



FELIX

The paper of Imperial College London



Our Oscar picks – who will win vs who should

PAGE 24 FILM

What happened to the RAG bungee jump?

PAGE 3 NEWS



Junior Doctors strike again

- Three dates set for 48-hour strikes
- Emergency care will still be provided
- Question over legality of newly imposed contract

England's Junior Doctors are set to strike again with three 48-hour walkouts planned for the coming two months, meaning that planned operations and procedures may well be affected, but emergency care will be maintained.

These strikes, to be held on 9th of March, and the 6th and 26th of April, are the consequence of the imposition of a new contract on the Junior Doctors last week by health secretary Jeremy Hunt, a contract which the British Medical Association (BMA) said would be "bad for the future of patient care, the profession and the NHS as a whole".

The disagreements between the government and the BMA largely revolves around patient safety,

working hours and basic pay rates, as well as what constitutes overtime, especially on weekends.

In the mean time, Junior Doctors have launched a legal challenge against the government over the imposition of the contract. They have applied for a judicial review to challenge the decision, and are expected to argue that the ministers haven't properly investigated whether the new contracts will discriminate against part-time doctors, and so likely unfairly impact women.

After a ballot conducted in November showed that 98% of the BMA's 38,000 strong cohort of doctors supported industrial action in protest to the contracts, Hunt's popularity has been slim among the profession and the wider public

too. He has been accused by the authors of an unpublished paper of manipulating figures, which he used last July when he said that 6000 people die per year due to the lack of what he called a "proper seven-day service".

This came to a head when Jeremy had to attend a cabinet meeting regarding the EU referendum on Saturday morning, the first time the cabinet has been in session on a weekend since 1982, which prompted a flurry of criticism on social media, mocking him over his weekend pay cuts and changes to "unsociable" hours.

Hunt is also the subject of the fifth most supported House of Commons petition, "Consider a vote of No Confidence..."

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Imperial President Alice Gast signs pro-EU letter

The *Sunday Times* published the open letter condemning 'Brexit'

Over one hundred leaders of UK universities, including the President of Imperial, Alice Gast, have signed an open letter published in the *Sunday Times*, asking the

British public to reject a 'Brexit' and vote to stay in the European Union.

The letter says universities are better able to "collaborate with partners" and that "our students are taught by the best minds" because

the UK is in the EU.

As well as stating the benefits to universities, the letter seeks to persuade voters that they should care about higher education as all of these EU-provided benefits have

a "direct impact on our economy, driving growth, generating jobs and improving people's lives".

It is unclear whether President Gast signed the letter in a personal capacity or on behalf of Imperial College, although the letter does state that "as university leaders we are committed to highlighting the value of EU membership to our universities". Imperial did return FELIX's request for clarification.

Whilst the short letter starts positively, listing the benefits EU membership provides, it goes on to say that leaving would mean "cutting ourselves off from established networks" and would ultimately "undermine" Britain's position as a

"leader in science".

The referendum date was announced by David Cameron on Saturday. It will take place on the 23rd of June, which is the penultimate day of Imperial's summer term. The mayor of London, Boris Johnson, came out to reporters on Sunday as a supporter of 'Brexit', or Britain leaving the EU, in a much-anticipated announcement.

British, Irish and Commonwealth citizens, as well as citizens from Cyprus, Malta and Ireland residing in the UK will be allowed to vote in the referendum. EU citizens will not be eligible to vote.

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FELIX EDITORIAL



felix@imperial.ac.uk

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A word from the Editor



Editor-in-Chief
Grace Rahman

Comment Editors
Tessa Davey and Vivien Hadlow

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Jane Courtnell and Lef Apostolakis

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Indira Mallik, Jingjie Cheng and Max Falkenberg

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Copy Editors
Mattin Mir-Tahmasebi, Anthony Voyage and Henry Lloyd-Laney

Cover picture by Matt Johnston

Hello to you. Now, let's get down to it. It's election time on multiple levels, and we should probably talk about both.

Yeah, this is the last week of freedom from Big Elections spam, so I'm going to lecture you about them – y'all should vote. Y'all should definitely vote.

We've seen some stuff happen in the last few weeks that has surprised a few of us by showing how much power the union really has. Don't you want some influence over who has that power? And, of course, who gets the power to manipulate what's really happening into a weekly bundle of news, features, entertainment and general digital content for Imperial generations Y and Z?

Next year, I will be long gone from this place. I will delete all of you off of Facebook (unless you have given me solidarity likes on my weaker

profile pictures) and only stop by the alumni office to drink free Diet Cokes when I'm at the V&A. I'm still going to vote in the freaking elections, and not just because I'm a hack or because on the union's voting stats page it shows how many out of the six sabbs have voted. I also feel morally obliged because of Emmeline Pankhurst and shit.

If you can, you should probably think about voting in the EU referendum as well. There's a good chance you've dropped off the electoral register, what with the Tory rule change, discouraged by the Electoral Commission, that's meant 770,000 names have been deleted. Yours could be one of them! C'mon they're reading of your texts, at least register to vote. The solution to this problem is inherently Googleable, and you just need a proof of address to make everything right again.

If you dodged voting last year because of your constituency was a



stronghold, voting in the referendum is arguably the first time your vote will matter as much as anyone else's. If you have any opinion on Britain's place in the world, trade blocs, human rights laws, or the ease with which British teens can interrail, you should probably have a little think about voting.

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Letters

Madam Editor,

I was surprised to see that President Alice Gast has signed the round-robin letter (Sunday Times 21/02/16) organised by the Britain Stronger in Europe group, which campaigns to keep the UK in a fundamentally unreformed EU at all costs. I hope Prof. Gast will make it clear that she supports the letter in a personal capacity and does not speak on behalf of the entire university, which of course contains a much greater diversity of opinion than this letter suggests.

I found it very curious that Prof. Gast believes that, "in the EU the UK is ... a more attractive destination for global talent". Surely to attract global talent we should adopt an immigration policy which treats all nationalities on an equal footing, rather than arbitrarily privileging EU immigrants over those from other countries. Allowing free movement from the EU in a time where restriction of immigration is government policy makes it more difficult for talented,

high calibre immigrants – such as President Gast herself – to join us.

What about collaboration? Neither CERN nor the European Space Agency, two of the world's greatest scientific collaborations, are EU bodies. Participation in the ERASMUS and Horizon 2020 programmes is not restricted to EU member states, so UK students would still have the opportunity to study abroad and academics would still be able to collaborate on international research if we vote to leave the EU.

Imperial is especially well placed to thrive post-Brexit due to its strong academic links with the East: "Imperial College London strives to be China's best academic partner in the West", as Prof. Gast recently said. Furthermore, many of the problems that scientists are trying to solve, such as climate change, are global rather than regional in nature. These problems require worldwide co-operation.

Finally, on funding. We all know that the UK is a large net contributor

to the EU budget. In the event of a Brexit, the UK government could match or increase the funding that research organisations receive from the EU. In any case, EU science funding is miniscule: the European Research Council plans to spend £1.3bn across the entire EU in 2016. The Department of Business, Innovation, and Skills will spend £5.8bn on UK research in the same time period.

In the 21st century, distance has never mattered less. Thanks to the Internet, it is as easy to collaborate with Auckland as with Aachen or Aberystwyth. We have always been an outward looking nation: In order to continue as a world leader, we must raise our eyes from the calcified trade bloc that is the EU and look to more distant horizons. The world is calling to us. How will we answer?

Jasper S. Menkus

It'll probably just go to voicemail.

-Ed.

DEMOCRACY AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
This issue

AMNESTY!
If you have ever felt lonely, boring, or in a...
PLEASE write to us once or twice by filling...
where it can be a positive action.
Write to: Felicity Hall, c/o Felix, Prince Consort Road, London SW7 2BB

ACCOMMODATION
There will be 18 places to stay available for...
to stay here as a student in...
Reservations must be made by...
The more you book in advance the more...
to be booked, and if you have any questions...
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Kitchen price £10...
all profits to...
to help the...
Please buy yours!

The EU referendum back in 1975 got a few Imperial students going then too.



Leeds university begins to sell its own bonds

The Russell Group uni will be investing the £250 million in student facilities

Grace Rahman
Editor-in-Chief

Leeds university has issued its own bond, with an interest rate comparable to the UK government's own low-risk Gilt.

In an attempt to attract more international students, Leeds will use the cash to invest in its infrastructure, including "high quality facilities that will enhance student education" according to the university's Vice-Chancellor, Sir Alan Langlands.

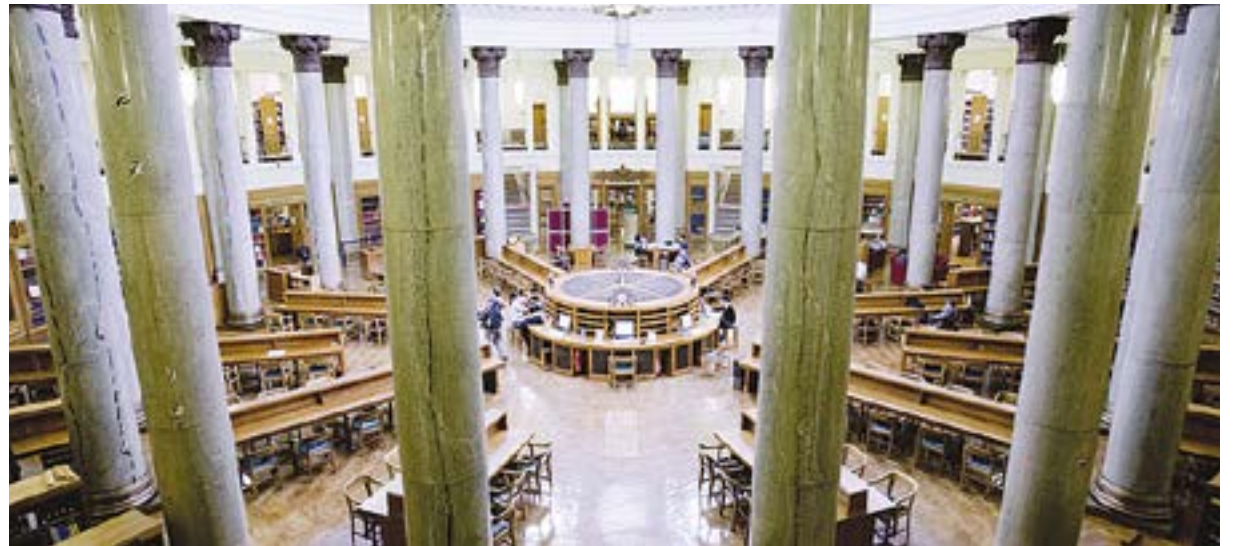
Barclays, HSBC and Lloyds Bank are acting as joint bookrunners, meaning they will effectively manage the issue of bonds on Leeds' behalf.

The bonds are worth £250 million in total, will return 3.125% and are due in 34 years. This interest rate is around 1% higher than the government's 30 year bond.

University bonds are a steady bet while interest rates remain low.

Several other universities including Cardiff and Cambridge have launched bonds in the last few years that have proved popular, with £1.25 billion's worth being issued. The constant stream of tuition fee income and the promise of government backing if anything were to go spectacularly

University bonds are a steady bet while interest rates remain low



They have bonds, and arguably a nicer library. Photo Credit: Which? University

wrong make investment in higher education facilities in the UK look like a pretty safe bet for pension funds and insurance firms.

However, the Financial Times warns investors to keep an eye out on the government's immigration rules if they're planning on buying. The loans are being used to fund investment in student

accommodation, teaching and new infrastructure, all in an attempt to attract international students who pay fees between £15,000 and £31,000 per year over home and EU students' measly £9000. Visa changes could mean that international student numbers could fall again as they did last year by 3% across the UK. At Imperial,

the number of overseas (non-EU) students was actually up 9.4% in the 2014/15 academic year.

As the government mulls over responses to its Green Paper on higher education, which proposed a series of radical changes to university funding, facilities are looking at all options to keep their income steady in the face of reform.

Cancelled RAG bungee jump green lit by college

- Alice Gast worried about proximity to buildings
- Cancelled three days before due to take place

Grace Rahman
Editor-in-Chief

Despite knowing about it since November, college officials cancelled the jump just three days before it was due to take place, over health and safety concerns.

The RAG committee were contacted by senior college officials last Friday, who told them the bungee jump would not be happening.

The jump was rescheduled last week due to unsuitable weather conditions, and there were no concerns voiced by college over the safety of the event then. The latest cancellation had nothing to do with

weather, with sources citing issues with health and safety.

A college spokesperson told us: "senior College safety staff have been carrying out final checks over the last week liaising with the new bungee jump supplier" which "unfortunately required the scheduled event to be postponed for a time".

"We are sorry for any inconvenience this caused to those taking part but grateful to all involved for their help in arranging for the rescheduled jump to go ahead."

RAG changed bungee supplier since last year, but only to switch to one deemed more financially stable by the union. The RAG committee informed college of this decision

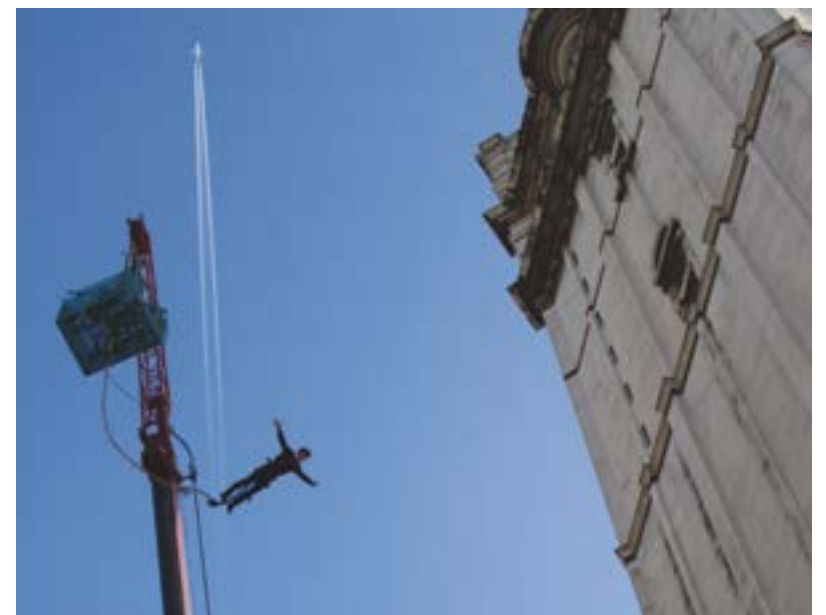
last year and all the relevant risk assessments had been sent to college Estates before Christmas. The plan was then okayed by college officials, as it is every year.

FELIX understands that the President of Imperial College, Alice Gast, herself may have then raised concerns about the jump, despite having been here for last year's.

On Tuesday, just after FELIX had published an article reporting the cancellation, college allowed RAG to provisionally re-arrange the event to the 21st and 22nd of March.

The bungee jump is a staple in the RAG week calendar, with students having jumped from a crane over Queen's Lawn for several years now.

This year, students paid £40 for the jump, and each had to raise the



Each to their own. Photo Credit: FELIX

same amount in sponsorship to take part.

It's not been an easy year for RAG, with their magazine effectively "banned" this month,

their committee threatened with academic sanctions over the publication and their jailbreak team being hauled off a flight after terrorism suspicions.



Kent students want Thatcher statue

In a story straight out of Hangman, Kent Union's Tory Society are campaigning for a 76m tall iron statue of the Iron Lady

Grace Rahman
Editor-in-Chief

Ding Dong, the witch is dead, but not for these students in Canterbury, who want a 70m tall idol of their idol built outside their union's Metric equivalent.

The campaign is in its second stage, which involves collecting signatures, having already been approved by their union.

The petition, which currently has 88 signatures, has ten more days to get the 150 it needs to proceed to the next level of consideration.

The Conservative Society's chair says although it started off as a way to highlight flaws in the union's petitioning system, they are now "going to run with it".

This is not the first time Kent University's Conservative Society has campaigned for a statue of Thatcher. Two years ago, just after her death, a committee member

called for a marble statue of her likeness to be built by the union. Unsurprisingly, he was downvoted to oblivion.

Thatcher, who was the first female Prime Minister and in office throughout the entirety of the 1980s, was a fierce campaigner against unions, once calling unionised striking miners, "the enemy within".

It started off as a way to highlight flaws in the union's petitioning system



Over FELIX's dead body. Photo Credit: FELIX

Junior doctors announce three more strikes in response to contract imposition

continued from front page

"...in Jeremy Hunt, Health Secretary" which has currently over 320,000 signatories, making him, on paper, more unpopular than Syrian airstrikes.

Several Freedom of Information requests made by journalists into meetings the government has had with companies specialising in private healthcare have recently been rejected with the government citing the need for a "safe space" for ministers to discuss policy freely.

It is likely that this will not be the last of the story before the contacts come into force in August of this year with a spokesperson for David Cameron saying "it is regrettable if they are going to strike again. I'm sure discussions will continue".

