



Felix

The Student Newspaper of Imperial College London

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"Imperial College sits in the heart of Albertopolis, a part of London which Prince Albert dedicated to educating people through free museums no matter their social status, class or former education... Imperial College's Business School seems to have forgotten its once noble heritage" //

Freelimages

The Business School made my life hell!

NEWS

Andy Djaba
Editor-in-Chief

Former Business School student, Amy Frelander, recounts her Imperial ordeal

An ex-Imperial student has reached out to *Felix* to share the experience she had last year with the Business School;

an experience which she describes as “tantamount to discrimination against people with mental health problems and those who are gender non-conforming.”

Amy Frelander, who works full time as a tech manager at Google, was enrolled on Imperial College Business School’s Online Global MBA in January 2018. However, following what she has described as “discrimination by 1000 cuts”, Amy withdrew from the course in May.

“I started the year well, full of confidence and

excitement at new prospects and end the year, still unable to function correctly, even on medication, under psychiatric care and in therapy, suffering from hypersomnia, migraines, generalised anxiety disorder and severe clinical depression.”

The course is structured such that students are placed in syndicate groups of about five or six per group. Students then work together with their syndicate group and progress through the course, keeping the same syndicate group throughout. Unfortunately for Amy,

she ran into problems with the people in her syndicate group. In an interview with *Felix*, Amy stated, “generally speaking, there were just problems, I felt, with emotional immaturity of the cohort and the syndicate groups”. Amy, who describes herself as sitting “in the non-binary area” since she doesn’t “actually 100% identify as female”, felt that she was bullied and discriminated against because she has “a lot of personality traits that people would associate with men.”

“People would say that I was aggressive,

very bold, very brazen; all these kind of things which, societally, are more accepted in men or expected of men and so, when I exhibited those behavioural traits within our group, both in the larger cohort and within smaller groups, I was very much rejected for that.” For Amy, this begs the further question: “Why was I called aggressive just for raising issues? Was it because people thought I was a woman?”

Amy noticed further issues surrounding equality, diversity and

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EDITORIAL

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THE BAG!

Andy Djaba – Felix Editor



The worst part about having a New Year's Resolution is the inevitable disappointment when you eventually flop. I managed to last a grand total of 17 days before flopping every single one of my resolutions. It was all going so well. Unfortunately, it is now 17th January and I've only been to the gym once in 2019, I haven't touched a book since 2nd January and it is currently after 11pm and I am writing my editorial. I'm especially disappointed in myself because today was going so well but, as per usual, the procrastination crept in. New year, same me...

This week's issue of Felix sadly comes with a somewhat harrowing front page News story. It's unfortunate that stories of this ilk are not at all uncommon at this university. This role has afforded me the opportunity to speak to a range of people with different opinions about the university. However, it is worrying how prevalent the sentiments expressed in Amy Freeland's article are amongst Imperial's staff and student population. I remain optimistic that things are changing, albeit

at snail's pace. My hope is, through sharing stories such as these and articles such as the "supervision stories" included in the monthly Postgraduate section (run in conjunction with the Graduate Students' Union), through *Felix*, we will be able to hold the College and Union to account. This can affect real, substantial change at Imperial and hopefully result in stories complaining about mistreatment at the hands of the university becoming a thing of the past.

On a lighter note, T-May lost her Brexit vote. I haven't seen a

defeat that embarrassing since Arsenal got smacked 6-0 by Chelsea at the Bridge. Brazil's humbling at the hands of Germany at the 2014 World Cup is a close second. I rate Theresa May for her resilience; I've never seen someone get up from the canvas with the count at "nine" so many times. On Tuesday night, my brother messaged me asking, "wagwan with this country bro? Are we Brexiting or nah?" To which I could only respond, "they seem to be playing some twisted game of 'Deal or No Deal' bro, who knows..." Speaking of my

brother, you might be wondering why the title of this editorial is "THE BAG!". One resolution that my brother started in 2019 was to relentlessly pursue the bag this year. Everyday he snaps me or messages me to remind me to remain focused on our goal. He also reminds me that I must be a "flipper and tumbler of the bag, never the fumbler". These new age proverbs are ones to live by so shoutout my bro! He's a clown but he's my clown init.

Also, quick shoutout to Hamzah Selim! You can read about his heroics on page three but my old football teammate managed to keep the undiagnosed Marfan's at bay for long enough to deliver a baby on a tube station. What a hero!

I'm really struggling to ramble today. Why are you still reading? Don't you have coursework or something better to be doing? Anyway, Section of the Week for this week goes to Games. The Games section returns with a bang; a four page extravaganza which even proved enough to thwart the mighty Arts section! Congrats lads!



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NEWS

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Imperial College Chemistry students to be offered cooking classes next autumn

NEWS

Isabelle Zhang

News Writer

The Department of Chemistry will pilot a new module, The Chemical Kitchen, for first years

Whether or not you are a chemist, you definitely have some experience with reacting chemicals – in the kitchen. On a molecular level, cooking is simply chemistry. The Imperial College London Department of Chemistry agrees, and will be advancing this notion by introducing a new module: "Introduction of Culinary Practices" for first year undergraduates who enter in autumn 2019.

The Chemical Kitchen,

as the module is also called, aims to introduce students to laboratory skills and practical experience via a more approachable and unconventional method. Lesson plans will cover traditional cooking techniques as well as methods such as "spherification" (think tapioca pearls in bubble tea).

This trial module is part of a "Techniques Bootcamp" that first year chemists will attend in groups of eight, brought about by the ongoing curriculum review of all Imperial College undergraduate teaching.

The sessions will train students how to document practical work, observation skills and dexterity, achieving consistent results, and executing written directions. The Department hopes that students will become accustomed to complex, practical tasks, and will develop ordered and systematic approaches to them.

The Department of

Chemistry is developing this unconventional module in collaboration with Jozef Youssef from the Basque Culinary Centre. Youssef is the founder of Kitchen Theory, a gastronomy experience design lab, and has had years of experience at Michelin star restaurants such as The Fat Duck. His work intensely analyses how our senses influence our dining experience. For example, he investigates how colours and symmetry can affect the perception and enjoyment of food.

Another member of the development team is Roger Kneebone, Professor of Surgical Education and Engagement Science. He believes the benefits will extend beyond culinary and chemistry. "The Chemical Kitchen will encourage social cohesion amongst

students, developing a sense of collegiality rather than competition within a safe environment that encourages personal

growth and supportive behaviour," he said.

The techniques covered by The Chemical Kitchen were tested out by an alumna from the Department of Chemistry, Katerina Stavri. She said: "This great initiative will provide a fun, non-threatening chemistry 'laboratory' for first year students allowing them to gain practical experience in a non-competitive environment. There are a lot of similarities between a chemistry laboratory and an experimental kitchen; from thoroughly recording observations to maintaining a clean and tidy work-space, students will have the opportunity to gain, practice and enhance skills needed in the lab in an interdisciplinary setting.

"A Chemical Kitchen requires creativity and intuition in the same way as research labs; this lab serves as a great stepping stone for young chemists who will join research groups in later years of



Imperial College alumna Katerina Stavri and chef Jozef Youssef // Geoff Pugh for The Telegraph

their studies," she added. Alan Spivey, Assistant Provost (Learning & Teaching), said: "Whether you want to be a chemist or a chef, skills such as meticulous planning and detailed observation and recording are vital. The plan is to encourage safe experimental practice, practical reproducibility and appreciation of the often-overlooked parallels between the practice of chemistry and myriad other activities which require manual dexterity so as to inspire our students to excel as experimental scientists."

The connection between cooking and laboratory chemistry is not

as far-fetched as it seems. Cooking an egg can exemplify how proteins are denatured by heat. A simple baking lesson would expose students to concepts of fermentation, temperature, and humidity.

Culinary science and chemistry also overlap in terms of apparatus. Chefs are increasingly using scientific equipment in their kitchens: centrifuges can be used to extract the oil from a puree; rotary evaporators can concentrate mixtures to strengthen flavor; sonic homogenizers can be useful in tenderizing meat.

Heroic Hamzah helps deliver baby at tube station

Imperial alumnus, Hamzah Selim, came to a woman's aid after hearing her cries at Warren Street station

NEWS

Andy Djaba

Editor-in-Chief

First year medical student, Hamzah Selim, has delivered his first baby - at a tube station. Hamzah, who graduated from Imperial

in 2018 with a BSc in Biomedical Science and now studies at University College London, was on his way home following an anatomy lecture on the afternoon of Tuesday 15th January when he heard two women shouting for help.

He saw the mother leaning against a wall on the Northern line platform. "I went over

to help because it looked like she was about to faint", told Hamzah of the experience. When he reached her, he realised the mother was in labour and the "baby was 50% out already". Hamzah then sat the woman down and delivered the baby boy.

Hamzah said his training from the time he spent working on a maternity

ward kicked in: "it was just instinct".

