



Felix

The Student Newspaper of Imperial College London

NEWS



Imperial tops the league for annual CO₂ emissions

PAGE 4

COMMENT



Comment writers on the 8th amendment debate

PAGES 12-13

BOOKS



Race, class, and identity in the age of Trump

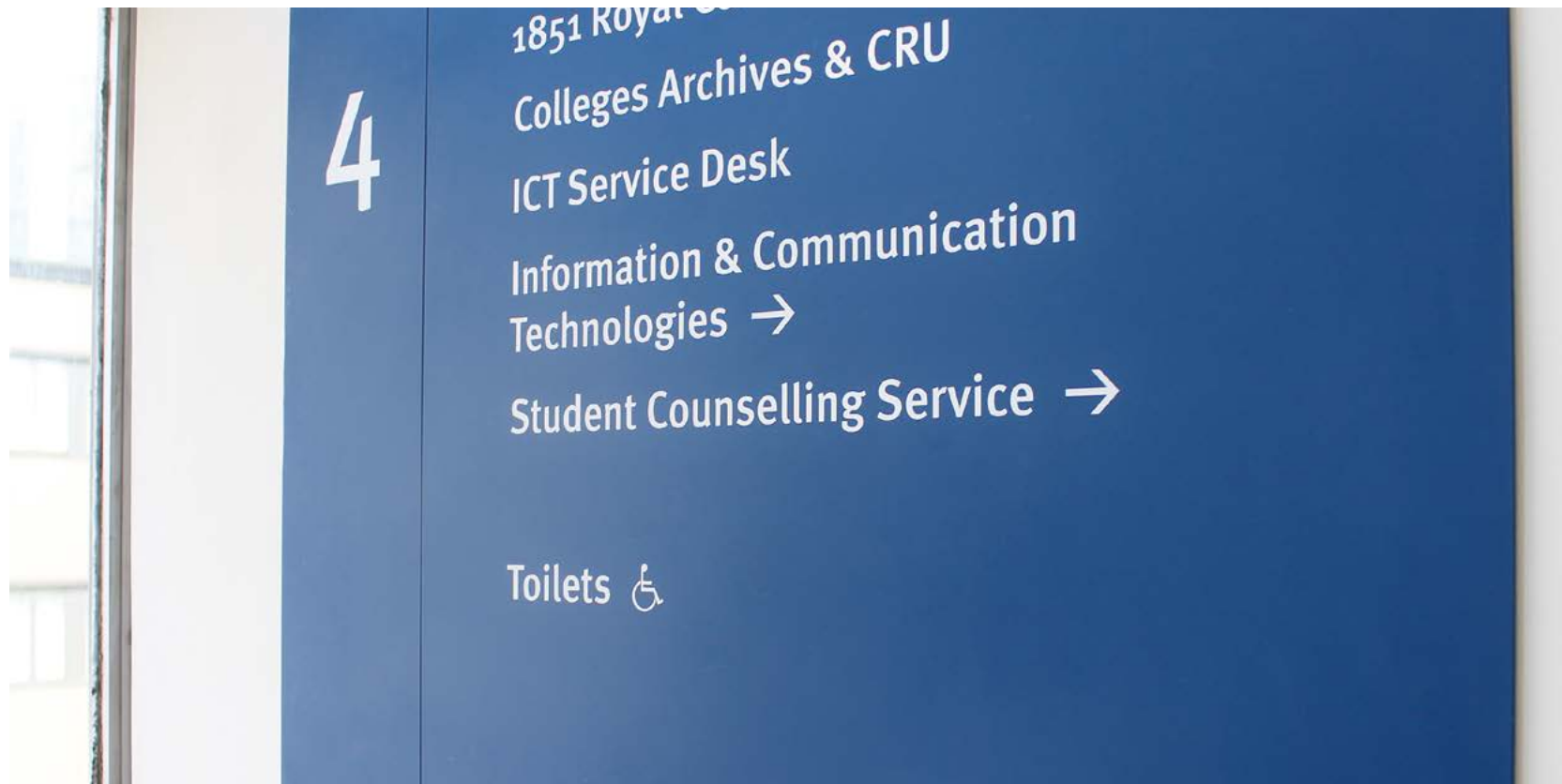
PAGE 20

MUSIC



Beach House return with lucky number 7

PAGE 26



Students are now waiting seven weeks on average to access counselling // Felix

Under Pressure: Counselling Service hit by increased student demand

NEWS

Fred Fyles
Editor-in-Chief

- *Students accessing counselling double in five years*
- *Wait times risen to seven weeks on average*
- *Student-facing staff coming under increased pressure*

Towards the end of the last academic year, while experiencing a number of difficulties, Claire* finally picked up the courage to go and see Imperial's Counselling Service. After waiting a few weeks for an initial assessment, she went

along to the counsellor's office at her appointed time, ready to talk to someone about why she needed help. The problem she had come in with, however, turned out to be the tip of the iceberg: as the counsellor asked her questions, further issues were identified, which Claire – consciously or unconsciously – had pushed to the back of her mind. She then waited another ten weeks before accessing regular counselling sessions.

"I was disappointed," Claire tells me, "That appointment made me feel worse, because I had to talk about my past and other deep stuff – there were all these problems I needed to work through, and then I was told to wait for two months. It just felt unfair."

While Claire stresses how much she appreciates the support the Counselling Service has provided, she is now stuck in limbo: having used up her first four counselling sessions earlier in the year, she is now left with a limited number to ration until next year comes around. "There were a couple of times where I was feeling desperate, but then I was like 'no, I should wait until things get bad to use the session'. But then my problems aren't solved. I need to see a professional. Talking to friends doesn't help."

S

Claire was one of the 1,013 students who registered at Imperial's Counselling Service last year, and her case is not unusual. The number accessing counselling

has been increasing every year, up from 552 half a decade ago. The Counselling Service is located in a nondescript corner of the third floor of Sherfield Building, above the hustle and bustle of the main walkway; along a quiet corridor, a series of wooden doors lead into rooms where a small team help students who are in need. These calm surroundings, however, belie a service that is coming under increasing pressure each year, as more students seek out support.

The Counselling Service is run by Rosie Summerhayes, a chartered counselling psychologist who first joined Imperial in 2003. Prior to that, she had experience within the NHS and another higher education institution. Rosie is the kind of person you probably imagine

when you think of the word 'counsellor': relaxed and softly-spoken, with a voice that is both calm and calming, she answers my questions about the state of the service with a quiet precision.

The service is divided into two branches: the Student Counselling Service, and the Student Mental Health Advice Service. Counselling can be made available for any registered student, who will have an initial meeting with a counsellor to determine what they need. Following on from this, the student will, if deemed appropriate, receive counselling. The service determines who to see first based on need, ensuring the most vulnerable students are seen the quickest; time spent on the waiting list is taken into

Cont. pg 4

EDITORIAL

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL 2

NEWS 3-8

POLITICS 9

COMMENT 10-11

SCIENCE 13-15

ARTS 19

BOOKS 20

GAMES 21

MUSIC 22-24

TRAVEL 25

C&S 27

HANGMAN 28-29

PUZZLES 31

SPORT 32

When awareness isn't enough



This Sunday will mark the end of Mental Health Awareness Week. On the surface of things, over the past few years things have only been getting more positive for the two thirds of us who will experience a mental health problem in our lifetime: we're now speaking about mental health more than ever, and while there is certainly still a stigma attached to mental illness, it's slowly being broken down.

However, our main article this week, on the Imperial Counselling Service, shows one of the main problems with the goal of this week: awareness is not action. And while it's brilliant for people in power – politicians, CEOs, College management – to encourage us to speak openly about mental health issues, it cannot replace real-world resources for those who are in need.

I have been at Imperial since 2012, and each year I hear horror stories about how long the wait times are for the Counselling Service. This month, we decided to start looking into the situation on the ground, to see whether these rumours had any factual basis. Reports

from the Counselling Service showed where the root of the problem lies: the number of students who need counselling is increasing every year, but the supply of counsellors is only being increased retrospectively, resulting in rising waiting times.

This, however, only shows us one aspect of the problem. Over the past couple of weeks, we've spoken to a range of people in and around the College, from students who have accessed counselling in the past, through to student-facing staff members, senior man-

agement, and the head of counselling herself.

What we found was a situation that was complex and nuanced: student mental health is becoming more of a problem for a wide variety of reasons, including both internal and external pressures; this is having an increased burden on staff members who want to support their students, and who are themselves facing threats to their wellbeing; people across the College are doing great work, but in the absence of a unified strategy their efforts remain atomised.

We've put together what we learnt in this exclusive report on mental health at Imperial. Journalism will always aim at a true representation of the world, but on a topic as fuzzy and broad as mental health, anything we produce will only be able to cover a small fraction of the topic. I hope this serves as a catalyst for people at Imperial – not only to start talking about mental health, but to actually do something about it.

Nobody we spoke to had any bad words to say about the Counselling Service itself – I, and many others, recognise that they are a small team of dedicated staff, doing what they can with the resources available. But this needs to change.

Awareness, while it might be welcome, does not a functioning support service make. Reminding us to look out for each other cannot make up for a lack of student counsellors. Encouraging us to open up to one another is not a replacement for funding. Mental health cannot be on the agenda for one week out of the year; it needs to be at the forefront of the College's thinking at all times.

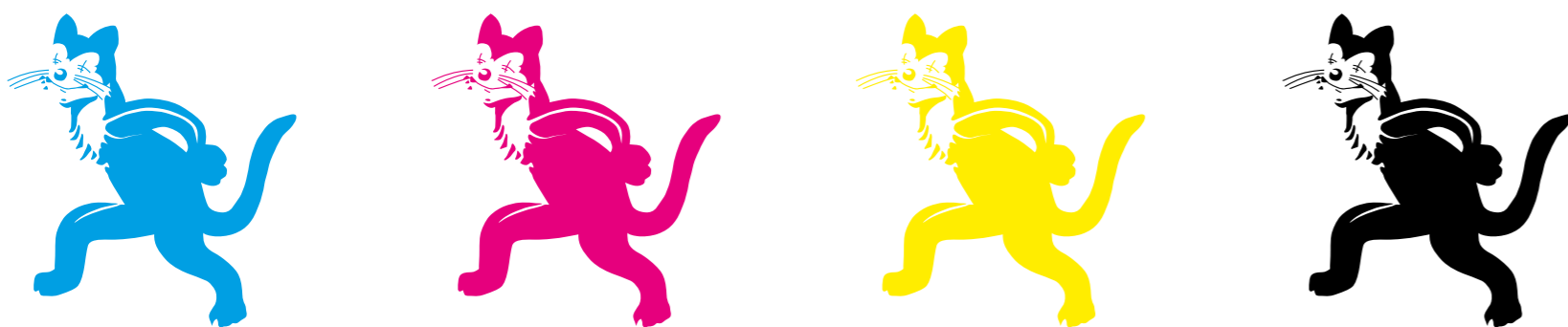


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NEWS

news.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Imperial emitted more CO₂ than any other university in the UK last year

NEWS

Joanna Wormald
Deputy Editor

Imperial is one of the worst-performing institutions for energy consumption, waste, and emissions.

The level of greenhouse gases emitted by Imperial is higher than that of any other higher education provider in the UK. The College is also one of the worst institutions for energy consumption and water waste.

Imperial was responsible for almost 75.8 million kg of CO₂ released in 2016/17, data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) shows. This figure includes emissions from the College's direct fossil fuel use (such as heating and the shuttle bus service) in addition to the CO₂ released in the production of electricity, which the College then uses.

Imperial consumed nearly 236 million kWh of energy, making it the third largest consumer among UK universities. This is an improvement on 2015/16 when Imperial's consumption of almost 260 million kWh topped the list of worst offenders. In its latest sustainability report, the College claims its energy consumption in 2016/17 was "particularly high" because of maintenance work which left the South Kensington combined heat and power plant "out of commission" from August 2015 to February 2017. The system has since been moved to the "more energy efficient" Slough.

Imperial's production of more than 60.5 million kg of waste also puts it in the bottom three. The manners in which this waste was disposed of are unknown but College figures claim only health-care waste – representing 11% of Imperial's total waste – is sent to landfill.

"Imperial's production of more than 60.5 million kg of waste puts it in the bottom three nationally"

More than 700,000 kg of CO₂ can be added to Imperial's carbon footprint when indirect emissions are considered. The HESA data only accounts for such emissions produced by the supply and treatment of water. Imperial is among the high producers for both of these metrics, releasing almost 232,000 kg of CO₂ through water supply and more than 477,000 kg through water treatment. Imperial is also the sixth worst institution in terms of water wastage – the College wasted almost 674 million litres of water in 2016/17 – though again this is an improvement on the previous year's more than 700 million litres waste water.

There are many other sources of indirect emissions, such as greenhouse gases released during student and staff commutes. As with many other companies, the total value of Imperial's indirect emissions is likely to



Electing a new Pope // Flickr/Andre Turcott

be much larger than the amount of greenhouse gases it produces directly. Imperial College Union's Ethics and Environment Officer Rhidian Thomas told *Felix*: "This is yet another disappointing performance from Imperial in terms of sustainability, in a year that's seen plenty. The College must show it takes environmental concerns seriously if it hopes for students to do the same."

An Imperial College spokesperson said: "Imperial carries out world-leading research in energy, the environment and climate change. We recognise our operations and activities have an impact on the environment and we have a responsibility to mitigate

this." These figures could prove embarrassing in the wake of the recently published Greening Imperial report. The paper found Imperial is "failing in terms of sustainability compared to its peers" and listed a number of measures to improve the College's environmental impact, ensuring sustainability is "comprehensively incorporated into estates management".

98% of students and staff surveyed as part of the Greening Imperial survey thought Imperial should be doing more for sustainability and climate change, while 91% were dissatisfied with Imperial's standings compared to other universities.

Professor Geoff Maitland, Professor of Energy Engineering at Imperial, and Greening Imperial co-author, told *Felix* the

"The results were called 'yet another disappointing performance from Imperial, in a year that's seen plenty'"

report was a "call to action to raise Imperial's aspirations and achievements in creating a sustainable,

low-carbon structure for itself and the world."

