



FELIX

The Student of Imperial College London



Rewinding time in
Life Is Strange.

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Where have all the
maintenance grants gone?

PAGE 3 **NEWS**



Medic boat club stopped on way to Belgium for being too drunk



The annual trip to Leuven ended abruptly at
Dover when students were sent home

Last week's ICSM Boat club's annual trip to Belgium ended before it really even began – at the ferry port in Dover.

Current medics and alumni were prevented by P&O ferry staff from boarding the boat which would have taken them to mainland Europe, as they were too drunk.

The students tried to board the 4:50am ferry from Dover to Calais but were “drunk and disorderly” according to port staff. P&O ferries took the decision not to allow the students to travel when they were scheduled to.

In an email, sent as the students were heading back to London having been turned away, the club's

Grace Rahman
Editor-in-Chief

captain told members that “[P&O] were willing for us to be allowed on after a 2-3 hour wait. Unfortunately, the coach drivers were unwilling to co-operate, hence are currently driving us back to London”.

The trip from Hammersmith to Dover had not been without issue. The coach company's depot manager was first contacted by

the driver at 3:30am over the students' behaviour. The coach left Hammersmith as scheduled at a quarter past midnight on Saturday. The coach company alleges that some students caused damage at Maidstone service station, which P&O ferries confirmed. The boat club denies that there were any complaints made during the planned stop in Maidstone.

The boat club was told by P&O that they could take a slightly later ferry, but as the coach driver was

getting close to his legal driving limit time, this would be impossible. The Dover port police were called, to help the coach get out of the one way system before the group were driven back to Hammersmith. Upon returning, the group tried to book another coach in an attempt to save the short weekend trip, but could not.

Drinking was heavy on the trip, with some rowers reportedly having port bottles strapped to their arms, that they weren't allowed to remove until the bottles were finished.

The trip, which cost £80 per ticket, involved two coaches and 100 students, who each pay £70 per year for club membership.

Some students had previously

arranged to fly or take the train to Leuven instead. These members got to their destination without a hitch.

This news comes after last year's shenanigans on the same club's annual Leuven trip, when a coach window was smashed on the way to Dover. Although the person responsible was an alumni student, the whole club was suspended during Imperial College Union's investigation.

The ICSM President and boat club declined to comment on this year's incident. The tweet printed here suggests the club has not been issued with a ban. A representative of Imperial College Union told us they “had been informed and are investigating”.



This tweet was sent after the party were turned away at Dover.

FELIX EDITORIAL



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A word from the Editor



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I love the medics, in all of their forms. I like the artsy medics, the Muslim medics, the medic sabbs, the medics who try and sell me doughnuts in SAF, and even the sporty ones.

Look, if we were all stuck on a desert island, the boat club medics would survive a lot longer than me. While I'd be writing out my tweets in the sand and trying to find a football to draw a face on for company, they could perform first aid, fashion slings from palm leaves and most likely build a basic boat and row to the nearest habitated land mass, all in a time that BUCS would be proud of. I have the utmost respect for people that I know could outlive me on a desert island.

They got hammered on a coach, man. It happens. People get hammered on coaches all the time, and worse. Have you ever been on

the first Oxford Tube on a Sunday morning? They were allowed to drink on the coach. P&O wouldn't let them on the ferry. The coach wouldn't let them wait for the next one. It was unfortunate. I hope they get their dosh back.

But it did happen so I'm going to report on it. If I see a suspicious looking tweet, I'm going to start making phonecalls. It doesn't mean I don't like boat club, or P&O, or port, or Belgium or medics because I enjoy all of the above. One of my best friends is a medic! I went to Leuven! I went on a boat once! This gal's got no agenda, except to create high quality content for millennials.

What is FELIX for? Well, it's a job for one thing, which brushes the tumbleweed from my CV and allows me to enjoy the finer things in life, like food and accomodation. But news happens, and the paper



will report on it. That's life, chums! If this all sounds quite exciting you should probably write for us. And if you hate us now, we'll let you write for us too. It's nice to have a bit of variation.

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Letters

In response to 'Imperial professor makes questionable comments on race in new book', Issue 1622

There have been many reports in the newspapers of 'no-go' areas in large cities in England.

There is absolutely no need to give citations for my opinions in this book. I give a list of factors (page 18) which could help minimise internal and external conflicts, including

clear natural boundaries, one race, one culture, one language, one religion. I am not advocating those things. Given the enormous amount of conflict caused within and between countries by differences in race, culture and religion, I do not see how any sensible person could object to that theoretical list.

As for the comments by 'Stan' about my teaching methods, I have to say that my methods were

very successful, with the course on which I was the sole teacher usually getting the highest or second highest average mark of any course in the department, with approval of the second marker and external examiners. It is complete rubbish that I wrote out all my lecture notes on the board - an impossible task in the time. I did write major terms on the board and pit [sic] up diagrams on the board. This helped

the students to take good lecture notes. Some staff members flashed many PowerPoint slides on and off, not letting students take down details in the lecture, condemning them to spend ages looking them up electronically later if they wanted the details. More than once the students gave me 100% highly satisfied ratings in the end of course official student questionnaires, so not all were of Stan's opinion. Stan

is certainly right that I cared about my students and topic. I am still in contact with many former students even from many years ago. I had many delightful students and really enjoyed teaching them, whatever their ability level.

Should FELIX wish too [sic] publish my reply, I am happy for them to do so, providing they give me a copy.

Dr Bernard Lamb (online)

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Maintenance grants are no more

From September there will be no more maintenance money from the government that doesn't have to be paid back

On Tuesday, Labour's attempt to reverse the government's decision to scrap maintenance grants was foiled.

From September 2016, students will only be able to access means-tested loans, which they will have to pay back once earning over the £21,000 salary threshold.

At the moment around 500,000 students in England are given means-tested grants to cover living costs which don't need to be paid back. This equates to an increase of £3500 of debt per year for students from the lowest income households, alongside their £9000 academic fees.

Many worry that this will put off bright students from poorer backgrounds from attending university at all, given the threat of such a financial burden. The average home student who started a degree in 2012 or later will leave university with about £50,000's worth of debt.

Representatives from the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts were outside parliament awaiting



I think we're a loan now. Photo Credit: BBC

the decision, and when the news broke that maintenance grants were to be scrapped, students 'occupied' Westminster bridge.

With signs, reading 'NO GRANTS = NO BRIDGE',

the protesters managed to block the main thoroughfare from Westminster to Waterloo for an hour and a half, before police successfully moved them along.

George Osborne has also been

accused of using the changes as a political trick, one in which the costs of the current student grants are passed onto the government 30 years down the line. This is due to the expenditure only being counted

when the student loans are written off and not, as is the case now, when the grants are first given out.

Osborne's use of this loophole allows him on paper to make huge strides towards "balancing the books by the end of this parliament" despite just prolonging the cost. Strong criticism was also voiced over the way the government enacted these changes, doing so without a full commons debate via the process of a "Statutory Instrument".

This type of bill is usually used for low-key policy change, not large-scale overhauls, and meant that a committee of just 18 MPs (10 CON, 6 LAB, 2 SNP) voted after having a debate of just 90 minutes.

The final vote, 10-8, meant that the last resort of reversing the decision now lies with the House of Lords, where a motion has been called for in order to annul the changes. It was a Lords vote that overturned Osborne's controversial tax credit cuts late last year.

MATT JOHNSTON &
GRACE RAHMAN

New financial threshold for non-EU students

You could be deported unless you earn £35,000 after graduation

This week pressure has been growing on Home Secretary, Theresa May, to abandon plans to deport non-EU immigrants who are earning less than £35,000 a year after 5 years of living in the UK.

The average UK-wide salary is far lower than this threshold, at £20,800 and a figure on the college's website put the average leavers' salary across subjects in 2013 at Imperial at £29,232.

A petition calling for the plans to be scrapped has reached 78,000 signatures, with large concentrations of signatures from London, but also from university towns like Bristol, Oxford, Cambridge and Brighton. Joshua Harbord, who set up the petition, said the policy "unfairly discriminates against

charity workers, nurses, students and others".

Alistair Carmichael, the Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman, also argued the point that the arbitrary level "fails to take talent and new sectors like tech start-ups, whose staff might be paid less than £35,000"

Petitions on the government's website are guaranteed a response once they reach more than 10,000 signatures, but as seen on Monday with the petition to ban Donald Trump, they need 100,000 signatures to be considered for debate in parliament.

After an outcry when these plans were first announced in 2011, several jobs were excluded from this threshold. These include PhDs, lecturers and nurses. There are also

some specific engineering jobs (such as in the oil and gas industry) that are on the government's "Shortage Occupation List", whose entry level salaries are usually below the proposed threshold, but would be exempt.

Proposals have also been made that would mean UK companies can't bring in skilled workers from outside the EU, unless they are paid a starting salary of £30,000 as well as paying a levy of £1,000 per year for every non-EU hiring.

The plans unveiled in 2011 were always planned for introduction in April 2016, and are seen as a way for David Cameron to reduce net immigration from 250,000 to a number "in the tens of thousands".



GRACE RAHMAN

"You have to be earning this much to stay". Photo Credit: Reuters



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ALL IMPERIAL STUDENTS ELIGIBLE

24 March – 2 April

FELIXNEWS

The Match4Lara campaign reaches Imperial

Stem cell donation drive hits SAF today

Today, the Anthony Nolan branch at Imperial is running a bone marrow drive in an attempt to find a match for a Thai-Italian student, the 24 year old Lara Casalotti, who has been diagnosed with leukaemia.

The test involves nothing more than writing down your details and spitting into a cup – this will be analysed to see whether volunteers have the right tissue type to save Lara's life.

At the moment, only 3% of people on the bone marrow register are mixed race, which has meant that a suitable match hasn't yet been found.

After no one in her family was a match, Lara's friends launched a worldwide campaign to find a donor, which has included huge drives on several university campuses.

Last week, the Cambridge drive recruited 656 people onto the Anthony Nolan register, which could also help hundreds of others waiting for stem cells to cure blood

disorders, including leukaemia.

Last week, it was reported that a Thai-Italian man took an eight hour coach ride across Thailand to take the test to see whether he could be a match.

Despite its reputation, donating stem cells is a lot like giving blood.

Despite its reputation, donating stem cells is a lot like giving blood and most people say it's painless



Lara is a big yoga fan and works to help refugees. Photo Credit: match4Lara

Most people say it's painless. Only 10% of donations actually involve giving bone marrow, and these procedures happen under a general anaesthetic.

30% of people diagnosed with blood cancers find a tissue match with a member of their own family, but the rest rely on donations from strangers. At the moment, The Anthony Nolan trust, the charity that matches donors with those who are ill, has 577,000 people on its register.

The charity says it needs more men, who make up only 15% of the register but produce more stem cells, and are more likely to donate them if matched.

As highlighted in Lara's case, they are also in desperate need of more donors from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. People of non-Caucasian origin are much less likely to find a stranger with matching tissue, and only 20% do.

The drive is running on Friday the 22nd in SAF from 11:30 until 18:00

Junior Doctor strike won't go ahead

Continuing negotiations means that the next strike has been cancelled

Junior doctors will not strike next week, the BMA have announced, calling off industrial action after it resumed talks with the government.

On Tuesday, the doctors' union said that continued negotiations with NHS Employers via an intermediary negotiation service, ACAS, meant that planned strike action for next week had been suspended.

After last Tuesday's strike which lasted 24 hours, doctors were due to strike again for 48 hours on the 26th of January. The strike would not have disrupted emergency care.

Another strike is still planned for the 10th of February if the negotiations do not result in "concrete progress", the BMA have said. The negotiations between the government and the BMA have

been tempestuous since last summer, when they first broke down.

Should the Government strong-arm the junior doctors by imposing the original contract changes, the changes would take place incredibly quickly because the vast majority of junior doctors are on short term contracts, typically six or twelve months. Their options would then be to accept the contract, move abroad to find employment or find a job in the private sector. The balance of the strikes ultimately lies with public opinion which currently strongly favours the position of the medics. An Ipsos MORI poll recently put their approval rating at 66%.

How Jeremy Hunt handles the negotiations between now and the next planned strike is likely to have impacts not only on the NHS, but on the wider public sector as well.

This is apparent with the ongoing negotiations between London Underground and its tube drivers. Again, negotiations using the ACAS service have been fruitful, with the strike that was scheduled for the same day as the suspended medics' walkout, now too having been put off. Peter Holden, chairman of East Midlands Regional Council of the BMA, cited this clash as part of the reason that the doctors' strike had been suspended, highlighting the fragile position the Government was in.

