



FELIX

The newspaper of Imperial College London



It's Beyoncé's world,
we're just living in it

PAGE 22 MUSIC

Could Imperial ever go on
a rent strike?

PAGE 4 FEATURE



Junior doctor contracts to be imposed by government



Hours after the announcement a protest was held outside the Department of Health

After further talks and a 24 hour strike this week, Jeremy Hunt has announced that controversial new junior doctor contracts will be imposed on medics.

During talks between the government and the BMA that continued during Wednesday's strike, a "final deal" was rejected by the doctors' union. The BMA have called it a "total failure on the government's part".

On Thursday evening, junior doctors, supportive members of the public and medical students, including the ICSMSU President and the Deputy President of Welfare attended at impromptu protest outside the Department of Health on Whitehall. They held placards and reiterated that the BMA would not stop fighting.

It is unclear where junior doctors can go from here, but in a press release, the chair of the junior doctors committee for the BMA said: "Junior doctors cannot and will not accept a contract that is bad

for the future of patient care, the profession and the NHS as a whole, and we will consider all options open to us."

Assuming the government's latest offer was enforced on junior doctors, the new system would be phased in from August of this year. In his last letter to the BMA, the government's contract negotiator, Sir David Dalton, said this would be likely to take 12 months to roll out across all NHS Employers in England. This means any medical students graduating at the end of this year would likely be immediately under the new contract.

On Wednesday Sir Dalton advised Jeremy Hunt to do "whatever necessary" to conclude the dispute after the BMA refused what he had called an "improved offer". Yesterday the shadow health secretary, Heidi Alexander, said Hunt's "desire to make these contract negotiations into a symbolic fight for delivery of seven-day services" had led to "a situation which has been..."

continued on page 4

Rowers forced to pay hotel two grand in fines

The boat club had their annual party there last month

The rowing club have been forced to pay £2050 in reparations to the Ambassadors Hotel in Bloomsbury, where they held their annual dinner three weeks ago.

The payment came straight from

the club's own account of Self Generated Income, which will include money the club have raised from sponsorship and membership costs. In other words, this is about a third of their income from this year's member subscriptions.

The club's social activities remain banned until further notice, however, they are still allowed to train and last week did so with a British Rowing coach. They are also set to compete this weekend.

Union officials met with boat club

trainers and the hotel this week as part of their now completed investigation. The findings are not yet public, as they will have to be approved by the Union's governance committee before any further action is taken.

The £2050 fine was paid in full by the boat club last week, and will presumably go towards what the hotel claimed were substantial cleaning costs and a smashed toilet door.

Allegations about the boat club's behaviour surfaced two weeks ago, after the hotel made a series of allegations regarding students' behaviour at the event. These included one student reportedly "vomiting all over [the] manager

while he was explaining to you that the function was going to be stopped due to the behaviour".

The hotel also said there had been damage to equipment, vomit found in "corridors and staircases around the hotel" and food thrown at staff.

Payment came straight from the club's own account

FELIX EDITORIAL



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A word from the Editor

You know when you've said a word so much it sounds like gobbledegook? I've said free speech so much this week it's lost all meaning. When you all share that Guardian 'Sorry we can't ban everything that offends you' video on Facebook, all your comments just read "FREEZE PEACH" to me now.

Not that it's not important. It's just other stuff is important. For example, all of you thinking of running for FELIX Editor: come and see me! I can help you. Yes, you! You can probably do it. I've been thinking you could, and secretly hoping you'd run. Anyway, I really am the best person to ask. I can give you advice and warnings, such as: don't bare your upper arms on Meet the Candidates and then regret it forever, and be prepared for people to make GIFs of your less cute facial expressions.

You don't need to be a sabb to invoke change. Fuck that! Something that really interested me this week was our feature into rent strikes. Partly because I wrote it, but I also spoke to some thoroughly rad

and proactive people at the UCL rent strike who really had faith that this kind of organised direct action can work for others, because for them it has. Last year, every student in one halls of residence got a grand back for their shitty housing. For a university like ours, that, let's face it, can definitely afford to run accommodation at a loss, and to whom money is obviously so important, an effective rent strike isn't as inconceivable as you might think. If you think that college aren't listening to students through the official channels, and to be honest, they don't have to, this is one thing they would have to listen to. They can't pull academic sanctions on you (illegal) and as a landlord with some stake in the students' welfare, eviction seems unlikely. As long as you have enough students unhappy with prices who agree not to pay, the rent strike will do itself. You also need a phenomenally well-organised campaign. UCL Cut the Rent write their own press releases. That's one professional gang of rebels.

You don't necessarily have to go



to union council for weeks on end to start something. Rise up! Listen to me, sounding like a shit Les Mis. It's 'love your union' week, public opinion in favour of the junior doctors' strike is at an all time high and a lot of London universities are looking into protesting against their astronomically expensive halls.

The time is now, the place is Imperial, and this Editorial is over so the Editor can go for a little lie down.



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The FELIX Sex Survey Cumming soon

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RAG mag battle becomes sexism row

President speaks out as RAG week continues mag-less

Grace Rahman
Editor-in-Chief

In this week's FELIX, the Union President has spoken out on last week's RAG mag controversy. Contents of the magazine, although technically not banned, caused the union to strongly advise RAG to dispose of the 1600 undistributed copies after the union had seen the contents. One page in particular was said to be "beyond the acceptable bounds of satire or mockery" and that further distribution would be considered "elevated harassment".

In her comment piece, Lucinda accuses the writers of "unacceptable behaviour", "bullying" and "personal attacks". Stating that she believed the piece to be sexist in outcome, if not in motivation.

However, Imperial College Union's own feminist society have said that they do not believe the piece was sexist. In a statement to FELIX a representative said: "Though we can't comment on other aspects of the article, the committee of ICFemSoc (which does not



It's impossible to say whether RAG's charitable donations have suffered. Photo Credit: FELIX

necessarily represent the opinions of all its members, or all feminists) does not believe the article in itself is sexist".

Last week, the union promised RAG a reprinted magazine for free, providing the offending page

was replaced with a Leadership Elections advert. On Saturday, RAG's Facebook page was promising a new digital version of the magazine, but by Tuesday, there was still no new flyer, either printed or digital. On Wednesday, the union

paid for the print of double-sided A5 cards advertising RAG's few remaining events, rather than a reprinted magazine as promised. Despite being near the end of RAG week, volunteers distributed the new 'magazines' around campus.

The non-ban has ironically given the RAG mag more attention than they could've hoped for and the comment section under FELIX's online news piece on the matter is full of people asking where they can get their hands on the contraband reading material. Several commenters lament what they call the union's "attack on free speech", with one only saddened at the fact that the mag was "really unfunny and gives satire a bad name".

This wasn't the only problem RAG faced this week. As Storm Imogen battered the UK on Tuesday, it was deemed too windy for their fundraising bungee jump to take place.

Despite harsh words from Imperial President, Alice Gast, on the contents of the controversial magazine, senior college management still aided with pancake making on Monday, as is tradition. Other RAG events have continued this week without a hitch: the RAG ball at Cafe de Paris on Tuesday, a 24-hour broadcast on IC Radio that raised £165, and Queen's Tower and underground tunnel tours.

continued from front page

...led to "a situation which has been unprecedented in my lifetime".

On Wednesday, junior doctors took part in a 24 hour strike, with junior doctors only providing emergency care. Up to 3000 operations were cancelled but public opinion of the junior doctors remains mostly favourable.

On Saturday hundreds of junior doctors, medical students and supporters joined a 'silent' march. The protesters sat down in the road outside Downing Street, many wearing surgical masks.

Fashion designer Vivien Westwood and actress Vanessa Redgrave spoke passionately about their experiences with NHS staff at the event.

The next day, Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, appeared on the BBC's *The Andrew Marr Show* and blamed the media and the BMA for the anger amongst junior doctors at the potential contract changes.

He also specifically accused the BMA of distorting his words, which he called "one of the cleverest trade unions in the book".



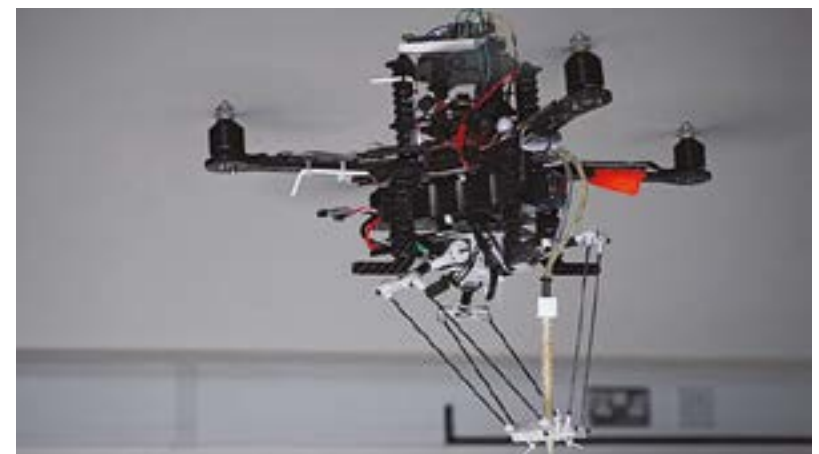
FELIX supports the junior doctors.

Imperial drone wins award

A PhD student from Imperial has led a team from the Aerial Robotics Lab to victory in a competition to find 'Drones for Good' in Dubai.

Talib Alhinai's winning entry is a prototype that can detect faults in pipelines and then deposit a liquid polyurethane foam to seal them. The foam is lightweight and can expand up to 25 times its original size after being applied to damaged pipes. Leaks from pipelines cause all sorts of problems throughout the world, with as much of 25% of drinking water being lost due to leaks. Dubai loses about 10% of its water in this way, so the judges took a particular interest in this entry.

The competition involved national and international awards, with



The circle line, but not as we know it. Photo Credit: Buildrone

Imperial's 'Buildrone' taking the national prize. The Imperial winners were personally congratulated by the ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

The prize was a million Arab

Emirates Dirhams, or about £190,000. They say they'll be channeling this money back into the project, in an effort to make it more user friendly.

GRACE RAHMAN

FELIX FEATURES



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Could Imperial ever have a rent strike?

UCL have had a successful history of striking over housing but could the students of Imperial ever rise up and do the same?

Grace Rahman
Editor-in-Chief

We've had our fair share of housing disputes at Imperial.

If you think people don't care, check out the ICTV's 'Imperial Questions Live' debate on the subject of Weeks hall from last year. Think union council but with ironed shirts and better behaviour since it's on YouTube for eternity and there were grown-ups present.

150 students at UCL have been striking since late January, refusing to pay their second term's rent, which was due at the start of the year. Altogether, this amounts to £250,000's worth of rent. They are demanding a 40% cut in prices and a rent cap for future students. The students are split between two halls, but most are in one in Camden. Although the halls are well-known for having cockroaches and mice, they aren't nearly as bad as the halls involved in UCL's previous successful rent strike. In these halls, loud building work was audible all day every day in bedrooms during

the exam period, despite promises that renovations would be over in months.

Perhaps the most interesting thing to come of UCL's previous rent strike is that it actually worked. Last year, students withheld rent and held protests at several halls and were eventually reimbursed for one term's rent. UCL had initially warned the students that they could face academic sanctions if they didn't pay, but these threats were swiftly removed after legal warnings

You cannot be academically penalised for outstanding non-tuition fee debts

from the government. Consumer rights bodies also reminded UCL and its students that you cannot be academically penalised for outstanding non-tuition fee debts.

Even without the threat of no graduation, is such a display of financial dissidence realistic here at Imperial? Students often complain about the high rents in first year, but after that, we tend to disappear into the private housing system. If first year students were effectively mobilised as they were at UCL, it would be possible.

Organisers of UCL's Cut the Rent campaign told FELIX that the rent strike had been organised by simply knocking door to door in the halls concerned. At the suggestion that some campuses are more up for direct action than others, the representative told us something along the lines of: if you can do it here, you can do it anywhere.

Cut the Rent told us that a critical mass of students involved was needed, not only for the plan to work, but for other students to join in and the campaign to snowball. Their successful rent strike had between a third and half of the residents striking.

It's easy to complain that students at Imperial aren't interested in the political, or social justice issues, but over the years when it comes accommodation, students have proved that they do care.

In 2014, the college conducted a Residential Experience Review, with one of the outcomes being a dedication to transparency, but little evidence of this has been seen.

Last year, Weeks halls was shut down. The hall wardening team at the time had no idea that this was even on the cards, and only found out that union council had voted to support the college's closure decision after having seen FELIX's Twitter feed the next day. After an emergency council meeting, and two re-votes, council once again chose to support the closure of the halls. Although Woodward rents were reduced from college's original plans, the union's 'Against Acton' campaign arguably came far too late to succeed.

Garden hall is still empty, and has been for three years now. Protests and *change.org* petitions were bandied about back in 2013 but to no avail. Imperial's most oversubscribed hall was shut down

at the end of that academic year. As urgent as the space was needed by college, reportedly for offices, it took a further two years for the furniture inside the halls to be removed.

Fees rebates at Imperial are not unheard of. Several first-year students at halls across Eastside and Xenia have complained that the size of their rooms are not consistent with others in their rent band and have received sizable amounts of cash back. There is obviously a jump from this to not paying any rent at all, but it's not an unfamiliar concept to private landlords like those running Xenia or university-run halls.

Essentially, it's a case of university profit over student experience, but with the government's higher education green paper likely to go through, student satisfaction will soon affect how much universities can charge in tuition fees. For this reason, top universities like ours will be more eager than ever to improve National Student Satisfaction survey scores, and as accommodation is such an implicit part of your experience, it should be high up on Imperial's list of priorities.

Imperial accommodation – a history of dissidence



2013 Against Acton campaign launch
Garden hall closed

2014 Evelyn Gardens closure announced

2015 Weeks hall shut
Evelyn Gardens reopens

2016

FELIX COMMENT



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Your President speaks on RAG mag 'sexism'

RAG has gone too far, and should take responsibility for putting women off taking on positions of responsibility



Lucinda Sandon-Allum
Union President

Who's to blame for the gender imbalance at Imperial, and in science and leadership in general? "Not me", you're thinking. For the vast majority of you, that's correct. But a tiny proportion of our community fails to recognise their role in creating that awful reality.

The institutional culture surrounding gender at Imperial is not an inevitable fact of life. It is created, and sustained, by people around you, right here, right now. In the same way that no one raindrop considers itself responsible for the flood, no one person considers themselves responsible for the fact that Imperial can be, on occasion, a hostile environment for women.

No one
raindrop
considers
itself
responsible
for the
flood

But sometimes, it becomes possible to pinpoint a single action or incident that perpetuates this reality. I can say with complete confidence that the actions of the RAG committee in publishing the RAG mag with offensive content, based on tired stereotypes about women and drawing upon aspects of my personal life, has directly led to women deciding against taking up leadership roles in our student community. I know this because students that have been considering a future as Union President or one of our Deputy Presidents have now seen how a tiny minority of our students act. It's clear that some individuals think



Nobody banned anything. Photo Credit: RAG

that tradition justifies bullying, or that it's somehow acceptable not to challenge your peers about what they say or do, or to refuse to take personal responsibility.

These actions have led to a female student withdrawing their run for a position of leadership, for fear of being subjected to the same abuse. If this is the way a few loud voices treat a woman in leadership, via trollish stereotyping and personal attacks, it is not a surprise that other female students have been discouraged from aiming for a leadership position. And so, Imperial's gender imbalance lives on for another year.

