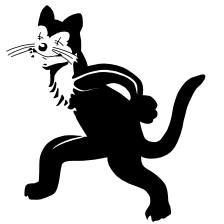


felix ...

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON



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hustings to be
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felix ... EDITORIAL

I will not challenge the status quo
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I will not challenge the status quo



Summer lovin'



Summer is officially here. You can tell by the hoards of panting students waiting to get served at FiveSixEight. You can also tell because *felix* has succumbed to society's pressures and has dropped to half its original weight in preparation for the beach. For real though yesterday was so hot I almost passed out while waiting to grab a coke at the bar.

Other tell-tale signs of the arrival of Summer include: an increase in threats of libel, the evaporation of the editorial team, our desperate use of freedom of information requests to generate content, the questionable quality of the centrefolds, the front covers and overarching themes, and of course the distinct feeling that everyone at Imperial has stopped caring and is one curly fry away from giving up and fucking off to some sea-side destination.

Still we'll persevere. At least until mid-June. Then I'm

off on holiday.

This week we thought we'd do a homage to everybody's second home, the Central Library. Imperial's glistening rectangular temple of learning; shrine of tears, sacrificial altar of broken dreams and every delivery person's favorite late night destination. We wrote a retrospective on every major work it's undergone over the last decade, laced with insights on expenditures gained from targeted freedom of information requests.

We also took a look at the Central Library's night owl culture because clearly we have nothing better to do than wander around the library after midnight and ask people what they think of the toilets.

Sure, this edition might be a bit dry but so are our parched mouths and if we had it our way we'd have closed shop already. So enjoy and don't forget, when in a pinch use *felix* as a classy sun-hat.

T H E
T E A M

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Mental health related drop-outs on the rise

It's easier to drop out than find support

Lef Apostolakis

In only five years, the number of students who have dropped out from higher education has quadrupled according to data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The findings which were highlighted earlier last week by the Guardian, show that just in 2014-15 a record 1,180 students struggling with mental health left higher education.

A series of freedom of information requests by the Guardian which managed to collect data from over 90 universities echoed these reports. The investigation found that just during the

**\\ Findings show that just in 2014-15 a record 1,180 students struggling with mental health left higher education **

academic year of 2015-16, nearly 88,000 students requested counselling, up 28% from the previous year and this demand is only increasing.

It's unclear whether this trend reflects an increase in the occurrence of mental

health problems amongst university students or whether it's a result of the fight against mental health stigmas, the rise in awareness of the existence of mental health services or trends of over-medicalisation.

At Cardiff University for example, the demand for counselling services which rose by 96% in the last three years is believed to be down to the institution's campaign to encourage students to access support. At least according to Ben Lewis, director of student support and wellbeing.

At Imperial according to a 2015 student survey, 20% of students reported a mental illness diagnosis, with a further

40% believing they didn't have a mental illness but having experienced mental stresses anyway.

Available services here include the Student Mental Health Advisers (SMHA) but to see one student need to be referred by a staff member. Following a referral, the long wait for a suitable appointment begins. There is no indication of how long this takes on average but many students reportedly have to wait weeks before receiving an appointment, during which time their condition can rapidly deteriorate with dangerous effects.

In response a pilot scheme

was launched at the start of the 2015-2016 academic year, offering the option of over-email counselling. Students the referral process is easier (it involves filling in a registration form and questionnaire) and if successful leads to an initial four email exchanges with a counsellor. Still the service has its limitations, including the depth of information that can be conveyed in an email.

With overstretched and unresponsive mental health services combined with an increase in the number of anxiety sources, dropping out of university might be the fastest and best way to cope with mental stress.

Election hustings to take place at Imperial

Imperial will be hosting general election hustings on the 1st of June, inviting five speakers representing the Conservatives, Labour, UKIP, Lib Dems and Greens. Speakers were selected by picking the constituencies in which the most Imperial students live (Hammersmith, Kensington and the Cities of London and Westminster).

"I approached the PPCs from the parties one by one initially, and was successful in getting interest early on from local Lib Dem, Green and Labour," says third-year chemist, Michael Edwards who's been organising the hustings. "UKIP and the Conservatives proved more tricky to pin down. I initially had my sights on sitting MPs, such as Andy Slaughter in

Hammersmith, but what with the short term announcement of this election, most people still had engagements, so it was a struggle."

Edwards and his team have been polling students to find out what main issues members of Imperial have on their minds. Burning questions unsurprisingly involve issues on the NHS, Higher Education, and Brexit. However we should expect a discussion on a range of topics including the economy and job prospects, climate policy, the 'Snoopers' charter, research funding, immigration and the housing crisis.

The plan is for the event to take the format of Question Time, wherein audience members suggest questions before going in, and one of the chairs presents those

**\\ Meaningful exposure to students will make politicians think more about how they can pass policy that benefits us as both current students and future taxpayers **

questions to the panel.

Organisers are still waiting on clearance for some speakers, though the ones who have been cleared have come back with a minimal security warning. It's safe to assume campus will be kept breezy, with likelihood of protesters at a minimum.

The debate will hopefully

offer the chance to Imperial students to be exposed to their potential democratic representatives. "Although not all of the panel may end up with a seat in the Commons," says Edwards, "some of them are local councillors for wards with a significant student population, and getting them to come to campus to talk with students is beneficial for both students and politicians."

I've been talking to people who are considering not voting as, due to the nature of the FPTP system, their vote won't count in either their home or uni constituency, and being exposed to the people battling for your vote can change mindsets."

If nothing else, Edwards hopes that meaningful exposure to students will make politicians think more about

how they can pass policy that benefits us as both current students and future taxpayers.

Nas Andriopoulos who will most likely be chairing the event said "the London Forum for Science and Policy have asked me to chair the event and I look forward to putting students' questions to the panel. I would encourage voters to come along, as it will be the perfect opportunity for our members to quiz local party representatives on how their policies will affect students, STEM in general as well as wider socioeconomic issues."

This year I have been apolitical and will continue to do so, I will be merely keeping the peace during debate and asking the students' questions."

Lef Apostolakis

Physics flops in league tables

Oh how the mighty have fallen. NOT

Joanna Wormald

Imperial is regularly declared one of the best universities in the world. The latest *Guardian* university league tables reaffirms this, placing us in joint 6th place overall. Imperial ranked top in Earth and Marine Sciences, Civil Engineering, Electronic and Electrical Engineering, and Engineering (general).

Physics however was a different story. Last year, Physics retained its place in 8th position. The 2018 rankings see it plummet to 30th.

Why have we fallen so far so fast? Statistics provided by the *Guardian* over the past three years don't make for happy reading. The overall score awarded to Imperial fell from 86.3 out of 100 in 2017 to a lowly 57.2 this year. Scores are calculated from a range of metrics, largely taken from the National Student Survey (NSS), which measure not only what benefits graduates gain but also how much the university puts into the course.

The Department of Physics has maintained

expenditure per student and the student:staff ratio has remained reasonably steady at 11.0. Yet overall satisfaction has dropped for the second year in a row, from 86% in 2017 to just 68% this year. This seems more an effect of exams and coursework (assessment satisfaction has dropped 20 percentage points to 42%) and less a result of poor teaching quality – teaching satisfaction is only down seven percentage points at 82%.

Strong teaching may be why achieving a 1st or 2:1 is considered slightly easier now. That's according to the 'value-added' score, which has fallen to 4/10. This piece of "sophisticated indexing methodology" measures how difficult it is for students to graduate with good degrees based on their entry qualifications. A low value-added score indicates it is easier to get that all-essential 2:1 or above. It's unclear whether this year's lower score is a positive or negative thing – a higher number of students achieving

a good degree could have a devaluing effect. Concerns among students that their degree might be perceived as worth less are mitigated by doubts that employers have sufficient knowledge to compare the difficulty of completing a Physics degree at different institutions.

Currently the *Guardian* league table indicates 85% of physicists find graduate-level work or further study after six months. Yet students remain optimistic, hoping the transferable skills they gain will be viewed well and boost their career prospects.

Whether the results are fair or accurate is a different story. "It strikes me that [the rankings] are more a measure of how much students enjoyed the course rather than how good the course is academically," says first-year Cameron Hughes, though he adds that "generally satisfaction isn't great, particularly for feedback."

What about College's own league table analysis? It is keen to note that unlike

other domestic league tables, the *Guardian* dismisses research-related metrics as unimportant. Imperial disagrees, implying we would rank higher had these measurements been included. In the spirit of intercollegiate rivalry, the analysis highlights where Imperial has beaten Cambridge, Oxford and UCL. What it neglects to mention is UCL didn't just rank more highly than Imperial in Physics – they replaced us at 8th position. Talk about adding insult to injury.

Speaking to Professor Jordan Nash, Head of the Department of Physics, it seems the rankings weren't a surprise. NSS results have been available from the start of the year and a rankings drop was anticipated.

"We have been changing how our course is delivered," Professor Nash explained. These changes in response to previous student feedback mean last year's cohort were probably subject to more disruption than other years. The department has "taken very seriously the results of the NSS last year" and been working to implement changes based on "a number of complaints where [the Department of Physics] certainly agree we can do things better."

The department has examined complaints and identified improvement areas, such as demonstrations and feedback in labs and tutorials. Students say "it feels like our lab reports are marked fairly haphazardly." Students receive different marks despite writing similar things to their peers and receive contradictory advice. For example, students told to use Harvard referencing in their next lab report were informed they should actually have used Vancouver referencing.