Consultant contracts are also up for renegotiation soon, and considering the difficulty in reaching an agreement for junior doctors, the government is unlikely to be able to spring another big change on the profession.

MATT JOHNSTON & GRACE RAHMAN



Last week's cover star at last week's protest. Photo Credit: FELIX

FELIX COMMENT



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The royals should pay for themselves

If we cut spending on the royals, the money could be better spent elsewhere



Jennifer Eden
Writer

For a long time, the UK has been wading through an era of cuts, cuts and more cuts. The NHS is expected to shave off £20bn in costs by 2021, schools are preparing for 16% cuts over the next three years, and controversial plans to reduce working tax credits have been in the public eye recently. Despite there being some overly optimistic murmurs of an end to austerity, it's looking unlikely that George Osborne is going to start splashing the cash any time soon. It's a sticky situation that, supposedly, we're all in together.

But guess who's still balling? That's right, the old baked bean and

The old baked bean and co. are seemingly unaffected by the UK's financial state



Does the queen really need more new jewellery? Photo Credit: ibtimes.co.uk

co. are seemingly unaffected by UK's financial state.

For at least two years, there will be no cuts to the royal budget. In fact the taxpayer funded income for the royals will actually rise to as much as £44 million (due to repairs needed for the palaces), before the royals will have to face reductions to funding. This is on top of the Queen's private income from the inherited estates, land owned, and the crown estate.

Although this money doesn't hugely impact the taxpayer, with the cost per person coming to just 56p each – quite good value, considering we reap the vast benefits of the royal loving tourists – there is an issue. By not scrutinising the royal budget, and even allowing it to rise, they are sending out the message that the royals will never have to make the same sacrifices as the rest of the population. While we're all feeling the effects, old Lizzy and Phil carry on livin' it large.

And it's not just the main figureheads that are smooth sailing

through austerity. The swarm of right royal scroungers living off the Queen's handouts indirectly

The royals will never have to make the same sacrifices as the rest of the population

affect the amount of public funding needed. If they were to be axed from the royal payroll, the extra pennies needed for repairs could be covered by the private income, and there would be no need for taxpayer's money which could be much better spent elsewhere.

With the potential £8 million rise to the royal budget, the government could have paid for roughly 1000 heart bypass surgeries or 10,000 cataracts operations; built a new average sized school; or even paid off 889 students' tuition fees for a year! Instead, that money will be spent on tarding up Buckingham Palace's interior and reupholstering the corgis' baskets.

The whole notion of this is not only uninspiring for the public, it undermines the government's harsh and increasingly unpopular tactics for getting the country back in shape. The issue is enhanced because now there really isn't any reason why taxpayer's money should continue funding the royals' ever expanding budget. The royal family has next to no power anymore. No one is going to be thrown in the stocks for opposing the rise to their budget, and therefore it seems ridiculous that we should have to keep paying out.

Ultimately it's time for the royal family to start budgeting and getting by on their own. Switch the fine wines for Sainsbury's Basics, make the horse and carriages available for hen dos, rent out Balmoral as a haunted house, or maybe just get Charles flogging shedloads more Duchy Originals. It doesn't matter how it's done, just as long as it puts an end to the royal freeloaders.



Prince Harry can often be found at Boujis in South Ken, spending your hard-earned taxes. Photo Credit: mirror.co.uk



NASA's billion-dollar savings plan

Because green is so much more than just the colour of money

Rahul Shivaram
Writer

Greens everywhere, rejoice! It's looking like those Heathrow-hating prayers have been answered by none other than NASA's own home-grown team of Aero Engineers and associates.

On the 4th of the January 2016, NASA released a press statement with big claims: their Environmentally Responsible Aviation project (ERA) had been a heart-warming success, set to save the airline industry over \$255 billion dollars over 25 years (2025 – 2050) and cut huge amounts of pollution, all by playing the efficiency game.

The project began in 2009, scheduled for completion by the end of 2015, totalling a runtime of six years in development. A host of industry partners jumped on board – some of which include General Electric, Pratt & Whitney, the US Air Force, Boeing and smaller contractors – as they volunteered over \$250 million and their own facilities to undertake the work. NASA fronted the remaining \$400 million of the expenditure.

There is such a thing as fairy-tale endings to research projects

For those who know the commercial aerospace industry, one wading deep in safety regulations, conservative design and high stakes engineering (and rightly so), it was a welcome opportunity for scientists and engineers to really have a crack at some unusual ideas. It was no wonder some industry



NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida - where the magic happens Photo Credit: Reinhard Link

giants were keen to get involved. Ed Waggoner, Director of NASA's Integrated Systems Research Program explained "It has been an unmitigated success... every one of our industry partners is getting something out of it."

And he's right, the outcome of the project was a whopping 75% pollution saving, a halving of fuel consumption and a reduction in noise pollution to an eighth of current levels.

The project was aimed at thoroughly testing eight technology concepts and refining the ideas.

The findings were interesting; some examples are highlighted for your geeky pleasure.

Firstly, they include an innovation of "tiny embedded nozzles" blowing air over the vertical tail fin of an aircraft meaning smaller tail fins can be used. In addition to this, a new non-stick coating design helping to prevent residue build up was tested. Secondly, cleverly stitched composite materials cut weight by 20% making for safer and lighter aircraft bodies. Thirdly, testing of the "morphing wing concept" via the US Air Force and FlexySys Inc.

allowed the plane wing to seamlessly extend its flaps.

A redesign of the combustion stage via Pratt & Whitney decreased nitrogen oxide pollution from combustion by up to 80%; and finally, the Hybrid Wing-Body Concept (HWB) was successfully tested, whereby the whole body seamlessly forms into wings, with the engines mounted on top.

So, there you have it, there is such a thing as fairy-tale endings to research projects; say hello to quiet skies, clean clouds and happy Greenpeace protesters, for now.

Calling all science writers

Do you have a burning passion for science? Do you enjoy pointing things out to strangers? Are you looking for a chance to have your geeky voice heard? Join the FELIX science writing team! Drop an email to fsci@ic.ac.uk and send us your articles, pitches or just say hi! We promise to say hi back.



A coastal approach to the plastic problem

Imperial College research suggests we should change our clean up methods

Naomi Stewart
Writer

which is based in the Netherlands – that aim to deploy plastic collectors at these environmentally toxic sites to directly clean up and remove the pollution from the ocean.

When we think of plastic pollution in our oceans, it's common for our first thoughts to be of a poor turtle squished within a tight plastic ring, or of the infamous Great Pacific Garbage Patch – a massive swirling vortex of plastic bags, bottle caps, fibres from synthetic clothing, and so on, found smack in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

Estimated at over 100 million tonnes and twice the size of the entire United Kingdom, most of the plastic in the patch has been broken down into microscopic pieces – microplastics – that can persist for hundreds, if not thousands of years, continuing to poison and kill ocean and avian wildlife indiscriminately.

The toxins in the plastics also enter the earth's food chain when ingested by animals, passing the dangerous chemicals continually through our planet's food webs and ecosystems. A recent analysis by Imperial College's Dr. Erik van Sebille and colleagues in Australia showed that more than 90 per cent of seabirds have swallowed plastics.

To date, much of the research focus on ocean plastic pollution has been on how to clean up this Great Pacific Garbage Patch and others that exist in almost every ocean in the world. There are well-meaning initiatives like The Ocean Cleanup –

Plastic collectors placed at strategic entry points would remove 13% more plastic than garbage patch collections

However, newly published research from The Grantham Institute's Dr. van Sebille and undergraduate physics student Peter Sherman actually shows that it might be more efficient to focus on cleaning up at the point of entry for pollution. That is, it's better to



Ocean plastics can pile up in important areas for animal conservation. Photo Credit: Forest and Kimm Starr

set up plastic collectors directly at coastlines where plastic garbage is being washed out, not out in the oceans where it's already being broken down into toxic chemicals and waste.

"There is a lot of plastic in the patch, but it's a relative dead zone for life compared with the richness around the coasts," said Sherman. The birds analysed in the earlier study by Dr. van Sebille are also concentrated around coasts where their food is plentiful.

The new study by Dr. van Sebille and Sherman, released just this Tuesday in Environmental Research Letters, shows how the researchers studied the movement of plastics in the ocean to figure out where was best to deploy plastic collectors and prevent the most harm to wildlife and ecosystems.

Modelling a ten year project starting in 2015, they found that plastic collectors placed at strategic entry points along coastlines would remove over 30% of the microplastics, as opposed to the 17% removal rate if collectors were placed at the garbage patches themselves. This proposed system of floating barriers and platforms would concentrate, collect, and remove plastics flowing into the ocean from urban rivers, sewers, and waste deposits before they even had the chance to disperse into the

currents and end up in these large concentrations of garbage patches.

"The Great Pacific garbage patch has a huge mass of microplastics, but the largest flow of plastics is actually off the coasts, where it enters the oceans," said Sherman.

"It makes sense to remove plastics where they first enter the ocean around dense coastal economic and population centres," added Dr van Sebille. "It also means you can remove the plastics before they have had a chance to do any harm. Plastics in the patch have travelled a long way and potentially already done a lot of harm."

The authors identified this system of coastline collectors as particularly useful around China and some Indonesian islands. These two countries were also recently identified as two out of five countries, also including Vietnam, the Philippines and Thailand, that contribute nearly 60% of global oceanic plastic pollutions, in a report released last week from McKinsey and Company and the Ocean Conservancy.

The McKinsey report also confirmed that over 80% of oceanic debris actually comes from land-based sources of pollution, not oceanic ones like fishing vessels or cruise ships. Most of it comes from litter and debris on the land or in waterways that eventually wash

out to the ocean. In light of this, the research from Imperial College pointing out the greater efficiency and success in reducing plastic pollution by ultimately stopping it at the coastal sources is even more relevant and timely.

"We need to clean up ocean plastics, and ultimately this should be achieved by stopping the source of pollution," said Sherman. "However, this will not happen overnight, so a temporary solution is needed, and clean-up projects could be it, if they are done well."

Over 80% of oceanic debris actually comes from land-based sources of pollution



A small garbage patch in the Pacific. Beautiful. Photo Credit: Stephen Guerissi



E-Cigarette claims go up in smoke

Why vaping will not help you quit smoking

Madeleine Webb
Writer

reviewed data from 48 studies and discovered that using e-cigarettes in fact decreased the rate of successful

Quitting smoking is one of the most common New Year's resolutions and there are seemingly endless methods claiming to help one quit, from patches to gum to spray; even hypnosis is used to help people kick the habit. However, recently e-cigarettes have been used to wean people off 'normal' cigarettes, which many consider more harmful than the electronic equivalent. The public health charity Action on Smoking and Health estimate that of the 2.6 million people using e-cigarettes, 1.1 million are ex-smokers, with increase of e-cig users between 2014 and 2015 being almost entirely from ex-smokers.

However, the University of San Francisco has released data showing that e-cigarettes are not actually as effective as believed when it comes to stopping smoking. Findings published in The Lancet Respiratory Medicine show that using e-cigarettes to aid attempts to quit smoking actually has the opposite effect. The researchers in San Francisco collected and

Using e-cigarettes to aid attempts to quit smoking actually has the opposite effect

quitting attempts by 28%. Studies included both practical and clinical

trials, as well as a range of age demographics, number of previous quitting attempts and nicotine dependence.

The researchers also presented a possible reason that e-cigarettes are ineffective when used to help quitters; in this case, the cause can be found in the e-smoker's psychology. The drop in the use of traditional cigarettes over the last 50 years is generally attributed to the introduction of policies to discourage smoking. Warnings on packaging, increased taxation and the ban on indoor smoking in public places, have made smoking more inconvenient and corroded its "cool" image. However, e-cigarettes, while regulated, are largely free of the same stigma and are considered to be less harmful. The paper states that "The inclusion of e-cigarettes in smoke-free laws and voluntary smoke-free policies could help decrease use of e-cigarettes as a cigarette substitute, and, perhaps, increase their effectiveness for smoking cessation."