Being an adult is about taking responsibility for the consequences of your actions, and the individuals involved in writing that piece need to accept what they have done and the impact they have had. As students we all have a duty of responsibility and mutual respect. If these values are not upheld and boundaries are crossed, the people accountable must confront their unacceptable behaviour.

Every student is entitled to speak freely, but the RAG mag is an attack on this. Freedom of speech does not equate to freedom from

consequences. This is an issue the FELIX editor tackled herself in her editorial on the 29th of January.

By condemning the article, Imperial College Union is in no way preventing RAG from raising money. As a previous RAG committee member and a huge supporter of the society I want them to be as successful as possible.

However, we want RAG week

The RAG
mag writers
must
take full
responsibility
for the
reduced
publicity

to be a success, not a scandal. It is perverse to argue that raising money can only be successful by being cruel and 'joking' about natural tragedies. RAG week charities support victims of ill health, war and poverty. One charity, Porridge and Rice, works to empower Kenyan women to break free from the cycle of poverty – a worthy goal, undermined by using sexist stereotypes as publicity for fundraising.

The RAG mag writers must take full responsibility for the reduced publicity they have caused for this week of fundraising. They have potentially discouraged participation, donations and sponsorship by tarnishing RAG as a group that permits and enables bullying.

We must stop this culture that accepts bullying, accepts fewer women leaders, and dresses up personal attacks as 'tradition' or 'satire'. It is not acceptable for an article to be written to target an individual's personal life, and even more so depicting someone's murder.

I know that the majority of Imperial students have no time for bullying, tasteless personal attacks, and gendered stereotypes masked as 'banter'. I am and will always be proud of the work I've done as Union President to encourage young women to study science and to take the challenge of leadership.

I would love to say that equality can solely be achieved through outreach projects and publicity, but they are only half the battle. The deeper challenge is to confront and uproot prejudices and structures that support and enable gendered attacks on women – even, or especially, when disguised as 'banter' or 'tradition'. It is just cold, hard reality that the path to equality is blocked by damaging habits, ingrained prejudices, corrosive behaviours and plain old bullying and harassment.

I am grateful for the support I have received – from President Alice Gast to student groups, societies and staff, all appalled by the behaviour of these few individuals. Together, we will stand up to sexism and bullying wherever we see it.

FELIX COMMENT



comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk

The union lost the plot and free speech suffered

If FemSoc say it wasn't sexist, were the union's actions justified?

Ben Williams
Writer

Here's a picture of Malaysian PM Najib Razak. Malaysian police responded to this image by warning the author that the image was 'offensive'. They then threatened that if he didn't 'act within the law', he would be arrested.

This, of course, had nothing to do with the fact that someone rich and powerful decided they didn't like looking the clown.

Of course, no such autocratic response to criticism would cross the minds of our very own democratically elected leaders here at Imperial.

Instead, when one is the Union President and faced with a critical article, the union merely "strongly advises" that it be removed from print. Then, oddly enough, one's subjects (or, students?) are told that continuing to distribute the article is "elevated harassment". Right.

There's a lot more at stake here than Lucinda's blushes.

This 'ban' is yet another example of college and the union interfering with the right of students and staff to comment and criticise. Freedom of expression isn't without restrictions. But I doubt that anyone who reads *Private Eye* (never mind Hangman) would be in the least surprised at

I doubt that anyone who reads *Private Eye* would be in the least surprised at the style of RAG's publication



The Malaysian PM in all his glory. Photo Credit: Facebook / GRUPA

the style of RAG's publication.

In fact, it seems much more likely that the Union's treatment of RAG broke its own policy in its treatment of RAG than in anything RAG wrote about the union.

For the body charged with safeguarding and protecting us as students, this is shameful. For starters, there's the legal gobbledygook coming out of Beit. To quote their own policy: "Harassment is always linked to anti discrimination legislation, and thus will focus on sex, gender reassignment, marriage".

These are known as protected characteristics. Unless the union can prove that the President was specifically targeted for abuse due to one of these, the accusation of harassment is completely baseless. i.e. apparently the union thinks the RAG article sexist. Was it? Having read said article, and given the treatment handed out to a 'Fen Bernardo', this claim is utter trash.

To quote IC FemSoc in full: "Though we can't comment on other aspects of the article, the committee of IC FemSoc (which does not necessarily represent the opinions of all it's members, or all feminists) does not believe the article in itself is sexist".

In short, the case for the union behaving as it did is shot. As a source close to RAG commented: "They just didn't follow their own rules". Truly, Ms. Sandon-Allum,

I find it 'unacceptably insulting' that someone within your union's management thought they could get away with it.

The basic question is this. If the case for the article being harassing is so flimsy, on what basis exactly did the union go around hauling students into meetings, demanding apologies and generally applying pressure? These underhand, opaque tactics of 'banning-but-not-banning' reek of a culture of political face-saving over democratic principle.

Perhaps Ms. Sandon-Allum and team simply haven't read their own policy.

"Bullying: The exercise of power over another person through persistent, negative acts or behaviour that undermines an individual personally and/or professionally."

Despite this wacko logic, President A. Gast went so far as to call the article in question 'disgusting' and warmly welcomed the above 'strong' response.

By apple pie and eagles, it staggers me that anyone can be paid £421,000 a year, and yet be seemingly so unaware of her own obligations. To quote the Imperial College Constitution:

"So far as is reasonably practical, freedom of speech within the law will be secured for students and staff of the college."

This isn't a luxury. Protecting this right of expression is a legal obligation on the college and it's

leaders (have a read of the Education Reform Act 1988 or Education Act No. 2, 1986).

Professor, since when has it been 'strong' to be so blasé about academic freedom?

The problem with constitutions is that they are only as good as their defenders. Take the Malaysian example. Article 10 of the constitution begins: "Every citizen has the right to freedom of speech and expression". Despite this, PM Razak has used the Sedition Act over 91 times this year. This is a 1948 act, designed with the express purpose of preventing revolt against British rule. Article 3a) reads: "It is an offence to bring into hatred or contempt or to excite disaffection against any Ruler or against any Government".

Is it seditious of me to wonder exactly what the difference is between our dear old Imperial Union's position and the colonialists of yesteryear?

The biggest 'discredit to the college's legacy' from this farce is that the words of President Gast and the behaviour of ICU sets a precedent that fundamentally threatens the scientific integrity of the college.

Scientific integrity does not just stop at the lab door. It is the fundamental principle that there is no topic too hard or painful that we don't have a right to discuss and examine. If we lose that as a college, we're dead.

Truth is, the union has not had it too tough, but too easy. As one student commented on a recent FELIX article: "the Sabbs are so unaccountable for their (lack of) actions."

That's got to change.

Protecting this right of expression is a legal obligation



The neurobiology of Anorexia

A glimpse into the calorie counting culture promoted by fitness apps

Alexandra Lim
Writer

It's amazing how science can be so fiercely intertwined with a topic as contentious as dieting. The relationship between the two became evident when I attended the past weekend's most anticipated brainy event – the London Students' Neuroscience Conference 2016. It heralded a most intriguing symposium on mechanisms of psychiatric disorders, with a special focus on Anorexia Nervosa.

Anorexia is predisposed by certain character traits such as perfectionism and obsessive habit rigidity. Thinness is heralded as the essence of substance – the sad but true irony ingrained in the mindsets of those affected. It is indeed true that these traits may be labelled as inherent, but not many of us are aware of the danger of their development following what would initially seem to be a perfectly innocent, healthy approach to losing weight.

We've all experienced the common scenario of having a friend (or yourself) wanting to be healthy. You start exercising more and eating healthier, understanding the nuances of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

It's all well and good, until the very thing you use for self-betterment – Google's myriad of resources detailing every nutritional aspect of each food that touches your lips – turns around to stab you in the gut. The sheer volume of information we have at our fingertips is also our biggest enemy when it comes to treatment of psychiatric disorders.

The neurobiological changes initiating anorexic behaviour in patients are enhanced by apps, such as *myfitnesspal*; apps which many dieters rim with halos. So what is the problem with logging every calorie ingested and every gram of fat tallied? Focus is transferred from maintaining health to counting calories. Everything essentially becomes a vicious numbers game. One ends up choosing a small piece of candy over an avocado just to fit into an appropriate intake. That piece of toast with butter and jam goes from being breakfast to half a day's intake, to toast without any butter and jam, to simply an item with an invisible, paltry calorie count plastered on its surface. Only numbers rule. The anorexic is trapped in a formidable, monstrous world of counting. Nutritional balance is impaired; restriction takes its place as the norm.

This rigidity knocks kinks into

the typical human reward circuitry systems. These are mainly located in the ventral striatum – a major part of the basal ganglia, controlling the reward system – and orbitofrontal cortex – a prefrontal cortex region involved in decision-making. The more one loses weight, the thinner one gets, and it is this thinness that activates higher ventral striatal activity in acute anorexic control patients. This invokes an increased ventral striatum response. Over time, neural connections are further disrupted, compulsivity and obsession over intake and outtake are expatiated. Whilst people of normal weight gratefully succumb to the occasional chocolate-studded muffin, in anorexic patients, food reward is perverted towards low energy dense foods, with fMRI scans showing increased frontal pole activity when shown high-calorie food pictures, displaying greater aversion to them. This impaired balance interrupts interoceptive pathways, and guess what serves only to trigger this inappropriate lust after 'safe' foods all the time, instead of giving in to the occasional cupcake? Yes, that dieting app which helped you drop the pounds in the first place, convincing you that the lower the number, the better.

It is important to note here that



All about the numbers – waist measurements and calorie counts.

Photo Credit: Benjamin Watson

recent studies have confirmed that even calorie counts are simply mere guesses at best; hindered by individual differences in gut flora, food intolerances and environmental

stimuli. Hence, we are better off without the constant stressing over numbers. After all, the human brain has evolved to preserve space for so many other more important things.

Iron supplement safety questioned

Imperial research suggests iron uptake through supplement use may damage cells

Lef Apostolakis
Science Editor

An investigation of the genetic mechanisms activated in reaction to the elevated iron concentration, and a subsequent examination of the cells in higher detail, revealed that just within ten minutes, cells treated with the iron solution had activated DNA repair systems, which were still activated six hours later.

Of course, the idea that excessive iron can cause serious damage to the human body isn't a new one. Iron overload and iron related

toxicity can cause mitochondrial damage, cytotoxicity and apoptosis and promote problematic growth of fibrous and cancerous tissues.

However an insufficient amount of iron in the body can also be unhealthy. Iron deficiency can cause anaemia, in turn causing a range of symptoms, such as tiredness, lethargy, a shortness of breath, and headaches.

Iron deficiency is in fact so widespread that six million prescriptions are issued each year for iron tablets in England and Wales alone, and it is estimated that it affects over 3.5 billion people worldwide.

With the consumption of such

great quantities of iron supplements, it is crucial to further investigate potential health risks.

As put by Dr Shovlin, "This study helps to open the conversation about how much iron people take. At the moment, each standard iron tablet contains almost 10 times the amount of iron men are recommended to eat each day – and these dosages haven't changed for more than 50 years. This research suggests we may need to think more carefully about how much iron we give to people, and try and tailor the dose to the patient."

So maybe have a chat with your GP before throwing out your iron tablets.



A 'lucky iron fish', a cast iron fish to cook with that is meant to enrich food with iron, claiming to successfully helping against iron deficiency and iron deficiency anaemia. Photo Credit Wikimedia



Forests as carbon source, not carbon sink

Human management of European forests to mitigate climate change could be counterintuitive



Human forest management, a waste of time? Photo Credit: Wikipedia

Madeleine Webb
Writer

A key component in the fight against climate change has been the idea of controlled and regulated reforestation in regions destroyed by human actions. However, a recent study suggests that forests regrowing in Europe after mass deforestation between the 18th and 19th century are actually contributing to global warming rather than helping to reverse it, despite the fact they are 10% larger than the pre-industrial revolution woodlands. This poses a real problem for those hoping to reverse the effects of climate change via reforestation, with over 85% of modern European forests regulated by human management.

Researchers from the Laboratory of Climate Science and Environment in France, recreated the last 260 years of human forest management through computer modelling; taking into account, biodiversity, harvesting methods, and background temperature fluctuations. The results suggested that in the 260 years, up to 2010, the addition of 200,000 km² to woodland in Europe led to a

temperature increase of 0.12°C. This number on its own may not seem that significant, but the researchers have said that the increase in temperature equates to about 6% of the global warming attributed to the burning of fossil fuels. According to the study's leader Dr Kim Naudts, "Even well managed forests today store less carbon than their natural counterparts in 1750". Hence, this study calls into question how well we understand our ability to combat climate change as a global issue.

The paper argues that the key issue with the forests under human management is the change in species composition, relative to a composition which would otherwise naturally occur. More and more forest managers have chosen to replant trees that are proven to be fast growing and highly profitable to make any projects sustainable. However, trees that fit such specific criteria, such as Pine and Spruce, absorb more heat than native and previously abundant deciduous species, such as Oak or Birch; meaning more energy is retained in our atmosphere, warming the planet. Additionally, these conifer species release less cooling water into the atmosphere, which affects both the local ecosystem and the wider region. These two factors caused a 0.08%

In the 260 years up to 2010 The addition of 200,000 km² of woodland in Europe led to a temperature increase of 0.12°C

increase in temperature, along with other contributing factors such as commercial harvesting.

The idea that reforestation and, more generally, creating mass carbon sinks is the most effective way to combat climate change has been challenged before. A 1992 study in *Nature* presented data showing that expanded forest regions in the upper northern hemisphere could be detrimental as those regions tended to be snow covered for large sections of the year. It was found

that snow, even if present only seasonally, reflected more energy than the conifer trees could. These findings may be only strictly related to European reforestation projects, since the results are so closely linked to the history of the continent. On the other hand, this process of mass deforestation and managed replanting isn't exclusive to these regions alone, so conservation groups worldwide will need understand this situation in order not to make the same mistakes.



Human managed forests are pushing out Europe's native species, such as the Oak. Photo Credit: Wikipedia



Five facts to break the ice on V-day

A journey through the wonderful and horrifying world of animal sex

Abigail Skinner
Writer

Nature documentaries often show the animal kingdom to be a weird and wonderful place, but animal genitalia don't usually get the attention they rightfully deserve. To right this wrong here's a list of five of the most bizarre bits on offer out there.

Let's start our titillating exploration of the icky world of animal sex in the exotic Down Under, with nothing less than Oz's national animal: the Kangaroo.

Females have three vaginas. The left and right vaginas carry sperm to the two uteri at the top, whilst the middle vagina delivers the jellybean-sized joey from one of the uteri to the mother's pouch. This arrangement also allows the female kangaroo to be perpetually pregnant: whilst one joey is developing inside her pouch, another embryo can be held in stasis, waiting for its sibling

to grow up and move out.

Vaginas, naturally, require penises to perform their reproductive function. And although some might reassuringly claim that size doesn't matter, it's clear that some species have missed the memo. If you're smiling, though thinking of the sperm whale when envisioning the biggest penis out there, wipe that smile off your face. It is in fact the banal beach barnacle that has the biggest willy (relative to body size) of the animal kingdom. Somewhere between eight and 40 times the length of their body.