Imperial has performed poorly in analyses of universities' environmental credentials over recent years: in 2017 People & Planet ranked Imperial 141st out of 154 HE providers and the worst of the Russell Group universities. A *Felix* investigation earlier this year also revealed Imperial has invested almost £9 million in the fossil fuel industry.

The Russell Group university with the lowest scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions was the London School of Economics (LSE), whose emissions were around 13% of those of Imperial.

"The reality is we don't have enough counselling staff to see the number of students who are approaching us"

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account, to prevent those with lower-level problems being left indefinitely.

Students will then have access to seven counselling sessions across the year – the majority will have under four sessions, and can hold the remaining sessions in reserve for check-ins later on in the year. In their annual report, the service states: “whilst this model enables a faster turnover, we are mindful this may also impact on student satisfaction and therapeutic improvement for some students.”

Alongside this, the Student Mental Health Advice Service provides support to students with chronic conditions, who need help throughout their academic career. This service can link into other support networks, such as the Disability Advisory Service or the personal tutor system, should the student desire.

At its most basic level, the current problems with the Counselling Service can be reduced to simple economics: the supply has not increased in line with demand. While the number of students registered has increased by over 80% since 2012/13, the number of sessions on offer have only increased by 60%. The results are waiting times that have slowly been creeping up every year, and which now stand at over seven weeks between first contact and regular counselling.

These are just average times: students have anecdotally reported waiting times of up to 15 weeks, while the longest anyone waited from assessment to counselling last year was over nine months. These figures can represent the extremes – students who request specific counsellors or can only attend at certain times will need to wait longer – but the

waiting time is far above the average 15 working days most universities report.

"Imperial report seven weeks' average waiting time"

While the demand has increased, many of those I spoke to – staff and students – believe the issue is with provision. As of February 2018, the Service employs around seven full time equivalents, including Rosie, to support a student body of 18,000.

“We need more counsellors,” Rosie says, “The reality is we don’t have enough staff to see the number of students who are approaching us. Our increase has always been retrospective...it’s always been to deal with what’s already walked through the door.”

The issue is not that there aren’t skilled candidates available – the service typically has 70-150 applicants or each job – but rather the funding hasn’t been made available from the College: the service has had its budget frozen for the past two years.

While the supply side of the equation may be clear, the demand side is not. The number of students accessing the counselling service increased by roughly 80% since 2012, but the number of students at Imperial has only increased by 12.14% in the same time. There are various theories to explain the increase: a reduced stigma around seeking help; an increased atmosphere of openness within the College; an uncertain and anxious political environment;

increased financial pressures associated with living in London; the rise of social media; greater demands on students to perform academically. The list goes on. In reality it is a combination of all the above driving the increase in demand.

Nevertheless, for the time being the Counselling Service is stuck in limbo. The College, which last year made nearly £120 million in surplus, are currently undertaking rounds of financial planning, after which Rosie will know how much, or how little, she will have to work with.

Professor Simone Buitendijk, Vice-Provost (Education), who is responsible for a number of aspects of the student experience, including welfare, told *Felix* the College were planning on increasing the support to the Counselling Service: “In the short term we are planning to increase the number of contact hours we can offer each week. In order to provide the best service we can, we will continue to prioritise those in urgent need.”

“Our investment in student counselling will be increased significantly in the next financial year. In parallel the College is working to put in place a new student support strategy which will proactively help to reduce stress. This includes tackling issues related to the academic experience which we know can exacerbate pre-existing mental health problems. It also includes initiatives to help students maintain a healthy lifestyle – both personally and academically – with the aim that we will reduce the need for counselling as a consequence.”

There is frustration among students, however, that any increases in



Students at Imperial are requesting more counselling than ever before // Imperial

funding are coming too late. Imperial advertises the Counselling Service within its prospectus, and, in the words of one student who has done work with recruitment, “it’s sold as part of the package of being an Imperial student.” For Claire, this lack of comprehensive support was one of the most frustrating aspects of her experience: “We pay so much, but then we don’t get anything for our fees – I’m paying around £10,000, but others can be paying £30,000. Students bring in money and a good reputation for Imperial, and then we don’t get basic things like proper mental health support.”

Shervin Sabeghi, Welfare Officer of the Royal College of Science Union (RCSU) says he has experienced more students speaking to him about external private services, as “they have no

confidence that they’ll be seen quickly enough by the Counselling Service... in the very short term College should be ensuring all students who need it can access counselling in a reasonable time.”

"The lack of support is frustrating for students"

Fintan O’Connor, the Union’s Deputy President (Welfare), told *Felix*: “The Counselling Service’s capacity is clearly inadequate and Imperial College Union consistently voices this fact to the College. The current level of service, resulting in average waiting times of several weeks between initial assessments and first appointments, is

unacceptable. The Union is firm in the conviction that student wellbeing, in particular counselling and mental health support services, are not an optional extra, but a core requirement of any university. The Union is pleased to see that in many meetings, staff are openly making the same challenges, however we are aware we cannot become complacent.”

“The Union’s role in supporting students’ welfare is one of passionate advocacy. In line with Our *Strategy 2017-20*, we have been lobbying the College to review the way it approaches student support, and provide a more comprehensive offering. Our objective is to work in partnership with the College to improve students’ wellbeing and amplify the student voice, and that’s exactly what we’ve been doing. The

Wellbeing Representation Network has raised the profile of student welfare across the College, and allowed students to work with staff at all levels to find tangible solutions.”

How the service will interact with the move to White City is an unknown quantity – Rosie tells me she would love to have a wellbeing suite on the campus, for Counselling and other services, but that the space has to be “right: a confidential space, safe, appropriate” – as is the impact the move could have on those students who will be leaving the South Kensington campus.

The service is currently putting in place an online psychoeducation programme, called Silver Cloud, which they hope will be useful, but there is a desire to do more. “I’d love to do anxiety management”, Rosie tells

me, “I’d love to do social anxiety as well, which I think is rampant, but not spoken about. I’d like to do sleep hygiene. I’d like to do a mood boost programme. I’d like to do a transitions workshop for students who are coming in, and going out. I’d like to go into departments. There are lots of things I’d like to do. But we don’t have the resources. We’ve got a waiting list. We’ve got people waiting for three months. We can’t.”

While it may be tempting to think of waiting times as an issue for only students, the lack of comprehensive mental health support can have a knock-on effect on staff members, particularly those who are in student-facing roles. Dr Ian Bastow and Dr Lizzie Day, senior tutor and disabilities officer respectively in the Department

of Earth Science and Engineering, tell me they are spending more time speaking with students facing difficulties than they usually would; “we can’t emphasise enough how we don’t mind this as far as our own time is concerned, but we’re not mental health professionals” – they only have training in Mental Health First Aid – “and inevitably can’t even pretend to give some students the support they need.”

"Senior tutors have reported an increase in students seeking help"

Anecdotally, senior and personal tutors have reported an increase in the number of students seeking advice from them and applying for mitigating circumstances. Several staff have called on the College to do more to recognise this pastoral work, embedding it in their workload models.

Fintan says the Union have been working with Senior Tutors to make sure all personal tutors receive appropriate Mental Health First Aid training. This is in line with the Union’s response to the National Student Survey, which highlighted issues with student satisfaction. “More generally,” he says, “we’re working with them to ensure that students receive the support they require from pastoral care teams, in spite of the increasing demand they face.”

The knowledge that the Counselling Service isn’t meeting student needs can have an impact on those responsible for supporting students. One member of

the Union’s Wellbeing Representation Network (WBRN), a new body of student volunteers responsible for signposting students to appropriate resources and feeding back wellbeing-related concerns to staff, said the current situation made her feel helpless: “Where do you send them? You get these situations where there’s nothing you can say, there’s no service we can send them to. In an ideal world the NHS would pick up the slack, but I do think the Counselling Service provisions need to be better.”

She recognises a similar effect on staff: “It’s not great [for them]...to feel they’re not doing their job”. It’s a sentiment echoed by Rosie: “When you feel like you’re not meeting the needs of people who are looking to you, that’s stressful, no matter what role you’re in.”

Dr Fred Marquis, Senior Tutor of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, says: “it is frustrating to find out that when a student plucks up the courage to seek help...the waiting times are either long internally (Counselling Service) or externally (their own GP).” Furthermore, due to the transient nature of student life, a number of students will begin therapy and not complete it, as they go on holiday or move away.

Staff are also vulnerable to mental health problems. One name that repeatedly crops up in my conversations with academics on the pressures they’re facing is Stefan Grimm, a professor of toxicology at Imperial who took his own life in October 2014. An inquest later in the academic year heard how Professor Grimm was at the informal stage of the College’s management

process, following difficulties in obtaining more grant money; while it is impossible to say whether or not action taken by the College would have changed the outcome, an internal review concluded there should be increased support for struggling staff members.

When I speak to Dr Martyn McLachlan, Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUGS) in the Department of Materials, he says Professor Grimm’s case brought attention to “an issue that had been going on for a long time, and possibly still continues in some places.”

Changes may have been made on campus – Rosie tell me the idea of a work-life balance is embedded in a way it wasn’t a decade ago – but the whole landscape of higher education is changing, from the introduction of government initiatives such as the Teaching Excellence Framework, to the pension changes that triggered industrial action last term. The result is more pressure on staff – both internally and externally.

Martyn tells me about how the ever-increasing student numbers can have an impact on staff pressures: more students means more teaching, more examinations, more marking, more conversations; and the increase in taught postgraduate courses, which run over a 12-month period, mean staff are often under pressure consistently throughout the year.

He also cites the increase in data available about academics: information on how many students an academic teaches, how many PhD students they supervise, and how many papers they publish is collected by the College. While

there is “no direct pressure from the institution”, he says “there’s always the thought at the back of your mind that thinks ‘well, if they have that data, and they organise it...what happens to the person who’s underperforming?’”

More generally, there is the impression that – while staff and students are doing a lot of work to address mental health problems – efforts are being hampered by poor communication. “There is a lot of good energy towards increasing student and staff support,” Rosie says, “it’s just putting it all in one place, and making sure it’s under a proper strategy.” She tells me her request to have Student Space – an advice hub for students – on the front page of Imperial’s website was denied by the College, who said it was not possible

“There are increased pressures on staff – internally and externally”

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“There are increased pressures on staff – internally and externally”

Martyn agrees more can be done to draw links between initiatives, highlighting areas where the Department of Materials have made improvements, such as introducing a new Senior Tutor.

Martyn also has experience of student support beyond his role as DUGS: he has been part of the wardening team at Imperial for a number of years, and currently lives on the top floor of Tizard Hall, in Princes Gardens. It’s a role he’s seen change over the years: while it was

Cont. page 6

"To say 'I found that difficult' is seen as weakness"

Cont. from page 5

"always there as a welfare provision", he now sees students presenting in need of serious extra support. "What it unclear is whether those students existed in that form before and suffered in silence, or whether there is some change that is having an impact on them."

Anecdotally, he has seen more students applying for space in halls on account of a disability, including mental health problems. The increased awareness of mental health has been reflected in his training, but he reports reductions in overall support for wardening teams: "There may have been more resources put into the whole support network across College, [but] wardening is possibly the exception, where we've seen a reduction in numbers."

§

It is important to highlight these problems with mental health are by no means unique to Imperial. Rather, it is a problem presenting across the board at universities and within this age group. Professor Buitendijk told *Felix* the "concerns about waiting times for the student counselling service, which have increased due to rising demand...are a challenge faced by all UK universities."

In the past five years, the vast majority of universities have experienced a sharp increase in students seeking support, with nearly 90,000 students requesting counselling services in the UK in 2015/16. The number of students dropping out of university due to mental health problems has also trebled in recent years, with Norman Lamb, former Health Minister, describing the situation as a "crisis on campus."

It is a problem noted at a national level: Universities UK last week released a report on mental health in higher education, which revealed nearly 60,000 students disclosed a mental health condition to their university this year, compared with under 10,000 ten years ago.

"Students said an echo-chamber of myths drove competition"

The UUK report also highlighted the number of suicides among students, which they say have been increasing steadily since 2013. In the run-up to this article I received emails from a number of staff who have been informed that three Imperial undergraduates have taken their own lives this academic year – significantly higher than would be expected for the age group or geographical area. The College told *Felix* their records showed only one student who had taken their own life since 2016, as judged by a coroner as part of an official inquiry. They are not able to speculate on past student deaths, or ongoing inquiries.

Why has there been this increase in mental health problems? Martyn believes there has been a change in what it is like to be a young person, and "at the point of entry students seem to come in with much more baggage than they did historically", while others identify increased academic, financial, and social pressures.

While most people I spoke to felt Imperial had become a lot better at recognising mental health

problems in the last five to ten years, the academic environment at Imperial was a contributing factor.

"I think the academic environment is a strong part of perpetuating issues people had before," Martyn tells me, "because of this environment students perceive we have – and I don't think it's true, I think students conform to it – they put silly pressure on themselves. If you have mental health issues, or a predisposition to them, the chances are you're going to accelerate that process by putting all this extra pressure on yourself."

He tells me a story about changes made to the first year labs within the Department of Materials: a few years ago, students would have around a week to complete a comprehensive lab report, whereas now they submit a much shorter piece of work the next day. The submission is electronic, so tutors can monitor how many people are turning it in at what times: the results showed people handing in work throughout the night, up until 7am. He asked his students to raise their hand if they'd spent more than an hour on it, two hours, three hours... by the time he reached the eight hour mark most of the class still had their hands up. The individual reports contributed around 0.01% to their degree, but "because there are marks associated with it, they put so much time and effort into it, disproportionate to the magnitude of the task".

It's a story that calls to mind the institutional culture review carried out at Imperial, in which the words 'competitive', 'ambitious', and 'driven' were among the most frequently-cited descriptors of the College. The report suggested there was a lack of community spirit



Students reported a sense of pressure among their cohorts // Imperial

within the university, partly due to a lack of communal space, and that the "competitive, individualistic pursuit of research excellence often comes at the expense of other values." Students and staff, the report argues, "felt that there was an all-consuming focus on academic performance, and negative attitudes towards those who did not do well or who were not as driven as others."

"Unless you tackle the culture... nobody will speak out"

Students we spoke to cited an echo-chamber of myths that drove competition within the College, and led to people becoming reticent to seek help. "We hand out leaflets, we email people as frequently as we can, we do surveys, and we get such a low response rate," one member of the WBRN tells me, "it's absolutely terrifying for me, because I know

from speaking to friends that so many people are really struggling...unless you tackle this culture, almost independent of how good the services are, nobody is going to seek them out."