Right now very few of the current smoking laws apply to e-cigarettes, allowing the devices to be used as a crutch for smokers rather than tools that enable quitting. "The irony is that quitting smoking is one of the



Why quit smoking when you can look THIS cool? Photo Credit: rpavich

main reasons both adults and kids use e-cigarettes, but the overall effect is less, not more, quitting," said one co-author Stanton A. Glantz, UCSF professor and director of the UCSF Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education. Even more worrying, further research from UCSF shows that the use of e-cigarettes may still have negative impacts on people's health, which are currently not widely known. Dr. Karen Wilson, chair of the American Academy of Paediatrics

(AAP) section on Tobacco Control argued, "The presence of nicotine in e-cigarettes is highly dangerous for the developing brains of the youth", which is especially troubling considering people under 25 generally use e-cigarettes at a much higher rate than other age groups. So for those students looking to look after their lungs in 2016, it's probably safer and more effective for you to stick to the gum or go cold turkey, rather than trying to vape in the back of a lecture hall.

A glimpse into the genetics of overeating

Amrita Ghosh
Writer

All the festive meals and drinks plaguing the holiday period, often have a substantial effect on our post holiday figure. Sure, we make New Year's resolutions to hit the gym and become fitter, but how many of us still struggle to fit into that pair of skinny jeans? Well, if you're still finding your jeans a bit too snug post Christmas, you can probably hold your genes responsible for it.

A research team of biologists at Heidelberg University gained new insight into how our feeding behaviour is encoded in our genes.

The team led by Prof. Dr. Lohmann of the Centre for Organismal Studies (COS), studied the model fruit fly (*D. melanogaster*), and looked at the function of a particular developmental gene which belongs to the Hox gene family. Hox genes are responsible for controlling the development of an embryo along the head-tail axis. In a sense, the Hox genes could be described as the body's 'architect' which is responsible for the physiological blueprint of an organism. However, this new study revealed that a particular gene in the Hox family, known as 'Deformed', plays a crucial role in controlling our feeding behaviour. This specific gene is responsible for establishing the feeding motor unit during the development of the embryo.

Deformed plays a crucial role in controlling our feeding behaviour

In the study, the Deformed gene was deactivated when the feeding



Genes, jeans...who can even tell anymore? Photo Credit: rpavich

motor unit was successfully formed after embryogenesis which revealed that this gene is also responsible for controlling the motor unit even during later phases of life.

This research offers new scope for several future studies, including looking at how the Hox genes perform this function on a molecular level.



Rewind time with Life Is Strange

Francine Tran
Writer

Many people often find themselves reflecting on their past choices, given the knowledge that they have now. Our teenage years are characterised by the mistakes and lessons learnt, shaping us into the 'adults' we are today. Undoubtedly, some mistakes bear significantly worse repercussions than others and real life has no second chances. Games are appealing to us because we can kill, fail and die with no consequences affecting our real lives. Life Is Strange challenges the idea that games don't affect us personally; it forces us to make harsh decisions that have the ability to haunt the player beyond the computer screen.

Life is Strange is a game that encompasses the trials of being a teenager and the burden of being a superhero. Developed by DontNod Entertainment and published by Square Enix in 2015, it is a five part episodic journey which explores the difficult decisions many teenagers encounter – with a twist. The protagonist, Max Caulfield, one day acquires the ability to manipulate time and alter the fabric of reality. Max and her childhood friend Chloe Price embark on exciting adventures, taking advantage of (and even sometimes abusing) Max's new found power. However, the story quickly evolves from a

There is
an ever
present
feeling of
trepidation

heart-warming tale about the newly renewed friendship of two teenage girls to the horror of an impending hurricane and subsequent fate of their town.

The heroine Max Caulfield (played by Hannah Telle) is a seemingly average teenage girl. Armed with a camera and creativity, she attends the prestigious Blackwell Academy in the hopes of pursuing a future career in photography. Despite her natural talent, her lack of confidence keeps her in the shadows of her peers. She is completely contrasted by Chloe Price (Ashly Burch) who is a recalcitrant spirit with electric blue hair. The tag team combination of a timid character and a rebellious one is not uncommon in teenage coming of age stories, because it works. Life Is Strange is no exception to this. There is also an intriguing ensemble of secondary characters, from filthy rich brats to the wholesome and innocent. It



But first, let me take a selfie. Photo Credit: Dotnot Entertainment

really is just like high school.

The game allows the player to rewind the vast majority of events, with each triggering consequences that cascade onto other consequences (The Butterfly Effect for those familiar with Chaos Theory). A decision that the player makes in episode one might not have visible effects until episode four, leading to moments of dramatic realisation. The choices that the player can make are vast; ranging from choosing between having a bacon omelette or Belgian waffle for breakfast to whether or not they steal money from the handicapped fund. There are several

'points of no return' throughout the story at which the option to reverse time is removed, forcing the player to really think carefully about their choices. Due to this, there is an ever present feeling of trepidation. At the end of each episode, worldwide statistics are revealed that show how people made their choices – one of the game's many quirks. Who wouldn't be curious to see what percentage of people made the same choices as you?

Every game features 'filler' moments that contribute little to the overarching storyline, instead existing solely to prolong it. In the case of Life Is Strange, there are several mini-games which are generally entertaining yet sometimes mildly annoying. Among these, in the third episode there is a part that warrants furiously mashing the keyboard in an attempt to solve a seemingly randomly and extremely frustrating puzzle. After finally

succeeding one hopes to never have to go through that ordeal again only to find out eventually that the exact same puzzle will feature no less than five times in the fifth episode. Moreover, the game is not without its fair share of glitches and graphical imperfections. The speech vaguely follows the movement of the characters' mouths at best, nevertheless one still cannot help but be impressed by the intricate artwork. Another feature of Life Is Strange that deserves praise is the soundtrack; the indie instrumental tunes, featuring musical talents such as Foals and Syd Matters, keep the player thoroughly engrossed in the gameplay.

Life Is Strange is a triumph in terms of storyline. There is much to be desired in terms of smoothness of gameplay, but this is a minor defect. The ending is poignant and thought provoking. Although the storyline takes place over only five days, the characters feel eerily familiar by the end.

Life Is Strange is a must play for those who are interested in point and click adventure games. Its episodic nature is perfect for allowing yourself an acceptable amount of procrastination one evening, but proceed with caution – it is entirely possible that you could end up bingeing the entire five episodes in one sitting.

Life Is
Strange is
triumph
in terms of
storyline

*Life Is Strange is available now
on all major platforms*



#nofilter. Photo Credit: Dontnod Entertainment



Terrible Love, not so terrible EP

Rob Garside
Writer

Terrible Love is a new band featuring UK Hardcore stalwarts from well-regarded and sorely missed bands such as **Bastions**, **Grappler**, **Goodtime Boys** and **Crocus**. On paper this EP should be a solid slice of melodic Hardcore with some post rock leanings and cathartic lyrics and vocals.

The best tracks of this EP are when Terrible Love insert real drive into their songs. 'Mt Misery' is a highlight with its driving guitar and drum lines. The cathartic opener 'Change Nothing' showcases muscular musicianship that would easily translate to a live domain. With its powerful gang vocals chorus', tense bridge and jangly

verse guitar lines, it shows off the skills that made Grappler and Bastions such necessary listening.

Unfortunately, the guitar tone the lead guitarist uses during the

'Change Nothing' showcases muscular musicianship

bridges on the EP is difficult to live with. A guitar tone could have could have really separated Terrible Love from their hardcore contemporaries so a move to a lighter tone seems

understandable, but I feel this takes away from what should be the most dramatic and emotional parts of the songs, leaving them insincere. The stodgy 'They Need You' really suffers from this poor choice with the peak of this song sounding really corny, whilst 'The Stone in Me' has some really twangy sounding arpeggios that almost sound comical.

The EP is good and shows promise for the future of the band especially in their more driving triumphant style songs and when they stay away from questionable tone choices. Whilst I feel this release fails to eclipse the member's previous works, with the spite and dependency of Bastions and the ferocity of Grappler missing in this release, it'll be interesting to see where this band goes next.

Change Nothing by Terrible Love is out now on Bandcamp



Wolves are hardcore. Photo Credit: Terrible Love

The month (so far) in tweets



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Retro Retrospective: Mad Men



The Men (and Women) who Sold the World. Photo Credit: AMC

Anurag Deshpande
Writer

Last year marked the end of lots of things; Jon Stewart's run on the Daily Show, Bill Cosby's career, Meek Mill's career, 2014, and many beloved TV shows. Of these, one was Mad Men, a series I discovered, binge watched, and fell in love with, all in the space of about two weeks. Centring on the enigmatic and dapper Don Draper, played by a perfectly cast Jon Hamm, the show follows the exploits of the men and women of the Sterling-Cooper advertising agency; as they attempt to navigate through the rapidly changing world of 1960s New York.

The driving force of the series is the strength of its characters. There are no one-dimensional characters, no real 'villains', and everyone gets moment to shine. At first Draper seems to be the platonic ideal of the 60s Ad-man; suave, charming, clever, a veritable James Bond-type. However, the first episode expertly and efficiently deconstructs this, revealing all his flaws and failings. No, Don Draper is not necessarily a good man. However, he is trying his damndest; which is what makes him such a compelling lead. We root for him to succeed and overcome, even as we see him fall, right on the verge, because of his own shortcomings.

This is, of course, not all the piece is. In its scale, it very much feels like a 'Great American novel'; a modern day 'Great Gatsby',

warning us of the pitfalls of avarice and overindulgence. It destroys that old adage 'things were better in my day' (in this case the 60s), showing us the past in all its grimy glory. Such things are always deftly and respectfully handled.

One of the central narratives follows Peggy Olsen (Elisabeth Moss), as she attempts to make it through the male dominated and

In its scale, it very much feels like a 'Great American novel'; a modern day 'Great Gatsby', warning us of the pitfalls of avarice and overindulgence

misogynistic advertising world. There are also the subtle touches, such as the rampant alcoholism (though admittedly I'd love to have that kind of bar in my office one day) or firm partner Roger Sterling's (John Slattery) hatred of the Japanese, due to his part in the Second World War. These, while barely commented on by characters

in the era, are blatantly obvious to us

that realising its significance will make you smirk. The title coupled with events towards the end serve to turn the whole episode into one long hilarious, if cruel joke. Then, of course, there's that wonderfully surreal dance number in 'Waterloo' (S7E7).

The writing has a beautiful way of endearing to you those who only a second ago you hated. The

The settings used are often just as important as the acting, with them reflecting the characters or being symbolic of this

in the 21st century.

Don't get the impression that the show is all serious, however. There are plenty of funny moments spread throughout, and showrunner Matthew Weiner goes to great lengths to ensure viewers are never bored or overwhelmed by drama. There is an understanding that, as in real life, both are required to keep things believable. In fact, one of the show's greatest comedic triumphs comes with the episode 'Guy walks into an advertising agency' (S3E6), which in my book is perhaps one of the greatest and meta titles an episode of anything has ever had. Without spoiling anything, I'll say

dialogue again is a testament to the skill of the writers. It ranges from charming, to witty, to pithy, often all at once. Consistently believable, what it never manages to be is dull or stilted. This is all to say nothing of the calibre of the cast. It's obvious everyone is acting their heart out, and this really helps cement these characters and make the viewers thoroughly invested in them. Even the child actors, particularly



Drinking to Remember. Photo Credit: AMC

Kiernan Shipka (playing Draper's young daughter), are some of the best I've seen.

I'd be remiss in forgetting to highlight the downright poetic synergy of direction/cinematography and writing. Whether it's the powerfully metaphorical sequence at the end of 'Shoot' (S1E9), or the incredible continuous shot of Don Draper walking set to 'You only live twice' (ironically signifying his fall back into his old habits) in 'The Phantom' (S5E13), every so often the show throws these moments at you that just scream 'iconic'. The settings used are often just as important as the acting, with them reflecting the characters or being symbolic of this. An example of this is the use of bright and over saturated colours for California, in contrast with the relatively industrial and faded colours of New York; used in order to signify the happiness and peace Draper feels in the West rather than at home. Interestingly, the colours and materials also have a distinctly flimsy and artificial feel to them, reflecting the constructed and easily breakable nature of this illusion.

Frankly, I can keep gushing about it, but the exquisite quality of Mad Men is something that simply must be experienced. It succeeds because all of its elements come together wonderfully. If I can't convince you, perhaps the show's 16 Emmys and five Golden Globes will.

Mad Men is available on Netflix and Sky



The Fastest Man Alive

Saad Ahmed
Television Editor

Pretty much any new TV series has a period of adjustment where the actors settle into their roles and the writers capture the show's voice. Superhero shows are of course, no exception to this rule, as Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. can testify. What makes the Flash unique is that it was able to hit the ground running straight off and just continually got better over the course of the next few months. Strictly speaking, it didn't have to start from scratch; being a spinoff of Arrow, some of the characters and ideas were already established prior to its pilot.