**\\ We certainly don't think this drop in rankings is a true reflection of the quality of the course **

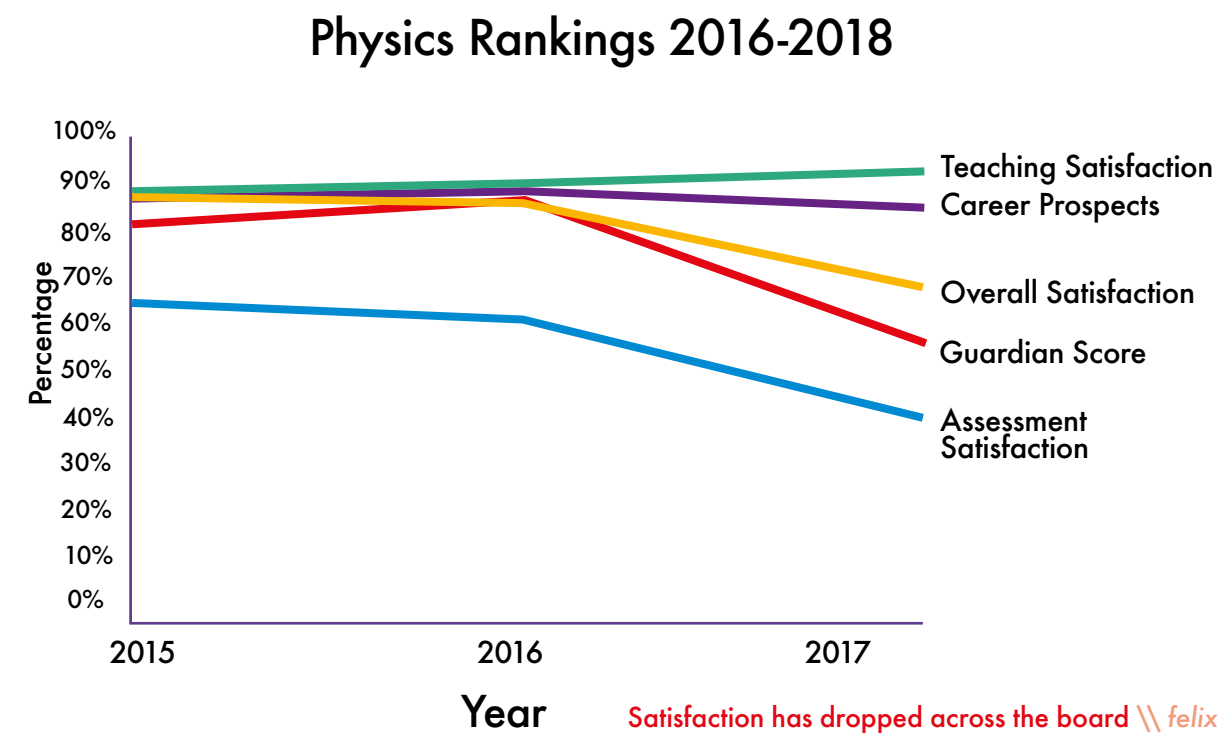
To remedy this, further training will be provided to members of staff involved in labs and tutorials.

Another source of unhappiness was "a small number of errors in exam scripts." Changes are now being made to the way in which exams are prepared and checked to reduce future errors.

Additionally, extra staff have been taken on to assist with undergraduate administration issues. This includes a new Student Liaison Officer to better support students.

It is not expected the league tables will adversely affect the number of future applicants. There are many other rankings available, all drawn from different data. Imperial ranks very highly in most of these, including on career prospects and the "scientific excellence of the staff", which are often important considerations of prospective candidates.

Professor Nash assures us that "as a department we certainly don't think this drop in rankings is a true reflection of the quality of the course we offer, and in talking to our students I also get the impression they don't feel so negatively about the department." He is confident results will improve. Next year may see Imperial reclaim its position towards the top of the table.



Engineering dominates Imperial awards

SACAs, President's Awards and NSS scores all say the same thing

Lef Apostolakis

The Union honoured Imperial staff last week at the annual Student Academic Choice Awards (SACAs for short) after sifting through a record breaking 831 nominations. The ceremony saw eight humans of Imperial getting recognised for their contributions in teaching.

Categories include supervision, tutoring, teaching assistant, undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, feedback, innovation and support.

Though Imperial has a long history of honouring members of its community for their teaching and research, the President's Awards (and formerly the Rector's Awards) with their selection panels overseen by the Provosts lack significant student involvement.

SACAs, on the other hand, give students the opportunity to be involved in the process of shortlisting nominations by acting as panel members and/or panel chairs. This means that shortlisted staff have been nominated and shortlisted by students.

According to Deputy President (Education), Luke McCrone, this makes the SACAs extremely valuable. "It is a widely held belief that the repository of data we generate through SACAs is about the best indication of 'teaching quality/excellence' that we can get our hands on – the direct, untampered

views of our students who voluntarily come forward to speak out about best practise," says McCrone. "This data will inevitably lay the necessary foundation from which we can innovate educationally in future, including as part of the Learning and Teaching strategy."

Looking at the outcomes of the SACAs, a problem that Vice Provost for Education, Simone Buitendijk has repeatedly expressed becomes evident – the student experience varies widely across faculties and departments. This year for example, while most awards were given to members of the faculty of engineering, the faculty of natural sciences managed to snag a couple and the faculty of medicine also took home one (the department of bioengineering was the only department to bag two awards).

However, the faculty of engineering has consistently

**\\ Out of the 40 SACAs awarded over the last five years, only a quarter of all SACAs have been awarded to natural scientists, while members from the department of medicine have only received six **



Most of the award winners were from the Faculty of Engineering \\ Imperial College Union

dominated the awards. Since their establishment in 2012, members of the faculty have received over half of all awards. Out of the 40 SACAs awarded over the last five years, only a quarter of all SACAs have been awarded to natural scientists while members from the department of medicine have only received six. The Business School and the Centre for Languages, Culture and Communication (home to Horizons and the Science Communication Unit) have only taken an award home once so far (which, considering their size, is quite an achievement).

To an extent this is to be expected. 45% of all students at Imperial are engineering students, whereas approximately a third and a quarter are natural scientists

and medics respectively. However, the award distribution also reflects the NSS results. With the exception of the department of mathematics, natural sciences and medicine typically perform poorly at the NSS survey. The crux of Imperial seems to be assessment and feedback with just over 40% of physicists last year agreeing that they were happy with the quality of assessment and feedback they received.

Though numerous voices at Imperial have repeatedly expressed that NSS scores are not the be-all and end-all, the dissatisfaction they reveal seems to come up at every opportunity.

In the case of the President's Awards too, distinctions are disproportionately awarded to members of the Faculty of

Engineering. In Education, excellence is recognised across teaching, pastoral care, research supervision and support of the student experience. Twenty staff members were recognised across all categories with over half of them occupying roles within the Faculty of Engineering.

Another 16 awards were given for research. Engineers dominated again, gathering nine distinctions, whereas the faculties of Natural Sciences and Medicine took home four distinctions each (one distinction was joint between faculties).

Looking at the winners lists available online, it is evident that this is a consistent pattern. Both in 2016 and 2015, engineers received half or more of all awards.



Take part in felix's very un-scientific poll at: felixonline.co.uk/go/ge2017survey

EEE Library to close at the end of term

Lef Apostolakis

Space to be replaced by study area

The Electrical and Electronic Engineering library, one of only a handful of departmental libraries remaining in the South Ken Campus, will be turned into a study space over the course of the summer. Departmental Facilities Manager for the EEE department, Andy Paice told *felix* that following consultations with the students and as part of a larger development taking place at the EEE building the teaching office will be moving where the EEE library currently resides, and the vacant space will be turned into a study area.

According to Angela Goldfinch, EEE liaison librarian departmental libraries were gradually absorbed into Central Library over a prolonged period of time. Library spaces within the Faculty of Engineering were closed/redeveloped back in

\\ As Paice puts it the actual library closed six years ago \\

2009 with the agreement of the Faculty. Where agreed, physical stock (books, journals, etc) was absorbed into the Central Library collection and subject support staff moved into Central Library (but were still accessible to students and staff). The departments then redeveloped the spaces including the provision of student study space.

In the case of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, the Department opted to retain the Library stock as a reference collection for staff/researchers. They redeveloped the space to provide study areas for taught students, and also for staff/researchers (restricted access). The space is still called the Electrical and Electronic Engineering Library

but is more a study space rather than a working library and is a department space.

As Paice puts it "the actual library closed six years ago." Paice says no one is taking any books out and when student representatives were asked whether the library should be kept as, is they declined,

\\ In the case of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, the Department opted to retain the Library stock as a reference collection for staff/researchers \\

opting for a new and improved study space instead.

The last departmental library on the South Kensington campus belongs to Civil



The mysterious EEE Library \\ felix

Engineering. The Department took over management of the existing library (retaining their stock) and so provides an additional library facility to their staff and students (which complements Central Library resources/services). The only other such libraries are those attached to the medical campuses and Silwood Park.

Mentality launches new survey

Lef Apostolakis

Two years after its launch, Mentality is conducting another survey to gain insight into stress and mental health at Imperial. The survey will close at the end of June, with results expected to be published by the end of term. According to Mentality chair Ariana Sadr-Hashemi, the previous report focused on getting Imperial-specific statistics on what mental health issues are most prominent in the student

body and measuring general attitudes to mental health.

"This survey is more campaign-oriented, aimed at finding out in detail what students use what mental health services, both college and NHS ones, and what their experiences were so we can campaign for improvements," says Sadr-Hashemi.

The survey will also investigate whether there has been a significant change if any, in the prevalence of mental health issues within the

\\ According to Mentality, 20% of respondents at the time stated that they had been diagnosed with a mental illness \\

student body since 2015.