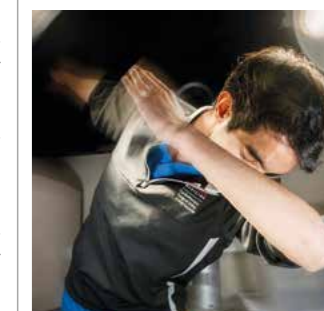
The mother had been

"I knew I had it in my locker!"

shopping with her sister and decided to take the tube after failing to flag down a taxi. She realised

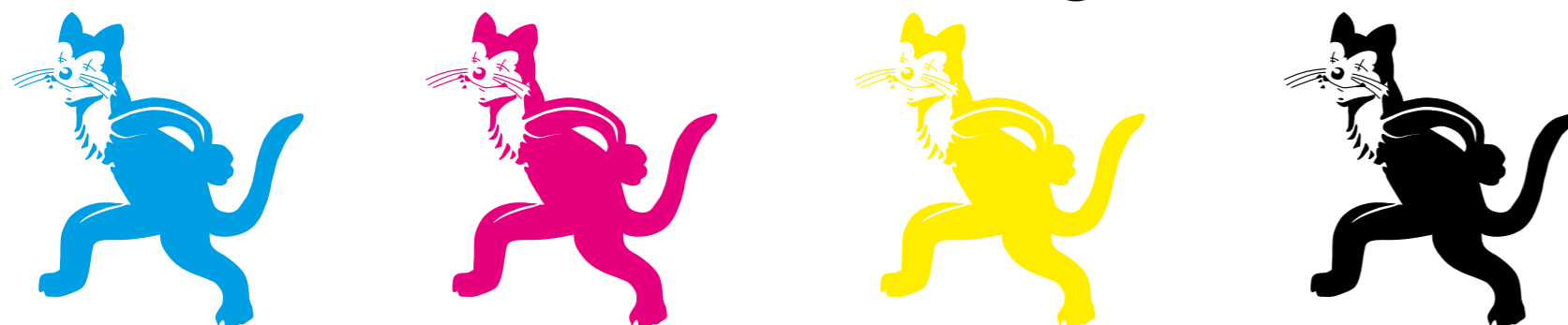
she was going into labour shortly before 2pm. She also told Hamzah she had given birth to three other children.

Paramedics arrived minutes after the boy was born and cut the umbilical cord. The child and mother were then later taken to hospital by the medics.



Dab on 'em! // Facebook: Hamzah Selim

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NEWS

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Imperial Business School made my life hell!

NEWS

(cont.)

inclusion when lecturers took it upon themselves to address the cohort about gender issues and has told Felix of “lecturers talking in lectures about LGBT+ issues with no understanding of the topics that they were talking about (confusing transvestism, transgender people, and drag queens and calling them scary and saying that all men have to do is dress up as women to understand them)”. Amy also complained about “deans not understanding what constitutes offensive notions to LGBT+ people (e.g. telling people that they turned other people gay) and arguing with me, as an LGBT+ person, that I shouldn’t be offended by what I am offended by”. Despite having good intentions, the lecturers made “a complete mess of it”, leading Amy to question whether they received “institutional support or training to talk about” the topic.

“My main concern is, there are a lot of people on that course who never would have probably ever encountered LGBT people and, because it’s a global course as well, there’s going to be a lot of people that are coming from cultures where it’s even illegal to be LGBT. Having somebody stand up and talk from a point of authority as a lecturer about these things from an ill-informed manner was a real problem for me.”

Amy shared that a lecturer “also said some other things which, as a feminist”, she “struggled with as well”:

“He said things around, ‘Well of course I don’t want to offend women, I’ve got 2 daughters’. That classic line of ‘because

they’re our mothers, sisters and daughters, of course we love them’... that’s just nonsense but it just further propagates biases that people have.”

“I just felt they were really ill-equipped to deal with stuff that includes EDI”

To Amy, the issues “started moving into the territory of a form of institutional sexism... institutional discrimination” and Amy claims that, even back in the induction week, “there was evidence of it”. “They had guest lecturers come in who would call the women ‘darling’ who would say ‘oh no I’ve got to take this question from this lovely lady in front, I can’t leave a damsel in distress’”. Amy found herself asking the futher question, “what does diversity mean to education courses - how can you integrate all the voices and ensure things are kept respectful?”

Amy believes that part of the problem was the university failed to “set up a good enough, strong enough Imperial culture” and wonders what the Business School’s Admissions policy looks at to “ensure diversity and that the students entering have the right attitudes to teamwork and diversity”. Amy also suggests that managing diversity should be a core syllabus item on the MBA course.

“People would naturally come in and exhibit the culture that they were used to, which was a problem and it ended up that we all clashed and the university

itself wasn’t very good at supporting us at all”.

Problems surrounding equality, diversity and inclusion were not the only sources of distress for Amy. “There were a lot of content issues; things hadn’t been checked, the quality wasn’t very good”, tells Amy of already spotting “red flags” within the one-week induction and the pre-induction periods. Besides the fact that much of the content was from Harvard Business School and there were “lots of mistakes and outdated content”, Amy also noticed “endless material focused on white, cisgendered males”.

“A lot of the content was very much targeted to a male perspective. They gave analogies related to football and F1 and things that you could understand how, in the ‘70s that’s what you would accept from a Business school but, in this day and age, it wasn’t good enough. They received a lot of complaints.”

“I know that, on reflection, they have realised that was a mistake”

Imperial Business School carry their “elite status” with pride and market themselves as one of the world’s leading universities. In Amy’s opinion, Imperial Business School still has a lot to work on before being worthy of its “elite status” in the world.

“There are of course some faculty members who you see are trying, or have found themselves in an environment that isn’t representative of how

they’d do things but the vast majority of staff, and materials are not where they should be for an elite school.”

According to Amy, she and many of the students in the cohort were just learning off YouTube, which begs the question, “how can the Business School justify the cost of its Global MBA programme?”

Amy said: “They wanted you to pay your money, take what you’re given. For a lot of students, it was because they just wanted the Imperial name, they just wanted the certificate and this is part of the problem. This was also part of the tension within the cohort. The vast majority of people were doing it because of Imperial’s reputation. They didn’t really care so much about the quality of what we were being taught.” Other students in the cohort have tried to defend this in ways which Amy considers “selfish, misguided and unethical, including arguing that, ‘paying a lot for a course means that you should work hard, even if this means teaching yourself or struggling through materials because of poor administration or teaching.’”

For Amy, the whole reason that she chose Imperial was because she thought it “implied quality”: “I thought that I’d be getting a high quality of teaching, a high quality of integrity, when in reality, it’s all just brand, it’s all just representation. That’s all I feel the majority of the staff at the Business School really care about. They don’t care about the quality for quality’s sake, they care about what people think about them, which is not the same”

Amy found herself



Amy hopes to leave “the hurt and pain in 2018” // LinkedIn: Amy Frelander

asking whether Imperial College is elite or elitist and whether the two can be separated. “In an ideal world, you’d want integrity and reputation to go hand-in-hand but we all know that reputation and integrity, there’s not a direct parallel all the time. There should be but there isn’t, especially with organisations and institutions that have been going for many, many years if not over centuries. It takes a long time for reputations and brands to change, it’s not an overnight thing.”

“They had high staff turnover, which really was contributing to their problems”

Amy complains of problems that she felt “gave people who had come into the course with a certain level of privilege even more privilege over other people.”

Amy added: “I come

from the direct opposite to the privileged, elitist bubble that this course seemed to want to protect. And it’s not something I can stand for.”

Following the problems with bullying and issues with her syndicate group, Amy decided to contact those in charge of the course. However, she ran into countless difficulties. She grew frustrated with the continued inaction on the part of the Business School. Within the first two months Amy sent 12 e-mails, to which she received no response. Amy recounted: “I was telling them I was in a lot of emotional distress, please don’t ignore this email. It wasn’t just casual stuff, it was ‘I’m hitting crisis point, please help!’”

It got to the point where Amy then had to escalate it to the Dean of the Business School because she was still receiving no response. When they did finally respond, I had a Skype call with the Course director.

“I think generally speaking, all the way through I was having a lot of problems with them and they just didn’t help me. They knew that I was

NEWS

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suffering and, in many ways, they just made it a lot worse. They were fully aware that was being bullied and did nothing to stop it.”

Two weeks into the second term, the stress built again because “the quality of the teaching materials was just so poor again”. The course took its toll on Amy and left her really ill:

“By that point I was really suicidal and just really depressed and my partner and I decided that a major source of distress was this course. There was nothing more that I could do, it wasn’t going to get any better. I wasn’t in a position to accept the poor quality, I felt that I hadn’t been treated fairly, I felt that my reputation within the cohort had been damaged and also, it got to a point where I felt my integrity was being compromised. I didn’t want to be associated with the course and I didn’t want to propagate this elitist mentality of ‘it doesn’t matter about the quality of the course, of the teaching etc., it’s all about the name and the brand and the reputation and what people think of it outside’”.

“I never got forwarded to any kind of resources that would help support me. I was never asked about my mental health, it just didn’t come up”

Amy is still dealing with the ramifications of the ordeal she suffered

through. When speaking to Felix, she mentioned “I’ve only today just got a psychiatrist say that I’m actually now better. It’s taken all this time for the depression to go away and that’s with medication, therapy, everything and I had to take three months off work because of it as well so it’s not inconsequential to me”.

When approached for comment, Professor Francisco Veloso, Dean of Imperial College Business School, said: “We are committed to providing all students with a world-class educational experience, and want everyone in our diverse and global community to feel supported and respected.

It would not be appropriate for us to comment on specific matters relating to an individual’s complaint. However we deeply regret if any student has had a negative experience or did not receive the support they expected, and we always seek to learn and improve.

We welcome feedback from students, and are always looking at ways we can enhance our programmes, currently with a particular focus on student experience. Our students are instrumental to our aim of innovating, and their insights have driven many of the changes being introduced to our programmes. Any students who would like to share further suggestions or concerns are always welcome to contact me.

We are very proud of our student body, and look forward to continuing to work with them to maintain and develop our community.”

After self-researching and having to fight alone, Amy followed the official complaint procedures afforded to her, which took six months. Whilst her complaints were all substantiated, she was left “profoundly disappointed by the contrition, empathy and humanity shown by



“The Business School seems to operate in a bit of a bubble separate from the rest of the College // Imperial College London

the Business School”. Amy recently published an article on LinkedIn, titled, “2018, My Year of Hell, Thanks to Imperial College Business School’s

Online Global MBA”. In this article, Amy gives a full account, detailing her version of events. She added: “I do want to be categorically clear

that this is not just my story. A lot of the things I was affected by, affected other students too. I know other students who have suffered on this course too

and didn’t get the support they needed. Some even withdrew too- just more quietly than me!”

COMMENT

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The last domino to fall

One of the last countries in the European Union to not fall victim to the rise of far right parties has joined the club with the rise of the new party Vox.