A star feature of the show is Grant Gustin's performance as Barry Allen, a forensic scientist and the series' titular hero. Gustin gives us a Barry Allen who is immensely likeable and impossible not to relate with. A stark contrast from Stephen Amell's intense and broody Oliver Queen, Gustin brings an enjoyable combination of youthful energy, delicate poignancy as well as a touch of Peter Parker-esque awkwardness to the table.

It isn't just the main hero who gives an amazing performance, it is the entire supporting cast. A lot of the show's driving force, drama and emotional core comes from Barry's relationships with his

circle of friends, families and allies. All the possible relationships are exploited to great effect. The two main highlights are Jesse L. Martin as Barry's adoptive father and Tom Cavanagh as his mentor. Martin brings a nice touch of warmth to his role, both as an anxious father and a man perplexed by all the crazy things around him. Cavanagh's Harrison Wells is the show's most captivating character, appearing to care for Barry while also being more than what meets the eye, eventually becoming season one's main antagonist. There isn't enough time to go through all the characters but

Ultimately, TV is inherently a better medium for superheroes than film

rest assured, everyone has their own quirks, traits and their time to shine.

Looking at all the underlying conflicts and how they develop overtime, it's clear the Flash is able to succeed because it adopts the serialised nature of superhero comics really well. With each episode having its fair share of twists and surprises as well as a climactic cliffhanger, it serves as a reminder that ultimately, TV is inherently a better medium for superheroes



Grant Gustin delivers an incredible performance as Barry Allen AKA The Flash. Photo Credit: The CW

than film. Weekly episodes can do serialised storytelling in a way a couple of films each year just can't. Of course a major advantage of films is having more time and money to bring the powers and spectacles to life. For a TV drama however, the effects of the Flash are damn impressive. His super-speed is rendered well in creative ways as well as the abilities of the numerous villains. A particular highlight is Gorilla Grodd, a completely computer-animated villain who heavily featured in two episodes so far.

The show is also never afraid to embrace the more colourful, light-

hearted and ostentatious features of comic books. The show is easily able to juggle between time-travel and telepathic gorillas while making everything work in a universe where powers are new and most people don't know how to react to them. The show gets bolder with this as it goes along, with season two introducing the concept of

The show is also never afraid to embrace the more colourful, light-hearted and ostentatious features of comic books

the multiverse with doppelgangers from a parallel earth. The humour plays a big part in keeping things grounded and not letting the drama get out of hand. With all the fun and flashy elements of comics, the movie version definitely has a lot to prove with the show setting the bar so high. With great acting and never being afraid to embrace its comic book roots, the Flash has an impressively high quality level and serves as a strong blueprint of how to do superheroes on TV.

While the show follows a standard 'villain-of-the-week' format, it is one done rather well. While some of villains come off as underdeveloped and one-dimensional, others have more nuanced and stronger appearances. Reverse-Flash and

Zoom, the main antagonists of seasons one and two are done well as complex and terrifying main villains. Mark Hamill also shows up as the Trickster, a role he had from the 1990s short-lived Flash series. His debut episode also proved that the show is capable of going into full-on camp territory without losing sight of its goal.

A major standout episode is the season one finale "Fast Enough". It does away with the "final confrontation" trend, moving that to the penultimate episode. It was an intensely emotional finale, forcing Barry to decide just how much he's willing to sacrifice in order to save his mother. Every actor was on full form and it felt like a great payoff to a season's worth of buildup. It also ended on a cliffhanger which, while aggravating, left the window opened for anything. This is nicely fleshed out and explored in season two.

The Flash is set to get his own solo movie in 2018, but featuring a completely new cast, story and even Barry Allen in the form of Ezra Miller. While it's an unusual and interesting decision, the movie version definitely has a lot to prove with the show setting the bar so high. With great acting and never being afraid to embrace its comic book roots, the Flash has an impressively high quality level and serves as a strong blueprint of how to do superheroes on TV.

The Flash is available on Amazon Prime



Some of the multi-layered and varied characters of the series. Photo Credit: The CW

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Is opera more than ‘fur coats and no knickers’?

Ben Williams narrowly escapes death by stiletto to report on **Royal Opera House’s** *La Traviata*



La Traviata at the Royal Opera House, 2016 Photo by Tristram Kenton

Ever watched ice-cream being made in a factory? A quick YouTube and a bit of cornetto should give you the full effect of my feelings as I stormed up the stairs (“Latecomers will NOT be admitted”) to the opera *La Traviata* at the **Royal Opera House**.

Maybe I just have a little crush on good engineering, but there’s definitely a tingle to think that a bunch of monkeys with firesticks have advanced to such a fantastic extent that whole herds of them can spend their lives building machines to endlessly produce the perfect level of chocolate flakes in a Mr. Whippy. That tap of your tongue on a lump of frozen milk is someone’s lifetime problem. Isn’t that crazy?

On the other hand, after having lustfully gulped down someone’s career, there’s something disgustingly pointless about it all. Something pretty disturbing – in a dark old world – that we’d waste such a glut of care on icecream. Who ever built higher, fought

The current carefully ‘authentic’ ROH production absolutely demolishes Verdi’s intent to challenge

harder, changed more – for love of an ice-cream?

Or, to quote my wise old Grandma, is opera just “all fur coat and no knickers.”?

La Traviata, billed as “everything that opera should be about” ... “an intense workout of your love and fear muscles”, seemed the best opportunity to settle the question.

The plot revolves around the struggles of a Parisian courtesan Violetta, (Venera Gimadieva, debut) and her (forbidden) love for a nobleman, Alfredo Germont (Samuel Sakker).

Violetta’s slow decline and eventual death from consumption (tuberculosis) forms the crux of the play, while Alfredo’s family do everything possible to prevent the union of the happy couple.

That plot has undeniably faded. The 19th century social mores of marriage and chastity that Verdi rebelled against are long broken. It took thirty years for Verdi’s opera to be performed in its original form.

So, (as much as *Traviata* is a

staple) it seems deeply ironic that the current, very carefully ‘authentic’, form of the **ROH’s** production absolutely demolishes the author’s basic intent to challenge. All that remains in the wreck is a fairly standard tale of romance lost and a history lesson.

The crisp vocal power of Venera was outstanding

The emotion in this performance is left in the force of the music, and not the words. This is just as well, because the acting itself is fairly robotic. There’s obviously a need to

balance vocal talent with dramatic ability, and that decision is always going to be weighted pretty heavily towards the former. Granted too, the size of the auditorium also means that unless gestures are exaggerated, they’ll be missed by a fair proportion of the audience.

However, messing up a stage slap simply isn’t great, nor does an imitation of a windmill do anything to convince me of a broken heart.

If I’d said this at the **ROH**, I’d probably have been staked by some hefty pearls and a stiletto. In no way do I deny the technical, vocal ability of the cast. The crisp vocal power of Venera (Violetta) was outstanding in particular.

However, I can’t shake the feeling that for the audience last Saturday, the real attraction of *La Traviata*, became not *La Traviata*, but a seat in Covent Garden.

To my mind, I think I’d rather close my eyes and listen to the music.

La Traviata at the ROH. Until 19th March. Tickets from £97



Saatchi Gallery raises a toast to female artists

Champagne Life makes history by being the only exhibition in the gallery to feature just women

Elizaveta Tchebaniouk
Writer

Champagne Life is not your average contemporary art exhibition, but the first of its kind in Saatchi Gallery's history. Not only is it staged to mark the Gallery's 30th anniversary, but it is also Saatchi's first major all-female exhibition.

The brochure claims the title itself makes an ironical statement about the illusory glamour of an artist's life. Hopefully that is the true reason behind the title, and not the fact that the exhibition's main sponsor is the champagne Pommery ...

It is difficult to think of any appropriate title for the exhibition as the artistic purposes and materials vary extensively. Though the variation between the artists is greater than any commonalities, I felt that each artist succeeds in effectively and impressively conveying her own individual message. This is definitely an exhibition which will leave you with a lasting and transformative impact well after your visit.

The exhibition consists of the works of 14 emerging international women artists, providing 14 unique reflections on the meaning of being a female artist today. Each artist's purpose is honest, and this purpose conveyed through their works in a most creative, unexpected, and original way.

Some of the works make statements about the current digital age and media culture. For example, in the first gallery, we instantly recognize the subjects of "Champagne Life" – repetitions of inverted Kim and Kanye painted over with a green or yellow. The fact that this unifying recognition phenomenon is experienced by all the viewers of the work, the ability of Julia Wachtel's work to demonstrate and expose this almost subconscious new 'instinct' created by celebrity pop culture and the Internet is truly incredible.

Maria Angeletti's works in gallery 6 also focus on the digital and Internet age, but specifically on its influence on artistic practice. Each trio of her works is composed



A "Kanye and Kim", Julia Wachtel. Photo Credit: Sarah Barlondo

of images that seem juxtaposed, but in fact may appear together in a Google search. The images are reproduced extensively in various ways and spliced together, leaving us to contemplate whether these

Julia Dault's sculptures bear marks and scratches that expose the act of the work's creation

processes of contemporary image culture distance the image from the subject, or uncover a new profound meaning in it. Contrastingly, Sigrid Holmwood's paintings illuminate a forgotten Swedish traditional life. The Impressionist style of the artworks and the nineteenth century subjects contrasts against the psychedelic neon colours in which they are done. The fluorescence seems to put a vivid spotlight on the vanished traditions, or perhaps revives them with a new, refreshed life.

Unconventionally, some works in the exhibition make statements about themselves. They act as mediums to expose the act of creation – a contemplation and an exposure of the methods undertaken by the artist to create the work. In gallery 6, Julia Dault's sculptures bear marks and scratches that resulted from the artist bending and assembling the work, and thus unmask the presence of the artist in the work. The imprints left on the Plexiglass hint at an unbreakable bond between the creator and her creation, and these imprints also seem to give the cold industrial



"Jermenac", Jelena Bulajic. Photo Credit: Sarah Barlondo



Moje Sabz by Soheila Sokhanvari. Photo: Ben Pruchnie/Getty Images

material a touch of human warmth, almost a sort of secret intimacy.

Similarly, Alice Anderson's '181 kilometers' bears testament to the meditative and intensely physical process undertaken by the artist to create the work.

The works in gallery 4 bear an existential essence. On the walls are Jelena Bulajic's works – each a portrait of a person she's encountered who's caught her attention in some way.

Three of the portraits are so large they almost fill a whole wall, and the effect created by an aged face in extremely accurate detail is absolutely transfixing. Not only are humans psychologically predisposed to be drawn to faces, the process of aging is inevitable for all. Tapping into these two facts, Bulajic's portraits evoke a feeling of empathy and of a haunting unity, and the monumental size and detail of the portraits make them even further powerfully mesmerizing.

In the middle of gallery is the sculpture "Echoué au seuil de la raison" by Virgile Ittah. The flesh of two bodies made of wax and

seeming to melt conveys Ittah's purpose in this work – to study the "frailty and transience of human flesh". The fact that the bodies almost hang in suspension further invites

Bulajic's transfixing portraits evoke a sense of haunting unity

us to reflect upon this transience between being and nothingness. The figures seem to reach for each other, and this perhaps adds the subtle metaphor of this inevitable part of

the human condition as unifying.

Seung Ah Paik's floor to ceiling drawings in gallery 8 are depictions of her own flesh down to the most unflattering details. Exposing the imperfections of her own flesh on a large scale is an unapologetic statement of honesty – of not only accepting but celebrating flaws as reflections of one's individuality and identity.

Her work aims to show a self-accepting take on beauty that contrasts the current societal obsession with illusory perfection. The soft muted tones and technique Paik used seem to further contrast the digital and sharply focused images of perfect bodies in the media that women are constantly bombarded with. Personally, I found Paik's works to evoke a feeling of tenderness in response to the way in which she depicts the female body that is empowering and inspiring.