The initial survey which was conducted in 2015 resulted in a report with

several key findings and recommendations. According to Mentality, 20% of respondents at the time stated that they had been diagnosed with a mental illness, and a further 40% of respondents felt that they didn't have a mental illness but had experienced mental stresses. In addition, 69.5% of Imperial students surveyed reported feeling stressed at least once a week. In comparison an NUS wide study reported 31% of respondents feeling

the same way. The report also highlighted the key role of academic pressure in the propagation of stress.

This time the survey hopes to reveal what services people use to get support and their positive and negative experiences with each individual service. Mentality are hoping this will shed more light on what needs to be campaigned for and where most of the focus needs to go.

A link to the survey can be found on the Union website.

Central Library air-con cost £11m

Lef Apostolakis

The Central Library spent more money in 2017 than it has over the last ten years

It might have taken a freedom of information request but we found out how much the new Central Library air-con is going to cost. And while we were at it we thought we'd ask for the cost of every single refurbishment the Library has undergone since 2004. Because nobody keeps secrets from *felix* (and also because College is only requested by law to keep data for up to 12 years).

Starting from the top. The Library's single biggest expense still on record is the Central Library Reimaging, which will see the installation of "chillers" on the roof and might help reduce face-melting temperatures. But we already knew it cost a fortune (£11 million to be precise) since it took a decade of complaints, plummeting NSS scores and Brexit for College to commit to improving the single most used space on campus. This is the Central Library's single largest expenditure in recent recorded history. The attempt to please overheating students is costing more than all refurbishments the Central Library has undergone over the last decade.

The second and third most notable 'Treat Yo Self' moment in recent memory were (collectively) the 2008 refurbishments which cost £10.4 million.

The ground floor, which back in the day housed a Waterstones (oh yes) and the Science Museum Library, was merged into the old walkway and became the Library Cafe and the group study area dotted with cosy think tanks. The Haldane Collection (also known as the Humanities collection of the Central Library) which used to sit in the north side of the library



"Wait. How much did library doors cost?!" \\ felix

was evicted and replaced by the Wolfson IT Learning Suite (prime napping spot).

This project also marks the beginning of the "air-con curse". The dimensions of the rooms which were meant to house the ground floor air conditioning units were different to the ones in the original plans. As the units are built according to the specifications of the room they're housed in, considering the specs meant the Library re-opening was pushed back three months to July, after summer exams. To avoid drilling noises revising students were at the time advised to study at higher levels, which however had started reaching intolerable temperatures. All in all not much has changed since 2008.

The fourth splurgiest

moment since the Athens Olympics was the 2015 Level 2 Development which saw the Science Museum library being once again evicted and the creation of additional student study spaces on Level 3. This cost £350,000.

Finally, last place on our Top Five and personal favourite (in fact the main reason behind this FOI) is the Library Main Entrance Vestibule (commonly referred to as "the fucking Library doors"). The foyer enclosing the Central Library's main entrance was constructed in just over a month and was meant to improve climate control and conserve energy. It's unclear whether it's achieved these goals, but it's certainly increased student frustration and might even have something to do

with the mental health crisis facing higher education. We are finally proud to reveal that the Library doors outside the Science Museum library being once again evicted and the creation of additional student study spaces on Level 3. This cost £143,000.

Other notable expenditures include two decoration projects (one in 2008 and one in 2013) which cumulatively cost £18,000 and £192,000 flushed down the toilets. Oh and wind catchers worth £75,000 in 2004, but even our Millennials editor, Tessa Davey, who's been at Imperial for almost a decade wasn't around back then to tell us if they successfully cooled down the Library, so I guess we'll never know.

And now that you know how much that snazzy study space we call home has cost, stop trying to smuggle in pot noodles.

College increases security in wake of Manchester attack

In a statement sent out by President Alice Gast and Provost James Stirling, Imperial students and staff were told that there will now be an increased presence of security at College's campuses.

This announcement comes two days after 22 people were killed and dozens were injured at an Ariana Grande concert at the Manchester Arena. Another eight have been confirmed missing.

On Wednesday soldiers were put on guard outside Buckingham Palace and Downing Street after Theresa May said another attack may be "imminent".

Although the President and the Provost reassured members of Imperial that there is no reason to suspect any specific threat to our institution or other universities, it also warned the Imperial community "to remain vigilant and to immediately report anything suspicious to Security".

A College spokesperson said new security measures will include "increasing both the number of patrols and the number of officers stationed in public areas around the campuses. We are also working closely with our neighbours to enhance safety and security in the surrounding areas as well as on campus."

College urges students who have been affected to contact their personal tutors, supervisors, senior tutors or the College tutors at any point. For staff, free confidential help is available from Confidential Care 24 hours a day, by telephone (0800 085 4764) or online.

Lef Apostolakis

Imperial College London



Student Support Fund

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

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Student Hub, Level 3,
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www.imperial.ac.uk/fees-and-funding



FREEZE PEACH

C O M M E N T ... **felix**

All shall love me in despair



Shaul Rosten laments the future of the U.K. in which an unopposed Galadr...
uhm Theresa May rules a broken democracy

\\ Corbyn is desperately trying to throw mud at Mrs. May, but seems to fail even at that \\

As we move, it seems inevitably, towards a Theresa May-led government, let's take a moment to think about the fallout for the political landscape of the future. Leaving aside the speculations as to the potential success of Mrs. May as future PM, consider what will be left wilting on the opposite benches of the House: a decrepit, highly unconvincing, and functionally incapable opposition. If we're lucky, and the gods of political amusement are smiling upon us, this could be spearheaded by Tim Farron, backed mightily by his four fellow Lib Dem MPs, but, then again, we might see him pipped to the post by the fish finger running against him in his constituency (true story). What is inevitable, however, is that whatever opposition we may have in the Commons, it will be an embarrassment, which will negatively affect all voters, whether the blood that runs in their veins is blue, red, orange or green.

The ridiculously low bar set by Comrade Corbyn and Co. of the past two years has been, inexplicably, undercut in the weeks running up to the election. Now, I don't especially lament over a Conservative victory, but the fact that they don't have to make any real arguments in this campaign, and are able to sit back and watch the other parties implode, is a little

depressing.

Just look at the quality of opposition in this campaign. As I'm writing, the Conservative party has just released their Manifesto, and the customary replies from major opposing Party members have come out. To say that their arguments were weak would be an understatement; their attempts at genuine political discussion couldn't support a matchstick.

\\ The ridiculously low bar set by Comrade Corbyn and Co. of the past two years has been, inexplicably, undercut in the weeks running up to the election \\

Take Labour: "She is hitting older people with a classic nasty party triple whammy: Scrapping the triple lock on pensions, removing the Winter Fuel Allowance and forcing those who need social care to pay for it with their homes."

Even someone with Corbyn's level of education should be able to see how dishonest – perhaps even stupid – those claims are. The triple lock on pensions is being replaced with a guarantee to increase state pensions by the higher of either inflation or the rise in wages, the only reason that they need to be raised in the

first place. Adding a 2.5% clause isn't generous, it's just silly. You don't need a higher income per year if prices stay the same – a change that is measured precisely and regularly by inflation rates. The Winter Fuel Allowance is being scrapped only for those pensioners wealthy enough to pay for their own fuel – something Labour have been clamouring should happen for years. As for social care, the Tories are raising the amount of money that you can keep whilst still being eligible for free care – thus extending the number of people who won't have to sell their home or raid their pension pots to pay for it. Not a single one of those 'opposing' arguments is logical, supported by fact, or even reflects the official Labour Party policy.

Though there are some genuine political discussions to be had in support Labour's foundations, instead of making these, Corbyn is desperately trying to throw mud at Mrs. May, but seems to fail even at that. His total lack of ability as a political opponent might be good for Mrs. May, but it isn't good for the governmental process of the United Kingdom, and it isn't good for you and me. We need politicians to hold each other to account, and a framework where the attempts to do so are almost comical doesn't help anyone.

The Lib Dems are even worse, not that that's any surprise. Instead of looking at the serious issue of the European

Union, a key policy divide to which they are offering a genuine political alternative, they decided instead on this: "Theresa May is betraying working families by snatching school lunches from their children and their homes when they die."

Dear oh dear. Not only does this patronisingly, and very unconvincingly, try to wield the great trigger words – 'working families' – but it is just factually incorrect. Under current rules, the elderly have to sell their assets, including a long term family home, to pay for care. Under the Tory proposals, not only would they be able to live the rest of their lives at home, but they could keep more money to give to their family at the end of it.

As for the school meals the Conservatives have pledged to increase education spending, a measure funded by scrapping free school meals for all pupils. The Lib Dems have promised the same increased expenditure on education, but, as yet, haven't explained how they'd pay for it – perhaps they figured that they're not getting in anyway, so who needs a reasonable financial approach? I don't care much for the Conservative

policies on social spending, but I am not going to publicly debase myself, as the Lib Dems have done, by lying for no other reason than to make headlines and glumly shake my head on TV.

The Lib Dems should be touting the honest political dialogue that they bring to the table, and extolling the other, valid political opinions they have, instead of the frantic name-calling and flag-waving in which they're engaging.

I honestly believe that all political parties have good arguments, appeal to sensible voting people in different ways, and play a vital role in the democratic landscape of our nation. In the current political environment, however, parties are wandering aimless in a sea of meaningless soundbites and thinly veiled stupidity; it is a sorry sight.

In the Lord of the Rings, a powerful female ruler, Galadriel, mulls over what her potential future would look like, if she takes the Ring of power and becomes a supreme, monarchical figure. Although she heroically denies the opportunity, in her pondering she declares that, if she ruled as such, "All shall love me and despair". I think a similar analogy might be applicable to the current election. Mrs May might rule with a great majority, but we the people, although supporting her leadership, might forlornly look at the broken pieces of our democratic process left lying in the ashes of a decent opposition.





Are we medicalising personality?