MATT JOHNSTON & GRACE RAHMAN



More strikes are planned in the next two months. Photo Credit: Matt Johnston

Alice Gast signs letter urging public to remain in EU

continued from front page

Despite attempts by Labour and Lib Dem Lords last year to lower the age to 16, voters must also be 18 or over. It is suspected that 7.5 million people are missing from the electoral register. Students in halls must now sign themselves up, so go to gov.uk/register-to-vote to make sure you can vote on the 23rd.

It is likely that Imperial College Union will fund campaigns lead by

students for both sides, with grants of up to £400 available.

There is also the possibility that a motion for either camp could be presented at Union Council, which could then potentially be voted in as an official union stance.

The Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, the President of the LSE, the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford and the Provost of UCL were also among the 103 university leaders who signed the letter.



Brexit-er Boris out on Exhibition Road. Photo Credit: Imperial College London

FELIX COMMENT



comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Scrapping over Scalia

The death of the conservative judge during the run up to elections means the seat could reain empty for eleven months



Nathaniel Gallop
Writer

Love him, hate him, agree or disagree with him, it is undeniable that US supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia was one of the most divisive and outspoken American political figures of this generation. A gifted jurist and bastion of American conservatism, his aggressive style of questioning and acerbic put-downs of opposing opinion made him respectively loved and reviled by Republicans and Democrats of all stripes. His passing, while away at a luxury ranch in Texas, in many ways marks the end of a political era.

It also marks the beginning of a desperate fight between Republicans and Democrats to secure control of his empty seat on the supreme Court. The Court itself is the highest level of judicial authority in America, consisting of nine members. Since Ronald Reagan appointed Scalia in 1986, there has been a modest majority of five associate Justices widely viewed as 'conservative'. With Scalia's passing, the partisan split between this 'conservative wing' and its liberal opposite number is even, meaning that whoever can secure the ninth seat left by the late Antonin Scalia will have a court favourably inclined towards their policies.

In this regard, President Obama

President Obama is at complete liberty to choose whomever we wishes

and his Democratic Party have an advantage. The process of appointing a justice to the supreme Court itself is governed by the US Constitution, which reads: " He [The President]



The judge divided opinion. Photo Credit: Wikipedia

shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint ... Judges of the supreme Court". The constitution is clear: the Senate (currently held by the opposing Republican Party) may sign off on a candidate put forward by the President. However, they cannot put forward a candidate of their own.

This brings us to our current quandry: President Obama is at complete liberty to choose whomever we wishes to sit on the court, provided the GOP (Republican) controlled senate approves. However, in the wake of Scalia's passing, Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell has vowed to prohibit any appointments made before the next President assumes office in January 2017, eleven months from now.

McConnell's supremely irresponsible stance on Obama's supreme Court nomination will leave the Court without a ninth sitting Justice for almost an entire year, severely weakening it's ability to set a binding precedent on a number of important upcoming cases. His argument that, because 2016 is an election year, nomination should wait until the next President

assumes office, is little more than sophistry: no fewer than five other nominations to the supreme Court have been made in election years. Under this light, McConnell's call for a delay is, in equal measures, both intellectually dishonest and crassly partisan, a thinly-veiled gamble in the hope that the next sitting President will be a Republican. It is also the potential first step on a slippery slope: if the Senatorial majority can hold off on confirming a nominee for eleven months in order for the current President's term to end, then why not one-and-a-half, or two years, or longer still?

Politically however, there are few options available to the Republican Party: with the passing of Scalia, there is now an even ideological split between the remaining eight sitting justices. Because supreme Court appointments are made for life, any appointment made under Obama would tip this balance away from the GOP, possibly for many decades to come. Given that the supreme Court is a useful cudgel for both parties to beat down unwanted legislation (the GOP has used the favourable 5-4 split afforded by Scalia to bring challenges to both Obamacare and the DREAM

Act), and a means to hedge against challenges to new laws passed by the GOP held Congress, it should come as no surprise that maintaining a conservative majority in the Court is seen as an absolute necessity for McConnell and Co.

There is also a Presidential election to consider. Had Scalia passed away closer to the January 20th inauguration date, it would have been no difficult task to have simply delayed a vote on the Supreme Court nominee until after the new President was sworn in, after which the previous candidate could be silently replaced. However, delaying the vote until Obama leaves office means that the whole ordeal will be dragged out for eleven more agonizing months. McConnell and his Senate will also need to provide a strong justification for denying any nominee a vote: delaying the appointment of an otherwise qualified jurist on ideological grounds will be seen by the electorate as a nakedly partisan attempt to misappropriate one of America's three legislative bodies. It is therefore likely that President Obama will elect a well-regarded moderate (his current top choice, Sri Srinivasan, was elected to the DC circuit court unanimously by the Senate) and force the Senate Republicans run in circles as they try to justify their stance. Should they be unable to justify their blocking of an appointment, then they will suffer for it come election time.

The remaining eleven months will be an excruciating legislative battle, for both Democrats and Republicans. By pre-emptively calling for a blockage of any supreme Court nomination, McConnell et al have put their cards squarely on the table: even if they do eventually allow a Senate vote on a nomination, it should be absolutely clear to all that it is nothing more than party-political pretence. If he was still alive, Antonin Scalia – a vigorous defender of Constitutional originalism – would surely have some scathing rhetoric of his own for Mitch and Co.

On second thought though, perhaps he wouldn't...



Science, what's good?

Spreading up Evolution

Jane Courtnell
Science Editor

Humans are once again appointed felon in the Ecological community. Zoologists Rudman and Schluter documented reverse speciation in the British Columbia Lakes, particularly Enos Lake on Vancouver Island. Introduction of Crayfish species was found to cause the extinction of two native threespine stickleback fish only three years after Crayfish introduction. A new hybrid species now monopolises this ecosystem. The ecological roles of the previous native species have been lost. Ecological linkage has caused a resulting dominos effect between species, systems and scales. Changes in these aquatic ecosystems have transgressed to the surrounding terrestrial landscape.

Engel et al. 2016 @ *Current Biology*

Vaginal seeding

Babies born by caesarean section are being wiped with their mother's vaginal fluid in attempts to boost their gut bacteria microbiome, and reduce risks of allergies and future obesity. The logic behind the practice is fairly simple, caesarean born babies are not exposed to the birth canal, so it is a means of manually transferring the microbiome to the baby in an attempt to remove any future health risks associated with caesarean births.

However, there is a lack of evidence for the effectiveness of the practice. It may even introduce the baby to the risks associated with harmful bacteria such as the group B Streptococcus, causing fatal infections in the newborns. Such risks would have otherwise been dodged. With little evidence in favour of the effectiveness of the practice, is it worth the exposure to these risks?

Cunning et al. 2016 @ *British Medical Journal*

Auctioning with a gender gap

Controversy over pay cheques for men and women is not a novel concept. However, a recent study found that even on Ebay, the transgression exists. Men and women were tasked to sell the same items on the auctioning website, and the results indicated the men earned more; specifically, women earned 79 cents on the dollar. An explanation proposed is that this gender pay gap is due to the way products are described by men and women on the site. Men tend to use more flattering terms than women. However, even when sentiment was controlled for, the gender gap was still apparent.

More interestingly, this gender gap was larger for new items than used items, with a 19% compared to 3% pay gap respectively. One possible explanation for this is that people subconsciously trust the judgement of women to describe good quality over men.

Lukianova-Hieb et al. 2016 @ *Nature Nanotechnology*

Do you like me?

According to scientists, looking at someone for no less than a few milliseconds is enough for you to decide how they fit on your 'likeable' scale. D Schiller and his team at the University of Basel in Switzerland performed an Implicit Association Test on football fans. Participants' responses to concepts such as 'love' and 'death' as well as subject response to the names of players on their own versus the opposing team were tested. Electrical neuroimaging helped to investigate the individual level processing steps during subconscious social assessments. The potential of modern electrical neuroimaging is demonstrated by the study. Investigations are currently being undertaken to see how these results can be used to facilitate diagnosis and therapy of mental diseases involving social deficits.

Kang et al. 2016 @ *Nature Biotechnology*

Sustainable fuel revolution

A team of chemists and engineers at the University of Texas have found a simple and inexpensive means of directly converting carbon dioxide and water into liquid hydrocarbon fuels; a revolution in terms of sustainable fuel technology. Oxygen by-product is reverted back into the system along with its positive environmental impact.

The reaction involves concentrating light, heat and high pressures driving a one-step conversion of carbon dioxide and water producing the hydrocarbon fuels which are currently used in cars today. This gives the technology an important advantage over battery and gaseous-hydrogen powered vehicle technologies, providing a suitable alternative fuel which requires little modification to the fuel distribution system. Hopefully the process can be implemented for everyday use in transport.

Kuhlwmil et al. 2016 @ *Nature*

Water landslides?

Lef Apostolakis
Science Editor

We are all familiar with the catastrophic consequences a landslide can have. Only last week, 250 people were trapped in their hometown in Idaho, USA, as a result of a massive landslide blocking the highway connecting them to the rest of the world. This week, one man died and another two were injured during a minor landslide in Ara Damansara, Malaysia, and five villages were covered in dust and debris threatening residents with suffocation, as a result of a dry landslide at Myagdi, a popular tourist destination in Nepal.

However, landslides are not a phenomenon limited to terrestrial environments. They are known to

occur underwater as well and may have devastating consequences. Around 8200 years ago, such a landslide occurred somewhere between the North Atlantic and the Arctic Ocean, off the coast of Norway. Sediment that had been collecting for thousands of years at the edge of the continental shelf started sliding down the Norwegian sea resulting in area of sediment the size of Maine travelling at speeds of over 40 miles per hour.

This massive relocation of land also moved tonnes upon tonnes of seawater, sending tsunamis crashing over northern European shores submerging areas as far as 20 metres underwater.

"It's hard to even comprehend the size of a landslide like this," says geologist Peter Talling of the United Kingdom's National Oceanography Centre.

"A single landslide can move more

sediment than all the world's rivers move in a year."

Although underwater landslides of this magnitude are not as common, smaller landslides do occur more frequently than you might expect. Many are known to have taken place only in the last few centuries, often causing small tsunamis, with recent research suggesting the 2011 Tsunami that struck Tohoku, Japan, was only as devastating as it was due to an underwater landslide triggered by the earthquake.

In the past, the only evidence of these immense geological events was scarring of the seafloor, which could only be recognised through comparison of different seafloor mapping attempts. A series of underwater landslides that occurred at Prince William Sound in the Gulf of Alaska in 1964 were only identified 60 years later, after a new mapping expedition compared its

results with the previous map which had been generated 16 years prior to the landslides.

Now through the employment of advancements in sonar technology we are able to get a more detailed glimpse into the history of such phenomena. Multibeam sonar, for example, provides a detailed model of the seabed surface, while sparkers, electrodes emitting high-frequency acoustic pulses can penetrate multiple sedimentary layers. Such data can provide information on the size, shape and path of landslides.

Yet, even though we now know more about these phenomena than we did before, predicting when the next underwater landslide might strike remains a challenge.

"Right now, to answer that question, one of the best things we can do is keep looking for evidence of past landslides in places that we know have had big tsunamis" says

Lesli Wood from the Colorado School of Mines.

Indeed, with such range of size, impact and conditions surrounding these events, it is hard to formulate rules to predict when, where and how powerfully the next one might be. Topography, water quality and sediment composition all affect how the seabed might react, so detailed analyses of seafloor samples from earthquake ridden areas can provide crucial data that can help build predictive models.

To promote research, collaboration and awareness, Wood created an open source database describing over 300 landslides based on their shape and size. She hopes that soon the database will be enriched with much needed geological data that will enable risk assessment of precarious areas, providing crucial information to the engineering community.



Back to the shire

Researchers have found the hobbit is not human

Madeleine Webb
Writer

Scientists are sent back to the drawing board as researchers suggest "hobbit" skull probably doesn't belong to an ancient human.

The perpetual mystery of human evolution has just lost a potential grandfather of modern humans. In 2003 the remains of a new primate species, *Homo Floresiensis*, was discovered in a cave on the Indonesian island of Flores and were thought potentially to be a version of modern humans. It's easy to see how their colloquial name of 'the hobbits' stuck; the average individual was estimated to be three foot tall and weighing 25kg, meaning they would be by far the smallest species closely related to humans. Initially, the specimen was generally accepted to be a form of early human that lived 15,000 years ago. This theory suggests the reason for the shrunken stature and grapefruit sized brain was due simply to a genetic defect that spread within this isolated population. An alternative theory was the specimen was an ancestor of *Homo erectus* that had undergone insular dwarfism due to a shortage in the food supply, obtaining their hobbit like structure. However, recent research strongly indicates that the hobbit species

Homo floresiensis may not be part of Homo at all.

It may seem news of little consequence but the findings have ignited a controversial debate about these specimens, since previous multiple explanations for these pint size primates. A study published in the *Journal of Human Evolution* documents results from state of the

Remains represent the existence of a new species

art analysis of a layer of the most intact of the nine skulls excavated over the last ten years. The results from the analysis, such as skull bone thickness indicated that the skulls showed "no characteristics from our species". Even with extensive specialisation, it is expected that there would be some common features between modern humans and the remains if indeed they were

part of the Homo line. Additionally, analysis of the skull showed no signs of significant genetic diseases that would have to have been present for the data to support the original theory.

This opens up the mystery species to a multitude of questions about their origin and their relation to other primate species, including our own. Despite the wealth of information gained by the analysis, the researchers remain unable to identify what the species is likely to be. Lead author, Antoine Balzeau said, "So far, we have been basing our conclusions on images where you don't really see very much. There is a lot of information contained in bone layers of the skull".

Even though the analysis provides strong evidence that the species isn't ancestral to *Homo sapiens*, the study failed to rule out the second hypothesis. Therefore, it remains possible that the hobbits were a subset of the ancestral group to *Homo erectus* that became smaller over time due to lack of key dietary requirements like iodine. However, it is also possible that the remains represent the existence of a whole separate species, which would open up a whole other can of worms for scientists trying to untangle homo sapiens increasingly complex phylogeny. Balzeau simply concluded: "For the moment, we can't say one way or the other".



One skull tells a different story. Photo Credit: Wikipedia

Science & the City

Across the spectrum of living organisms we have species that are adaptable and flexible, known as generalists, and those who occupy unique niches and exploit them maximally, known as specialists. Raccoons are generalists – they'll eat anything, anytime, anywhere. On the other hand, koala bears are specialists; they can only eat eucalyptus leaves, live in trees, and need warm climates.

This simplified dichotomy is also mirrored in the scientific world. There are highly specialised experts – for instance, those who research things like vascular remodelling in systemic and pulmonary hypertension, and generalists like the field naturalist who integrates knowledge of botany, ecology, engineering, management, chemistry, etc. in systems research.

Recently, with increasing access to higher education and the entrenchment of institutionalised learning, specialised focuses in sciences have become increasingly commonplace. In turn, this has begun to spawn generations of highly specialised scientific experts, who may spend years working on one particular problem or issue. This stands in stark contrast to the idea of the 'Renaissance Man', known also as polyhistor or polymath. This was an ideology touted during the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods – arguably the beginning of modern science – where someone

who excelled physically, socially, artistically, and in numerous intellectual fields was revered as the great thinkers and thought to spawn innovative creativity.

This transition from valuing the jack-of-all-trades to the master-of-one marks a distinct cultural shift in science. On the one hand, with increasing numbers of scientists, engineers, and researchers across the board, it seems natural that we would settle into specialised niches; if we are freed up from a more superficial knowledge of many things, we can delve very deeply into a singular problem or topic – which surely is beneficial. However, the crux of that issue comes when it's time for researchers to resurface from that depth and share those findings in such a way that the knowledge is beneficial for society at large, which is not always common. Another issue is that in losing generalist perspectives, we're losing cross-disciplinary ideas and holistic ways of thinking that are quite useful in problem-solving and innovation.

So while we've dove head first and perhaps unconsciously into specialisation, maybe it's best for the scientific world to take cues from the natural world and retain a mixed balance of specialists and generalists, so that we can benefit from these two very different, yet equally valuable mindsets and ways of undertaking scientific research. NAOMI STEWART



Our science and engineering mix is wrong – there's too much specialisation and not enough generalists. Photo Credit: Wikipedia

**Imperial College
London**



FELIX SCIENCE



science.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Sh!t Science

Thin penguins waddle, but fat penguins wobble

MARIANNE GUENOT



"Sally, nobody likes a penguin that wobbles!"
"You calling me fat?" Photo Liam Quinn

At Sh!t Science, we argue that all research, no matter how ridiculous, has a purpose and brings us all closer to the truth.

This week: penguins. You thought you knew just how adorable they were, but that was until you heard the news that makes them frigging awesome. Fat penguins are scientifically more likely to fall over.

This is what results from a study hailing from the University of Roehampton suggest, in a paper aptly titled 'Fat King Penguins Are Less Steady on Their Feet'. The authors reminds us that very comprehensive studies have previously shown that pregnant women and very fat people, have a completely different gait than thin people (would we dare to say they waddle more?). So applying this research to penguins just makes common sense, really.