COMMENT

Aida Manzano Kharman

Comment Editor

Amongst the seemingly ever rising far right movement in Europe, despite all the tumultuous events that have been occurring in Spain recently, the rise of an extreme right party was not something that Spanish and European citizens predicted as happening anytime soon. And yet nonetheless, Vox was the first party to do so.

Sending shockwaves across the country, the elections in Andalucia were the first elections in which Vox managed to secure their first members of parliament. Although the left-wing PSOE was the most voted party, an alliance between the right-wing party currently in power (PP) and Vox, meant that Andalucia was governed by a right-wing alliance for the first time in 36 years.

But in what does Vox believe? And more importantly, why are Spanish citizens voting for them? As one would do to find out more about this new party's proposals, I began reading through its official electoral program. What I read truly worried me. Although it is not unusual for political parties to contradict themselves these days, these claims were at points so contradictory it was almost amusing, if it weren't for the fact that their aim is to actually govern Spain. Their



Santiago Abascal, leader of Vox // *Washington Times*

program is summed into 100 short bullet points, which they market as their new proposal to "make Spain alive".

Immediately their first point is to take a jab at the Catalan government, calling their attempt at a referendum a putsch and the politicians putschists. Interesting choice of words that I will not delve into. To solve the undeniable divide that exists between Catalans and the rest of the Spanish citizens, they proposed to remove the current federal government that has been in place since the signing of the Spanish Constitution of 1978. There is no hint at dialogue to try to understand where the discontent in Cataluña is coming from, and instead, their solution is, well, you can't have conflict between the federal states if you just get rid of the federal states. One perhaps key aspect that might have missed Vox's final review of their program was that, were it not for the federal system currently

in place and the federal elections that are held, they wouldn't have gained any seats in parliament, so it was quite baffling to read a proposal aimed to eliminate the very same system that allowed them to even be on the map in the first place.

Another eye-catching proposal was the reclaiming of Gibraltar. Why, I hear you say? The reason is uncertain, but what is for sure is that the general secretary of Vox, Jose Ortega, can tell you all about his great odyssey in 2016, when he swam, yes you read correctly, swam, all the way to Gibraltar, and climbed to the top of a mountain to place a Spanish flag on its peak. In fact, he recounts this great epic in such a theatrical way that its almost hard to believe that he's being serious. If you feel like grabbing some popcorn and hearing the tale of this great Spanish hero, please don't hesitate to read his interviews on the incident. Truly some great content.

On a much more serious note, they followed on with the immediate derogation of the law of "Historic Memory". This was a law put in place to allow victims of persecution in the past to be recognised. Amongst its measures, it allowed their relatives to petition for their bodies to be buried with decency by retrieving them from mass graves, it prohibited public symbolism of Franco's fascist dictatorship and recognised that sentences under Franco's regime were unjust and prejudiced against non-fascists.

But Vox is a well-rounded party, not only drawing inspiration from the fascist past, but also keeping up to date with Trump-ist latest tendencies. Apparently in Vox's eyes, it is also imperative to raise an uncrossable wall between Ceuta and Melilla (Spanish cities in north Africa) and Morocco.

In regards to their

immigration policies, their proposals include prohibiting immigrants from ever obtaining legal status in Spain were he or she to enter the country irregularly, for life. This means that any immigrant entering the country, for example in a dinghy, would never be able to settle in the country, or receive any sort of help, including medical help.

This effectively means that hot returns would not be illegal. Hot returns is a term describing the

"It is imperative to raise an uncrossable wall between Spain and Morocco"

practise of returning immigrants without carrying out the legally established procedures or meeting the internationally acknowledged guarantees to their country of origin. Images, witnesses and other numerous sources with evidential value accredit such practices in the cities of Ceuta and Melilla and the small islands under Spanish sovereignty. It is a practise that has been deemed illegal by both European Court of Human Rights and the United Nations.

But perhaps the most worrying measure proposed on the topic of immigration, is the notion of nationality quotas.

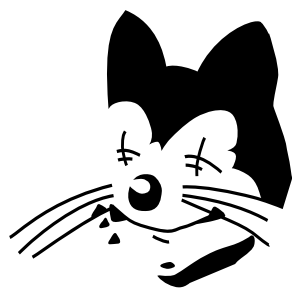
Strongly reminiscent of the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 in the States, their proposal would prioritise Spanish speaking immigrants and immigrants from countries with ties to Spain over other countries of origins and establish tight quotas on other nationalities.

The final questionable proposal on the topic under this section was the urge to publish all data on nationality and origin regarding statistics of crime in Spain. Under the 14th article of the Spanish constitution, all citizens have the right to no discrimination, so publishing this data would not only be a violation of privacy, but also an attempt to scapegoat different nationalities of people living in Spain by portraying them as criminals.

Reading through their 100 points for a more renovated Spain, all I saw was a perfect recipe for a backwards, xenophobic country, much like the one we had during Franco's dictatorship. Why would anyone vote for these reforms? Is it that easy for us to forget how damaging it was for Spain when the outlook was extremism, black and white division and complete disregard for dialogue? Are we sure we really want history to repeat itself in that way? What is certain is that no attempts to derogate our historic memory will definitely not erase the mistakes of our fascist past, and I would much rather learn from them than to repeat them.

COMMENT

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Meat-free Mondays: are they okay?

An anonymous comment writer thinks that all the fuss about meat free Mondays is overblown.

COMMENT

Anonymous
Comment Writer

What possible change on campus this new year could spur so many people to respond with anger? What possible subject, requiring no effort on most anyone's part could cause hordes to descend upon Imperial's most popular social media platform at Imperial College Exposed to express their outrage? Of course, it's reducing how much meat we eat. Of course.

If anything has been made clear by the trial

of meat free Mondays so far (of which there will have been only two by this newspaper's release) it's that many people are angry. Many students perhaps understandably feel that their lifestyle and identity is under attack. Less understandable is how eating meat is so key to their identity, and even less intelligible is how one or at most two meals without meat a week constitutes an attack on said senseless identity.

The second thing that has become clear is that this is apparently the fault of "the vegans". Not the WHO's, who have clearly stated that meat consump-

tion is tied to cancer risk. Nor is it the IPCC environmental scientists' fault, despite the demonstrably high impact of animal agriculture on climate change which, it may be worth remembering, is something we need to solve soon before we leave our planet uninhabitable for the next generation. No. It is clearly the vegans who are at fault. The vegans must be in control, because why else would there be no meat nor dairy nor fish on campus on Mondays. Except there's still fish. And all the dairy. And sandwiches aren't even included in meat free Mondays.

Perhaps if it weren't for the incessant muddying of waters with regards to infringement of personal freedoms and social responsibility, as found in the American question of guns as well as other endless political debates, then it might be easier to tolerate people being so pathetically whiny about meat free Mondays. Unfortunately, eating less meat isn't just a question of personal preference or how much you're willing to do for the environment. It's not enough anymore, if it ever was, for some people to stop eating meat once a week. We need societal change because,

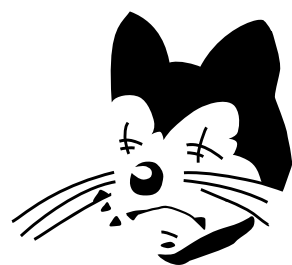
face it: you live in a society. We all live on the same dying blue dot. My not eating meat means

"We need societal change to save the dying blue dot we inhabit"

nothing if you keep doing all the clearly harmful things to environment that are as easy to solve

as this. If you need help changing, I'm here to help. If you're unwilling to change, it makes no sense for everyone else to sit around and watch you mess things up for the rest of us. You need to change as much as anyone else.

So, are meat free Mondays okay? Well, they're the smallest step in the right direction that we should be happy to support. It's one meal a week, people, and it's only pescatarian. What's not okay is how pathetic and incapable some people seem to be when presented with vegetarian food.



A travesty has occurred at Imperial

Meat-free Mondays are an assault on everything that we hold dear at Imperial: unethical consumption under capitalism.

COMMENT

Grumpy Bastard
Comment Writer

The vegetarians, or vegans or whatever powerful fruit- and veg-based cult that apparently runs this university has struck again. If you, like myself, are a carnivore innocently minding your own business, you will have run into the horror that is meat-free Mondays. How is it that these green-fingered

sandal-wearing tree-huggers have moved from being shunned at the edges of society to having enough power to manipulate what I can eat for lunch? Much like other extreme political ideologies that emerge from the shadows to oppress us normal-red blooded meat lovers, the animal friends convention has risen up. Now is the winter of our discontent.

How is it that the vegetable slime can impose their will upon us. Some of them make the claim that the Union has the

mandate to rule on what I

"Why are the treehuggers now able to manipulate what I can have for lunch?"

put in my mouth as a part of reducing emissions. In general I agree with that

sentiment. I personally believe in climate change, but I believe that people undersell the potential benefits. For one thing it may get warmer and for another, it might drown all those pesky tax havens. I believe it is my personal duty to stimulate as much demand as possible for that aim alone. That alone would be worth it, not withstanding the joy of eating a juicy steak.

Some argue that this approach is about making us healthier and happier as a result of giving up meat for a day a week. What

a bunch of hypocrites. Are they not all addicted to the most unhealthy, diabetes inducing food of all- sugar? Sugar is

"Global warming might mean that we can drown tax havens"

sold around campus per-

manently with no chance of it being subject to the same sanctions.

In summary, as much as I can no longer get an erection without looking at the portrait of the queen, why is it that the veggie extremists cannot comprehend that I cannot bring myself to eat unless I know that a semi-sentient animal has suffered? Something must die for me to live. And preferably that thing should be pink and squealing. And not a child.

POLITICS

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May's Brexit deal voted down by calamitous margin

Theresa May's deal has been soundly rejected by Parliament. She has wilfully plunged this country into crisis.

