



# Felix

The Student Newspaper of Imperial College London

## NEWS



Government promises to crack down on no-platforming

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How health and arts are coming together

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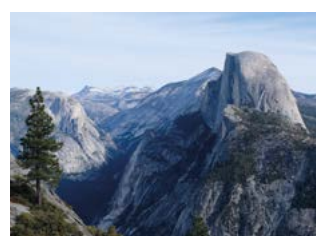
## MUSIC



Janelle Monáe comes out of her shell

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Despite a high ranking, student satisfaction remains an issue // Imperial/Felix

## Imperial 4<sup>th</sup> best university in UK; problems with student satisfaction continue

### NEWS

**Frank Leggett**

*News Writer*

**Fred Fyles**

*Editor-in-Chief*

*Imperial comes 4<sup>th</sup> in Complete University Guide (CUG) league tables, but student satisfaction remains an issue, particularly in the Department of Physics.*

**T**he Complete University Guide (CUG) rankings, released last week, saw Imperial climb one spot

to 4<sup>th</sup> best university in the country. The University of St. Andrews fell two places from the 2017 rankings, moving Imperial and the London School of Economics (LSE) up one place each. LSE has retained its position just ahead of Imperial for the fourth year in a row, while the top of the table is dominated by Oxford and Cambridge.

The overall score for Imperial in the CUG league tables – which take into account entry standards, student satisfaction, research quality, and graduate prospects – was 930, compared to 935 for LSE and 928 for St. Andrews.

The CUG also publishes yearly subject rankings,

which have seen a number of changes for Imperial. Mechanical Engineering and Computing have each moved up a place to 2<sup>nd</sup> best in the UK, while Chemical Engineering and Civil Engineering have dropped a place each to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> respectively. Chemistry has moved up two places to 4<sup>th</sup> in the UK, while Medicine has seen the largest gain, rising three places to put the subject 5<sup>th</sup> nationwide.

However, student satisfaction remains an issue. While it has shown a year-on-year improvement in the CUG tables – jumping from a rating of 3.99 to 4.07 out of five – it remains the second worst of the top-ten universities. LSE was the only

top-ten university with a lower rating for student satisfaction. Mathematics, Aeronautical Engineering, Biology, and Physics at Imperial all showed low student satisfaction, with a score lower than four.

The Department of Physics had the lowest student satisfaction rating of all subjects at Imperial. Its ranking of 3.68 marked physics at Imperial as the worst for student satisfaction out of all universities surveyed.

The student satisfaction rates used by CUG were generated by results of the National Student Survey (NSS). A number of universities saw students boycotting the NSS, meaning their results were omitted.

The physics department has been facing issues with student satisfaction for a number of years: last year Imperial's NSS data showed physics students were the least satisfied of all departments, with only 2/3 students reporting being satisfied with their course. Particular issues were raised with feedback, marking, and the lack of a sense of community.

While the Department of Physics has put in place a number of changes to address student concerns, those who spoke to Felix reported the rate of change was slow. Communication from the department was a particular issue: one student described the emails they received

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# EDITORIAL

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## Graduation 2.0



I was originally going to write this editorial to encourage people to go out and vote in their local elections. I had a whole diatribe planned, where I would outline why democracy was so important, how vital it is for the government to listen to the voices of younger voters, and the inspirational men and women who have campaigned for universal suffrage. Trust me, it was going to be great. Pulitzer Prize to the usual address, etc.

Unfortunately, I realised that – while I might write this column while the polls are still open – this issue is going to be published long after voting is all over, and the dust has settled. So instead you’re going to have to read what you read every week: a poorly-thought out, barely readable stream of consciousness, powered by the twin engines of a looming deadline and a desire to just go home and sleep. Enjoy.

This week has, for me, seen cause for both celebration and consternation. This Wednesday was the postgraduate graduation ceremony (no matter how many times I say it, it still sounds

clunky) – hundreds of students who had finished masters degrees or PhDs came back to Imperial, black cloaks flapping in the wind and rain, surrounded by proud family members jostling for prime photo-opportunity position outside the Royal Albert Hall. I always rather enjoy graduation days – not because of the actual ceremony itself, but rather because the sight of the proud graduands/graduates (I don’t care about the difference, don’t @ me) is pretty wholesome, and makes it seem like the experience so many of us

go through will be worth it in the end.

And this brings us onto a less pleasant point: last week, the Complete University Guide released their UK league tables, in which Imperial climbed a rank to 4<sup>th</sup> in the country. However, one metric where Imperial fell down compared to other universities was in the student satisfaction portion of the rankings. Some departments, in particular, had great scores for research quality or job prospects, but pretty dire ones for how happy their students were.

The Department of Physics, in particular, had low student satisfaction scores. This isn’t a new problem: the satisfaction rates have been slowly dropping over the past few years, with National Student Survey responses highlighting concerns over assessment, feedback, and the lack of a sense of community. To get a better idea of what the problems were in the department, I went to the voices that really matter – the students. They described a ‘hostile environment’, where undergraduates all too often feel like a low priority in comparison to the research that goes on around them.

The department is doing things to try and fix this, and it should be welcomed, but it reflects a general issue over the stress many students go through to get an Imperial degree. One student I spoke to said they’d regretted the amount of stress they’d put themselves under, and how it had numbed them to constant pressure. So despite the joyful faces of students at graduation, I still have to wonder: is it all worth it?



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# NEWS

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## Students raise concerns over Central Library toilets

### NEWS

**Fred Fyles**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

Several students contacted Felix this week reporting overflowing sanitary bins, blood on floors and walls, and out of order facilities.

A number of students have recently raised concerns over the cleanliness and upkeep of the toilet facilities at Imperial.

Several students this week spoke to Felix over the state of the bathrooms around campus,

particularly those in Central Library. Students reported having to use bathrooms with blood on the walls and floor, overflowing sanitary bins, and used sanitary products on the floor and toilet seats. Felix was sent photographic evidence of bloodied tampons on the floor of toilet cubicles in the women’s bathrooms in Central Library.

One student told Felix “causes many problems, since when you’re on your period and need to change towels or tampons, there’s often nowhere to put the old ones. The bins are not small, and given the fact they seem to be in a permanent state of overflow, it makes you wonder how often they really are

emptied. It is horribly unsanitary, and seems to be a problem specific to the Library.”

Further issues were raised with out of order facilities, with students reporting closure of several of the men’s bathrooms in Central Library this week due to “essential repairs and servicing”. Students also reported equipment in toilet cubicles falling off the wall and injuring them.

One student told Felix: “The Level 5 urinals have been flooding and spilling out over the floor. Today the whole bathroom was marked out of order, as were the ground floor toilets, making the ones that remained operational considerably busier. It’s just one more thing for us

to worry about on top of the impending exams.”

These problems come at a particularly busy time for Central Library, as many undergraduate students prepare for upcoming examinations.

A spokesperson for Imperial College London said: “Library Services constantly reviews the cleaning of our facilities and works with the cleaning team to continue to make improvements. In recent months adjustments have been made to the cleaning programme for Library Services and we will continue to review these plans and make amendments as appropriate during the busy revision period”.

Central Library is currently in the middle



If you see someone taking a photo in the toilet, please don't panic // Felix

on an ongoing renovation project, which aims to bring about long-awaited improvements in temperature control. The first phase of the project,

which saw Levels 4 and 5 closed for several months, was completed earlier this academic year.

## Students describe physics as "a hostile environment"

### NEWS

(cont.)

regarding changes to the course as “confrontational and unapologetic,” while another student said “much of the communication from the department feels like we’re an inconvenience.” One student told Felix: “Any time I see an email from the department in my inbox, I’m immediately on edge...the passive aggressive attitude contributes to making the whole department a hostile environment.”

As well as issues with communication, students reported problems with accessing past papers, lack of clarity over marking and feedback, and the lack of a community of students. One student said they thought things would improve, but “the culture is still quite unhealthy. Competition is kinda

implicitly encouraged to a pathological level, and that really kills any kind of community vibe.”

One Physics student told Felix: “In the physics department there is one rule: student opinion comes second. It’s stupid, since giving our opinions can help develop a better course/ experience for everybody. My only hope for student satisfaction to rise in the future is that we have a new amazing head of department who actually listens to us, as well as the upcoming curriculum – God knows how, but they realised having student input on that would be useful. It is a true nightmare to make changes to the Physics department.”

The Department of Physics has put a number of changes in place to address the satisfaction rates, an Imperial College spokesperson told Felix:

“The department recently appointed a student liaison officer in order to be able to provide more support to students, and has been carrying out student satisfaction surveys as well as drop-in sessions to allow students to raise concerns and voice their views. The Department has also been working to strengthen the personal tutor system and has started new initiatives to improve assessment feedback timeliness. Other initiatives to support students include efforts to boost mental health awareness across the Department, working with charities Mind and Student Minds to develop a network of trained student facilitators who can help signpost others to support”

The CUG described Imperial as “a great choice for studying Physics”, saying its “high

Entry Standards, strong Research Quality, and impressive Graduate Prospects...more than make up for a relatively low Student Satisfaction.”

An Imperial College London spokesperson told Felix: “Imperial College London is committed to offering all of its students a world-leading, rigorous, evidence-based, inclusive educational experience as part of a vibrant research environment. The College is embarking on a radical transformation of the way it educates by applying new teaching methods that enrich the student experience and improve inclusion and diversity. We will be working with students at every opportunity to get feedback, as we understand that we need this evidence base if we are to offer students the very best in teaching and support services.”

### Imperial ranked most innovative university in the UK

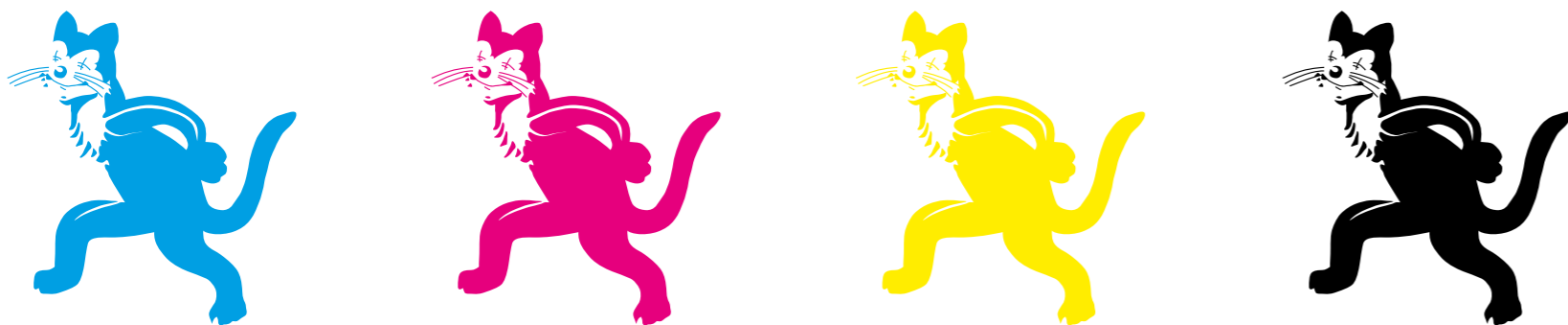
Imperial has retained 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Reuters’ ranking of Europe’s Most Innovative Universities for the third year in a row. Only KU Leuven, Belgium, was ranked higher.

The ranking is based on the number of patents filed and granted, as well as how often basic research from an institution influences commercial R&D activity. Imperial received a score of 36.8 against 40.7 for KU Leuven and 32.7 for Cambridge, who came 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Overall, the Reuters ranking has shown many UK universities have dropped this year, with continental institutions, largely in Germany, advancing their positions. This comes amid the continued uncertainty over the implementation of Brexit, with academics seeing the E.U. or the USA as better for career prospects.

Speaking last year, Professor Alice Gast, said she was “very concerned” about uncertainties regarding Brexit.

## Felix is recruiting!



**We want you – yes, you! We’re looking for writers, photographers, editors, illustrators, reporters, computer experts and grammar nerds to join our team. No experience needed – we’ll teach you everything you need to know. If you’re interested, send us an email on [felix@ic.ac.uk](mailto:felix@ic.ac.uk)**



## Universities minister promises to crack-down on no-platforming with first interventions in 30 years

## NEWS

**Fred Fyles**  
Editor-in-Chief

*Sam Gyimah called for clarification over policy on free speech at university, as debates over extent of the problem continue.*

Universities Minister Sam Gyimah this week promised to crack down on the “institutional hostility” of safe-space and no-platform policies, with the first government interventions on the issue in 30 years.

At a closed-door free speech summit chaired by Gyimah on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May, the minister called for clarification over guidance offered in the higher educational sector, and said the government will work with university to “provide clarity of the rules for both students and universities.”

Gyimah said preventing people speaking at university campuses due to their views was “chilling”, and said new guidance should “prevent bureaucrats or wreckers on campus from exploiting gaps for their own ends.” He said: “There is a risk that over-zealous interpretation of a dizzying variety of rules is acting as a brake on legal free speech on campus.”

The summit, which was held in London, brought together a number of organisations, including the Charity Commission and Universities UK (UUK). The Department of Education has not offered more information on what the content of the guidelines would be, only that they

would “provide clarity of the rules for both students and universities.”

This will be the first government intervention into freedom of speech on campuses for more than three decades. The last such intervention was the free speech duty, introduced in 1986, which stated universities had a responsibility to protect freedom of speech within the law.

This announcement indicates Gyimah will be following in the footsteps of his predecessor Jo Johnson in focussing on the issue of free speech. Gyimah wrote in *The Times* this week that he had “fallen foul of censorship” due to “unseen and pernicious tentacles of bureaucracy” when he visited a university campus.

**“The move indicates Gyimah will be following in Jo Johnson's footsteps in focussing on the issue of free speech”**

The move is the latest in a series of government statements on free speech on campus. At the end of last year, Johnson said the Office for Students (OfS), which came into force on April 1<sup>st</sup>, would have the power to fine universities that failed to protect free speech.

Speaking to *Felix*, Alex Chippy Compton, President of Imperial College Union, said: “While the

Government is pandering to its base about ‘attacks on free speech’, here at Imperial College Union we are working with our members on real risks to students’ education and wellbeing. In the last few weeks alone, we have lobbied College to refund students for teaching missed due to strikes, work on a student support strategy, and follow our recommendations to improve the Imperial Bursary to widen access to Imperial.”

“We invite Mr Gyimah, and the other politicians and commentators who have conjured up this false narrative about students, to leave the safe spaces of their offices and online echo chambers and come to Beit Quad to learn what student leaders are really doing and how they can help improve our students’ university experience.”

In recent years there have been a number of high-profile controversies over visiting speakers to UK universities: in 2015, Manchester Student Union refused to grant alt-right figurehead Milo Yiannopoulos the right to speak, saying his views would incite hatred against trans students, while King’s College London had to be evacuated in March after protesters stormed a talk by Carl Benjamin, a controversial British YouTuber who makes videos under the name Sargon of Akkad. Benjamin has frequently been described as a member of the alt-right, a label he rejects.

A number of media outlets have directed attention towards the policy of ‘no-platforming’, in which individuals are denied the right to speak on university campuses. The National Union of Students’ (NUS) No



Gyimah has turned his attention to the issue of free speech // Flickr/Policy Exchange

Platform Policy, prevents individuals or groups with racist or fascist views from speaking at NUS events. Six organisations fall under the policy, including the British National Party and English Defence League.

**“The debate over whether or not universities in the UK are hostile to free speech is an ongoing one”**

While *Felix* is not aware of recent incidents at Imperial, Imperial College Union policy states free speech needs to be balanced with student safety and commitment to

equality and diversity.