"If I wanted to send out one message, it would be that asking for help is not weak." Helen Money-Kyrle, the Royal School of Mines Union's (RSMU) Welfare Officer tells me, "it shows that we can be open to change, and it allows us to improve." This inability to seek out help has been identified by many at Imperial as a major stumbling block for student support.

At the end of my conversation with Martyn, he takes me down the corridor from his office to show me the Materials Common Room – a lecture theatre the department converted into a shared space, and given back to students. The handful of students present – sitting at sofas, gathered around tables looking at laptops – sit up to attention when Martyn enters, but quickly relax back into their usual routine. "It has caused us issues with timetabling and with management,"

Martyn says, "but I think the benefits are good." The space, which encourages students from different years to spend time together, forming inter-year groups, is something of which he is clearly very proud. "To say 'I found that difficult' or 'I wasn't prepared for that' is seen as a sign of weakness...having other people say they went through the same thing [at that stage of their degree] makes you think you're not alone, which I think is hugely beneficial."

§

At the end of my conversation with Rosie, after we have discussed the need the Counselling Service has for more resources, I ask her one last question: how does she feel about the future?

"I will be a lot more positive if I hear we've got the additional resources, and space to put that additional resource in. That we've got a waiting room, and there are plans to look at mental health across Imperial in a joined up, integrated way. Then I will be very positive."

Names have been changed.

Where to get help, on and off campus

If you're having problems, you shouldn't suffer in silence. Sources of help are available, from the College, Union, or external providers

College

Chaplaincy

The chaplaincy service can provide students with a safe space to talk about problems or concerns they may have. As well as faith-related services, the Chaplaincy also runs a weekly Mindfulness Meditation workshop, held every Tuesday 13:05-13:50. The chaplains can also offer one-off conversations and bereavement support, or provide the opportunity for regular conversations, for issues which are more complex or take time to address.

Senior and Personal Tutors

The majority of students at Imperial will be allocated a Personal Tutor – a member of academic staff who is able to provide support and help on academic or personal issues throughout your time at Imperial.

Each department will have a Senior Tutor, and each faculty will have a Faculty Senior Tutor. If you have an issue you feel you cannot raise with your Personal Tutor, or an issue you think is particularly sensitive, consider contacting a Senior Tutor.

Student Counselling

The Student Counselling service has a presence at the South Kensington, Hammersmith, Silwood Park, and Charing Cross campuses. They are able to offer confidential support and counselling services to students. If you would like to contact them to schedule an appointment, visit imperial.ac.uk/counselling

Student Hub

The Student Hub is a College-run service located on Level 3 of the Sheffield Building, and is open Monday to Friday. They can provide advice and information on a range of topics, including accommodation, exams, and financial support.

Mitigating Circumstances

If you encounter anything that affects your academic life at Imperial – examinations, coursework, projects, or general study – you should inform your Personal Tutor and your department's Senior Tutor as soon as possible.

Mitigating circumstances can cover a wide range of issues, including physical or mental

Union

ICU Advice Centre

The ICU Advice Centre is a Union-run service, which helps all students at Imperial College London, at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. They can offer advice on a range of topics, including academic issues (appeals and complaints) and non-academic issues (finances, housing, legal rights). They can also offer advice to recent graduates, students with confirmed offers, and students on interruption of studies. The advice is free, confidential, impartial, and independent. You can get in touch via email (advice@ic.ac.uk) or phone (02075948060).

Wellbeing Representation Network

The Wellbeing Representation Network (WBRN) is a body of around 90 student representatives responsible for identifying issues and raising awareness across a range of areas, including health (physical and mental), finances, relationships, equality, and personal safety. Each department will have a number of Year Representatives, who will report to a Departmental Representative; the Departmental Representatives report to Fintan O'Connor, Deputy President (Welfare). Representatives are selected from among the student body via democratic elections.

Representatives are able to raise concerns to College and Union staff, as well as signpost students to other areas of support. You can find your representative by looking on the Union website, or contact Union staff directly.

health issues, personal problems, bereavement, and financial troubles. Anything out of your control that affects your ability to study could be considered a mitigating circumstance.

It is important to raise concerns as soon as they may arise, rather than waiting until later. If your circumstances affect an assessment, you should submit your mitigating circumstances form within five working days of the examination

External Support

NHS

If you are having physical or mental health problems, you can arrange to make an appointment with your GP, who may be able to refer you on to other services where necessary. Some areas of London also allow you to self-refer to psychiatric services in order to access support.

The Imperial College Health Centre run a Triage clinic Monday to Friday, from 8:30-10:00am, available to all students registered at the South Kensington, St Mary's, and Royal Brompton Campuses, as well as all medical students.

Charities

A number of charities and organisations offer emotional support, including:

- **Samaritans** – Offer 24 hour confidential support to anyone in emotional distress; you can also visit your local branch to discuss things with volunteers face to face. Phone: 116 123
- **London Nightline** – Telephone helpline with confidential listening, support, and information to students in London. Open every night of term from 18:00 to 8:00. Phone: 02076310101
- **The Havens** – Specialist support to those living in London who have been raped or sexually assaulted. Available 24/7. Phone: 02032996900

NHS 24 Hour Crisis Lines

- Available 24 hours a day:
- **Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, Hillingdon, Brent, Camden, and Harrow** – 08000234650
- **Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Hounslow** – 03001234244
- **Wandsworth** – 02035134421

or assessment deadline. Submitting after the deadline may mean that the claim will not be accepted, regardless of the reason for the claim.

If you need more advice or information on mitigating circumstances, please examine the policy online, contact your personal tutor or academic support, or speak to the Imperial College Union Advice Centre for independent support.

Nominations open for Union summer elections

NEWS

Hafiza Irshad

News Writer

Voting for the third set of Union elections open on 29th May, with a range of positions up for grabs.

Imperial College Union earlier this week opened its doors to nominations for its third set of elections this academic year. The elections are running to fill the many remaining positions across four categories: Liberation & Community Officers; Constituent Union Leaders; Academic & Wellbeing Representatives; and Clubs, Societies & Project committee roles.

Nominations opened on the 16th May, and will be closing on the 23rd. The timing of the elections has changed compared to the Leadership Election last term: candidates will be able to campaign



We've finally got a new election photo! // ICU

from Friday 25th May, with voting opening on Tuesday 29th. The voting will stay open until Friday 1st June.

Any student who will be continuing their studies at Imperial College for the next year is able to run for a position provided they meet any prerequisites for the role. There are high hopes the remaining positions will be filled, to allow committees and teams to begin work and planning for the upcoming year.

This is the third set of

elections this academic year. The previous elections, which ended on 9th March, saw the election of Robert Tomkies as Union president. All key central Union roles were filled bar the LGBT+ Officer. A number of Constituent Union roles went unclaimed, particularly within the Royal College of Science Union and the City and Guilds College Union.

There was a widespread lack of competition for many of the roles, with a number of roles having

no candidates standing. The election also saw some students run for multiple roles, perhaps in apprehension of a wave of stiff competition. In some cases this backfired, leading to students having to drop out of some roles after being elected. Many of these roles are now aimed to be filled by these upcoming elections.

Nominations are open until Wednesday 23rd May. You can nominate yourself on the Union website.

Reporter's analysis

This election is essential to the functioning and productivity of many groups on campus. With committees lacking team members work may prove to be stagnant, and any progression students have been asking for hindered. The 'excitement' of these secondary or tertiary elections can seem to pale in comparison to the larger leadership elections. However, it is important to note that many of these unclaimed roles are pivotal.

Perhaps we ought to take a more front seat approach to these elections, to allow for some healthy rivalry and see the election of inspired and committed members of our Union. Taking on a committee position may feel daunting at first but whilst taking on a role of responsibility can add to a task list it doesn't necessarily have to reduce the quality of each completed task. We must strive for excellence both within and outside of our academic lives.

- Hafiza Irshad

New Union bar supplier named

NEWS

Frank Leggett

News Writer

Molson Coors set to become the new draft supplier for Imperial College Union bars from August 1st.

Molson Coors – the current non-draft beer provider – has been chosen as the new draft beer supplier for the Imperial College Union bars, replacing Greene

King

The change of supplier will take effect on the 1st of August, after a five months' tender process for the position. Staropramen, Pravha, Carling, and Aspalls among others will be available from the keg. While the Union is still to make a decision on prices, following a separate budgeting process, previous surveys released by the Union suggest a pint of Staropramen could cost up to £4.50 against £2.80 for current house lager Stella 4.

Matt Blackett told *Felix*: "I am delighted

to announce the new bar supplier for the Union will be Molson Coors. It was fantastic to be part of the tender process along with the other student representatives on the Panel. The hard work put in by the Union's Commercial Services team has resulted in a great deal for our members for the next three years."

"This represents a new chapter for our venues, with an increased product range, greater event support and many more benefits for our student staff and all our customers."

The Union stated that choice will lead to better value for money while also allowing for increased training for the

"The Union stated the choice will lead to better value for money, and increased training for staff"

bar staff

With the arrival of Molson Coors, students will be able to name and brand the company's house cider. A call for suggestions will be held with students giving their suggestions, along with the reason for the choices. The vote will be closed-box to avoid inappropriate entries.

The decision was guided by feedback from a survey conducted earlier this year asking students for their opinion on the choice of house lagers. The Union stated at the time: "The Union

is always looking to improve services for students and listening to students' views is critical to this".

The survey came after a wave of criticism directed towards the Union for changing the house lager of four years, Stella 4, to Bud-Light – described by one student as "literal piss" – without consulting the student body. The Union claimed that the move was saving students £10,000 during the academic year. Stella 4 was subsequently brought back after a three month absence.

Student Academic Choice Award winners revealed

NEWS

Fred Fyles

Editor-in-Chief

The awards for academic and support staff were given out at a reception at the Union last Monday.

The Student Academic Choice Awards (SACAs) took place earlier this week, with eight staff from across a number of departments going home with awards.

The awards ceremony, organised by Imperial College Union, took place on Monday evening. 48 staff from across the College were nominated by students for awards such as Best Graduate

Teaching Assistant and Best Tutoring.

Nick Burstow, Deputy President (Education), who headed the SACAs this year, said the evening was "incredible", and it was "a pleasure to see just how much the SACAs mean to the staff at Imperial"

It was a good night for the Department of Materials and the Imperial College Business School, who took home two awards each. Professor Marisa Miraldo, an associate professor in health economics, kicked off the evening with her award for Best Supervision. The panel said she was described as "outstanding and inspiring" in her nominations. PhD student Hormoz Ramian, also from the Business School, took home the award for Best Graduate Teaching

Assistant.

From the Department of Materials, Dr Anna Regoutz was awarded Best Teaching for Undergraduates; she was described as "a shining pearl in a murky sea of confusing lectures" in one of her nominations. Dr Luc Vandepierre, a Reader in Structural Ceramics from the Department of Materials, was awarded Best Feedback.

Best Innovation was awarded to Giskin Day, course lead for the new intercalated BSc in Medical Humanities, Philosophy, and Law, for her "out of the box thinking, imaginative use of gamification in teaching content, and expanding the horizons of her students"

Speaking to *Felix*, Day said she felt "honoured" to receive the award: "The students inspire me,

because I always learn so much from them, but there is also a team of innovative teachers – I'm inspired by a lot of people. Just being given the permission to be innovative at a big university like this is really nice. There's a great future ahead for innovative, interdisciplinary teaching."

Burstow told *Felix*: "The SACAs are a truly wonderful initiative, and a reminder of what we should all be making more time to do: to celebrate excellence, to share positivity, and most importantly, to say 'thank you' to those who have made a difference to us. Despite the pressures students face, this year saw our students saying 'thank you' more than ever before, with nearly 2000 nominations submitted."

Full list of winners

Best Supervision

Professor Marisa Miraldo – Imperial Business School

Best Tutoring

Professor Graham Wilson – Medicine

Best Graduate Teaching Assistant

Hormoz Ramian – Imperial Business School

Best Teaching for Undergraduates

Dr Anna Regoutz – Materials

Best Support Staff

Clare Drysdale – EEE

Best Innovation

Giskin Day – School of Professional Development

Best Feedback

Dr Luc Vandepierre – Materials

Best Teaching for Postgraduates

Dr Fidelis Perkonigg – Computing

Break in at Beit Hall

NEWS

Fred Fyles

Editor-in-Chief

A burglar was caught trying to enter students' rooms on Tuesday.

An intruder was arrested earlier this week after attempting to enter unlocked rooms in Beit Hall.

On Tuesday evening the individual, who was trying to gain access to rooms within the hall, was spotted by a student, who contacted the on-site security team. The police were then phoned, who arrested the individual.

Residents of Beit Hall were informed

of the incident shortly before 9.30pm that same evening, in an email from the warden. He urged any students who notice items missing to report it to a warden or the security team.

"The individual was trying to gain access to unlocked rooms within the hall"

A representative from the College told *Felix*: "Alongside the College's security and wardening

teams, students play an important role in keeping halls safe and secure. Students are asked not to let people tailgate when entering halls, and are advised to keep their room doors locked even when only away from their room for a short time."

Nigel Ward, Imperial College Crime and Investigations Manager, also advised staff and students to keep valuables out of sight and locked away. "Report anyone you feel looks suspicious to security," he told *Felix*, "We would rather get 100 false calls than miss the one about someone who is up to no good."

If students have any security concerns, they are encouraged to call the security team on 02075891000.

Changes to appeals and complaints process

NEWS

Fred Fyles

Editor-in-Chief

Appeals and complaints policy have been changed this month.

Imperial College London has put in place changes to their policies on academic appeals and student complaints, aimed to make the process clearer and easier.

The changes, which came into effect earlier this week, included separating out arithmetical mark checks from the usual appeals process,

providing more information to students about how and when to escalate complaints, and providing clear timelines for those on both sides.

Registry, who deal with complaints and appeals, say the changes were made to make the process easier for students to understand, providing clear timelines and stages to the complaints or appeal process.

The changes came into effect from the 14th May, following approval from Imperial College's Senate. All appeals and complaints raised from the 14th onwards will fall under the new procedures. No student will be disadvantaged by the changes that have been made.