POLITICS

Divyen Vanniasegaram
Politics Editor

Theresa May lost the vote on her Withdrawal deal by 230 votes, and she only has herself to blame. This defeat was an inevitable consequence of the incompetent way she has handled Brexit.

Theresa May's problems are profound and difficult to solve but she gave herself no chance at all by her approach to Brexit. She has consistently treated Brexit as an exercise in party management between the Brexiteers and her pro-remain MPs rather than as the defining issue of the day. This was never going to work, and any deal would have required some level of cross-party support to pass the House of Commons. Theresa May has the sublime ability to pretend and act as if she has a massive majority when this is simply not the case. The numbers are simply not in her favour, and she should have spent this time reaching consensus within Parliament for a deal that she could have then taken to the EU as the starting point for negotiations. This is not new information, as this has been evident since her botched 2017 election.

This approach is unacceptable to fanatical Brexiteers, but their power is overstated. They didn't have the numbers to topple Theresa May in a vote of no confidence in her as leader of the party, and they certainly would be powerless in the face of



Theresa May // Wikimedia

cross-party support for a deal. The one move these Tory Brexiteers have left is to leave the party and vote against her in a vote of no confidence. What would happen afterwards though? A general election where they wouldn't stand a chance of winning and the outcome would be in all likelihood a softer Brexit. The only reason the Brexiteers are happy at this point is because if Parliament cannot agree on anything then the UK leaves on no deal terms. This is a game of high stakes poker, but ultimately the Brexiteers

will lose with remain MPs also prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to prevent a no deal Brexit. If the rest of Parliament is able to work together then the Brexiteer cause will be dead in the water.

"May has put the interests of the Conservative Party ahead of the country's"

What the country needs is a Prime Minister with the confidence to stand against those in her own party who are Brexit ideologues who would in all likelihood be unhappy with any deal. Doing so even at the risk of splitting the Conservative party. This kind of split would be the first of its kind since Peel in the 19th century, but the Conservative party survived and would ultimately survive another split. This reckoning has been on the horizon since Brexit happened. Time and time again rather than facing this head on,

May has dithered, wasted time and kicked the can down the road, putting the interests of her party ahead of the country. She has been the architect of the constitutional crisis between Parliament and the government. MPs have resorted to Parliamentary guerrilla warfare, passing motions and amendments to seize control from the government over Brexit in the absence of any leadership or solutions from the government. Our system was never designed for this.

It's promising that Theresa May has agreed to meet with the leaders of other parties to find a way forward and signals that she may compromise towards a soft Brexit, highlighting the waste of time everything up to this point. Given that other leaders have met with Theresa May, it's disappointing that Corbyn has so far not taken part in these meetings. It would appear to be solely a political decision to avoid making any tough decisions himself and to not appear to be supporting the government and the Conservatives. May will need to give up several of her red lines and bargaining chips including no deal if she is to make any progress in talks with opposition leaders anyway. By taking part in the talks Labour and the other opposition parties stand a much better chance of pushing Theresa May towards a soft Brexit with a customs union. This could be a great opportunity for Corbyn to doge the ever-present problem of

whether to back a second referendum and deliver a Brexit that would be most palatable to his party members. Once Brexit happens, things may well become easier for Corbyn. Pro-EU Labour members and MPs will gain far less traction in calls for a second referendum with the wider public once the issue appears settled. Corbyn can then focus on his attention on bashing the Tories over cuts and the NHS, certainly more natural territory for him.

Brexit has been fasci-

"Corbyn is acting purely for political interest to avoid the tough choices he faced"

nating to follow and will continue to deliver. We are entering a new stage of this process, and anyone would be a fool for confidently calling the outcome now. Any one of no deal, a referendum or a new deal could still happen. A referendum feels unlikely as it will not happen with May as Prime Minister and if one thing has been consistent over the last few years is her steadfastness. No deal shouldn't happen if Parliament gets its act together aided by the Speaker leaving some kind of soft deal as the most likely outcome.



Botox injections result in temporary flaccid muscle paralysis // Flickr

Facing the facts: Botulinum toxin in aesthetic medicine

With more than 3.5 million botulinum toxin procedures worldwide in 2014, the global botulinum toxin market is currently worth £3 billion and is expected to grow 7.2% each year

SCIENCE

Maya Kaushik
Science Writer

Pick up a glossy magazine to check out the latest gossip around your favourite Hollywood A-list celebrity, and you may notice that many of them have seemingly flawless faces, lacking the frown lines and crow's feet that you might expect to see in someone of their age. Sometimes this is down to airbrushing

and photo-editing, but sometimes this can be because the celebrity has had a cosmetic treatment, such as botulinum toxin injection.

Botulinum toxin works by disrupting the normal release of acetylcholine in motor neurons, resulting in a temporary flaccid muscle paralysis. Normal release of acetylcholine at the neuromuscular junction is mediated by a synaptic fusion complex, which is made up of a set of proteins known as SNARE proteins. After membrane fusion, acetylcholine is released into

“Incorrect injection technique can cause problems such as eyelid ptosis (a drooping eyelid)”

the synaptic cleft and then bound by receptors on the muscle cell. Botulinum toxin cleaves the SNARE

proteins, disrupting the assembly of the synaptic fusion complex, and thereby blocking acetylcholine release.

Several clinical trials have been conducted on botulinum toxin for aesthetic use, mainly for frown lines and crow's feet. Botulinum toxin is also used for lateral eyebrow lifts, ‘bunny lines’, and ‘gummy smile’, among others. Much of the safe use of botulinum toxin is based on the physician's injection technique, which is often personal and based on clinical experience

– incorrect injection technique can cause problems such as eyelid ptosis (a drooping eyelid).

Botulinum toxin has medical and therapeutic uses outside of aesthetics, including muscle spasticity, strabismus, and improper eye alignment. Many types and brands of botulinum toxin are now available in several countries worldwide. People have a range of psychological, cultural and social reasons for choosing botulinum toxin as an aesthetic treatment, in our increasingly image-conscious world.



Several clinical trials have been conducted on botox // Flickr

SCIENCE

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Mother's smoking during pregnancy changes baby's DNA

SCIENCE

Eyad Abuelgasim
Science Editor

Smoking in pregnancy damages an unborn baby's DNA – increasing its risk of smoking-related conditions in adulthood and a premature death, new research has found.

The study serves as a caution for mother smokers, more than half of whom continue during pregnancy, say scientists.

Mother's smoking changes chemicals in their baby that turn genes on or off – making the baby prone to illnesses seen in adult smokers.

“The study serves as a caution for mother smokers, more than half of whom continue during pregnancy”

Known as ‘epigenetic tags’ these changes can lead to obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer.

The study, led by scientists at Imperial College London and the University of Oulu in Finland, analysed data from more than 18,000 people across the world – including the UK, US and Australia.

Their findings published in the Lancet's journal EBioMedicine

show for the first time how it impacts on the development of disease through life and how smoking during pregnancy damages the baby's DNA in the womb without changing the genetic ‘code’ itself.

Instead, smoking can add or remove chemical groups attached to the outside of the DNA – called ‘epigenetic’ tags, like chemical sticky notes, through a process called DNA methylation. These changes can alter how certain regions of DNA are read and copied, so affect the activity of key genes.

“Our study shows compelling evidence that changes in epigenetic markers may persist over the lifetime of an individual,” said Professor Marjo-Riitta Jarvelin, from Imperial's School of Public Health, and who led the research group.

Smoking during pregnancy can lead to premature birth and low birth weight, as well as predisposing the child to higher risk for cardio-metabolic risk factors in later life.

But the exact mechanisms underlying these longer-term effects were unclear.

Yet despite the known risks, it is estimated 53% of women who smoke daily continue to smoke during pregnancy.

“Smoking during pregnancy can lead to premature birth and low birth weight”

Professor Jarvelin added: “These findings are important for health policy makers to further draw attention towards increasing awareness on smoking cessation programs and for better prevention strategies in maternity clinics and health centres.”

Her team focused on methylation of a gene called GFII, known to be linked with smoking.