While Paik's works focus on the physical aspect of female identity, Mequitta Ahuja's paintings in Gallery 7 convey her take on the intangible aspects of identity. Being ethereal, these facets of identity can thus be presumed to be unfixed, and Ahuja's works aims to convey a similar concept – that identity is not static, but ours to fabricate. Her paintings show figures (often self-portraits) woven into a mythological or ancient setting. Personally, I felt the work "Stack

Let's hope this promise of a brighter future for female artists isn't false

"Stack" clearly conveys this concept. The feeling of an ancient tradition evoked by the earth-toned mosaic – an ancient and traditional art – contrasts strikingly to the body that is depicted in the same traditional style but is coloured bright blue. The mosaic can be interpreted as a metaphor for using bits and pieces of tradition, culture, and the past to reimagine these boundaries and to create out of them a unique identity. Moreover, the blue skin is a symbol clearly demonstrating the ability to create a personal identity despite seemingly unchangeable



"Two Cows, 2013", Stephanie Quayla. Photo: courtesy of the Saatchi Gallery, London.

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conventions.

The sculptures in gallery 8, such as a striking minotaur, explore how man and animal reflect each other, and seem to subtly mirror the soft red clay tones which can also be found in Paik's drawings in the same gallery. The material **Stephanie**

its showcase of unique perspectives makes this exhibition definitely not one to be missed



"Bound", Alice Anderson. Photo: Nils Jorgensen/Rex/Shutterstock

Quayle used to create her pieces – organic red clay sourced by man for centuries to create – enhances the exploration of the antiquity of the relationship between man and beast.

Several works – notably those of **Mia Feuer**, **Soheila Sokhanvari**, and **Maha Malluh** in Gallery 3 – illuminate political issues or bring our attention to the lasting and

consequential impact of human actions. These works act to unmask these consequences – we are forced to come face to face with the realities of human actions, which many are not aware of or avoid thinking about. Also notable are the works of **Suzanne McClelland** conveying data sets which can pertain to

body builders and terrorists. These works hint at a duality of life and are evasively ominous in both their contents and their atmosphere, created by blurry shadows and dark colours.

I found *Champagne Life* to be the perfect exhibition chosen to mark the grand occasion of Saatchi's anniversary, as it demonstrates Saatchi's mission and commitment

Overall the unique perspectives and original creativity of each showcased artist, taken together with this mission, makes *Champagne Life* an empowering and inspirational exhibition. Definitely not one to miss.

to supporting female artists. Though this is just one small step (and just one single exhibition) in the greater scheme of things, it is at least a step in the right direction.

Moreover, this exhibition brings much needed attention to the reality of the issue. Shockingly, some still believe that the glass ceiling for women is a myth, despite global statistics. Only one woman has ever headlined Coachella, solo exhibitions by female artists have only made up 25% of the Tate Modern's roster since 2007, and so on ad infinitum.

Champagne Life is at the Saatchi Gallery until 19th March. Tickets from £97

Champagne Life is at the Saatchi Gallery until 19th March. Tickets from £97

Sexism in the arts doesn't make for a pretty picture

Chronic under-representation of female artists across the world is robbing us of great artwork

Indira Mallik
Arts Editor



"Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum", Guerrilla Girls. Photo: Guerrilla Girls

If you're thinking that a whole exhibition devoted to women is an unreasonable amount of positive discrimination, consider how many shows in the **Saatchi Gallery** have featured just men. There are no prizes for guessing it's more than one in 30 years.

Sexism is endemic in the art world; of the top art institutions in Westminster and the City of London, out of 386 public works of art; only 8% are created by women. Only 31% of artists represented by London galleries are women despite 72% of students studying Art in London being female.

The Guerrilla Girls, rather damningly, in their series *Do Women STILL Have to be Naked to Get Into the Met. Museum?* found that in 2011, less than 4% of the artists featured in the Art section of the **Metropolitan Museum of Art** in

New York were women, but 76% of the nudes are female. In fact, the proportion of artists seems to have actually declined from the 5% representing every female artist in 1984. Nothing else quite so eloquently points out even now; women are seen first as objects, figures to pose rather than human beings with things to say and ideas

to share.

Chronic under-representation feeds into the arts market; in 2014 *Artnet.com* counted just five women in the top 100 living artists based on sales from 2011 to 2014. Passion, not money matters to most artists, but the gender pay gap means that women are less likely to afford to continue being full time artists.

Champagne Life has created something of a trap for itself by being a one-off exhibition. It risks becoming a gimmick that will be over by Spring, a token salute to these women who have been bundled together for no other good reason than they share an XX karyotype. These blockbuster one-offs should be celebrated, but

should be recognized as merely the first step in achieving real change. The end of the exhibition should not mean a return to the status quo for the Saatchi and the rest of the art world.

Until fair representation is achieved in the top galleries year round, it will be us, the public,

Blockbuster shows should go further to promote equality in the arts

that will be missing out on all the fantastic art we could've enjoyed had the art world got its act together.

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Privilege paves way to success for aspiring actors

Max Falkenberg
Arts Editor

Unsurprisingly, it appears privilege is a key to success on the silver screen. In an interview with the *Radio Times*, the actor and Lannister poster boy **Charles Dance** came out saying that state educated actors have fewer opportunities than those from the

44% of people in TV, film or music are privately educated

private sector. What a revelation! So many of the big names have the badge of privilege. That's not to say some aren't great actors, but still, 44% of people in TV, film or music are privately educated, I wonder – why the disparity?

In his interview, Dance highlights Eddie Redmayne and Dominic West as actors whose Eton background give them an extra charm and confidence to hit the stage – but there are many more. Henry Cavill, Carey Mulligan, Tom Hiddleston, Helena Bonham Carter, Ben Cumberbatch, Hugh Laurie, Emily Blunt... I could go on



Eddie Redmayne at Eton. Photo Credit: London Media

and on. Despite making up 7% of the general population, the privately educated are crammed in at the higher echelons of theatre and film. In a sense it's self-fulfilling. A career as an actor remains one where the right contacts and the right agent are invaluable. As a nobody, audition after audition dominates your day to day with rare success, but past a certain level the top jobs are just handed out – newcomers

are a rarity.

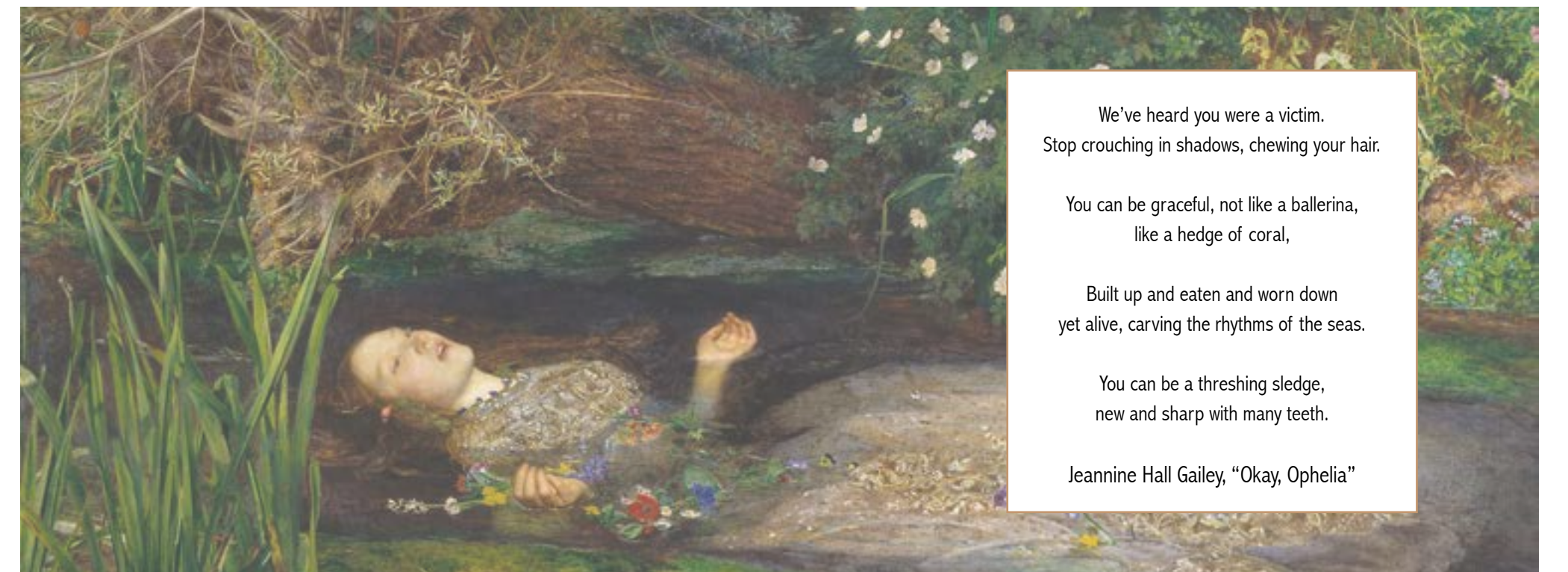
But do not rush to judgement. For the few who make it, it is talent and training that get them there. For many the training comes at drama school and part of this is having exposure and guidance to life on the stage. I went to a private sixth form and I can tell you that the drama experience is staggering. A former director in residence at Eton, our head of drama had worked for the

imagine the same influenced many of today's actors. Talented or not, actors from the top private schools are backed by an unrivalled support and training network that simply isn't available to the less privileged.

Yet that still doesn't justify the huge gap at the top. Life as an actor

Actors from the top private schools are backed by an unrivalled support and training network

is competitive and for the 2% who make a living from it, there is whole lot of hardship on the way there. If you can't afford to stick to it and wait for your break, you'll never make a career out of it. As long as the privileged can pay their way through the years of unsustainable London life, the disparity will continue. More needs to be done to close the gap and make a career in acting possible to the underprivileged, but in the current anti-arts climate, that won't be happening soon.



We've heard you were a victim.
Stop crouching in shadows, chewing your hair.

You can be graceful, not like a ballerina,
like a hedge of coral,

Built up and eaten and worn down
yet alive, carving the rhythms of the seas.

You can be a threshing sledge,
new and sharp with many teeth.

Jeannine Hall Gailey, "Okay, Ophelia"



Endurance is everything in *The Revenant*

If Inárritu's frontier survival epic doesn't net Leo that Oscar, nothing will

The Revenant



Dir. Alejandro G. Inárritu *Script:* Alejandro G. Inárritu, Mark L. Smith *Starring:* Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hardy, Domhnall Gleeson, Will Poulter. 156 minutes.

Thomas Carroll
Writer

The *Revenant* is a brutal film. Nominated for twelve Oscars, it's looking like this might be the one that bags it for Leo, and goddamn, will he have earned it. Anyone who has read anything about director Alejandro González Inárritu's new frontier survival epic will know that everything about the film's production was a feat of superhuman effort and endurance. From freezing temperatures to minuscule daylight hours, the fact that this film exists at all is testament to the will of the cast and crew to make something worthy of the story that inspired it. I'm happy to report that this effort was not in vain.

Set in the wilderness of 1823 Montana and based on the events surrounding Hugh Glass (Leonardo DiCaprio) – a legendary frontiersman and fur trapper – *The Revenant* is a study in grim determination. It begins with Glass's fur trapping party being ambushed by native Arikara warriors, which leaves most of the men dead. The survivors, including cantankerous half-scalped trapper Thomas Fitzgerald (Tom Hardy), decide to head overland to the nearest settlement. Shortly afterwards, Glass surprises a mother bear with her cubs, and is viciously mauled. Severely injured, Glass is left to either recover or die with his half Native-American son Hawk, Fitzgerald, and naïve young trapper Jim Bridger (Will Poulter). Fitzgerald kills Hawk, and tricks Bridger into abandoning Glass, leaving him alone and weaponless in the wilderness with hostile natives pursuing. What follows is one of the greatest survival tales of all time and a 200-mile odyssey to seek revenge on the man who killed his son and left him for dead.



Leonardo DiCaprio, thinking about all the awards he's going to win for his portrayal of Hugh Glass in *The Revenant*. Photo Credit: 20th Century Fox

From the off, you know what you're in for. The ambush occurs within the first fifteen minutes and by then about twenty people have died onscreen, many of them extremely graphically: arrows through throats; shots through chests; axes through skulls. No, this film doesn't spare you the gory reality of frontier living at all. However, while the vast amount of violence will be in itself a turnoff for some, it is beautifully done. The shocking immediacy of the deaths is acutely felt, as opposed to grunts dropping like flies, Rambo-style, in a cartoony Wilhelm-scream-esque death.