The debate over whether or not universities in the UK are hostile to free speech is an ongoing one. The UK Parliament’s Joint Committee on Human Rights published a report on free speech at universities earlier this year, stating “the extent to which students restrict free speech at universities should not be exaggerated.” The report stated it was “not a pervasive problem,” but identified university and student union policy could present a barrier to free speech.

The Spiked Free Speech University Rankings this year stated over half the UK universities surveyed had “actively censored ideas on campus”; the majority of policies the group singled out as suppressing freedom of speech were about preventing harassment, discrimination, or transphobia in the workplace. Commentators

have called these rankings a “misrepresentation of freedom of debate on British campuses”, and said Spiked were “handmaidens of the alt-right”. Alistair Jarvis, UUK’s Chief Executive, said: “Universities are committed to promoting and protecting free speech within the law...a small number of flash points do occasionally occur, on contentious or controversial issues, but universities do all they can to protect free speech so events can continue.”

Gordon Marsden, the shadow higher education minister, criticised the closed-doors nature of the summit, and described the announcement as “simply another piece of meaningless posturing from the government, while it has nothing practical to offer students dealing with record levels of debt.”

## Poor weather doesn't dampen spirits at postgraduate graduation ceremony

## NEWS

**Fred Fyles**  
Editor-in-Chief

*The graduation ceremony, which took place on Wednesday, saw 3,500 students converge on the Royal Albert Hall.*

Over 3,500 graduates made their way across the stage of the Royal Albert Hall this Wednesday to

receive their degrees during the postgraduate graduation ceremony.

Students who had completed masters and doctorates made their way to the South Kensington campus from more than 60 countries, with friends, family, and supporters in tow. The ceremonies were live-streamed on YouTube.

The three graduation ceremonies, held throughout the day, saw hundreds of gown-wearing graduands milling around campus, despite the inclement weather.

**“The ceremonies saw hundreds of gown-wearing graduands milling around campus, despite the inclement weather”**

Professor Alice Gast, President of Imperial College London, spoke at the ceremony. She highlighted the importance technological changes would have on their lives, particularly artificial intelligence. She told graduates they were “prepared to navigate and contribute to this new era”, and urged them to “listen to the world around us”.

Imperial also conferred honorary degrees to five people on Wednesday, including Sir Keith O’Nions, former President and Rector of Imperial.

Other recipients of honorary degrees included: Dr Demis Hassabis, founder of DeepMind; Professor Mary Robinson, who advocates for sustainable development and justice for climate change victims; Dame Mary Archer, an expert in solar energy conversion; and Professor Dame Sally Davies, founder of the National Institute for Health Research and England’s Chief Medical Officer.

Five individuals were awarded Imperial College medals, and twelve individuals and groups

were awarded President’s medals for “contribution to the life and work of the College”.

Five students were awarded Outstanding Student Achievement Awards.

The next graduation ceremony will be the undergraduate graduation ceremony, to be held next October.

## Professor's arrest in Iran confirmed

## NEWS

**Fred Fyles**  
Editor-in-Chief

*Iranian officials confirmed this weekend that Professor Abbas Edalat has been detained in Iran.*

Professor Abbas Edalat, from Imperial College London’s Department of Computing, has been detained in Iran, the Iranian government has confirmed.

The news of Professor Edalat’s arrest, which was first reported by the Centre for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI), a US-based non-profit, was confirmed by the Iranian authorities over the weekend. It was the first time the country confirmed his detention.

G h o l a m h o s s e i n

Mohesni Ejeji, a spokesperson for the Iranian judiciary, told reported in Tehran: “I confirm his arrest on security charges, but I am unable to give details.” The UK’s Foreign Office have said they are “urgently looking into” the arrest.

Fars, a news agency in Iran widely described as a ‘semi-official’ agency of the Iranian government, reported Professor Edalat was part of an “infiltration network affiliated with Britain.”

A spokesperson from Imperial College London described Professor Edalat as “a valued colleague... who has made many important academic contributions throughout his career.” They told *Felix*: “We are understandably concerned for his welfare following reports of his arrest in Iran, and we are urgently seeking further information.”

## PINT OF SCIENCE



7 pubs

Science talks in local pubs

MAY 14, 15, 16



7-10pm

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT [pintofscience.co.uk/organisation/imperial](http://pintofscience.co.uk/organisation/imperial)

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# POLITICS

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## The government's handling of the Windrush scandal is a national disgrace

*The way the government have treated these members of our society has put communities, political faith, and the NHS at risk.*

### POLITICS

**Divyen Vanniasegaram**  
Comment Writer

The government's past few years of immigration policy have been cruel and inhumane, as highlighted by the Windrush Scandal. The arbitrary target to cut immigration to the tens of thousands has spawned some nasty and unexpected consequences. The 'hostile environment' policy adopted whilst Theresa May was Home Secretary is the culmination of the path this government has ardently pursued, and has attempted to make it as difficult as possible to live in the UK without having the appropriate documentation to prove a right to remain.

**"The Windrush Scandal has directly developed from government policy"**

The Windrush Scandal has developed from such a policy. People came to the UK from the Commonwealth following World War Two to settle and work; however, many of these people, especially minors, did not apply for British passports or official documents to



Amber Rudd has found herself in hot water // Flickr/Polish Ministry of the Interior

show their right to live in the UK. Anyone from the Commonwealth who arrived in the UK before 1971 had a right to British citizenship but, due to the hostile policy, many of these people have been asked to prove their right to remain here after decades of living in the UK. Imagine living in a country you have called home for decades only for a letter demanding you prove you have the right to live here or you will be deported. This is the situation thousands of individuals have had to face. Most of these people have spent their entire lives contributing to society and communities; to call into question their citizenship is a point of shame that the government

should and must bear. It is a gut-wrenching experience to be so profoundly neglected and shunned by the nation you have lived in and paid your dues. To be denied the right to access healthcare and the right to work for the sake of meeting migration targets is disgusting.

The government's handling of the scandal has been dire to say the least. The now former Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, was either incompetent or deceitful – in reality probably both. She failed to comprehend the nature and scale of the problem, not only when it was raised with her last year, but also as the scandal has developed this year. The government have failed to go far enough to show

genuine contrition for the pain they have caused, nor done enough to resolve the situation for the thousands of people who have been affected. The Home Office is a notoriously difficult department to manage, and Amber Rudd essentially admitted this herself by saying that she was focusing so much on counter-terrorism that she took her eye off the ball with immigration. Ultimately, if the safety of the country is the Home Office's greatest priority, and a massive job in and of itself, it might be time to consider separating one of great offices of state in two – not only for the benefit of the poor Member of Parliament left to the run the department, but also for the country as

a whole.

**"Not enough has been done to resolve the situation for the thousands affected"**

A further consequence of the government's attempts to slash immigration to 'acceptable' levels is that the government has refused entry to the UK of thousands of highly skilled migrants, as they have already filled quotas for the month. This is an entirely ludicrous and illogical position for the

government to take. There have been approximately 5,000 doctors who have been refused entry into the UK due to these quotas. The NHS has been faced with one of the trickiest periods in its existence: it has severe staff shortages, and hospital trusts have, quite rightly, been recruiting from abroad to fill these gaps so the NHS is able to continue to provide an amazing service.

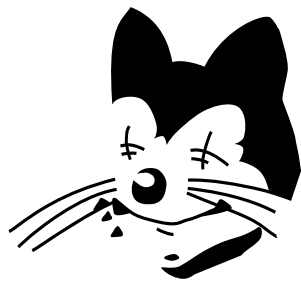
The government, on the one hand, claims it is doing everything possible to support the NHS through this difficult time, and yet on the other hand is actively preventing doctors entering the country. The NHS have recognised the importance of getting qualified staff in place as quickly as possible to support the health service; it's a shame that the government have been unable to recognize this fact despite the NHS falling apart around them. Regardless of whatever immigration targets the government has foolishly tied its hands to, it should be brave enough to say we need doctors urgently and that it is committed to sorting this problem.

The road the government has decided to follow on immigration will not benefit anyone. It is preventing doctors from doing their jobs and simultaneously has thrown the lives of thousands into chaos. Many citizens voted for Brexit so the UK could take control of its borders the Windrush scandal shows the government can't be trusted to control our borders as it is, let alone once Brexit actually happens.



## COMMENT

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# Imperial should be refunding our tuition fees following the strike

*A group of Imperial students argue this is not solely about loss of contact time. The entirety of our educational experience has suffered because of the strikes.*

## COMMENT

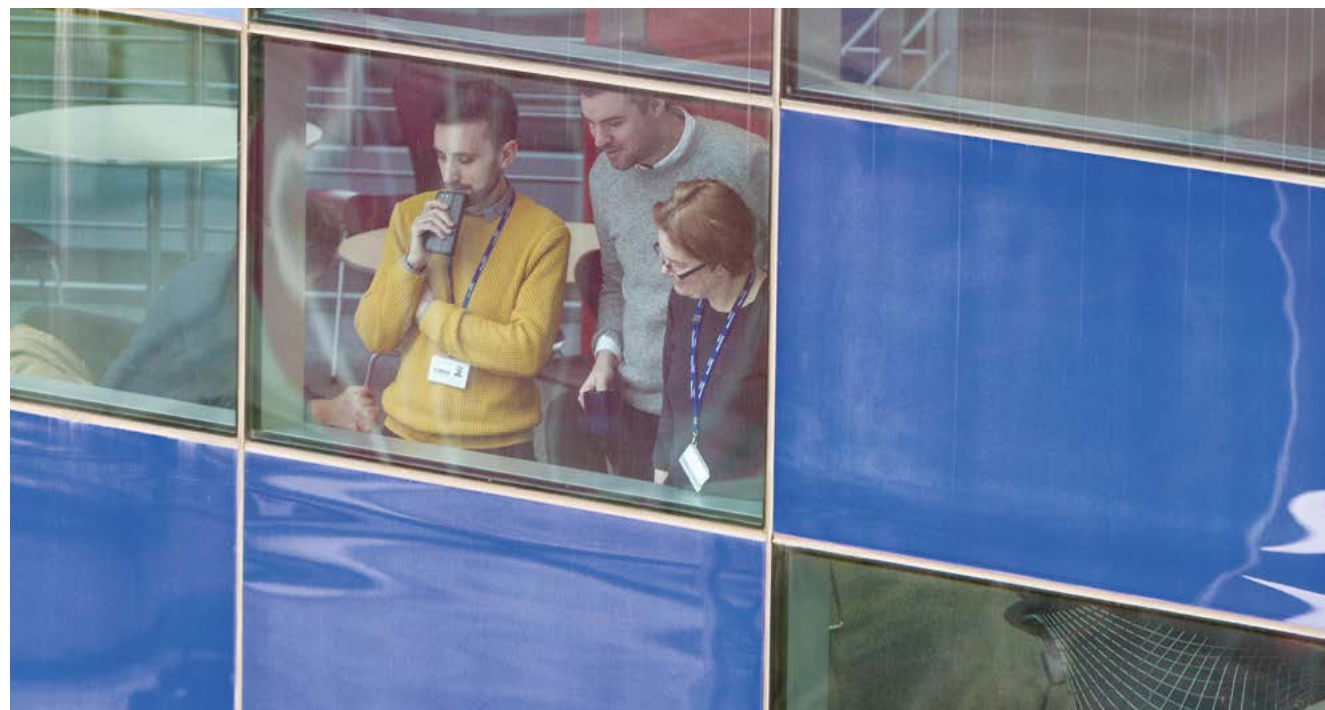
## Students of Imperial

*Comment Writers*

Earlier this year, while academic and support staff were exercising their right to strike in protest against unfair changes to their pensions, over 3,000 students signed a letter to senior management asking for a partial refund in tuition fees. As a result of the industrial action, many of us lost out on contact time, support from staff, and general momentum. If, as seems to be the case across the UK, universities are businesses, and we are consumers, then we have the right to demand a refund.

These concerns have been presented to the senior management of the College, but the response we have received has been lacking. Last month, several of us heard from Professor Alice Gast personally, who sent a statement that has also been uploaded to the Imperial website. It reads: “fees cover all aspects of your time at Imperial, and are based on the delivery of overall outcomes, rather than being payments for specific contact hours.”

While we appreciate Professor Gast recognises this is about more than just contact hours, we hope that by overall outcomes she does not solely mean our degree certificates. Instead, they should refer to the graduate attributes listed on Imperial’s own website. Imperial are “committed” to ensuring Imperial graduates will



Someone looks concerned // Joseph O’Connell-Danes

“Demonstrate deep conceptual understanding of their chosen discipline”, “approach challenges with curiosity, critical thinking, and creativity”, and “have developed into independent learners with high self-efficacy”, among others.

To achieve these aspirational outcomes requires departments to deliver the pedagogical approach outlined in the excellent new Teaching and Learning Strategy. Launching this strategy, Professor Simone Buitendijk, Vice Provost (Education), noted the emphasis on interactive learning, with “a focus on increasing the sense of community and working with student as partners.” while Ms Giskin Day, an Imperial College Principal teaching fellow, envisaged classrooms as “interactive facilitative space(s)” where dialogue rather than didactic delivery was central to learning.

We entirely agree with this visionary and aspirational strategy, and welcome its implementation at Imperial. However, Professor Gast appears to discount the view that our education had suffered and as a result, and avoids the question of the college’s liability to refund any of our fees.

While our fees are not for specific contact hours, it is precisely because we have lost this contact time that we have lost the opportunity for dialogue and interaction, both of which are central to the College’s educational strategy. As a result our education has suffered. Indeed, this is the basis of our claims for compensation. On many courses, both undergraduate and postgraduate, we are fortunate to be partners with our lecturers in this excellent type of education; however, it cannot take place when our lecturers are on strike. The educational

experience, which was the reason that we chose to come to Imperial, is what we value so highly, and not just the outcome.

Our educational experience should not be atomised into specific contact hours, but should rather be based on the totality of our learning experience. This requires our teachers and fellow students to be present in the department, at seminars, in classes, and on-line – and not on strike. The key point we were making in our correspondence with the College is that we have not just lost specific contact hours but also momentum and the excitement and creativity that comes from an excellent course. It is our educational experience in its entirety that has suffered as a direct result of the disruptions arising from the strike.

Despite assurances from senior management about mitigations for the

strike, these have necessarily been minimal and in no way compensate for our loss. The fact remains that our lecturers were on strike for 14 days in the Spring Term – more than a quarter of the total term. Recovering lost teaching – funded by the college – may help to some extent but needs to fit into students’ existing commitments. Full time students are very stretched already, with multiple commitments, and few have capacity to retrace steps from the previous term. Even if it were feasible to reschedule lost teaching, the practicalities of doing so from the student’s point of view are therefore very limited. And without full student participation and interaction as partners in learning, the educational experience is considerably diminished. Therefore it can never simply a matter of replacing missing teaching sessions at a later date, particularly for

the practical courses that were cancelled and which may be essential for some students in their future careers.

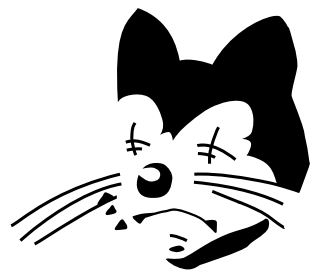
The sad fact is that strikes mean lost production. This is the reason that the College are withholding pay from our excellent lecturers who went on strike. It seems disingenuous to us that they can therefore also assert that we have not suffered a loss in our education and are not due a refund. For 14 days we were unable to meet with our lecturers who were union members; we missed scheduled teaching sessions; we lost opportunities to learn. This is what the totality of education means to us and not just the final degree outcome.