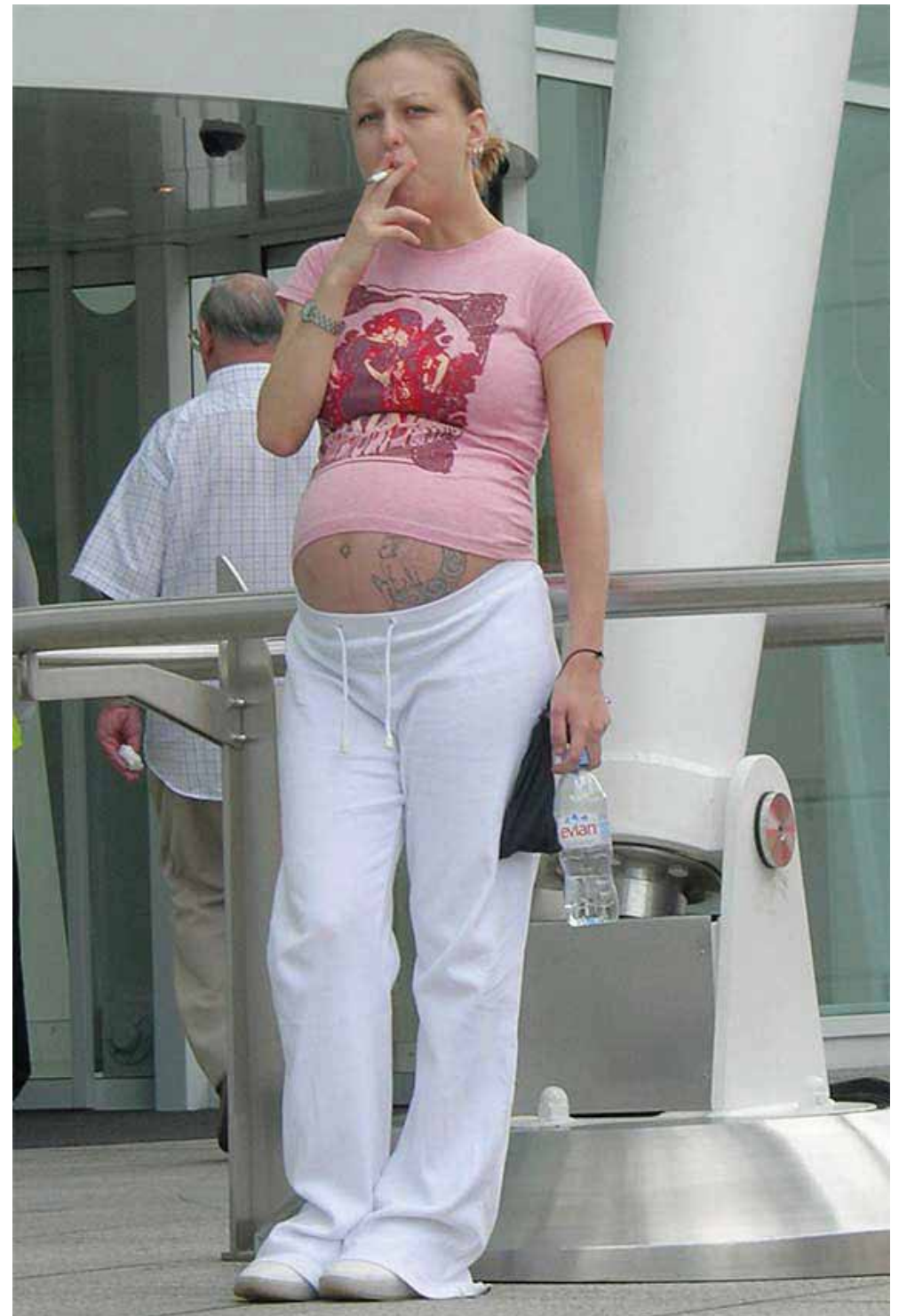
Using data from 22 population-based studies from Europe, the US and Australia, the team looked at the link between maternal smoking and epigenetic changes in a number of regions of the gene.

They identified lower DNA methylation of GFII in those who smoked or whose mother smoked while they were pregnant.

“Exposure to cigarette smoking in the womb ultimately increases a person's risk for a range of health conditions in adulthood”

According to the researchers, these epigenetic changes are associated with increased body mass index (BMI), blood pressure and blood lipids levels in adulthood.

This means exposure to cigarette smoking in the womb ultimately increases a person's risk for a



Pregnant woman smoking outside London hospital // Wikimedia

range of health conditions in adulthood, including diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

Priyanka Parmar from the University of Oulu, said: “Such epigenetic loci might serve as objective biomarkers of past environmental exposures that could be used for preventive health measures. This discovery provides a strong foundation for further work to unravel

emerging smoking epigenetic markers with downstream detrimental health outcomes.”

Cigarette smoking accounts for an estimated six million deaths each year and even former smokers are at long-term risk of cardiovascular diseases, lung cancer and stroke.

The study highlights an underlying epigenetic component for maternal

smoking exposure and disease risk. But the size of the effect is unclear.

The team now hopes to explore more genetic regions linked with maternal smoking exposure and disease risk. Their work focused on just six genetic markers out of a potential 6,000.

BOOKS

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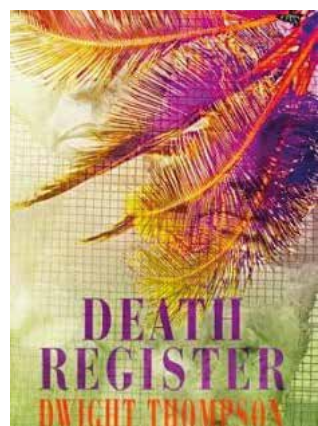
Death Register: a review

Death Register is a book about growing up in Montego Bay, Jamaica. I enjoyed the book but hated every single character in it.

BOOKS

Charles Titmuss

Comment Editor



Death Register is a novel outside my literary comfort zone. It follows the formative years of Chauncey Knuckle and his group of friends, growing up in the city of Montego Bay. It explores their relationships with their peers, their families and their teachers against the intensely homophobic and patriarchal background of Jamaica in the 90s.

Chauncey's story is directly driven by the conflict between himself and his best friend Tristan. Tristan is a homosexual and, while working together, Chauncey witnesses him being sexually abused by their employer. Chauncey fails to do anything, either to report the incident or to intervene on his friend's behalf, which Tristan is aware of. Tristan and Chauncey also experience direct academic rivalry at the elite private school that they have attained scholarships to. Chauncey excels as a writer, but struggles with mathematics, while Tristan is naturally gifted in this field.

These different factors drive resentment between the two, in addition to the struggle that Chauncey feels when it comes to accepting his friend's homosexuality.

The men and boys throughout this novel are portrayed in a mostly negative light due to the author's interpretation of toxic masculinity in Jamaica, to the point where the main characters are fundamentally unlikeable. Fathers beat their sons with the flats of machetes; the sons are all revolting perverts, misogynists and bullies and the main character has a penchant for both writing about and employing sexual violence against his girlfriend. I'm beginning to feel a little exhausted with this particular character trope; if mums can get off to the idea of a rapey man then maybe it's about time we did away with this stereotype to avoid making characters into unintentional parodies of Christian Grey.

One of the key themes in this book is intolerance of homosexuality. Words like "battybwoy" and phrases such as "no-homo" crop up all over the dialogue. The climax of the book, or at least one of the climaxes, occurs as a result of Tristan being caught having sex with one of the male schoolmasters. He is beaten up and then referred to a cultish schoolboy secret society that passes judgement on such matters. He is tried in absentia and expelled from the school. Anyone associated with him is ostracised from their peers, save one of his friends that is alleged to be gay but makes a speech

at the trial rejecting gay rights as incompatible with human rights. All in all, pretty fucked.

There are other important themes throughout the book, such as the conflict between the wealthy and the poor. Homeless people are ruthlessly exploited by the wealthy for sex, with homeless men engaging in sex acts with the local big men and women working in the aforementioned brothels.

The ending of the book was mostly lacklustre. Tristan is shot by corrupt police officers as a result of his involvement with a drugs gang. Chauncey reflects on his relationship with Tristan and admits that he was not entirely honest with himself or his friend as he loved him. I never really felt that this degree of affection was

effectively demonstrated by the author's writing and, instead of leaving me with a sense of sadness at this unrequited affection, I felt absolutely nothing.

I didn't really empathise with either – or indeed any – of the characters. They all felt almost entirely flawed, tied together by a series of events that seemed to emerge out of the smog of the narrative. It felt like, in trying to portray Jamaica in its entirety, the author brought much of what should have been background into the foreground. The plot lurched from event to event and the characters then failed to react in a believable manner. I felt like the story would be much more interesting were it written from Tristan's perspective, as he is a character

that would be far easier to empathise with.

That does not mean to say that this is a not a book you should read. It exposed me to a degree of toxic masculinity that absolutely made me uncomfortable and consider my own behaviour. The innovative style by which Chauncey both experiences and writes about events in the book is interesting and exposes more of the character without engaging in prolonged internal monologues. It is a rich portrayal of a Jamaican city in the 90s and contains some profound sections and characters. The strongest example of this is Chancey's Aunt. Although beautiful, intelligent and compassionate, she is barren and as a result has settled for an abusive

boyfriend. She is possibly one of the only characters in the book that I liked and I found some of the dialogue written for her on misogyny to be rather wonderful.

Overall, *Death Register* is a book that I was not ready for. Although I was aware of the degree of homophobia present in Jamaica, I was unaware of the extent. I must also admit that I found the portrayal of the character's life and their attitudes towards women very much at odds with my own worldview and experiences. That being said I think that this book raises important questions about masculinity in Jamaica and masculinity in general. It probably was not really suited for a sheltered white boy like myself.



Jamaica – looks pretty // Flickr

MUSIC

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The man who shocked the world

Three years on from the death of music icon David Bowie, Felix pays tribute by ruminating on some of the more overlooked tracks from his magnificent and eclectic career.

MUSIC

Juan Rubio Gorrochategui

Politics Editor

Three years ago last week, David Robert Jones passed away at the age of 69. I remember it perfectly, as it was the day I had my first exam as an Imperial undergraduate. The night before I had been listening to *Blackstar*, the surprise avant-garde album that he had released only two days earlier, and I was still mesmerised by its dark tones and the raspiness of his aged voice. Tired, stressed, and a little bit depressed by the sheer bleakness of the record, I went to bed, hoping for a good sleep to ensure a clear head the following day. I awoke to a news alert on my phone, followed by a sudden kick in the stomach as my half-asleep brain processed the information displayed on the screen. My idol was dead.

But he was not the only person that passed away that day. Throughout his life, he had as many avatars as a Greek god, and indeed sometimes it seemed that he had been sent from an otherworldly realm by a mysterious higher power to marvel us. He was a young beatnik from South London that looked for abandoned Afghan fur coats in the dumpsters of Carnaby Street. An androgynous alien that performed fake fellatio on his onstage bandmates. A European aristocrat with fascist inclinations triggered by a diet of milk, peppers, and massive amounts of cocaine. He was all those

characters, and many more, as every single fan had a different element of his persona attached to them.

To pay him homage in the best way I can think of, I have selected a list of his most underrated compositions, in chronological order. Listen to them, and you will be able to understand why the innumerable masks he put on were just that, masks. And behind them remained a hidden, even more sophisticated personality, an expert on dozens of fields, ranging from Kabbalistic occultism to American politics. A deep knowledge that allowed him to become the man who shocked the world.

'Cygnet Committee' (1969)

Hidden in *Space Oddity*, the record that brought him to fame with its unforgettable title track, 'Cygnet Committee' narrates with melancholic tone the disappointment that follows the success of most revolutions, in no doubt inspired by his recent experiences with the hippy-run Beckenham Arts Lab. At over nine minutes, it remains Bowie's third longest song in his entire discography.