A working party from across the College, and including consultation with the Imperial College Union sabbatical officers and the advice centre made the changes based on recommendations that arose from existing sector guidance, such as the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's "Good Practice Framework", as well as reviewing the cases they have handled.

Students who would like advice or guidance on complaints or appeals can get in touch with their programme team in the first instance or visit Imperial College Union's Advice Centre.

Imperial College London



Student Support Fund

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

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

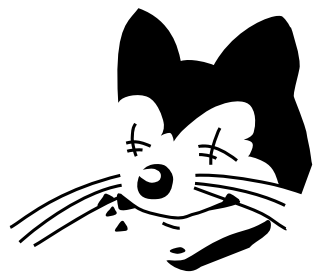
+44 (0)20 7594 9014

Student Hub, Level 3,
Sherfield Building

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

POLITICS

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It's time to break the cycle of foreign interventions

Syria and Libya are just the latest examples of where Western intervention has had catastrophic effects. We need to recognise how to stop it from happening again.

POLITICS

Anonymous
Politics Writer

The olden days of warfare, of shrewd generals commanding their gallant troops into majestic battles, are long gone. The *guerres du jour* are served as drawn out, low-intensity meat grinders across land, sea, and air, augmented by a generous portion of ideological – and perhaps, one could say, memetic – disinformation warfare waged both conventionally across mainstream media and asymmetrically on one of the most sophisticated pieces of technology devised by humankind: the Internet.

In the information age, the collective power and influence wielded by the Western establishment in the government, media, intelligence, and military spheres form the most powerful arsenal in the battle for public opinion. The lionization of the YPG, the Kurdish guerrilla which form the backbone of the US-supported Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), in the Western psyche as “an organization which has an ideology that combines libertarian socialism, gender equality, respect for ethnic minorities, secularism and green politics” – as described in a recent Felix comment piece – is one of the most recent showcases for the power of this propaganda machine. The narrative from the Western mainstream media about this



A child in a Syrian refugee camp // Flickr/Mustafa Khayat

group is structurally sound only when supported by cherry-picked examples which distort the facts on the ground by presenting half-truths, or, in some cases, outright falsehoods. The YPG commit acts which are as reprehensible and against the ideas of the “Western liberal consensus” as any other group in this conflict, examples of which include:

- The use of female child soldiers under the influence of drugs
- Admitting to use of civilian clothing by its militants which is a war crime per Article 48 of the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, blurring the lines between combatants and civilians
- According to the

UN, preventing civilians from leaving Afrin and hence utilising them as human shields (a tactic also used by ISIS)

- Inciting and supporting attacks on civilians in Europe – think about what the headlines would have been in the case of similar Molotov attacks backed by ISIS

Sifting through popular media outlets such as CNN or *The Guardian*, it is nigh impossible to find any reporting on these deeds which would tarnish the YPG's credentials.

Such selective reporting is, of course, not unique to the internet age. The most harrowing example of this behaviour is *The Independent's* heroic portrayal of Osama bin Laden soon after the

end of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, when his fighters were still useful CIA assets. However, whether delivered by the far more pervasive platform of the Internet or via the ancient-yet-proven medium of newspapers, the main objective behind such pieces is often drumming up support for interventionist foreign policy objectives. These policies have already led to disastrous consequences not only in the warzones themselves (attacking Afghanistan to destroy a regime led by militias who staged 9/11 but were previously supported by the CIA; outright lying about Iraqi chemical weapons as a pretext for invasion; “humanitarian interventions”

in Syria and Libya) but also in Western countries as evidenced by the recent string of Islamist terrorist attacks across Europe and

“It is painfully obvious that Western intervention amplifies suffering”

the USA.

In fact, a feedback loop created in the wars' effects in Europe is the most peculiar – it is a two-step process initiated, ironically, by Western interventions, such those

as in Libya and Syria which accelerated radicalization of Muslims living in the West and worsened the refugee waves. The second step is the radicalization of the Euro-American right which leads to further foreign interventions. The most tragic manifestation of this causation loop in the UK was the Manchester bombing in 2017, where the attacker was trained by the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group – an organization funded by the MI:6 in the 1990s to assassinate Gaddafi.

In response to the Manchester bombing, Jeremy Corbyn faced excoriating responses for suggesting that failure in foreign policy played a central role in the propagation of extremist ideologies, and that the war on terror was a failure. Upon closer inspection, it is painfully obvious that whenever Western groups support foreign armed groups, it inevitably amplifies suffering for both the people in those countries and the West itself. The world is now teetering on the edge of a war in Iran following US President Trump's decision to withdraw from the nuclear deal. To break this cycle of madness, it is increasingly important to write to your MP, vote for non-interventionist candidates, and oppose all foreign intervention – whether that intervention takes the form of a supposedly Icelandic Pirate Party-esque militia or of a conventional invasion. Otherwise, the tragedies of Iraq, Libya and Syria could repeat in Iran in 2019.

COMMENT

comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk



The early termination of nuance: arguments around repealing the 8th

Those arguing against the 8th amendment all too often turn to arguments that blur lines, and play politics with serious issues.

COMMENT

Shaul Rosten

Comment Writer

Later this month, on May 25th, the Republic of Ireland will hold an historic vote: whether or not to repeal the 8th Amendment of the Irish Constitution, which states: “The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right”

As such, television, radio and, of course, social media have been rife with proponents of both a ‘Yes’ vote – advocating repealing the Amendment and liberalising abortion rights laws in the country – and a ‘No’ vote. There is one argument, amidst the many banded about, with which I take issue, and that I wish to try and address here. Whilst the argument is one that is used to advocate a pro-abortion rights stance, I want to be clear that I am not arguing against having the right to have an abortion, but against the logic, and claimed importance, of a specific argument used for it; each side retains legitimate and logical arguments, and I am not coming down on either side.

The argument in question, used by pro-abortion rights activists, is this: “I believe that a woman has the right to choose what to do with



A pro-abortion rights rally in Dublin, in 2012 // Flickr/William Murphy

her body”.

In my opinion, although a woman’s choice certainly comes into the issue to some degree, it is not the central point on which the debate rests, and its continued inflammatory use suggests you are either for women having any right to choose anything, and so pro-abortion rights, or against women having the right to choose anything, and so against, creating an unnecessary stifling of opinion and discussion.

The debate of abortion ultimately rests on at what stage one believes

an unborn foetus is alive, such that its termination is considered either an innocuous action, like removing a small growth of cells, or such that its termination is considered equivalent to killing another human being. For instance – do we propose that the child is entirely not alive before birth, even a few seconds before delivery? I doubt that most people would agree with that. Similarly, I doubt most people would describe a day-old zygote as being alive; so the answer must lie in a

grey area somewhere in between.

If you believe that the unborn foetus is not alive, then the expectant mother can do what she likes (subject to my second point later on), much as we wouldn’t care if she elected to have plastic surgery, or get a tattoo. If you believe that an unborn foetus is alive, then it isn’t simply another part of the woman’s body, and a more nuanced approach must be taken. Is the foetus fully alive, such that no one has a right to terminate it, in the same

around whether or not a foetus is alive. Current rhetoric, however, seems to place the burden of the argument solely around the issue of women’s choice, conflating the issues and fuelling pithy, virtue-signalling arguments that don’t really deal with the complexity at stake.

“Current rhetoric places the burden of argument solely around women’s choice, without dealing with complexity”

Now, I hear you say, surely a woman has a right to choose for herself whether she thinks the foetus is alive or not, and act accordingly? I would counter with this: Moral relativism, rightly or wrongly (a little joke there), is practised in most secular countries by way of democratic consensus: we all largely agree that it’s wrong to murder people, so it’s against the law. In this framework, I as an individual don’t have the right to decide for myself whether killing is wrong, and I can’t take action – such as killing them – based on my personal assessment. Abortion shouldn’t be any different. With abortion, a country makes a decision as to how it views the life

COMMENT

comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk

of a foetus, and at what stage, and what the laws should be in line with that view; they thus vote on their view of morality, and its place in the law, in the same democratic process through which all our legislation is enshrined. Individuals don’t have the right to choose their own morals and apply them in contravention to law, law that has canonised the moral consensus of the people. Abortion is no

exception.

Furthermore, the implication of the binary nature of this argument – you’re either pro women’s choice, or against it – and the proxy this seems to play for your stance on abortion also seems to cruelly ignore any rights of the father. A foetus is not the exclusive property of a mother simply because it resides in her womb. Babies have fathers too. Just because the DNA

“This is a dangerous game of proxy, that blurs lines and plays politics with significant issues”

of the father resides in the body of the mother, doesn’t remove the fact that it exists, and, by right of paternity, belongs (in the way that any child belongs to a parent) to him. Where is his say? That is not to demand that the male voice overpowers or vetoes that of the female – but, as parents of a child, together, they should be respected and consulted. What does women’s choice have to

do with the decision of two parents, made together? Again, there is plenty of scope for debate around ownership, and at what point a bundle of cells becomes a child, that has parents, who have rights; my point is that, even as a secondary argument in the issue, women’s rights do not stand alone as a deciding factor.

To be unequivocally clear: my argument is not for or against actually

having the right to have an abortion. What I’m trying to demonstrate is that one particular argument, the right of a woman to choose what to do with her body, is far less relevant to the actual issue at hand than activists are making it. In my opinion, this is a dangerous game of proxy, that blurs lines and plays politics with serious and socially significant issues.



COMMENT

Lisa Hey

Comment Writer

On May 25th, Ireland will be holding a referendum on abortion laws, more specifically on whether to repeal Article 40.3.3 of its constitution (also known as the 8th amendment). The amendment states that foetuses and women are to be given the same right to life, and hence renders abortions illegal – except in cases where women’s lives are at risk. This makes Ireland the only country in Europe with such tight laws on abortion, with the exception of Malta, where abortion is illegal in all cases.

The referendum mainly stems from the death in 2012 of Savita Halappanavar, and the following protests and mobilisation to repeal the amendment. Ms Halappanavar, a 31-year old dentist, died from septic shock and multi-organ failure as a result from complications from a miscarriage, as she was repeatedly refused an abortion. Her case

It’s time to repeal the 8th once and for all

Ireland’s abortion laws are regressive, cruel, and out of place in the modern world. It’s time they finally go.

highlighted the thin line between defining risk to a pregnant woman’s life and risk to a pregnant woman’s health, which is one of the many controversial aspects of Ireland’s current law. At present, any pregnant female in Ireland apart from the circumstances mentioned previously – let her be victim of rape,

“This is a dangerous game of proxy, that blurs lines and plays politics with significant issues”

incest, undergoing a complicated or unwanted pregnancy – incurs up to 14 years in prison for terminating a pregnancy. However, as statistics have shown in various countries, the number of abortions does not decrease where abortion is illegal, instead having an impact on the safety

of those terminations: Irish women in particular resort to ordering abortion pills online, and unsafely, shamefully, taking them at home, or travelling to Britain where abortion is free under the NHS. Around 5,000 women a year travel out of Ireland to abort, but it comes at a cost that not all women can afford, including of course a heavy physical and mental toll.

In some cases, women are forced to carry a dead embryo to full term and deliver a stillborn, as would have been the case for Lupe, originally from Spain, who had been carrying a dead embryo for two months and flew back to her home country to get an abortion. In other cases, they are forced to carry out pregnancies that result from rape or incest. In 2014, an asylum seeker who was kidnapped, beaten, and raped in her home country was forced to keep, then prematurely deliver, a baby by caesarean at 25 weeks, after she threatened to go on a hunger strike in response to being repeatedly denied an abortion. The United Nations and UN Committee Against Torture have stated in the last decade



Ireland goes to the polls next week // Flickr/Edson Chilundo

that denying abortion for a pregnancy due to rape can be recognised as a form of torture. Similarly, denying abortion in cases of severe and fatal foetal impairment is considered a violation of human rights.

Abortion is undeniably an on-going debate and sensitive topic, but this referendum is a much-needed step for Ireland to bring its legislation up to a modern, and humane standard. The

strong rallying of citizens for the ‘Repeal’ campaign shows the importance and relevance of this vote. While polls were giving a clear ‘Yes’ vote for the past few months, they are now narrowing and giving a less defined outcome.

While every person is entitled to their own beliefs and opinion, it does not seem empathetic to deny – and punish – abortion in all but one unclear case, on the basis of one’s individual

opinion. Repeal the 8th is merely about moving on from forcing decisions and punishments upon women, to giving them access to a possibility and choice they have been so far denied, that results from deeply engrained mentalities and religious values.

SCIENCE

science.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Searching for a match: could you be Kaiya's stem cell donor?

Kaiya was diagnosed with leukaemia six weeks ago, and is still looking for a donor – her family are desperately appealing to South Asian people to join the register and help find a match.

SCIENCE

Fred Fyles
Editor-in-Chief

When the parents of five-year-old Kaiya took her to the doctors following some bruising, they weren't expecting to hear anything out of the ordinary. Instead, they returned home with the news that their daughter had leukaemia.

Kaiya, who was diagnosed a little over six weeks ago, is one of the roughly 400 children who are diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia (ALL) in the UK each and every year. Now, after several weeks of chemotherapy,

invasive procedures, and testing, she is in desperate need of a stem cell transplant. Unfortunately, her family hasn't been able to provide a match, and now are appealing to the general public to help them find one.

ALL is a form of blood cancer. While it can affect people of any age, it predominates in those between two and five years of age, with three quarters of cases occurring in those under the age of six.

While the cause is unknown, there are a number of different factors that can lead to the development of ALL; genetic factors are those most closely associated with the disease, and in Kaiya's case a genetic abnormality has been

detected, with two chromosomes swapping part of their genetic information.

“BAME patients make up only 15% of the donor register, making it harder to find matches”

While survival rates can generally be rather good for ALL, they are greatly dependent on a wide range of clinical and biological factors. They are also dependent on having the right kind of treatment available – chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and stem cell transplants.

Kaiya is one of the over 2,000 people in the UK who need a bone marrow or stem cell transplant each and every year, and – as someone of South Asian background – she is facing an extra hurdle. There is currently a mismatch between supply and demand on the stem cell donor register, with black and minority ethnic (BAME) individuals making up only 15% of those registered. While last year the charity Anthony Nolan recorded the highest number of BAME donors registering, BAME patients still only have a 20.5% chance of finding their best possible donor match, in comparison with a nearly 70% chance in northern

Europeans. This means that when children like Kaiya are in need, it can be much harder for them to find help.