We would like the College to meet with us and our union representatives to agree a way forward that respects students’ loss of education experience through fair compensation. We feel privileged to be students at Imperial and are fortunate to be receiving an excellent educational experience. This, however, did not happen whilst our lecturers were on strike. We need to agree a fair and just formula to compensate, not only ourselves, but the 3,000 fellow students who have signed the letter stating they believed their education would suffer.

Felix will be publishing a version of this article online as an open letter. If you would like to put your name to it, please fill in the form: <https://goo.gl/forms/gt5Y4H-PQvpO6R3C52>

# COMMENT

comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk



## Graduation is a waste of money, and we're all going to die anyway

*Grumpy Bastard, our resident contrarian, sets his sights on the graduation ceremony.*

### COMMENT

#### Grumpy Bastard

*Comment Writer*

This week all of the gormless morons who managed to make it through the whole of an Imperial postgraduate course graduated. As I looked through the crowd of students desperately navigating their parents and loved ones to the ceremony, to be seated nowhere near one another, it struck me that all of their faces bore the same expression: relief. I think that probably sums up the Imperial experience that we were all mis-sold when filling out the UCAS form all that time ago. Thank fuck it's over.

The weather really went

for exactly the same thing as well. Not dramatic rain, just a persistent drizzle to make all the photos look foreboding and miserable, a further reminder of the true Imperial experience. I unfortunately had to come in on the day of graduation and everyone was using umbrellas, possibly the most lethal tool a small-statured pedestrian can possess short of an RPG-7. I assume that people use umbrellas to protect their expensive outfits, hat, and hair from the onslaught of said light drizzle, but is that worth the cost of someone else having to perform an inelegant ballet to navigate through the crowds? There must be a better way to protect one's garments from the rain without causing inconvenience to everyone

else. Possibly some kind of rigid head condom. I'll have a chat with Des Eng, give them something to do other than eating rubbers and shoving pencil leads up their noses.

All of this just to protect the gowns they make you hire for the ceremony, atop whatever fancy clothes that people have chosen to wear. The graduation ceremony as a whole is an over-expensive opportunity to get a handshake from Alice Gast. It's highly likely that the whole expense of the event just about covers the cost of her time to shake all of your grubby hands and pretend that this is anything special to her, before the next trainload of gullible money cows arrives in October.

Don't get me wrong, I'm sure the graduation



Love the gown! // Imperial College

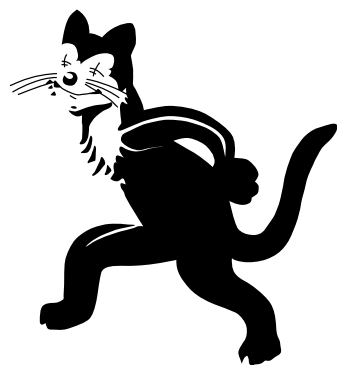
ceremony is extremely meaningful to some people and it is a celebration of your achievement at university. I just wish it wasn't so expensive given that the faculty have essentially admitted that the tuition fees only

cover the cost of the piece of paper they present at the end. Personally I'd prefer it if they stuck to the tie honoured tradition of workplace leaving dos: not-memorable and regretting it the morning after, but at least it comes

with a free mug.

*Grumpy Bastard extends their congratulations to those graduating and wishes them well for the next 40 years of drudgery before their inevitable descent into chronic illness and death.*

## Felix is recruiting!



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**If you're interested, send us an email on [felix@ic.ac.uk](mailto:felix@ic.ac.uk)**



# SCIENCE

science.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## How do we mend the rift between science and art?

*Aesop's Arts in Health Conference and Showcase demonstrates how people are working to bring the worlds together, but also shows how far we still have to go.*

### SCIENCE

**Syon Lee**  
*Science Writer*

I am slightly ashamed to admit that after four years at Imperial, I had yet to attend a single conference. However, in the spirit of trying new things and expanding my horizons, I agreed to accompany my friend to Aesop's Arts in Health Conference and Showcase. This neophiliac mentality was what drove me to choose Humanities, Philosophy and Law (HPL) and Computational Medicine as my BSc options – basically anything that wasn't clinical Medicine. Of course, taking risks like these could end up either way – through HPL, I've discovered a new passion for the arts whereas through Computational Medicine, I've discovered my pathological inability to write working code and a near fatal allergy to data-frames. Nevertheless, I was hoping that this conference would be the perfect end to my year of experimenting, and the event was finally sold to me under the promise of free food and Dame Darcey Bussell DBE of Strictly Come Dancing fame.

Then April 19<sup>th</sup> rolled around and, on the most glorious day of the year so far, the decision to spend the whole day indoors being lectured at didn't seem like such a great idea anymore. Nevertheless, we dutifully trooped in, fixing our swanky *PRESS-Imperial College London* badges to our chests and strapped ourselves in for the eight-

hour education tour-de-force.

After a rousing opening speech by science writer and broadcaster, Vivienne Parry OBE, the main questions of the day were posed:

“What is the role of an artist in 21<sup>st</sup> century society and how can one achieve artistic citizenship?” and “How can art be utilised to transform a negative health image to a positive artistic one?”

Compelling questions for sure, but not the ones I was seeking answers to. What I wanted to know was when we'd see the legendary Dame Darcey Bussell, principal dancer of the Royal Ballet at the tender age of 20, and whether or not she actually floated, as rumours would have you believe.

### “Dance for Parkinson's shows dance as a positive intervention that improves stability”

The rest of the day was split into showcases, panel discussions, and plenary activities with organisations explaining their projects and demonstrating various health benefits. These projects ranged from Melodies for Mums, group singing sessions showing promising signs of preventing and abating post-natal depression, to The Reader, shared-reading groups attempting to tackle increasing social isolation



The arts can play a vital role in healthcare // Tas Kyprianou

across the country. A personal favourite was Dance for Parkinson's, a collaboration with the English National Ballet, whose promotional video was a giddy montage of elderly chair-dancing and asymmetric legwear sported by the ballet troupe. Not only is dance a positive intervention that improves posture, stability, and fluidity of movement, but one patient also described its benefits as “a new sense of freedom, a coping mechanism”.

On the clinician side of the health experience, projects such as Performing Medicine by the Clod Ensemble attempted to teach health workers and medical students how to act human again – a regrettably much-needed programme in the current clinical environment. As a medical student myself, I am often wary of accusations that new generations of health workers were increasingly cold and distanced from the people they were trying to treat. However, as one speaker put it, “Feeling caring

isn't enough”. Blame it on the prescriptive nature of the clinical encounter, the tick-box feel of ICE-ing (asking about ideas, concerns, and expectations), or time constraints imposed on health workers, but the actual demonstration of caring is now often left as an afterthought, regardless of how clinicians actually feel.

Midway through the day, we were treated to a workshop with Patsy Rodenburg, Professor of Text and Poetry, and world expert on teaching voice, speech, and presentation skills. What started as a description of the power of ‘presence’ for healing and everyday life culminated in a cultish session of breathing exercises and pair-bonding activities. Despite the atmosphere of religious reverence, I couldn't help but feel a little sceptical of the promised benefits of breathing to people (not beyond, and not before).

Perhaps it was because of my sceptical nature, I couldn't help but notice an undercurrent of fear

beneath the praise and positivity throughout the day. Fear for funding, understandably, but also a fear of the medical community. The question most often raised was how to do an RCT (randomised control trial) and every mention of the initialism sent shiver through the crowds. This, along with the collective eye-rolling at the mention of evidence-based medicine left me slightly worried about the medicine-arts divide. Was the rift really that irreconcilable? And whose job was it to bring these two disciplines together? In this event, it felt like a battle for dominance between science and art – social interventions were declared “better than drugs” and social health was emphasised while biological health was often side-lined. I don't wish to detract from the importance of social aspects of health, and these projects are all genuinely exciting regardless of what domain you work in, but what was needed – a common language translating between arts and science,

between ‘soft’ therapies and clinical outcomes – was sorely lacking from an event that sought to marry the two worlds.

We left slightly early to catch the last ray of summer sun. After all, I didn't want to wait another year before it graced us again with its presence. Unfortunately, this meant I never got to see Darcey

### “I couldn't help but notice an undercurrent of fear beneath the positivity”

Bussell, patron of fourteen charities and committed dance advocate. Maybe I'll never know if her skin really glows in the dark, as it does in my imagination, or whether she chooses to enter every room with a pirouette. Either way, I was glad I decided to go, if only to see the asymmetric legwear.



## SCIENCE

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## Let's talk about sex(ual health)

## SCIENCE

Nada Mohamed-Ali  
Harumi Quezada  
Yamamoto  
Clara Greiner  
*Science Writers*

They say your years at university are some of the best of your life. That the lessons you will learn and the experiences you will gain will be paramount in forming who you are as a person. However, it does not always feel that way. For many of us the transition from the shelter of our homes to the whirlwind that is university can be overwhelming, and adjusting to this newfound independence can feel like a continuous struggle. All too often we end up neglecting to take care of ourselves (we've all had

that sad bowl of cereal for dinner, right?). Even if you do happen to be one of those super humans who find the time to study, eat healthily, exercise, and maintain a social life, there is still one aspect of our health that is greatly overlooked: our sexual health.

### Why is Sexual Health Important?

University is a time of firsts, with many students finding themselves sexually as well as academically. Being aware of our bodies is an integral part of maintaining honest, healthy, and ultimately satisfying sexual relationships. We believe that raising awareness on this issue and providing students with the correct tools can help to facilitate this, making everyone healthier and happier!

That is why the Sexual Health Campaign team conducted a survey of 155 Imperial students in which 70% of participants expressed interest in having a sexual health campaign and testing services.

### The Campaign

The Sexual Health Campaign at Imperial is a new student-led campaign that was started by two postgraduates in the School of Public Health; it now has student members from across the university, and collaborated with the Union to empower and educate about sex.

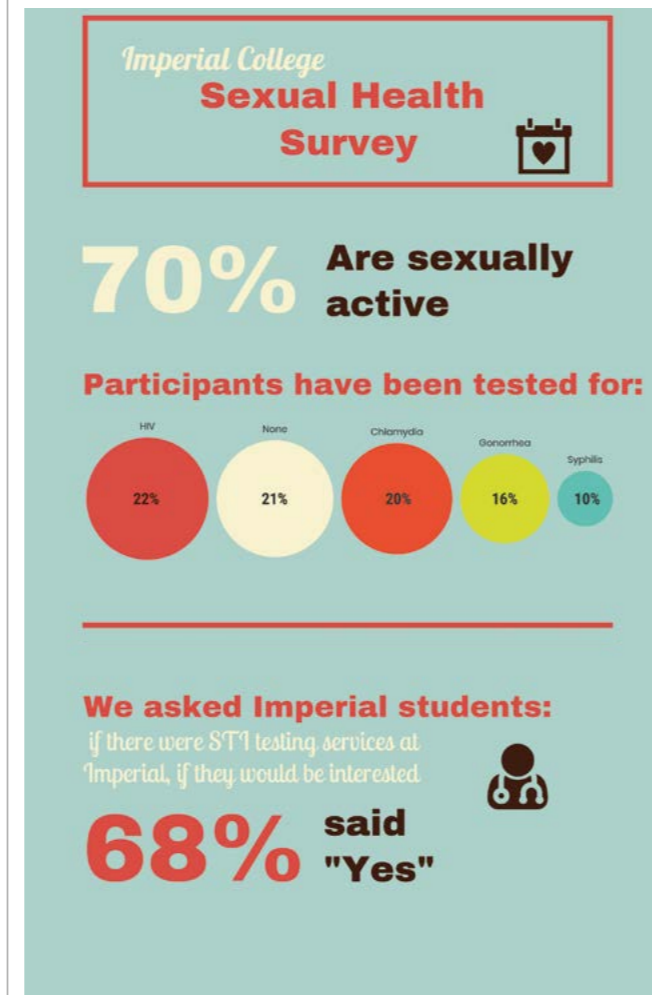
We have partnered with local sexual health clinics to provide full sexual health check-ups for students, as well as launching an awareness campaign to promote safe, consensual sex for all.

### How you can get involved

Our campaign days are open to undergraduate and postgraduate students on three Wednesdays: May 9<sup>th</sup>: (South Kensington), 16<sup>th</sup> (Charing Cross) and 23<sup>rd</sup> (South Kensington) from 11am to 4pm.

Drop by, we would love to help answer any questions you may have about the health check-ups, the campaign, or just about safe sex. In addition, the Jefferiss Wing at St. Mary's Hospital will provide take-home testing kits ready to pick up throughout May.

Hope to see many of you there, in order to show Imperial how important is sexual health for the student community!



## Connect with conservation – the scandal of Sudan

## SCIENCE

Steve Allain  
*Science Writer*

Some of you may have recently read that the last male northern white rhinoceros, called Sudan, was put down due to age-related ailments. The northern white rhinoceros is a now functionally-extinct subspecies of the white rhinoceros, with only two females remaining. This day was imminent – with such a small surviving population size, their chances to recover seemed unlikely. However, what has been ignored by several media outlets is that the

southern white rhino is something of a conservation success story.

It is still argued whether or not the southern and northern white rhinos represent subspecies of the white rhino, or whether they are two entirely separate species. For arguments sake, we are going to assume, using current knowledge, that they are both closely related subspecies.

Let's start with the southern white rhino, which experienced a population crash, with reports from the early 1900s that as little as 50-100 individuals remaining in the wild. But, thanks to population recovery efforts across the globe, the southern white rhinos have bounced back, with a population

size today amounting to over 21,000! Of course, with so many rhinos in such a small place, many have been reintroduced to previous areas of their range. Their status on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List has also been down-listed to Near Threatened, and, despite this, population efforts remain ongoing in order to safeguard the rhinos for the future in light of illegal ivory poaching. These efforts are in need of worthy celebrations, but this message – that rhino conservation is working – is difficult to portray to individuals.

It may come of a surprise to you, but there are three smaller rhino species living within Asia,

aside from the two in Africa. The Sumatran rhinoceros is the only living rhino species left which is woolly; most people would have thought that the last of these died out at the end of the last ice age but in fact, they are clinging on in south-east Asia. They are now listed as Critically Endangered, with only five substantial populations remaining in the wild: four on Sumatra and one on Borneo. Their rainforest homes have slowly been reduced as humans have expanded agriculture and cities in the previous range of the species. Their numbers are a lot more difficult to determine, as they are solitary animals which are widely scattered throughout their range – however,



The southern white rhino is doing well thanks to conservation efforts//Wikimedia

there are estimates that fewer than 100 animals remain. This species represents a group with no other living members: the woolly rhinos. When they become extinct, will we see the same media

outry? We are starting down the slippery slope to extinction, and now is the time to act, before they too are just another casualty of the Anthropocene.

## SCIENCE

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## Lab-grown heart used for drug safety testing

## SCIENCE

Sarah Wong  
*Science Writer*

Currently, drug safety testing has to be initially conducted on animals, before trials in humans begin. While animal models have proven to be useful, in some respects, they do not wholly mimic human reactions.

One of my lecturers' favourite examples is thalidomide – a mild sleeping tablet that was proven safe in adults. Animal studies and human drug trials failed to detect its harmful effects on developing foetuses, and, as a result, in 1962 thousands of babies worldwide were born with malformed limbs.

This disaster led to increased stringency of the

drug testing process, but did not reduce the fears of expecting mothers – pregnant women are less likely, for example, to take long or short-term medications to help control their symptoms of insomnia.

However, a recent study in March by a research group in Syracuse University, New York may have just found a reliable, clinically-relevant model to allow drug safety testing in embryos! This involves using stem cells – unspecialised cells that can be turned into different type of cells, such as heart cells. By utilising bioengineering principles, the research group in US were able to generate a heart in the early stages of development using stem cells.