Of course you don't strictly have to be male to sport a penis; take hyenas for example. Being aggressive is useful within the hyena community and the fiercer the mother is, the more androgen, a male sex hormone linked to aggression, she passes to her young. Female hyenas with a lot of androgen develop clitorises that can be up to 7 inches long, so lengthy it's often mistaken for a penis. During birth the clitoris becomes the birth canal for a cub to

squeeze its way through. Yikes.

Speaking of willies, male ducks have one that's long and anticlockwise spiralling. When it's flaccid it's tightly coiled, but as soon as it enters a vagina it becomes erect within a third of a second with ejaculation happening just as quickly. Males often force themselves upon females and reports of duck gang rape are quite common so female ducks have evolved vaginas that trick the males. Their vaginas are filled with trick openings so if she doesn't want to have sex she can direct the male to ejaculate in a dead-end but when she does, she can relax internal muscles to make sex easier.

But most likely, the prize for weirdest penis goes to the Echidna, known also as the spiny anteater. This strange looking member of the monotremi, has an even stranger looking member consisting of one shaft with four heads. Each time it has sex, two of these heads shut down and release sperm into the female's two-branched vagina and

alternates heads the next time it copulates.

If you enjoyed these facts come and hang out with *I, Science* at

the Science Museum Lates on Wednesday 24th February for more of the same and a game of Whose Penis is it Anyway?



If you think the echidna doesn't look that weird, A) really? B) you clearly haven't tried to have sex with it. Photo Credit Wendy Eiby

Natasha Khaleeq
Writer

Guerrilla Science held their V-Day event last Monday at The Book Club. The night titled 'An Evening of Lust, Sex and Brains' aimed at demonstrating how senses and brains react when people meet that special someone. Guests were to undertake several challenges based on scientific findings, all while advertising their arousal, holding up a 'Turned off' or 'Turned on' card, oh and while blindfolded.

The evening provided guests with a range of challenges centred around different sensory experiences. Challenges such as the hearing and smelling challenges, demonstrated the effect of our senses on mate selection, playing on the effect of a complementary immune system on our smell, or the appeal of a deeper voice to women.

Overall a fun night, but some googling could have saved guests £20.

This week's science picture



The Book Club transformed into a venue exploring the links between our senses and the recipe for true love. Photo Credit Natasha Khaleeq



A fantastic display of failed potential

The Young Vic presents an inspiring but shallow take on a Hindu classic

Abhinav Varma
Writer

I really wanted to like *Battlefield*. Usually, a statement like this foreshadows ruthless panning and heartless criticism, especially when it makes an appearance at the beginning of a review. But I shall try and be objective.

Battlefield is essentially a retelling

A retelling of the epic poem, Mahabharata

of the epic poem, Mahabharata, something of a cornerstone of Hindu mythology. The poem is one of the oldest works of literature in recorded history; bits of it date to before the origins of London some two-and-a-half millennia ago. It is by far the longest literary work, a whole order of magnitude above the *Illiad* and *Odyssey* combined. It is also a text of considerable importance – historians (notably, W.J. Johnson et al.) argue that it is

comparable to the Bible, Qur'an, or the works of Shakespeare and Homer.

Let me get it out of the way: *Battlefield* is a great production. The Young Vic itself is a remarkable venue, “bustling and unorthodox” and “South London’s glorious temple of leftfield theatre”. It ticks all the boxes – fancy bar (nutritious spring water on tap), a simple, minimalistic black box layout. It’s worth a visit; few places are as brimming with energy. Their productions are top-notch, and great credit has to be given to whoever it is who oils the cogs and wheels in this machine. Seats are worth their price, things start and end on time, and there are no backstage brawls between stage-hands and makeup artists.

Secondly, *Battlefield* is superbly acted. McNeill makes a great, relatable everyman of the demigod-like protagonist, Yudishtira. Karemera was great as the female lead, Yudishtira’s mother, an absolute paragon of all that is motherly and matronly, equal parts nurturing and authoritative. I cannot leave out her poise, her grace, and how superlatively she conveys a sense of quiet fortitude with her sheer body language. O’Callaghan is the real stand out though; his primary

role as the blind king, the father of a hundred dead men, is deliciously realised with almost Grecian pathos. Finally, Nzaramba plays Krishna, one of the most revered characters in the mythology, whose very essence is his virtuosity, authority and godlike status. Nzaramba is a very, very good actor – with a superb command of expression, intonation, and subtle inflections that he uses to his advantage to create an entertaining performance. But as to how far he embodies the properties of his character, I am not sure. Well, this is the entire cast – sparse, nuclear, four-person. And at the helm of it is Marie-Hélène Estienne and the legendary Peter Brook himself (whose first production of the play ran for a bladder-boggling nine hours).

However, I was less than impressed with *Battlefield*. I’d definitely say that it falls short of its lofty ambitions, or even cast doubts on the loftiness of those ambitions. The biggest disappointment was the writing – how much more this play could be! The script barely addressed the central plot or, indeed, the most pervasive theme in the source material – namely, war. It was as though one had adapted Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War* and focused entirely on terrain analysis and taxation.

It’s not that I demand blood and violence on stage. It’s that one of the central efforts of the source text is a meditation on conflict and the moral philosophy of justice, killing, and warfare. And instead of this, we are treated to a bunch of fables about snakes, pigeons, falcons, worms, and mongooses. One gets the feeling that the makers of this play abandoned the deeper points made by the work to focus on throwing together a bunch of colourful, exotic parables that would conjure up the peculiar allure of the ‘mysterious East’. What of the interesting character dynamics, the incredibly potent plot, the ruminations on duty, responsibility, and ethics? Instead, we get a funny story about a worm that doesn’t want to die. It is as though a Homeric plot were condensed into a series of Aesop’s fables.

In this way I felt as though the source material was terribly underused. As W.J. Johnson says, this is a text with equivalent literary value and emotive force as the Greek tragedies, or of Shakespeare’s. How it would have benefited from a similar treatment! If only the writers and directors had the courage to delve into the deep melancholy of it all, the heightened drama, the nuances of plot and language – the

beautiful writing is all there! But the effect of a potent scene is too often quelled by a visual gag in the following moments.

And this was the other thing – only too frequently a decidedly somber moment in the story would incite uproarious laughter – something that would be entirely jarring and out-of-place in a serious Shakespearean tragedy, which is essentially what the source material

A potent scene is too often quelled by a visual gag

is, at least much more than it is a comedy sketch. Maybe my only fault is that I have read it.

But let us not dwell on what could be. What is, is a delightful, comical, entertaining play, to anyone who sees it with fresh eyes. If you have read the source material, however, then you might be disappointed at how poorly-realised its potential is.



The cast of *Battlefield* at the Young Vic Photo: Simon Annand



The visual legacy of space exploration

Michael Benson’s photographic journey of the solar system shines at the NHM

Abhinav Varma
Writer

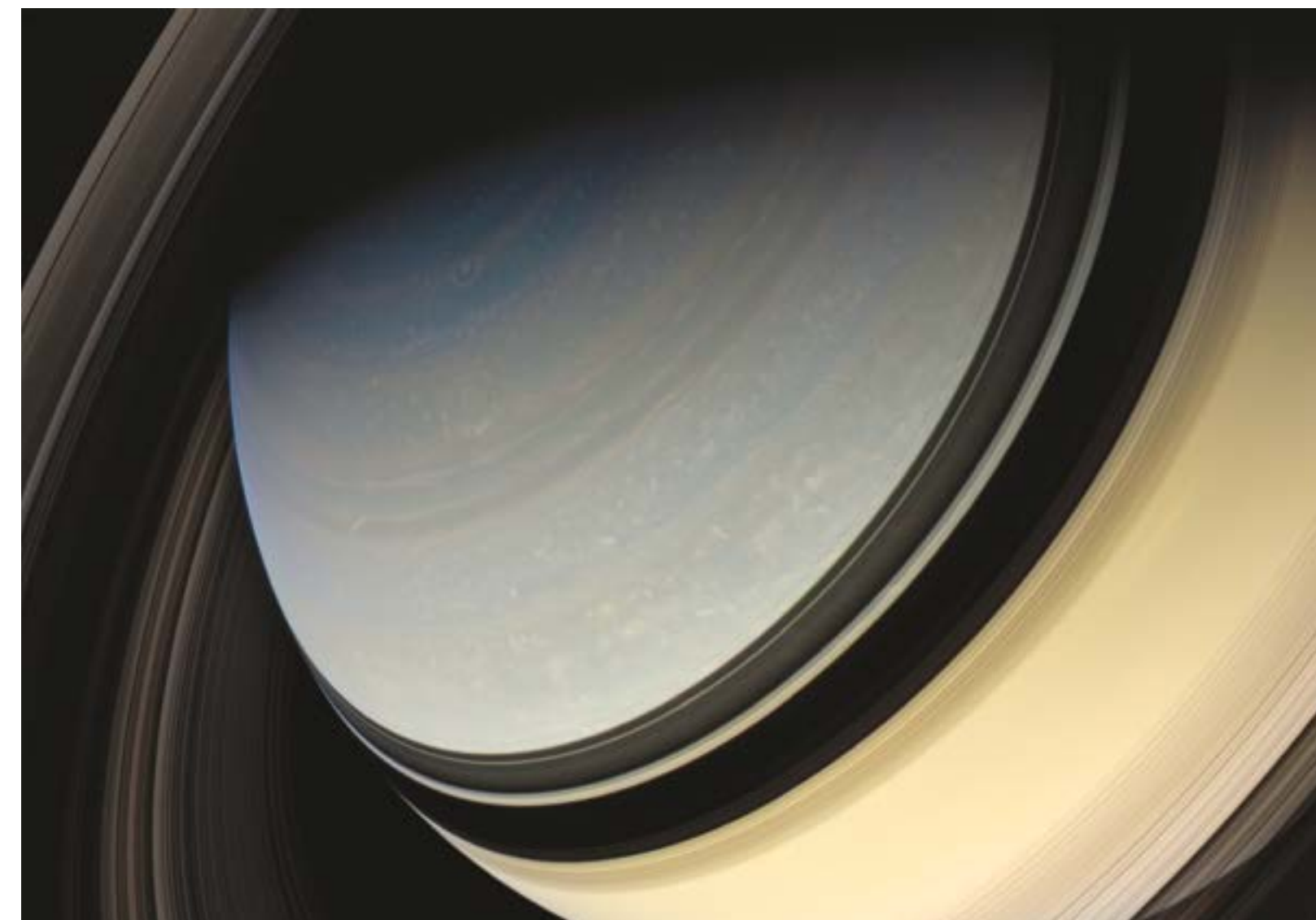
The latest offering from the Natural History Museum is a photography exhibition titled *Otherworlds*. Like all great collections of art, it aims to intrigue the intellect as well as stir the emotions. In its own words, *Otherworlds* aims no less than to “embod[y] the symbiosis between

The biggest and most pristine spectacles that could ever be viewed

art and science”, and “simultaneously reveal the ethereal beauty of far-off worlds and clues to how the solar system... began”.

And reveal this it does. Unlike with most photographic exhibitions, the puppeteer of our heartstrings is, in this case, not human beings but machines – machines named Rosetta, Lunar Orbiter, Magellan, Viking Orbiter, and Curiosity, among others. They are the probes and robotic spacecraft that wind their weary path around the cosmos, ceaseless, untrammelled by friction and resistance in ways that most human photographers can never be.

They are the farthest manifestations of our eyes, and indeed, most remote incarnations of the human observer. The images they obtain are random, largely unguided, and yet those are the images that most move us. It’s funny – we are so used to the terrestrial terrain that it takes a skilled eye and an artist of great creativity to inspire us with the everyday sights around us; not everyone can be a photographer on Earth. But these cosmic subjects, so perfect are they in their form, movement, and composition that



Saturn, dark side of the rings. Photo: NASA/JPL/Michael Benson, Kinetikon Pictures, courtesy of Flowers Gallery

even the chance image by an ancient camera can be possibly the most beautiful photograph ever taken.

We start off our journey on Earth, which, as you would imagine, is the most natural place for lift-off. The viewer is encouraged to meditate on terrestrial vistas – the gorgeous specular reflection off the Caribbean sea, the vast spread of Mexico’s Yucatan peninsula. Across the latter a fire rages – a result of slash-and-burn deforestation. “Signs of human intervention can be seen even from very high orbits,” the label describes. On one hand, it is a grossly embarrassing realisation. On the other, it is a relief – one has to only travel a little bit further before the views are no longer marred by mankind’s folly.

We are then treated to the moon, paired against the Earth, photographed in 1967. A year later, humans would witness earthrise for the first time, during the Apollo 8

mission. Only a few years later, we made our last trip – since 1972, no human being has ever left low Earth orbit.

And the Sun is next! A seething, pulsing, billowing, boiling ball of red, white and orange, against a featureless black backdrop. On its quietest days, the panel describes, the Sun is “sobering”; when in a more volatile mood, it is “downright terrifying”. There is a great macabre beauty to the ball of fire, almost Lovecraftian – it’s no surprise that those of creative persuasion are drawn to it. There are at least three young artists sitting and sketching, and one child has been fixated by it ever since I walked in.

Mercury, Venus and Mars are their usual hostile selves. However, beauty rears its unexpected head in all the starkness – the way sunlight bounces around Mercury’s tumultuous topography creates a softer day-night divide that we see

on Earth, and Mars’s global dust storms shroud its giant canyons in a veil of red. Speaking of Mars, there is a picture of Curiosity looking back on its tracks, and it is poignant because it’s almost a metaphor for humans looking back at their footprints – which one wishes we did half as often as rovers do.

Leaving human footprints behind, we arrive at the gas giants – Jupiter, its stormy self, and Saturn profoundly affecting with its graceful, almost perfectly geometric form. If Jupiter is the roman God of sky and thunder, Saturn is a ballet dancer with hula hoops. The rings reflect so much light onto Saturn’s night side that there “a perpetual twilight lingers”. Ultimately, the gas giants are outshined by their moons – particularly beautiful is a picture of Enceladus, one of Saturn’s moons (and not a Mexican appetiser) which erupts a vast spray of water into space that immediately freezes

into a column of ice.

The photos of the outer planets are among the most remote views ever witnessed by Man. They appear cold and distant, but even they too have an unexpected side to them. Last year, we flew by Pluto for the first time – and what we discovered was that the dwarf planet’s atmosphere, backlit by the sun, was as blue as earthly skies. One wonders if the grass, too, is greener, on the far side of the solar system. It is a lot to take in. One gets a sense that the planets are dynamic, graceful things, rather than featureless hunks of rock. Often, heavenly bodies are just specks in the sky, but in *Otherworlds*, these dots in the firmament become living, breathing entities, colourful, commanding, awesome, awe-inspiring – they are, almost literally, the biggest and most pristine spectacles that could ever be viewed. And here they’ve captured them on camera.



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Every Tuesday	Super Quiz	20:00 - 22:00	FiveSixEight
Every Tuesday	Cocktail Night	18:00 - 23:00	Metric
Every Wednesday	CSP Wednesday	19:00 - 01:00	Metric & FiveSixEight
Every Wednesday	Sports Night	19:00 onwards	Reynolds
Every Friday	PGI Friday cocktails	16:30 onwards	h-bar
Every Friday	Reynolds Cocktail Club	17:30 - 00:00	Reynolds
Friday 12 February	Good Form	20:00 - 02:00	Metric & FiveSixEight
Friday 19 February	BPM	20:00 - 02:00	Metric & FiveSixEight
Friday 26 February	Common People	20:00 - 02:00	Metric & FiveSixEight

FELIX GAMES

Gravity Rush Remastered

It's time to try defying gravity

Cale Tilford
Music & Games Editor

There are very few games that have provided the same joy and awe as *Super Mario Galaxy*. I remember fondly the moment when I, as Mario, was able to run around a small spherical planet for the first time. I wasn't defying gravity; I was adhering to it, in a way no game had ever done before. It didn't allow the player to control gravity, instead it

I wasn't defying gravity; I was adhering to it

ability that the player must use to navigate the environment and defeat enemies. It's an idea that, if implemented badly, could have been awful. Luckily, the developers have perfected the controls: hold down a trigger to float and then use the joystick or gyroscope to aim where you want to 'fall.'