And this story just keeps on getting better. To substantiate their

claims, they captured fat penguins, put them on a treadmill, and filmed them. Which means that now, all over the internet, are videos of penguins on a treadmill!

The results show (who cares, at this point, right?) that although the gait and stride length of penguins remain the same, regardless of their weight, fatter penguins have a higher "leaning angle and leaning amplitude". Translation? Fatter penguins waddle normally, but they wobble more! Complete happiness ensues.

This all sounds mildly ridiculous, but as always, it serves a greater purpose. This research subscribes to a wider line of enquiry called gait analysis, the study of locomotion of humans and animals. Carefully studying the dynamics of humans when their motions are hindered, for instance by debilitating diseases such as Cerebral palsy and Parkinson's,

has helped doctors develop new treatments and surgeries. Studying

the gait of animals can give us a different insight into dynamics of locomotion, which can, for instance, help us develop more effective robots.

The gait of penguins has been studied since the 1970s, and has been puzzling scientists ever since. Whereas penguins seem very at ease in water, part of their life cycle involves traveling huge distances on land, painstakingly and awkwardly dragging themselves step-by-step while conserving enough energy for them to make the journey, sustain themselves, and feed their female and newborn chick. Studying their gait can give us insights into a previously uncovered mode of locomotion.

So next time you see a cute animal doing something stupid, grab a camera and immortalise whatever shenanigans might be taking place. For science!

Natasha Khaleeq
Writer

This week's science picture

Doctors are not going to accept the new contracts that Jeremy Hunt is trying to impose on them, so they're planning three more strikes as well as launching a judicial review. The government condemned the announcement, arguing that the contract will improve services. However, Dr Johann Malawana (leader of the BMA junior doctor division) states that the general consensus amongst junior doctors is rejecting the imposition: "the government must put patients before politics." Also the BMA have found legal grounds for a challenge and if the Equality Act (2010) equality impact assessment has not been carried out, they will take the government to court. However, Danny Mortimer, chief executive of NHS Employers stated that the majority of the BMA's concerns had been addressed in the final contract and urged junior doctors to reconsider. This is the most bitter clash since the creation of the NHS.



Junior Doctors protesting Jeremy Hunt's NHS dilapidating contract. Photo Natasha Khaleeq

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FELIX steps out onto the red carpet – our picks for the Academy Awards

Best Picture



All signs point to this going to *The Revenant*, and it's a pity really. I found it perhaps one of the duller, uninspiring, hollow films I've seen in recent memory; while in the cinema it may seem like a real journey, but looking back you are hit with the realisation that the film actually says nothing of interest or note. *Spotlight* could be a dark horse, as could *The Big Short*, but really I feel like the award would serve the film community best by going to *Mad Max: Fury Road*. An inventive, high-octane, perfectly-balanced film, *Fury Road* creates a world filled with improbable characters and highly-detailed ecosystems and after the credits roll you wish you could stay longer – surely the mark of a great film. It would also help break the drama homogeneity that has consumed the Academy, showing us that an action film can still have great merit.

Will Win: *The Revenant*
Should Win: *Mad Max: Fury Road*

Best Director



It looks like Iñárritu will win this award for the second year in the row for his work behind the camera in *The Revenant*. Really it would be no surprise: Academy voters enjoy it when things are spelled out for them, and *The Revenant* is so stuffed full of technically impressive shots that voters can sleep easy knowing there is indeed someone giving the film direction. However, I prefer those whose work is a little less obvious; I think it takes much more skill to create a tightly controlled drama, and (glossing over the outrage that Todd Haynes wasn't nominated) therefore I think the award should go to Lenny Abrahamson. Not only does he delicately handle the brutal subject matter of sexual abuse story *Room*, but he also ekes out two of the most genuine performances in recent years, from Brie Larson as Ma, and the stunning, revolutionary Jacob Tremblay as Jack.

Will Win: *Alejandro G. Iñárritu (The Revenant)*
Should Win: *Lenny Abrahamson (Room)*

Best Original Screenplay

Out of the five nominees for this award, only two have come up with truly inventive ideas: *Ex Machina* and *Inside Out* both tell completely original tales, one looking to our childhood past, the other to a potential future. The others all take on real-life happenings: Cold War counter-intelligence swapping in *Bridge of Spies*; the Catholic church molestation scandal in *Spotlight*; and the rise and fall of N.W.A. in *Straight Outta Compton*. However, while it is tricky creating something out of nothing, it is arguably more difficult to tackle a historical event and afford it the required gravitas and respect. This is exactly what Tom McCarthy and Josh Singer have done with *Spotlight*, which manages to present an immensely complex and controversial topic without a sense of dumbing things down for the audience.

Will Win: *Tom McCarthy & Josh Singer (Spotlight)*
Should Win: *Tom McCarthy & Josh Singer (Spotlight)*

Best Adapted Screenplay

Pity the voters for this award; few Academy voters actually watch the films nominated, let alone go through the hassle of reading the books they were based on, and this means that the skill of many brilliant screenwriters has not been recognised. Out of the last five awards, four have gone to films based on non-fiction books, perhaps reflecting the difficulty tackling such subject matter can pose when compared to pieces of fiction. As such, it is likely that *The Big Short* will win, and while the screenwriters' effort to make such an elephantine topic as the housing collapse accessible in an 120-minute film is admirable, I would love to see the award go to Phyllis Nagy for her pitch-perfect adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's *The Price of Salt*, which retains all the brittle sharpness of the original text, and is the most faithful adaptation I have possibly ever seen.

Will Win: *Adam McKay and Charles Randolph (The Big Short)*
Should Win: *Phyllis Nagy (Carol)*

Best Actor



God, this is a bad year for actors. Following on from his win last year, Eddie Redmayne put in an offensively affected performance in *The Danish Girl*, meaning real-life trans pioneer Lili Elbe had no resemblance to any human being I have ever met. Similarly, Bryan Cranston portrayed Dalton Trumbo as a collection of bizarre tics given human form, using a voice that suggested toothache. Matt Damon was adequate in *The Martian*, but for a film that is basically centred completely around him, he made very little impact. I haven't seen *Steve Jobs*, so I can't comment on Michael Fassbender, but I don't know if it could be worse than the others. All signs point to this award going to Leonardo DiCaprio for his role as grizzled survivalist Hugh Glass, showing that to win an award you don't need to show nuance or skill, just a willingness to grunt a lot and eat bear liver on screen.

Will Win: *Leonardo DiCaprio (The Revenant)*
Should Win: *Nobody*

Best Actress



In direct contrast to the offerings on display in the Best Actor category, I can't remember a year when the Best Actress race has been stuffed with such fantastic performances. Out in front for me are Charlotte Rampling, for her devastating turn in *45 Years*, Cate Blanchett, who formed the foundation of *Carol*, and Brie Larson, for her stunningly affecting performance as abuse survivor in *Room*. While Saoirse Ronan was charming in *Brooklyn*, and J-Law was bolshie in *Joy*, neither of them can match the others in terms of the power of their performance. Smart money is on Larson to win on the night, and though I will be happy for her, deep down I feel Blanchett outstripped all competition with her nuanced, controlled performance as Carol Aird.

Will Win: *Brie Larson (Room)*
Should Win: *Cate Blanchett (Carol)*

Best Documentary

I know people say let bygones be bygones, but I can't help feel that this year's award should go to *The Look of Silence*, if only to compensate director Daniel Oppenheimer for the fact that two years ago his absolutely mind-blowing documentary *The Act of Killing* lost out to *20 Feet From Stardom*, a documentary about backing singers. *The Look of Silence* may not be as powerful as his last film, but history calls for reparations. Ultimately, however, the award is likely to go to *Amy*, Asif Kapadia's portrait of Amy Winehouse, whose descent and death is played out in graphic detail. Whilst the film relies on footage obtained by the paparazzi who arguably helped drive Winehouse to her death, and its voyeuristic feel makes you feel complicit in her addiction and downfall, *Amy* would be a worthy winner.

Will Win: *Amy*
Should Win: *The Look of Silence*

Best Animated Feature



Now, I hear *Anomalisa* is supposed to be brilliant. It's not out until next month in the UK, but the buzz around it is that it's a subtle, nuanced, beautiful piece of work – which means that it will undoubtedly lose at the Academy Awards. Luckily, it seems that the award will go to *Inside Out*, which would be a completely worthy winner. Taking a look at the interior life of a child going through a rough patch, *Inside Out* connects us with our childhood memories, managing to communicate vastly complex psychological and emotional concepts with an ease that belies its ingenuity. *Inside Out* marks perhaps a return to form for Pixar, which is joyful news in and of itself. Oh, and it made me weep like a baby 10,000 feet above the Atlantic, glass of plane wine clutched in my hand. Make of that what you will.

Will Win: *Inside Out*
Should Win: *Inside Out*

Best Supporting Actor



Maybe it's the theatre snob in me, but I would love it if Mark Rylance takes home the award. Legendary for his theatre work, not least as artistic director of The Globe, Rylance's performance in *Bridge of Spies* is magnificent, and recognition would show the worlds of film and theatre are not as distinct as people think. As Soviet spy Rudolf Abel, Rylance brings a sense of deadpan humour in his controlled performance, and is the best thing in *Bridge of Spies*. I don't think Tom Hardy's performance in *The Revenant* was worth shouting about, and similarly Christian Bale's nomination for his blunt treatment of hedge funder Michael Burry is baffling. Mark Ruffalo could be a possibility, given his outburst of energy in *Spotlight*, but ultimately I think Sylvester Stallone will nab it, less for his turn in *Creed*, but more for recognition of his decades of work.

Will Win: *Sylvester Stallone (Creed)*
Should Win: *Mark Rylance (Bridge of Spies)*

Best Supporting Actress



Bookies have Kate Winslet down as the likely winner, following her performance in Danny Boyle's *Steve Jobs*, during which – dodgy Polish accent aside – she showed off her powerful expressiveness. The dark horse of the race could be Alicia Vikander, who acted Eddie Redmayne into a corner in *The Danish Girl*. Jennifer Jason Leigh is unlikely to get the nod, although *The Hateful Eight* marks a welcome resurgence in her career. Similarly, Rachel McAdams was possibly the best actor in *Spotlight*, but probably won't hold up to the others. For me, Rooney Mara deserves to take home the award for creating the complex, emotionally-layered Therese Belivet in *Carol*; unfortunately, that role lacked bombastic moments or hysterical outbursts, and therefore will be overlooked by the Academy.

Will Win: *Kate Winslet (Steve Jobs)*
Should Win: *Rooney Mara (Carol)*

Best Original Score

All signs point towards Ennio Morricone winning this for his scoring of Tarantino's Western *The Hateful Eight*, and why not – it's a wonderful piece of work, managing to be stirring, exciting, but never overbearing. You might accuse Morricone of ripping off tropes of Western music, but he pretty much invented them. *Star Wars* has its usual John Williams treatment, but does he really need a sixth Oscar? You're getting greedy John. Similarly, *Bridge of Spies* has a perfectly perfunctory score from Thomas Newman, all swelling strings, but any Cold War film that doesn't make use of Nena's '99 Luftballons' is dead to me (I know it was set decades before Nena released this banger, but really, does that matter? No. The answer's no.) However, *Carol*-lover that I am, I would love for this to go to Carter Burwell, for his delicate compositions, which complement the tightly controlled drama.

Will Win: *Ennio Morricone (The Hateful Eight)*
Should Win: *Carter Burwell (Carol)*

Best Cinematography



A cinematographer can make or break a film – and yet the role is often overlooked by cinema-goers. This year the award will inevitably go to Emmanuel Lubezki for the third year in a row, for *The Revenant* – it's probably fair, since the scenic shots are by far the best thing in the film. Vittorio Storaro does equally good work in *The Hateful Eight*, although the interior shots means he can't show off his chops; and in *Mad Max* John Seale takes us through the entire colour spectrum, from blistering reds to cooling blues. However, I think shooting a beautiful film is easier when you already have natural beauty in front of you; it takes something more to take a city street, and capture the urban magic through the grime. And that's why I think Edward Lachman should win, for his sensuous portrayal of NYC, heavily influenced by Saul Leiter's masterful photography.

Will Win: *Emmanuel Lubezki (The Revenant)*
Should Win: *Edward Lachman (Carol)*



The top three actor-musicians who aren't Madonna

Considering my age it's hard for me to imagine that, at one time, Madonna was the biggest star in the world. Unfortunately though, often with a great music career comes a terrible film career. Anyone who's seen *Swept Away* or *The Next Best Thing* should know that she's never set the bar high for musicians-turned-actors. For ease of list-making I've excluded artists from the 50s and 60s because starring in shitty films seemed to be a requirement in those times (here's looking at you Elvis):

Beyoncé Knowles

Long before she was dominating the Super Bowl half-time show and releasing music videos which warrant short-film status themselves, Beyoncé was a budding film star. The leading role most people now remember Queen Bey for is her portrayal of Deena Jones in the utterly fabulous *Dream Girls*. One thing you guarantee when you cast Beyoncé is a cracking tie-in single and *Dream Girls*' 'Listen' is no exception.

Yasiin Bey (Mos Def)

I've admitted my enjoyment of several films in this section that should get my film-writer badge torn from my metaphorical jacket. One that should get a lot of nerd blood boiling is my love for the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* film – this is coming from someone who's read the entire book series. Bey's Ford Prefect was easily the best part of this film, and the rapper has also stolen scenes in many others, including *The Italian Job* remake.

Justin Timberlake

Considering his superstar status, Justin Timberlake's movie career success came as little surprise. Timberlake has now starred in several features from Rom-Coms (to be expected) to serious dramas. Admittedly, one need only watch *Black Snake Moan* to know he's no DeNiro, but the charisma that made him so successful in music also lends something special to his films. Special shout out to *The Social Network*.

BEN COLLIER

Equality at the Oscars?

Ahead of the Academy Awards this weekend, we ask whether or not it's time to pull the plug on gender-segregated acting awards, in favour of a gender-neutral accolade



As Patricia Arquette pointed out in her Oscar speech, Hollywood is a hostile place for women. Photo Credit: StudioCanal/Fox/John Shearer AP

The year that saw the first Academy Awards, 1929, also saw two landmarks in the march for equality: in the UK, the 1929 election was the first one in which women under 30 could vote, leading to it being termed the 'Flapper Election'; and in Canada, five women led a campaign to change the legislature to recognise women as 'persons', meaning they could stand for any role in government. In the nine decades since, we have seen revolutionary strides in sexual equality, and yet Hollywood awards remain a region of segregation: when the Academy Awards are broadcast, the acting categories will still be split along gender lines, as they have been since their inception.

So why is this? It could be argued that early on in the days of the film industry, women were rarely afforded interesting parts, and that

the decision to separate out actors for awards ensures that at least two women will win an Oscar every year. Conversely, nowadays it is acting where men and women are most equal in the industry: last year only 6 non-acting awards were given to women, out of 19; there has never been a woman nominated for Best Cinematographer; and Kathryn Bigelow remains the only woman to win the Best Director award. Should we have separate gender categories for these awards too?

While I do agree that there needs to be a lot more done to encourage women across all areas in Hollywood, I don't feel like having acting awards divided by gender is the best way to recognise women actors working today; all it does is place them in a category of their own, furthering the idea that their work is inherently 'different' to the 'serious' work of men. As Gloria

Steinem said: 'it's not like upper body strength' – acting requires skill and hard work, and this is independent of the individual's gender. To continue to portray women actors as 'separate but equal' really isn't true equality.

Furthermore, having a single acting award could set a precedent for the industry: where the Academy goes, the industry follows, and by breaking down gender lines a powerful message could be sent out to studio heads. The gender pay-gap in Hollywood has – rightly – been in the news in the last couple of years. From Frances McDormand talking about how she has only been paid her going rate once in her career, to Jennifer Lawrence and Amy Adams being paid significantly less than their male co-stars in *American Hustle*, gender equality is becoming a driving force in shaping the industry. Adopting a gender-

To continue
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women
actors as
'separate
but equal'
isn't true
equality



Meryl Streep, clutching her Oscar, and thinking of how she's so much better than you. Photo Credit: Dan MacMedan/AP

neutral acting award could show the Academy recognises – and values – women's work the same as men's.

And if an appeal to equality doesn't reach you, what about just an appeal to quality? Now, we know that, by and large, the Academy Awards are meaningless. Meaningless both in the 'what about Syria?' sense of the wider world, but also within film as an art form; brilliant films don't get awarded anything, and the vast

number of bad films that get awards (1994: *Forrest Gump*, 2002: *Chicago*, 2005: *Crash*) indicate that Academy Awards are not about artistic merit. But this problem is more pronounced in the acting category. Let's consider this year's nominees:

Leonardo DiCaprio will probably take home the Oscar for his portrayal of Hugh Glass, a role that does not reveal any ability to convey complex emotions or nuance;

instead, it's another example of how voters love seeing actors suffer on screen (Hollywood sure is a sadistic industry). But then perhaps he deserves the award, since it's definitely an absolutely stinking year: Eddie Redmayne layered on so many simpering affectations as Lili Elbe that I'm not sure whether the portrayal is offensive to just the trans community, or women in general; Bryan Cranston similarly conjured

up a number of tics in order to play Dalton Trumbo, in a role that could be best described as 'pained'; and Matt Damon was amusing, but not much else, in humdrum *The Martian*.