Current problems with growing a developing heart (also known as cardiac organoid) in the

laboratory centre around the immaturity of the cells themselves. Those that were grown on a dish are simply not the correct shape or orientation, and therefore they have different functional properties to those inside a human.

To resolve this, the group used biomaterials – substances that are able to interact with cells – combined with stem cells, to drive stem cell specialisation into heart cells, as well as encouraging cell maturation. The group patterned the biomaterial by creating the correct geometric confinement on the biomaterial, and, consequently, a 3D cardiac cell culture that mimics early heart development was able to be formed in approximately three weeks.

Since human stem cells are used, these organoids are well suited for drug screening, because it



'Siri, find me a picture of science' //Wikimedia

eliminates the species difference between animals and humans; this means patients can now have greater confidence when taking medications, and, perhaps, fewer animals are required for drug testing. In parallel, understanding the factors that influence

human heart development may allow for the study of developmental heart abnormalities, allowing scientists to find treatments for congenital heart defects.

The technology is still in its infancy, and the applications may only be

limited to early defects at present. Furthermore, there are still discrepancy between the heart that grows inside a human, and that which is grown in the lab. More research is required, but the future prospects remain exciting.

## Science and eternity – perspectives on immortality

## SCIENCE

Maria Balaç  
*Science Writer*

One of the most recent hot topics in the field of science and technology centres around Netcome – a private company who have set out to preserve human brains post-mortem, such that, one day, following technological advancements, they would be able to “recreate your mind”. Netcome bases their business plan on award-winning research which resulted in the intact preservation of an animal connectome. This was done via a process called vitrification: a combination of

chemical embalming and cryogenics which enabled the team to preserve all the synaptic structures within a rodent.

**“It is not often that science reaches out to people en masse, evoking such strong reactions”**

This achievement, however, has not yet been replicated in humans, and the outline of their project has received criticism for its methodological practi-

cality. Neuroscience poses difficult questions, some of which have answers that would prove crucial for this project, such as the fact that it is currently unknown whether an intact cryogenised connectome would retain the information that once circulated through the brain. Moreover, we do not know whether the information we want to retain is actually related to the biological basis of consciousness. For vitrification to be successful, the brain needs to be removed fresh; while the protocol for replicating the procedure for human use is currently under development, this very idea of transhumanism is more entertaining, from a debate point of view, than ever.

It is not often that science reaches out to people en masse, evoking such strong emotional reactions, as with the possibility of eternal life. Looking back in history, immortality has always embraced many spiritual dimensions, as seen with the ancient Egyptians, who were well known for preserving their leaders' remains, some of which still exist day.

The novel approach by Nectome sounds appealing, especially in cases where terminal illnesses are involved. However, the implications of such a project becoming reality are immense: ethically, legally, and in terms of the future of the human race. Since brain collection must be completed imminently at death, this

procedure could only be conducted in countries or states where assisted euthanasia is legal. Provided the protocol is successful, the person would lose their body, and possibly wake up to the prospect of having a conscious experience in a research computer.

This scenario is riddled with questions. What would initially be a collection of independent “consciousness folders” on research computers may one day become the one and only means of human existence. We could look at it as an evolutionary success, as a new paradigm where we confront another type of mortality and begin the same cycle again, as a way of achieving unity and connection with each

living human. Or, from a different perspective, this would create a collective consciousness and serve as a path to losing what was initially aimed to be preserved, the ego, instead reaching a point where everything currently known to us through our subjective experiences becomes nonsensical.

Important advances and discoveries are still to be made, both in neuroscience and technology, before we can unequivocally develop a protocol that would enable human consciousness to live forever in a computer simulation. Until then, we have to answer questions such as: “What, in fact, are we trying to achieve with this?”



# A deep dive: Cambridge Analytica

*Using mass surveillance, big data, and machine learning to control your mind.*

## TECH

### Hubert Kaluzny

Tech Writer

Cambridge Analytica have been successfully controlling the minds of thousands of people – if not hundreds of thousands – since 2013. Working for political parties for over 200 elections in the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as Argentina, the Czech Republic, Kenya, India, and Nigeria, they may have singlehandedly swung the outcome of two controversial knife-edge votes. In 2016 they acted in the U.S. Presidential Elections and likely the U.K. European Referendum – the full extent of their actions may never be known.

It all began on the 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2010, when Facebook announced Open Graph, a tool for 3<sup>rd</sup> party application developers allowing them to ask the user for permission to access their personal data; at the time this also included access to the personal data of all the friends of a user. As of 2017, the average number of ‘friends’ for every profile was 338 people (median at 200); given the number of people who directly accessed the app is anywhere from 185,000 to 300,000 we have an enormous amount of potentially affected people. Cambridge Analytica claim the number of people whose data was harvested was 30 million, whilst Facebook claim this number is 87 million. Whichever way you look at it, the sheer amount of data that could have been sourced surpasses the level of current known



CEO Mark Zuckerberg has been summoned before the parliament to defend Facebook's blunder // Flickr/Anthony Quintano

mass-surveillance techniques used by governments.

In 2013 Dr. Aleksandr Kogan, a research associate at the Department of Psychology of Cambridge University built a 3<sup>rd</sup>-party profiling application to use for his research. By 2014, Facebook had updated their terms and conditions which no longer permitted new 3<sup>rd</sup> party applications to harvest friends' data or be used for psychometric profiling. However this did not apply to the application that Kogan had built in the previous year. In early 2014 Kogan had been introduced to SCL Elections and in May of the same year formed the company Global Science Research (GSR) to create a data-licensing contract between itself and SCL Elections, an affiliate of Cambridge Analytica. The contract stipulated that the funding transferred to GSR was to be used “to further develop, add to, refine, and supplement

GS psychometric scoring algorithms, databases and scores” from which Kogan and his partner Joseph Chancellor could not profit directly from.

*The Guardian* published an exposé in December 2015 on the involvement of Cambridge Analytica in aiding Ted Cruz's presidential campaign with the use of Facebook user data. After this publication Facebook ceased their collaboration with Dr. Kogan and asked him to delete all the data acquired by GSR. Facebook and Dr. Kogan had a close relationship, with Facebook sharing aggregate user data to feed into GSR models. These models were used by GSR to match personalities with voter record data provided by SCL Elections to be able to target voters.

The contract between GSR and SCL Elections stated that the predictions made by this model were comparable to, if not more

accurate than, those made by close acquaintances of test groups. This claim, however, is unsubstantiated and there is no reason to believe that targeting on an individual basis was possible. This does not mean that group targeting was not possible with a sufficient prediction rate for it to be viable: even with a conservative 50% correct prediction outcome on a group size of a couple of hundred can be an important factor when some elections were won by a few hundred votes. Once Cambridge Analytica established their target groups, media content would be created, curated, and published based on the groups' personal interests and political beliefs; they would then would use marketing platforms with specific targeting tools, such as Facebook itself, to reach voters with the right material.

Something that might hit closer to home is with

a company called AggregateIQ, who were affiliated with the SCL group, the parent company of Cambridge Analytica. AggregateIQ was hired by the ‘Vote Leave’ campaign team called BeLeave, £625,000 was donated from the official Vote Leave campaign for the referendum, all of which was used to pay AIQ for their services. In total £3.5 million was paid to AIQ for their services by the different Vote Leave campaigns.

**“It will be extremely difficult to take back control of our data”**

It would be impossible to ever estimate how successful Cambridge Analytica, SCL Elections, and Global Science

Research were at converting masses of data into votes; however, these events show us some of the more dangerous effects of powerful computing technology we have developed. Social-media services like Facebook are wielding powerful currency in this new age, this currency being our personal data. With millions of people sharing data publicly with minimal privacy restrictions, it becomes increasingly profitable to record and store as much data as possible on as many people as possible. In a dystopian society it is easy to imagine governments going through all our data and controlling what we see on a massive scale. Legislation can at best control where our data is stored, who it is shared with, and what the data is used for, however it is slow to be written and implemented. It will be extremely difficult to take back control of our data.





'Hell is other people' // Johan Persson

## Joe Hill-Gibbins takes us on a tour of hell

*The National Theatre's production of Rodney King's bawdy meditation on isolation, **Absolute Hell**, has moments of magic, but they are few and far between in the bloated structure.*

### ARTS

#### ABSOLUTE HELL



**Where?** National Theatre

**When?** Until 16 June

**How Much?** From £20

**Fred Fyles**

*Arts Writer*

The National Theatre's production of *Absolute Hell*, Rodney King's jet-black dramedy set in Soho after the Second World War, begins by attempting to prove Jean-Paul Sartre's adage that 'hell is other people'. The entire cast – 28 people strong – line themselves up along the front of the Lyttelton Theatre's stage, barely managing to all fit on, before launching into an a capella rendition of Édith Piaf's 'La Vie en Rose', following which the

curtain rises on a salubrious, battered drinking den in the heart of London.

As the introduction suggests, the play is most certainly an ensemble piece, with characters' story arcs weaving and threading over each other, for better or worse. And the cast isn't the only jam-packed thing about it – the production clocks in at around three hours, with two breaks, and while director Joe Hill-Gibbins manages to make it seem shorter, it maintains a sense of bloat.

Hill-Gibbins' decision to keep things ticking along rather rapidly, making ample use of the staging to create a frenetic atmosphere, is a smart one, presumably done to make the stage seem a bit like a spinning top, liable to topple over at any second. However, what actually happens is the characters can come across as over-choreographed, the mania

coming and going but always somehow leaving enough space for the main action to play out.

Out of this fog of cigarette smoke and spilled drinks, certain stand-out characters emerge: the bar, 'La Vie en Rose', is run by Christine Foskett (Kate Fleetwood), who veers from abrasive to humble, blaring out drink orders one minute and baring her soul the next. She is joined by Hugh Marriner, a gay author who hasn't published any stories for years, and spends his nights getting drunk in La Vie en Rose, surrounded by fellow lost souls. They are supported by a varied coterie of grotesques and GIs – Liza Sadovy is wonderfully off-putting as 'The Treacle Queen', while Jonathan Slinger's sleazy film director Maurice Hussey displays a razor-slash of a smile as his lecherous hands roam.

At the best of times, the stage becomes like

a vast vision of hell, like something by Hieronymus Bosch, with the huge mirror to one side of the set reflecting back the action, slightly distorted and incredibly menacing. But these moments come too few and far between. There are several points where the chaos breaches through a fine veneer of artifice, and the play feels truly alive, like an Otto Dix painting – the scene at the end of the first act, where masked GIs pour into the bar is the most chilling example – but for the most part the action always feels somewhat constrained.

When *Absolute Hell* – initially called *The Pink Room* – was first performed in 1952, it all but sunk King's career, as critics lined up to discredit it as tawdry and sordid. It wasn't performed again for more than three decades, and in the interim relaxed censorship laws allowed King

to rewrite certain parts of it, making the references to sexuality much more overt. Unfortunately, in the interim, he did little to allow the characters to put on a good show.

The script essentially circles around the same points again and again. It's presumably done in order to highlight how crippled the characters are, trapped in their cycles of loneliness and misery, but it results in a severe and bitter lack of development, frustrating the audience. We may understand why the character keep returning to La Vie en Rose again and again, but that doesn't mean we want to stay there any longer than is necessary.

For a play that tests the audience's endurance to succeed, it needs to be able to capture their attention throughout. *Absolute Hell* is epic in size, but not, unfortunately, in scope. While the themes it throws up are precinct –

and all the more relevant today, loneliness being an eternally-modern malaise – and the casting generally impressive, King seems to be rehashing the same points over and over again. Part of the play's nature is in its bloated structure, but one can't help but wish Hill-Gibbins had taken a bit of a knife to the production, leaving its most affecting moments to gape open, raw and bloody.

The stage is stalked, during the majority of the play, by a sex worker walking the streets. Always looking straight ahead of her, with a dead-eyed stare, she jangles her keys in an attempt to drum up trade, prowling on the edge of the action. She looks sinister, and menacing, and – above all – tired. By the time the curtain comes down, I can sympathise.



## Fashioned from Nature, but at what cost?

The V&A's exhibition latest explores the history of fashion, from its environmental cost to sustainable eco-fashion today.

## ARTS

## FASHIONED FROM NATURE



Where? V&A  
When? Until 27 Jan 2019  
How Much? £10 students

Helen Money-Kyrle  
Arts Writer

Fashion is unnatural – and distinctly human. Whether you pay much attention to it or not, the clothes that you wear express something about your individuality and, in turn, each of us have a personal and subjective response to fashion.

The V&A's *Fashioned from Nature* exhibition makes you aware of this personal response. The exhibition displays the natural with the unnatural, with a bizarre juxtaposition of real animal bones and furs next to dresses designed to turn women into the living embod-

**“The exhibition displays the natural with the unnatural in a bizarre juxtaposition”**

iment of flowers. The atmosphere feels slightly jarring, with recordings of birdsong mixed with a mechanical clacking of looms and sewing machines.

And yet the designs are beautiful, celebrating nature through floral

prints and exotic natural materials, meeting our aesthetic desire for something new. Through its display of fashion from the 1600s next to natural history specimens and new innovative fabrics, the exhibition asks us to look frankly at the past and make up our own minds on whether or not we can design a more sustainable future for the industry.

For all the beauty of the clothing and drawings, the exhibition leaves you feeling uncomfortable as you read about the damage the industry has had on the environment. The mechanisation of cloth production in the 1700s was one of the main drivers of the industrial revolution; the industry boomed as the population of Britain tripled during the following century.

More and more coal was used to fuel the high volume of production, polluting the air and water. Our desire for the exotic led to the poaching of exotic animals for their furs, hides, and feathers. Displayed, we see female corsets and dresses stiffened with baleen, or whalebone, and hear about how this trend led to the severe over-hunting of whales.

And yet, despite all of the damage, we see how humans have been inspired by nature; the use of fur and feathers in fashion was paired with a significant societal interest in natural history and botany, demonstrated by a multitude of floral designs, and detailed drawings from books published in the same era.

As the exhibition transports us into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we see

how fashion adapted to accommodate a desire for change, providing a medium through which we could reflect our social concerns.

By the 80s a number of popular designers were starting to use fashion as a way of raising awareness to the damage humans are doing to the planet. T-shirts started carrying slogans, encouraging people to think and act on topics such as nuclear weapons, famine, and the environment. Alexander McQueen used prominent images of nature to make us consider our attitudes towards the environment and Stella McCartney aimed to combine great design with sustainable materials. We are brought into an era of ‘eco-fashion’ where consumers are now encouraged to ask, ‘how are my clothes made?’ and ‘who made them?’.

**“Fashion adapted to accommodate a desire for change, providing a medium for reflecting social concerns”**

Having seen how fashion can be used to spread ideas, we are shown how designers have catalysed innovations which are making textiles and manufacturing processes increasingly environmentally friendly. We see the stunning Calvin Klein



Clothed in nature // Vee Speers

dress worn by Emma Watson to the Met Gala in 2016 which was made completely of recycled plastic bottles. Eco-hybrid designs, cellulose couture, modern leather grown from mycelium, a dress grown from roots. You can hear Vivienne Westwood's vision of moving towards a sustainable fashion future come to life. Her advice: “buy less, choose well, make it last”.

This thought-provoking exhibition gives a frank and, ironically, unattractive history of fashion, but it also highlights the role it has played and still plays in spreading ideas and

shaping culture. When asked whether we can create a more sustainable

**“This exhibition gives a frank and, ironically, unattractive history of fashion”**

fashion industry, I find myself optimistic.