The famous bear-attack is another point of artful violence and somehow tops the previous ballet of suffering. In my opinion DiCaprio deserves an Oscar simply for the toe-curling, butt-clenching screams of pain and waves of facial contortion he produces during the scene. Serious credit must also go to whoever produced the bear (one of the only concessions to CGI in the whole

film) which I'm sure will stand the test of time as an example of CGI done right. One particular moment that highlights the director's commitment to convincing us of his film's reality is when the bear's heaving breath fogs up the lens of the camera, making you feel like DiCaprio is really being savaged by a true tank of an animal.

As you will probably have noticed, suffering is quite the theme running through this film from start to finish. While this is masterfully done, viewers looking for a film with more emotional heft may want to look elsewhere, as there's not really much emotion on show other than vengeance, fear, and varying levels of pain and survival instinct. What drives the film and keeps you engaged for the whole (admittedly rather long) 156-minute runtime is seeing what Glass will survive next. Such adversities include sub-zero temperatures, starvation, gangrene, and frozen rivers, with your overall opinion of the movie mostly being

shaped by whether you're invested enough to see him pull through another punishing situation.

DiCaprio isn't the only hook in this film though, with Tom Hardy and Will Poulter putting in

The
Revenant
doesn't
spare you
the gory
reality of
frontier life

convincing performances in their own right. The cinematography of Emmanuel Lubezki is another draw, with beautifully constructed shots and long 'how-did-they-do-that' single take sequences showing off serious filmmaking prowess. The entire film is aided in its authenticity and onscreen intensity by the fact that it was simply so bloody hard to make. Treacherous weather conditions and sub-zero temperatures meant that actors were constantly fighting off hypothermia, and Inárritu's insistence on using only natural lighting for shots limited filming time to a few hours a day. Every scene was meticulously rehearsed, and the effort shows in the final product.

The Revenant is a visceral venture into a cold hell of life and death, and – in the age of blockbuster sequels – one of the most original films to have come out in a long while. A gamble that seems to have paid off, I can only hope the film and its actors get the recognition they deserve.



Jacob Trembley and Brie Larson give staggering performances in Lenny Abrahamson's *Room*. Photo Credit: StudioCanal

Creed



Dir. Ryan Coogler *Script:* Ryan Coogler, Aaron Covington *Starring:* Michael B. Jordan, Sylvester Stallone, Tessa Thompson 133 minutes.

Once in a while, the pairing of an actor and a role appears so perfect that it eclipses the possibility of that actor ever truly being separated from their character: Hugh Jackman will always be Wolverine despite his continually-expanding performance résumé, and Robert Downey Jr. quite simply is Tony Stark. One of the earliest and best examples of such a pairing is Sylvester Stallone and his humble-beginnings boxing champ Rocky Balboa, a character so iconic and well-loved that it's quite hard to remember exactly when you first heard about the *Rocky* saga, although you're certain it was quite some time ago.

Stallone's Rocky now returns to the silver screen for a seventh time in *Creed*, although not quite taking centre stage – the story instead is based on Adonis (Michael B. Jordan), the son of Rocky's old rival and friend Apollo Creed, who rejects the easy life anointed by his father's financial success and instead hungers to become a boxer himself. In search of proper guidance, Adonis tracks down Balboa in the dusky backstreets of Philadelphia – the same setting of all the previous

Rocky movies – and asks for his training. It may not sound massively original, but this is a sports drama – what would you expect?

Except it's not just a sports drama. In the vein of the best of the *Rocky* films, *Creed* uses its visceral sporting action as a thrilling backdrop to a human drama that is perhaps even more engaging than its counterpart. While the poignancy of Adonis' fight for success is somewhat blunted by the silver-spoon upbringing he received, it is made up for by the film's powerful exploration of the themes of family, passion – the real battle is not for a mere title, but for Adonis' very identity.

The performances, as is common

Creed may
well be
the most
engaging,
worthwhile
reboot to
come along
in years

in sports drama, bolster the film with their authenticity – Michael B. Jordan has worked with director Ryan Coogler previously on the acclaimed *Fruitvale Station*, and it's clear that the professional relationship between them is a strong one; while the films don't overlap much thematically, the palpable power that possessed Jordan's portrayal of Oscar Grant in *Fruitvale Station* courses through the blood in Adonis Creed's veins. While Jordan remains an arresting and immediate central presence throughout, and a likeable new hero to carry the saga forward for a new generation, it is in fact the old guard Stallone who steals the show – that legendarily winning combination of actor and role rings true once again. As an audience we fully believe that although age is catching up with Rocky – a moving scene in which he visits the graves of some old friends is a highlight – he is still undeniably Rocky: quietly passionate, a little goofy, and ultimately heart-wrenchingly lovable. His performance is truly excellent; I'll sleep well if Stallone carries home this year's Best Supporting Actor Oscar (as it's largely suspected he will).

It's not often that a truly worthwhile reboot comes along, but this may well be the most engaging one in years. *Creed* makes up for its lack of originality with a good story, told well by a talented cast – with some brilliantly-done fight scenes to boot.

TOM STEPHENS

Room

Dir. Lenny Abrahamson *Script:* Emma Donoghue *Starring:* Brie Larson, Jacob Tremblay, Joan Allen, Sean Bridgers. 117 minutes.

Room is a story of kidnapping, survival and, ultimately, hope. The two lead performances by Brie Larson and Jacob Tremblay give the film heartbreaking depth, but this is hindered by a wobbly narrative.

The film follows a mother known only as Ma, played by Larson, and her five-year-old son, Jack, played by Tremblay, as they live their life as captives in a shed. At the start, Ma has been held captive for seven years, meaning Jack has lived his entire life in what they call 'Room'. To make it bearable, Ma has told Jack that Room is the entire world, that beyond it is only space, and beyond that is 'TV world'. What follows is their attempt at escape – but even if they manage it, can they handle living in the world beyond Room?

Considering the large amount of time spent in such a small room, not once did the film feel closed in. Director Lenny Abrahamson somehow created the feeling of a wide expanse that beautifully mirrors the incredible world that Ma had created for Jack. But is this world really beneficial for him in the long run? By telling him this story, will it make it harder to come to terms with the real world upon their escape? The film delves into questions like this one, sometimes answering them, other times

intentionally refusing to. At only eight years old, Tremblay gives a performance anyone would be proud to call their greatest work. It's a real shame that he was mostly ignored for award nominations; it must be difficult for anyone to play someone whose entire world is completely changed so convincingly, let alone a child. Watch out for this kid, he could likely grow up to be one of his generation's finest actors.

Larson succeeds in creating a character who is terrified and broken underneath whilst trying to appear strong and happy for her son, going from motherly to angry to desperate in the blink of an eye – an emotionally exhausting performance.

Although *Room* has many great aspects to it, it isn't perfect: the first half of the film is intense and emotional, and at one point I could even feel my heart thudding heavily; but all too quickly, the narrative of the film turns into a semi-incoherent mess. While all the individual scenes in the second half are well made, they don't always fit together naturally. At one point, a character is introduced, and a plot develops around them, but before anything can happen the character disappears forever, without seeming to really affect anyone. This, along with other parts, means that the empathy I felt for Ma, built up so well in the first half, began to slip away as the film progresses – definitely not the intended effect.

Room is a difficult film to watch; it's a dark and tragic story, but the hope that remains throughout is enough to make it watchable until the end.

ALEX HEIB



Michael B. Jordan and Sylvester Stallone in *Creed*. Photo Credit: Warner Bros.

FELIX FILM



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The top three *method actors* that aren't *Daniel Day-Lewis*

With anecdotes far too extensive to cover in any one article, Daniel Day-Lewis treads the line between genius and madman. His dedication to method-acting led him to, for example, remain exclusively wheelchair-bound and spoon-fed throughout filming of *My Left Foot*. However, with actors being the weird bunch they are, there are plenty of other examples to look to:

Choi Min-Sik

One story that has come out of Leonardo DiCaprio's role in *The Revenant* involves his eating of raw liver despite being a vegetarian. In a similar vein, the Buddhist actor Choi Min-sik ate several live octopuses for his role in the superb *Oldboy*, praying for each one beforehand. In the film, each year of protagonist Dae-su's confinement was marked by hot wire as a tally on the skin. This marking, along with the weight fluctuations that came with confinement, was not faked.

Hilary Swank

The 1999 film *Boys Don't Cry* portrays the life of Brandon Teena, a transgender man murdered in 1993. Hilary Swank was cast and, for over a month before shooting, lived her life as a man. Introducing herself as her brother to friends and neighbours Swank covered her breasts, stuffed her underwear, cut her hair short and spoke in a low tone in her dedication to the act.

Christian Bale

Christian Bale is well-known for his extreme weight fluctuations. The most famous example was in the mid-2000s, when he nearly halved his weight by eating one apple and tin of tuna a day to play skeletal Trevor Reznik in *The Machinist* before gaining back 109lbs of muscle for the first of the *Dark Knight* Trilogy. In the past few days Bale abandoned his role as Enzo Ferrari for health concerns. Good to see he has limits, I suppose.

BEN COLLIER

Winners and losers in this year's Oscar nominations



Mad Max: Fury Road and The Revenant lead the pack, but snubs for Carol means that Todd Haynes is left out in the cold. Photo Credit: 20th Century FOX

Last week saw the announcement of the nominations for the 88th Academy Awards, quite possibly the event of the cinematic calendar. In a perfunctory ceremony, headed by Ang Lee and Guillermo del Toro, the names were rattled off in quick succession, leaving plenty of time for the following deluge of critical analysis of the list. So how is the ceremony shaping up for this year?

Alejandro G. Iñárratu's frontier revenge-epic *The Revenant* leads the pack, with twelve nominations, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, and Best Supporting Actor. If the Golden Globes and Critics' Choice Awards are anything to go by, this year will see the Best Actor award go to Leonardo DiCaprio, whose nomination for *The Revenant* is his fifth for acting. However, a large number of nominations does not necessarily transform into actual success; one only needs to look back to two years ago, when David O. Russell's *American Hustle*, which led the pack with ten nominations, went home empty-handed. One thing we can near-guarantee, however, is that someone will flub Iñárratu's name – here's hoping for a repeat of John Travolta's infamous 'Adele Dazeem' incident.

Tailing just behind *The Revenant*

is George Miller's *Mad Max: Fury Road*, which has ten nominations. While the Academy has never been known to shy away from populist cinema, their recommendations tend towards the bland (*The King's Speech*, anybody?) therefore, it is refreshing to see them nominate a film that has been undoubtedly both wildly popular, and completely off-the-wall. The fact that its nominations include both Best Picture and Best Director are perhaps signs that the Academy is beginning to embrace maximalist cinema, as demonstrated by Miller's bonkers blockbuster. Ridley Scott's *The Martian*, essentially a vessel for Matt Damon's acting chops, garnered seven nominations, and recent success at other ceremonies means it could be one to watch on the night.

However, a large number of cinema-goers were left disappointed, after this ceremony acted as a sequel to last year's #OscarsSoWhite debacle, where Ava DuVernay's *Selma* was by-and-large shut out of nominations. Like last year, all twenty nominees for acting awards are white, prompting many commentators to question the process behind the awards, calling – here's hoping for a repeat of John Travolta's infamous 'Adele Dazeem' incident. While many of the performances nominated this year have been worthy of awards, it is the

suggestion that no black artists are good enough to be nominated that is more upsetting. Idris Elba, whose terrifying turn as a commander leading a group of child soldiers in *Beasts of No Nation* earned him nominations for a BAFTA, Golden Globe, and a Screen Actors Guild Award, was snubbed by the academy. Similarly, Will Smith's turn in sports drama *Concussion*, which saw a Golden Globe nomination, was ignored.

The latest in the Rocky saga, *Creed*, saw Sylvester Stallone earn a nomination for Best Supporting Actor, but no nomination for its black director Ryan Coogler, nor its black lead Michael B. Jordan. Similarly, *Straight Outta Compton*, the N.W.A. biopic that became the highest grossing film with a black director, only received a nomination for its four screenwriters, all of whom are white.

With many seeing this as an indication of racial bias on the part of the Academy, high profile names like Spike Lee and Jada Pinkett Smith both announcing their intention to boycott the ceremony. It comes as a bit of an embarrassment to Academy president Cheryl Boone Isaacs, the first African-American to be elected to the position, who has been vocal in her criticism of the Academy's lack of diversity. Despite removing

the membership cap, and recruiting 400 younger members, as the last couple of years have shown, things are not improving. In a statement on Twitter last week, she said that she was 'heartbroken and frustrated about the lack of inclusion', and acknowledged that 'change is not coming as fast as we would like'. She has announced that she will launch an investigation into the Academy, with the likely outcome of changing the membership structure to better represent the film-going public.