There is something you can do, however: every weekday next week the King's College NHS Health Centre will be hosting a swab test drop-in, where people can test to see whether they are a match for Kaiya. They're asking anyone eligible who is of South Asian heritage to go along and see whether they can help Kaiya.

For those who are not of South Asian heritage, or are unable to go along to the drop-in sessions, it is still possible to join the bone marrow donor register: those between the ages of 16-30, who are in good health, can visit Anthony Nolan to sign up, while those over the age of 30 can sign up to alternative registers, such as DKMS. After signing up to the register, you will get a cheek swab, which you then send off – and that's it, you're registered!

If you're a match, you'll be asked to donate stem cells. Two methods are possible, with the vast majority of people undergoing peripheral blood stem cell collection. This involved receiving medication to increase the number of stem cells in your blood, before blood is taken through a needle in one arm, similar to a regular blood donation.

While Kaiya and her family are trying to maintain a normal life, time is of the essence in the race to find a donor. “Kaiya is our world,” her parents have said, “She is



Kaiya needs to find a match soon // CureKaiya

the kindest, big-hearted person you will ever know. She is such a sweet, fun-loving girl that makes everyone laugh with her infectious giggle. She is an amazing big sister and we are so proud to have her as our daughter. We want to celebrate her birthdays, see her graduate and have the happy and successful life we've dreamt for her. She is destined for big things and only you can help get her there. We are forever indebted to the kindness of our friends and strangers.”

To find out more information about Kaiya's story, and read about how you can help, please visit [facebook.com/curekaiya](https://www.facebook.com/curekaiya). For more information

“King's College NHS Health Centre are holding a drop-in session where people can get tested”

about stem cell or bone marrow donation, and to sign up to the register, please visit Anthony Nolan, NHS Blood and Transplant's British Bone Marrow Registry, or DKMS.

SCIENCE

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Science at the gym: the molecular basis of metabolism

Trainers hate it! Scientists identify new molecule implicated in exercise and weight loss!

SCIENCE

Sarah Wong
Science Writer

Exercise is good for you, we all know that. You don't need to read an article on it – or do you?

I guess the main question is, do you know how to exercise effectively?

The standard answer about the effects of exercising is that it trains heart muscles to become stronger, enabling it to pump effectively, resulting in better blood pressure. However, these effects are on the macro-scale, and scientists have yet to identify the molecules that bring about the health benefits of exercising. In particular, how exercise is able to elevate metabolic rate.



Mmmm, feel that 12,13-diHOME! // CC

Since metabolism is essentially the rate at which our bodies process chemicals, understanding the molecular factors is important for us to combat metabolic diseases and obesity.

A recent paper demonstrated that a molecule named 12,13-dihydroxy-9Z-octadecenoic acid (12,13-diHOME) can influence metabolism.

This lipid molecule is released by the liver and fat tissues, and it belongs to a class of molecule scalled lipokines– ‘lipo’ refers to fat, and ‘kine’ denotes kinesis or movement, suggesting the molecule assists in the process of fat transport. Previous studies have also reported that the lipokine can improve skeletal muscle insulin sensitivity,

therefore lowering ones' risk of diabetes.

In human studies, researchers have found that 12,13-diHOME levels increased after exercise, compared to 13 other lipid molecules that were measured. This confirmed the theory that this lipokine is induced by exercise, with levels increasing regardless of gender or age.

Not only that, but they also showed that 12,13-diHOME negatively correlated to fat mass and body mass index (BMI). In other words, you are likely to have a higher 12,13-diHOME level if you have a lower fat content, or a lower BMI.

To study the mechanism of 12,13-diHOME, scientists used mouse models to mimic the effect of chronic exercise. They found that, indeed, the lipid molecule in question increased after

exercise, and those mice that were working out had a lower fat mass as 12,13-diHOME can increase skeletal muscle fatty acid uptake.

To investigate the source of 12,13-diHOME, the scientists removed different types of fat tissue, and measured the level of 12,13-diHOME in the blood thereafter.

The results indicated that mice that had their brown fat removed do not have an increased lipokine level, even after exercising in the same manner. This experiment demonstrated that 12,13-diHOME released from brown fat is essential for an exercise-induced increase of the molecule itself.

Interestingly, brown fat tissue is the type of fat that is responsible for generating heat when you are feeling cold. Funny enough, in another paper

by the same research group, mice had an enhanced cold tolerance when they were exposed to a cold environment, or when 12,13-diHOME was injected.

In the future, with sufficient understanding of the entire process, a synthetic form of 12,13-diHOME could be developed as a drug to treat metabolic diseases and obesity. At present, it is best to stick with your exercise routine and eat healthy. Alternatively, perhaps, you can be experimental and expose yourself to the cold and see if you lose weight faster!

Be warned though, clearly, a larger human cohort is required to confirm effects, and further studies are essential to understand the role of lipokines in metabolism. Enjoy your food and appreciate your body – as beauty comes in all forms!

Information Conservation Technology

SCIENCE

Steve Allain
Science Writer

It is becoming increasingly clear that technology is advancing at such a rate that tasks that once took conservationists weeks or months have been cut down to a number of days. This includes the use of equipment such as camera traps, drones, and custom-built prototypes that are project specific. If, like me, you enjoy the fun of developing your own piece of kit in order

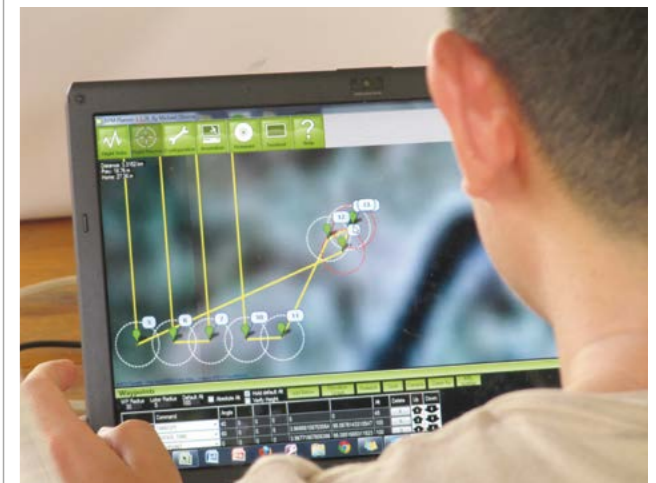
to help answer a burning scientific question then I have great news for you! There is an existing online community called WILDLABS.NET (found at the web address of the same name). It is a combined community of conservationists, engineers, data scientists, and other stakeholders. The platform is designed to share information, ideas, tools and resources from the community to help others discover and implement technology-enabled solutions to conservation challenges. It is now, more than ever, that technology is needed if we are going to solve the most pressing

conservation challenges of the modern age.

The community itself is run in association with United for Wildlife, a charitable organisation that is the collaborative efforts of multiple non-governmental organisations such as WWF and ZSL. The great thing is that whether you are using a new piece of kit that has already been built, or designing your own from the ground up, you should be able to find a member of the online community who is able to help! I have first-hand experience of this: I designed a passive acoustic monitoring system for amphibians

to use in Borneo. It had a few teething issues, and I was not sure if the components I tested the system with would stand up to the elements in the rainforest. Thankfully, multiple members of the community were able to help and, if it were not for them, the project would probably not have gone ahead.

It is not just advice and guidance that the community provides, but also an opportunity to collaborate and network. Every scientist knows that the key to success is a combination of these two things, and networking with people from all over the world



Technology is providing new options for conservationists // ConservationDrones.org

with the same technological problems or solutions is a great solution! Thus, WILDLABS.NET provides the conserva-

tion community with a much-needed tool to facilitate future partnerships between individuals and groups.



Beit Quad, Wednesdays, 1pm

Your Union events

Friday 18 May



THE UNION BAR

Beer & Boardgames

Every Monday
18:00 - 23:00
The Union Bar

Grab a boardgame and a beer from the bar and relax during exam season

Food and drink deal
Sharing platter and 2 drinks for £13
£11 with soft drinks

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h

Royal WEDDING celebration

PGI FRIDAY

FRIDAY 18 MAY
in the h-bar
16:00 - 01:00
FREE ENTRY
DJ 20:00-01:00
2 cocktails for £6

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REYNOLDS BAR

CLUB reynolds

Royal Wedding Celebration

Friday 18 May
19:00 - 02:00

Celebrate Harry and Meghan the way they would want you to!
With music, drinks and Student DJs in Reynolds Bar!

free entry

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imperial college union

Coming up in our bars



Super Quiz
Every Tuesday
20:00 - 22:00

Cocktail Night
Every Tuesday
18:00 - 23:00

Common People
Friday 25 May
20:00 - 02:00

Find us on Facebook!
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Cocktail Club
Every Tuesday
19:30 - 23:00

Pub Quiz
Every Thursday
19:30 - 23:00

PGI Friday - Royal Wedding Edition
Friday 18 May
16:00 - 01:00

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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

Club Reynolds - Royal Wedding Edition
Friday 18 May
19:00 - 02:00

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

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ARTS

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The new Royal Academy places students at its heart

ARTS

Indira Mallik

Arts Editor

The Royal Academy is inextricably linked to summer in the capital by virtue of its most well known event: the Summer Exhibition. Each year works by amateur artists, those still looking for their big break, are exhibited alongside the work of the established Academicians: artists elected to the Royal College of Art (much like scientists are elected to the Royal Society). It is an exhibition like no other, with visitors guaranteed to see work by artists that they would have never heard of otherwise.

This laudable support of emerging artists has been historically absent



A visualisation of the RA link bridge // David Chipperfield Architects

from the rest of the RA calendar. This is because, despite being one of the most prestigious post-graduate art schools in the country, beyond the annual RA Schools Show, the Academy has rarely allowed the public to be privy to the contemporary

art being shaped within its walls. As a result, outside of the blockbuster shows, the RA struggled to draw in visitors.

All this is about to change. From next week, 250 years since the Royal Academy was created, the New RA is set to be

unveiled.

For the first time, two RA buildings in the heart of Piccadilly – one in Burlington House, and the other in Burlington Gardens – will be joined into a unified campus in which the public are free to wander. The merging has

been designed by architect Sir David Chipperfield, who, rather than overhauling the historic buildings, has staged “diagnostic, punctual interventions”: a concrete link bridge here, a space-transforming skylight there, to create a whole that is fiercely modernist and respectful of its considerable history.

The expansion will put the Academy’s collection on display for free to the public for the first time. Visitors will be able to see works that include Michelangelo’s *Taddei Tondo*, the only marble sculpture by the sculptor in Great Britain. Elsewhere, the Senate Rooms have been repurposed as a permanent gallery dedicated to architecture.

Finally, and perhaps, most notably, the RA Schools will be at the heart of the new Academy.

Students will rotate

through The Weston Gallery, a public studio and workshop, allowing them to shape their art in full view of public gaze. For visitors it will be a glimpse into the forefront of contemporary art.

A new light-filled lecture theatre, modelled after the Victorian horse-shoe operating theatre where dissections took place for students to learn anatomy, is the crowning jewel of the renovations. Chipperdale will kick off the proceedings with an inaugural lecture next week, soon to be followed by an engaging programme of debates and talks.

The new building is being celebrated by a free ‘art party’ this weekend, including printmaking workshops, food stalls and live music.

America, vodka, and me: Tori Scott’s raucous cabaret comes to London’s Vault Festival

ARTS

Vaishnavi Gnananthan

Arts Writer

Hailed by *Provincetown Magazine* as the “Bette Midler of the new millennium”, Texan-born singer Tori Scott is renowned for her confessional, raucous acts. Normally based at Joe’s Pub, an affiliate of New York’s Public Theatre, Scott came to London earlier this year to perform *Thirsty* at the Vault Festival.

Thirsty is an hour-long cabaret performance detailing exploits from Scott’s life: from her teenage discovery of

vodka and their subsequent lifelong love-story, that one time she ended up in prison, and the trials and tribulations of everyday New York life, she’s ready to share it all in this comic confessional. It’s all powered through with classic songs from old musicals and subverted takes on modern hits. Scott’s escapades are funny to be sure, but what really brings it all together are her powerful vocals and natural self-deprecating humour.

A running thread throughout her interactions with the audience are her references to America and its political situation. Whilst we’re all probably tired of the go-to references that make easy fodder for comedians, Scott

brings a uniquely funny take to it by drawing parallels to her own drunken misadventures. America is that good friend who has had one too many and lost control. It makes big issues shallow, but this sort of thing is in keeping with the atmosphere of Scott’s storytelling.

It’s not just the jokes and funny stories that stand out in this performance, though. Scott is a truly talented singer and you can’t deny the power of her vocals. There are too many great numbers to name them all, but her rendition of Hozier’s ‘Take Me to Church’ and Janelle Monáe’s ‘Tightrope’ are amongst the best. Her performance really comes to a head in its final moments with an amazing

version of the criminally under-performed ‘Wig in a Box’ from rock musical *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, followed by 4 Non Blondes’ classic ‘Whats Up’. Ending on those two stellar performances, there is no way the audience could do anything but demand an encore. It wasn’t just Scott who’s amazing: she is backed up by a three-piece band ‘The Shame Spirals’, consisting of musical director/ pianist Adam Wachter, drummer Lisa Martin, and bassist Jamie Wilkins. They are the perfect foils for each other, and together they create a brilliant show.

The Vault Festival is the perfect place for Scott, although the particular stage used, ‘The

Crescent’, isn’t an ideal choice. Its standard stage layout with the audience in rows facing the performer seems too conventional for *Thirsty* which might have felt more at

home taking over one of the Vaults’ large bars. The atmosphere Scott creates is intimate, one where you want to be round a table of friends, drinks in hand.



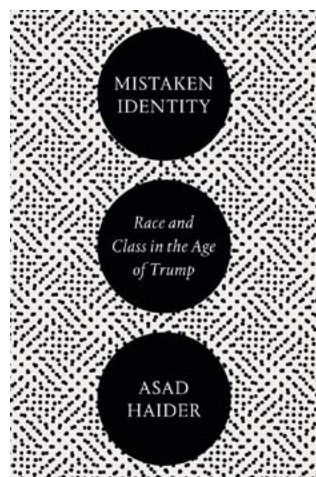
Tori Scott has powerful vocals // itstoriscott.com

BOOKS

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Mistaken Identity – how should the left move forward from identity politics?