Tessa Davey thinks sometimes we cross the line when it comes to diagnosing mental health disorders vs personality traits.

\\ Sometimes ignorance is bliss, and an undiagnosed personality disorder is just a quirk \\

...
None of my friends from home have mental health problems. This is in small-town, rural Wales, where knowing about the wider world isn't really a thing, and buzzwords like self-care and mindfulness might as well be in a totally different language, or are laughed at from behind a veneer of defiant stoicism. This isn't to say that some people in my hometown don't suffer like my friends in London, but certainly more of them claim to be happy. Maybe it's the country way of life, or maybe

experiencing and help us find guidance and ways to cope. But there comes a point where these descriptions become our whole identity, we become nothing more than a collection of precisely defined traits. When these are our defining features, rather than simply being aspects of our personality, we can lose track of who we are and use them as excuses to inhibit ourselves.

There is scientific evidence that acting happy can raise your mood and adjust your brain chemistry. There is

are jumping on the Youtuber-backed trend of self-diagnosis, claiming social anxiety for example and using that as an excuse for avoiding things that they actually like to do. This isn't everyone - a lot of people use it as a starting point to find tools to work on things they want to change, but for others it justifies a complacency.

When we force our personality into boxes, we are sometimes forced into manufacturing problems. As soon as we've found a problem, we can then fall into

our personality traits? When we do that we are implicitly saying that the perfect person is one without any of these 'problems': a person without personality.

Awareness of mental health problems and removal of the stigma that surrounds them is hugely important, and I fully support the huge societal drive to work on these things. But some of the things we're

not seem a bit sinister that we're rushing to medicalise normalcy? It's now normal to be diagnosed with depression following a bereavement, where in the past it would have been a given that you were grieving. If a diagnosis helps you get support, then I'm all for it, but all too often it makes people think that there is something wrong with them, and it starts an endless cycle of depression that can be hard to break.

It's really important to be able to recognise and talk about problems that we are experiencing, and familiarity

\\ As soon as we've found a problem, we can then fall into this cycle of being unhappy because we think we should be \\



it's the lack of awareness that all too often leads to self-diagnosis and, like a self-fulfilling prophecy, misery.

Does the hyperawareness of issues like social anxiety and mental health problems help diagnose and give us the vocabulary to discuss our issues, or does it merely serve to overmedicalise personality - something that in turn makes people unhappy?

Having words to describe ourselves can give us an identity. It can help us easily share what we are

also evidence to suggest that thinking you should be miserable can make you sad. Don't get me wrong, I'm not for a second suggesting that those who truly are suffering from medically diagnosable mental health problems or social issues that affect their quality of life are doing anything wrong by identifying these issues but some people hide behind them, which can have a negative impact.

Instead of just calling themselves a bit shy, people

this cycle of being unhappy because we think we should be. Sometimes ignorance is bliss, and an undiagnosed personality disorder is just a quirk.

You'd be hard pressed to find anyone who you couldn't diagnose with some sort of personality disorder. You want a citation for that? - There are plenty in the medical literature. But why do we do need to? How is it helpful to diagnose and compartmentalise all of



\\ Given that so much mental health research is done by pharmaceutical companies trying to flog you mood adjusting drugs, does it not seem a bit sinister that we're rushing to medicalise normalcy? \\

diagnosing aren't problems, they're just traits. It's the same when we look at all disabilities as illnesses in need of a cure rather than features of people that makes them who they are: it's alienating and dehumanising.

Given that so much mental health research is done by pharmaceutical companies trying to flog you mood adjusting drugs, does it

with the vocabulary to do so is an important first step. But in a world where the numbers of people who claim to be suffering increases with the numbers of words we have for a problem, we should be cautious in applying these definitions to ourselves. Self-improvement is always a good thing, but sometimes instead of looking to cure ourselves from the pathology of personality, we should accept our individual differences and celebrate them.



General Election Hustings at Imperial - Thursday 1 June



Join the political societies of Imperial College Union for a hustings of local parliamentary candidates! This is your chance to grill the people who want your vote on 8 June – so don't miss the opportunity to question them on their policies and what they want to do for you as students. The event will be followed by refreshments during which we hope the debate can continue over drinks and nibbles. Make sure to have your say on the key issues of this election. The event will be chaired by Nas, Union President.

Speakers are:

- Bridget Fox, for the Liberal Democrats
- Alan De'Ath, for Labour
- Victoria Borwick for the Conservatives
- Richard Braine for UKIP
- Bill Cashmore for the Greens

The Hustings takes place at 18:30 on Thursday 1 June in Lecture Theatre 1, in the Blackett Building. Have your say on what you think are key student issues for this election. To find out more and register on Facebook visit: <https://goo.gl/4kBfKY>

Take the Mentality survey



Mentality seeks to highlight and clarify key points of access within College when seeking help. The group campaigns throughout the year to raise awareness, reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and most notably help people to seek support for their problems.

Suffering from mental health problems can be scary, isolating and confusing especially when you feel there is nowhere to turn. Mentality are actively working to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and aim to educate the student body at Imperial about the importance of mental wellbeing. Mentality are running a survey again to help better understand and support our members. Take the survey here: <https://goo.gl/HNLkSq>

Imperial Plus are recruiting

Could you be a student trainer? Deliver ILM endorsed skills workshops to student volunteers at Imperial.

We are looking for enthusiastic students who are excellent communicators, confident public speakers, are well organised, reliable and can think on their feet. Gain experience of delivering workshops and develop your skills as a trainer by joining our team of Student Trainers for Imperial Plus. It's also a great opportunity to earn some extra cash!

Imperial Plus gives our 2,500+ volunteers the opportunity to develop transferrable skills through workshops delivered by Student Trainers. We ensure our Trainers benefit from the experience too by providing them with training and ongoing support. Applications close on Monday 5 June. Interviews will take place on Wednesday 21 June.

imperialcollegeunion.org/student-trainer

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Life of Galileo | Stars, Revolution, and Rock and Roll



Billy Howle in *Life of Galileo* at the Young Vic // Johan Persson



Indira Mallik

Life of Galileo is on at the Young Vic until the 1st of July

Tickets from £10

Director Joe Wright has pulled out all the stops for the Young Vic's new staging of Bertolt Brecht's *Life of Galileo*. Under a huge makeshift planetarium dome actors in modern dress hurtle around the circular stage. Brendan Cowell as the titular man never seems to stop, at one moment stabbing apples to illustrate the concept of gravity, and the next bodily spinning Billy Howle playing Andrea, his pupil to demonstrate the rotation of the earth; he never seems to lower his voice beyond a mid-bellow. That it's energetic cannot be denied, but at times

// This production thrums with energy, in trademark Wright style, pure entertainment from start to finish //

it gets a little too much. The first act is almost entirely exposition, indeed, at times it feels uncannily like a low-fi Royal Society Christmas Lecture demonstration. While it effectively establishes Galileo as a teacher and a scientist brimming with energy and bombast, it drags a little towards the end. The scenes are intercut occasionally by light shows on the screen suspended like a dome above the stage: there, vistas of constellations and far off galaxies appear to a soundtrack of seat shaking, feel-it-in-your-bones, bass-heavy rock music. The music has been composed by Tom Rowlands, one half of the Grammy-winning The Chemical Brothers. It's a glorious score and in some parts – especially near the close of the second

act essential to building the atmosphere of the production; but in others it lends the aura of an over-egged Brian Cox documentary to the proceedings.

Joe Wright, who some years ago directed the Keira Knightley version of *Pride and Prejudice* is clearly a fan of modernising classic stories with modern twists (the film doesn't much concern itself with staying faithful to the period). It's easy to see the allure of shaking off historical trappings to make a work relevant. In this production, the effect is mixed. *Life of Galileo* is already a story of an era defining discovery, it has passion and oppression, love and betrayal, it is a story of revolution (both literal and figurative); grand enough in scope without the sexing up that Wright seems to think is requires.

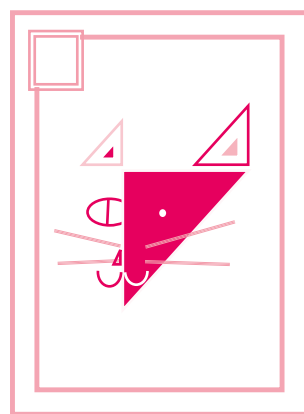
When the action reaches its more emotional peaks, and the actors are left to simply deliver the lines, it is electrifying. Brendan Cowell as an ailing Galileo taking stock of his life is deeply moving, Ayesha Antoine is criminally under-used, but in the brief flashes she appears on stage in her role as the put upon no-nonsense Mrs Sarti, she sparkles with wit, we don't see much of Anjana Vasan as Galileo's daughter Virginia either, but she too gives the small character plenty of pathos. The standout performance is by Billy Howle who as Galileo's protégé delivers a performance that is very often funny and occasionally deeply affecting as he spans three decades of the life of Andrea, from petulant curiosity as a ten-year-old, to uncompromising idealism eight years later, and finally to humility and forgiveness as he sets out to carry on his estranged tutor's work. Brecht's work, commonly associated with Marxism, is fiercely political.

Like so many of the works that found poignancy in the 80s, the focus on the dogma of authority figures, the wilful ignorance and suppression of knowledge by governments and leaders in power strikes a chord now. Just as a little way down the south bank at the National Theatre, *Angels in America* is about the inevitability of progress, here too in *Life of Galileo* the recurring theme of the importance of truth is both a rebuke to the current climate of double speak and "fake news", and a

// The recurrent theme in *Life of Galileo* of the importance of truth is both a rebuke to the current climate of double speak and "fake news", and a salve //

salve – such a climate cannot, Brecht concludes, last forever, somehow, truth will out.