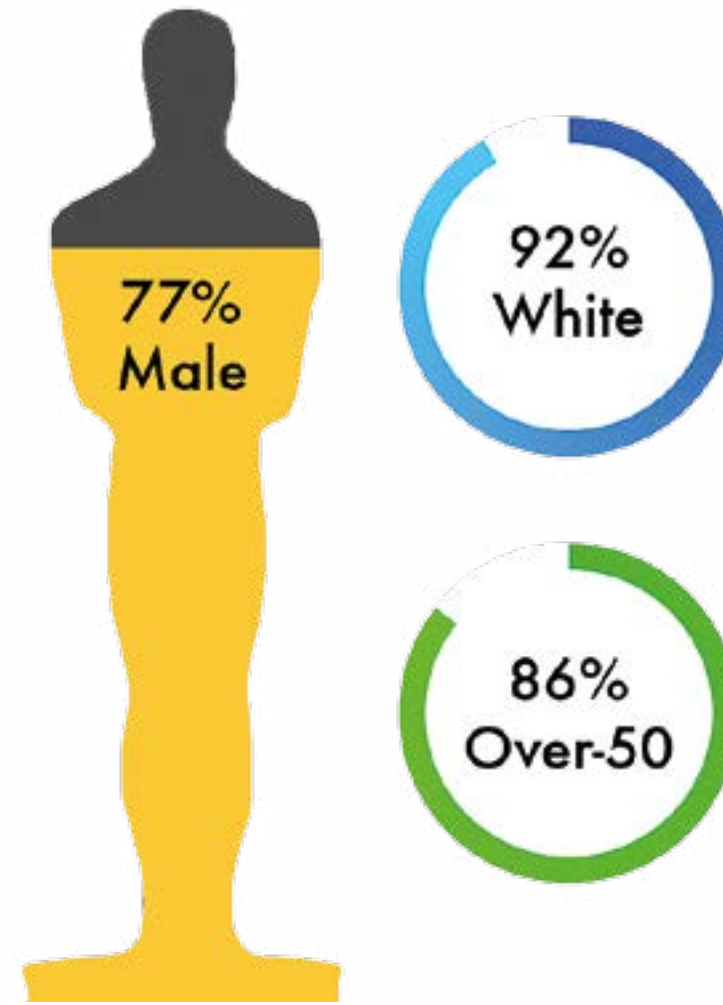
And this change is long-overdue. A study in the L.A. Times from last year found that the Academy membership is 77% male, and 92% Caucasian, with black members making up only 2% of the Academy. Furthermore, the average age of members is 62, with people younger than 50 making up only 14% of the membership. With such a growing divide between the Academy membership and the movie-going public, a rearrangement of membership is much-needed.

But the problems with diversity don't just stop there: Todd Hayne's ravishing masterpiece *Carol*, which garnered rave reviews across the board, was noted by its lack of inclusion in the Best Picture and Best Director nominees. Many saw this as a direct snub; the fact that *Carol* was nominated for Academy Awards for its acting,

FELIX FILM



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Male, pale, and stale? The makeup of the Academy membership.

cinematography, script, costume, and score should have near-guaranteed its inclusion in the Best Picture category. Something seems wrong, and my personal hunch is that the Academy still has a deep problem with films that aren't catering to a straight audience. *Carol* is a film about two lesbians that doesn't veer off into tragic territory, and offers a chance of a happy ending; it was adapted by a lesbian, and directed by a gay man. It seems the Academy hasn't moved on much from 2004, when the mediocre *Crash* won out over the far superior *Brokeback Mountain* (a decision even *Crash's* director has questioned). The decision this year to include the straight-friendly trans narrative of *The Danish Girl* over the wildly liberating *Tangerine* just reinforces this idea that the Academy are hostile to LGBTQ cinema.

Another snub was Sarah Gavron's obvious Oscar-bait *Suffragette*. I finished my review of it (back in October) with the line 'it will win a lot of Oscars,' and I now happily eat my words.

However, it's not all doom and

There is a growing divide between the Academy and the public

gloom with the nominations. One of the most surprising outcomes in this year's awards was the growing recognition outlets like Netflix are getting for shaping the cinematic market. While their original production *Beasts of No Nation* failed to gain any nominations, two of the Best Documentary nominees, *What Happened, Ms. Simone?* and *Winter on Fire*, were distributed on

the online streaming programme. While this perhaps only reflects the openness of the documentary branch of the Academy, it seems inevitable that online streaming services will go on to change the future of cinema, just as they revolutionised television culture.

Perhaps the final word should go to the most pleasantly surprising nomination: veteran British actor Charlotte Rampling, who has been nominated for her chillingly powerful role in Andrew Haigh's long-awaited, critically-acclaimed drama *45 Years*, which focuses on a married couple who have to endure a shock to their relationship. Rampling's performance is simply stunning in it, and – after the Academy's long-running tradition of refusing to recognise art-house talent – I am relieved that she is recognised for her work. She has already won awards for Best Actress at the Berlin Film Festival, and the European Film Awards; after the performance was snubbed by the BAFTAs, who nominated *45 Years* for only a single award, it's good to know that the world hasn't gone completely mad.

FRED FYLES

Documentary corner: *Nas: Time is Illmatic*

Ben Collier
Writer

In 1994, Nasir "Nas" Jones released his debut studio album *Illmatic*. The record quickly became a classic of hip-hop music, and one of the most influential albums of all time. Many people consider this album, myself included, to be one of the best, hip-hop or otherwise, ever produced. *NME* magazine at the time described it as 'rhythmic perfection,' and in retrospect many discuss it alongside *36 Chambers*, *Ready to Die*, *The Chronic*, and *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*. *Nas: Time is Illmatic* provides a context for the album, expanding on the topics covered in its lyrics (from drug culture to poverty) and narrating the early life of Nas. One may expect this documentary to exclusively feature boasting and the kind of raving I have just shamelessly demonstrated, leading to a bland puff piece, but this is far from the truth. In reality we are treated to an intimate look into Nas' life and influences. We see Nas grow up in the projects of Queensbridge as the son of



Nas poses with his friends and neighbours for *Illmatic's* album artwork. Photo Credit: Danny Clinch

a Jazz singer and postal worker, experiencing the uglier sides of life all in a film lovingly, professionally, and subtly assembled.

Two key moments in the film include the leaving of Nas' father

and the death of his best friend Willie Graham, who was shot following a fight. This second example was an incident that also scarred Nas' brother Jabari both physically and emotionally. It is

interesting to occasionally look beyond the bravado of Jabari in particular and see a man who is deeply scarred, even repeatedly begging his mother to move as the location of the shooting haunted

him. This culminates to show how close Nas came to succumbing to the life that many of his friends did. A particularly poignant part of the film features Jabari looking at a picture included in the album's art of a group of Nas' peers and neighbours. Jabari explains how each person featured is either in jail, between sentences, or dead. The true bleakness of the future faced by many black youths at the time strikes hard here, and is emphasised by Princeton professor Dr. Cornel West, who elaborates on the life of the average working class black family in the US at that time.

The final sections of the film closely follows the rise of Nas as a teenager making music and the development of his famed lyricism. One criticism here is that the very short running time doesn't allow for exploration to quite the level I would have liked in some cases. However, what the film does do right is portray the genre of hip-hop as one that is essential to communities such as Queensbridge, and provide a refreshingly mature view of the artistry, social awareness, and poetic lyricism that rap music can achieve.

FELIX CLUBS & SOCS



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Your society could win £500

If you can think of a charitable idea they'll give you £1000 to make it happen

Iskren Peev
Writer

Corporate Responsibility (CSR) is a company's sense of responsibility towards the community and environment in which it operates.

To promote this idea, the Finance Society organises an annual CSR conference in which all Imperial societies are invited to propose their own charitable ideas and the winner gets £1000 to make it a reality.

This year we teamed up with RAG to bring you an even bigger and better Charity Challenge 2016 and we're throwing in an extra £500 for your society to spend as you please, with the main presentation event kicking off RAG week on the 8th of February!

What is a charitable idea?

It can be anything, as long as it costs £1000 to implement and brings about positive change in the world. You can organise an event to

It can be anything, as long as it costs £1000 to implement and brings about positive change in the world

raise more money and donate it to a charity of your choice or you can invent a clever device to filter water to prevent disease in poor parts of the world.



FINANCE SOCIETY
IMPERIAL COLLEGE

Who knew these two would be buddying up?

How do I take part?

You need to form a team and be backed by an Imperial society. Your idea needs to be submitted in the form of one to two A4 pages or a video lasting up to five minutes video.

The proposal will need to carefully address how the £1000 will be spent and include the names of everyone involved

The submission deadline is the 24th January.

The winners will then be picked

by the Imperial student body after a week of voting.

This is an excellent opportunity for societies to gain new membership as each team must represent a society and each society can only put forward one team but there is no limit on team size.

The Final

The top five teams will present their ideas at the final and the winner will be chosen by a panel of independent judges (in the past

these have been representatives from Morgan Stanley, Barclays, Ernst & Young, Citi, Deutsche Bank and Goldman Sachs). The best part is that we will be providing copious amounts of free pizza for everyone attending and it's all for a good cause.

For more information on how to submit your idea or vote please find our Facebook event ICFS & RAG: Charity Challenge 2016. We look forward to your submissions and seeing you at the final!



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Wednesday 27 January,
The Great Hall
11:00 - 15:00

Loved the excitement of Freshers' Fair? Experience it again at our **Refreshers' Fair!** Meet some of our Clubs, Societies & Projects, external companies and pick up some freebies.

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NEWS WITHOUT THE NEWS



MEDIC SPORTS CLUB FINALLY MAKE IT ACROSS THE CHANNEL



“Not earning £35,000 after graduation? B-bye!”

HOROSCOPES



ARIES

This week you go on a boozy trip to [REDACTED] but on the coach there, everyone gets pissed and [CENSORED] in the [UNABLE TO NAME FOR LEGAL REASONS], resulting in your permanent ban from the English Channel. Ah well, there's always next year.



TAURUS

This week, you do a naughty thing but then tweet about it! So people find out! That was silly! Don't do that again! #atleastnoban



GEMINI

This week you misspell something after previously having mocked students for their poor English skills. Maybe you should learn too (sic) practice what you preach.



CANCER

This week you realise instead of relying on your student loan for financial support you should prioritise a little bit of insurance fraud. You jump in front of one of those wankers with Range Rovers; however, they don't slow down as Wholefoods awaits and you end up in a full body cast.



LEO

This week you would like to remind everyone that Saudi Arabia is still an awful place that doesn't care about human rights and that Great Britain supported their entry into the UN's Human Rights Council. I wonder if oil money had anything to do with that...



VIRGO

This week you're a bottle top in the centre of the garbage patch in the Pacific ocean. Your life is carefree and yet monotonous; you long for an existence outside the giant vortex of trash. One day you escape, make friends with sea creatures and fall in love. You sell the film rights to Pixar.



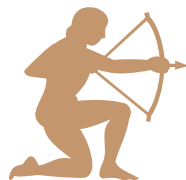
LIBRA

This week you are excited about the massage you're going to receive courtesy of the NHS; however, your idea of a beautiful lady masseuse is quickly eradicated when Keith from Durham asks you to strip to the waist and pat your bottom.



SCORPIO

This week you remember all your friends from school who were applying for medicine and who also voted for the Conservatives. Oh boo hoo! It's not safe it's not fair! I haven't got more money for my guaranteed job! Sob. [This is not the official view of FELIX. None of this is. -Ed.]



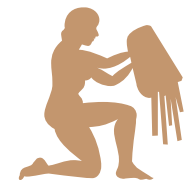
SAGITTARIUS

This week after coming back from home with a massive suitcase, you decide to take the tube back home; however, you are vaguely ethnic and as a result are 'randomly' stopped and searched eleven times. Fuck the police.



CAPRICORN

This week as the horoscopes writer you would like to say that you greatly admire the police but then again you are also as pale as the skies of Ireland so you don't really need to worry about them. Never been stopped in an airport either.



AQUARIUS

This week you are a genetics professor. Why weren't any black people nominated at the Oscars, you wonder. John Boyega in Star Wars? Everyone involved in Straight Outta Compton? It upsets you, deeply. You have reformed.