But if we turn to the Best Actress nominees, it's a different story. Jennifer Lawrence, easily the worst of the bunch, still packs in more emotional range than DiCaprio. Saoirse Ronan is equally captivating in her role as Irish shop-girl Eilis, imbuing her with a deep vulnerability that hardens into an inner strength. Charlotte Rampling delivers a performance that would be award-worthy just for what she brings to the ending alone: a shot that will haunt your dreams and linger in your mind. Brie Larson, the likely winner, is a magician on screen, as the traumatised abuse victim of *Room* who must hold it together for her child. And, of course, Cate Blanchett is completely phenomenal as the complex, controlled Carol Aird, in Todd Haynes' sumptuous masterpiece *Carol*.

Ultimately, the continued existence of separate acting awards is a mystery for me. By continuing to split along gender lines, the Academy sends out a message that men and women are separate, while simultaneously lessening what winning an Oscar means. Not only that, but abolishing gender lines would make the ceremony considerably shorter, and – as anyone who has stayed up to watch the Oscars will tell you – that would be like manna from heaven.

It seems unfair that, if Larson and DiCaprio win the awards, Ronan,

FRED FYLES

The Smuggler



Dir: Angus Sampson, Tony Mahony. Script: Angus Sampson, Leigh Whannell. Starring: Angus Sampson, Hugo Weaving, Leigh Whannell. 103 minutes.

Making a film about bowel movements is a tough sell. But that hasn't stopped Tony Mahony and Angus Simpson, the directorial duo behind Australian crime drama *The Smuggler*, who approach the topic with great vision, but a lack of even-handedness. Set against the backdrop of the 1983 America's Cup, which saw an Australian yachting team breaking American dominance of the race, *The Smuggler* tells the tale of Ray Jenkins (Tony Mahony), a young man from the back end of nowhere who spends most of his time repairing televisions, being looked after by his mother, and playing football in his local amateur team. A trip to Thailand for the team is funded by shadowy small-town crime boss Pat (John Noble), and Ray is convinced to smuggle heroin back across the border in his stomach, in order to help out



Angus Simpson as Ray, in the somewhat confused film *The Smuggler*. Photo Credit: The Smuggler PR

with his parents' financial troubles. However, he is stopped at the last minute by customs, and detained in a hotel, where – rather than face criminal charges – he opts to try and hold his bowels for the next ten days, at the ire of police agent Croft (Hugo Weaving).

On the surface, this film all about shitting could easily turn out to be, well...shit. And the promotional material doesn't help either –

showing Mahony bending over, it seems to promise some kind of high-jinks caper centred around laxatives and defecation. But actually *The Smuggler* is more than that, with a variety of different moods and themes explored. At some points attempts at humour are made, but on the whole this is an incredibly bleak film, more in keeping with social realist dramas than black comedies. Ray seems a little simple,

ripe for exploitation, and protests as the pellets of heroin are forced down his throat; he is regularly abused by the police chiefs in charge of him, who make him endure scalding showers; his dad, buckling under pressure, starts drinking, and verbally abuses his wife before meeting an untimely fate; his own mother tries to slip him laxatives in order to get him arrested. At times it's unclear whether I'm watching a

humorous exploration of Australian masculinity, or a Shane Meadows film.

Elsewhere, Mahony and Simpson seem to have taken a cue from David Lynch: one scene is eerily reminiscent of the famously disturbing karaoke scene in *Blue Velvet*, where Dean Stockwell sings along to Roy Orbison – only this time it's crime boss Pat crooning at the funeral of Ray's best friend, murdered by the police; elsewhere, Ray's inner turmoil (both mental and gastrointestinal) is represented by a series of malarial fever dreams, which drip with Lynchian sweat.

Scenes like this are excellent, but the issue is that Mahony and Simpson don't seem to know what they're making: is it a dark satire on Australian competitiveness, with the America's Cup serving as a metaphor for trying to keep up in a changing world? Or is it a social drama, where young men from working class towns are kept stuck in a world of petty crime and police brutality? Whatever it is, it's certainly far from shit – with a bit more of a unified vision, Mahony and Simpson could have had an excellent film. Even though it doesn't reach those heights, *The Smuggler* is far better than its scatological matter may suggest.

FRED FYLES



The good, the bad, and the cannibalistic

Bridging the gap between modern Westerns, *Bone Tomahawk* shines through

Bone Tomahawk



★★★★★

Dir: S. Craig Zahler *Script:* S. Craig Zahler. *Starring:* Kurt Russell, Patrick Wilson, Matthew Fox, Richard Jenkins. *132 minutes.*

Fred Fyles
Film Editor

Typical. You spend ages waiting for a blood-spattered neo-Western film, and then three come along at once. In the past few months Quentin Tarantino made a welcome return with his potboiler gore-fest *The Hateful Eight*, Leonardo DiCaprio dragged himself through miles of wilderness in *The Revenant*, and now we have *Bone Tomahawk*, a horrific traipse through cannibal-infested deserts, directed by screenwriter and author S. Craig Zahler. Midway between them, *Bone Tomahawk* manages to be more inventive and memorable than either.

The story is one of a classic Western: a small town is terrorised by a group of Native American 'savages', who disembowel farmhands and steal away town doctor, Samantha O'Dwyer. The sheriff teams up with Mr O'Dwyer, backup deputy Chicory, and local womanizer John Brooder, embarking on a journey to kill the Indian tribe and rescue the captives. The main bulk of the story happens within the first half hour, leaving the remainder to languidly unspool, as the motley crew face down raiders, gangrene, and cannibals.

Kurt Russell is on excellent form as Sheriff Hunt; he could have wandered off from the set of *The Hateful Eight*, beard intact. As the bumbling old widower Chicory, Richard Jenkins is endearing, and similarly Matthew Fox inhabits the world-weary character of Brooder well, giving him a wit that – while not razor sharp – is still the most cutting that side of the Mojave.

However, the real draw here isn't really the acting; it's the script. Zahler made his name as a novelist, and his talent with both description



Kurt Russell, stealing scenes as the town sheriff, in the bloody, brutal *Bone Tomahawk*. Photo Credit: Shutterstock

and dialogue is obvious here. The dramatic opening perfectly builds a tension that remains a background hum throughout; there is no climactic battle, no dramatic scenes, but just four men making their way agonizingly slowly through the desert. The writing is extremely witty too, the drama punctuated

The script
is stripped
of bloat,
leaving
sharp bones
of speech

by lengthy sojourns about the best way to read a book in the bath. While there is not much dialogue, Zahler makes sure each line shines, stripping it of extraneous bloat, until he is left with a sharp bone of speech, gleaming in the desert sun.

Of course, the idea of a group of white men facing off against Native American 'savages' has a long history in the Western genre; that the dehumanising image was used to justify colonial atrocities should inspire more than a twinge of guilt in the viewer. However, the way Zahler writes the antagonists means they don't resemble any form of humanity, let alone a real American tribe. Early on in the film the men ask for the assistance of a Native American tribal expert: 'They're not my own kind,' he says, 'Men like you wouldn't distinguish them from Indians, even though they are something else entirely'.

And he's right. The tribe have no language, communicating through a series of mystical howls; they cripple and blind the women members of

the group to keep them docile and in the most memorable scene of the film – which I won't spoil here – they graphically mutilate one of the characters. In short, they are sub-human, filling the same role as zombies or vampires in other horrors – a surface upon which humanity can project their worst fears. I question whether such a portrayal is any more offensive than those where Native Americans are 'peaceful mystics' or 'noble savages', existing in a state of communication and harmony with nature, gifted with a deep insight into the balance of the world. Such portrayals posit the Native Americans as something to be 'understood' by the white settler, who acts as a pupil for the Indians' teachings about the world.

It would not be remiss here to mention *The Revenant*, which portrays Native Americans as both horrifically violent savages, and revered spiritualists, in touch with the history of the earth. *Bone Tomahawk* eschews this, and – while certainly a gamble – is all the

stronger for it. It is also, perhaps, a stronger film than *The Hateful Eight* – certainly, it is less saturated with quick-fire dialogue. And while all three films revel in their violence, *Bone Tomahawk* is the one that strikes the balance just right: in *The Revenant* the brutality rung hollow, becoming meaningless; in *The Hateful Eight* blood was strewn across the set with such aplomb it brought down bathos on the dramatic proceedings; but in *Bone Tomahawk* there is a sense of real violence, not inflicted unwillingly, but certainly not gratuitous.

Bone Tomahawk doesn't shy away from violence, but it never feels like an ordeal, something to just get through in order to reach the triumphant payoff at the end. In *Bone Tomahawk* the biggest danger isn't the wilderness, or the savage tribes, but the men who inhabit it, and this is the film's biggest strength. As Samantha O'Dwyer says: 'This is what makes frontier life so difficult. Not because of the elements, or the Indians, but because of the idiots!'

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Wednesday 2 March	ACC	19:00 - 01:00	Metric & FiveSixEight
Wednesday 23 March	Spring Carnival	20:00 - 03:00	Metric & FiveSixEight
Every Friday	PGI Friday Cocktails	16:30 onwards	h-bar
Every Friday	Reynolds Cocktail Club	17:30 - 00:00	Reynolds
Friday 4 March	Freeze Friday	20:00 - 02:00	Metric & FiveSixEight
Friday 11 March	Election Results Party	20:00 - 02:00	Metric & FiveSixEight
Friday 18 March	Common People	20:00 - 02:00	Metric & FiveSixEight



It has to be Hinds

Matt Johnston
Writer

Ana Perrote, Carlotta Cosials, Ade Martin and Amber Grimbergen. Together they are **Hinds**, a Spanish band on the cutting edge of the garage rock scene in Madrid with a debut album poised to break them out further still. Formed in the summer of 2011 by Ana and Carlotta (the vocalists and guitarists of the quartet), the two went under the moniker of 'Deers' until a legal dispute made them change their name, but not before they added bassist Ade and drummer Amber.

2014 was when the band started to gain traction outside of their Spanish sphere after the release of their two singles, 'Demo' and 'Barn', prompted European and US tours and slots at Glastonbury and Benicàssim.

The culmination of this rise is their debut album, *Leave Me Alone* which was released in January to a smattering of critical acclaim and embodies a carefree, youthful summer vibe without losing sight of their garage rock roots. The themes that run through the record largely focus on love, romance and breakups, all set to a backdrop of long summer nights in a flurry of 2/3 minute bursts of passion.

The music itself isn't overly complex but the raw emotion shines

through, notably in the call and response which Perrote and Cosials often engage in, leading into a flurry of lyrics and guitar riffs. The lyrics themselves are also a standout point with them being written in a second language, a kind of warped and twisted English. This gives rise to odd and quirky lyrics, adding to the whole craze of the songs.

The opening track, 'Garden', is

The raw emotion shines through

initially an upbeat and punchy song, transforming into an impassioned, almost love drunk plea to a distant lover of "give me the keys and I'll show you how to fight for more" and sets the tone for the remainder of the album, described by the band as "the 12 faces of love [they've] experienced".

Leave Me Alone then works its way through 'Fat Calmed Kiddos', a bizarre title encompassing another passionate breakup ballad, and onto 'Warts' and 'Easy'. Both follow similar themes, of jealousy and breakups, as well as starting off

slowly before building to a crescendo of jangly guitars and vocal outbursts by Ana and Carlotta, by which time you can't help feel pumped up and passionate towards their cause.

What follows is the craziest song on the album, 'Castigadas en el Granero' (roughly translated to 'Grounded in the Barn'). A blend of mad lyrics are present ("all I see is a big cow / and now I'm eating all your corn") but are hardly recognisable in the frenzy which ensues. It feels like you should be dancing around like nobody's watching by the end of it, and this is neatly followed by 'Solar Gap', a twinkly guitar instrumental echoing the hazy end to a party.

This soothing mood leads back into the second half of the album, with themes staying around the trials and tribulations of young love. "I am flirting with this guy, just to pretend I'm fine" gives off a vibe of passive aggressive backstabbing at a former flame, akin to staring across a room and toying with them.

'Bamboo', along with 'Castigadas en el Granero', is a throwback to the band's first released material and yet again captures a snappy outburst of love, swiftly followed by the slowed down and beautiful 'And I Will Send Your Flowers Back'. Taking it down a notch gives a feeling similar to a long summer night, twinged with the sadness of letting go. "Space, what a fucked up mess" is the motto which runs throughout and the style which Hinds seem



Leave Hinds alone! Photo Credit: Hinds

to run with, that of peaking with a passionate, heartfelt message is again present.

The final two tracks on the album, "I'll Be Your Man" and "Walking Home", are reconciliatory tunes, with the former fitting in the same calming vibe as 'And I Will Send Your Flowers Back', leading nicely into the closing track which returns to the upbeat roots that opened the album up.

The crazed lyrics also are present again, "You're the rice of my bowl" being a particular favourite outburst (and also a rejected Valentine's Day card slogan). The album ends on a cliffhanger, fading "You're the love of my life" quietly to silence, mirroring

They played with a youthful exuberance

the closing moments of a sunset and a fleeting summer romance.

But where these songs are a decent listen on a tube ride, they take on a whole new life when played live.

The band performed at KOKO in Camden last Thursday, to their largest headline crowd to date and their ninth sell out show in London. The band were initially taken aback by the reception from the audience, and it took them a couple of songs to overcome emotions and settle fully into their groove. When they did however, they played with a youthful exuberance that the recorded version just couldn't capture.

The songs were bolstered by the atmosphere and vice versa, generating a performance which while not the most technically accurate was bursting with fun. The crowd joined in with the outpourings of love, lust and longing, and danced along in the spirit of it all. Rounding off this carefree, adolescent mood was an encore in which the girls invited their friends onto the stage, to dance around to a cover of 'Davy Crockett' like one big party.

All in all the polished sound of the album dampens the rawness of the group, a key factor in what stands them apart from the rest of the crowd. They're not manufactured pop clichés, they've bottled an actual feeling, a whirlwind summer filled with all the emotions that young love provides. It's hard to capture an instant but in this case Hinds have made huge strides towards it; it's not perfect but it now remains to be seen whether they can do it again even better.



Small venues are dying out

Peter Munton
Writer

Over the past decade, London has lost over forty percent of its small music venues, and it is a similar story around the country. Notorious venues such as the Sheffield Boardwalk have already closed, which saw greats such as **The Clash**, **Sex Pistols**, and **Arctic Monkeys** play there at the beginning of their respective careers. Many more small venues are at a risk of shutting down, like the 100 Club on Oxford Street and the Troubadour on Old Brompton Road, which has gone up for sale.

The alarming rate of these closures is down to a combination of reasons: increasing rent prices, ridiculously harsh licensing scrutiny, and the pressure of building more housing leading property developers to raise blocks of flats next to these clubs. This will inevitably cause more noise-abatement notices to be filed

costing the venues thousands of pounds to contest.

To preserve the cultural value that these institutions bring to the British music scene, something must be done. The UK music industry is currently valued at £3.5 billion and is mainly based on the small venue

Something must be done

circuit, the lifeblood of the music scene. There are of course the big O2 arena and stadium gigs that rake in millions, but without a platform to showcase their talents and tune their skills, there will be no musicians to fill their shoes in twenty years time. **Queen** famously played their first

gig here at Imperial. Without these grassroots venues the British music industry is simply not sustainable.

It is not only artists that need these institutions to help their careers. Small music venues provide hundreds of thousands of jobs for bar staff and technicians amongst others. They, too, use these venues as opportunities to hone their talents and improve their career prospects. In all professions you will have to start at the bottom, no one starts off playing Wembley or being a lighting engineer at the O2.

However, as much as it is about the live music, it is also about the role they play in the society. Small venues have played host to activism and good for the surrounding community. They have a heart, a soul and a connection to their community. These venues are a meeting place for people with ideas, diversity and a non-conformist attitude. It is imperative to hold onto passion, culture, art and fun times, to fight for what makes our community ours.



One of the many clubs at risk of shutting down. Photo Credit: 100 Club

A foot-thumping foray into modern jazz

Josh Lawrence
Writer

GoGo Penguin are a Mercury Prize nominated jazz trio who are lumped into the increasingly broad genre of modern jazz; a genre best separated from its predecessors by an unshamed

Music with a strictly organic feel

acceptance of rhythm. *Man Made Object* is a testament to this. The album's blend of classical jazz and modern house music provides a highly accessible acoustic soundscape.

The stand-out adjective of the album is melodic. The trio have

turned their backs to the extended solos and virtuoso flourishes which often repel people from traditional jazz releases. The album instead barrels along with funky instrumentation and stringently controlled improvisation to provide music which is more at home in a club than a jazz bar. Songs like 'Smorra' and 'Quiet Mind' have a dance music aesthetic similar to that adopted by **Bonobo** and other jazz-inspired producers. The group's use of acoustic instrumentation allows them to create this music with a strictly organic feel.