Asad Haider's new book neatly skewers the problems with modern identity politics, but doesn't go far enough in offering us a solution.



BOOKS

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

by Asad Haider

Verso. 144 pp.

Fred Fyles

Editor-in-Chief

In June 2015, an interview conducted by KXLY, a small news outlet located in the city of Spokane, Washington, sparked heated debate across the world. For the first eight



Jesse Jackson put forward his 'Rainbow Coalition' in the 1980s // Wikimedia

minutes, Jeff Humphrey, the interviewer, speaks to Rachel Dolezal, president of the local NAACP chapter, about hate crimes she's experienced living as a black woman in the USA. In the last 30 seconds, however, he goes for the jugular, asking her: "are you African-American?" She walks away.

Dolezal, the chair of the Office of the Police Ombudsman Commission and an instructor in Africana studies at Eastern Washington University, is not African-American. She was born in Montana, to white parents, and, at some point after leaving her parents' house for university, began presenting as an African-American woman. The revelation over her identity birthed a short-lived cycle of think-pieces and online commentary, before her image was simply recycled into a series of memes, which still crop up from time to time,

with Dolezal becoming a by-word for the inauthentic appropriation of black culture and suffering by white individuals.

For Asad Haider, a founding editor of *Viewpoint Magazine*, a publication centred around Marxist theory and analysis, Dolezal's story is emblematic of a much wider issue within contemporary political discourse: the problems contained within identity politics. Dolezal exercised her "sovereign right as an individual working within the framework of identity" when forming her public persona, and – if we are to look at why her case makes us uncomfortable – we need to analyse what we mean by identity.

Mistaken Identity: Race and Class in the Age of Trump attempts to do just that, neatly dissecting the current issues with identity politics, and looking to a black radical tradition to see how the left can move forward in the future. In a series of short chapters, Haider takes us through the formation of identity politics, the current problems it throws up for organisation and solidarity, and how it came to develop in this way.

Haider writes from personal experience: he describes his difficult relationship with the terrain of identity, with a childhood that left him "convinced of the impossibility of settling on fixed territory". Born in Pennsylvania, he would spend every other summer visiting relatives in Karachi – split between these two experiences of the world, he settles on

a world-view that does not fit into the American paradigm, left without "anything resembling an identity". This confusion intensifies following the events of 9/11, which saw a "culture of condescending and exclusionary reactionism" mutate into an "undercurrent of open hostility".

Haider is at his best when neatly skewering the most unproductive aspects of today's discussions around identity. He takes umbrage with how theoretical ballast underpinning sociological and political concepts has been eroded over time – intersectionality, for instance, which legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw based in materialistic reality, "now has an intellectual function comparable to 'abracadabra' or 'dialectics'".

Those who read the subtitle of the book and expect an analysis of how race or class really operate under Trump, however, will be disappointed. Haider very rarely touches on Trump, or the reason he managed to take the White House, and only mentions Hillary Clinton as an example of where identity politics becomes disconnected from a fully realised revolutionary agenda – a politics wholly constituted by the idea of identity, rather than formed through it.

Any discussion about political concepts needs to examine their foundations: you cannot have a debate about the current refugee crisis without asking what we mean by statehood or borders, and identity politics should not



Rachel Dolezal sparked a debate about identity // Wikimedia

be mobilised without an interrogation of what we mean by identity. Haider is aware this can be tricky, since, in the absence of "other practical organisational efforts to combat racism, any questioning of the framework of identity seems like an attempt to deny the validity of the antiracist struggle."

Haider compares identity politics to religious fundamentalism, saying "some choose the consolations of fundamentalism. But others choose the consolation of identity". But he doesn't seem to go far enough in identifying what these consolations are. He tracks the emergence of identity politics in its current manifestation as a result of both a black elite prioritising racial unity as a means of preventing solidarity among the working class, and a neoliberal agenda that divorced progressive language from its grassroots base, leaving it hollow. This is all well

and good, but the popularity of identity politics within online discourse must have more to it.

Ultimately, what frustrates Haider about identity politics seems to be how it has become a substitute for real-world organisation and action. Activists have "allowed politics to be reduced to the policing of our language" while "the institutional structures of racial and economic oppression persisted." The turn away from a revolutionary nationalism, which Haider identifies in the work of mid-century black radicals, has allowed the capitalist state to absorb their challenges. To fight back against Trump, we need to "provide alternative visions, languages, and practices". Unfortunately, while this book is a good start to the conversation, Haider is unable to offer us a practical vision of what this new reality might be.

GAMES

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That infamous 'one more turn'. Who needs sleep when you can build an empire! // 2K Games

Just one more turn: the arbitrary endpoint

More often than not, we keep on playing a game even though we know we should've stopped a while ago. What exactly is the reason behind this?

GAMES

Saad Ahmed

Games Editor

Picture this. It's 3am. The only sound you can hear is the rhapsodic music of your game. Sleep is trying to lure you into its pull. You try to resist its charms. You have lectures in the morning. You know the smart thing to do is to shut down the game, and go to sleep. But you can't bring yourself to do it. Just one more level up, one more turn and it'll all be over.

This is a scenario a lot of gamers are familiar with. We all give ourselves a limit, we all say we're not going to cross it, but before we know it, we've already gamed our night away and are feeling somewhat miserable, or at the very least, utterly exhausted when it's over.

Unless of course, you've been downing Mountain Dew like a madman. I'll keep going until I hit the next level, you think.

Why do we do that? Do we really get any advantage over doing something there and then as opposed to doing it later, after we've done more important things? No we don't; it's the game, or maybe yourself, fooling you into thinking you need to keep going, for some kind of artificial endpoint. You may feel like you have something to complete before you can stop, but you really don't.

As an example of this, imagine you're reading a book. You're about to close the book and go to sleep only to realise you have eight or so pages left. You decide to forgo sleep for the moment and plough on. It's understandable why someone would do this; you've just invested

eleven or so hours into reading the book, and you think another half an hour won't make a difference. But remember, at this point, you're already half asleep, and the ending won't have the same amount of impact on you now as compared to when you're wide awake.

“The real issue is with meaningless endpoints, which players create for themselves”

In a more gaming related example, imagine you've been playing a few games of *Dota*. You've been doing really well and feel like it's time to

call it quits while you're still ahead. But then you find out you're only a few more achievements away from levelling up. So you decide to slog yourself through it and get the achievement. But once you do, you don't really feel any better for it. In fact, you might look at your current gaming time a little less fondly than before. Why is this? Simply put, you stopped playing for the fun of it. You were now playing to complete a task. Worst still, it was a task with no real benefit, at least not in the real world at that moment. It was a task you decided to put on yourself.

People, in general, love completing things: it's human nature. Whenever you decide to finish playing a game, you do so out of your own volition, after you've hit some sort of goal. Game designers make sure to add in some kind of

markers or indicators that make us feel some kind of progress or completion. These can take the form of checkpoints, rewards after completing challenges or finishing a level.

For the most parts, these types of endpoints aren't bad. They give a sense of game advancement, or, in the case of certain achievements, encourage you to play in a different and interesting way. The real issue is with meaningless endpoints, which players create for themselves. *Civilisation* is the biggest game where players create hollow endpoints for themselves. 'Finishing' a game of *Civ*, involves several hours at the fastest and several weeks at the slowest. You just cannot finish a game of *Civ* in a short timespan, so you settle for stopping at the next turn, which leads to the next turn and so on. And thus, people find themselves unable to

let go or stop a game.

Free-to-play games, especially, mobile games in particular, are usually designed in a way to give you some arbitrary endpoints. They usually have several types of progression bars or achievements list to show you how much you've been playing and how much you serve to gain by playing further. "Gain" is a bit of a loose term, it's really the game confusing your brain into thinking there are things to be gained.

Hopefully, now that I've spelt things out a bit, it'll be become easier to drop games at the first opportunity. Recognise why you've been playing up until a certain point and whether you're doing it to meet some kind of artificial endpoint. If you can learn to let go at the right time, you'll be all the better for it and enjoy the game much more as a whole.

MUSIC

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Beach House return with lucky number 7

The dream-pop band's latest work sees them developing their sound, embracing a more aggressive palette, while retaining their charm.

MUSIC

7



Artist: Beach House. **Label:** Sub Pop. **Top Tracks:** Drunk in L.A.; Lemon Glow; L'Inconnue. **For Fans Of:** Real Estate; Animal Collective; Melody Prochet. 47 minutes

Martin Flerin
Music Writer

When the new Beach House album, 7, came out on Friday, the first thing I did in the morning was take a walk through Hyde park and listen to it. Back home, Beach house was THE band I would listen to on long and moody walks through the forest, and I thought it fitting that I give 7 a whirl in the closest approximation to a forest I have here. Listening to the band in nature just fits. Watching the leaves swivel in the wind helps internalize the poignant lyrics and the hazy sounds with which Beach House have become synonymous. The weather was overcast and the wind was blowing – everything was perfect.

Now, I have to admit that I hadn't been convinced entirely by the singles leading up to the album. 'Lemon Glow' had all the right characteristics of a great Beach House song: the slow synth intro, subtle and intimate lyrics, and the characteristically soothing delivery of singer Victoria Legrand, arguably the best vocalist in dream pop. But the next two – 'Dive' and 'Dark Spring' – seemed like they

signalled a slight departure from the sound I have come to know and love. 'Dive' seems to me to be one of the most aggressive sounding Beach House songs yet. Alex Scally's guitar has a surprising fuzz and an edge to it and the final flourish kicks the drum machine into overdrive. 'Dark Spring' did not make sense at first either. Their songs usually tend to envelop your soul, to attempt to slowly coax you to resonate with their melancholy. Their practice space is entirely coated in white fur for fuck's sake, you can't expect this band to force any feelings on you. But that is how I felt about what would turn out to be the album opener – it felt forced.

"'Lemon Glow' has all the characteristics of a great Beach House song: slow synth intro and intimate lyrics"

Over the zebra crossing I went, and into the park; I started listening. Oh boy, did the opener change my mind. The last lines of 'Dark Spring' sum up the ominous setup that the song creates in the context of the album. "The world's colliding / A new dividing / The colour's missing / Upon the dark spring". 7 is like no Beach House album before it. It is. Better. It is probably not different enough from the rest to satisfy those who say that

all of their songs sound the same but their sound here is much denser than in any of their previous work. Listening to their older songs I could always imagine my thoughts and feelings bouncing between the stratospheric synths and the grounded rhythm of the drums, they just felt like they were a mile apart. This album does not let you do that. There is much more going on. There are more layers, the production is cleaner. Whereas they previously made incremental changes to their sound, here they have taken a bigger step. The duo may have taken a chance with this change but it was not only in sound where they changed things up.

Many question the relevance of art, especially in today's world, where recycled political messages permeate everything in order to assert the work's relevance. But art need not be relevant in a way that makes it obvious for everyone. It must protest, it must placate, and it must be some sort of shining light for someone out there. It must simply be true to life. And there is something about the extra pinch of darkness in this album that sums up the disillusionment that many feel today without actually saying it.

I don't want to just ramble on about the abstract feelings I get while listening to the music. I have their words from the album to back it up. First of all, there seems to be a running theme of the number seven in the story of this album. The first single came out on 14/2, and the total number of songs



Do I have something on my face? // Sub Pop

the band have recorded was brought to 77 after the album's release. The song 'L'Inconnue' speaks of seven girls, and lastly, of course, the name of the album. As seven is considered to be the queen of lucky numbers, at least in western culture, you would expect there to be a theme of the supernatural in the album. I feel it only serves to act as a contrast to the very real stories that Victoria's beautiful voice tells. Likewise, I perceive the gloomy lyrics as a way to highlight the beautiful in their songs.

The contrast of "Strawberries in springtime / pretty, happy accidents" and "On a hillside, I remember I am loving losing life" wants to ground us. To remind us that life has a bright side,

that we should not get caught up in the bad, that every melancholy must serve as a springboard for happiness, and that this

"'Lyrical contrasts serve to remind us that every melancholy serves as a springboard for happiness"

happiness comes from inner peace and self-love, highlighting what we should strive for in life. I feel that this duality of using dark and broody

imagery to highlight the bright and beautiful, this brilliant lyrical chiaroscuro is best encapsulated in the lines: "Little girl, you should be loved / Little girl, you should be loved / The moment you say you know / Is the moment you are."

One of my friends made a joke once that Beach House is driving music for the heavily sedated (if this were true, we'd probably see Tiger Woods endorsing them) and I feel that this album changes that impression. It probably went under the radar due to Tranquility b

Base's release the same day. Beach House aren't about that though. They keep it on the DL. Slightly dirtier this time though...

MUSIC

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Shô! it's come to this: jazz fusion from Marseille

MUSIC

SHÔ!



Artist: Shô!. **Label:** Independent. **Top Tracks:** Shô!; Cloud Drummer; Just a Beginning Part 1. **For Fans Of:** Snarky Puppy; Lettuce; Hiatus Kaiyote. 29 minutes

Henry Eshbaugh
Music Editor

There's this guy on YouTube called Marcel the Drunkard, and he does really spiffy speed watercolor paintings. He does them to fusion/neo-soul albums, then uploads the video and the music to go along with it. The guy's neat, and the albums

are abshô!lutely splendid. His latest video featured a jazz fusion ensemble with ambient, proggy undertones – Shô! (shô! on bandcamp), who've just put out a new album, also called Shô!. Shô!, let's get to the nitty-gritty.

Shô! is a band from Marseille, on the southern shô!re of France. From what I can tell, there's not much of a scene there; probably just some venue called Le Jam or something (side note: I actually looked it up, and there really is a place called Le Jam in Marseille, and yes, it's a jazz bar). Either the jazz revival is going international now, or these guys were just some oddballs that came out of nowhere. Either way, I'm happy the album landed in my hands. I'm no

pushô!ver when it comes to music, but this left me shô!ok, dazed and amazed like a kid in a toyshô!p.