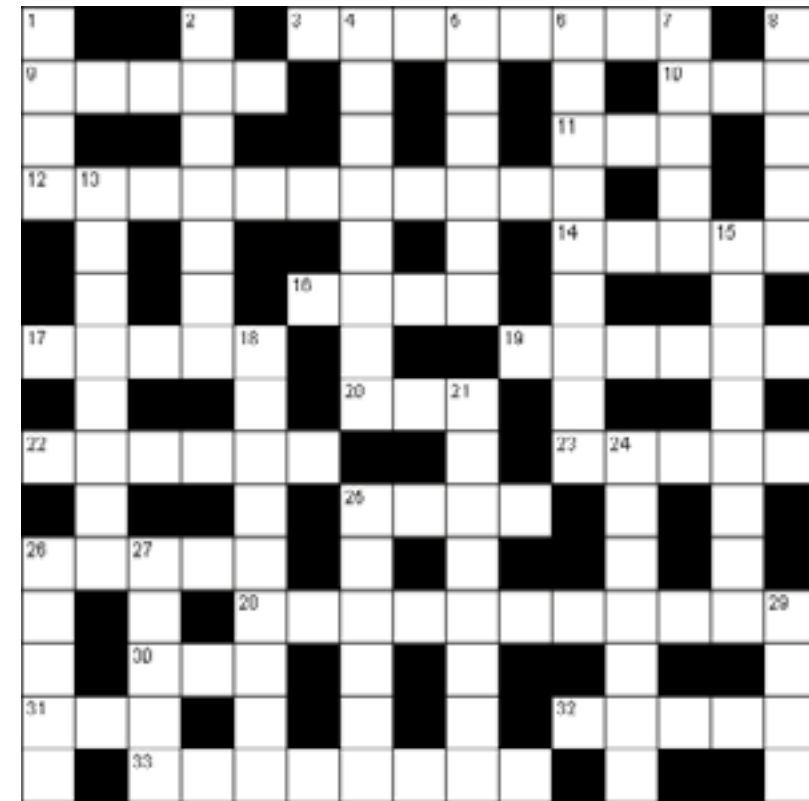
PISCES

This week you hope that the lecture you're currently in whilst writing the horoscopes will finish soon. Please all lecturers, if you think reading off your slides is good teaching, just fuck off. Ugh.

FELIX PUZZLES



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- 20. Pen point (3)
- 22. Inhabitant of Kansas (6)
- 23. Lunar period (5)
- 25. Drag (4)
- 26. Worth (5)
- 28. Important (11)
- 30. Exclamation of contempt (3)
- 31. Wrath (3)
- 32. Plentiful (5)
- 33. Leaning to one side (3-5)

Down

- 1. Low in pitch (4)
- 2. Crease in the skin (7)
- 4. Sun directly above (4,4)
- 5. Cylindrical material (6)
- 6. Burrowing creature (9)
- 7. Genre (5)
- 8. Secret agents (5)
- 13. Vista (8)
- 15. Something deleted (8)
- 18. Spacecraft (9)
- 21. Fashion shop (8)
- 24. End result (7)
- 25. Minor Prophet of the 6th century (6)
- 26. Brilliant (5)
- 27. Defamation (5)
- 29. Digits (4)

Across

- 3. Breaks (8)
- 9. Wrathful (5)
- 10. To bleed from (3)
- 11. Narrow beam of light (3)
- 12. Wastefully extravagant (11)
- 14. Listens (5)
- 16. Stink (4)
- 17. Flowers (5)
- 19. Every sixty minutes (6)

	5	6			7		d	1	f			
	1		8	5						b	d	9
g	8	f		4	2							
7	4		1	3	b		e			g	f	
2						f	g	5			b	c
9		7	3		g	a		c	e			8
8	g		2			9				a		e
	a	c	e	9						3		
	1					6	8		5		e	
f	2			4				c		9		1
3			f	5		9	1	g	d			b
4	b		6	3	8							a
		d	6		1		3	e	b		8	7
						c	9			2	3	d
5	c	7					2	6			9	
			4	7	c	d					g	5



FUCWIT

Solo Efforts

- 1st Cherry Kwok 137
- 2nd Nicholas Sim 136
- 3rd Greg Poyser 42
- 4th Ayojedi 33
- =5th Jan Xu 13
- =5th Sach Patel 13
- 7th Harry Secrett 10
- 8th Joshua Wan 8
- 9th Ho Chin 7.5
- =10th Grace Chin 3
- =10th Jeremy Ong 3

Groups

- 1st Pufuletsi 70
- 2nd CP Fanclub 51
- 3rd Gap Yahhhh 44.5
- 4th Parmesan 9.5

Points Available 22

- Crossword 5
- Chess 4
- 4x4 Sudoku 4
- Nonogram 2
- Bridges 1
- Sudoku 2
- Slitherlink 2
- Word Wheel 2

For both chess problems:
White to move. Checkmate
in two.

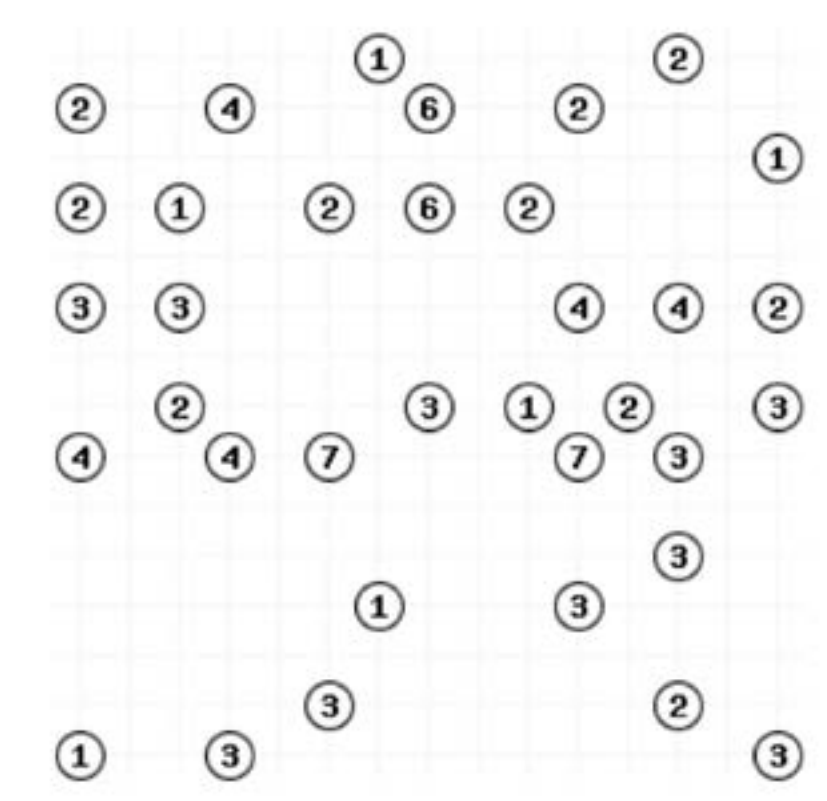
1					6		1	1											
1				2	7	2	1	1	6										
1				7	2	8	6	3	2	2	3								
1	9	11	10	8		8	2	2	2	2	4	3	5	2	1				
8	1	3	8	5	14	4	4	2	2	2	3	3	4	2	2	2			
4	15	8	3	7	8	7	4	1	2	7	5	1	2	9	7	4	2	30	30

	3	7	2									
	2	2	3	2								
4	1	1	2	2								
	3	1	1	2								
	5	1	2	2								
	5	1	2	2								
	7	1	1	2								
	7	2	1	2								
	9	1	1	2								
	9	2	2									
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	10	2										
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	5	13										
	6	13										
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	2	1	5	2								
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3	2	2	4	2								
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3	5	2	3	2								
3	5	2	3	2								
4	3	2	3	2								
4	2	3	3	2								
3	2	3	3	2								

FELIX PUZZLES



fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk



Bridges

Connect all of the islands with horizontal and vertical bridges.

Bridges cannot cross islands or other bridges.

Up to two bridges can run alongside each other connecting a pair of islands.

The numbers indicate the number of bridges leaving the islands.

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

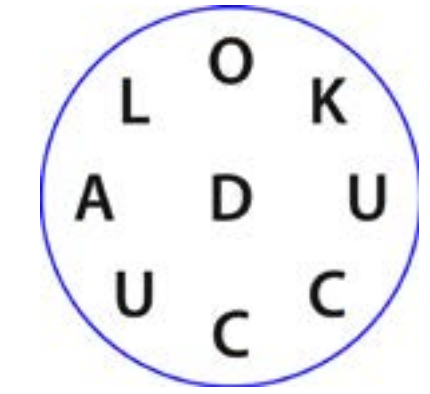
Solutions

Word Wheel Snowflake

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



.	.	3	.	.	.	3	2
.	.	.	.	2	.	2	1	2	.	.	.	2
3	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	.	.	3
3	2	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	1	.
3	2	2	.	.	2	1	.	.	.	3	2	
.	.	.	.	.	2	2	.	2	.	.	.
2	2	.	.	2	3	3	2	.	.	1	.	
1	.	.	.	2	0	.	.	.	.	.	3
.	
.	3	.	.	2	.	2	.	.	2	.	3	
.	
.	3	.	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	.	.



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

PAID ADVERT

Nominations now open!

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ACADEMIC CHOICE
AWARDS**

Nominate someone today to celebrate and reward excellence and innovation amongst Imperial's academic and professional staff.

To make your nomination, visit imperialcollegeunion.org/sacas



Superior rucking and tackles aplenty

Strong performances but a loss early in the year for the women's rugby team

Laura Tuckey
Writer

In the first match of the new year on Wednesday 20th January, the Imperial woman's rugby team set off to Reading in a hope of their first win this season in the league.

Spirits and morale were high as the team arrived nearly on time to the sports ground. After a quick warm up, the game was underway. After an early try by Reading, not disheartened, the team pulled together and managed to score two tries in the first half.

The first by Charlotte, in a show of pure strength and determination, pushed through the opposing line and the second was from Elizabeth in an equally mighty battle to the line.

Imperial got a very lucky break when, having broken free of opponents, a Reading player failed to put down the ball on the touch line and ran it into the dead zone! But this was only a slight let up and unfortunately the speed of Reading was too much at times and they broke through the Imperial team,



Back before the bruising. Photo Credit: Ladies Rugby

pushing them further into the lead.

All in all the first half showed some very good rugby, with Imperial winning scrums and turning over in rucks.

At the half time team talk, spirits were lifted and the team were eager to pull back some points. However, the hard pitch (nearly frozen) made

this an even harder task. The second half was a story of tackling, with some amazing tackles being landed by everyone, especially Lizzie, Pip and Freya. The rucking ability of the Imperial team was far superior to Reading's, with a large proportion of tackles ending up in a turnover.

Unfortunately, the second half

also led to some injuries, notably the Captain's cracked rib, meaning that Reading's speedy number twelve managed to slip through the defensive line, scoring more tries.

The Imperial team thought they had a lucky break when, due to injury, Reading's top try scorer (of this match), was subbed off.

Unfortunately, the second half also led to some injuries, notably the Captain's cracked rib

However, the lack of recent training was starting to show as the team tired towards the end, and couldn't quite get any points back.

The final score was 65-10 to Reading. But it was not a disheartening game, with many of the girls playing a sterner of a match, and having the bruises to prove it, it was a very good benchmark to start the season on. Well done girls!

Home fixtures: Wednesday 27th January

HOCKEY

MEN'S 1st
vs MEN'S 2nd (MEDICS)

MEN'S 2nd
vs. HERTS

TABLE TENNIS

WOMEN'S 1st
vs LSE

MEN'S 2nd
vs CARDIFF

RUGBY UNION

MEN'S 2nd
(MEDICS)
vs KING'S

BADMINTON

MEN'S 1st
vs HERTS

MEN'S 3rd (MEDICS)
vs KINGSTON

BASKETBALL

MEN'S 1st
vs LONDON MET
MEN'S 2nd
vs PORTSMOUTH

FOOTBALL

MEN'S 4th (MEDICS)
vs KING'S

NETBALL

WOMEN'S 5th
(MEDICS)
vs UWL

WOMEN'S 6th
vs BRUNEL

WOMEN'S 8th (MEDICS)
vs ST GEORGE'S

LACROSSE

WOMEN'S 2nd
vs KENT

FENCING

WOMEN'S 2nd
vs BRUNEL

TABLE TENNIS

MEN'S 1st
vs LSE

MEN'S 2nd
vs ESSEX