The Young Vic is always a joy to visit, the small venue, the proximity of the actors and action lends immediacy to the performances. Here, where so much for the staging was done to include the audience, it was more so. *Life of Galileo* tends towards the heavy handed, but is no less enjoyable for it. Whatever its shortcomings it is never boring: laugh out loud hilarious in places, menacing in others, this production thrums with energy; it is, in trademark Wright style, pure entertainment from start to finish.



Manwatching offers an insight into the world of sex from a female heterosexual point of view. The show consists of a roughly 60 minute monologue, which explores several aspects of sex, including masturbation, sexual fantasies and consent. The prose is raw, explicit and dynamically written. In every performance the monologue is read aloud by a male comedian who has no previous exposure to the text. The result is an impromptu experience that is funny and at times a bit shambolic.

I went to see the piece on its second night at the Royal Court in Sloane Square. I sat amongst a diverse audience (both in age and gender) in the small upstairs auditorium. The room was painted black and on the stage floor there were two raised platforms housing a printer and a jug of water. After a few minutes a man walked out in an expensive shirt and shorts with a vaguely familiar bearded face. He announced that his name was Adam Buxton and he would be giving tonight's performance. Perhaps the expectation was palpable; on other nights Nick Frost and Phil Jupitus would be performing. Buxton addressed this with characteristic ease, "so I know you are all a bit disappointed", before proceeding into a light hearted biography. He is a comedian and actor, with an impressive portfolio of script writing and he now hosts a podcast. Meanwhile the printer whirred behind him, producing the 28 page monologue. The appearance of two yellow pages, Buxton explained, would mean the reading could begin.

He started, and at once

the audience relaxed into the rhythm of the piece. You could tell Buxton had practice in script reading, his pacing was good and his phrasing dynamic. Most importantly he adopted the jocular tone of the author. We could tell it was his first time seeing the script, and through eyebrow raising, dramatic pauses and what I presumed were ad-libbed comments, the whole experience felt organic. There were some stumbling points, 28 pages is

// The prose is raw, explicit and dynamically written... nervous chuckles that accompanied the first minutes reading soon gave way to hearty roars from the crowd //

a lot to get through in one sitting. Occasionally these were funny, misread words creating additional dirty meanings in the text. Sometimes they were prohibitive, and we would have to wait as Buxton retraced his thoughts. This was to be expected; Buxton handled it all very smoothly. To help him, the monologue could have been made shorter, and perhaps some of the awkward phrasing smoothed to make it more first-read friendly.

It's important I do not give too much away regarding the content of the monologue. Part of the fun in this piece is being shocked and surprised

by the writer's discursive train of thought. Seemingly benign anecdotes become sexualised and the narrative jumps between distant themes with only the most rudimentary segues. The fact that the narrator is as surprised by this as the audience creates a powerful shared experience. We are more prone to laughter when we feel slightly uncomfortable, and the nervous chuckles that accompanied the first minutes reading soon gave way to hearty roars from the crowd.

Does it matter that the narrator is a man? In many ways it's vital for the success of the piece. Manwatching is after all just that. Watching a man react and respond to the truth about feminine heterosexual desire. Personally I found some of the passages to be genuinely enlightening. I have no doubt that this was the case for Buxton and the male component of the crowd as well. Pieces like this are not only important because they break down the taboo culture of talking about sex, they also unify the gender divide in understanding it.

Who wrote *Manwatching*? We never find out. I think it's important that we don't. The themes covered in the text are universal and anonymity reflects this. This is further conveyed in the monologue's conclusion where women in the audience are prompted to stand and claim provenance of the work. It's in appropriate end to the 90 minute reading and the applause that follows is undoubtedly sincere.

After the show, Buxton is given flowers and then leaves. We follow behind, having all laughed and thought a good deal. Unanimously, I think we all feel a lot closer to Buxton now too.

Manwatching | What Women Really Want



Manwatching – "written by an anonymous woman, performed by an unprepared man" // Helen Murray



Claire Chan

Manwatching was on at the Royal Court Theatre the 10th to the 20th of May



Course Correction | Doctor Who



This is why you always wear a seatbelt
\\ BBC



Anurag Deshpande



Halfway into the latest season of Doctor Who, set to be Peter Capaldi and showrunner Steven Moffat's last, we have yet to be disappointed. After a rocky few seasons, the show began to show signs of recovery with last Christmas' delightful, superhero themed fix. The first six episodes of series ten have continued this upward trend, with new companion Bill proving to be quite a highlight, and Capaldi being allowed to flourish. Finally, we get to see

Capaldi's Doctor come together in a coherent way. Moffat has now established a firm grip on the 12th Doctor's personality; rough around the edges, but not unkind or mean-spirited as he often seemed in previous series. This Doctor is now more of a Fagin or Willy Wonka figure. It's just a shame that this shift in characterisation comes just as Capaldi is set to leave. The unique choice to make our

**\\ I only wish Capaldi could have been allowed to settle into this very comfortable groove earlier. If only we could turn back time **

protagonist blind, albeit we can infer temporarily, also affords Peter Capaldi the opportunity to flex his acting muscle.

In fact, one must commend Moffat on the choice to seemingly make the Doctor's blindness a running plot point. Given that the show's long history, it always runs the risk of repeating itself. This new development, however, offers a range of intriguing narrative possibilities to the writers. Whether or not these are seized fully, remains to be seen. So far, at least, it has been used in interesting ways.

Another welcome change is the fresh dynamic between Doctor and companion. Over the past half-decade or so, viewers have grown increasingly frustrated by Moffat's need to make female companions fawn romantically over our lead. Thankfully, this season instead opts for a much more interesting student-teacher dynamic. This actually calls back to earlier Doctors, and returns the show to its roots somewhat. Still, it is a dynamic we have seen far too little of since the series' revival, and so offers a necessary reprieve from the constant lovesickness Doctor Who has taken to wallowing in recently. This treatment

enhances the Doctor's larger than life nature, and makes the audience too feel like they're along for the TARDIS ride.

Central to the success of this new dynamic, of course, is the new companion, Bill. Pearl Mackie's turn as the Doctor's latest accompaniment is a tour-de-force. Mackie brings a youthful energy, and refreshing perspective to the show that, in retrospect, it had really been lacking. It helps that she feels more grounded and self-aware than some previous companions. Also worth noting is that Bill Potts is the Doctor's first openly gay companion. Here, again, Steven Moffat deserves credit, as her sexuality is handled with relative grace and poise. While it is certainly commented upon periodically, it does not ever feel like an afterthought or a tokenisation. Bill's love life is treated with as much respect and comedy as previous companions'.

Another of the strengths of this season is that each episode is relatively self-contained, and there doesn't yet seem to be the sort of overuse of continuity that had become endemic of the last few years. The decision to use new monsters of the week keeps things exciting, and also solves the power creep problem for classic villains by using them sparingly. Additionally, while the plots in the season so far have been relatively straight forward, they have been exceedingly



Thinker, Teacher, Doctor, Spy \\ BBC

well executed. This excuses much of the, admittedly inevitable, recycling of villain concepts, too. Subtle variations also help this; zombies become Capitalist Space Zombies. Worth special mention is David Suchet's unnerving appearance as The Landlord.

Naturally, the season hasn't been without its faults. Mostly the typical issues that plague Who, a bit too much cheese here and there, and obvious twists. A commendable exception to the latter trend however, was found in the season's sixth episode, 'Extremis'. The episode's A-plot was very unique as

**\\ Another of the strengths of this season is that each episode is relatively self-contained **

far as concepts explored in Doctor Who go, and its genuinely bleak moments were sobering. This is all despite the tenuously linked, although quite well acted and funny, segments with the Master. There is a risk that as we flow into the second half of the season with this plotline, we will once again fall into the trap of circle-jerking continuity too hard. However, despite it seemingly being the main plotline for the current season, Moffat has managed to keep it appropriately restrained.

This season has been a noticeable improvement compared to the last few, and I actually look forward to watching new episodes of Who again. I hope this trend continues through the back half of the season. I only wish Capaldi could have been allowed to settle into this very comfortable groove earlier. If only we could turn back time.



MILLENNIALS...

felix

Dealing with escapism



Central library is a great spot for binge watching. Just make sure you remember to control yourself

\\ Michael

It should come as no surprise to anyone that life is a cruel mistress, especially if you're in uni. With deadlines, exams and project work, it can quickly get overwhelming. Things can also be insanely frustrating (when for example, you put all your heart and soul into revising for a course but you screw up the exam, just because the compulsory question was about waves in the solar wind which you obviously hadn't revised thoroughly because it barely came up until now!).

And so, with all of life's hurdles thrown at you, no one will blame you if you look for means to escape. At Imperial, the so called 'geek culture' is

\\ Make sure you remember to snap back to reality at the right time \\

the default entertainment for most people, where people dive into worlds of fantasy, adventure and sci-fi through video games, books or Netflix (without the chill). And that's great, these worlds are popular for a reason and offer a

great form of entertainment and release. The real world is brutal and sometimes you just need to zone out in a fantasy world.

Without the ability to escape, we would all burn out a lot faster. Sometimes we just need to step away from our problems, and return to them with a fresh mind. Just don't take it too far. When escaping turns into a pathology of escapism, you might find you have a problem. You might recognise this as the point where you're neglecting all your work, skipping lectures and becoming a shut in to have 15-hour sessions of *League of Legends*. This could be catalysed from anything remotely negative, be it a poorly marked lab report, rejection from another job application or just a bad day. The key, like most things in life, is to strike a balance and make sure you remember to snap back to reality at the right time.

"How do I strike a balance?" I hear you ask. Let's start by identifying when you're struggling with escapism. If you find yourself feeling disdain for the real world and its subjects, and a need for something better, something separate to this reality you might have a

problem. We're not talking about taking a break or seeking some relief. The latter is about building up your energy for something important as opposed to abandoning the real world for a ten-hour-long *Overwatch* session. It may seem simple, but gaining perspective and recognising when you're crossing the line is the first fundamental step to



taking back control.