'Quicksand' (1971)

The guitars provide lightness to this ballad that shows off Bowie's profound understanding of the esoteric. With references to occultist Aleister Crowley and Nietzschean philosophy, the song explores themes that would be further developed in his future album *Station to Station*. It is not surprising that

this is Marilyn Manson's favourite song of all time.

'Five Years' (1972)

What to say of this great opener? A perfect introduction to the glam rock era symbolised by his alter ego, the flamboyant Ziggy Stardust, 'Five Years' tells the story of a man that finds out that the world will end in the eponymous time, leading him to ponder about his life. Overshadowed by some of the best and most famous songs of his career ('Starman', 'Suffragette City', 'Rock 'n' Roll Suicide,' and 'Moonage Daydream', to name a few), its final guitar solo by Mick Ronson foreshadowed the wonders that of the album that would soon follow.

'Lady Grinning Soul' (1973)

One of Bowie's many talents was his ability to find collaborators who could enhance and elevate his songs to a superior level. That is the case of virtuoso pianist Mike Garson, who started a decades long association with Bowie in this album. The masterful piano entrance combines perfectly with Bowie's silky voice in this love ballad. It has been called "the Bond theme that Bowie never did", as its lyrics and melody fit nicely with the atmosphere of Roger Moore's 007 era.

'Word on a Wing' (1976)

Station to Station is a monument to insanity. The culmination of his Thin White Duke period, he admitted decades after

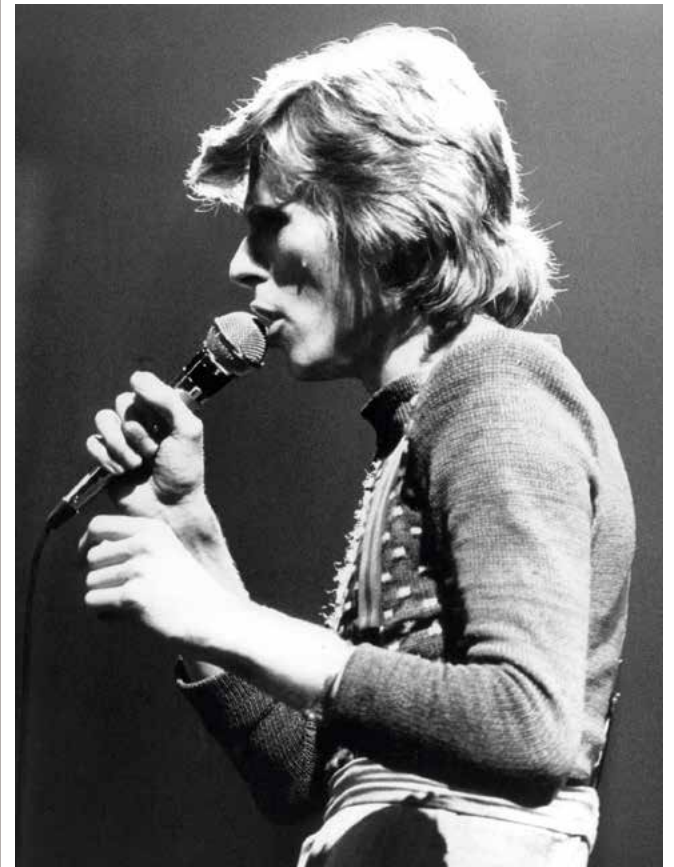
its release that he had no recollection whatsoever of the recording and production process, his cocaine addiction becoming so consuming that he regularly stored his urine in the fridge, for fear of witches stealing it. The occultist tones of the title track are further explored in 'Word on a Wing', a song marked with references to religion and crises of faith that arose every time Bowie awakened from his drug induced delirium. The angelical chorus that closes the composition provides a strong contrast to the actual state of mind of the performer.

'Subterraneans' (1977)

Move one year into the future, and you would find an entirely different Bowie. Transplanted from LA to Berlin to end his addiction once for all, the mostly instrumental songs of *Low* capture the admission of defeat of a man that had hit rock bottom, and musically serve as precursors to the synth and funk of the 80s. The closing track of the record, 'Subterraneans' gloomy melodies in stark contrast to its delicate sax solos that evoke past, happier times. It is supposedly dedicated to the people living East of the Berlin Wall, whose suffering was only increased by the festive memories of *belle-epoque* Weimar Germany.

'The Secret Life of Arabia' (1977)

Another great ending track, this song combines Bowie's famous falsetto with the African rhythms that would be further



Chameleon, comedian, Corinthian and caricature // Wikimedia

explored in his next album, *Lodger*. It has been unfairly panned as out of tone with the rest of the album, but it provides a great transition to the styles that Bowie would fully fledge on later years.

'Waterloo Sunset' (2003)

A cover may be a strange choice for this list, but Bowie's version of the classic Kinks anthem manages to surpass the original. Its rockier tone showed that the swinging London of the 60s had become a truly global city by the late 90s, serving as an update the most iconic song ever written about Londinium.

'Valentine's Day' (2013)

After the superstardom of the 80s and relative

obscurity of the 90s and 00s, Bowie returned to the spotlight with a surprise album that meditated on both his life achievements and memories, and his latest obsessions. Valentine's Day is the latter, narrating the story of a teenaged mass shooter in suburban America.

'I Can't Give Everything Away' (2016)

How to define *Blackstar*? A magnus opus that became even more definitive when Bowie passed away two days after its release. This song is the last album track of his century spanning career. Its message of calm despair before the unavoidable end will always resonate with anyone with half a heart. Truly the most emotional swansong ever recorded.

ARTS

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Jonny Woo's All-Star Brexit Cabaret

Saving the stage glitz and glamour for his costumes, Jonny Woo's All-Star Brexit Cabaret is a hit

ARTS



Where? London Coliseum
When? Was on 17th Dec
How Much? From £20

Connor Winzar
Arts Writer

For one glorious night, the creative mind of Jonny Woo was unleashed yet again in theatrical form, but this time at the prestigious London Coliseum. With phenomenal costumes that glistened so much that they would make disco balls blush, a spectacularly funny recollection of the history of Brexit and an astounding group of vocalists, Jonny Woo's All Star Brexit Cabaret left nothing to be desired.

Before the show even started I had a good feeling about it, as I walked into the theatre to see stalls to the left and right of the stage filled with Theresa May look-alikes. Eventually the curtains rose to reveal Richard Thomas on the piano, while Sooz Kempner, Adam Perchard and Kevin Davie sang a comical, overly dramatic introduction to the show. Suddenly Jonny Woo took to the stage and instantly I was bedazzled by his glittering EU flag themed jumpsuit; in what appeared to be an even more fabulous version of *Strictly Come Dancing*.

Giving the audience a few moments to process the majesty of his outfit, an introduction was provided about the show that was promptly followed by a musical number about the day of the referendum, depicting both sides of the

debate and how the public reacted to the results. Now something I absolutely loved about the production is how it remained neutral by taking an equal number of jabs at both sides, with remainers being portrayed as exaggerated weed-smoking hipsters and leavers portrayed as right-wing racists; with this, an absurd balance was achieved.

When it comes to the showcasing of politicians the show pulls no punches, with David Cameron (Jonny Woo), Angela Merkel (Diane Chorley), Boris Johnson (Jayde Adams), Nigel Farage (Le Gateau Chocolat) and Theresa May all being put on the comedic chopping block. A particular favourite of mine was Jonny Woo's take on David Xameron, as he sung about Cameron's woes along with a

trio of backup singers in a political rendition of "The Three Little Pigs", as well as Le Gateau Chocolat's performance as Nigel Farage in a magnificent opera style performance.

With all the turmoil that is Brexit deal negotiations, Jonny Woo's All-Star Brexit Cabaret presents the painful chronology of events in a fantastically comedic style, along with gorgeous costume design and changes (such a key part of the performance that they even had a song for it), something I enjoyed most about the show. Between singing sequences there were also periods of stand-up comedy that featured Jayde Adams' Boris Johnson impression and Myra Dubois's Britannia performance, both of which could easily be described as comedy gold. Not to forget added



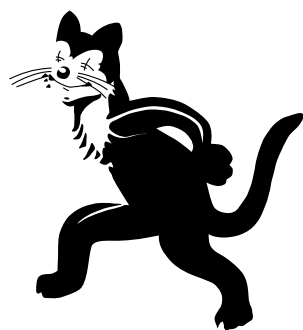
Fabulous costumes and hilarious skits // Jonny Woo

surprises such as the Theresa May choir (the lookalikes I mentioned earlier) bursting onto the stage with flailing arms, with some even daring to imitate the technical challenge that is May's robot dance.

All in all, the only fault

that I could possibly find with Jonny Woo's All Star Brexit Cabaret is that I wished it were longer, because God knows I think everyone wanted to laugh more about this horrible mess that we've found ourselves in.

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If you're interested, please email felix@ic.ac.uk

ARTS

arts.felix@imperial.ac.uk



Poor Pyotr Ilych // Catherine Ashmore

The Queen of Spades: ROH disappoints

Stefan Herheim's production delivers confusion in spades

ARTS



Where? Royal Opera House
When? 13th Jan - 1st Feb
How Much? From £11

Claire Chan

Arts Editor

It's been a long while since I've found an opera more enjoyable with my eyes shut than open. But with a director who says things like 'Opera is not about giving people a good time,' perhaps I shouldn't have been surprised. Stefan Herheim's gamble with Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades* tries too hard to be clever, making for a bewildering, boring and generally unenjoyable production.

Instead of Tchaikovsky's magnificent overture, the curtains rise to 'Tchaikovsky' performing fellatio on a prostitute. This rather distasteful opening is just the beginning of the humiliation of the poor composer.