The expansive open world, unlike in *Super Mario Galaxy*, is flat (in the sense that no part of the world is curved). There are times when levels are formed in the same way as *Galaxy* – spherical and cylindrical – but, these are not what make *Gravity Rush* so great. The incremental cityscape, from your beginnings in an undesirable part of town to the city centre which adorns the cover, gives the player an increasing sense of wonderment. The initial thrill of floating around, and walking on the side of, small buildings is eclipsed again and again. By the time you're finally towering above the city, there's a real rush (pardon the pun).

offered up new environments where the concept of up and down was constantly in flux.

Five years later, Project Siren released *Gravity Rush* for the Playstation Vita. Critics at the time noted its innovative controls and mechanics, but it never quite achieved the success it deserved (mostly as a result of being on a platform that no one bought). At the core of *Gravity Rush* is the ability to manipulate gravity, an

The game isn't just a platformer; it incorporates many role-playing elements. You can upgrade your powers, do optional side quests, and unlock extra costumes. These don't detract from the core gameplay in anyway, but they often feel like unnecessary extras. Personally, I would have preferred a pure action-platformer. *Super Mario Galaxy*, like many other Nintendo games, gets it right in the way that your character's abilities don't get better over time, but expand through new power-ups and level mechanics.

Gravity Rush is very obviously a game by Japanese developers for a Japanese audience. It's story begins with the tired trope of amnesia. You play as a girl called Kat, who meets a cat, Dusty, with gravitational powers. You're thrown into a world where gravitational storms and creatures known as Nevi are ravaging the local populace. And it's your job to save the day. At first, the plot does feel uninspired, but it soon grows into one of fantastical intrigue which even manages to incorporate themes of class and corruption.

Gravity Rush looks and performs marvellously

Comic style cutscenes playfully add character, and motive, to the world's inhabitants. If you enjoy the themes and styles often found in anime, this might be the game for you.

For a game that has been ported from the Vita to the PS4, *Gravity Rush Remastered* looks and performs marvellously. It's a great remaster. With the extra power of the PS4, the gritty, almost steam-punk, environments are given the respect they deserve. To exaggerate the



Fuck gravity. Photo Credit: Sony Computer Entertainment

changing environment, and districts of town, the sky changes colour as you move between each: the orange of Auldnoir, the purple of Pleajeune, the yellow of Endestia, and the iconic green of Vendecentre. Each reflects certain characteristics of these areas, making them feel distinct.

Gravity Rush is the first game since *Super Mario Galaxy* that has evoked

the same childish excitement inside me. I have a huge amount of respect for developers Project Siren (and Bluepoint Games who handled the remaster). It might not be as polished or as revolutionary, but it's just as fun. There's something about playing with gravity that is just awesome.

Gravity Rush Remastered is out now on PS4



The floor is lava. Photo Credit: Sony Computer Entertainment





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FELIX GAMES



games.felix@imperial.ac.uk

The Witness

Jonathan Blow delivers his second masterpiece, a game about mazes

Joel Auterson
Writer

There have been very few games released in recent years that have had more to live up to than *The Witness*. Unlike the recent *Fallout 4*, there was no multi-million dollar marketing campaign, no tube ads, no merchandising – in other words, no ‘hype’. Instead, *The Witness* has been quietly on our radar for close to six years.

Braid designer Jonathan Blow’s sophomore effort was originally announced – and demoed – in 2010, having already been in development for a year. Blow has spent the last half-decade polishing, tweaking, and vastly overshooting the planned 2013 release date – as well as the original \$800,000 budget. The finished game released just a couple of weeks ago, with a final development cost of close to \$6 million. I picked it up on PS4 a couple of days after release, to see if it’s been worth the wait. It has.

The Witness is, at its heart, a game about mazes. Dotted around its idyllic island setting are some 650 puzzles, in the form of mazes on panels. The player draws a line from the start to end of the maze, and solving a panel lights up the next one. Solving some puzzles will open doors, move platforms, or affect the game’s world in other ways. Taken

Blow, as in *Braid*, has followed the Nintendo school of game design

at face value, this sounds pretty dull – how, then, have I sunk over 20 hours into these mazes without getting bored?

The reason is that Blow, as in *Braid*, has followed the Nintendo school of game design: introduce a new, simple concept to the player, and then explore all possible permutations of that concept. In *The Witness*, different mazes will have different rules, signified by markings on the maze itself. These rules are taught to the player without any words or explicit explanation – instead, a simple maze with a new rule has to be solved, followed by a more complex one, and so on. The island is split up into different areas – there’s a swamp, a desert, a beach, and more – and in each area



The Witness is gorgeous. Photo Credit: Thekla Inc.

the puzzles have different rules. It’s when these rules start to be combined with each other that the game gets really tricky.

The Witness is not an easy game. Quite often I’ve come up against a puzzle whose rules I simply don’t know, or ones whose rules I do know, but haven’t fully understood. This is intentional – in some cases, the only solution is to walk away and come back later. There’s a certain delight in realising that a rule you’ve just learned means you can now solve a puzzle on the other side of the island. Similarly, the feeling that comes with solving a puzzle you’ve

been stuck on for ages is comparable to beating a boss in *Dark Souls*. It’s you against Jonathan Blow, and occasionally you come out on top, and feel like a king – then the next panel lights up.

Many players will be tempted to look up the solutions online, but I’d advise against this. It not only ruins the fun, but in *The Witness* it makes learning the rules more difficult, and you’ll need to look up solutions for the next panel too; cheating will snowball, and is best avoided.

The Witness is easily the best-looking game I’ve played on the PS4, pinching that crown from the excellent *Grow Home*. The island looks gorgeous; the colours are vibrant, the water gloriously reflective, and the chunky-polygons art style is one of the best I’ve seen. There’s no music – the game

is almost silent, the only sounds being the lapping of waves, the player’s footsteps, or the low hum of the maze panels. Anyone who has played the *Myst* series will feel right at home. The rare few melodies feel significant, and actually slightly creepy – play with headphones if you can.

The island is also absolutely packed with secrets and things for the player to discover – the level of attention to detail is astounding. I don’t want to give too much away, but as an example, there are some pieces of what can only be described as artwork which are only visible from a certain perspective, and one kind of puzzle I wasn’t even aware of, which, when discovered, totally blew me away. What plot that exists is largely left up to the player’s own interpretation, with various audio recordings and sculptures scattered around the island.

In this way, the game is like an art gallery of sorts – what you get from it, other than the puzzles, depends on what you bring with you.

The Witness is not a game I’d necessarily recommend to everyone – it can be punishingly difficult, and the lack of a concrete story may turn some away – but, for me and likely for many others, it’s a masterpiece, and I use that word without a hint of hyperbole. I can’t wait to see what Jonathan Blow does next.

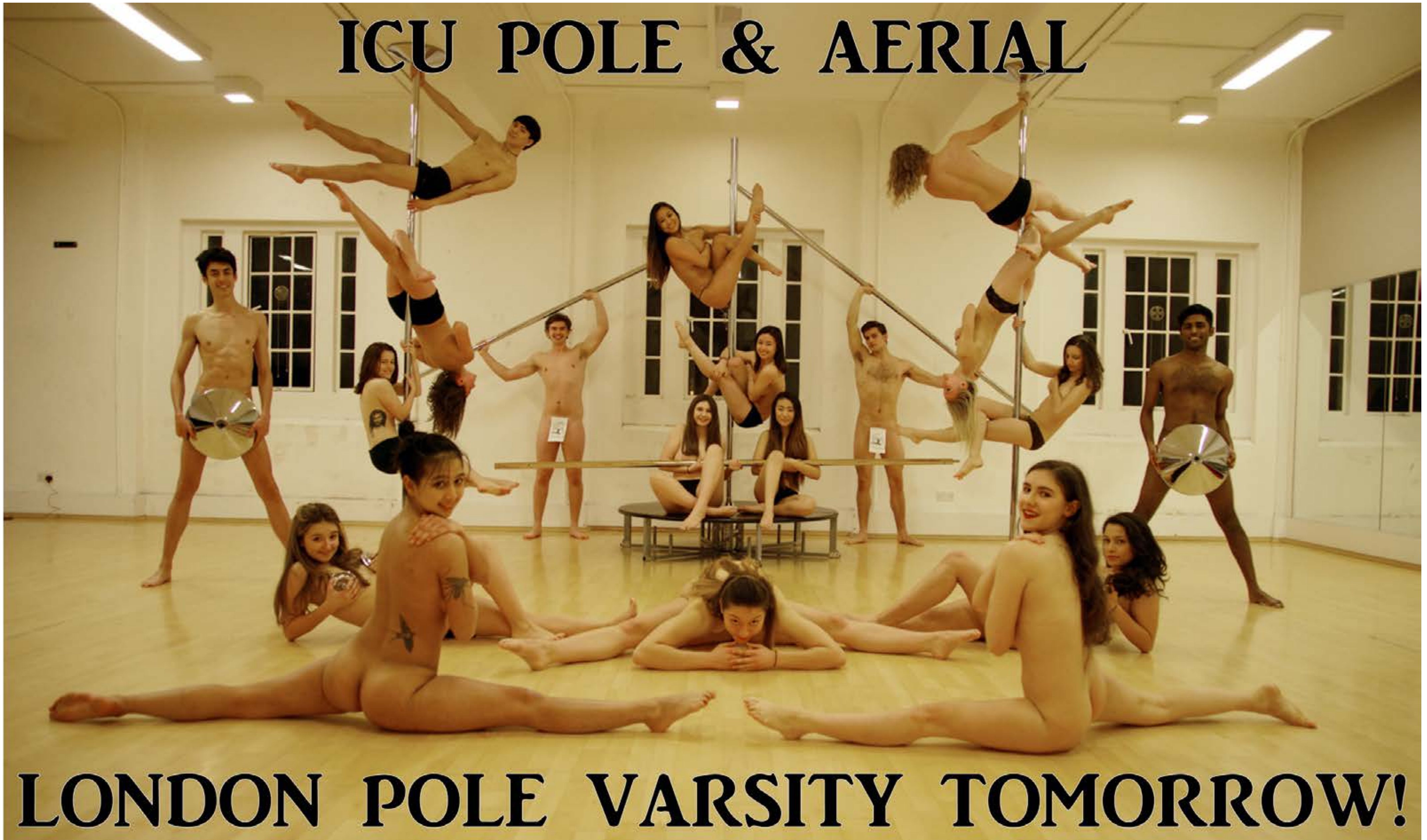
The Witness is out now on PS4 and PC



Don’t understand a puzzle? Come back when you’ve explored some more. Photo Credit: Thekla Inc.

The Witness
is easily the
best looking
game I’ve
played on
PS4

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Documentary corner: *The Imposter*

Ben Collier
Writer

On the 13th of June, 1994, thirteen-year-old Nicolas Barclay went to play a game of basketball with his friends in San Antonio, Texas. This was the last time he was seen. Missing for three years and presumed dead, he was suddenly discovered in Linares, Spain. Or was he? Well, his family said it was him. In fact, they were entirely sure. This confirmation was apparently enough for US embassy officials and the FBI, who celebrated the return of Nicolas with the family. The issue is that the Nicolas that went missing 3 years prior had blue eyes and a thick Texan accent. The person who turned up had brown eyes and a French accent... It seems unbelievable but it's all completely true. With a real world set-up this good how could the film not succeed?

There are a lot of unanswered questions in this film but one thing is certain: there was an imposter. This pretender was 22 year-old French-Algerian Frederic Bourdin:



With dyed hair, Frederic Bourdin walks through a high school hallway as Nicolas Barclay. Photo Credit: The Imposter PR

an obsessive-yet-talented con man, who turned out to have a long history of impersonating various children. The misidentification by the family was predicted by Bourdin, who is interviewed in the film; all he had to do was capitalise on a grieving and desperate mother and

sister, who we realise were probably willing to believe anything. In the end Bourdin was exposed by largely one man – private investigator Charles Parker.

The whole film gorgeously unfolds in the style of a classic thriller. Re-enactments are used

extensively to set the tone and allow the documentary to take a more narrative form. Normally, when someone says the phrase 're-enactments' to me, images of cheap and cheesily shot scenes come to mind, but this is definitely not the case here – the realism and style is

superb.

Director Bart Layton really succeeds in maintaining tension and mystery throughout. We are not given all the information we need right away, and my opinions changed several times throughout the film. Several questions are raised and never answered: Did the Gibson's really think Bourdin was their son? Did they convince themselves out of desperation? Perhaps they had an ulterior motive? If so, what motive would explain allowing a stranger into your house? I won't spoil the 'oh my God!' moment of this film – a moment which honestly makes you question everything you've begun to think up until that point – I'll just say that it gives you a good central point when you debate the question of "how the hell did he get away with it?!"

Overall, *The Imposter* is a masterfully assembled documentary. Taking the form of a documentary/mockumentary fusion with the best aspects of both genres being extracted, *The Imposter* is uniquely accomplished for a documentary film, in terms of both tension and edge-of-your-seat filmmaking.

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Perfunctory historical piece without pizzazz

Turgid *Trumbo* fails to shine, despite the best efforts of Bryan Cranston

Trumbo



Dir. Jay Roach. Script. John McNamara. Starring. Bryan Cranston, Diane Lane, Elle Fanning, Louis C.K. 124 minutes.

Fred Fyles
Film Editor



Helen Mirren in full-on mad hat mode, opposite the strained Bryan Cranston in *Trumbo*. Photo Credit: YouTube/Entertainment One

I can remember learning about the Hollywood blacklist in my GCSE history class; a paranoid electorate, whipped into a state of frenzy by senator Joseph McCarthy, pilloried a group of film actors, directors, and writers for their left-leaning tendencies. And that was all it was for us: a note on the past, sandwiched between the Truman Doctrine and the sultry summer of the Rosenbergs' execution. But of course, for those involved, for their family and friends, for the whole industry, that was far from it; director Jay Roach seeks to rectify this in his film *Trumbo* – focusing on a single individual (in this case Dalton Trumbo, the screenwriter of *Roman Holiday*, *Exodus*, and *Spartacus*), the film invites us to observe the catastrophic effects the blacklist had on an entire generation of creatives.

Bryan Cranston is the titular Trumbo, and while – fresh from his stratospheric success in *Breaking Bad* – he provides the film with a certain amount of gravitas, his character really seems to amount to little more than a collection of mannerisms. Cranston's Trumbo clutches his trademark cigarette holder, spends hours in the bath scribbling, and responds to every change in situation with the same pained/confused face; he delivers his lines in a tone that reminds me most of Daniel Day-Lewis' oil baron in *There Will Be Blood* – strained, dignified, charismatic.