More importantly though, you might want to take a closer look into the underlying reasons behind your escapist tendencies. Sooner or later, you're going to need to face your problems. You can't run away from your commitments forever and the longer you wait, the worse things will get. Princess Peach will always be waiting in another castle, but UROP places fill out fast.

In the words of Andrew Ryan from *Bioshock*, "We all make choices in life, but in the end our choices make us."

Escapism is a great defence mechanism but watching the entirety of *13 Reasons Why* isn't going to help write up your thesis (in fact if you're struggling with depression or suicide, maybe stay away from that one). You need to sit down and identify the sources of stress and upset in your life. And when you've done that, think of ways to tackle them one baby step at a time. Don't forget, it's OK to talk to people and ask for help whenever you need it, whatever the obstacle may be. No one is perfect and most of us have at some point sought out support. Sometimes a friendly voice is all you need to get back on track.

Obviously, if you've been hit by something major, you're not going to feel like tackling it or thinking about it. But it won't do you any good to shut yourself out altogether and use artificial achievements to make up for it. Take time off to feel better and get whatever's bothering you out of your system. Then you need to identify when you're ready to deal with things and get back on your feet. It'll definitely be hard, and your

low self-esteem at the time might be pushing you to stick to the fantasy world, but you can beat it and rise above it. Your only worst enemy is yourself.

Don't get me wrong,

\\ You can't run away from your commitments forever \\

binge-watching is fun and spending my nights saving princesses is basically how I spend my holidays. Just remember that you need to live in the real world as well and no amount of levelling up can make you move forward in life (unless you're a professional gamer but that's another story). At the end of the day, everything comes down to you, you're the one in control of your life. Taking time off now and again to unwind and entertain yourself is fine, just as long as you keep your priorities straight. At the end of the day, fantasy worlds are beautiful and should be fully enjoyed, not turned into harbours of guilt and denial.

Saad Ahmed



Afterhours sessions in the Central Library

How does one end up in the Library past midnight? Maybe you had a paper to submit tomorrow. You thought you had everything under control. You were halfway there but you made the mistake of taking a break and committing to an episode of the *Great British Bake Off*. Six hours later you get a text from your coursemate asking you what reference you used for a thing you haven't even heard of. You look at the time and have a mini heart episode. You get up from the sofa, the sudden movement giving you head-rush, take a deep breath and make the only decision that makes sense at 1 a.m. on a Thursday. You go to the Central Library.

We've all been there. Some of us more than once. Frankly if you haven't pulled an all-nighter in the library do you even go here? Still the Central Library gets transformed into a magical realm, littered with candy wrappers, populated by orphan lecture notes. If you keep still you might get approached by a

We started with the ground floor and made our way up. We'd start with the group study areas and build our confidence up until we reached the silent study floors.

The first guy we bumped into was Andy Whitfield, a Metals and Energy Finance Masters student who was surprisingly chatty.



Why are you not home working?

I concentrate better here. It forces me to work - there are too many distractions at home.

What is your relationship with the library?

I hate it, it's a terrible place! No, it's a good facility really. I'd just rather be somewhere else: asleep right now.

What is the longest amount of time you have ever spent in the library?

Probably twelve hours.

How do you get through it?

Music, or I go out on my bike and ride around London for half an hour and wake up a bit.

What about snacks and drinks?

Mini cheddars and I don't really drink coffee although I did bring pro plus with me today but I haven't had it yet.

What sort of person do you think you have to be to come here for an all-nighter?

There are some who just come here for fun and enjoy it. One guy on my course just enjoys working in the middle of the night. He would rather sleep all day and work through the night.

That's not me - this is just a last minute thing.

Let's talk hygiene. Tell us about the toilets.

They're fucking horrible in Imperial. I don't know what's wrong with this place. I've spent four years in central Africa working on a mine and the toilets there were better than the ones at Imperial.

How would you describe yourself?

Laid-back. Too laid-back apparently as I left this all to the last minute.

We thanked Andy and wished him good luck. We said we'd come back to check up on him. We lied.

Next we cornered someone on his way back to his group. He didn't see us coming. Actually he did and was really cool about sparing five minutes to talk to us. But we managed to mess up the recording so we'll never know what this beautiful stranger had to say.

We then decided we should probably move on and harass people on other floors. But not before intruding on the

sleep-deprived undergrad, desperately looking for a functioning toilet. Who are these study-machines who power the Central Library's afterhours sessions? Are they victims of circumstance? Are they bad time-managers? Are they the overly keen, the serial night owls, the best people you will ever know? How do they do it and what wisdom do they have to impart on us? We decided to find out and reveal their secrets.

We arrived at our destination just after twelve. As any seasoned Imperial student will know, at eleven all College study spaces shut and students are thrown out of their departments, leaving the desperate with only one option: the Central Library. By twelve, everyone has settled in, got their snacks spread out, had a little cry maybe and is probably three chapters deep in revision. Clearly that's the best time to be interrupted.

Lef Apostolakis & Cale Tilford



privacy of one of those weird little study cubes and force Shafakat Bashir, a Chemical Engineering Masters student to talk to us

Is this your first all-nighter?

It's not my first no. I can't revise during the day as there is no space in the library. So I sleep during the day and revise all night.

How many all-nighters have you done?

Loads. Even when I'm not revising I'd come in the morning at about five o'clock just before lectures and do six hours - do my lectures and then go home. During the day there is too much distraction and the library is quite busy as well. It's always hot. At this time you can revise at your own pace and it's quiet - and it all goes in.

Is there any sort of routine you have when you revise?

If I understand something and I'm just practicing something then I listen to music. If I don't then it's a distraction.

You've got a very large bottle of water there but do you ever have any other drinks or snacks?

No, if I have sugar I feel sleepy and go home. So, I stay away from sugar and foods. I just have the big bottle of water. It goes, it lasts me the night. I don't do any refills - I can't drink London water, I'm from Leeds.

How much do you spend on bottled water a year?

This bottle is 50 pence and I have two bottles a day probably. About £7 a week. When you think about it it's quite a bit.

What about toilets and hygiene?

They have their ups and downs. Lately, the toilets in the library have been out of order. There's always been stuff clogged in the toilets and shit around the bowl - it's kind of off-putting.

What kind of person do you think you need to be to do all-nighters in the library?

What kind of person are you?

Because I've moved here from a different part of the country and don't really know anyone where I live the only social aspect of my life is at university. If you've got a very social and active life, it's a bit more difficult to do all-nighters. If you're living secluded away from student areas it's a bit more dull - you're a lot more likely to study, especially at this time. If it's a Thursday, Friday or Saturday night and you're a student and you wanna get wrecked you're not going to come to the library.

After wasting a good fifteen minutes of Shafakat's time we

reluctantly decided to let him go back to his big old bottle of water and make our way to the second floor to tackle a silent study area.

We tried talking to a good six or seven students on the second floor. Luckily Fabiola Mann, a first year medic, took pity on us before we lost all our remaining morale.



How many all-nighters have you done?

Not that many, I try to avoid them when I can.

Is this an all-nighter?

No, I'm probably going to go to bed in the next hour hopefully.

How do you feel about the library?

It's pretty good. It's a nice environment. I get a lot more done here than I do in my room. It's good to have a constant place to work in - it kinda gets you in the zone.

What's the longest time you've ever spent in the library?

Probably about nine hours during the day.

So you're not really a night owl then?

Well I am but I'm trying to



sleep earlier. That's not going well because exams are coming up.

What's the weirdest thing you have ever seen in the library?

There was fire drill at 1AM. It was weird, we were just chilling outside. There were 50-60 people and that was during the Easter break.

What about snacks?

The vending machine downstairs has my favourite chocolate bar - Snack bar. It tastes a bit like chocolate fingers.

...and drinks?

Mochas or diet cokes or waters if I'm planning on sleeping.

How would you describe the sort of person who spends a lot of time in the library at night?

Cramming. **So that's what you're doing?** No, I've got a month and a bit before my exam but I feel behind. I just kind of wanted to get ahead.

What's your relationship with stress?

Highs and lows. Generally at a high I'll come to the library. **Anything else you would like to add?**

I just really like this space.

As we bid Fabiola farewell, Cale pointed out people come here because they want no distractions and that we're hella distracting.

So we decided to cut our losses and move on. As we arrived to the third floor, another silent study floor, we were overtaken by dread as we thought about all the students we'd once again have to bother to be done with this article. Then a structural engineer popped out of the loo and we snatched him and asked him to step out for a sec to answer some questions. After spelling his name for us Angel Ruizdelarbol told us all about his relationship with the library.



Are you gonna spend the whole night here?

No one more hour.

How often do you do that?

Every day. I study here and in Skempton. I prefer working at nights especially now that I no longer have lectures.

What's the longest time you've spent in the library?

In one sitting between Skempton and here - today for example I had an exam - I'll be in the library from 2 p.m. to 2 a.m. So twelve hours.

That's a lot of hours. What do you do for snacks and drinks?

I bring stuff from home normally. Or go to Wasabi.

And what about the loos?

It's not fine. Normally... Not fine.

What's the most horrifying thing you've seen in the toilets?

Really? You want to know that? Blood... piss [He said jokingly. We presume.] **What kind of person are you?**

What kind of person do you need to be to study so much at the library?

I'm a happy person, a stressful person.

How do you deal with stress?

I study. It's better than going home and watching TV series. I prefer to study in the library. At home I can't concentrate, I just watch Netflix or something.