There are two threads that run through the album, "Just a Beginning Part x" and "Spatial Night Part x" for x in 1, 2, 3 (last term zonked me, friends). JaB is the start and the end of it, but it always shows up with its counterpart, isolating the two singleton cuts, "Cloud Drummer" and "Shô!". The album is cohesive; the surprise cuts give a rhythmic shô!ve after the spaced-out (uh), mellow "spatial night" cuts. JaB shô!vs off more active, driving melodies – some even sounding nearly math-rocky in their tone and construction, and providing a nice counterpoint to the shô!legaze. The singletons build off both

these themes, displaying different dimensions of the band's burgeoning technicality.

And the band have chops. While some might jump ahead or fall behind, nobody ever feels ishô!lated from the jam. There are some great chords laid down on Cloud Drummer; "Shô!" has a wonderful shifting grô!ove with a fantastic cross-section of layered instrumentation – the musicians duck in and out of phase with each other in a polyrhythmic jumble that nearly respects a 4/4 pulse. And the shô!cking tempo drop 3 minutes in kicks ass – the sloshy guitar reminds me of the last Fleet Foxes album – at near 5 minutes, it's slowly enveloped by a gorgeous keyboard harmony slowly



That guy looks shôcked. Shôcked, I tell you! // Shô!

swelling up from the guitar's shadow; when the keys dominate, the song is over.

The EP did feel a little shô!rt. But for a first shô!t at an album from the (ap-

parently fresh) group, it was remarkably cohesive and nicely technical; overall, a very enjoyable, very promising piece of work. See you at the shô!w!

Ólafur Arnalds at his absolute best

MUSIC

ÓLAFUR ARNALDS



Support Artist: Manu Delago. **Venue:** Royal Albert Hall. **Date:** 14th May 2018. **Ticket Price:** £20.

Sabina Nowakowska
Music Writer

What a wonderful evening at the Royal Albert Hall! Ólafur Arnalds, one of the most successful artists signed by a minimalist record label – Erased Tapes – gave a memorable performance to a sold out crowd at the iconic London venue last Monday.

The concert was opened by Manu Delago, an Austrian Hang player. Ephemeral sounds of three Hangs, complemented by

some subtle electronics, resulted in a perfect opening act for what we were about to experience.

Ólafur Arnalds brought with him on this tour a string quartet, a drummer, and two self-playing pianos that play sequences of notes generated by an algorithm in response to the chords played by the Icelandic musician on another piano. The algorithm also controlled some of the lights on the stage. Pretty cool! The key element in Arnalds' music is his sparse piano playing, with long notes coming from strings and gentle electronics. This time the sonic landscape was extended by the sound cascades from self-playing pianos, and drumming, which added nice dynamic to the show. The concert was rather quiet and sometimes required the audience to stay absolutely silent and

focused to be able to hear barely audible murmur elicited from the violin.

The atmosphere in the majestic Victorian auditorium was very intimate. Not only was it due to beautiful tunes played by brilliant musicians, but also Arnalds' charming personality. The minimalist composer seemed to be flabbergasted by the legendary status of the place and humbled by the enthusiastic reception from the audience. Things got emotional when he dedicated one song to the couple in the crowd who got engaged that evening. It culminated at the end of the concert, when, after the first encore the band left the stage, Arnalds, with a trembling voice, thanked his family who flew over from Iceland to watch his performance and dedicated the very last song to his late grandma. He then sat behind one



The grand high minimalist // Sabina Nowakowska

of the pianos and started playing a very quiet and moving piece 'Lag Fyrir Ömmu'. Halfway through, he was joined by the strings played by his bandmates backstage. The sound was kind of muffled, as if it was coming from a different world.

That was a magical way

to end a great concert. I had tears in my eyes. Nothing else could be played after that. Arnalds proved that evening that he deserves all the accolades he receives. He showed that he is a mature artist who is aware of every single sound coming from the stage – or even from behind

it – and is not afraid of experimenting. We were presented with a lot of new material on Monday and it made me truly excited about the new album. The whole performance was probably the best thing I have heard from him so far – it was Ólafur Arnalds at his best.

MUSIC

music.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Take your protein pills and put your hair gel on

Arctic Monkeys return with their follow up to AM: A full-blown concept album that takes in modern politics and social commentary, while moving towards a new sound.



The new Central Library design looked a little odd // Domino

MUSIC

TRANQUILITY BASE
HOTEL & CASINO

Artist: Arctic Monkeys.
Label: Domino. **Top Tracks:** Batphone; Four out of Five; Golden Trunks. **For Fans Of:** Pulp; Father John Misty; The Last Shadow Puppets. *41 minutes*

Hannah Cudmore

Music Writer

From the record's title alone, it is immediately apparent that this LP is going to be unlike anything we have heard from the Arctic Monkeys so far.

They have a huge legacy, with a sound

that shifts from album to album. Their debut, *Whatever People Say I Am That's What I'm Not*, which became the fastest selling debut in British music history, is a fast paced, highly charged record. Moving away from this style, they explored more melodic descriptions of love and heartbreak before arriving at *AM* in 2013, which enjoyed a huge commercial success with its dark and lustful tones. Five years on, they have finally released something new and the main questions that preceded it were how they would sound now? Would they rehash *AM*'s winning formula? No, of course not.

This album is a far cry from any that the Arctic Monkeys have

released before. The most prevalent instrument is the keyboard, contrasting the guitar-laden approach they had taken thus far. It's stripped back; across most tracks only simple melodies accompany Turners vocals, which have also undergone an upheaval, almost sounding like spoken word. Largely discarded also are single-ready crowd pleasers with memorable chorus' and riffs; instead they have made a concept album.

"Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed." Neil Armstrong declared during the 1969 moon landing, which would be the site where humans walked on a different celestial body for the first time. The album's concept is a

very literal translation of this, setting up a resort upon the moon with Turner playing a character looking introspectively at humanity and himself. Indeed, the opening lyric, "I just wanted to be one of The Strokes / now look at the mess you've made me make", shows how far from their roots they have travelled, a world away from playing to small crowds in Sheffield bars.

And this is one of the issues that many fans are divided over. These cocky, funny, and unabashedly arrogant young men started out uncaring of success, shunning awards shows, and looking down upon crowd-pleasing artists. Eight years on from their debut, the release of *AM* showed grown rock stars, a completely different front to the one they portrayed in their earliest days, leading to shouts from some fans that they had sold-out. And now with the new record, we have a new face again; relatable in its loneliness and vulnerability, but more remote than ever.

It would be naïve to them to still be singing about slipping past the bouncer into a club. Listening to their debut though, it is hard to believe that they would have turned to social commentary and politics for new musical inspiration. But here we are. In nearly every song, Turner sings about his mistrust of the rapid usurpation of technology and social media. His character sits in their lunar hotel, looking at humanity viewing each other through their screens, as it changes how we interact and emote, before ironically turning

to the internet himself to help answer his questions: "I want an interesting synonym to describe this thing / that you say we are all grandfathered in / I'll use the search engine". In 2005, Alex Turner was taking a "Topshop princess" home, now he is staring at his 'Batphone', waiting for it to light up with a message from the one he is falling for.

'Golden Trunks' delves into the political world; it includes the quite fantastic lyric "the leader of the free world / reminds you of a wrestler wearing tight golden trunks / He's got himself a theme tune / they play it for him as he makes his way to the ring". In a sense this echoes their previous style, comedic and witty, but more poncey - this new flowery cynicism is shown again in 'American Sports'. Turner bemoans politicians "taking the truth and making it fluid"- a round-about way of saying 'fake news'.

"It is hard to believe they would have turned to social commentary and politics for inspiration. But here we are"

Alex Turner is a clever man, some of his lyrics are truly beautiful and resonate with the listener. However, at what point

does it become too much? This new prose-like style contains so many references to famous works and some lines are so pompous it makes you wonder if he had a thesaurus beside him as he wrote. It is an issue he addresses throughout the album, that it may "end up too clever for its own good". And despite the flooring arrogance, it's difficult to disagree.

Undoubtedly, the hardest thing to swallow about the album is its lack of instrumental prowess. This bare sound is not what they are known for, and this latest venture feels as though the rest of the band have been sorely underutilised. When imagining it live, I struggle to see anything other than Turner taking centre stage, with Nicholas O'Malley, Jamie Cook, and Matt Helders lurking tentatively behind him, contributing infrequent chords or the occasional, lonely drum.

But on reflection, I really do enjoy the album. I didn't expect them to recreate an old sound, but on first listening I did experience the shock felt by so many. It is incredibly different; and although it was a pleasant experience, I did not feel any of the emotional response that their music usually induces. However, on every subsequent relisten, I have taken away something new from it. It's subtle, complicated, and, while a bit pretentious, oddly endearing. But then, what else would you expect from someone at Tranquility Base Hotel and Casino, observing us from their detached existence?

TRAVEL

travel.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Paris mon amour: three days in the City of Lights

*Paris is one of the most famous cities in the world, often on every traveller's bucket list, and is especially convenient to visit while living in London. Travel Editor **Edita Pileckyte** shares her experience of a three-day trip to this Western European gem.*

TRAVEL

Edita Pileckyte

Travel Editor

Paris holds a special place in my heart because it was my first travel destination since I moved to London, and it made me fall in love with travelling. It was during the revision period for my January exams in 2nd year, when I got the idea, which seemed so crazy at the time, to just pack my bags and go to Paris after exams. The last exam was on a Thursday, and the new module was scheduled for the following Monday, which left us with only three days to relax and rejuvenate. But since Paris is so close to London and visiting it had been my dream for a long time (and also I was running out of

ways to procrastinate), I quickly organised transport and accommodation, convinced a friend to come with me, and finally went on this spontaneous three-day trip that ended up being one of the most amazing things I've done during my time at Imperial.

Day 1

Our trip started on Thursday evening as we took the overnight bus from London Victoria. The journey took around eight hours and was around £15 one way (obviously, a train or plane would have been quicker and more comfortable but also much more expensive). We crossed the English Channel from Dover to Calais on a ferry, where we had to get off the coach and sleep on one of the sofas inside.

Pro tip: you literally have to run to get yourself a sofa, else you might be stuck sleeping on a chair.

Upon arrival to Calais,

“Inside the Eiffel Tower, we spent some time admiring the city from above and found an ice rink on one of the floors. Never had I ever thought I would ice-skate above Paris!”

everyone was thoroughly checked at the customs, especially people from outside the EU. Needless to say, we didn't get much sleep that night, but hey, it made the travel experience even more adventurous and unforgettable.

We arrived Paris at 5am, way too early for our Airbnb check-in. Without any data on our phones or a plan on how to travel around the city, we wandered around until we found an underground station. Luckily, they have maps all across the underground system that clearly indicate where each landmark is. So the first thing we did at five o'clock in the morning was visiting the Eiffel Tower. Since it only opens

at 9am, we first went for breakfast at a cute French café, where a lovely local lady gave us some sight-seeing tips.

We came to the tower just in time for sunrise, which looked absolutely amazing! The tower has a few floors, with different ticket prices – the very top floor was closed so we could only get student tickets for the middle one. We spent some time admiring the city from above, did some souvenir shopping inside, and found an ice rink on one of the floors. Never had I ever thought I would ice-skate above Paris!

We then continued our journey along Avenue des Champs-Élysées, a large famous street full of shops and restaurants. We had to stop at one of the clothes shops to get some warm gloves and socks since the Parisian winter was much colder than that in London. Then, after a 'lavish' lunch at McDonalds (I usually opt for super cheap food and accommodation whilst travelling and spend more money on sightseeing instead), we reached the Arc de Triomphe. But since we were still carrying our heavy bags and tired after only four hours of sleep on the bus, we headed straight to our Airbnb to drop off our stuff and have a nap.

In the evening, we visited the Musée du Louvre (tickets are free for people under 25) to see the original *Mona Lisa* and other famous works of art. On our way home, we caught a glimpse of the beautifully lit up Eiffel Tower in the distance.



You can never be too old for Disney // Edita Pileckyte

Day 2

We dedicated this day to Disneyland, located outside of the main city area but still accessible by direct trains. We got a one-day two-park ticket for around £60 (mind you, this was two years ago and was also cheaper since we went during off-peak season), but only managed to visit one park since there are so many things to do. We went to all of the kids' rides and were the only 20 year-olds standing in line (ain't even ashamed, I paid too much to skip all that). Adult attractions were a bit more daring, like the House of Horrors or high-speed roller coasters, which altogether added up to an amazing experience. We concluded the day by watching the firework show above the main Disney castle, the last attraction of the day. (Some advice here: pack your own lunch for famous amusement parks since prices there are too

damn high!)

Day 3

Our last day was quite chill. We climbed up the Arc de Triomphe which overlooks the city, with twelve streets projecting around the Arc in all directions. We also visited the Notre-Dame Cathedral and Montmartre to complete our Paris experience. The only thing we didn't have time for was the Palace of Versailles, containing a museum and gardens, situated in the suburbs of Paris.

Finally, we took our bus journey back to London – having just arrived at 8am, we were already sitting in the lecture theatre that afternoon. However sleep-deprived I was, my happiness with this trip was over the top – that's when I realised how awesome travelling is, and it might be even more fun when you get to do that spontaneously.



Off to a great start with a 9am sunrise // Mingke Pan

Summer Elections¹⁸

#leadthechange

Nominations open until Wednesday 23 May

Nominations are now open for a range of positions in Summer Elections 2018. This is another opportunity, following our Leadership Elections in March, to stand and lead the change at Imperial. Positions are open across various areas of student life, including Liberation, Constituent Unions, our Academic & Wellbeing Representation Networks and our biggest Clubs, Societies and Projects.

Nominations opened: Noon, Wednesday 16 May
Nominations close: 23:59, Wednesday 23 May
Candidate manifesto deadline: Noon, Thursday 24 May
Candidate Briefing: 13:00, Thursday 24 May

Candidates revealed and campaigning begins: 07:00 Friday 25 May
Voting opens: Noon, Thursday 29 May
Voting closes: Noon, Friday 1 June
Results released: Evening, Friday 1 June

Stand now at imperialcollegeunion.org/elections



New Draught Supplier chosen

After 5 months of bid presentations and tastings from 10 suppliers, the Union has appointed Molson Coors as our draught supplier across all our bars. The 3-year deal will start on 1 August 2018, when our current contract with Greene King finishes.