The overall effect is that everything Cranston says seems to take on an air of gravitas, making his Trumbo seem less like a human being and more like rhetoric given a human form. It is perhaps unsurprising that Cranston's performance is so broad, given Roach's most famous work is the *Austin Powers* trilogy. At one

point, his friend and fellow writer Arlen Hird (a composite character, played very well by Louis C.K.) snaps at him: 'Jesus, do you ever say anything that isn't gonna get chiseled on a rock?' – a fair question. But then perhaps the fault lies – ironically enough – with screenwriter John McNamara. The script is solid, but not anything really special. It hits all the points along the story arc, giving us the requisite initial setbacks, betrayal from a friend, an emotional crisis (where Trumbo's guilt seems to be absolved by him spending his cash), and an eventual, inevitable conclusion. Cue credits and archival footage.

Cranston has a fair amount of backup power in the supporting cast: Diane Lane delivers the most nuanced performance of the film as Trumbo's long-suffering wife; Elle Fanning puts in a great turn as Trumbo's fiery teenage daughter, who is more concerned with the passing of the Voting Rights Act

than her father's scriptwriting; and Michael Stuhlbarg does an adequate impression of actor

Cranston's Trumbo really amounts to little more than a collection of mannerisms

Edward G. Robinson (although, after his exceptional performance in *A Serious Man*, all I really want is for Stuhlbarg to get more film time in *any* role). Helen Mirren, placed front and center in all the advertising campaigns for the film, has little more than a bit role in gossip-columnist Hedda Hopper; it's all mad hats, panto-dame style barbs, and rampant anti-semitism, and – ultimately – she really isn't that good.

The film is stolen, however, by John Goodman, who puts in a barnstorming performance as Frank King, a B-list producer who takes on scripts written by Trumbo in secret; Goodman has some of the best scenes of the film, and runs with them, culminating in one where he is threatened with shutdown if he doesn't fire Trumbo. 'I make garbage!' he screams, smashing a baseball bat into the space that seconds before was filled with a man's head; 'wanna call me a pinko

in the papers? Do it! Nobody who goes to my movies can fucking read.'

But it turns out Goodman's performance is the high spot of an otherwise flaccid piece of work. While overall the cast put in a solid (if uneven) effort into their roles, there is a sense in which the film doesn't really come together. Perhaps it's the script, which flies through 15 years of tumultuous history at a speed which would give you whiplash; or maybe it's the direction, which is done perfunctorily and without panache; or perhaps it's the cinematography, and the bizarre lighting style which sees everyone brightly illuminated from the front. In some respects, this film reminded me of Spielberg's *Bridge of Spies*, another film about one man facing down rabid, commie-fearing America; but that film was produced with oodles of style, making it a masterful oil painting in comparison with *Trumbo's* colour-by-number.



Icelandic villagers have sheep on the brain in *Rams*, a tale of man and beast. Photo Credit: Soda Pictures

Rams



Dir. Grímur Hákonarson. Script. Grímur Hákonarson. Starring. Sigurður Sigurjónsson, Theodór Júlíusson, Charlotte Bøving. 93 minutes.

A beautifully shot movie, enhanced by the location of a secluded valley in Iceland, *Rams* is a story about family – which here includes sheep.

The story revolves around two estranged brothers Gudmundur (Gummi) and Kristinn (Kiddi) Bodvarsson, who have not spoken a word to each other for 40 years. All their correspondences are conveyed through a messenger sheep-dog; it helps that they are, in fact, neighbours. After narrowly losing to his brother at the yearly ram competition, fueled by jealousy, Gummi becomes convinced his brother's sheep is infected with scrapie, a degenerative disease affecting goats and sheep. After his thoughts are confirmed, the implications sink in: a death sentence for all the valley's sheep, including his own. Slaughtering their ancestral prize winning flock and allowing the Bostatur breed to become extinct is not on either brother's agenda, and they go about trying fight the inevitable in their own way.

Winner of the *Un Certain Regard* Prize at Cannes in 2015, *Rams* was Iceland's entry for the 2016 Oscars for the Best Foreign Film category. Shot in a secluded Icelandic valley, the film has no shortages of scenic vistas. The use of long still shots frames the isolation

of the characters both physically and mentally, and conveys to the audience the impact losing their sheep would have. A haunting score by Atli Örvarsson perfectly complements these shots to create a sense of extreme loneliness. The relationship between the men and their flock is shown to be one of family – if not more than family – as it is only at the possibility of losing their sheep that the brothers even decide to communicate. As the film progresses, we see the relationship between the two brothers change and evolve, as they are faced with a common goal of securing their ancestral flock.

With strong and subdued performances from both the leads Sigurður Sigurjónsson (who was in the music video for 'Crystals' with Icelandic band Of Monsters and Men) and Theodór Júlíusson, you feel as attached to the sheep as the brothers, especially in the lead up to the final shot. As they movie ends

we are left wondering what the brothers were really looking for: to save the sheep? or to save each other?

MERYLANIL

The American Dreamer (1971)



Dir. L.M. Kit Carson, Lawrence Schiller. Script. Dennis Hopper, L.M. Kit Carson, Lawrence Schiller. Starring: Dannis Hopper. 90 minutes.

Pretend we're not here,' the voice behind the camera asks Dennis Hopper, fresh out of the bath; Hopper, already with 15 years' experience behind and in front of the camera, smiles at the impossibility of such a statement. *The American Dreamer*, a documentary about

the US director/actor, serves as a good companion piece to Hopper's films, showing him when he was at his most well-known, following the runaway success of *Easy Rider*. Fans of Hopper, however, may have to look away, lest they dislike what they see on screen.

Hopper is an abrasive personality, the American counter-culture personified. Talking about why he wanted to make *Easy Rider*, he talks about turning a mirror on the 'society of criminals' that make up the powerful of America; however, for each interesting aphorism offered by Hopper there are two more that grate, such as his take on literacy: 'I don't believe in reading.' Watching this 1971 piece back now, it is perhaps unfair to judge Hopper in the cold light of modern standards. Still, he comes across as irritating, half-crazed, and lecherous – not a good combination.

We catch Hopper in the middle of making *The Last Movie*, following on from the success of *Easy Rider*; Hopper was given carte-blanche to make whatever he wanted, and the result was – unsurprisingly – a jarring piece of work, wholly experimental in tone. He would not direct again for another ten years. *The American Dreamer* is somewhat similar, making use of sharp jump cuts and experimental interludes in a way unassociated with most documentary features. The result is a beguiling, engrossing work that, although showing Hopper in an unflattering light, seems completely honest about the director's inner life.

FRED FYLES

The American Dreamer will be available from online screening platform MUBI from 12th February



Dennis Hopper, the last true American dreamer, here showing off his gun collection. Photo Credit: Polaris Communications

The top three strong women leads who aren't Elle Woods

Legally Blonde is a decent enough film, and I appreciate the effort of the filmmakers to create a stereotype-defying and intelligent female lead. However, the fact remains that Woods only gets into law school because the admissions officer fancied her, and her big show of intelligence at the end of the film has nothing to do with any knowledge of complex law. I'll take any of these badasses over Ms. Woods:

Ripley – *Alien*

Academics are absolutely obsessed with Ridley Scott's 1979 classic. Full books have been written about its themes, which range from the fears of modern society, to Marxism, to representations of pregnancy (phallic imagery guys, phallic imagery everywhere). Sigourney Weaver plays Ripley who the author Judith Newton perfectly says 'appropriates qualities traditionally identified with male, but not masculinist, heroes.'

Éowyn – *Lord of the Rings*

The nature of Tolkien's insanely intricate world of Middle Earth makes my argument here rather difficult. Fortunately I only need one quote to make my case. During the Battle of Pelennor Fields, Éowyn confronts the Witch King of Angmar who boasts "You fool! No man can kill me! Die now." Éowyn retorts, "I am no man.", and deals a killing blow. Ouch.

Chihiro – *Spirited Away*

The Bechdel test describes whether a film contains at least two named women who talk to each other about something other than a man. Despite a worrying number of films today failing this test I cannot think of a single Miyazaki film which could be included amongst them: Chihiro is only one of his many inspiring and maturely-written female characters. She may not be perfect, but her realism makes her relatable and wonderful.

BEN COLLIER



Beyoncé wins the Super Bowl, again

Indira Mallik
Arts Editor

Beyoncé has never been one to shy away from making a statement; the surprise release of her self-titled album in 2013 proved that. The release of 'Formation' 24 hours before upstaging **Coldplay** at their headline gig at the Super Bowl could be a new high. Not only the manner of its release, but the message it sends, at once politically charged and gloriously celebratory, makes 'Formation' one of **Beyoncé's** most powerful songs yet.

Released together with the video, the song is so reliant on the imagery to put forward its message, it seems impossible to discuss the song without referencing the video as well. Directed by Melina Matsoukas, who also directed 'Pretty Hurts' and **Rihanna's** 'We Found Love', the video feels more art-house than those that usually accompany Beyoncé's songs. An ad lib from the murdered Youtube star and bounce artist **Messy Mya** introduces a montage of post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans; clapboard houses into floodwaters act as a visual shorthand for the chronic underinvestment by the government of black communities. Footage from Abteen Bagheri's 2014 documentary *That B.E.A.T.* cuts to reveal Beyoncé, squatting on top of a sinking New Orleans police cruiser with raw buccaneer swagger.

Her voice when she starts to sing is hoarse, gravelly; closer to **Nina Simone** or **Ella Fitzgerald** than



Beyoncé slaying. Photo Credit: Beyoncé Foundation Video

to the dance/pop Beyoncé from 'Single Ladies'. This is pared down rap (no surprise that the track was co-written by Swae Lee of rap duo

Politically charged and gloriously celebratory

Rae Sremmurd) set to bounce music, a mix of hip hop and rap particular to New Orleans, which provides punctuation to Beyoncé's unapologetic, punchy lyrics.

In its rap-adjacent, repetitive lyrical pattern 'Formation' has some stylistic themes common with '7/11'. However, whilst '7/11' is a carefree dance anthem about youth and hedonism that as a result of its hotel setting is somewhat generic, 'Formation' is grounded in a particular experience, deeply entwined with the imagery of the black South.

The video weaves through the past and present, from the antebellum South to Southern gothic, from the churches that serve as the nucleus of the Southern communities, to take-away crayfish, Red Lobster, and hot sauce. This is a celebration and affirmation of identity from Beyoncé who has sometimes been accused of acting 'too white'. "My daddy Alabama, momma Louisiana / mix that negro and the creole make a Texas bama" Beyoncé declares,

rooting herself in her Southern ancestry, reclaiming racial slurs,

'Formation' is far more radical and outspoken than we might've expected

reminding us that first and foremost she is a black, Southern artist.

Perhaps she is reminding herself too: "earned all this money / but they'll take the country from me". It must be difficult to reconcile her present 'Givenchy dress' level wealth with her less affluent childhood, so it is particularly sweet when she declares "swag" to be a bottle of "hot sauce in [her] bag".

This is about more than reclaiming a personal identity, it is also a reclamation of the narrative surrounding black Southern communities, and black women. It is joyous and celebratory in the face of discrimination, violence, and oppression. It tells us: don't believe what you see on the TV, this isn't gangland, these communities are more than acts of police brutality and grief. By inhabiting black women from the past, Beyoncé is holding up a picture of black ancestry that opposes the imagery that the mainstream media propagates, indicting a media that rewards showing black suffering (*Twelve Years a Slave*) but refuses to acknowledge the stories black communities write for themselves (*Straight Outta Compton*).

This is not about what other people think or want, this is a celebration of the beauty of black women by a black woman, about pride and self-love. Beyoncé sings about all the features that society tells black women they should find unattractive in themselves. "I love my negro nose with Jackson Five nostrils" she says, "I like my baby hair, baby hair and afro" she tells us, as we see her four year old daughter Blue Ivy playing, her afro bouncing. Later Beyoncé, her own



Beyoncé in post-Katrina New Orleans. Photo Credit: Beyoncé Foundation Video



FELIX Music #HotTakes of the week

What is a hot take? Elspeth Reeve, for *The New Republic* last year, described it as a "piece of deliberately provocative commentary that is based almost entirely on shallow moralizing" which is "usually written on tight deadlines with little research or reporting, and even less thought." Using that definition, I guess we could define everything we write in FELIX as a 'hot take.'

In an age where most opinions are expressed in less than 140 characters, hot takes are now the norm.

So Help Me God

KANYE WEST (Parodyed) - 10
BILL COSBY INNOCENT !!!!!!!

Kanye randomly spurted out this turd on Twitter on Tuesday. Kim, please take his phone away. I'm a fan of Kanye's work but he really needs someone to help him filter his thoughts (especially after his praise of Ben Carson last year). I have now thrown away my favourite Kanye t-shirt. I don't want to be seen as promoting someone problematic in any way.

Not even once?

My @talyan - Feb 9
@NickGibbMP I left school 15 years ago and I've not used Pythagoras's theorem once or even seen a Bunsen burner.

In a tweet that would probably enrage most Imperial students, Allen's response to the Education Minister asked the same question school children have been asking for years. She's right that a lot of people are unlikely to ever use the maths or science they learnt at school in real life, but the same could be said for P.E. I haven't got off my fat arse and done any real physical exercise for years.

CALE TILFORD



"Hands up, don't shoot." Photo Credit: Beyoncé Foundation Video

hair in a big, blown-out afro joins a lineup of black women with afros to dance. There's no mention of butts or curves or plump lips, the features that the white media fetishise in black women whilst condemning their noses and their kinky hair.

The power of black women coming together was underscored during Beyoncé's half time performance at the Super Bowl. Wearing gold bandoliers, looking like a glam guerrilla leader crossed with **Michael Jackson** circa 1993, flanked by dozens of black female dancers, wearing black berets in homage to the radical Black Panthers Party, Beyoncé and the dancers joined together to give the 'black power' salute made famous by Olympic athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos in 1968.

Throughout, 'Formation' is far more radical and outspoken than we might've expected, there is no question of looking at the subtext or reading between the lines. In a video filled with iconic images, one of the most striking is towards the end. A

young black boy in a hoodie dances in front of a line up of (white) policemen in riot gear. He ends his moves by orchestrating the police to put up their hands in the 'hands up don't shoot' gesture made famous in the Black Lives Matter protests. The scene cuts away to graffiti on a wall that reads "stop shooting us".

Beyoncé, and husband **Jay Z** have been low profile but passionate supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement, with Jay Z donating \$1.5 million in profits from his streaming website Tidal to Black Lives Matter and other similar organisations on the day that Trayvon Martin, another victim of police brutality would've turned 21. 'Formation' is Beyoncé's acknowledgement that it is no longer enough to condemn quietly, nor support quietly; this is her finally, not exactly finding her voice on the issue, but raising it, and it is anything but quiet. In 'Formation', Beyoncé embodies the much maligned role of the angry black woman, and does so unapologetically, claims her black

femaleness with pride, and says yes, I am angry, with good reason.