Angel laughed throughout our chat. It was unclear whether he was truly finding the interview entertaining, whether he was using laughter to hide the pain that usually comes with spending twelve hours straight in the library, or whether he was about to flip out and do a double murder on us. So we let him go and went up a level where we met a chemeng student that preferred to stay anonymous.

Are you spending the whole night here?

I think so. This is the second or third time I'm doing an all-nighter.

How do you find it?

I think it's quite peaceful here at night. I love it when there's not a lot of people around. It would be great if there were

more beds, I mean couches, you know places to nap. **Protip: check out the ground floor computer room.**

Yeah I'm thinking of going there later tonight.

How many hours have you spent here straight?

Probably twelve hours plus. I can't really remember but definitely at least twelve hours.

Why are you not home working?

I used to stay home to study but recently I found a study buddy so I come here to study with him and I think it's a great place to come for a meet up.

You have any snacks you enjoy during your sessions?

Ah, a Snickers bar? I don't know. A Kinder Bueno bar. Once. I don't usually have any snacks or coffee, but I do drink a lot of water.

Let's talk hygiene and toilets.

I think the situation could be improved. Not much else to say. I don't mind using them, I can generally tolerate it.

What kind of person are you?

How do you deal with stress?

I generally don't mix with people much, but recently I found a close friend. Late at night you'll probably find hardcore studying people here. During the day I usually go to sleep or to lectures and tutorials. If I have to. As for stress, I was really stressed till I found a buddy.

Anything else you'd like to add?

I haven't seen a mouse in the library but I hope to see one soon.

On that note we thought it might be time to head off. So we finally made our way to the fifth floor where we were met with super keen biology newbie and all-nighter expert Gunay Arcan.



Have you done this before?

Yes many times. I have a tutorial for tomorrow. Usually I'll leave the tutorial sheet till the last minute and I'll have to stay up all night. I do this about three times a week [laughs awkwardly]. I think I have insomnia.

What's the longest time you've spent at the library?

Probably from eight in the evening till eight at night. Twelve hours.

What's your routine?

I don't bring food with me but I drink a lot of water and usually take breaks to go to the toilet. But I don't have anything to eat usually.

So that's not yours? [pointing at some sort of wrapper tucked under a computer]

Yeah I ate that [laughs].

Why are on the fifth floor? It's so hot here. I mean you're basically in your underwear.

Is it? Well when I got here it was around 6 p.m. so it wasn't that cold. I always choose the fifth floor 'cos the least people come here so it's not very busy.

What's the weirdest thing you've seen in the library?

Mice, there's a lot of mice. I have videos of them. They're everywhere.

Talks to us about the toilets and how you deal with them.

They're not good. They smell bad. I've just been and they are not clean. It doesn't bother me too much because I have to study here. I can't concentrate in my room so I have to stand it.

The fifth floor has a reputation for boning. Have you ever seen anyone get it on here?

I've never seen anything. I see girls sitting on the laps of boys sometimes kissing but nothing more. Sometimes the guard making rounds spots them and asks them to stop. He'll say "the Library is a public space."

What kind of person are you?

I'm a night owl and I do stress a lot. I always leave the work till the very last day and I don't learn from my mistakes. This is why I'm here right now. I don't revise properly every day, I leave it till the last minute.

How's that working out for you?

It's not working out. I

managed to survive my first exams but it's not going to work now I think. My next exam is in late June but I'll leave it till mid June before I start revising.

So you've already predicted your failure?

[laughs]

Feeling a lot more care-free after our conversation with Gunay we started our decent back down to the Ground Floor. We were about to leave when we decided to talk to one last person before calling it a night. Mobolaji Adekanmbi who was on duty at the main desk. We talked for quite a while but we've boiled our conversation down to two key questions:

Tell us about your relationship with food and drink.

Oh... We encourage students to eat food at the cafe or leave it outside, but some will try and sneak it inside. Students complain about food smells and we have to tell students that cooked food isn't allowed in the library.

Students will eat and keep it under the table. When you go around you'll see it but you don't know who's it is. Some students will sneak in pizza. Some people come with electric water boilers [kettles] to make coffee. But obviously that's not allowed in the library.

Have you ever caught people making out or boning in the library?

At night we never experience that. Apart from one time, there were some students in the ladies toilets and that got reported. The person [who reported it] heard the voice of a few people, girls and boys in the toilets but he didn't see them do anything, he didn't establish the fact. We spoke to the student and I think he said she celebrated her birthday and was trying to give her boyfriend a special treat. You have a house, you should have gone to the house instead of the toilets!

Damn straight.



In defence of being flaky

Tessa Davey, professional flake and now officially a doctor, encourages you to follow your heart and be the best flake you can be

Be honest, we all have that friend who's a complete flake. You know, you make plans with them only to have them cancel at the last minute. Maybe this happens repeatedly. They're really fucking annoying, right? Maybe you don't even want to bother to reschedule. Maybe they're so flaky that you eventually ghost them as friends or maybe they drive you nuts but something keeps you from severing ties, despite the mild dread that comes every time you make plans with them.

I am this person. I am a massive flake. I am someone who makes plans and cancels them all the time, and I generally don't feel at all bad about it. It's controversial, I know. But before you just push me aside as a terrible person, hear me out.

People get hella angry about flaking. Honestly, I would say that the majority of rants that I hear from my friends about their social lives

hideously offended or put out when someone cancels on me. That's not to say that I wouldn't otherwise have made plans with someone else if I had that evening/afternoon/brunch slot free – I have a perfectly active social life with more friends than I have time to see as much as I want to see them,

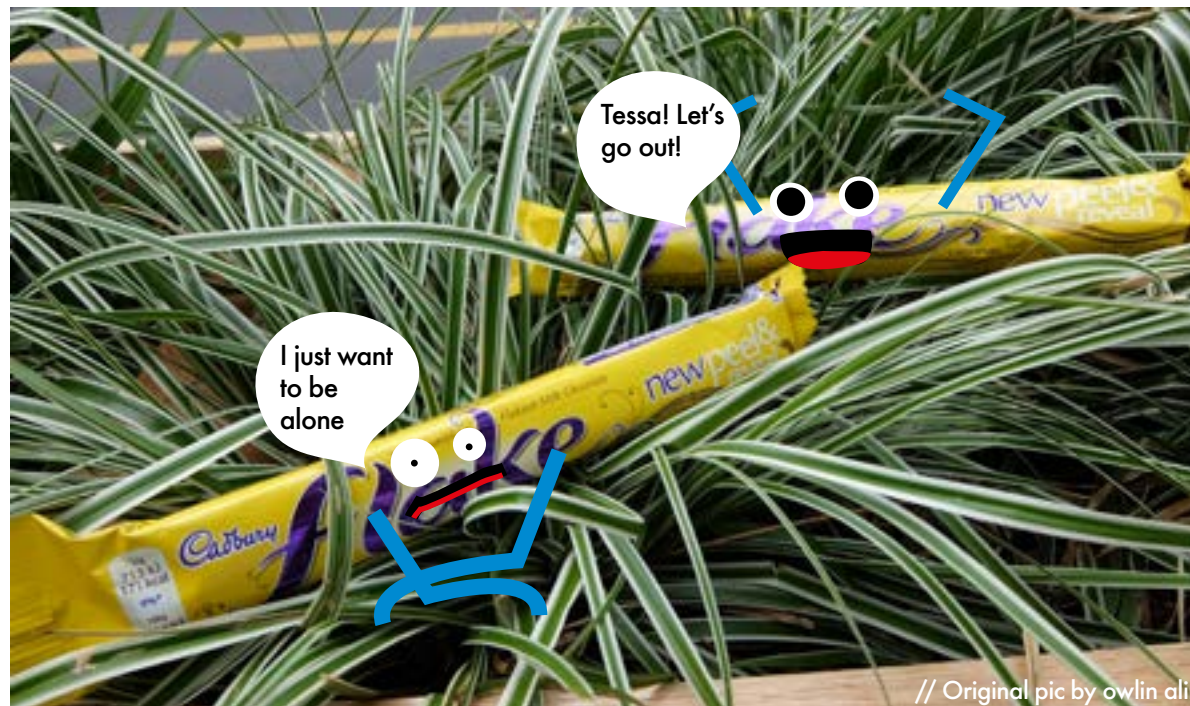
I'm just not in the mood for people. Sometimes, no matter how much I love you and no matter how much I enjoy being around you, I will not enjoy a social engagement, and I will not be good company.

And this is okay. It's good to recognise this. It's better for us both and for our friendship

exclusively say that cancelling because you're just not in the mood isn't an excuse, because if you go anyway you'll end up having a good time. I mean, great, if that's always the case for you, but I know myself well enough to be able to say what is gonna cheer me up and what is not. If I don't want to see you right

inconvenienced someone. There is now someone out there either scrambling to find someone else who has been flaked on to hang out with, or resigning themselves to a slightly boring night in. But you know what, that's not going to kill them. I have no problems admitting that I'm going to put myself first day to day, and if that means cancelling plans, so be it.

Like, don't be a dick. If you're consistently cancelling plans, don't make so many plans. If you're always cancelling plans with the same person, be mature enough to re-evaluate that friendship. Don't be a flake because you can't tell the difference between an obligation friendship and a friendship that you're actually gaining



// Original pic by owlin alin

\\ I am someone who makes plans and cancels them all the time, and I generally don't feel at all bad about it – it's controversial, I know \\

are about people cancelling on them at the last minute. It is really annoying, I get that. But I don't think it's the cardinal sin that it's made out to be.

Perhaps it's just the introvert in me, but I'm not usually

thank you very much – but if it means that I end up having a rare evening to myself, I don't really mind that either. Whether or not my friend has given me a good reason or is obviously just too lazy to travel into Central London, it doesn't really matter.