The most impressive aspect of *Man Made Object* is its ability to maintain strong melodies with free percussion. This is best seen on the opening track 'All Res', where a homely piano loop allows for some upbeat drum experimentation.

The album's subtle blending of genres allows it to break free from its inspirations. Its instrumentation lends its style most to the now defunct **Portico Quartet**, whose album *Knee Deep in the North Sea*

goes painfully unrecognised as a pioneer in modern jazz music. By fusing elements of Portico Quartet's music with the melodies of jazz-house producers, GoGo Penguin have provided a fresh sound which is more mature than their earlier

More mature than their earlier releases

releases.

Man Made Object is not the most experimental jazz album of recent times, and this shows in its numbingly predictable final tracks. Having said that, the album's lack of pretentiousness provides a naïve



The band named themselves after a stuffed penguin. Photo Credit: GoGo Penguin

beauty rarely found in jazz. The album which acts as a fantastic gateway into the world of modern jazz. The trio's meticulous instrumentation has provided an incredibly pleasing jazz.



FKA Deers. Photo Credit: Matt Johnston



AKA *Jessica Jones*

Saad Ahmed
Television Editor

Lately there's been some strong comic book TV adaptations debuting, ranging from the gritty atmosphere of *Daredevil* to the fun and colourful world of the *Flash*. Marvel's *Jessica Jones* manages to bring another successful, while at the same time different, mood to the table. Focusing on the more shady side of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, the show has very much a noir feel to it.

The show features Krysten Ritter as our titular hero, a hard-drinking PI with superpowers and a mysterious past. Ritter is on full form, being perfect as *Jessica Jones*, someone with rough edges who's been driven into a more secluded nature due to the terrible stuff she's been through. She has the right balance of wit and arrogance and in spite of everything, still has an innate desire to help others and be a hero. It's nice that in spite of the wall she's built up around her, she has empathy for the people victimised by the villain Kilgrave and the main focus of the show is her efforts to take him down.

David Tennant gives an amazing performance as Kilgrave, being as good as Vincent D'Onofrio as Wilson Fisk in *Daredevil*, if not surpassing him. Kilgrave has the ability of mind control, making people do whatever he wants them to while at the same time being a narcissistic sociopath

with absolutely no morality or code. He is terrifying because he is completely about himself; he has no grand schemes or plans for world

Jessica Jones, someone with rough edges who's been driven into a more secluded nature

domination. He simply acts in the moment, doing whatever's on his mind with anyone who's present. At one point he remarks how difficult it must be not to have his powers, showing how deranged he truly is. It's a testament to Tennant's acting skills that he can charm you with his humour and likeability, even making you sympathise with him at times, before turning and reminding you why he's so repulsive.

An interesting choice made by the showrunner, Melissa Rosenberg, is not to shy away from the fact that



Krysten Ritter gives an outstanding performance as the broken but determined Jessica Jones. Photo Credit: Netflix

Kilgrave is a rapist, both mentally and physically, and tackles head on the consequences of what he's done to so many people and how it changes them. The show takes the idea of a supervillain to its scariest and most evasive place while making sure not to lose focus or devalue the people who have been victimised by him. The writers don't back away from this and give opportunities to show how the characters process what has happened to them and work on what to do next in wake of such a violation.

The remaining supporting characters are also portrayed well and help to bring out different aspects of Jessica's personality. Carrie-Ann Moss as Jori Hogarth is a ruthless and manipulative lawyer,

being a shark of the world of law while Jessica's neighbour Malcolm, portrayed by Eka Darville, is sympathetic and endearing. Wil Traval portrays Will Simpson, an adaptation of the character Nuke, a cop who only sees things in black and white and has the aura of having something off about him. Mike Colter as Luke Cage proves he's more than capable of having his own Netflix series, being tough, strong and sharing great chemistry and sexual tension with Jessica.

The highlight supporting character is Rachael Taylor as Trish 'Patsy' Walker as Jessica Jones's adoptive sister and best friend. She acts as a contrast to Ritter's character and it's great seeing how, while being polar opposites of each other, the two

women support and complement each other.

A weak link of the series is the character Robyn, another one of Jessica's neighbours. She's unlikely in all her appearances and too heightened and farcical for this world. It doesn't help that she gets more involved in different plot points as the show goes along. The number of time and scenes spent on Hogarth's marital issues, despite the payoff, felt like a bit too much.

Also, like *Daredevil* before it, Jessica Jones felt like the more stronger episodes came a little before the end. I'm not saying the ending isn't good, but the build up was done much better.

Having said that, *Jessica Jones* is still a true triumph adding something different to the superhero genre. It's the most adult entry from the Marvel Universe with plenty of R-rated violence and a frank depiction of sexuality. To the show's credit, none of these scenes feel as if they're present for shock value or for show, but rather help depict the harsh and brutal world of the story.

Jessica Jones is a grim show and really creepy at times. However, it's a compelling series from start to finish with an excellent lead character guiding us through the dark and murky underbelly of the Marvel Universe. This is a stand out series, not just for Netflix's line up but also for the ever-growing world of superhero shows in general and is definitely worth a watch.

Jessica Jones is available on Netflix



What if the Doctor was a mind-controlling murderer, rapist and sociopath? Photo Credit: Netflix

It's a compelling series from start to finish with an excellent lead character



Vinyl grooves

Anurag Deshpande
Writer

This show really snuck up on me. HBO seems to have pushed it out without the sort of fanfare one would expect; especially given the names attached to this project. When Martin Scorsese and Mick Jagger say they're doing something together, you pay attention. So, I decided to give the two hour premiere (directed by Scorsese himself) a chance.

Was it worth it? Well, mostly. The series has certainly managed to capture my attention, although, perhaps not as strongly as I'd have liked. And, it is not without a few issues that keep it from reaching the heights I hoped it would. That is, so far, at least.

First though, let's discuss the good. The series explores the music industry in the 70s; mainly following record label executive Richie Finestra (featuring Bobby Cannavale in a rare starring role)

as he attempts to stay on the wagon while keeping his company alive. The performances are all solid, and the show manages to pull together quite an eclectic cast. Sporting the likes of Olivia Wilde, Juno Temple, and, most bizarrely, Ray Romano; there really is nothing but praise to

All the classic Scorsese hallmarks are also here

be had here. All the classic Scorsese hallmarks are also here; from the protagonist's verbose narration à la *Wolf of Wall Street* and *Goodfellas*, to the occasional surreal sequences. In this piece, they take the form of cutaways to renditions of iconic tracks performed by representations



No sympathy for the devil. Photo Credit: HBO

of the relevant icon.

On the topic of the music; the soundtrack, and its integration into the episode is just fucking awesome. There's also some great use of visual metaphors throughout; a particularly effective example being in the closing sequence of the episode.

As I said earlier though, the episode isn't without its problems.

This opening episode definitely drags on for too long, and it lost my interest slightly towards the middle.

It also throws a lot of dangling plot threads at the viewer from the outset; slightly overwhelming us, and making each one seem less weighty. These should really have crept in slowly as the series progressed, and a few particular ones (no spoilers)

would have served as great ways to

keep hooking the audience back, and keeping us on our toes as the show went on.

I'm still interested though, and the characters and acting mean I'm invested enough to keep watching. Ultimately, I have faith in Scorsese to give us and interesting and gripping new series.

Vinyl is available on Sky

Cartoon Corner: Avengers EMH



Assembled we're strong; together fight as one. Photo Credit: Disney XD

Saad Ahmed
Television Editor

Avengers Earth's Mightiest Heroes is a fantastic journey into fun and adventure, with writing that embraces the best elements of Marvel media as well as the original

comic book roots. With well done, serialised storytelling, an excellent voice cast and superb animation, *Avengers EMH* is a lot of plain, awesome fun that anyone can enjoy.

This show adopts the nature of comic book stories well, having big adventures with ongoing plots and subplots to keep you going and craving the next installment. It does

a fine job of retelling and adapting classic stories while being original and keeping things grounded in its own universe. This series features all the major highlights of the Marvel films plus more. It does its own spin on plots like the *Winter Soldier* storyline and an invasion of an alien race. Without the demands of a film calling for more grittiness or realism, this show is able to show the best of the Avengers. While sometimes serious, the show is not afraid to let the more fantastical elements of comics to appear.

The show also features a large and rotating team of Avengers. Each member of the team has their own quirks as well as their time to shine.

The show makes you interested and invested in all the characters, even with the likes of Hawkeye. The characters themselves have their own developments and journeys, whether it's Thor and his qualms with his family or the Hulk trying to gain acceptance from others.

Speaking of characters, the show features a ridiculously large

This series features all the major highlights of the Marvel films plus more

number of people from the Marvel universe. Practically all the major Avengers villains are shown, each with their own motives and objectives. There is also a number of supporting characters as well as guest appearances from heroes like the Fantastic Four and even the Guardians of the Galaxy. In one episode, Spider-man forms and

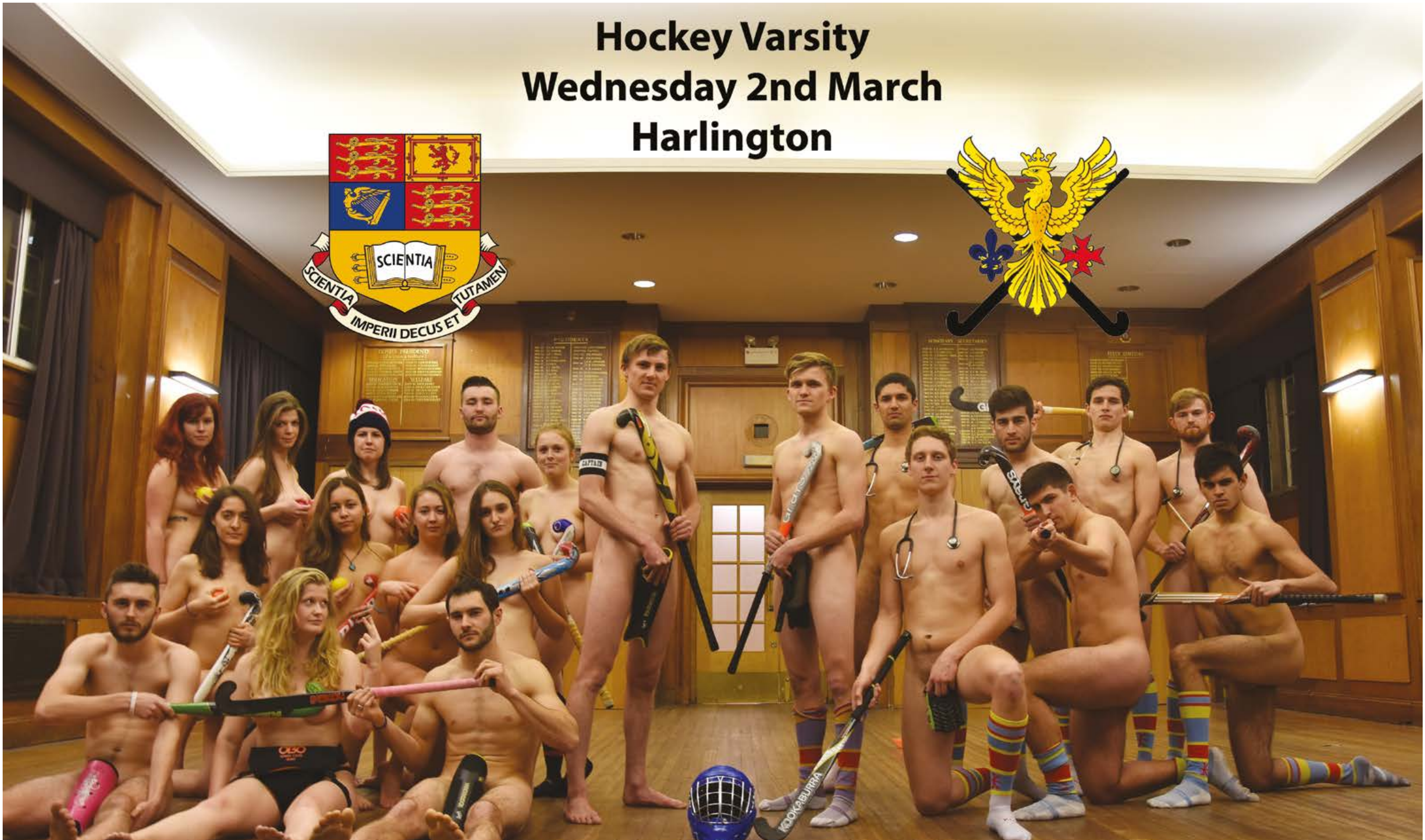
leads his own Avengers team into action.

The voice-acting of the show is top notch. Every character sounds original and organic, some of whom sound uncannily similar to their movie counterparts. The animation is also a treat, with a generous amount of detail as well as engaging and blockbuster-like action sequences. Occasionally the stories are simple and generic and sometimes plot threads are dropped, only to be picked up much later. In spite of this, every episode is a blast to watch.

This show only did last two seasons before it was axed making it join the ranks of awesome shows cancelled before their time. With amazing characters, and great stories, this show was a love letter to decades of comic book mythology. If you're impatiently waiting for Marvel's films, this is a show that'll keep you occupied until then.

Avengers Earth's Mightiest Heroes is available on Amazon Prime

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Unravelling the past

Coldwood Interactive's *Unravel* is smart, but frustrating

Cale Tilford
Music & Games Editor

Platformers (that aren't made by Nintendo) have seen a revival in recent years, with a large focus on artstyle and graphical fidelity. *Rayman Legends*, *LittleBigPlanet*, *Bionic Commando*, and *Shadow Complex* are all notable for their presentation, whether realistic or stylised. Innovating within the platforming genre is hard, so developers often use visuals to distinguish their work.

Unravel is by all accounts beautiful. It focuses on the miniature, with a small protagonist known as Yarny (made entirely from red yarn). Trees, twigs, and rocks become, as a result of Yarny's size, relatively massive structures within the game world. Small rodents, birds and crabs become large, threatening enemies. This magnified world, with its almost lifelike graphics, evokes a real sense of exploration and awe in the player.

The diverse environments represent more than just places, they hold the memory of an old woman whose house acts as the hub world. Yarny is a physical representation of her love, crafted by hand, with the red yarn that trails behind connecting her

There is a sadness and loneliness in *Unravel* that underpins everything

memories to help her reminisce. The memories that the player collects as they traverse the world exist only for a brief moment, and even then they are obscured and blurry. The trials and tribulations of the player represent the struggle of someone looking back on their past, hoping to find something to comfort them. There is a sadness and loneliness in *Unravel* that underpins everything.

What really sets *Unravel* apart from other platformers, is the literal unravelling of the character you play as. The red yarn becomes a support, a rope swing, a lasso, and



Look at that swagger. Photo Credit: *Unravel*, Electronic Arts

a trampoline. It's length is limited, forcing the player to carefully think about the order of their actions. Unfortunately, many of the environmental puzzles feel like they are impossible to complete the first time you're faced with them. Constant deaths, which cause you to respawn at a checkpoint, ruin the games otherwise leisurely pace. This is where Coldwood Interactive's puzzle-platformer ultimately unravels; there is no balance

Unravel is a classic case of style over substance

between punishment and reward.

Unravel is a classic case of style over substance. However, its style cannot, and will not, be ignored. There are a few games that look as good, especially from development teams this small. More frequent respawn points and less timing-based puzzles could have made *Unravel* a truly exceptional game.

Unravel is out now on PS4, Xbox One and PC

We want writers and illustrators

ANOTHER CASTLE

Imperial's gaming magazine returns this spring

games.felix@imperial.ac.uk



How Delacroix inspired 20th century art

The National Gallery highlights the old masters' influence on Impressionists

Elizaveta Tchebaniouk
Writer

Most would not expect the last painter of the grand style to be one of the first modern artists, and so it is quite daring and unique for an exhibition to make such a statement. *Delacroix and the Rise of Modern Art* sheds light on Delacroix's overlooked role as being an early modern revolutionary in both his individual style and the influence he had on succeeding modern masters.

The show opens with Cezanne's statement – "We all paint in Delacroix's language". In each room,

He had a rebellious vision of liberating colour and technique



Christ Asleep during the Tempest, 1853 by Delacroix. Photograph: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

some of Delacroix's paintings are displayed alongside a painting by another artist which directly mimic or incorporate certain elements from that specific work of Delacroix's. This layout exposes his influence and shows that this "we" in Cezanne's statement includes Renoir, Van Gogh, Monet, Manet, Matisse, Kandinsky, as well as countless others.