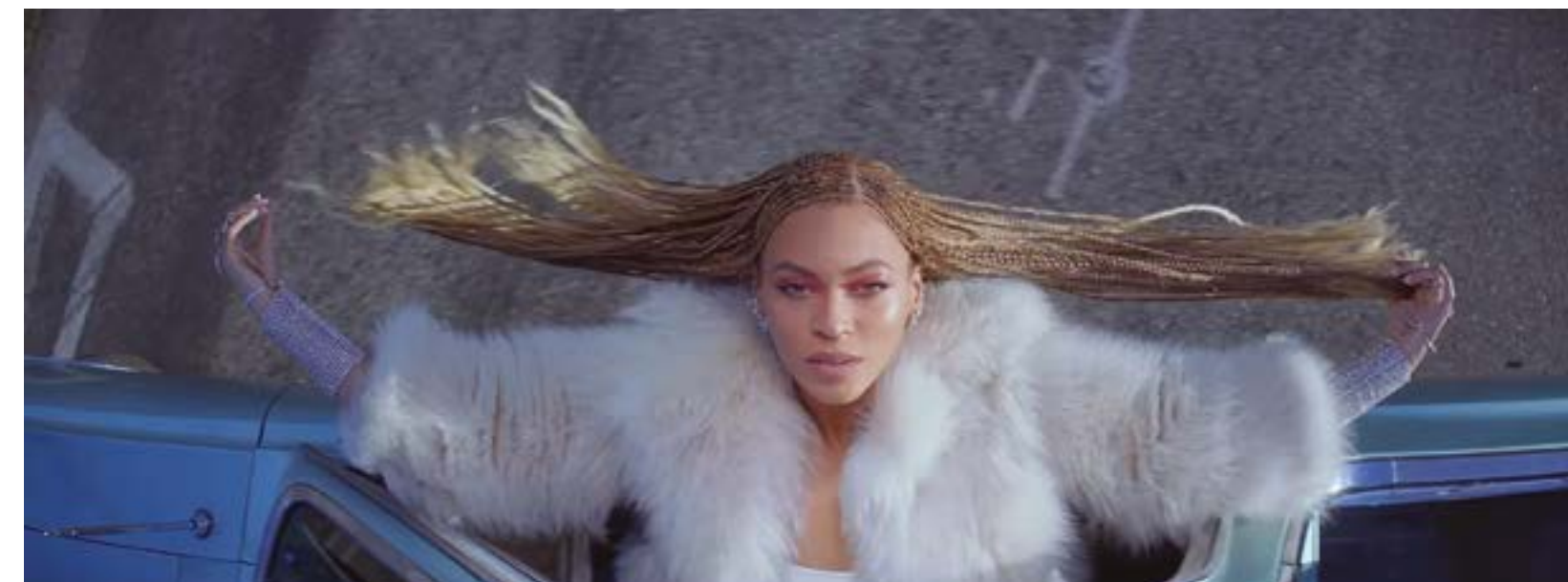
The "I slay" in 'Formation' could easily be substituted with Maya Angelou's "I rise"; the track at times feels like 'Still I Rise' or Nina Simone's 'Young, Gifted and Black'

For many years now, she has had nothing left to prove

set to bounce music. Some will still be disappointed that Beyoncé waited so long. For many years now, she has had nothing left to prove, and having won every commercial and critical accolade possible (twice), nothing to lose. She has leant her voice to the feminist movement in particular,

starting from 'Independent Women' with **Destiny's Child**, all the way to 'Flawless' which used sections from Nigerian feminist writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED talk as a refrain. She has been less outspoken on racial matters however, sometimes in sharp contrast to other black female artists, perhaps most notably her younger sister Solange. 'Formation' in its call to arms to black women, however, acts as a brilliant example of what intersectional feminism should be. Trans women, and queer issues aren't ignored either, the video uses footage from *That B.E.A.T.*, a documentary on bounce music and queer culture in New Orleans, and features **Big Freedia**, a queer bounce artist. This inclusion and celebration of Southern culture cements Beyoncé's reputation as an artist with something important to say, aside from being a phenomenal entertainer.

"I slay" sings Beyoncé repeatedly in 'Formation', and no one in good conscience can argue otherwise.



Beyoncé slaying, again. Photo Credit: Beyoncé Foundation Video



Cartoon Corner: One Punch Man

Saad Ahmed
Television Editor

This anime is one which is a stark departure from how typical anime, or indeed superhero stories, usually are and that is a completely good thing. The biggest quality of this show is that it feels fresh and new. It was originally a webcomic which was so popular it got its own animated adaptation, and it is not hard to see why. The show features Saitama, our protagonist, who is so strong he can defeat all his enemies with, as the title suggests, one punch. What follows are episodes filled with intense action, outlandish hilarity, and just some plain, crazy fun.

The standard trope we see or experience is usually that of a chosen or gifted hero, who must learn all the skills necessary to defeat the villain. This show flips that trope on its head in an awesome parody kind of way. Our hero is so strong that

all his battles end with one punch, and because of this, he is literally bored and just wants to find a worthy opponent (along with some fans). The reason he got that way? He trained on his own so hard he went bald (I'm not making this up). Despite all his immense power, the best you can describe his personality as is stoic, humble and a little unremarkable.

The mostly standalone episodes feature our hero meeting, and

Our hero is so strong that all his battles end with one punch

defeating, different villains and monsters as well as meeting other heroes along the way. Everyone



Gearing up for the ultimate KO punch. Photo Credit: Daisuki

reacts in differing and amusing ways when seeing Saitama's attitude as well as his strength. There is also a simple ongoing plot thread about Saitama trying to become a more professional hero and wanting to be treated with more respect from everyone else. The succession of battles all pile up, ultimately culminating in the final showdown towards the last few episodes. The plot, although simple and minimalist, has made this anime one of the best to ever hit the world. One Punch Man has shown that you do not need an over-the-top protagonist, someone hell bent on taking over the world or a grand adventure to be entertaining.

This show doesn't try to be funny yet it is a large bundle of laughs. A lot of hilarity comes from seeing the villains and monsters (and sometimes heroes) scoff at Saitama's appearance and brag about their own strength, only to be promptly dealt with in one hit. It also helps that Saitama almost always has a bored expression and is completely non-plussed about anything happening around him and everyone he confronts. For example, in one awesome encounter, a monster states he's going to go on a rampage for one week, all the way to Saturday, and Saitama is shocked because it means he missed the Saturday supermarket sale, leading him to punch out the monster's guts in frustration.

Obviously just seeing countless

monsters get defeated would get old rather quickly, so to add something different, other heroes show up as the show progresses with some of them having recurring or supporting roles. A plot point is that all the heroes are divided into different

The fight scenes are also all wonderfully rendered; you can see and feel every impact

ranks, set by the Hero Association, and their power set and attitudes usually reflects their status. It's refreshing to see new players enter the playing field and see what they bring to the table. They approach problems and other characters in unique ways and it's entertaining to see the interplay between them.

One of the problems of the show, however, is that some of these heroes aren't developed enough and come off as one dimensional. In particular, the S-rank hero Tornado

suffers the most as she comes off as a bratty girl with a lot of power and an unlikable personality. The same problem could be extended to the villains and monsters, but as they are usually taken out in the episode they appear in, it's not so much an issue with them. Honestly, this is a relatively small issue and I'm basically nitpicking here.

The animation quality of the show is top-notch. All the monsters are animated with great detail and each episode is a visual delight. The fight scenes are also all wonderfully rendered; you can see and feel every impact and force behind all the punches and attacks. There are also subtle touches in the animation which are much appreciated. For example, seeing Saitama's eyes changing expression depending on the intensity of the situation as well as the monsters' faces going from deadly and full of rage to glassy eyed and dead.

One Punch Man deserves all the popularity and praise it has considering what it has accomplished. It might not be a great battle series with an original story but it is an excellent parody and action series. This anime is entertaining, unique and definitely a fun watch and with only 12 episodes out so far, there is little reason for you not to watch. It is with eager anticipation, that we all wait for season two.

One Punch Man is available on Daisuki and Hulu



The Triumph of War and Peace

Anurag Deshpande
Writer

When it was announced that the BBC would be producing another adaptation of Tolstoy's epic tome, I, like many others, was intrigued. Then came the news that veteran showrunner Andrew Davies, who has written or produced for the likes of everything from Bridget Jones to Pride and Prejudice, would be the guiding hand. This split people into mainly two camps; those who, like me, were reassured, and others who felt this was an affront to Tolstoy's spirit. These purists believed that Davies would use this as nothing but an excuse to give us a sexed-up trapeze through the 19th century glitterati. They weren't entirely wrong. But, in his defence, the show runner only does this by showing us directly some of the subtext of the novel; subtext that Tolstoy did not elucidate himself only because the social trappings of his era did not let him.

If you're not familiar with this behemoth of fiction, War and Peace follows five families from the aristocracy of 19th century Russia. We follow the lives and struggles of these people on the eve of Russia's war with Napoleon and through the following years.

Another area of concern, one more

justified, was the compact length of the adaptation. Six episodes is dangerously thin space to cover the monolithic text. As such, the success of this adaptation depended greatly on the calibre of the actors within it, and their capability to impart Tolstoy's complexities to us through their emotion. I'm pleased to say that, in this regard, the production

We follow the lives and struggles of these people on the eve of Russia's war with Napoleon

succeeds admirably.

Whoever did the casting deserves a bonus. Paul Dano is pitch-perfect as the hapless Pierre Bezukhov, doing that typical Paul Dano thing of looking and acting like a lost puppy. Lily James also shines here, surprising with her range and evocativeness as the innocent Natasha Rostova. I liked her just fine in Downton, but she really didn't get this kind of opportunity



Two lost puppies in the wild. Photo Credit: BBC



Reserved Regality. Photo Credit: BBC

to flex her acting muscles there. This performance has got me hyped for Pride and Prejudice and Zombies. The real revelation, however, is Jessie Buckley as the ever beleaguered Marya Bolkonkaya. She manages to convey immaculately the character's tight-rope walk between reserved strength and deep sadness. If there's any weak link here it's Jack Lowden as Nikolai Rostov. It's not so much that the acting is bad, but rather that the character is just played, or possibly written, incorrectly. Instead of being fraught by his divided loyalties, Nikolai just comes across as a fickle asshole with no real regard for anyone else.

The previously mentioned short length does create some pacing issues, however. The series practically ignores Helene towards the end, although the few scenes in which she features are poignantly performed. Additionally, there are a few moments here and there that don't quite have the impact they should because we just haven't spent as much time with the characters as would have been appropriate. Perhaps the worst case of this is Petya Rostov's death where, to be completely honest, I barely gave a shit.

Tolstoy himself would be quite pleased with this distillation of his tonic against doom

The first half of the series, at first glance, seems to be more focused on the romance and court intrigue aspects of the plot. This isn't necessarily a criticism per se, as it is a good way to pull in more casual audiences, and eases the viewer into the story without immediately bombarding them with Tolstoy's heavy philosophising. Additionally,

the reasoning for this structure becomes beautifully apparent in one moment in episode 5, with Andrei Bolkonsky's and Anatole Kuragin's meeting on the battlefield. It serves to make us experience the full force of Andrei's realisation by making us undergo it at the same time. Just as he realises how trivial the small transgressions and struggles of egos back home are in the face of the great human tragedy of war, so too does the audience.

I also have some final stray observations on the series. Firstly, I love the use of lighting in this series. In particular, for Natasha and its relation to her development. Also, the memorial montage for Andrei, and its format are downright absurd. It feels like someone accidentally cut in a wedding video from the 80s and actually caused me to laugh when I first watched it.

Some of the self-proclaimed guardians of high literature may take issue with Davies' initial approach to the series. Thing is, at the end of the day, War & Peace is a love story. Okay, that's a little disingenuous. Rather, it's about the great cruelty of the world and the secret, fragile, yet immensely powerful weapons against it; love and compassion. Everyone behind this adaptation clearly seems to understand this, certainly better than its detractors. Ultimately, I think Tolstoy himself would be quite pleased with this distillation of his tonic against doom & gloom, and all it tries to accomplish.

War and Peace is on iPlayer

FELIX CLUBS & SOCS



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London Students' Neuroscience Network

An impressive collaboration for the London medical schools neuroscience societies

Jingjie Chen
Arts Editor

[Nobel Laureate] John O'Keefe spoke to an overflowing SAF

Last weekend, Imperial played host to the largest ever student-led Neuroscience conference, organised under the banner of the London Students' Neuroscience Network (LSNeuroN). For the first time, neuroscience societies of the five London medical schools – Imperial, UCL, King's College London, Bart's and St George's – collaborated to put together the weekend affair, consisting of keynote speeches and a wide variety of symposia organised by each neuroscience society, as well as a poster prize session.

Keynote speakers included Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine 2014 Professor John O'Keefe, who spoke to an overflowing SAF lecture theatre about his discovery of "place cells" that form a kind of "inner GPS" of the brain, for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize. Professor John Donoghue, who hails all the way from Brown University in the states, was here to talk about his work which allows paralysed people to control artificial limbs with their thoughts. Professor Maria Spillantini travelled from Cambridge to talk about her work on neurodegenerative disease, while

Sir Colin Blakemore spoke about the workings of perception.

In addition to the impressive line-up of big names in neuroscience, the selection of symposia showcased the latest research in all aspects of neuroscience, from a panel discussing artificial intelligence to a neuroscience ethics workshop to an exploration of the interactions between neuroscience and art. Imperial's Neuroscience Society organised the wildly popular brain dissection workshop by Professor Steve Gentleman, where delegates got to see first-hand the dissection



The organising committee with John O'Keefe. Photo Credit: Alan Liu, MBBS-PhD programme

of a preserved brain and explore its pathology. Professor David Nutt was also there to give his talk on psychoactive substances, which was followed by a heated debate about the risks and benefits of recreational drugs.

Interestingly, part of a Channel 5 documentary on a child born with just 2 per cent of brain matter

(but who is now a developing normally as a toddler) was filmed at the conference, as delegates were inspired by the family's story and a short presentation on the science behind it. The conference was also a fantastic networking opportunity for students in the field, as they were introduced to the most exciting research and the people involved. Delegates had a chance to mingle with top researchers in the field during the wine reception (which featured a live band!) as well as learn from each other during the poster presentation session.

Over the two days, the conference attracted almost 400 delegates from all over the country and even a significant number from abroad. They were a mix of undergraduate medical students, masters and PhD students, as well as post-doctoral researchers and professionals working in related fields such as music therapy.

This would not have been possible without the contributions and hard work from all the universities, fulfilling LSNeuroN's aim to foster collaboration among the neuroscience community in London. This is its biggest event to date, and a promising testament to the variety and quality that can result from such a collaboration.

Over the two days, the conference attracted almost 400 delegates from all over the country

Imperial's Neuroscience Society is proud to be involved as part of the core and organising committees of the conference and a host of this very successful conference.



Brain dissection. Photo Credit: Azmi Rahman, Year 1 Medicine

FELIX CLUBS & SOCS



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The Imperial Volunteers Dinner

Ju Yoo
Writer

Over the past few months, my team and I have been organising an event called PwC Presents: Volunteer Dinner; an event to celebrate the hard-work of Imperial's volunteers, to help promote volunteering societies and to build new relationships between societies. There's been a huge wealth of support for this new event and I hope that this dinner will help other volunteers as I hope it will help me.

As chair of a relatively new society (ICSM Connect) it's been, at times, difficult to build up a new community. Volunteer Dinner was dreamt up as an answer to my own problems. Like many volunteering groups, the strength of our society is built on the strength of our teams and every term we're faced with new challenges, from finding sponsorship to training. It's easy to see other similar volunteer societies tackling the same problems yet there are very few opportunities to

find out how they overcome their challenges.

Unlike sports or arts, there are no drunken Wednesday nights at the Reynolds/Metric for alcohol-induced bonding. And as much I enjoy getting drunk and could imagine myself chanting "Volunteer for old people! Volunteer for old people!" grabbing onto unfortunate nearby strangers, there's something that just doesn't seem right about that image. It's not what normally springs to mind when thinking about the galas and balls usually associated with volunteering.