Though fashion may

seem fickle, if we look back over the last century we can find a number of constants: a love of detail, high quality materials, high standard of workmanship, and a search for something new. As ‘conscious’ clothing becomes increasingly fashionable, it will become ever more available, as high street brands adopt and adapt to the latest innovative techniques and textiles.

But even if you can be convinced that we are headed towards a greener future, I have to ask, are you prepared to forgive fashion for its damaging past? I'll let you decide.

## The photographer as painter, sculptor, artist

Tate Modern's *Shape of Light* exhibition is a great history lesson in abstract photography, but neglects contemporary post-1970s technology and artwork.

## ARTS

## SHAPE OF LIGHT



Where? Tate Modern  
When? Until 14 Oct 2018  
How Much? From £5 (16-25 Tate Collective)

Fred Fyles  
Arts Writer

From the dawn of the age of the camera, photography as an artistic medium has been consistently set apart from the tradition of fine art. Henry Fox Talbot, one of the fathers of the photographic process, wrote in the mid-19th century that photographic plates “are impressed by the agency of Light alone, without any aid whatever from the artist's pencil.” Here was a medium that could represent the world around us as it really is, and whose starting point is not the intangible artistic imagination, but the concrete physical reality of light. In a turn of phrase characteristic of the new possibilities photography posed, he called photos “the sun-pictures themselves.”

It is against this dichotomy, which places photography as a counterpoint to fine art, that the curators of the Tate Modern's latest exhibition rail. Set out as a ‘manifesto exhibition’, *Shape of Light* aims to track a century of abstract photography, and – in the process – break down distinctions, placing the photographer on an equal level with the sculptor or painter. They already have, as their starting point, a model for how to go about doing this: 291,

the legendary art gallery managed by Alfred Stieglitz, aimed to place photography on the same level as more accepted art forms, proving it could be a medium just as artistically fecund as oils or marble. As viewers progress through the exhibition, we can see how artists attempt to build up the essence of abstraction through the developing language of photography – a language that is still developing today.

The pioneers of the practice of abstract photography are present, as you would expect: Man Ray, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Paul Strand. In Man Ray's case, the curators have managed to secure a series of his ‘Unconcerned Photographs’, taken by swinging a polaroid camera around, leaving it to chance what would be in the viewfinder's range when the shutter closed. The work acts as a playful corrective to the output of more formal photographers, reminding us that abstract photography can be just as much about joy as about technique.

By showing photos alongside sculpture and paintings, the curators draw our attention to how photographic technique developed alongside artistic movements, and – in certain cases – preempted them. Thus Alvin Langdon Coburn's ‘Vortographs’, a term coined by Ezra Pound, hang alongside Vorticist work by Wyndham Lewis – one black and white, the other in eye-popping colour, both are linked through their dizzying visuals. In other rooms we've got Bridget Riley's op art alongside

Gottfried Jäger's mathematics-inspired photography; Moholy-Nagy's structured photographic compositions acting as a counterpoint to Theo van Doesburg's paintings; the automatism of Nathan Lerner's abstractions hung next to one of Pollock's paint-splattered canvases.

The shadow of the pioneers of the early-20th Century – namely those who emerged from the Bauhaus, and the American photographers they inspired – hangs heavy over the exhibition, but the curators do well to remind us how international these working practices were.

A collection of images from Latin America, featuring everyday items in repetitious close-up, are arrestingly beautiful, while Chinese amateur Luo Bonian's works from the 1930s use cut-up techniques to create swirling sepia-toned kaleidoscopes of imagery. Kansuke Yamamoto's 1956 sculpture ‘The Thrilling Game Related to Photography’ serves as an emblem for the exhibition as a whole: a small box containing an photograph of glass shards, pierced with the shards themselves, it breaks down our separate conception of ‘sculpture’, ‘art’, and ‘photography’ into a single entity, whilst also retaining a sharp sense of playfulness. Works like these, little seen within the mainstream photographic canon, are the highlights of the show.

Frustratingly for an exhibition that promises to cover a century of the artform it insists on focusing on the history of abstract photography pre-1970, at the exclusion of more recent works and



Unconcerned Photograph (1959) – playful, serendipitous shots // Man Ray

without consideration to the impact of new technologies on the ability of artists to create their vision.

A single room at the end of exhibition affords us the chance to move into the world of digital photography. Paul Graham's highly-magnified scans of reels of film reveal the crystals and pigments which make up photographic technology, arranged into beautifully dynamic patterns that are given evocative names like “End of an Age”. Elsewhere, Antony

Cairns' frenetic photographs of bustling cities have been transferred onto eReader screens, whose immobility – detached from their casing, they hang inert – contrasts with the high-energy scenes portrayed, and Thomas Ruff has done away with the photographic process all together, creating a ‘digital darkroom’ in a marriage of art and automation.

Writing in the late 1970s, Susan Sontag spoke of how American photography was becoming defined by a

reaction against ‘Westonism’ – “that is, against contemplative photography, photography considered as an independent visual exploration of the world.” Much has happened since that time, and yet – by not showing us how abstract photography has moved on since the 1970s – *Shape of Light* merely cements a narrative that was never in question. As a history lesson, it is exceptional, but as an exhibition it leaves much to be desired.



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# BOOKS

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## *The Devil's Dance* – dancing on the border between imagination and reality

*Uzbek exile novelist Hamid Ismailov's novel draws from rich Central Asian culture and poetic tradition, in an exploration of what it means to be a writer.*



### BOOKS

**Fred Fyles**  
Books Writer

The death of Islam Karimov, the dictatorial leader of Uzbekistan, nearly two years ago, dropped the country into a quagmire of uncertainty. The leader, who had held power for 27 years, was widely criticised for his use of torture, crackdown on press freedoms, and a 2005 massacre in which around 400 protesters were killed. In a turn of events that seems right out of a postmodern satire, the news of his ill-health was announced on his daughter's Instagram account.

Out of this chaos and turmoil, the Uzbek novelist Hamid Ismailov, who was forced to flee Uzbekistan in 1992 for Britain, had his first Uzbek-language novel published in the Central Asian nation in 25. Literature, like life, finds a way.

The novel that was published, *The Devil's Dance*, now finds its way into English-readers hands, thanks to a translation from Donald Rayfield, printed by publishers Tilted Axis. Rayfield, working closely with Ismailov and fellow

translator John Farndon, has produced a moving translation that flows beautifully, while retaining a number of stylistic and structural elements that could make the translation difficult.

*The Devil's Dance* reads something like a cross between classical Central Asian poetry and a postmodern deconstruction of the function of the novel. The story primarily centres around the life of Abdulla Qodiriy, perhaps the most popular Uzbek novelist of the 20th century, although little-known in the West. Opening with Qodiriy tending to his garden, suffused with the idea for a novel that “would be a terrific story, surpassing both *Past Days* and *The Scorpion from the Altar*”, he is quickly arrested by the Soviet secret police, as part of Stalin's Great Purge. Ismailov immediately plunges us into a world of political prisoners and jail cells, intrigue and horror.

Within this framework, Ismailov takes us inside the mind of Qodiriy as he struggles to conceive of the uncompleted novel – *Emir Umar's Slave Girl* – and try and finish it within the cold walls of his cell. This secondary novel, set during the ‘Great Game’ of the 19th century, in which English and Russian spies wormed their way into the royal courts of Central Asia, centres around Oyxon – a poet and queen, passed from ruler to ruler, trapped within the confines of palaces. It's a more palatial setting than Qodiriy's, but it's still a prison.



Hamid Ismailov // *Index on Censorship*

Ismailov plunges us deep into a world of double-crossing, poetry-spouting royalty, introducing a retinue of historical figures, such as Nasrullah, the ruler of Bukhara, Emir Umar, the leader of Kokland, and Nodira, his beautiful wife, and one of the most acclaimed Uzbek poets of the age.

**“It is a novel that celebrates the rich history of Central Asian culture – one political repression threatened to erase”**

Qodiriy develops a deep identification with Oyxon, whose predicament resembles his own:

“only when he know Oyxon's life from beginning to end would he be able to bring his own life to its conclusion”, Ismailov writes. Qodiriy implores God to allow him out “safe and sound; then he would finish his tale of Oyxon and follow it up with a new, more hard-nosed novel, set in modern times.” He never makes it out, instead being executed in the October following his arrest. The novel he is constructing in his head during his prison sentence is lost, and it is up to Ismailov to reconstruct it for us.

The novel, with its foundations deeply set in Central Asian literature and poetry, mines both *One Thousand and One Nights*, and the lyrical poetry of the 19th century as inspiration. And yet unlike Scheherazade, who needs to keep on telling stories to secure her safety, Qodiriy is acutely aware of the limitation time has on his imagination: “*A Thousand and One Nights*

goes on and on only in fairy tales”, his jailers tell him, “We can put a stop to this right now.”

It is this undercurrent of ever-present danger that drives him in a quest for survival, as he attempts to hold on until he can complete the novel. In Ismailov's exploration of the nature of literature, he highlights the difference between the conception and completion of a novel, as well as the reasons behind the drive to create art. The novel is “an enquiry into a human being's spirit, his identity, in much the same way as a prison interrogation,” a jailer informs Qodiriy, highlighting the power and violence of writing.

For Ismailov's Qodiriy, as well as Qodiriy's Nodira and Oyxon, writing has an intoxicating power over their own lives, and the lives of others. Qodiriy is “aware of the effect that the ‘made-up’ could have on real life”, and the threat that his writing will “vanish without a

trace” hangs over him. As one aphorism quoted in the book goes: “Saying ‘halva’ once doesn't bring a sweet taste to your mouth, but after a hundred times, your teeth will start sticking together”.

Interspersed with poetry translations from Farndon, *The Devil's Dance* is a novel that celebrates the rich history of Central Asian culture – a culture that political repression threatened to erase. From descriptions of Uzbek nature and food – the rice dish plov is frequently mentioned – to celebration of the Uzbek language, Ismailov's novel is a vital introduction to a world I'd never encountered before. While it can be a bit heavy going for readers like me, with no exposure to Central Asian culture, and many of the historical references flew straight over my head, it remains a beautiful and nuanced exploration of what it means to be a writer.



## MUSIC

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## Grid of Points – A ambient meditation on silence and absence

Grouper's latest album, recorded in the middle of a cold snap, sees them moving more towards piano and vocals, in a guarded display of intimacy.



## MUSIC

## GRID OF POINTS



**Artist:** Grouper. **Label:** Kranky. **Top Tracks:** Breathing, Parking Lot. **For Fans Of:** Julianna Barwick, William Basinski, Tim Hecker. *22 minutes*

## Fred Fyles

Editor-in-Chief

Liz Harris, the woman behind the ambient outfit Grouper, whose latest release *Grid of Points* dropped last week, lives in Astoria. It's a small town located on the very northernmost edge of Oregon, on a strip of land that abuts the Columbia river as it bleeds into the wide Pacific. To look at images of Astoria is to look at a town confronted by the ocean; the landscape slopes down to the bay, from which a solid steel bridge spans the dual horizontals of sky and

water.

This openness, this sense of expanse, or horizontality, bleeds into Grouper's musical output, which has always explored a liminal space between intimacy and distance. It sounds like secrets whispered into a void, which the listener is privileged to hear. She has previously spoken about how releasing an album was, to her, like sinking an object into a lake, unseen, before quietly stealing away. As such, listening to Grouper always feels like a privilege, and – sometimes – like a transgression.

*Grid of Points* is a concise work – lasting only 22 minutes in total – but continues the trajectory set out by her earlier, longer releases. Since her breakout album, *Dragging a Dead Deer up a Hill*, Grouper has gradually shifted away from reverb-loaded guitars and synths, which stretched like mist along an empty field; instead, she has

begun using a more precise collage of piano, vocals, and musique concrete – it gives a greater sense of immediacy, and hints at the person behind the project. The seven songs on *Group of Points* form a companion piece to her 2014 acclaimed album *Ruins*, but remain a point of departure.

Opening track, 'The Races', which comes in at under a minute, acts like a signal of intent for Grouper, setting the tone for the rest of the album. Multi-layered vocal tracks create a choral blast of sound, reminiscent of work by fellow ambient musician Julianna Barwick. The remainder of the songs, built around pianos, place Grouper's vocals front and centre, in hazy pieces that, though experimental, remain open and accessible. Songs like 'Blouse', built around slowly progressing chords which slowly work their way towards the sublime, see Grouper's vocals bleeding over the top of a piano base. 'Parking Lot' similarly sees Grouper echoing alongside ghostly pianos.

*Grid of Points* is an album built around negative space; silence pervades the songs, which are like fine bolts of lace, defined by absence. In tracks like 'Birthday Song', the piano and vocals simply fade away, a slight pause demarcating phrases. In 'Driving', meanwhile, which follows on from the gradual dimming of 'Parking Lot', this silence is broken by an unsteady intake of breath, as if Grouper is steeling herself

for a performance.

Harris has described her role in Grouper as akin to a caretaker. In an interview with *Pitchfork*, she put it: "this music is a room that I take care of, I help decide what is accepted. Here distortion and mistakes, silence, deep sadness, and misunderstanding, they all have a place." *Grid of Points* is an album that is humanistic, generous, and

uplifting.

The recordings, which were conducted in 2014 in northern Wyoming, were broken off after Grouper fell ill; the music reflects the cold snap that was occurring outside at the time, as well as the fever that forced her to stop recordings. Nevertheless, the album, although short, is a whole body of work. In the last song, 'Breathing', the vocals and piano

are cut across by a field recording of a coal train thundering by. But rather than simply using it as a punctum to close the album, Grouper allows it to linger for its entirety; as the seconds, then minutes, pass by, the listener appreciates small details, which – like much of Grouper's work – linger long after the sound has faded away

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## MUSIC

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## American Dream: *Dirty Computer* is the truth Janelle Monáe no longer wants to hide

Monáe steps out of Cindy Mayweather's shadow in her most powerful album yet.

## MUSIC

## DIRTY COMPUTER



**Artist:** Janelle Monáe. **Label:** Wondaland. **Top Tracks:** Pynk, Django Jane, Crazy Classic Life. **For Fans Of:** Solange, Prince. *49 minutes*

## Indira Mallik

Arts Editor

Janelle Monáe began her career by adopting an android alter-ego, Cindy Mayweather. In singing about oppression, forbidden love, and the struggle to be free in Cindy's guise, she joined the tradition of artists like Ann Leckie, who see stories about Artificial Intelligence to be more than science fiction fantasy divorced from the world around us, but rather as metaphors for the lives of people who are marginalised and do not fit the mould of the rich,



The yonic look is so in next season // YouTube

cis, straight, white, and male. Cindy, for Monáe, was a way of speaking out whilst keeping her listeners at an arm's length – we were able to know about Monáe's feminism, her politics, but not about her true passions.