Delacroix's works themselves reflect his rebellious vision of liberating colour and technique from traditional rules, unafraid of official opposition with which many of his paintings were met. His controversial *The Death of Sardanapalus* (the small version is displayed in Room one), for example, when first shown at the Salon, was condemned for bizarreness, violence, and sexuality (curiously, in our times these

themes have been so commonplace in modern art that they've almost become overused and no longer

Delacroix was a key reference point for Cezanne

surprise, really). Delacroix's innovative composition in this painting was, however, impressive and influential to the modernists, as we see the composition of the figures mirrored in Cezanne's *The Eternal Feminine* shown alongside the work. Arguably, Delacroix's determination to "express passion as clearly as possible", as Baudelaire said, and rebel against traditions inspired the following generations of modernists to push creative boundaries.

Even though most of the works by Delacroix displayed in the exhibition have religious, mythological, and literary themes – subjects of grand tradition and unseen in works by the Impressionists – he was chiefly attracted by these subjects in

that they allowed "full play to the imagination" and a way for him to find "his own particular feelings to

He was a pioneer of painting simply for art's sake

express". His habit of painting a scene to express and convey feeling rather than an objective narrative was a key reference point for Impressionists.

We see Delacroix's influence on the Impressionists particularly in Room four. He pointed out that "even when we look at nature, our imagination constructs the picture" and true to this belief, Delacroix expressed the emotions felt before nature through subjective use of colour and form. This offered a precedent for a new type of landscape painting taken up by the Impressionists, who expressed the personal experience and sensations evoked in the artist by nature through their paintings.



In Room three are Delacroix's surprisingly bold flower paintings, a relatively underrated part of his oeuvre. They are a contrast to his mythological and oriental themes dominating the previous two rooms.. He painted flowers as a way to show mastery of colour, and they were some of the earliest examples

This reaffirms his role in modern art

of the revolutionary movement "art for art's sake"; painting for sake of painting, for aesthetic joy of artist and audience.

Over all in Delacroix's works in this exhibition, including ones influenced by mythology and orientalism, his color scheme is very similar to that of the avant-garde works. His omnipresent and persistent palette of bright bold navy, red, yellow, and black immediately brings to mind the palette of Malevich's *Suprematism* paintings. Delacroix himself said, "I dislike reasonable painting" – a statement resonant of an abstractionist's



The Death of Sardanapalus, the reduced 1846 version, by Delacroix Photo Credit: Philadelphia Museum of Art

motto, isn't it?

The last room seems to reaffirm Delacroix's central role in development of modern art. There is just one small painting by him in this room, alongside several works by Matisse and a work by Kandinsky – both prominent figures of the early 20th century modern art world. This room implies Delacroix's lasting legacy, and it's a shame that it ends so early in the art history timeline! It would be even more curious to see Delacroix's influences on later modern artists such as Picasso.

The show's punchline is Fantin-Latour's *Immortality*, where a winged figure representing immortality showers roses towards the greenery of a park above which the name "Delacroix" faintly hovers. This is almost too blunt an expression of the show's theme of Delacroix's enduring legacy when it has already succeeded in subtly and artfully expressing its title in various ways throughout each of the rooms.

Perhaps it is not only the influence of his revolutionary use of colour and form to express feelings that lives on in modern art, but also the central idea for painting that he expressed in the last line of his personal journal – "The first merit of painting is to be a feast for the eyes."

Delacroix and the Rise of Modern Art is at the National Gallery, London until 22nd May

A trippy look at first-time parenthood

Ben Williams
Writer

carriers for her ideas that they are.

"Perhaps, in a play crying out at a world that is hard and loud and vast and brittle and more, just more, than we could ever hope to know or understand"

I read Nina Segal's script for "In the Night Time" in a mad, streaming rush, coffee on fingertips on pages in the dregs of whisky and sleep. It deserved every one of my 5am minutes, and more.

"At this very moment, the universe itself is leaving us behind. Receding. Walking away and not even waving goodbye..."

It's a play in the sense that "The Odyssey" could have a script. Coming away from the performance, the words, still, are largest on stage. Actors are mannequins, but Segal's work grips them tight, the helpless

grown-up jokes are in the sidelines, but the play leaps for them.

It suffers only in that the pitch is hard to maintain. Once the tide's in and the big bad world has burst through the window how do you stop it pouring out? At points the play verges on manic – and that's undoubtedly the point – but the audience is, maybe, drowned just a hint too quickly to register the full force of the flood.

Gate has pulled out the stops on this – some of the most thought provoking theatre I've seen in a while. And c'mon IC – it's on your doorstep for £7.50. What more could you want?

If you're particularly keen, check out my interview with director Ben Kidd in last week's FELIX.

In the Night Time is at the Gate Theatre until the 27th of February



In the Night Time at the Gate Theatre. Photo Credit: Bill Knight



The unflinching inner life of a girl growing up

Eimear McBride's astonishing novel is transformed into an empowering performance

Anisha Kadri
Writer

The audience sits calmly, unaware of the storm that is poised to strike.

A single figure stands on stage in pyjamas. There are no other voices in this narrative, no props or distractions. The only ornament of this stage is just a girl, half-formed.

She is a stranger just yet.

By the end, we know her story intimately – we know *her* intimately. If we look hard enough, we can even recognise a part of ourselves in her.

Based on Eimear McBride's novel of the same name, *A Girl is A Half-Formed Thing* was adapted for the stage by Annie Ryan, and performed solo by Aoife Duffin. This play follows the journey of a girl from birth to the golden age of twenty. Told from the girl's perspective, we hear a stream of thoughts and inner discourse as her life meanders into adulthood.

Far from the predictable coming of age story, this is about finding strength and fortitude in the face of a cruel reality. The girl is abandoned by her father shortly after birth. She must cope with a controlling mother and the everyday reality of

her brother's terminal illness. She is sexually abused by her uncle at 13. Sex becomes an escape and an anaesthetic for her. Her exploration shows that female sexuality is a powerful thing: both a crippling curse and a powerful gift for a young woman in today's world.

Despite the manifold, she remains resilient in her search for meaning and a sense of self.

This is a play of striking simplicity

This is a play of striking simplicity. Most modern plays seem garish and superfluous. The bare stage becomes Aoife's playground as she paints us a scene beyond the sparse set, mixing the bold outline of her body language with the more intricate brushstrokes of her speech. Although the language of the play is indicative of the its Irish roots, it doesn't really matter where the story takes place; its narrative is distinctly



Aoife Duffin delivers a captivating solo performance in *A Girl is A Half-Formed Thing*. Photo Credit: Mihaela Bodlovic.

universal.

The real magic comes from the masterful scripting. The syntax has a poetic rhythm to it, but ventures beyond the limits of literary convention. Surprisingly, her words remain relatable, maintaining an unflinching honesty. Like the girl in the title, her thoughts and her words are half-formed, fragmented, and hurled at us with no apology, fast

and slow, hitting each point with searing precision.

The play tackles a much more general commentary on society, and childhood. It would be unjust to relegate this play to any single genre. Empowering for people of all genders, it demonstrates a great beauty in resilience.

An exceedingly experimental theatrical adaptation, *A Girl is A*

Half Formed Thing is a play for a brave and pioneering audience. The subject matter can be emotionally demanding, and disorienting at first. However, it still rewards a loyal audience with a memorable and thought-provoking performance.

A Girl is a Half-formed Thing is on at the Young Vic until 26th March.

An unforgettable encounter in the rainforest

A one man show captures the essence of the Amazon and the nature of our minds

McBurney's performance recounts the story of Loren McIntyre – an American photographer who travels into the Amazon rainforest to attempt to capture on film an elusive, indigenous people called the Mayoruna. It quickly becomes apparent, however, that this story did not happen in the past alone, but is also happening in the present. This is uniquely done through the engaging auditory experience.

The stage looks entirely unprepared; it is as if a rushed

rehearsal is just ending, rather than a theatrical production beginning. Bottles of water are strewn here and there and an inconspicuous cardboard box lies abandoned beside a table. Perhaps the only thing which points to anything out of the ordinary is an Easter-Island-like head that sits alone atop a stand in the middle of the stage. It is perhaps unknowingly an omen of the lonely world inside our heads into which we are about to be plunged.

Simon McBurney looks rather laid back as he walks onstage alone, dressed in shirt, jeans and cap. He

begins to speak in a disarmingly informal fashion as he demonstrates the capabilities of the various audio effects which will be used live in the performance. The play relies on a totally immersive sound experience due to the lack of other actors and scenery. This is made possible by – among other things – the strange head, which is revealed to be a binaural microphone – one which records sound in three dimensions. In this threadbare setting, he begins to weave the almost hallucinogenic fabric of a totally different world.

We were asked to switch off



Simon McBurney in *The Encounter*. Photo Credit: Robbie Jack



Kayapo warriors move through the forest; in *The Encounter* Loren McIntyre, an American photographer searches for the Mayoruna. Photo Credit: Martin Schoeller, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC.

McBurney evokes pictures of the Amazon rainforest using his own voice as an aural paintbrush

our mobile phones at the start of the performance – not unusual. But now it seems all the more appropriate as we find ourselves in an 'auditory plane' soaring above the ground. Suddenly, McBurney's daughter's voice interrupts him and he begins to have an exasperated and very real conversation with her, although her voice is actually a six-month old recording. And so, the entire mood and cleverness of his

piece is set from the off: where does the boundary lie between the past, present and future?

A performance which involves the audience wearing headphones is at first slightly disconcerting. I am used to seeing, hearing and reading stories, but this was an entirely new experiment in storytelling: I was living the tale. McBurney evokes pictures of the Amazon rainforest using his own voice as an aural paintbrush, along with items on the stage and at times a classical soundtrack. The art he creates ranges from stomping out the hauntingly rhythmic beats of a tribe's strange dance to sloshing a water bottle until it is a turbulent river. All this along with his convincing rendition of the deep American accent of Loren McIntyre, whose voice seems to evoke the presence of the photographer with us.

McBurney's voice and the sounds of the Amazon are just "behind your frontal lobe" as he himself put it; both physically and – as we were soon discover – mentally. In the play McIntyre's adventure in the rainforest transcends into a philosophical journey and this is portrayed very effectively. It is said that radio sparks the imagination and television kills it, and this was never more evident: soon, I myself began not only to hear the

He weaves the fabric of another world

soundscape, but also to see what it represented within my own head – perhaps the best stage for the strange story that was to ensue.

The story becomes progressively

The sloshing of a water bottle becomes a turbulent river

less chronological. This non-linear view of time and space is also accepted in physics where time can have multiple dimensions, and yet it never seemed so tangible as when listening to the, at times, trippy performance. We sometimes jump, not only through McIntyre's life, but through McBurney's own past which in a way mirrors the story, further creating a sense of discontinuous time and drawing into question the vague boundaries between people's lives.

This is a performance of alternating senses of togetherness and isolation. The simple lighting provides a powerful mental stimulus – adding character to the sound yet not detracting from its impact, becoming at some points rain, and at others fire. In the background, the anechoic wall upon which much of the lighting dances is shaped as such that it looks like a large optical illusion, appropriate to the psychedelic and almost uncomfortably deep experience that McBurney is planting while inside our heads.

Much of the piece's brilliance stems from the fact that McBurney knows many of the ideas he wishes to share are not explainable in words. This phenomenon of communication through thought as opposed to language is a theme

Multiple dimensions of time seem tangible

essential to the story, and is in a sense shared with the audience due to the way the story is told. Darkness pervades the piece, alluding to that empty void full of sound within our own heads.

Overall, I would describe this production not as a production but rather more accurately as a timeless piece of art about nature: as a brilliant performance which manages to capture the essence of an exotic location and people, but also the nature of our own minds whether time really exists as we know it. Rest assured you are guaranteed a powerfully moving performance.

WALEED EL-GERESY

The Encounter is on at The Barbican until 6th of March. Tickets from £10.



On the shoulders of literary giants

David Mitchell and Kazuo Ishiguro discuss ghosts, action and what they avoid writing

Jingjie Cheng
Arts Editor

It was an odd set-up – the 2500-seater Royal Festival Hall packed to the brim, eagerly watching just two individuals on stage. Sat slightly angled towards each other and separated by an unassuming coffee table were two of the greatest literary figures of our time. I was seated right at the back (everything else was sold out), and their figures were dwarfed by the massive screen behind them with their names emblazoned across. Kazuo Ishiguro and David Mitchell may be the only two people on a vast stage regularly used for entire orchestras or dance troupes, but their presence filled the space around them and commanded the attention of rows upon rows of fans, writers, geeks and the curious.

Clearly, their words have touched the lives of many. Being a passionate fan of Kazuo Ishiguro's books, I had eagerly signed up for the event entirely because of him without actually realizing who David Mitchell was. I mean, I've watched *Cloud Atlas*, but I am ashamed to say that I have never actually read any of his books. On the other hand, I count Ishiguro's Booker prize-winning novel *Remains of the Day* as one of the books that have changed my worldview, and his short story collection *Nocturnes* completely overturned my ideas of the magic that can be done with beautiful language.

However, this event turned out to be exceedingly fruitful precisely because of the dialogue between the two arguably similar but ultimately very different writers. Mitchell describes his first book promotion event abroad where he was pleasantly surprised to find an impressive crowd, only to learn that they were all there for Ishiguro, who was also at the event. He is fifteen years younger than Ishiguro, but the two are good friends, often sending each other manuscripts for comments and exchanging ideas over the telephone. At one point, Mitchell talks about how the multiplayer board game *Dungeons and Dragons* inspired him as a child – to which Ishiguro replied that he had mentioned the game to him before, but he had no idea what it



David Mitchell and Kazuo Ishiguro, giants of the literary world. Photo Credit: Paul Stuart (left), Jeff Cottenden (right).

was because he was probably too old!

Friendly banter permeated much of their conversation, which was split into three sections, each preceded by a clip. Since the event was titled "Among Giants and Ghosts", it was only appropriate that the first clips were from the films *Sixth Sense* and

Clearly, their words have touched the lives of many

The Innocent. Interestingly, they disagreed fundamentally on what they found scary about ghosts – Mitchell narrated a story his brother told him as a kid, about a misplaced liver and his grandfather's ghost. Ishiguro, however, contended that that was more horror, which he thought was distinct from eerie, fear-inducing beings and events. Horror didn't scare him – what he found scary was simply the existence

of the supernatural, a being at the edge of reality.

To Ishiguro, ghosts show that "our control over the world is not complete", and that was what scared him. Writing, then "unleashes this force or power". "Do you write because you want to create something out of nothing, then?" Mitchell asks. Ishiguro's stories often deal with characters that are struggling with ghosts within themselves, or the ghosts of decisions that they have made. Living in Lord Darlington's estate long after its days of glory, Stevens from *Remains* is constantly haunted by the mistakes of his past.

The second clip was from a samurai comedy film, where two samurai stare at each other, tension building up palpably without any movement at all, until both of them slash across at the same time. Ishiguro points out that Mitchell is far more acquainted with writing action scenes than he is, and the pair went on to discuss the value of writing about action, considering that films can do a far more vivid job. Mitchell points out that it is the build-up to the fight that makes or breaks the game in writing action, not the exchange of blows itself. Raising the example of *War and Peace*, Ishiguro adds that

writing also allows one to move more effectively between the micro and macro aspects of the action.

At one point, Ishiguro brought up that he found Mitchell "remarkably fearless as a writer, perhaps even reckless".

Ishiguro's characters often struggle with ghosts within themselves

Despite keeping a notebook of ideas, Ishiguro said that most of them didn't end up anywhere as he found it greatly uncomfortable to write outside of his personal experience, almost like he did not have a right to.

"Do you hesitate in the same way?" he asked Mitchell, who replied that

he had a point of writing books that are quite different from one another, and in that process he tends to veer into the unfamiliar. However, both agreed that there are certain cultural and political areas that they felt compelled to avoid, because the right to write them "had to be earned" – such as African American literature being so richly filled by native writers.

Perhaps this avoidance of real history stems from a fear of misrepresenting the past and doing injustice to real tragedy. I do not personally see anything wrong with appropriating history in works of fiction, if a particular time or event suits the creative plot one has in mind. No one bills novels as history books, and there is no obligation to be accurate, after all.

It was a great pleasure listening to two great writers chat, on this whirlwind tour across a range of issues. I will never cease to be amazed by the capacity of human imagination that creates words and images so elaborate and beautiful that speaks to so many people at once. "Among Giants and Ghosts" is an appropriate title not only because of the discussion of ghosts and fantasy, but because these are two giants of contemporary literature.



Life after anorexia: IBS

A personal account on the more neglected side effects of the disease: Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Emily-Jane Cramphorn
Writer

People often speak about the risks of anorexia and bulimia – how they can kill you, make your bones brittle and your hair fall out.

However, I want to talk about one very overlooked side effect, Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). For many years I have starved and punished my body. I have abused laxatives, purged perpetually, binged frenziedly and outright refused to eat. Historically, my behaviours have left me in a critical state however my recurring battle now lies with IBS.