The decision was made following feedback from over 700 students in our House Lager Survey in December, and by a panel spearheaded by Deputy President Finance and Services, Matt Blackett, along with Claudia Caravello (CGCU President), Rhys Smith (ICSMSU President) and Marin Tuleu (h-bar Duty Manager). Members of the Union's Commercial team were also on the panel.

The decision to appoint Molson Coors was unanimous as it was deemed to represent best value-added for members.

How we will benefit:

- A wider range of new and exciting products
- More event support, including speed pouring machines and outdoor bars
- New and increased number of taps for faster service
- Increased training and support for our hardworking student staff

Name our House Cider

The change of supplier also provides the exciting opportunity for us to name our own cider. Read Matt's blog for more info on the supplier decision and use the opportunity to tell us what you think our cider should be called.

Find out more at imperialcollegeunion.org/bar-supplier

CLUBS & SOCIETIES

felix.clubsandsocieties@imperial.ac.uk

GAME ON – IMPERIAL CLUB EXPERIENCE PROJECT

'It's 2017 at Imperial College Union; clubs are abundant and resources few. Their quests are ambitious, but it's dangerous to go alone.'

Their Union has devised Imperial Club Experience Project (ICXP) to equip clubs with the tools they need for development and to enhance their members' experience. By completing a set of goals, clubs can gain the experience they need to level up. Club that opt in will be richly rewarded.'

At this point anyone with a penchant for 80's arcade games should get the (dubious) references, but the real challenge is extracting meaning from such an abstract concept. ICXP – what is it and how does it affect clubs at Imperial?

ICXP is a new reward and recognition scheme for Clubs, Societies, and Projects (CSPs). The idea is that clubs can gain points for meeting a series of goals related to the management of their group. For example, by

running a *Give it a Go* session – essentially a free or low cost taster or beginner's class – a club will gain five points. Clubs can build points spread across five different themes to reach a total score. Points are then calculated to define a clubs' overall 'level' and the associated rewards. Many of the goals link to existing club activity, like running an AGM or meeting a minimum of 20 members, while others recognise clubs that are expanding their activities, such as running large events, trips, or tours.

Benefits to clubs range from priority location at Freshers' Fair to exclusive development opportunities and grants. As a minimum, clubs will be afforded a unique badge displayed on the Union website A-Z; with nearly 17,000 hits during Welcome Week, virtually speaking this is the place to stand out. Clubs will also receive certification and consideration for the ICXP Award at this year's Union Awards on 15th June. For those that need extra support, ICXP offers clubs 1-2-1 development planning to help map their long term growth, and

level up to reach the juicier rewards in the future.

You may be thinking *'that's all fine and dandy, but why now, and what's the purpose?'* With such a diverse range of CSPs it's a minefield for students to understand the ins and outs of all 370-something of them, and more importantly, those which are well run. From a member perspective, if I join a club will it a) be good value for money, b) provide a good experience, and c) even be 'alive' still? ICXP gives students a way to navigate the maze of clubs at Imperial, and sets apart those focused on their development, and those simply existing (looking at you Croquet)*.

CSPs that join now will have all points backdated to 1st August 2017 so there's no excuse not to get involved and see where you stand in the leaderboard. In all truth, we all just want to know who wins the game of clubs...

Ready player 2?

*Now dormant, RIP.

To sign up your CSP before the deadline (21 May) go to imperialcollegeunion.org/icxp. For any questions email activities@imperial.ac.uk.



IC Chess showing off their new table arrangement // IC Chess

IMPERIAL COLLEGE CHESS HOLD ONE OF LONDON'S BIGGEST TOURNAMENTS

One of London's biggest chess tournaments is hosted right here at Imperial, and organised by its number one sports club, IC Chess. The most recent edition kicked off on Friday 20th April, finishing on Sunday 22nd.

The weekend got off to a good start, with League Captain Ben Nevett conceiving of a

novel table-arrangement to maximise the hall's capacity, blowing the minds of all present and casting doubt on the necessity of years of turning players away from supposedly full tournaments.

Round one opened to an entry list of 95 in the Union Concert Hall. Organisation was led by alumnus John Sargent, and play officiated by the legendary FIDE International Arbiter Adam Raooof. Entrants were split into three sections (Minor, Major, and Open) based on ability, with five rounds to separate them.

This edition saw the club's President-elect FIDE Master Aron Teh, incumbent Thomas Donaldson, VP Francesco Salerno, and esteemed-member Aluna Rizzoli brave the Open section, with shock-entrant superstar (formerly ninth in the world rankings) and prolific author Grandmaster John Nunn, raising the average rating of the section substantially.

International Master Richard Bates and two-time Bangladeshi Woman's Champion Akter Shamima rounded off a remarkably strong tournament (much to the author's dismay).

The President started off well but saw his performance rapidly combust

and crash in a microcosm of his academic career at Imperial, failing to convert against WIM Shamima and then losing to a welcome visitor from France, Jules Brunier.

Aron suffered a shock defeat in round one, before storming into third place with a streak of four ruthless wins—including one over Aluna, who held onto two points out of five. Rock-solid as ever, Francesco ended his time on the committee on a high with two wins, two draws, and a single loss. First place was shared by Dr Nunn and IM Bates, surprising no-one, after they paused their respective massacres of the opposition to agree a quick draw in round four.

For another incredibly smooth weekend, we'd like to thank: Kristie Thacker and the SAC team for providing the venue and access to the SAC kitchen; Adam Raooof for taking up the mantle of Chief Arbiter; John Sargent for returning as Chief Organiser again and doing everything that title entails.

This is IC Chess signing out for the year, we look forward to seeing you all again in October!

- Thomas Donaldson

ICXP

IMPERIAL CLUBS EXPERIENCE PROJECT



FINANCE



SAFETY & RISK



DEMOCRACY

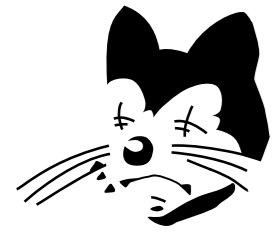


ACTIVITY



ENGAGEMENT

Is your club ready? // ICU



Hangman



Artist's impression of what the new service will look like // Flickr

Imperial to bring in ‘virtual counsellors’ to cover student demand as exam season hits

HANGMAN

Negafelix
Editor-in-Chief

The College is investing in a series of ‘virtual counsellors’ as counselling service continues to be stretched thin.

Imperial’s student counselling service has announced plans to bring in a series of ‘virtual counsellors’ to cover the increased demand they have faced from students over the past few years. Students will be able

to pick between a range of virtual counsellors, which come in a number of different models: one variation is a simple helium balloon with ‘you’re enough’ written on it, which plays calming whale songs; another is a Roomba that has been programmed to be drawn towards the sound of crying and blast ‘Happy’ by Pharrell Williams on repeat.

The move comes as the service is facing increasing demand. While the number of students accessing the counselling service has increased by nearly 40% over the past two years, the service has had no increase in funding since 2016, meaning the

current counsellors are being stretched thin.

Earlier this week, Oscar Murrucane, Vice-Provost (Making Ends Meet), announced contingency plans to help the service continue to provide counselling to students until the College runs out of excuses. Starting from the beginning of next month, students will have been provided the choice between a 10-15 week wait for a real life counsellor, or a two week wait for one of their new ‘virtual counsellors’.

Murrucane told *Hangman*: “We recognise the counselling service has faced some difficulties recently due to increased demand, which

is simply due to more students being aware of the service, and nothing at all to do with the College

“One student said her counsellor – a mop with a face – was one of the best listeners she’d ever met”

setting them impossible workloads and creating hostile environments.” “We deeply value the

wellbeing of our students and their fees, and have decided to increase provision to the service with a brand-new, cutting-edge ‘virtual counsellor system’.”

A group of students were this month testing the virtual counsellors as part of a pilot scheme. *Hangman* spoke to some of them about their experiences: Katy, a second-year mechanical engineering student, had been seeing a virtual counsellor for about two weeks. “I was a bit hesitant at first,” Katy told *Hangman*, “but I was really desperate to speak to someone. I was surprised when I went into the room and my counsellor was just

a mop with a paper plate face attached to it. But I gave him a chance, and he turned out to be one of the best listeners I’ve ever met – much more so than any friend or loved one.”

Another student wasn’t convinced, however: Anthony, a first year biomedical sciences student was paired up with the Roomba model, but had to switch to a real-life counsellor a couple of weeks later. “I’d try and tell it my problems,” Anthony told *Hangman*, “but then it would just drown out my sobs with that awful song. Now every time it comes on in Metric I have horrible flashbacks and have to lie down in a dark room.”

HANGMAN

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Imperial to include *Infinity War* spoilers as mitigating circumstances

HANGMAN

Negafelix
Editor-in-Chief

The changes come in the middle of the assessment period, as students report *Thanos*-related concerns.

Imperial College London have made a number of changes to their policies surrounding mitigating circumstances, following the release of Marvel’s *Avengers: Infinity*

War.

The policy changes, which were implemented during the summer exam season, an unusual move, came into effect last week, following approval from Provost’s Board.

As well as clarification over the process for mitigating circumstances, the policy outlines a number of new reasons for obtaining them, which mostly seem to revolve around *Infinity War*. Alongside reasons like ‘bereavement’ and ‘mental health problems’, students will now be able to apply for mitigating circumstances because of: ‘the ending of

Infinity War being ruined for me by some jackass on Reddit who didn’t use the spoiler tag’; ‘extreme stress following having to explain who everyone in *Infinity War* is to an elderly relative’; and ‘too much time spent catching up on all the Marvel films I missed and not enough time revising’.

The move followed an increasing number of students approaching student services with *Infinity War*-related concerns. William Dablay, Vice-Provost (Ambitious Crossovers), told *Hangman* about some of the rationale behind the

decision: “Just following the release of *Infinity War* we had a number of students cite existential concerns over Thanos obtaining all infinity stones as a reason for potential poor performance in upcoming exams. I presumed they were all experiencing some kind of break with reality, until my son explained, at length, what the film was about. Given the sheer volume of *Infinity War*-related complaints, we decided to alter our policy mid-term.

The changes to the policy have some notable omissions, however: Nathaniel, a third year



‘Siri, find me a picture of a Thanos’ // Marvel

Imperial student, was upset the policy made no mention of *Black Panther*. “If I fail my biomaterials exam, it’s not going to be because of Spider Man or

any of that bullshit,” he told *Hangman*, “it’s going to be because Wakanda doesn’t exist in real life.”



ARIES

This week you’re the *Felix* Editor, and you’re dreading having to cover your third set of Union elections in one year. This wasn’t in your contract!



TAURUS

This week they ask you how you are and you just have to say that you’re fine but you’re not really fine but you just can’t get into it because they would never understand.



GEMINI

This week you’re the Deputy President (Education). SACAs are finally over, and you’ve got nothing left to distract you from the meaninglessness of existence.



CANCER

This week you’re confused about how the College can produce so much wastewater when all the Central Library toilets are fucked.



LEO

This week you finally get a counselling appointment, but you’ve been waiting so long you can’t remember why you were sad.



VIRGO

This week you decide to chill out in the sun on Queen’s Lawn in full view of people taking an advanced computing exam. You monster.



LIBRA

This week you’re excited the weather has improved enough to break out your summer short-shorts. You get arrested for public indecency.



SCORPIO

This week you try and use disappointment at the new Arctic Monkeys album as mitigating circumstances. It succeeds, surprisingly.



SAGITTARIUS

This week you finish your last exam at Imperial, but let’s be real: every day is a test with your social skills.



CAPRICORN

This week you go along to Union Council, and it’s just like your sixth birthday party: nobody turns up and you can’t stop crying.



AQUARIUS

This week you seriously overestimate your tolerance to the sun. Don’t worry, when the skin peels, there might be a tan underneath!



PISCES

This week you’re the Horoscopes Writer, and we’ve still got four of these issues left to do? You’re bleeding me fucking dry.

FELIX SEX SURVEY



HOW DO YOU DO IT?

BIT.LY/FELIXSEXSURVEY

SPORTS

sport.felix@imperial.ac.uk

LUCA Outdoors Championships II – revenge of ICXCAC

IC Cross Country and Athletics Club head to Lee Valley, for the second round of LUCA outdoor championships. Going for strength in numbers, they dominate the field.

SPORTS

Jack Mitchell

ICXCAC Writer

LUCA outdoors – take two. Taking place at Lee Valley stadium on 28th April, this was an incredible event for ICXCAC and turned out to be our most successful ever athletics meet, in large part due to the enormous number of athletes that signed up to be part

of the action.

The day began with a bang, with Noel Rimensberger winning the very first event – the 400m hurdles. This was then immediately followed by a stellar performance from Alex Mundell, our club captain, who went on to win the women's 400m hurdles. Imperial also had victories in many other events, including in the 3000m steeple chase for Oliver Newton, the 800m and 1500m for James Millet, and in the javelin

and discus for Raul Rincken. On top of these great successes, we saw a strong team performance in the 5000m, with Harry Scriven taking third, and others in the team running excellent races.

“The day began with a bang, with Noel Rimensberger winning the very first event: 400m hurdles”

Another of our most successful athletes of the day was Shaun B Lutu, who took home victories in three different events: the 110m hurdles, the high jump, and the triple jump. As you can tell, he's pretty good at jumping... One of the surprise successes of the day was Imperial's strong display in the multi-event (think mini



The ICXCAC crew with their flag // ICXCAC



Celebrating a day of winning // ICXCAC

heptathlon), with a 1-2 finish in the men's event by Noel Rimensberger and Jack Mitchell (me) respectively. The events included were the 100m, shot put, high jump, and 1500m. I can confirm that running a 1500m without specifically training for it is a slightly unpleasant experience, but a rewarding one, especially given that it helped me come away with my first ever medal

at an athletics event!

So overall, another amazing athletics meet for ICXCAC. The fact that it was our best performance alongside our biggest ever number of entries just goes to show how important numbers are to our success. Everyone counts, as points are earned based on final position in the field, so the more competitors we have the more points we can pick up!

Which is why if you're considering giving athletics a go and would like a much-needed revision break, you should come along to the third and final LUCA event of the series at Battersea Park on 26th May.

Please contact Max Thorp our athletics captain on max.thorp14@imperial.ac.uk or check out our club Facebook page.

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