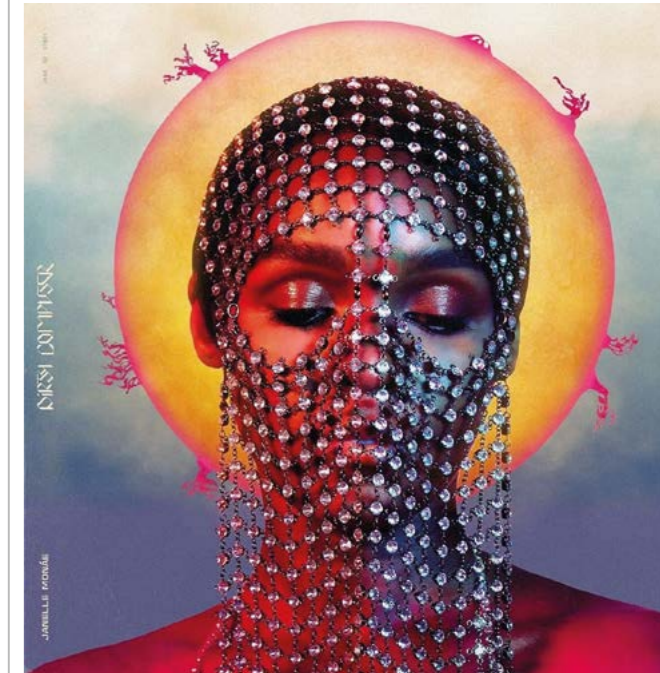
In the five years since the release of her last album, *The Electric Lady*, Monáe has appeared in the Oscar winning *Moonlight*, about a young black gay boy growing up in Florida, and in *Hidden Figures*, where she played the first black woman in America to gain a degree from a white college during the Jim Crow era. In hindsight, these roles seem like the prelude to *Dirty Computer*, an album that, at its heart, wants to be a touchstone for people who do not easily get representation in mainstream culture. With a title that hints at the sexy, subversive, and (emotionally) compromised songs that lie within, this album is Monáe's most

confessional. Finally, we see Monáe step out of Cindy's shadow and share her unfiltered self.

"The transformation of silence into language" wrote Audre Lorde "is an act of self-revelation". Listening to *Dirty Computer* is the act then of witnessing Monáe finding her truest voice after so many years of silence. We get the sense that she has felt burdened by her evasion: "I don't want to live on my knees/I just want to tell the truth" she declares in 'Crazy Classic Life', a smooth R&B track that is louche and hedonistic on the surface, but barbed with emotional punch. It isn't hard to read between the lines to figure out what the truth that has been haunting Monáe is: questions about her sexuality have followed her since her debut album. 'Pynk', a collaboration with Grimes, appears half way through *Dirty Computer* to lay the rumours to rest. It is a blissed-out, airy,

funk celebration of the female gaze and sapphic desire, and about as explicit as you could ask for – in a fun, erotic, and somehow rather touching run of lyrics, Monáe details all things pink: tongues and vaginas, yes, but also eyelids, brains, hearts. The accompanying video underscores the queer vibes: in several scenes Monáe sports a pair of gloriously unsubtle vulva trousers with Solange-like insouciance as maybe-girlfriend Tessa Thompson pokes her head between the singer's legs. "Pink", Monáe concludes, "is the truth you can't hide."

The exuberance of 'Pynk' is reflected in the afro-beats stylings of 'I Got the Juice', a track featuring Pharell, the synth heavy 'Make Me Feel' which is suffused with Prince's influence, and 'I Like That', an ode to self love and resilience. In other places, we see Monáe the activist take



centre stage: in 'Screwed', a sex-drenched pop number featuring Zoë Kravitz, Monáe offers commentary on sex, power, and inequalities. The nihilism of 'Screwed' shows hints of an anger that is refined and amplified in the magnificent 'Django Jane', a swaggering, braggadocious rap distillation of her speech at the Women's March in 2017. Referencing everything from Pussy Riot to Shonda Rhimes, the feminist polemic ends with the fantastically arch line "let the vagina have a monologue".

Yet throughout, Monáe circles back to truth-telling – its liberations and the dangers that allowing yourself to be visible bring. In the opening bars of 'Don't Judge Me' Monáe's voice is gravelly, almost hoarse; raw in a way that is entirely disarming. "Even though you say that you love me/ Is it me or do you love my disguise?" she asks us. Organ refrains weave into the psychedelic-funk

cadences of the following track, 'So Afraid', hinting perhaps to Monáe's religious upbringing and struggles to reconcile her faith with her sexuality.

That the album's bright harmonies, purposeful defiance, and joyful, exhilarating guitar riffs have this undercurrent of melancholy makes *Dirty Computer* perhaps the most compelling and true representation of a coming out experience. Monáe's talent and bold ambition has always set her apart, her newest album reveals a side of her heretofore unseen. Rather than the other-worldly Cindy who kept the world at bay, this is a woman who, despite her fears, has unflinchingly embraced her truth, dared to be visible as a black, queer woman – a combination that the world doesn't always welcome. *Dirty Computer* is Monáe at her most human, most vulnerable, and most powerful; it cements her as one of music's true icons.



## MUSIC

music.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## A wrong, mostly short history of punk rock, part III

*Hank finally got his shit together sufficiently to write the third and final installment of Felix Music's history of the nittiest, grittiest genre that's ever graced a recording booth. Unfortunately, he still can't write consistent titles.*

## MUSIC

## Henry Eshbaugh

Music Editor

To all of my readers waiting for this a month ago – sorry, the end of term got messy, and I never finished the article. Not that you (as in, my readers) exist, I just thought I'd take the opportunity to flatter myself. Now, on to history.

Despite all the over-eager commenters throughout the years claiming that 'punk is dead,' it never went away. To this day, you can find thriving scenes from the gutters of Jakarta to here in central London. The basic tenets – the disrespect for established customs, the aggression and frenetic energy, and the do-it-yourself ethic – have all inextricably manifested themselves in contemporary music.

But such abstract concepts associated with punk rock, nowadays, are by-and-large divorced from the Punk Rock Sound of old. For example: drumlines. Historically, punk's always preferred minimal complexity, maximal energy; hit the snare a square four times per bar and be done with it. When there were variations, they were distilled and rehashed; for example, D-beat (named after the band Discharge) is a relatively tricky fill for the untrained drummer, but they play the same fill at the same tempo for albums at a time. That subgenre, by the way, is predictably called D-beat.

Over such a long time, though, these sorts of approaches have

faded away; the no-rules approach holds for punk rock itself ultimately, and it is this very trait that allows the punk rock ethos to recycle itself and stay relevant across decades. Punk's not dead, it's just in hiding.

This is the point at which modern punk diverges, in terms of composition, timbral palette, thematic approach, and so on; punk lives on, as a set of ideals, versus a particular music scene.

The landscape of modern punk is quite scattered. Many of the old giants are still around; you can still go see shows for Bad Religion, NOFX, The Descendents, Bad Brains, and so on. Quite a few, naturally, have broken up; sometimes, though, they reformed(ish). For example, Op Ivy called it quits before their first album even dropped, but Tim Armstrong and Matt Freeman then formed Rancid in '91, and they're still going. And Streetlight Manifesto and Propagandhi are still sticking out great stuff (if you can call the pace Streetlight works at "active").

Then there's pop punk, a (some would call unfortunate) genre blending emo, pop, and something approximating a punk rock sound. There are too many bands to count; some big ones are Rise Against, Yellowcard, Search the City, and so on. The largest acts are undoubtedly Paramore, Fall Out Boy, and Green Day. They're labeled as "punk" because many emerged from the punk scene – Green Day was big in the 80s and 90s, and their first major-label effort *Dookie* is a classic album. Likewise, Pete Wentz of



Reverb's one hell of a drug. Look what it drives people to. Quit dream-pop before it's too late. // Andrew Jackson Jihad

Fall Out Boy got his start in Racetractor, playing the Chicago scene while it thrived (where he often shared the stage with Tim from Rise Against). It's a shame how they disintegrated – now they make major-label electro-pop and sound blander than ever.

There are fusion genres, too. Bands like Slowdive and Godspeed You! Black Emperor inherited quite a bit from the DIY ethic, but turn the tempo down waaaay low; the latter lives in a commune in Quebec, where they have their studio. Hip-hop caught a major wave as well, with artists like Danny Brown and Death Grips being prime examples.

Folk-punk was kick-started by the Violent Femmes; the genre has snowballed in modern times. Recent successes include Andrew Jackson Jihad, Days'n'Daze, Johnny Hobo and the Freight Trains, and

Jeffrey Lewis. The fusion is marked by acoustic, eclectic instrumentation; usually horns, a double bass, and an acoustic guitar that sounds like someone beat the shit out of it before they picked it up and started strumming as fast and hard as they could.

**"Punk rock stands as testament to the full palette of human emotion."**

Grindcore is a joke genre. The verses are usually incomprehensible noise. Anal Cunt comes to mind – with songs like 'I Went Back in Time and Voted For Hitler' and 'I Lit Your Baby On Fire' counting among their least offensive songs. The Gaslight Anthem

have sought to recreate Springsteen. It's a whole new generation of Americana, and it sounds fantastic; *The '59 Sound* and *Handwritten* are absolute essentials.

Bands have also followed in Joy Division and New Order's footsteps; Protomartyr comes to mind as an example of what I might call Rust Belt wheeze-punk, with songs that sound like the urban decay they were born in.

Queercore and Riot Grrrl are genres that came out of the LGBTQ+ and feminist movements; in the former, there are bands like the Violent Femmes and Pansy Division, while the latter gave birth to the headline-grabbing Pussy Riot – famously jailed for protesting Putin. I should note here that while punk has a reputation for machismo, the space is quite open and accepting; most punks at shows have fairly far-left political views. It's really funny

watching some dude on stage scream about how their shows should be a safe space – not to discourage the moshers, just to make sure individuals who belong to minority groups feel welcome.

And that, at the end of the day, is what defines punk rock for me. It's not just about the music – it's about getting up on stage, making as much noise as possible, and building a community rooted in that special kind of catharsis that belongs uniquely and totally to punk rock.

And that's the allure; the camaraderie, the intensity, the crowdsurfing and moshing – it all builds up to something much greater than the sum of its parts, a vibrant and vivacious mish-mash that stands as testament to individuality and community, to good times and bad, to the full palette of human emotion.

Few genres have made such an impression on me. Punk rock will always have a place in my heart.



# TELEVISION

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## Felix recommends the perfect TV for exam season

We give you our top picks for what to watch when you're taking a 'quick' study break in Central Library.

### TV

**Fred Fyles**  
Editor-in-Chief

You know the feeling. You're approaching your eighth solid hour in Central Library, trying to do something that comes remotely close to revision, but can feel your concentration dwindling away with each passing moment. It's time for a break, but what to do? The lining of your stomach can't handle another cup of library coffee, your Facebook feed is full of people you don't really like talking about how much work they're doing, and you've already swiped through everyone in a five-mile radius on Tinder.

What about a quick episode of a TV show? You open up Netflix, and cast your eye around for the latest release. Maybe some comedy? Or what about that independent British drama that's been getting a lot of good reviews in the press? Oh, and your friend recommended checking out that

sitcom about millennials living in New York City, he said it's different from all the other ones that have come before...

Before you know it, two hours have passed by, and you end up just watching another episode of *The Big Bang Theory*, as you slowly fill with self-loathing.

Never fear. *Felix TV* is here to help. Here are a few of our favourite shows to get you through the revision period, guaranteed to provide a welcome break from fluid mechanics, and earn you some dirty looks for hogging up a precious seat in the computer lab.

### **Bojack Horseman**

Created by Raphael Bob-Waksberg, and boasting a stellar cast – Will Arnett, Amy Sedaris, and Alison Brie, among others – as well as cameos from everyone from Daniel Radcliffe to Paul McCartney, *Bojack Horseman* is a darkly satirical take on the Hollywood industry, which also addresses heavy-hitting issues related to mental health, failure, and isola-

tion. Bojack, a washed-up star of a 1990s sitcom, spends his days drinking heavily, and pushing away everybody who cares for him as his self-hatred deepens.

Those he alienates include his agent Princess Carolyn – a magnificent Amy Sedaris in a career-best performance – who puts on a bright attitude to cover up what's lacking in her personal life; and Diane Nguyen (Alison Brie), a ghostwriter with ideals and intellect, trapped in a world of showbiz and a mismatched marriage.

While the premise might sound disillusioning, the script keeps things engaging, shot through with a morbid wit and a penchant for wordplay. Clocking in at 25 minutes each, the episodes deal with sensitive subject matter in a clear and emancipatory manner. Besides, after watching a couple of episodes, your life might not seem quite so bad.

Available on Netflix

### **Midnight Diner: Tokyo Stories**



When the NSS keep ringing your mobile // Netflix

Based on a manga series, *Midnight Diner: Tokyo Stories* is one of a number of foreign series purchased by Netflix as part of its all-consuming expansion. While Netflix originals like *The Crown* or *House of Cards* may be known for their dramatic plots and snappy dialogue, what makes *Midnight Diner* so appealing is simply how little actually happens each episode.

The show, as the name would suggest, revolves around a diner in Shinjuku, which is exclusively open during the night, fuelling the inhabitants of this 24-hour city. Operated by a single man – known as 'The Master' – the diner will make whatever the clientele request, provided the ingredients are available. Each episode features a single dish, which serves as an introduction to the problems or challenges facing individual patrons – whether that's pickled plums reminding a man of his deceased mother, or rice omelettes exposing the cultural tensions between Japan and Korea.

There are no denoue-

ments, or dramatic overarching story arcs. Instead, each episode unfurls at its own slow pace, offering a nuanced and multi-layered insight into the diner's patrons. It's a truly humanist piece of television, one that simply asks you to allow yourself to be carried along with it.

Available on Netflix

### **RuPaul's Drag Race**

Currently in its tenth season, *RuPaul's Drag Race* has gone from a tiny competition with a shoestring budget, to a global empire, and one of the most exciting reality television shows currently being broadcast.

For the uninitiated, the show pits a group of drag queens against each other through a series of challenges, designed to test their 'Charisma, Uniqueness, Nerve, and Talent'. Each week the contestants need to act, dance, and sew their asses off, watched over by legendary drag queen RuPaul, before the two bottom contestants go head to head in a lip sync battle. The queen who is left at the end of the

competition is crowned 'America's Next Drag Superstar'.

Out of this premise, the show has generated over 100 episodes of twists and turns, and become a cultural touchstone for a new generation of TV, cropping up everywhere from *SNL* to the derivative *Lip Sync Battle*.

What the show does so well – and what makes it excellent revision-break material – is to offer complete escapism from everyday life. It takes the viewer to a world of artifice and heightened reality, while always retaining a punchy wit that pokes fun at the entire notion of reality television. With episodes clocking in at 45-60 minutes each, this provides a bit more of a substantial break, but leaves you inspired by all the talent on display on the screen.

Available on Netflix

### **Another Vine Compilation**

Ok, go on. We won't judge.

Available on YouTube



Midnight Diner is a humanistic, joyful drama // Netflix



# Your Union events

Friday 4 May



**iPOP**  
Friday  
4 May  
20:00-02:00  
Metric and  
FiveSixEight  
Free before 20:00  
£2.50 after  
£1.50 Facebook guestlist  
imperialcollegeunion.org/whats-on



**h** GSU  
**PGI FRIDAY**  
EVERY FRIDAY  
in the h-bar  
16:00 - 23:00  
FREE ENTRY  
Take a well-deserved break from the research and lab-work to spend the night relaxing with friends at the h-bar! Get two delicious cocktails for £7.20 from our bespoke cocktail bar and enjoy the laid back vibe!  
TWO SELECTED COCKTAILS FOR £7.20  
TWO BOUTIQUE BEERS FOR £6.50  
SIX SELECTED SHOTS FOR £14.00  
imperialcollegeunion.org/whats-on



## COCKTAIL NIGHT

Choose from our range of classic, modern and signature cocktails  
£4.50 each or 2 for £7.60

Every Friday from 17:30

imperialcollegeunion.org/food-drink



## Coming up in our bars



### Super Quiz

Every Tuesday  
20:00 - 22:00

### Cocktail Night

Every Tuesday  
18:00 - 23:00

### iPOP

Friday 4 May  
20:00 - 02:00

Find us on Facebook!

fb.com/beitbars



### Cocktail Club

Every Tuesday  
19:30 - 23:00

### Pub Quiz

Every Thursday  
19:30 - 23:00

### PGI Friday

Every Friday  
16:00 - 23:00

Find us on Facebook!

fb.com/hbarpub



### Free Pool

Every Day  
17:00-23:00

### Pub Quiz

Every Tuesday  
18:30-23:00

### Sports Night

Every Wednesday  
18:00 onwards

### Cocktail Night

Every Friday  
17:30 onwards

Find us on Facebook!

fb.com/reynoldsbarcx

Get exclusive offers, discounts and more on our bars' Facebook pages.

imperialcollegeunion.org/whats-on





# FOOD

food.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## Seven things I learnt about Italian food from my trip to Rome

*Italian food is not just pizza and pasta. Food Editor Alice Davage learnt more about the celebrated cuisine during her Easter travels and wants to tell you all about it. Lucky you.*

### FOOD

**Alice Davage**  
Food Editor

Let's face it, one of the main reasons why people visit Italy is for the food. Yes, there is also bucket loads of history to gaze at in awe and the sunshine is a nice change from the UK, but really, the food is the main event. When I say "Italian food," what comes into your mind? Pizza and pasta? Maybe gelato? While visiting a friend on her Erasmus year abroad in Rome, I endeavoured to scratch beneath the surface of the average pizza crust and find out a bit more about the local cuisine and how the locals treat their food. Read on to find out what I learnt. Spoilers: it's not just about the carbs; although, they are mentioned a lot.