IBS is a fairly common complaint and is overlooked as a harmless idiopathic syndrome. However, IBS dictates my life and impacts both my physical and emotional health. I am 21 years old and I cannot eat without severe bloating,



We all know it's unhealthy, but IBS is a lesser known consequence of anorexia. Photo Credit: Newscast UK

If you
abuse
your body
eventually it
will break

stomach pains and gastric reflux; I live off Gaviscon and other gastric medicines. I suffer from gastroparesis and irritable bladder syndrome. I do not have normal 'bowel habits' and suffer from rapid and extreme fluctuations. I am somewhat incontinent; my bladder is weaker than a 40-year-old woman with 5 children. I cannot bounce on a trampoline, I cannot sneeze, and I cannot hold it in. Much of my life revolves around the loo, I cannot sleep through the night or go on

long journeys and despite being told that with weight restoration my symptoms should ease, that has not been the case. Almost five stone later and my symptoms have not subsided.

I hope that in time things will ease but I worry that this is a life sentence.

Not a day passes in which I do not regret how I have abused my body. I did not think I was harming myself or that my behaviours held consequences.

Nonetheless, the cold hard reality remains that if you abuse your body eventually it will break. The human body is an amazing and resilient yet fine tuned machine, it will adapt and survive under challenge but like all things, it has its limits.

Your body needs energy. Your digestive system needs food and is meant to work in a 'forwards' direction. If you abuse this balance then ultimately your body will begin to reject food and it will fail to digest as nature intended. Your metabolism will cling to energy giving you a somewhat 'fatty' exterior meanwhile your stomach will reject its contents after years of abuse. Re-swallowing food has become a daily occurrence,

Eating
disorders
and their
side effects
do not
need to
be a life
sentence

unpleasant I know, but painfully true.

Eating disorders are not glamorous and they are not without risk. If you are suffering please do not dismiss the damage to your health, it is very real. Eating disorders and their side effects do not need to be a life sentence, but only we, the sufferers, have the power to break free.

Mental health helplines and resources

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

Helplines and Online Resources

If you are distressed and need someone to talk to:

Samaritans

Phone: 08457 90 90 90
(24 hour helpline)
www.samaritans.org.uk

For issues with anxiety:

Anxiety UK

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

No Panic

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

For eating disorders:

Beat

Phone: 0845 634 1414
(Mon-Thurs 13:30-16:30)
www.b-eat.co.uk

For addiction:

Alcoholics Anonymous

Phone: 0845 769 7555
(24 hour helpline)

Narcotics Anonymous

Phone: 0300 999 1212
(Daily 10:00-midnight)
www.ukna.org

College Resources

Student Counselling Service
Phone: 020 7594 9637
Email: counselling@ic.ac.uk

Imperial College Health Centre

Phone: 020 7584 6301
Email: healthcentre@ic.ac.uk

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




Painting may or may not help. Photo Credit: Newscast UK

The LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS 2016

Last chance to nominate yourself for The Leadership Elections 2016.

Nominations close Sunday 28 February

 **Voting opens**
12:00, Friday 4 March
Voting closes
12:00, Friday 11 March

imperialcollegeunion.org/elections

imperial college union



Imperial College London

PRIVATE HOUSING EVENING

7 March 16.30 - 19.30

16.30
exhibition in the Queen's Tower Rooms.
Meet estate agents, private halls providers and other service providers.

Join us for tips and advice on finding private accommodation.

18.00
presentation begins in the Great Hall

imperial college union

@icstudenthub #privatehousing

imperial.ac.uk/accommodation

Student Hub
student life support





Breakfast at Granger & Co.

FELIX reviews the healthy(er) Aussie breakfast spot

Christy Lam
Writer

Your committed relationship to Wasabi for breakfast, lunch, dinner AND midnight snack is just not working anymore. You've tried everything at Hummingbird from cupcakes to whoopie pies, risking diabetes and an E number overload. You've even set foot into Roots & Bulbs desperate for something new, green and wholesomely natural.

That's it. We are leaving South Kensington.

Situated on Westbourne Grove, Notting Hill, Granger & Co. will be your perfect spot to get your Aussie breakfast fix. Walk inside to find a well-lit, airy, spacious room with clean, marble tables and a casual, minimalist vibe.

But we have no time to devour the interior. Let's get down to food.

I always order a coffee or a hot chocolate to start my meal. For some reason they always surprise me with crazy animal patterns covering the entire interior of the glass. My mocha came with a thick layer of chocolate on the sides, with furious

You are seriously missing out in life

feline claw marks. And the coffee itself? GOOD. Finally, something different from our Library Café.

Now. If you come here without trying their signature ricotta hotcakes, you are seriously missing out in life. Three 1" thick hotcakes, pan fried to a beautiful golden brown, stacked on top of a freshly peeled banana, a knob of honeycomb butter next to a mini jug of syrup. Served steaming hot on a clean white plate. Fluffy, like a marshmallow. Creamy and velvety with generous chunks of ricotta studded inside. Soaked up the syrup and melted butter like a sponge to give you that filling, comforting, buttery goodness in every mouthful.

Trust me and try it. You will never go back to Wasabi.



Thick, white and deliciously sticky - just what the doctor ordered. Photo Credit: luxlife-blog.com

Vegan? Gluten free? Cake? Surely not.

FELIX presents the birthday cake for your "friends" with challenging needs



Look at that. Don't you just want it in your mouth?

Photo Credit: Sanjay Bhattacharya

Sanjay Bhattacharya
Food Editor

Cakes as birthday presents are great – so quick, cheap and the effort everyone knows you went to means that even if you mess it up, people will pretend it tastes good. Fortunately, this recipe is virtually idiot-proof. Go ahead, test that statement.

Makes 1 small cake, for about 6 hungry people with dietary needs – but can be easily doubled!

Vegan (dairy free) chocolate chips can be ordered online, or found in one of the many niche stores in London.

160g plain, gluten free flour
200g granulated sugar

50g cocoa powder
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
1/2 tsp fine salt
235ml warm water
1 tsp vanilla extract
80ml neutral vegetable oil
1 tsp white wine vinegar
100g vegan chocolate chips (if you can find them)

Preheat your oven to 180°C/160°C if using a fan oven. Grease/paper a 9" round cake pan, springform if you have it.

Sift together all the dry ingredients into a mixing bowl. If you don't have a sieve, use the back of a spoon to carefully break up as many lumps as you can. In a jug, mix all the wet ingredients together. Pour the wet into the dry, using a whisk to

combine – don't dump all the liquid into the mix in one go, as you'll end up with lumps. Use a spatula to mix in the chocolate chips, if using them, before transferring the mix to the pan.

Bake in your preheated oven for ~30 mins, when a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean. Leave to cool for an hour, then remove from the tin – a knife around the edge should help – before letting cool completely, if you can resist.

Keen food blogger? Fancy yourself the chef? Send any recipes, reviews or ideas to

food.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Union Page

Reynolds Bar refurbishment - designs are in! Let us know your thoughts.



We're now in the final stages before refurbishment commences in the Reynolds Bar during the Easter break and this is your last chance to give us your feedback. Just visit our consultation webpages at imperialcollegeunion.org/reynolds-transformation and take our final survey. We're looking forward to seeing a new and revamped Reynolds Bar and hope you are too! If you have any questions, please contact Carl Salton-Cox, Reynolds Bar Manager (c.salton-cox@imperial.ac.uk).

imperialcollegeunion.org/reynolds-transformation



Explore the UK this term



Last year, the International Student Support team at College organised activities to help international students settle in at the College and explore the UK, and they have some more trips running this term! You can join them in Oxford or on a day a trip to Bath. For more details, visit imperialcollegeunion.org/whats-on and search for the events in our What's On calendar.

imperialcollegeunion.org/whats-on

Day trip to Oxford with optional Punting activity

Saturday 5 March
09:00-17:00
£20 per person
(£5 extra for punting)

Day trip to Bath with optional Roman Baths visit

Saturday 19 March
09:00-18:00
£20 per person
(£10.75 extra for baths visit)

Fridays in the h-bar - bar food on till 22:00 from 4 March



From Friday 4 March, the h-bar will be extending its bar food service until 22:00. Grab an h-bar burger for yourself or tapas to share with friends and colleagues with your drink for a little bit longer next month!

Coming soon at the h-bar:

Pub Quiz - every second and fourth Thursday
Wine Tasting, Friday 4 March
PGI Friday, every Friday from 16:00

imperialcollegeunion.org/h-bar

FELIX CLUBS & SOCS



felix@imperial.ac.uk

Techtonic victory at the ICCAs

The all-male A Cappella group is officially off to New York for the finals in April

The semi-finals of the International Collegiate a cappella, the show that last year won the union's event of the year, returned last Sunday, with even more excitement from last year's highly anticipated event. Featuring eight of the UK's top university a cappella groups, competing to a sold-out audience in the Great Hall. Opening the show were the University of Oxford's renowned male group Out of the Blue. Durham's mixed group the Northern Lights followed, with the University of Bath's mixed group Aquapella. Before the interval was the anticipated showdown between the previous winners of the quarter-finals, Semi-Toned of the University of Exeter, and the Techtonics of Imperial. Semi-Toned gave a very strong and technically sound set, putting a huge amount of pressure on the hopeful Techtonics. But this

did not faze them, as they closed the first half with an outstanding performance, confirmed by the standing ovation they received. Beginning the second set were mixed group the Bristol Suspensions (unsurprisingly from the University of Bristol), followed by mixed group the Alleycats of St. Andrews. The Scopes, mixed group of Imperial closed the competition with a fun and lively set. While the judges deliberated the cast of the new all a cappella musical "Gobsmacked" gave an inspiring performance. After they had finished it was time for the verdict. A sense of nerves filled the Great Hall as all the groups stood on stage. Special awards were announced, notably the Techtonics winning best choreography for their rendition of "Bicycle Race". Aquapella ranked third, and Semi-Toned came second. Surely this could only mean one thing - the Techtonics were announced as



The Techtonics with their award! Photo Credit: Will O'Reilly

the winners, to the delight of the captivated audience. A truly well deserved triumph rewarded with an exciting trip to New York City to continue their ICCA journey.

RACHEL PALEY

DramSoc presents Birdland

Nathan Patel
Writer

Entering into the second term of the last year of my Joint Maths and Computing Degree, I thought to myself, "How can I distract myself from my work in a ridiculous way I haven't tried yet?". Having already become captain of the most obscure sport on the planet (underwater hockey - don't ask), and literally played God in a DramSoc play last year, I decided it was time to actually become God. Sadly, gaining omniscience is fairly difficult, so I settled on directing. Sadly, nobody liked the play I wanted to do, so I settled on assistant directing someone else's.

The play in question is Birdland, by Simon Stephens. It follows Paul, a rockstar at the height of his fame, his subsequent downfall, his descent into madness, and how it alienates and destroys his relationships with everyone around him. The dialogue is sharp and witty, and it

provides interesting commentary on the celebrities of modern society. Armed with a script, budget, and a producer prodding us to get on with it, we began our search for our cast. Auditions were one of my favourite parts of directing, as I got to see the wide range of acting talent we have right here at Imperial.

Having being told Leonardo DiCaprio sadly wasn't available, we settled on our cast over Christmas, and rehearsals began. For the last six weeks, Jack Williams (the director) and I have been blocking out scenes, bringing out emotional performances, telling actors to "act higher and/or drunker", and making Paul a bigger dick than we thought possible. I've loved every moment of it.

From the initial idea to the polished performance, every actor brings their own spark to a scene, and it's the collaboration that makes the play great. "Try it and see" has become one of my favourite lines, because even the weirdest sounding ideas can really make a scene. Sitting back and watching a play



The Life of Paul. Photo Credit: DramSoc

really begin to come together is one of the most rewarding things I've ever done.

Show week is now on us, and I couldn't be more excited to see

Birdland on stage for the first time. The cast are all fantastic, having really grown into their characters; the crew are also fantastic, pouring nights and days behind the scenes to

make sure the play actually happens; and the band have been rehearsing late into the night, all to bring you an experience that will be absolutely fantastic.



felix@imperial.ac.uk

ICU MTSoc Presents Sweeney Todd

The Demon Barber of Fleet Street takes a turn on Exhibition Road

Tom Stephens
Writer

Imagine you can never really tell which of your friends would make the most convincing serial killer. When auditions were running for MTSoc's production of Sweeney Todd back in December, the titular role of the murderous barber was hotly contested with auditionees flocking in from as far afield as King's College to throw their hat into the ring. So when 2nd year physicist Nick Bradley secured the part of Sweeney - undoubtedly one of the most coveted characters in all

One of the most coveted characters in all of musical theatre

talents is also an exceptional actor. During the first run of the show the only note director Pete Noden made for the scene was "Nick - a little bit of wee came out".

Nick leads a colourful and exceptionally talented cast of characters as they tell the tale of Todd, a barber wrongfully imprisoned who has escaped capture and returned to London. Encountering his old neighbour

been polished clean as a whistle. It has been woven together with dexterity into a sonic tapestry that glisters more and more brilliantly as the show progresses.

Henry's commendable efforts in finding a top-quality band have also paid off - at the first band call when I sang "Johanna", one of the most well-known songs from the show, I was filled with a new love for the number as I heard the

The songs themselves also give the performers a chance to shine, and each and every member of the cast has risen with gusto to the occasion. The exceptional singing talents of the ensemble gives every chorus number a strength that sends chills down the spine, and the leads match that power with their performances; standouts include Emma Watson's portrayal of Lovett, with a belt range that would put

in discomfort. Roshani Abbey is also a highlight, showing off her beautifully smooth soprano range in the heart-warming "Green Finch and Linnet Bird" solo.

It has to be said that the duets are often the most stunning part of the show; the fabulous interweaving that builds between the four voices of Anthony, Johanna, the Judge and the Beadle by the end of "Ladies In Their Sensitivities" is truly magical to take part in, and a moment that took place in AS2 when glittering rays of sunshine danced through the windows and onto the backs of

There truly is no substitute for seeing these exceptional performers in the flesh



MTSoc's Sweeney Todd will get your blood pumping Photo Credit: Cem Hurrell

of musical theatre, and in his debut performance with the society no less - quite a few people were surprised.

While Nick, at 6'11" (at a guess), is as physically imposing as they come and is known throughout the college for the quality of his beautiful singing voice, he's one of the last people you would guess is likely to grab the nearest razor and begin slashing merrily away. A night in the union with him reveals in him an aptitude for banter, a pining for New Orleans, and a passion for music but not a thirst for blood.

However, the second the cast saw Nick perform "Epiphany", the turning point of the musical and arguably the most exhilarating number in a show full of exhilarating numbers, everything became clear. It turns out that the man of many

Mrs. Lovett, he plots his revenge with her on the Judge that sent him away and took his daughter. Along the way he meets a naïve young sailor (played by myself), a half-crazed beggar woman, an "Italian" barber and his servant boy, and a beadle working for the judge. As the story unfolds, these characters collide with each other in ways that will impact them forever.

Whilst the story itself is thrilling, the legendary musical score (composed by the great Stephen Sondheim) is what makes the show the masterpiece it is. Tackling one of the most challenging productions in all of musical theatre was something that the entire cast found daunting as the rehearsal process began, but under the rigorous musical direction of Henry Harrod each number has

The duets are often the most stunning part of the show

beautifully powerful swell of brass that underscores it.

any performer to shame, fresher Fergus Wade's mesmerising turn in the role of servant boy Toby, and Ehsaan Shivarani's show-stopping appearance as barber Adolfo Pirelli, who leaves the audience laughing with every minute of the little stage time he has.

The directors' choice to include songs that are traditionally considered optional also bolsters the performances of the leads; first year chemical engineer Laurence Ankers' portrayal of the beadle Bamford explores the attics of the human hearing range with his high notes, Hatty Campbell's beggar woman fully expresses every dimension of the haunting character, and Arun O'Sullivan's Judge Turpin has his shocking chance to make everyone in the audience squirm

To get your ticket, visit <https://mtsoc.co.uk/tickets/>



felix@imperial.ac.uk

New Financial Worlds Conference

Imperial College Finance Society successfully hosts the Conference for its 5th year

Finance Society Committee
Writer

On 17th February 2016, the 5th New Financial Worlds Conference was successfully held at the state-of-the-art Bloomberg Auditorium in London.

The day was split between Investment Banking and Global Markets. The diverse range of speakers left attendees with an unparalleled understanding of the two areas. With an inside-scoop on how to break into these exclusive divisions from the industry's best, attendees are now better equipped to differentiate themselves amongst the fierce competition.

The day started with a talk from a Managing Director at the Investment Banking Division of Goldman Sachs. Having worked at the division for close to 20 years, his extensive experience quickly expanded attendee's knowledge on debt financing and LBOs.

The next speaker was Omiros Sarikas, a principal advisor at AHV Associates LLP, a private equity

firm. With a long track record in M&A and PE/VC, he diligently explained the life cycle of a fund, their position in the financial world and how attendees should align themselves to the industries' needs.

Christopher Wickli from Citi rounded off the Investment Banking session with an excellent summary of what ECM involves and the characteristics that make a successful banker in this area. The first Global

Provided an eye-opening view

Markets speaker was Nigel Khakoo, the Global Head of FX Trading at Nomura International, who focused on Abenomics and derivatives. Using a recent example he explained the use of options in order to take advantage of central bank events.