Volunteer Dinner is all about finding out more about each other and how we can help one another. Volunteers are a similar breed and the truth is, if you're a student willing to give up copious hours of your time to help out others, without the need for recognition or glorification then you have a unique characteristic or virtue.

One of the promotional ideas for the Volunteer Dinner was to release a 'Humans of New York' style video series to Facebook entitled 'Volunteers of Imperial' where we'd



PwC Presents: Volunteer Dinner organisational committee. Photo Credit: Ju Yoo

ask two or three questions to get volunteers to chat with the camera. Out of this we found almost every volunteer had very similar answers: I do it because I love helping people and being there to listen to their stories and their hardships. I do it for my team, working together to

face worthwhile challenges. I just enjoy volunteering, there's nothing more to it.

So, if you're a volunteer, or if you're interested in finding out more about various volunteering societies and meeting the committee of these societies, then this a dinner for

you. We've got a really nice venue (Double Tree by Hilton hotel), some great musical entertainment, some prizes to give out and a really awesome menu. Plus, support from PwC's sponsorship is letting us keep it cheap. So please consider coming and I hope to see you there!

Picocon 33: Origins - 20th February



Guests of Honour, Michelle Paver, Paul Cornell and Carrie Hope Fletcher. Photo Credit: www.michellepaver.com, www.paulcornell.com, www.carriehopefletcher.com

Picocon is a small convention run by Imperial College Science Fiction and Fantasy Society (ICSF). It is one of the only entirely student-run conventions, and it has been held in late February each year for 33 years – this February 20th marking Picocon 33.

Picocon has a long history of having Guests of Honour, who are famous or up and coming authors in the Sci-Fi or Fantasy genres, including Cory Doctorow, Jaime

Fenn, Alastair Reynolds, Frances Hardinge and many more. These Guests of Honour (GoH) give talks about their books and the theme of the year.

This year's GoH are Michelle Paver, Author of *The Chronicles of Ancient Darkness*, Paul Cornell, previous screen-writer for *Doctor Who*, and author of several comics and the novels *Shadow Police* series, and Carrie Hope Fletcher who played Beth in the *War of the Worlds* musical. Her debut fantasy novel,

On the Other Side, is coming out this summer. She is currently playing Eponine in the West End in *Les Miserables*.

There is an author's panel where the authors can be asked questions by the attendees, and Turkey Readings in collaboration with RAG, where examples of books so badly written are read out so that people will pay to prevent the reading from continuing (or to make it keep going!).

Silly Games is an event where we

imitate various gameshows, and we also have Destruction of Dodgy Merchandise, where examples of terribly misguided merchandise are bid on to be saved or dunked in liquid nitrogen and smashed by the highest bidder. The proceeds from all go to charity. This year, as last year, Stuart Ashens is coming to Imperial from the Youtube domain to chair the auctioning of the merchandise.

Alongside the games and panels there will be a variety of stalls selling everything from our own Picocon merchandise to jewellery and even professionally illustrated prints by Autun Purser.

The Pub Quiz will be in Metric, with teams captained by our GoH! Finally, we also have an event known simply as Harmless Fun.

The theme of this year's Picocon event is 'Origins'. Upon investigation, there were two origin stories for the convention – one being that it was a gathering of ICSF members to play board-

games at another's house which they decided to simply escalate; the other being that the first ever Picocon was actually an organised ICSF trip to a different convention in Glasgow, whereupon the group decided that they should make a convention like that themselves! Picocon's name was reportedly coined by Steven Barnett, when it was observed that it was a very small convention – earning it the prefix 'pico'!

Picocon has come far over the years, from a trip to a different convention entirely (or board games in a flat!) to a well known London Sci-Fi convention. This year, it will be held on Saturday 20th of February. Registration begins at 9am on the day in Beit Quad. Tickets can be bought from the union website or on the day at registration, with concession prices for students and further reductions for ICSF members.

NOOR N MULHERON

FELIX PUZZLES



fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk

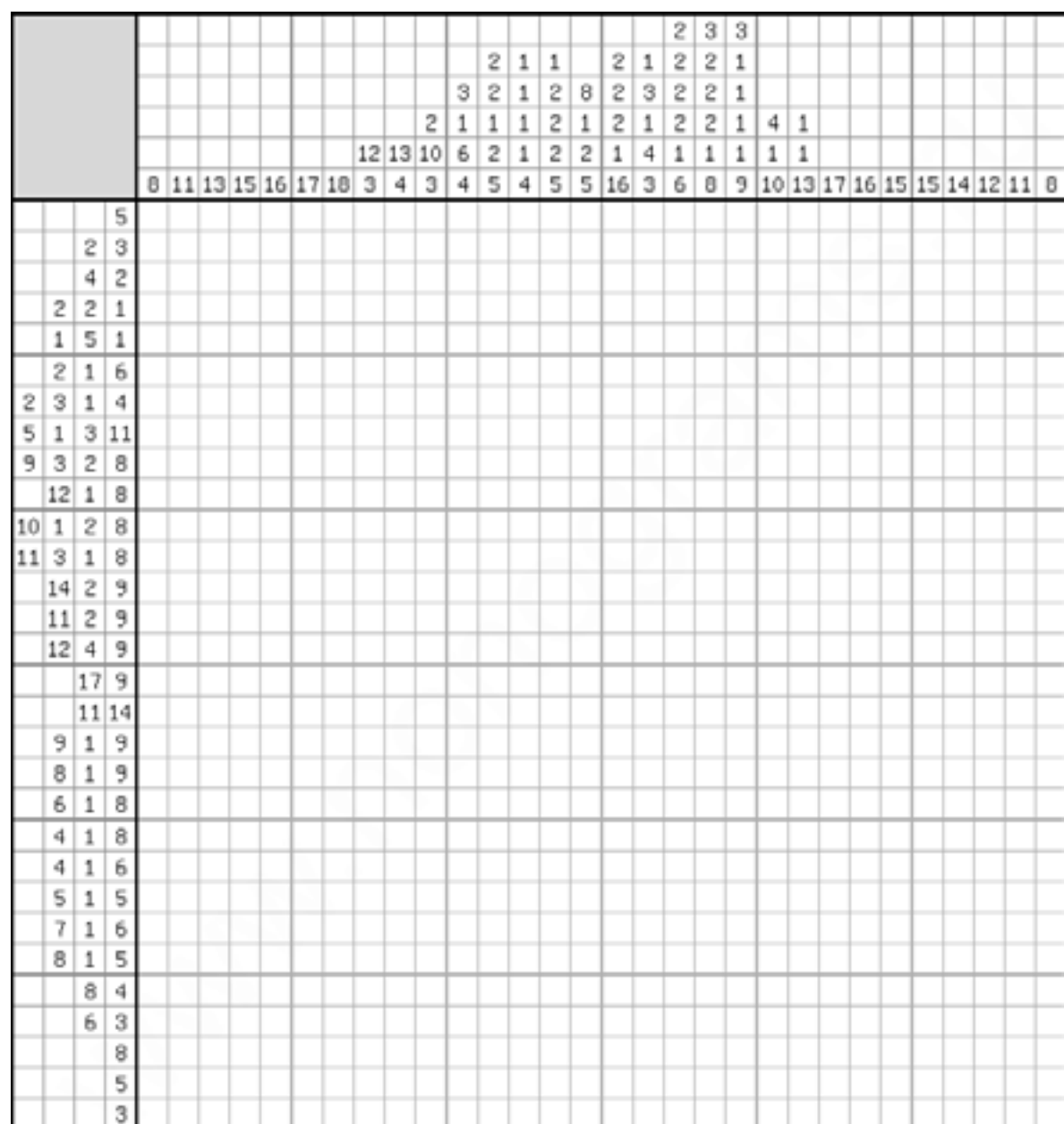
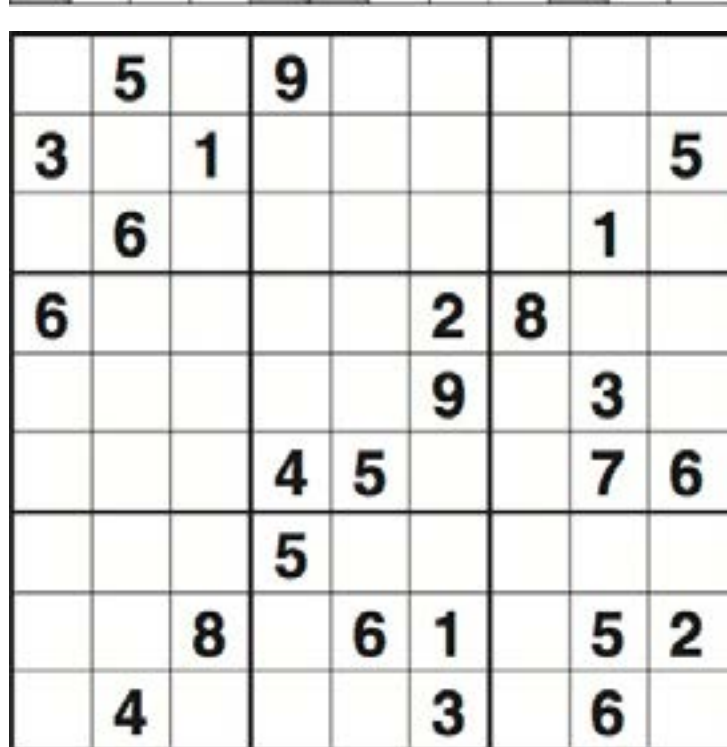
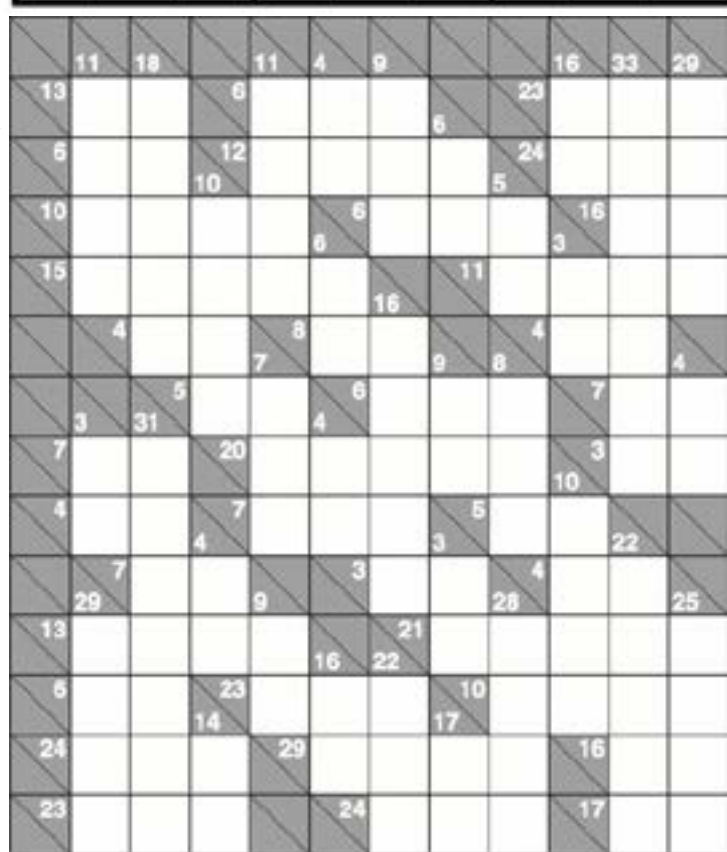
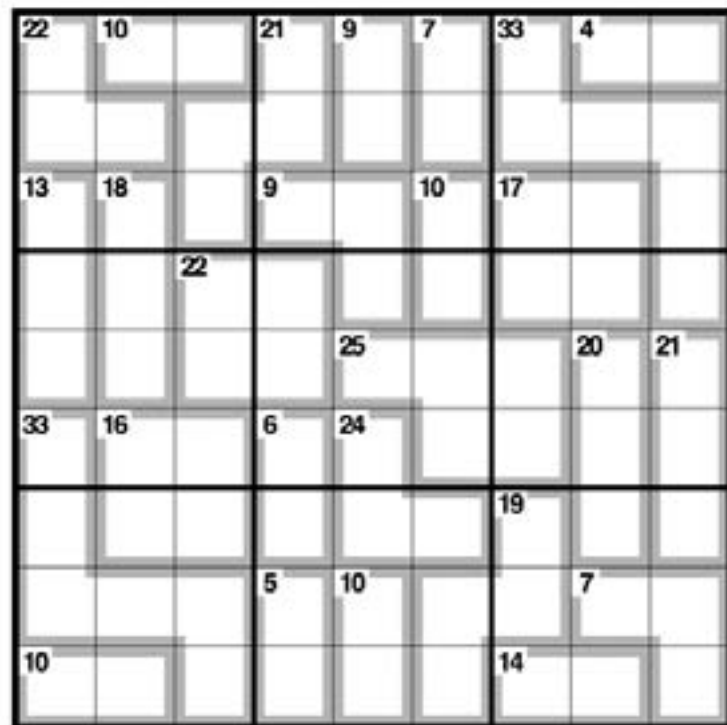
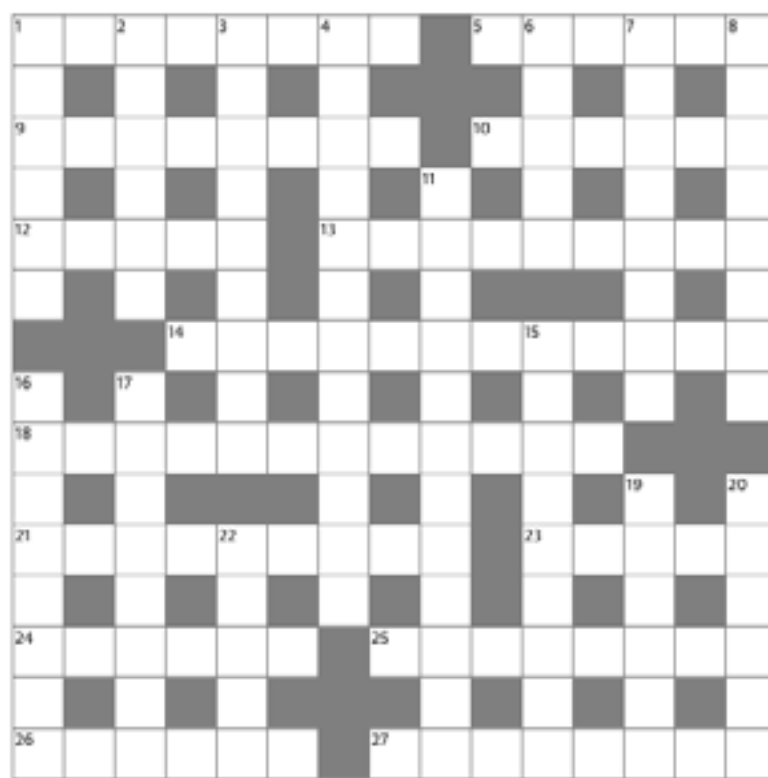
Across