#### 1. Whipped cream on ice cream works

This is not unheard of



in Britain, where elaborate sundaes and banana splits are often garnished with whipped cream. But, to my surprise, it was standard for ice cream parlours to offer a dollop of whipped

cream on top of scoops of gelato in Rome. Cream on cream - too much? British people mix custard with ice cream after all, which is a much quirkier combination. Why don't we add whipped cream here? The next London Instagram craze, anyone?

#### 2. Fondant chocolate in ice cream is magic

While we are on the topic of gelato, I tried

**"Rich fondant white chocolate... balanced by plenty of sharp raspberry sauce"**

some that was unlike any version of ice-cream I have ever had before. The gelateria *Blue Ice*, located adjacent to the Fontana di Trevi (Trevi Fountain), offers a rather indulgent white chocolate and raspberry flavour. However, the white chocolate component was less like traditional gelato and more like the fondant white chocolate you get in puddings. The rich fondant white chocolate could've been too sickly sweet, but was balanced off by plenty of sharp raspberry sauce running through the gelato. There was far more raspberry than the often pathetic amount found in the average raspberry ripple you find in tubs in UK

freezer sections.

#### 3. Truffle is multi-functional

Imagine this: a beautiful platter laden with a selection of cheeses, hams, olives and bread covered in poppy seeds in a little red basket on the side. One mystery cheese sticks out. Originally, I think the mystery ingredient looks like a cross between olives and mushrooms. After tasting it I decided it was neither and looked quizzically at the friend sitting across me. She saw my confused face and explained that it was



Cornetti // Flickr/Dr. Wendy Longo

probably truffle. Apparently, truffle is a common ingredient in Rome, often added to pizza with ham, pasta, and oil.

#### 4. Cornetti look like croissants (but don't be fooled)

At first glance a cornetto (not the ice cream) looks



Can you spot the truffle cheese? (bottom left) // Alice Davage

to all intents and purposes like an ordinary croissant. But delve deeper into the pastry and you will find an unexpected texture. Instead of the flaky buttery soft consistency typical of a croissant, the inside of a cornetto resembles bread, but is sweet. Soft, yes, but structured. Perfect for spreading your favourite breakfast topping onto, be that Nutella, jam or marmalade.

#### 5. Aperitivo is the perfect budget dinner

Does an all-you-can-eat buffet and a cocktail for 10 euros sound good to you? In London, just the cocktail alone can cost £10. The Italian aperitivo is a pre-dinner drink often accompanied by

finger-food brought to the table or access to an extensive buffet. Although not designed to replace your dinner, aperitivo certainly can for those travelling on a budget. Give it a go next time you are in Rome.

#### 6. Iced espresso is a summer energy boost

Served in a small glass similar to a shot glass, iced



espresso is a great alternative to the conventional warm espresso. Served with a dash of sugar to take the edge off the bitterness, iced espresso can be sipped and enjoyed in the sun when a much needed mid-afternoon pick-me-up is required.

#### 7. Food is stationary

A commuter shoving a pre-made sandwich into their mouth while running down the steps into the tube station may be a normal sight in London, but no such thing is seen in Rome. In fact, it is rare to see boxed sandwiches and other on-the-move lunch items in general.

**"Iced espresso... a much needed mid-afternoon pick-me-up"**

Instead, food is eaten at the table and enjoyed at a leisurely pace. An espresso is enjoyed at the counter. Steps are littered with people eating pizza slices and gelato under the water sprays from ornate fountains. Food is savoured, not scoffed. After all, why would you rush through a master-piece?



## TRAVEL

travel.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## Out of season in North America's national parks

Recent Imperial graduate **Konstantin Holzner** has been touring the Americas in an old fire engine. Felix has just caught up with him to hear about the perks of off-season travel to North American national parks.

## TRAVEL

**Konstantin Holzner**  
Travel Writer

There are many valid reasons why you should visit North America's national parks in high season. It's when the weather is reliably good, when the flowers are in bloom, or when certain wildlife encounters are the most likely. However, high season comes at a price, and not just literally. Many of North America's most popular national parks have become very crowded, with excited visitors hunting for perfect Instagram shots. The wardens are facing huge challenges in managing visitor numbers in a sustainable way, which allows people to enjoy the outdoors but also protects the habitats and species within the park. So let me make a case for off-season travel.

**Redwood National and State Parks (California)**

The Redwood parks protect just under half of all remaining coastal Redwoods, the tallest trees in the world. The vast majority of these magnificent trees have fallen victim to logging in the past, and since re-growing them literally takes hundreds to thousands of years, restoration of this old-growth temperate rainforest is a long game. For now, these relatively small protected parks lend themselves to be explored on an awesome road trip along the coast of Northern California. There's a number of spec-

tacular scenic drives right through the forests, which are very busy with cars in high season, particularly on weekends, and you'll likely spend some of your valuable holiday time looking for a parking space. In December, we only had to share the place with some deer roaming undisturbed.

As stunning as the drives are, to really experience the Redwood forests and appreciate the size of these trees, you've got to go for a walk in the woods. The most striking thing for me was the incredible silence. The huge trees and the thick undergrowth muffle essentially all noise, and I've never been in a place as quiet as this. But to enjoy the marvellous tranquillity of the forest, you want only a small number of cars and hikers in the park – another reason for off-season travel.

**Denali National Park and Preserve (Alaska)**

Home to North America's tallest mountain, Denali, this park protects

incredible wilderness full of mountains and wildlife but the access is very limited all year round. Although in the main season you can drive farther into the park using their tour buses (private vehicle access is restricted), I highly recommend the off-season, particularly if you're into backcountry hiking. During the summer months, backcountry permits are booked out months in advance, and people queue from very early on in the morning for a small number of permits allocated on the day. When we went hiking there in late September, we were the only people with a permit camping out in the entire six million acres.

There aren't many paths in the park, and most backcountry exploits involve advanced navigation with a map and compass, picking your own route (it's possible to book tours with experienced back-country rangers). On our first day, we followed a river bed covered in animal tracks.



Tombstone Territorial Park in Yukon surely looks inviting // Konstantin Holzner



A small fraction of what the Yosemite National Park has to offer // Konstantin Holzner

Moose, wolves, and grizzlies are all very active there. Within ten minutes of pitching our tent we saw two moose appear out of the forest. The next morning, we woke up in a few inches of snow and on our way back saw which animal tracks were fresh.

Another advantage of the off-season is that the flightseeing tours from nearby Talkeetna through the mountains (optional glacier landings available) aren't fully booked, so you can just rock up when the weather is perfect.

Although expensive, the views are spectacular!

**Tombstone Territorial Park (Yukon, Canada)**

This relatively young park, located near the southern terminus of the infamous Dempster Highway, protects an incredible array of rugged peaks. Wilderness permits are also usually booked out months in advance for the summer months. In September, however, we had no trouble obtaining a permit to hike to Grizzly Lake, and the autumn colours in the park are spectacular. We camped out there for two nights (didn't see any grizzlies though) and were treated to the most amazing sunset, followed by an incredible display of northern lights – you don't get those during the summer either – that made even the Canadians in the neighbouring tent “ooohh” and “aaahh” in awe.

**Yosemite National Park (California)**

Chances are your last laptop shipped

with one of Yosemite's stunning granite walls as a background picture. It's certainly the most breath-taking North American national park I've been to but also one of the busiest. During high season, people queue from early in the morning for a chance to pitch their tent in the infamous Camp 4. The valley floor is super busy, and so are the more accessible hikes. Glacier Point is probably one of the most Instagrammed places on earth, but the road to get there is closed during the off-season and you can only reach it by foot. So when you've hiked up there, you're almost certainly alone. And even if you're not, you can be certain that the others have also earned that spectacular view. If you're hungry for more, continue on along the aptly-named Panorama Trail for more stunning views. One of Yosemite's free shuttle buses will take you back to where you started in no time, and some drivers will even sing you a song or tell you stories of the park's history.

## TRAVEL

travel.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## Grand Canyon and Death Valley: the pride of South-West USA

Travel Editor **Edita Pileckyte** continues on the topic of North America's famous national parks, with pros & cons of guided tours as an alternative to travelling by rental car.

## TRAVEL

**Edita Pileckyte**  
Travel Editor

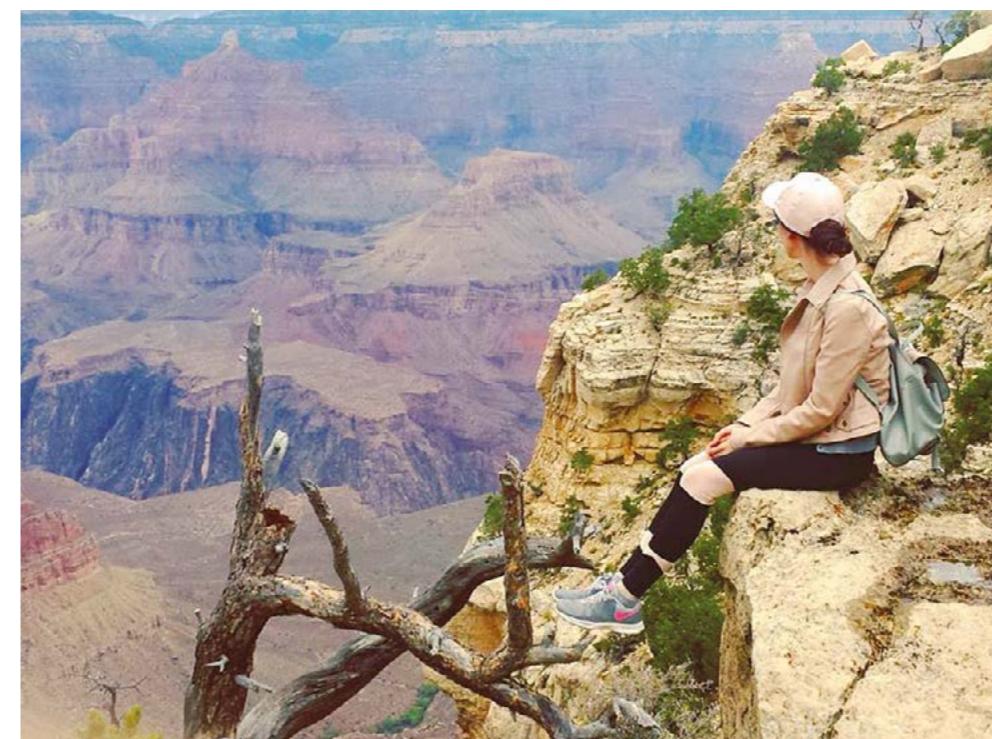
During my three day stay in Las Vegas, I decided to visit two of the most famous North American national parks – Grand Canyon in Arizona and Death Valley in California. They were a huge contrast from the busy and posh Vegas, and were an integral part of my US experience. While one day is more than enough for the famous casino and party city, even if you're keen to visit every single hotel on the Strip, the parks are so huge (and so far away from the city) that you could easily spend a few days there and still have lots left to explore.

**Grand Canyon**

Tour companies offer one- or two-day trips to South or West Rims of

the canyon, each a bit different to suit everyone's taste. For example, the South Rim tours are usually the cheapest, while the West Rim tours include a skywalk (at extra cost) and a visit to a local Native American village. Most companies also offer a helicopter tour

**“Having a guide means you don't have to worry about getting lost or experiencing problems with the car (which can spontaneously stop working in the extreme heat)”**



Trying to be edgy at the Canyon // Edita Pileckyte

for an additional fee.

I visited the South Rim, and the tour included a stopover at the Hoover Dam and Lake Mead. We also passed the Colorado River. At the canyon, we were given three hours to walk around, most of which was spent just walking along the edge of this never-ending, breath-taking natural wonder, reading about its history along the way and admiring the views. There were also a couple of points to climb down for a challenge and a more Instagrammable view.

**Death Valley**

Also unbelievably huge, the Death Valley national park offers a range of unforgettable sights. The most famous one is the Badwater Basin, the second lowest point in the Western hemisphere, consisting of salt deposits. Another impressive place is the Artist's Palette – a range of dunes made of colourful sand. Besides



Empty off-season roads in Death Valley // Edita Pileckyte

that, you can find sand dunes, rocks, trees, and some short vegetation in the Valley if you know where to go. I didn't manage to see the whole park in my one-day tour, especially since it took a while to get there from Vegas. On the plus side, we came back to Vegas rather early which allowed us some time to explore the city.

**Guided bus tours: yay or nay?**

Before going to any national park, it's important to decide whether you're renting a car or booking a tour, since there's usually no chance of reaching them by public transport (or the hassle is real). The biggest disadvantage of the tours is the price (e.g. \$200pp for Death Valley), which is much more expensive than a rental car and the park entrance fee,

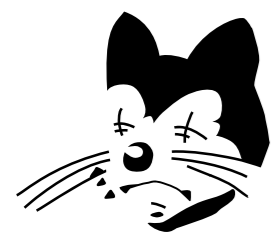
especially if you split the cost among a group of travellers. Also, the tours don't give you enough time to explore the area at your own pace or stop anywhere you want (and longer trips with overnight stay naturally cost even more).