Herheim wants us to view *The Queen of Spades* as the product of Tchaikovsky's struggle with repressed homosexuality. To this end, the Tchaikovsky figure (played by Vladimir Stoyanov) remains on stage throughout the opera, scribbling on loose sheets of paper and mock-playing on the piano as though he is writing the events of the opera in real time.

The midnight confrontation between Gherman and the Countess? There's Tchaikovsky, skulking in the corner. At the apparition of the Countess' ghost? There he is again, playing the piano with unnecessary melodrama. Gherman's and Liza's passionate love declaration? There he is too, chivvying the protagonists towards each other like some kind of maiden aunt. It is completely distracting. The emotional intensity of each scene is utterly lost – something Herheim clearly intends, since he has the characters pretending to sing off

'scripts' like actors at an audition.

The worst part of it is that this butchering of the opera isn't even to any point. Unlike what Herheim would have us believe, *The Queen of Spades* is not the invention of Tchaikovsky's tormented, gay mind. It was based on Pushkin's short story of the same name mocking human greed, and trying to reinvent it as the product of Tchaikovsky's tortured soul just does not make any sense no matter how hard Herheim tries. It's unclear what each of the characters signify and how this is all supposed to tie into Tchaikovsky's homosexuality.

To be fair, it isn't just the direction – this production suffers musically as well. Maybe we can't blame the singers for being as bewildered as the audience. Stoyanov, who (mystifyingly) plays both Tchaikovsky and Prince Yeletsky, was among the better singers here, with one of the few highlights of the evening being his

aria 'Ja vas lyublyu'. Aleksandrs Antonenko as Gherman is another story altogether. Was he

"Maybe we can't blame the singers for being as bewildered as the audience..."

singing, or shouting? At first I thought he was being intentionally discordant for the sake of acting, but I soon realised it wasn't a conscious decision at all. Eva-Maria Westbroek, starring opposite him as Liza, wavered in her singing and seemed to run out of breath in the longer passages. The one bright spot was Anna Gorvachova, who sang excellently as the side character Paulina (Liza's friend, here 'reimagined' by Herheim as her lesbian

lover).

Even Tchaikovsky's beautiful music failed to charm. The ROH orchestra, conducted by Antonio Pappano, played some of the most confrontational, unsubtle Tchaikovsky I've ever heard. Perhaps Pappano was suffering from a Wagner hangover after last year's Ring Cycle?

The set was, at least, technically excellent, with backlit panels of bookshelves seamlessly changing the stage from

"the most confrontational, unsubtle Tchaikovsky I've ever heard"

bedroom to ballroom. Visually arresting, the set designs came across as slightly histrionic at times, - at one point the large chandelier started

swinging across the stage while spewing smoke, like Phantom of the Opera gone wrong.

To prolong the misery, *The Queen of Spades* is hardly a short and sweet opera. 7 acts long, at the interval I found myself wondering how I would manage to get through the second half. At times it felt like we were just being shouted at – by Antonenko and Westbroek, by Pappano and the orchestra, by Herheim and his harebrained ideas.

Tchaikovsky would have been rolling in his grave. Wait – he was doing quite enough rolling about on stage already, being kicked and jeered at by his out-of-control characters and made a laughingstock for the audience. Far from being a sensitive exploration of Tchaikovsky's mindset and motives, Herheim's adaptation is a disrespectful and disappointing bastardisation of an opera once described by Tchaikovsky as 'my masterpiece'.

ARTS

arts.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Ambitious panto drama lack focus

ARTS



Where? Park Theatre
When? Until 26th Jan
How Much? £23; £16 students

Vaishnavi Gnananathan
Arts Editor

Aging panto performer Ronal Roy Humphrey returns to his dressing room, still dressed in bright dress and impressive wig. He's as loud and as flamboyant as you would expect from a panto star. But there's more beneath the surface for Roy. Faced with aging and the inevitable changes facing his beloved art-form, he's a man hiding

tremendous emotion behind the façade of his bright yellow gown. In a well timed follow-up to the Christmas pantomime season, *The Dame* opens up a bleaker take on this cheerful Christmas staple.

Writer Katie Duncan starts off with what would already be rich material for exploration. Roy is facing the lack of relevance that has come with both age and the decline of pantomime, alongside the death of the British seaside town that had been the traditional stage for pantomime. Surely, there's more than enough here for a 70 minute performance. But halfway through, we switch focus. It becomes clear that Roy also has a troubled childhood past. An abusive father and a child shielded by a vulnerable, but ever so loving mother. Perhaps it's cold to be so

dismissive of such clear sentimental bait, but it feels like Duncan has just taken a generic 'sad childhood' and added it into the mixing pot, almost as a cheap cheat for emotional depth.

The script also has a strong tendency towards hyperbole and the melodramatic, and to an extent that works. Our titular character is, after all, a pantomime dame looking back on his glory days – a certain flair for the dramatic is to be expected. But Duncan's writing fails to rein in her words when she takes Roy from stage performer to confused child, with her overly lyrical wording destroying any hope of actual immersion in Roy's past.

The play is almost saved by Peter Duncan. The former *Blue Peter* presenter delivers a strong



Peter Duncan as Roy // Robert Workman

performance as Roy, alternating between exuberant pantomime dame, and troubled man. The performance is almost a showcase of his versatility as he easily transitions from one to the other. However, even he cannot fully salvage this confused piece. Roy as a character

lacks the genuine heart needed to really come to life and as a result, we are left with a performance that somehow rings false.

London's Fringe theatre scene is full of talented writers, and it's all too frequently that I find myself watching a lacklustre

production of a great piece. It's almost more frustrating that *The Dame* is the exact opposite. The Park Theatre's lovely intimate space, simple yet effective set and most of all, Peter Duncan's strong acting talents are wasted on this confused piece.

Obscure Shakespeare receives a fun new revival

Not considered a Shakespeare masterpiece by any measure, the Royal Shakespeare Company breathes some life into The Merry Wives of Windsor and manages a hilarious 'Essex'.

ARTS



Where? Sadlers Wells
When? 19th – 20th Oct
How Much? From £15

Shivani Gangadia
Arts Writer

The comedy centres around the lascivious Sir John Falstaff, known to many from Shakespeare's Henry IV plays – *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is said to have been commissioned by Elizabeth I herself, who must have felt her beloved Falstaff deserving of his own story. This play uses this fact as a means of introducing the characters,

as in the beginning they come in one-by-one with their names projected onto the background – I found this immensely helpful in keeping track throughout the play due to the many characters.

In classic Shakespeare style, the story at times feels like there's a bit too much to keep up with, with bizarre sub-plots including marrying off the young Anne Page, a confusing dispute between a Welsh person and French doctor, a jealous husband posing as 'Master Brook' to trick Falstaff, and the involvement of Falstaff's servants in his downfall. However, the main story is ultimately that of Falstaff being the subject of Mistresses Ford and Page's schemes – and rightly so,

as Falstaff is attempting to womanise them simultaneously (owing to his debt and need for money).

Little does he know they've been tipped off – and boy do they have a lot in store for him. And so the hilarity ensues, as they repeatedly ruin Falstaff's foolish attempts to seduce them. The standout performances were those of the titular characters, Mistresses Ford and Page (Beth Cordingly and Rebecca Lacey). There was such incredible and succinct repartee between them, and every scene they had together lit up the stage with flawless comedic timing.

David Troughton, a veteran Royal Shakespeare Company actor, also commands the stage

in every scene he appears in, perfectly depicting a lecherous and loud Falstaff, and as expected, nails every bit of verse he has. Naturally then, the best scenes were the ones with all three of these characters, and there was some fantastic physical comedy alongside the

banter – notably the scene where Falstaff manages to get himself into a wheelie bin to hide from Ford.

The costumes and set design – a weird, never-before-seen mix of Tudor and Essex, with neon and glitter amok – were fantastic, and the strange dance scenes at the beginning and end only

added to the quirkiness of the whole play. There was never a dull moment; there's humour for even those who typically don't understand Shakespeare's jokes. Fiona Laird has taken one of Shakespeare's often overlooked plays and adapted it for a fun, silly evening for all.

Beth Cordingly and Rebecca Lacey in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* // Manuel Harlan

IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON AFRICAN CARIBBEAN SOCIETY PRESENTS



AFROGALA HAZINA

9TH FEBRUARY

6PM
GREAT HALL
IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON

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FILM

film.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Roma: a triumph of cinema or the pinnacle of home viewing?

A 'Netflix Original' by nature—it's a monumental shame that most will not discover this gem on the big screen.

FILM

ROMA



Dir: Alfonso Cuarón.
Script: Alfonso Cuarón.
Starring: Yalitza Aparicio, Marina de Tavira, Fernando Grediaga, Jorge Antonio Guerrero.
135 minutes

Sung Soo Moon
Film Editor

I have been anticipating Alfonso Cuarón's new film, *Roma*, since its warm reception around the festival circuit last year. It's been six years since *Gravity*, a film that swept the board with its accolades, both technical and artistic. After making several high-profile, comfortably budgeted, 'Hollywood' films, Cuarón brings us *Roma*, his first Spanish-language feature since *Y Tu Mama Tambien*.

Roma centres around Cleo (newcomer Yalitza Aparicio), a housemaid for a middle-class family in the Colonia Roma, a suburb of Mexico City, in 1970–71. The family consists of parents Sofia (Marina de Tavira) and Antonio, their four young children and Sofia's mother, Teresa. Evidently, Cuarón draws from his childhood, having grown up in a family like Sofia's; these series of events are full of rich detail. Dubbed as his most personal film yet, you can really feel the grooves of his fingerprints in the frame.

Cuarón's 1970s Mexico City is brought to life within the shot. Again, Cuarón employs his trademark "wandering frame"



This movie is in black and white, but it sure isn't one of the Charlie Chaplin ones // Netflix

"Dubbed as his most personal film yet, you can really feel the grooves of his fingerprints in the frame."

whereby the camera is distracted by the stories of those who are not the main subjects of the film. The world that that our protagonists inhabit is fully realised and given context. A scene that plays out in a furniture shop is placed in the background of violent demonstrations, now historically known as the Corpus Christi Massacre. Our protagonists come face to face with danger—what started in the background

becomes part of our story in the foreground. These shifts of focus happen throughout the film to serve to provide a grounding in reality, and sometimes a liberal construction of reality.