Because the thing is, I cancel plans at the last minute. Again hear me out, I'm not a monster – if something big is happening and my support is truly needed as a friend, if the person I'm meeting is already en route, if we have tickets to something or we're meeting to do something specific and long-planned, then I will be there. However, sometimes

that we don't endure this interaction that will be making me increasingly tense and probably grumpy – not exactly ideal properties in a friend.

But this is just not socially acceptable to say. Unless you have exclusively excellent, self-care respecting friends, you're going to come up against some hostility if you bail on drinks because you just want to be alone. If you're not being called out to your face, you can almost guarantee that behind the scenes there's some passive aggressive bitching about your unreliability.

If you ask anyone in strong opposition to flaking, they will

then, I'm not gonna, and it's really not a reflection of our friendship, but a reflection of how I am feeling right then.

Maybe it's because you're overbooked that week because you don't like to say no or because something came up that's eating into your time. Or maybe you just recognise that what you really need to do is to go home and catch up on some Netflix. Or do some problem sheets. Or to chat to your housemates or to do whatever you want to do. You're an adult, and if you don't want to hang out with someone, you don't have to.

Yes, you have mildly

\\ Or maybe you just recognise that what you really need to do is to go home and catch up on some Netflix or do whatever you want to do, either way you're an adult, and if you don't want to hang out with someone, you don't have to \\

something from. Be a flake because you don't want to force anything or to have a shitty time. But accept your flakiness and cancel early, be the best possible flake you can be, and you don't have to feel guilty at all.



CRISIS

Chris

Dear Chris,

I'm a first year Chemist and while everyone's out and about enjoying the sun, my looming end-of-term exams cast their shadow on me and are seeping off all my joy.

All I feel is an impending sense of doom, whether that's when I stand in line waiting to get served at the library cafe or trying to enjoy a friendly game of ultimate Frisbee.

I've tried kick-starting my revision but I either get tempted by the lovely weather and get dragged outdoors by my friends, or if I somehow muster the willpower to stay home I have to deal with everyone at halls who's finished exams and is flaunting their care-free lifestyle without respect or empathy for the rest of us who still have shit to pass.

How do I deal with this?

Carrie Less

Dear sweet innocent fresher Carrie,

We've all been there. How can anyone be expected to work and study when it's 30 degrees outside and even hotter in the library? It is a known fact that no serious work gets done after the 15th of May. So technically if you still have exams to revise for or if you haven't completed your final year project, I'm sorry my dear but you're up for elimination.

You might be asking yourself "But why did nobody tell ME?" Honey, Imperial is a dog-eat-dog world. For every student that fails, the future becomes a tiny bit less hopeless and uncertain for the countless PhDs and postdocs with dreams of tenure.

But to be fair no one tells first years anything and that's OK because your year counts for peanuts in comparison to the rest of your

time here at College. I'd really recommend a couple chill pills. Just go out have fun, pass ideally and it should be fine.

"BUT GRADES!"

Sigh If you really need to get that 2:1, there's only one solution – Central Library camp out. Pack your snacks, pack your toiletry bag (which should include toilet roll and an enema kit just in case) and bring that USB fan your friends got you as a joke three Secret Santas ago cause things are about to get steamy. Literally.

But seriously chill, you're just a baby. Come back when you have a 150 page thesis to write.

Big luv,
Chris xxxx

HOROSCOPES



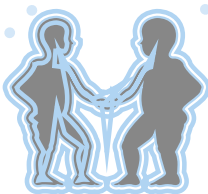
ARIES

This week you get threatened with legal action if you're to publish that thing you're not allowed to publish because people are OK with dicks on the front cover but not with making fun of scientists.



TAURUS

This week you feel hotter than you've ever felt before. Maybe it's that avocado-toast. Maybe it's Maybelline. Oh wait no it's the Central Library.



GEMINI

This week you're Jonathan Masters and your alter ego has taken over your body and tries to do a murder suicide on you. Sadly you don't have any kitchen knives at your house because they glorify violence.



CANCER

This week you're a security guard. You're disappointed you haven't received any gifts. The Provost lied about an increase in security presents.



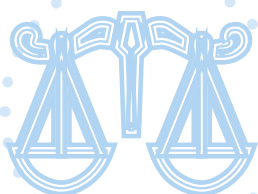
LEO

This week you're a bunch of school-kids running about on Queen's Lawn. You don't even go here.



VIRGO

This week you're Imperial's legal team and you're disappointed felix would make fun of the President's awards. It's like they don't even read the paper.



LIBRA

This week you are a random man in the Union Bar and, after finishing your mozzarella sticks, you fill the dish with ketchup and sneak off with it. Who are you? What are you doing?



SCORPIO

This week your housemate walks in and yells: "I JUST LOST MY VIRGINITY TO AN ICE CREAM TRUCK!" You can't wait to move out.



SAGITTARIUS

This week you try being a Yes Person, saying yes to everything you get offered. You end up with gonorrhoea and a pet snake you decide to call Magic Mike. Yay?



CAPRICORN

This week you are told your boyfriend of three years was just "really good friends" with you and just happened to sleep with you five nights a week. #SummerLuvn



AQUARIUS

This week you spend all your time on Trip Advisor looking for sweet travel deals, at the expense of your degree. You fail your final exam but at least you bagged some dirt cheap tickets to Morocco.



PISCES

This week you accidentally order Coke instead of diet Coke and realise they taste exactly the same. You feel like a dick briefly and get over it.



Imperial College Israel tech trip

Xingchen Zhou recommends Israel | 10/10 would visit again.

I would like to start by thanking the committee that spent days and nights working hard to put this amazing trip together. I must say I've gained so much from this trip in many aspects.

I didn't do any background research on the destination beforehand but went with the hope of letting the country and its people surprise me while there. The whole experience started before even checking in at the airport when I was 'interrogated' for 10 minutes on lots of random questions. These included why do I study in the UK, who packed my luggage, and who has touched it during my travel to the airport etc. After that, I was cleared to proceed to check in. This made me realise that this country definitely prioritises security. On the flight, my mind was refreshed by the slogan of in-flight duty free shopping: "lowest price at highest altitude". This made me more

eager for the upcoming tech trip and to find out how this country has become a world-leading start-up country whilst at war with most of its neighbours.

Upon arrival, our tour guide Yoni asked everyone to think of the most embarrassing story in our life and what we learnt from it. While exchanging our stories we laughed, learned and started to understand the spirit that makes the Israeli State – people here don't fear failure, they learn from it and rise again on it! This spirit was further seen in the many start-up companies that we visited later (Google, Intel, Reporty etc.). While visiting these start-up/technology companies, their successful business models were discussed, the new investing market was explored and the latest products/ideas were introduced. This was a well-rounded learning experience.

Though each day's agenda was really packed, there was

a good combination of visiting revolutionary companies and mingling with the 40 other students on the trip from across 12 Imperial departments. Every night we drank, we danced, we chatted and the next morning would wake up at 6:30am for another long day. To be honest, I only had 3 hours sleep every day for a week and I still don't know how I managed to live through that. It was one of the most colourful weeks of my life! When I see the people from the trip again on campus now I really can feel there is a special bond between all of us!

The committee also arranged dinner with local Israeli university students during the trip. I enjoyed listening to these students sharing their military experience and how it has toughened their personalities.

Personally, the most touching moment during this trip was the visit to Yad Vesham. We have all heard sad stories



The group in Israel \\ Daniel Voignac

about Jewish people from WWII but actually standing in the museum, seeing these historical preserved objects and listening to the stories from Yoni everyone couldn't help but tear up. This heavy history reminds humanity that we shouldn't let any similar tragedy happen again to any race.

We then moved on to visit the holy city of Jerusalem.

Instead of seeing chaos and conflicts between those of different religious beliefs I saw a Jewish old man sat down with a Christian old man having tea and chatting about their day. This wasn't the picture I held for Jerusalem but now I could see there was friendship between conflicting religions in this so-called conflict city!

Theana Johnson talks history, military and food in Israel

I love travelling and discovering new places. So when I heard about the trip to Israel organised by the Israeli society I jumped on the opportunity to go to a country I had never been to. I expected to explore the start-up and historic culture of Israel, visit some companies and sights and have a great time. But the experience was beyond all of my expectations. It wasn't great, it was phenomenal! I came back with so many incredible memories of places, people and moments, truly impressed by this country built in such a short amount of time and am very realistically considering

living there at some point in my life.

Everything we did was interesting, captivating and entertaining from the talks by start-up legends to culinary

\\ Everything we did was interesting, captivating and entertaining \\

tours of the street markets of both Tel Aviv and Jerusalem to the visit to universities and historical landmarks. We had nearly no time off or sleep but looking back none of us would have had it any other

way.

I love food and consider myself a very real food tourist, so obviously I need to mention the food as it was an integral part of my experience. Shak-shuka, falafel, shawarma, and of course my constant hummus food-baby were definite highlights of the trip.

Our guide took us through all the aspects of the state of Israel, its history, its economical and political situation and its people. I found it especially important that we met with locals to discuss and get a perspective on what we had learned about including the start-up nation, the military service, the history

of the Holocaust, the Jewish religion, and student life. Not only did we meet locals, but we also met foreigners who

\\ I found it especially important that we met with locals to discuss and get a perspective on what we had learned about \\

had moved to Israel and their happiness in this country was apparent to all of us.

Beyond the action-packed

program, what made the trip was the people. 40 of us who didn't all know each other at the start yet in just 6 days we laughed, danced, shared moments like we do with friends we've known for years. I met people from the Business school that we never usually interact with and discovered a whole new aspect of Imperial that is full of the funniest people ever. The differences in age, nationalities, subjects made it all the more special.

I will be eternally grateful to Daniel and the committee for organising this fantastic trip. Lecheim!



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