However, having a guide is handy since you not only get to hear interesting facts about places you're passing by but also don't have to worry about getting lost or experiencing problems with the car, which, for example, can spontaneously stop working in the extreme heat in the middle of the desert. In my case, the weather in Grand Canyon happened to be much different from hot and dry +40°C in Vegas – it was rainy, windy, and you could see lightning bolts in the distance. And though I couldn't complain – I was at the freakin' Grand Canyon

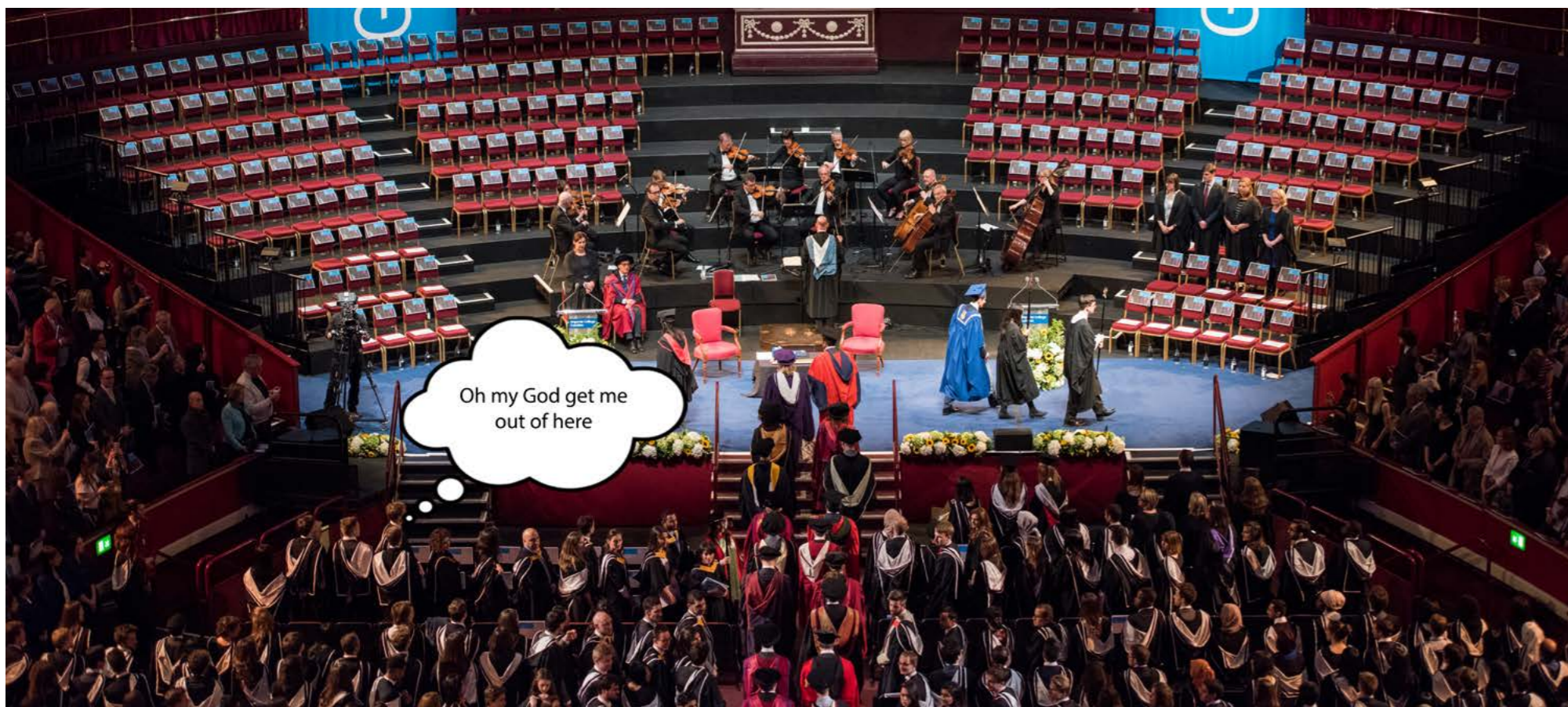
with a double rainbow in the sky – I have to admit I was relieved knowing my bus will take me back to my accommodation safely. If I had drove there by myself and wandered somewhere far away along the narrow paths, getting suddenly caught in such a storm in the middle of the Canyon would not have been fun. Finally, the tours also supply unlimited bottled water that comes in handy in the heat as well as modest breakfast and lunch.

Overall, I'd say the guided tours are safer and more reliable than going on your own and might be worth the extra money but they won't allow you enough time to explore everything in your own time as you'll always be on a tight schedule, with no flexibility. But if you're confident enough to opt for a rental car, make sure you're well prepared and have GPS signal!





# Hangman



Oh my God get me out of here

Knees weak, palms sweaty // Imperial College

## Imperial forced to set up 'recovery tent' as returning graduands suffer from PTSD-style symptoms

### HANGMAN

Negafelix  
Editor-in-Chief

The College had to seek medical advice, as a record number of students began reliving PhD-associated trauma at graduation.

As postgraduate graduation got underway earlier this week, staff at Imperial were forced to erect a 'recovery zone' for those suffering from stress after returning to campus.

College staff working

on postgraduate graduation, which took place this Wednesday, cited a number of reports of graduands suffering from anxiety attacks, fleeing campus, and simply lying on the ground and screaming 'no, no, don't make me go back.' It is believed these reactions were generated by visitors remembering traumatic memories of their post-graduate study, triggered by visual cues on campus.

Staff were forced to co-mingle the refreshment tent in order to establish a 'recovery zone', in which traumatised graduands and graduates could calm down and receive professional support. Hangman understands this area consisted of large bean bags, with soft lighting

and music, and volunteers telling the students 'you never have to go back to that lab again, you're safe now' in hushed tones.

Dr Katie Blentham, a consultant psychiatrist at Charing Cross Hospital who was drafted in by the College to help them prepare for graduation, told *Hangman*: "the reactions we see in those who have recently left Imperial after completing a PhD are similar to the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) experienced by those in conflict zones. These students will typically experience a heightened reaction to noise, sensations of anxiety, and a desire to avoid areas of stress, such as the toilet on the second floor of RSM where they

**"Dr Blentham, a consultant psychiatrist, said the episodes could be set off by exposure to triggers, such as walking past the toilet you spent your PhD crying in"**

would go to cry when it all got too much."

One PhD student, who graduated on Wednesday

with a doctorate in geophysics, told *Hangman* about her experience: "I was really looking forward to having a wonderful day after four years of hard work. However, as soon as I arrived on campus and saw Central Library, I began to feel really ill. I spotted my supervisor across the Quad, and he came to greet my family. I suddenly had a flashback to the time he'd been so mean about my lab results I wet myself, and collapsed. I don't remember much of what happened afterwards, but when I came to in the tent my mother told me I'd tried to attack my supervisor, and was screaming something about them never being able to take me alive."

Will Hanley, Vice

Provost (Pop Psychology), told *Hangman* the College had plans to move the ceremony next year. "While we feel the graduation ceremony this year went very well," he told *Hangman*, "the College is looking into alternative venues, with less of a lived history of trauma and stress. We'd like to also take this opportunity to remind our recent graduates that the generosity of our alumni allows us to support some of our neediest students, so if you're planning of practicing philanthropy, please do keep us in your thoughts... or don't... whichever you find less traumatising."

# HANGMAN

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## Students told: post hand-in selfies or be penalised

### HANGMAN

Negafelix  
Editor-in-Chief

If a student hands in their dissertation, and doesn't take a photo of it, was it ever really handed in?

Several students have failed their dissertations after failing to post a photograph of them handing it in on social media.

A number of final-year physics students, who handed in their final project reports earlier in the week, yesterday

morning received an email from the head of department informing them their "failure to accurately document the moment on social media" had meant they would "be given a lower mark, in line with our new educational policy."

Harold Bash, one of the students affected, who has now dropped from a high 2:1 to a low 2:2 said he thought the rules were "unfair": "I worked incredibly hard on my project, pulling several all-nighters the weekend before it was due. I think to expect me to document this moment - when I'm pale from lack of sun exposure, sweaty from an overdose of caffeine, and

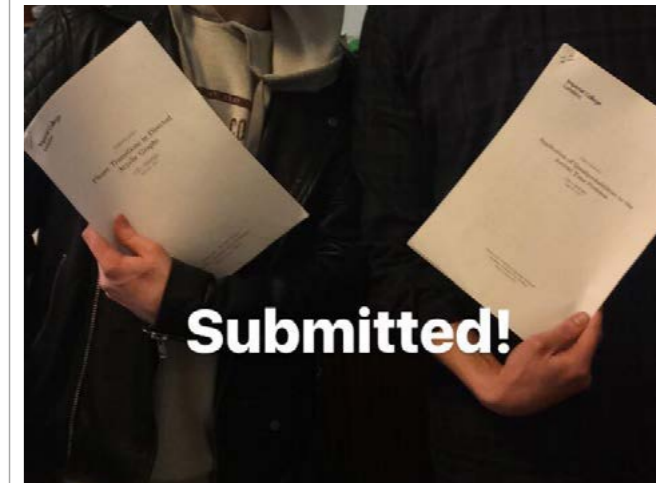
greasy from a diet consisting solely of Fusion and Library Cafe jacket potatoes - is borderline-sadistic."

**"The College said 'failure to accurately document hand-in on social media will result in a lower mark'"**

Other students, however, felt the new rules were appropriate: "Of

course it's a fair rule" one student told *Hangman*, "If I hand in my dissertation, and nobody is around to like my Facebook post about it, did it ever really happen? I don't know, I'm not a philosopher."

Paul Killey, Vice Provost (Humblebragging), spoke to *Hangman* about the policy changes: "The changes on hand-in rules have been put in place as part of our new Learning and Teaching Strategy. Starting in departments in the Faculty of Natural Science, and then moving out to other faculties, we will now no longer be accepting dissertations without photographic evidence of the actual hand-in on



I wanna see this all over my Snapchat // Felix

social media. Of course, students have always been present for the handover process in the past, but we felt they hadn't really been present - you know what I mean?"

He also said the new

rules would "create a sense of community among the students undertaking final projects", and "maybe encourage them to go and take a goddamn shower before they hand in the work."



ARIES

This week you're the *Felix* Editor, and it's a very slow news week. Time to run a piece on the library toilets!



TAURUS

This week you're working in Central Library and pop down to the Cafe for a coffee. When you get back someone has thrown your stuff in the bin and claimed the desk as their own. Them's the rules.



GEMINI

This week you hand in your final year project, and wait for the crushing feeling of doom to finally lift. It doesn't. Turns out you're just depressed.



CANCER

This week, taking inspiration from Amber Rudd, you decide to be completely incompetent at everything you do in the hopes it will pay off. It does! You're made the new Home Secretary.



LEO

This week you're so pleased you were able to exercise your democratic rights and vote in the local elec... oh fuck you've missed them haven't you.



VIRGO

This week you procrastinate by becoming emotionally involved with a detached, 'does he like me or not' guy. Don't worry. Once exams are finished you'll realise he's not mysterious, he's just a cunt.



LIBRA

This week you realise you've managed to sample every single baked good on offer at Imperial. Your life is now hollow and meaningless.



SCORPIO

This week you head back to Imperial for graduation, and take on the appearance of a drowned rat. It's for the best - nobody can see your tears in the rain.



SAGITTARIUS

This week you want to have an opinion on the Windrush scandal, but it happened during revision time, and too much has happened for you to catch up with it. Best wait until the next government fuck-up.



CAPRICORN

This week you have your first exam you get through without crying and wetting yourself! This time you only cry! Go you!



AQUARIUS

This week you try and put "complete heartbreak over Kanye's tweets" as a reason for mitigating circumstances. It succeeds, surprisingly.



PISCES

This week you're the Horoscopes Writer, and you're emailed by your personal tutor about your "concerningly bitter horoscopes" - this is how I FEEL don't judge me.



## advice centre

Good luck with  
*exams*



## Exam help #icuHereforYou

As you prepare for exams this term, we know you may be experiencing stress. If it becomes unmanageable, please reach out to the Advice team at the Union. Full time caseworkers are waiting to provide advice and support in areas such as mitigating circumstances, appeals, money issues, legal woes, or anything which may affect your exam performance or ability to prepare.

We've also got tips and tools to help you cope. Throughout the month of May, we'll be at different points on campus giving away useful tokens such as tea, energy bars, ear plugs, and water bottles. We'll also share wellbeing and study tips online.

Contact us at [advice@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:advice@imperial.ac.uk), drop by the Union (Level 2), or visit [imperialcollegeunion.org/exams](http://imperialcollegeunion.org/exams).

## Nominate someone by 21 May

Is there a Club, Society or Project that has delivered a significant improvement to the student experience this year? How about a volunteer who's gone above and beyond, or a Representation Network rep who's done stellar work? Consider nominating them for The Union Awards.

The Union Awards are an annual event which rewards students or groups who've made a difference to student life throughout the year. There are 14 categories spanning various aspects of life at Imperial.

Nominations close 21 May, after which a panel of students will decide the shortlistees to be recognised at a ceremony in June.

Nominate someone amazing at [imperialcollegeunion.org/awards](http://imperialcollegeunion.org/awards).



## Sign up for ICXP by 21 May

Has your Club, Society, or Project signed up for ICXP yet? Gain special rewards such as priority placement at Freshers' Fair, promotion on Union social media channels, exclusive workshops and much more.

ICXP - Imperial Club Experience Project - is a way for Clubs, Societies & Projects to be recognised and rewarded for their successes. CSPs will receive points for the completion of a series of goals, unlocking rewards along the way. It's a great way for clubs to develop for the benefit of their members.

Deadline is 21 May. Sign up at [imperialcollegeunion.org/icxp](http://imperialcollegeunion.org/icxp).

## Apply to be a student trainer

Gain experience delivering workshops and develop new skills by joining our team of Student Trainers for Imperial Plus, Student Activities or Imperial Award. We are looking for enthusiastic students to deliver training workshops to other students throughout 2018/19.

If you're an excellent communicator, confident public speaker, organised and reliable, then we want to hear from you! Being a student trainer is a great way to gain new skills, and earn extra cash during your time at Imperial.

Deadline is 29 May. Apply at [imperialcollegeunion.org/student-trainer](http://imperialcollegeunion.org/student-trainer).







# SPORTS

sport.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## ICXCAC head to the LUCA outdoors competition

### SPORTS

**Jack Mitchell**  
ICXCAC member

The sun was shining, and despite the early start for many, the ICXCAC team was smiling. Why? It was time for the LUCA (London Universities and Colleges Athletics) outdoors athletics series, beginning at Parliament Hill athletics track. On 15<sup>th</sup> April, the first meeting kicked off, with competitors from all across London battling to top the points table going into the second event of the series. The complete range of events was on offer, from steeple chase to javelin, and this event provided a perfect opportunity for the many first-timers to get introduced to the sport.

By 9am, we had planted the Imperial flag and the team was all set

to over-enthusiastically cheer on their fellow competitors. The day began with the signature event of this meet, the 10,000m, followed by the 1500m. ICXCAC

**“Imperial is now in 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the points table behind King’s and UCL, but it is all to play for with two more events to come”**

had plenty to cheer for early on, with a 1-2 finish in the men’s 1500m by Oliver Newton and James Millett respectively. An

excellent performance too from Helena Dona in the women’s race. Following on from this, Imperial was strongly represented in the 400m, with four competitors including Athletics’ Captain Max Thorp. Great performances followed by ex-captain Raul Rinken in javelin, shot put and discus throw, with him winning the javelin event.

Other successes of the day included another win by James Millett in the 800m and by Oliver Newton in the steeple chase (think 3000m but with hurdles and puddles). A special mention too for Club Captain Alex Mundell who bagged a massive 22 points for the team across her many events. The highlight of the day was the 5000m, with four athletes entered from Imperial, purely because of the sheer quality of the chants generated by the Imperial cheer squad (video evidence can be



Squad posing for a photo on the track // ICXCAC

supplied). There could be no doubting our team spirit, especially given our latest innovation of Imperial-brand transfer tattoos – although this did lead to many weird looks on the tube ride back (possibly due to them being on our foreheads...).

So, all in all, another great event! The first of

the series finished with Imperial in 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the points table behind King’s and UCL, but it is all to play for with two more events to come. The bigger the team, the more points we can win so if you’ve ever been tempted to give athletics a try, now is your chance! This incredibly casual event

offers you the perfect opportunity to unleash your inner athlete (and help beat UCL in the process). In joining ICXCAC you not only get the chance to take part in this great competition, but you get to be part of one of the best clubs in Imperial. So why wait?

## Want your team on the back page?



**Felix Sport are looking for representatives of sports clubs to write about their highs and lows! Whether it’s thrashing UCL in a BUCS match, or heading off on tour to Portugal, we want to hear from you!**

**If you’re interested in writing for the Sports section, please email the Sports Editor at [sport.felix@ic.ac.uk](mailto:sport.felix@ic.ac.uk)**