Our final speaker, Marc Mourre



Marc Mourre giving a talk on the future of the oil sector. Photo Credit: Ju Yoo

(pictured), the former Vice Chairman of Commodities at Morgan Stanley, is widely acclaimed as one of France's most famous bankers and, true to expectations, provided an eye-opening view on the future of the oil sector.

With a drinks reception to conclude, the Conference was extremely well received by students and speakers alike, with a number of students having successfully networked with our speakers and recruiters! Indeed, for anyone

interested in finance, attending next year is an absolute must considering the insight you will gain, as well as the exclusive and diverse network that you are sure to build.

IC Finance Society hits 2000 members

Iskren Peev
Writer

Last Tuesday Imperial College Finance Society (ICFS) successfully overtook Medical Education (the biggest departmental society) in terms of membership. By Friday, ICFS reached yet another milestone by becoming the first society to exceed 2000 members.

What is it that has brought more students together than any department at Imperial? As a career-orientated society, the main focus of ICFS is organising events for its sponsors. Networking sessions and trading games had attendance at an all-time high, with several boasting more than 200 attendees. Some students even received invitations for an interview

the following day and secured their dream job as a result. In particular, ICFS caused a riot outside Eastside bar when hundreds of suit-wearing members queued for a chance to rub shoulders with City professionals (and free pizza!).

It's not all to do with finance, though! ICFS also held its first ever social event - those that gave it a chance had one of the best nights of their life, with food and drinks on us all night. Our annual dinner promises to be even better with more than £70 subsidy per person.

We also heavily subsidise our two international trips: the New York trip with all expenses paid for 22 members (including one lucky winner of a completely free trip!) and the Tanzania microfinance trip, which gives members an opportunity to volunteer their skills to help grow small sustainable businesses

in close-knit communities. We also teamed up with RAG to promote corporate social responsibility by delivering the Charity Challenge of 2016, where Raincatcher Imperial won £1500 for their outstanding charitable efforts.

Following on from the success of our New Financial Worlds conference at Bloomberg HQ, we're also hosting the London FinTech Conference 2016 in collaboration with other universities. CEOs and leaders of ground-breaking startups will discuss the future of the industry, with an opportunity to network and potential job leads.

We also hosted the University Investment Banking series, where both categories were won by Imperial teams, beating the likes of Cambridge and LSE.

The team behind a record-breaking year is the ICFS committee, who



The gang. Photo Credit: Abhishek Mukherjee

have dedicated a lot of their free time to using the resources they had available to the best of their ability.

The result is clear: our members have gained insight into the industry, made good contacts

and had fun while doing it. With election time looming, people are extremely determined to be on next year's ICFS team - it has accounted for around 200 new members. Will you be part of our story?

FELIX HANGMAN



hangman@imperial.ac.uk

NEWS WITHOUT THE NEWS



GOVE AND GAST IN EU FALL OUT



NEW CROSSRAIL LINE TO BE NAMED AFTER BRITAIN'S REAL QUEEN

HOROSCOPES



ARIES

This week, you huff and you puff and you blow the RAG crane down. Metaphorically. That's right, you're the Imperial College Health and Safety Department.



TAURUS

This week, you volunteer to be the first off the crane in the doomed RAG bungee jump. However, the college was right, and bam, you slam right into the window of the SCR, ruining a senior manager's lunch.



GEMINI

This week, in an attempt to get picked up by the nationals again, you leave copies of your newspaper around pubs next to the *Daily Mail*, *Guardian* and *Times* headquarters. However, when you return the following day, you find people have just pulled out the centrefolds. Same old.



CANCER

This week, you're thinking about running for a Big Elections position. You then discover that you're expected to make decisions that might divide student opinion, and they might tweet stuff at you like 'DPW sux!!!' at four in the afternoon. Good grief! You back out.



LEO

This week, you're Jeb! Bush. All the men in your family have been Presidents, so you try too, even though all you've ever wanted to do is dance. Eventually you back out, but it ends with your father proudly watching you play the lead in *Swan Lake*.



VIRGO

This week you're the new underground line thingy. No one's ever bothered to ask *you* what your name is. Rude.



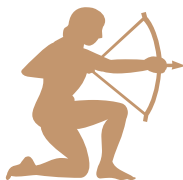
LIBRA

This week you're the Brits, but like the sick dog you are, ITV refuses to let you drift off into the night, instead pumping you full of life-extending drugs like Adele and Rihanna. An experimental mix of James Bay and Beiber prove too much and finally, you're at peace.



SCORPIO

This week you're working on your manifesto for the elections. You get a bit carried away and call yours the New Manifesto for the Disenfranchised and launch it into a national campaign. However, you're suspended for using adhesive promotional materials.



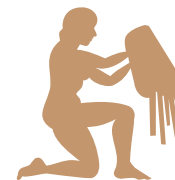
SAGITTARIUS

This week, you decide to sign an open letter printed in FELIX for what you think is a perfectly innocent pro-EU campaign. However, it's actually a veiled attempt by the IC Euro-sceptics Society to trick you. You call the society "disgusting" and stop their bungee jump.



CAPRICORN

This week, you realise that everything you write in the horoscopes comes true as Kent students petition to build a 76m tall statue of Margaret Thatcher outside their union bar. Realising the power you have, you start write more carefully. The writer gets a great grad job. The end.



AQUARIUS

This week, you're the 15,000th member of Finance Society, which means the bankers now has more engagement than the union itself. A coup is staged and Finance now governs us all. But then all the stuff that happens in *The Big Short* happens here and we're all fucked.



PISCES

This week you're the EU, and people are going round saying they don't want to be with you anymore. You decide you don't want to be with them anyway, even though you thought things had been going well. They eventually leave, but you tell all your friends it was mutual.



Medals aplenty for the rowers

Newcastle's BUCS Head up proves a successful trip for the team

Toby Heaton
Writer



Rowers in their natural element outside of messy dinners. Photo Credit: Imperial Boat.

For Imperial's rowers, BUCS Head was moved from the metropolitan Boston to the tropical Newcastle this year (a Head race is a rowing time trial, rather than a side by side race). ICBC sent up 22 of our finest athletes to compete on the Sunday, in an attempt to prove that the strength of our squad is defined by quality, not quantity.

After a seven hour drive up to Newcastle on the Saturday morning, there were doubts about the race going ahead at all. The conditions were abysmally windy and choppy during our paddle on Saturday afternoon and we came off the water wet, cold and apprehensive about the racing tomorrow – the forecast was only meant to get worse.

After a hearty meal from some uncomfortably friendly Northerners and a good night's sleep in the finest accommodation north of the M4, the crews were ready for the first races of the day. The first boat to race the 4700m course was a coxless four of Andrew Halls

(Club Captain, 4th year Materials), James Redhead (Civ. Eng. exchange student), Alex Ball (2nd year Mech Eng) and Juha Lepannen (3rd year Mathematics). This crew raced well, navigating the unfamiliar Tyne river to secure a silver medal in their Championship category, behind the home favourites of Newcastle University. The next crew off was a coxed four of Ben Thomas (Environmental Tech. MSc), Toby Heaton (2nd year Materials) and Myles Holborough (3rd year Mech Eng), Ollie

Hines (3rd year Theoretical Physics) and cox Chris Au (Environmental Tech. MSc). This crew managed to do one better than their teammates, beating Edinburgh and Newcastle to win a gold medal.

The final crew in this division was a lightweight (less than 75kg) coxless four of Paul Jones (PhD Biomaterials), Romain Barnoud (PhD Computer Science), Rob McPherson (2nd year Materials) and Myles Holborough (3rd year Materials). The four upheld

Imperial's strong lightweight track record by winning a bronze medal in their category. The afternoon offered more challenges for the rowers. Wind had picked up, meaning that the racing would be slower this time round. It was time to bring out the big guns for the finale of the weekend's racing – the men's eights. We had two eights racing at BUCS: one championship eight, contested by British universities for the fastest student eight in the country, and one intermediate eight.

Our intermediate eight was made up of people ICBC coached from complete novices at the start of the 2014/15 academic year. The crew was Dugald Fraser, Tom Burnell, Jac Reid, Fabio Albertani, Lawrence Jones, Vitaly Delve, Paul Liétar, JT Baird and cox Emily Boothe. This eight would be competing against university second eights, because of the ruling against entering more than one boat in a championship event. Our championship consisted of some familiar names: Romain Barnoud, Toby Heaton, Ben Thomas, Ollie Hines, Tristan Vouilloz, James Redhead, Andrew Halls, Myles Holborough and Chris Au. The eight set off second, following Newcastle down the course and brought the prized gold medal home to London! Finally, the intermediate eight put in a storming performance to come 5th when competing against far more experienced rowers.

22 athletes sent up to Newcastle, 22 BUCS medals brought back to London. A good day in the office for ICBC and it bodes well for the rest of the season!

Follow us on Instagram and Twitter on @imperialboat.



Goodbye old friends

Old faces make an appearance at American Football's Bath match

Panukorn Taleongpong
Writer

Last Sunday saw our last game of the season against the Bath Killer Bees, the Immortals were determined not to end the season with a loss; however, after a long game, the score was 49-8 to the Killer Bees.

We started out the game with a kick off. After a fantastic kick, the defensive team were on. The defense were extremely strong and were able to stop the Killer Bees from advancing. After the fourth down, the offensive team were on. With a miraculous QB sneak, Kevin Kim swerved and ran through the defensive lines and, from our red-zone, scored an amazing touchdown (two point conversion successful). Afterwards, the defensive team were able to force a fourth down near our end-zone but, due to a fumble, Bath were able to recover with a few yards to spare from their first, much-needed, touchdown. With that advantage, Bath were able to score making it 6-8 as the two point conversion was unsuccessful. Unfortunately, afterwards, the Immortals defensive players picked up injuries and with a lack of players, many offensive members were forced to play both ways. A big shout out to the offensive linemen who stepped up in a time of need and filled in where necessary. With the lack of players, special teams



Everybody through the tunnel. Photo Credit: Imperial Immortals

were lacking organisation and many players had to step into fill the gaps before snaps. With a fatigued Immortals squad, Bath were able to take advantage and piled up touchdowns. This unfortunately ended with a score of 49-8; we wish the Killer Bees a good and successful trip up to Sterling and for the rest of their season.

After the game, as is our tradition after every last match of the season, the Immortals formed a tunnel for the leavers; I would like to dedicate this section of our match report to the leavers: Jonathon Robert Joseph, Marcus Stead-Hall, Bami Falana, Emanuel Oladayo Olagbaju, Rhys Kilian, Noach Ben-Haim, Kevin Kim, Paulius Viskis, Rayane M. Jackson and Alex Brockhurst.

Jonathon Robert Joseph, played for the Immortals and American football for the first time this year, playing fullback. Jon has been an essential part to the team this year, on and off the field, being loved by all.

Marcus Stead-Hall, ex-publicity officer and running back/full back has been with the club for five years. Through his days he's been known to specialise in cut blocks, with any

linebacker fearing to get on the field when seeing him. Bami Falana, joined the club last year and was

always playing running back until his last game of this season where he was playing as a linebacker and a defensive lineman. His athleticism is known to all around; with his pace and strength he was a massive asset to the offense.

Emanuel Olagbaju, current secretary, has played for the club for four years. Throughout his glorious career he played as a running back, slot, and a defensive lineman, his power and agility is famous within the team and the American football community in the country, his trucking count is off the charts, and any defensive player going up against him would crumble against the fear of being destroyed.

Rhys Kilian joined the team this year as a wide receiver however, his versatility and experience meant that he was playing in other positions such as quarterback and running back, through which he performed phenomenally. Loved throughout the club, Rhys will be missed on and off the field.

Noach Ben-Haim, undoubtedly one of the best receivers this team has ever seen, has been with the club for two years and before that, played at Coventry University as

A big shout out to the offensive linemen who stepped up

a wide receiver as well. His speed and strength have been such an important part of this team's offense and he has had many highlights including his one handed reception in the last game.

Kevin Kim has played since 2011, starting out as halfback then wide receiver then quarterback this year. He is known around the team not only for being extremely tough when it comes to receiving hits, but also for being an all round fabulous person. He has lead our team to many touchdowns and he will be missed.

Paulius Viskis, an absolute beast of a defensive player, has played for three years as a linebacker and a defensive end. His brute strength would cause any quarterback to shiver in fear.

Rayane M. Jackson also played as a defensive lineman and running back and is well known for being a monster both ways. His determination and passion has brought the team up many times and his craze for sacks has led to him to becoming an amazing player.

Finally, Alex Brockhurst, ex treasurer and current sponsorship secretary for the club, has been in many positions including linebacker, safety, corner back and running back. He has always been a massive part of the team, whether it is on the field or behind the scenes in terms of running the club. He is truly a tremendous player causing a lot of havoc for anyone going up against him.

The club would like to thank all the leavers for their contributions and we wish them a successful journey for the rest of their careers!

As is our tradition after every last match of the season, the Immortals formed a tunnel for the leavers

The Immortals were determined not to end the season with a loss

The **LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS** 2016

RESULTS PARTY

Friday 11 March

20:00 - 02:00

Metric & FiveSixEight

Free entry

Hear the results from The Leadership Elections from 20:00 before our Impulse DJs take over to help us celebrate from 22:00.

IMPULSE FEATURING DJ **BASHER**

imperialcollegeunion.org/elections

AND THE WINNER IS...



Batons, Bevs and Baked Potatoes

Hyde Park Relays 2016 proves yet again that Valentine's Weekend is better with a hangover

Chris Thomas & Anna Lawson
Writers

Some say that it's the most prestigious and largest event known to Imperial's Cross Country and Athletics society, others say that it's merely a warm-up jog in preparation for a night of serious shape-throwing in the beloved Metric. Either way, it's left undeniable that the Hyde Park Relays of 2016 proved to be the highlight of many students' Valentine's Weekend.

Hyde Park Relays (more lovingly referred to as HPR) is a historic event, comprising a mass student relay race hosted by ICXC&AC which welcomes both internal teams, often sporting fabulous fancy dress, Cross County teams across the UK and even stretches out to regular European visitors, such as 'Poznan Uni of Economics' and 'The Flying Dutchmen'. Women's teams are composed of four warriors, with six machines running for both men and mixed teams. Each runner covered a 5km route twisting round



The race was enjoyed by athletes of a whole range of abilities. Photo Credit: Dave Tan

the delightful paths of Hyde Park. Following the event, the teams are rewarded with what is rumoured to have been described this year as a 'Michelin star standard' feast in

the world renowned SCR ft baked potatoes and fruit squash, before the grand results ceremony.

Now in its 67th year, prizes were taken to a new level and presented

as engraved running batons and an array of sporty goodies, with podium positions up for grabs for the following: fastest individual male and female legs (meaning laps, but also in the literal sense); and the three fastest teams amongst mens, womens, and mixed for both internal, external, halls, and international entries. Celebrations then run well into the early hours of Sunday morning as Metric is overtaken by the hoard of elated and Jaeger fuelled athletes.

This year saw no lapse in the heroics of the race. Gathering in a somewhat dreary and cold Hyde Park on Saturday afternoon, over 100 teams turned up to battle their way up the results table and promptly donned themselves in their respective fancy dress outfits, tribal face paints or, for the more serious runners, in some criminally short shorts. As well as Universities such as Bristol, Reading and UCL retaining their usual attendance, this year saw appearances from honourable Imperial teams such as 'I thought you said rum' and 'C++ and chill' as well as representatives for many of the Halls, clubs and societies such as Swim and Waterpolo and, of course, ICXC&AC. Despite the 'nippy' wind many teams finished with

PBs set, sweat dripping and, most importantly, happy faces; although maybe this was in anticipation of the dinner awaiting them over in Uni.

6pm saw the teams gather in the SCR, freshly showered and ready for the night to begin, where food was served by members of ICXC&AC, even providing second courses for those who had run up a serious hunger. Results this year were outstanding: fastest male and female legs were awarded to ICXC&AC's own Sarah Johnson (17:23) and Chris Olley (14:39). Meanwhile the internal awards saw 'The Gents' promenade away with fastest male team and 'TriIC women's A' sprint their way to victory for the ladies. Oxford and Cambridge gave IC a run for their money, taking 1st and 2nd place respectively for both the male and female external teams. However, IC was hot on their heels, with 3rd place for the external men's and 4th for the women's. On the other side of the pond, 'Poznan Uni of Economics 2' and 'The Flying Duchesses' skipped away with 1st international team back for males and females respectively. Wilson Halls skidded in with 1st place for Halls teams.

After the prizes the teams descended to the Union for what is undeniably Metric's best night of the year with international boat races and many, many Jagerbombs. As the night progressed the famous Hyde Park Relays horn was unleashed onto the dance floor with dire consequences. The rest of the night descended into a blur for most but it was undoubtedly the best way to break into Valentine's Day.

This year
saw no
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Chris Olley leading the race for Imperial was the hero of the day by not only being the main event organiser (along with Felix Nicol) but also running the fastest leg of the day! Photo Credit: Dave Tan