- 1 Lots more kids, but only a little noise? (4,4)
- 5 Material is excellent, endlessly ornate (6)
- 9 What about learner at race, perhaps well down the grid? (8)
- 10 Prayer of saint to be set among the stars (6)
- 12 Observed leading Scotsmen like a piper (5)
- 13 African grower available to engage tennis champion (5,4)
- 14 Musician's skill rescued tarnished gig (5-7)
- 18 Horse so sick, tamed and patted on the back (6-6)
- 21 Drink in large amounts during music's ending (5,4)
- 23 Crowd keep listening (5)
- 24 Short cut through lab maze? (3,3)
- 25 Pastoralist finds the way to part of India (8)
- 26 Resolve unfinished plan by end of year (6)
- 27 Led follower to create flyer (8)

Down

- 1 Start to read through Waugh's daily: this once on page 3? (6)
- 2 Little to keep king leaving union (6)
- 3 In Ireland, be awfully poor on this (9)
- 4 Safe now to serve beer so? (3,2,3,4)
- 6 With beginnings of asthma, is reaching with hesitation for ventilator (5)
- 7 Part of day fine ... stop! (8)
- 8 It's cold beside the road; get closer (8)
- 11 Sluggish, not in going under old porch but on top (4,3,5)

- 15 Egyptian leader with a popular record attracts people (9)
- 16 Jack, abandoning tasks, smoked behind screen (8)
- 17 Couple rowing; I'd come running across the street (8)
- 19 Ancient method of trial, or coming to agreement (6)
- 20 Carrying burdens across back of mule that's slow (6)
- 22 Large hill finally converted to small one (5)



FELIX PUZZLES



fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk



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

MY FMI SIUYN OIB HQVVIK
 5 6 1 5 8 3 8 3 6 2 2 8 4 1 3 5 5 8 4
 YVBYQUIG KMQK OIB NMIXSB
 6 5 4 6 3 3 8 3 4 5 3 4 2 8 4 2 5 8 2 3 4
 SIUY MZD ZV GYKXGV
 3 8 3 6 5 2 1 2 5 3 6 4 2 3 5



FUCWIT

Solo Efforts

1 st	Nicholas Sim	178
2 nd	Cherry Kwok	177
3 rd	Greg Poyser	50
4 th	Ayojedi	33
5 th	David Fengchu	
	Zhang	14
=6 th	Jan Xu	13
=6 th	Sach Patel	13
7 th	Harry Secrett	10
8 th	Joshua Wan	8
9 th	Ho Chin	7.5
=10 th	Grace Chin	3
=10 th	Jeremy Ong	3
11 th	Megha Agrawal	2

Groups

1 st	Pufulezzi	93
2 nd	CP Fanclub	67
3 rd	Gap Yahhhh	58.5
4 th	Parmesan	9.5

Points Available

Crossword	4
Nonogram	4
Kakuro	3
Killer Sudoku	3
Sudoku	2
Chess	2
Word Search	3
Cryptogram	2
Word Wheel	1
Riddle	1

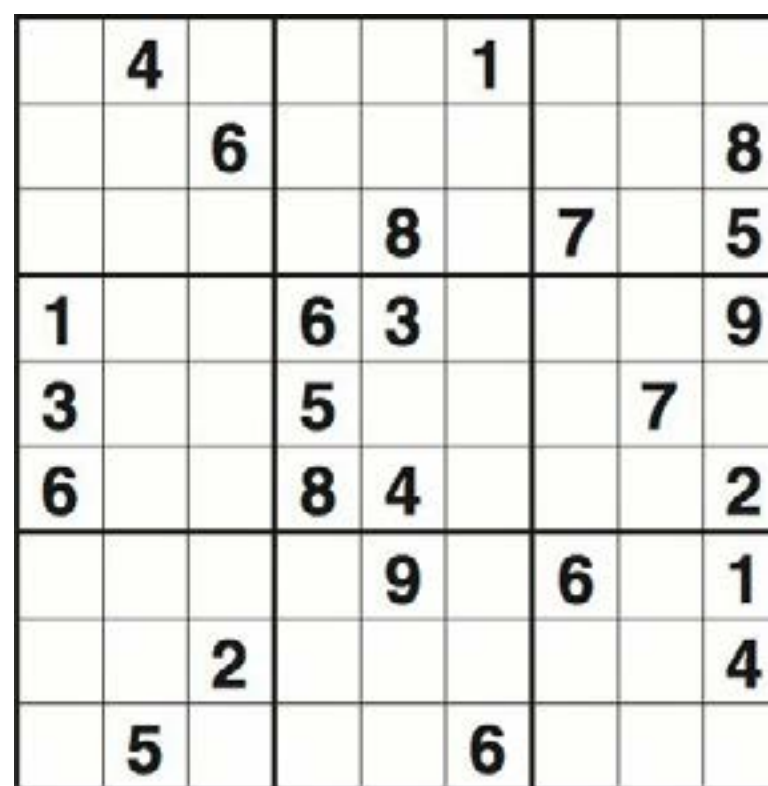
Send in your solutions to fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk before midday on Wednesday!

Solutions

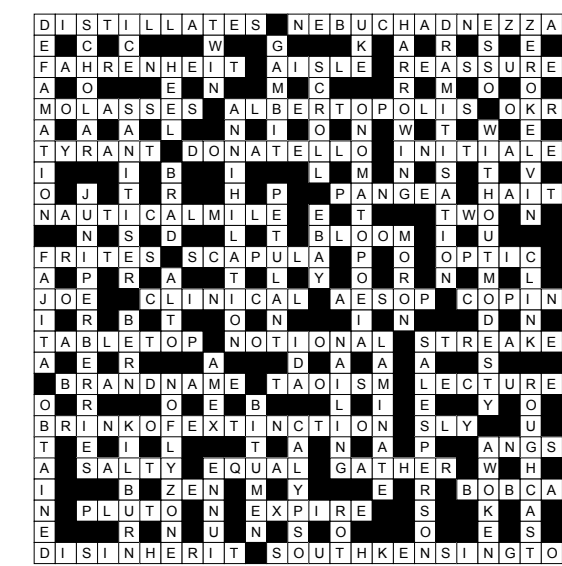
9 7 3 1 4 2 5 6 8	3 8 2 9 6 7 4 1 5
2 5 8 7 3 6 9 1 4	9 5 6 3 1 4 8 7 2
4 6 1 8 5 9 2 7 3	1 7 4 5 8 2 9 3 6
8 1 6 3 2 4 7 5 9	8 9 5 1 4 3 2 6 7
3 9 2 5 8 7 6 4 1	4 2 1 6 7 5 3 9 8
7 4 5 9 6 1 3 8 2	6 3 7 8 2 9 1 5 4
6 8 9 2 1 5 4 3 7	7 6 8 2 9 1 5 4 3
5 3 7 4 9 8 1 2 6	5 4 9 7 3 8 6 2 1
1 2 4 6 7 3 8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

Riddle

I never was, am always to be,
 No one ever saw me, nor ever will
 And yet I am the confidence of all
 To live and breathe on this terrestrial ball



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



Imperial College London



Student Support Fund

If you suddenly find yourself in **financial difficulties** or experience an unexpected change in circumstances, you may be eligible to apply for **emergency financial help** through the Student Support Fund.

**CONTACT THE STUDENT
FINANCIAL SUPPORT TEAM
TO FIND OUT MORE:**

+44 (0)20 7594 9014

Student Hub, Level 3,
Sherfield Building

www.imperial.ac.uk/fees-and-funding

FELIX HANGMAN



hangman@imperial.ac.uk

Diary of a Sabb

Monday 8th February

Dear Diary,
My uncle once said that "With great power comes great responsibility." I've been in this position for more than half a year and only now am I beginning to feel the power surge through me. It's like ecstasy flowing through my veins. I thought I was the chosen one; that I would destroy the union and its endless bureaucracy, not join them. During those sleepless nights, I always ask myself the same question: am I truly transparent?
Have I broken the sacred promise of my manifesto? In the history books will they remember me as the translucent one?

Thursday 11th February

Dear Diary,
Today I realised (again) that I'm not ready for a world outside of university. My delusions of grandeur earlier in the week have finally subsided. Mum and dad said I can't come and live at home with them after that last incident so I guess I have no other choice but to run for a sabbatical position again. What shall I be Deputy President of this time? The DP of Love? The sad, lonely faces I see when I walk to the Library to pick up a copy of the university "newspaper" weigh heavy on my heart. I wish I could help. Maybe, I've finally found my cause.



HOROSCOPES



ARIES

This week RAG have wronged you so you summon the all-powerful Storm Imogen. However, the meagre winds only serve to delay the bungee jump organised to collect money for the children of Great Ormond Street Hospital, and RAG's activities continue.



TAURUS

This week you manage to acquire a copy of the banned RAG mag from a guy who knows a guy. College officials hunt you down and you finish the remainder of the term in Guantanamo Bay. Hey, at least it's a shorter commute than Woodward.



GEMINI

This week you complain about college censorship. That in itself leads to you being censored, thus cancelling out the original censorship allowing free speech to reign. Everybody wins!



CANCER

This week you see your old roommate from first year; however, they are particularly frosty towards you and you have no idea why. Your friend then reminds you that you had a threesome in your room whilst she was sleeping. That'll be it.



LEO

This week, under the stress of the coursework that's due in on Monday, you start to have vivid sex dreams about your tutor. The next day in labs you find it difficult to look her in the eye as she passes you a long, hard pipette and tells you not to put the tip in.



VIRGO

This week after yelling out your girlfriend's mums name during sex and then putting it in the horoscopes, she is not particularly happy. She tells all her friends that it was just a joke and it didn't really happen. But it did.



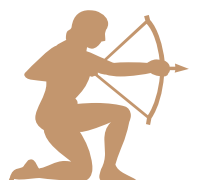
LIBRA

This week you try to infect yourself with a tropical virus in order to get out of doing an exam; however, instead of infecting yourself with diphtheria you contract dick-offthoria and your penis falls off. Okay it's a bit weak but go with it.



SCORPIO

This week you discover that your new fetish is putting vegetables on top of your boyfriend whilst having sex. It starts with an innocent bell pepper but by about week four you just start just fucking him with a butternut squash.



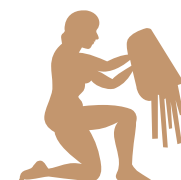
SAGITTARIUS

This week you are still struggling with your porn addiction; however, you run into some trouble as it has started to slow down the entire college wi-fi. IT send you an email to please stop.



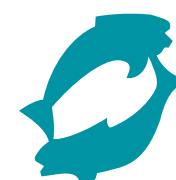
CAPRICORN

This week you gorge yourself on pancakes to the extent that you put on about 50 kilograms. After some emergency liposuction, you take this extra piece of fat away and keep it as a pet. You call it Cuthbert.



AQUARIUS

This week, you ban yourself. You're banned. No more you. But now everyone wants you. You can't deal with all this attention, so you try and become less controversial. But now you're just a boring A5 leaflet of a man. Sad.



PISCES

This week you hear debates all over campus about a new food craze so you decide to have a go yourself. You take some fuzzy-skinned orange fruit and chill them right down to a low low temperature. Mmmmm, freeze peach. Oh wait.



Imperial squash opposition

Incredible performance from squash to nick title from favourites

Ian Jubb & Tom Readshaw
Writers

Last weekend saw the return of the prestigious Roehampton Club University Cup, with 16 mixed teams across the country playing in a tournament renowned for its high standard of squash.

Since winning the inaugural tournament Imperial had sat on the sidelines as team after team had lifted the glorious Roehampton Cup. The first team from Imperial, made up of Ian Jubb, Jez Carter, James McCouat, Tom Readshaw (captain), and Ann Babbie, had their confidence smashed in the very first match of the tournament when they were drawn against the mighty Leicester in the group stages. Leicester, now taking after their local football team, were a force to be reckoned with as they took the win from Imperial 3-2.

Meanwhile, the second Imperial team, made up of Kharthik Chakravarthy, Sam Horne, Nick Dunn (captain), Ujval Jaipuria, and Uttara Raju, had their work cut out for them in a tough group containing LSE, Kings and Bristol. They gave the other teams a good run for their money but ultimately came up short. The first team picked themselves up, remembered their training, and went on to batter eternal rivals UCL and Bristol 2nd's



The whole gang. Photo Credit: Imperial Squash

to secure their place in the quarter-finals against Leicester 2nds.

After destroying Leicester's 2nd team in an attempt to intimidate their 1sts (who were now blazing towards the final from the other half of the draw) Imperial 1sts were set

to take on Bristol in the semi-final. Meanwhile, Imperial 2nds managed to beat Kings 2nds 3-2 before finally succumbing to UCL 3-2 to finish in a commendable 14th place. Tensions were high at semi-final time as Imperial and Bristol were drawn at

2-2.

The hopes of playing in the final fell on Ian Jubb to win the deciding match. With almost unnatural composure he secured the win and Imperial's place in the final against the big dogs, Leicester. Fuelled by

revenge (and the club's excellent Sunday roast dinner), Imperial were ready for the final. With fantastic performances from all of the team, and victories in some extremely tight matches, Imperial overcame unlikely odds to reclaim their place as champions of the Roehampton squash tournament.

The prize giving followed, with a memorable and witty speech from team captain turned comedian Tom Readshaw being a particular highlight. As reward for an outstanding performance each player received a Bohemian crystal trophy, VIP tickets to Canary Wharf squash classic and a year's squash membership at Roehampton Club, valued at around £500.

Imperial
overcame
unlikely
odds to
reclaim their
place as
champions

Relegation for the Immortals after Kingston loss

In our last home game of the regular season, the Immortals faced the Kingston Cougars. After an amazing performance against the Lions last Sunday, the team was confident coming into the game. However, after a long and hard-fought game, the final score was 12-20 to the Cougars.

Early on in the game, the defensive team were moving around, causing a lot of havoc on Kingston's offense. Multiple penalties were called, particularly false starts from the Cougar's offensive side. As a result, the line

of scrimmage was continuously moved up field, closer and closer to the end zone. Finally, the defense were able to force a punt, opening up the flood-gates for the offensive team. With an extremely impressive drive, Quarterback, Kevin Kimono, rushed into the end zone getting the first touchdown of the day (2-point conversion was unsuccessful). With a tiring and injury-filled defense, multiple offensive linemen filled in on defense and held the Cougars into the half with a score of 6-7.

In the second half, a frustrated Cougars side adapted to our vocal

defense by introducing clap snaps in the hopes of reducing penalties going against them. This failed to stop Sam 'No Chill' Hill laying a filthy sack on the quarterback and Alex 'heads down' Brockhurst laying him out in another play. Well done Alex!

On the other hand, running back Papa Noach Ben-Haim made some very impressive runs gaining a lot of yards, however, a fumble resulted in a turnover and ultimately a touchdown by the Cougar's quarterback (kick was good), making the score 6-14. The offense came

back strong however, with multiple impressive run plays and the famous rolling maul, ending the third quarter deep inside Cougar territory. After a few plays, Josemi Idigoras completed his first reception and touchdown for the Immortals (two point conversion was unsuccessful), hopefully with many more to come for him! After a late touchdown from the Cougars, the game ended with a score of 12-20, unfortunately meaning that the Immortals are now officially relegated from the Premiership league, however, this also gives the team a chance to

rebuild and come back strong. This game's MVPs were: Sam Hill – for performing tremendously both ways, laying down tackles left, right, and centre; Markus Mohr – again for performing very well both ways; Harry Lawrence – covering well, making essential plays to stop passes; Race Koidan – for being a good laugh, a good lad, and an even more impressive versatile player; and David Rovick – for playing in a position he's never been in before and performing well.

PANUKORN
TALEONGPONG