Thematically, there is a lot that you can pick from the film, but these tiny details were made to be absorbed not studied. There is a serene and meditative atmosphere to the film like a distant memory, misremembered. Quirky moments of absurdity occur leading to questions in these conscious choices in narrative but is never pretentious. Although the story ventures into episodic melodrama, the mundaneness of everyday life is also captured. These moments of stillness in the scene is complemented by the extraordinary sound design—part of what makes this depiction of 1970s Mexico so

full-fleshed is the soundscapes. Strong women characters drive the drama forward; gender politics and social issues are adequately presented but are not the focus of the film. In essence, *Roma* is a family portrait—a slice of life of an ordinary family, but this is anything but an ordinary film.

Cuarón directs with a quiet confidence. He gets the best out of his cast; the two female central performances from Aparicio and

"Roma serves to prove that great cinema that deserves recognition is not limited to its platform"

de Tavira are astonishing. The film is, on a technical level, magnificent. The framing always adds to the drama and frustrates us with more tension. Scenes are staged with a beautiful and poetic realism you can find in modern street photography. The drama is never overshadowed by the technicalities, but the two combine effortlessly to provide an overwhelming experience. Without spoiling the film, the scene at the hospital, and the scene at the beach are standout moments that are masterful in their construction and craftsmanship.

As for distribution, *Roma* is having a limited cinema release, and it's available to stream on Netflix now. This theatrical run is not just a cynical bid for awards recognition, as *Roma* is truly a cinematic film that rewards being seen on the

"There is a serene and meditative atmosphere to the film like a distant memory, misremembered."

biggest screen (and best sound system) available. Many in the film industry express discontent in the great debate over "films" primarily distributed on streaming services and their eligibility for "film" awards. *Roma* serves to prove that great cinema that deserves recognition is not limited to its platform—streaming is the future.

GAMES

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Destiny 2 // Bungie

The Destiny Divorce - Activision and Bungie Split Up

The 10-year contract, started in 2010, has not been seen through to the end. Guardians, the future is changing.

GAMES

Anthony Onwuli

Games Editor

Bungie and Activision Blizzard started their partnership in 2010 after Bungie gained their independence from Microsoft. Activision had in place a 10-year contract with the aim of helping Bungie launch their first project after Halo – Destiny. However, this 10-year contract has now been cut short with Bungie now assuming the full publishing rights of the Destiny series. With the control of their IP completely back in their own hands, we can only wait and see how the Destiny series moves forward.

Activision's Statement

"Today, we're announcing plans for Bungie to assume full publishing rights and

responsibilities for the Destiny franchise. Going forward, Bungie will own and develop the franchise, and Activision will increase its focus on owned IP and other projects. Activision and Bungie are committed to a seamless transition for the Destiny franchise and will continue to work closely together during the transition on behalf of the community of Destiny players around the world."

Activision's statement appears to indicate an amicable and friendly split, but if rumours are to be believed then Bungie could not be happier with having full control of their IP. Rumour has it that champagne was popped by Bungie staff after the announcement was made.

"Champagne was popped by Bungie staff"

Activision in the past have publicly called out their disappointment with the earnings of Destiny 2: Forsaken with their Chief Operating Officer Cuddy Johnson said that the earnings had failed to meet their standards. A Bungie developer had fired back publicly to this statement:

Comments from Bungie

"When we first launched our partnership with Activision in 2010, the gaming industry was in a pretty different place," Bungie wrote in its post. "As an independent studio setting out to build a brand-new experience, we wanted a partner willing to take a big leap of faith with us. We had a vision for Destiny that we believed in, but to launch a game of that magnitude, we needed the support of an established publishing partner."

These statements and rumours only confirm the

strained relationship that we've seen over the past 9 years of their contract. Activision expected Bungie to release a new destiny title every two years from Autumn of 2013, but as we all know, Destiny 1 shipped in 2014, with Destiny 2 having gone live in 2017, which makes Bungie a title behind Activision's schedule. From Activision's massively known franchise "Call of Duty", strict production schedules are a classic for Activision releases. So in some ways, this divorce could be Activision accepting that Destiny has not panned out to be the franchise it expected from their contract.

"We wanted a partner willing to take a big leap of faith with us"

It's no understatement that Destiny has a long and arduous road to get to where it is today through the numerous expansions and updates during its lifetime, which at times have left us Guardians with feelings of joy at the new content but annoyed at other times for splitting the player base and letting the microtransactions slide straight to our bodies.

Tough times for Activision

Activision is truly going through rough times though, with customer backlash and a drop in their stock prices back in November after announcing Diablo Immortal for mobile phones instead of a full PC title. Additionally, they have abandoned their Skylanders franchise, so coupled with Destiny, Activision's harem of mega-franchises has grown smaller.

The future for Bungie

A Chinese online game company called NetEase, which publishes Activision's "Overwatch", "Hearthstone" and "World of Warcraft" games in China has invested \$100 million in Bungie for non-Destiny related IP titles.

Now that Bungie are in full control of their IP, the industry landscape allows many options for the developer to continue their development of future instalments for their baby without the need of a publisher. They now no longer need to stick to the strict release schedules which could pan out well Guardians. Let's hope that Bungie can now restore the light to the 10 million active guardians. This will also let us see whether or not if some of the issues which plagued Destiny were from the developer or by executive meddling from the publisher.

GAMES

games.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Good times ahead for gaming with the upcoming release of Kingdom Hearts 3 and more!

GAMES

Connor Winzar
Games Editor

January

Friday 11th

Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story + Bowser Jr.'s Journey - 3DS

Friday 11th

New Super Mario Bros U Deluxe
Switch

Friday 11th

Tales of Vesperia: Definitive Edition
PS4, Xbox One, PC, Switch

Tuesday 15th

Onimusha: Warlords
PS4, Xbox One, PC, Switch

Tuesday 15th

The Walking Dead: The Final Season Episode 3
PS4, Xbox One, PC, Switch

Friday 18th

YIIK: A Postmodern RPG
PS4, PC, Switch

Friday 18th

Ace Combat 7: Skies Unknown
PS4, Xbox One

Friday 18th

Travis Strikes Again: No More Heroes
Switch

Friday 25th

Resident Evil 2 Remake
PS4, Xbox One, PC

Tuesday 29th

Kingdom Hearts III
PS4, Xbox One



Kingdom Hearts 3 // Disney

February

Friday 1st

Ace Combat 7: Skies Unknown
PC

Friday 15th

Crackdown 3
Xbox One, PC

Friday 15th

Far Cry: New Dawn
PS4, Xbox One, PC

Friday 15th

Jump Force
PS4, Xbox One, PC

Friday 15th

Metro Exodus
PS4, Xbox One, PC

GAMES

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Friday 22nd

Anthem
PS4, Xbox One, PC

Tuesday 26th

Anno 1800
PC

Tuesday 26th

Dirt Rally 2.0
PS4, Xbox One, PC

Tuesday 26th

Trials Rising
PS4, Xbox One, PC, Switch

Thursday 28th

Left Alive
PS4, PC



Metro Exodus // 4A Games

February

Friday 1st

Dead or Alive 6
PS4, Xbox One, PC

Friday 1st

ToeJam & Earl: Back in the Groove
PS4, Xbox One, PC, Switch

Thursday 7th

Total War: Three Kingdoms
PC

Friday 8th

Devil May Cry 5
PS4, Xbox One, PC

Friday 15th

One Piece: World Seeker
PS4, Xbox One, PC

Friday 15th

Tom Clancy's The Division 2
PS4, Xbox One, PC

Thursday 21st

The Sinking City
PS4, Xbox One, PC

Friday 22nd

Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice
PS4, Xbox One, PC

Friday 29th

Tropico 6
PS4, Xbox One, PC



Devil May Cry 5 // Capcom

GAMES

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Smash Ultimate is here, everyone! / Nintendo

Felix Games' new addition: Smash Corner

A new chapter is being turned for Felix gaming as we embark on a quest to provide you with quality info on how to up your smash games, with weekly characters analysis and tips.

GAMES

Connor Winzar
Games Editor

It's clear that the Nintendo titan that is Reggie heard the cries of the dissatisfied Smash player, for he has finally achieved perfection with the magnificent game that is *Super Smash Bros. Ultimate*. On a serious note, Smash Ultimate is a spectacular game; despite not quite capturing the nostalgia that came with the N64 game melee, it makes up for it by building significantly on its predecessors. Accompanied by a staggeringly large collection of OSTs from numerous series, all your favourite

stages from the past games, and not to forget a gigantic roster, Smash leaves you satisfied.

With ever changing metas and tier lists, the game has a constantly changing dynamic with so much variety that the game can be quite intimidating. That's where we come in! We may not be top tier gamers, but we're avid players of the series, and know a trick or two; mostly from from watching the pros and tournaments. As such, we are proud to announce the creation of Smash Corner, a section of Felix Games that focuses entirely on Smash and could potentially develop into something bigger with a large enough following!

But it's early days, so

for the moment, we aim to keep you up to date on the meta whilst giving you tips on how to deal with bullshit Yoshi edge guarding, Simon/Richter's insane range, and grenadier Snake players, along

"Creation of Smash Corner, a section of Felix Games that focuses entirely on Smash"

with other ways to tackle new machines incurred by the ever changing meta.

We're looking to have a weekly Smash corner article, focusing on how to maximise a characters's

"Keep you up to date on the meta whilst giving you tips on how to deal with bullshit Yoshi edge guarding"

potential, and a general rundown of their abilities as well as counters to each character.

And for the even more

competitive players we may host competitions in the distant future, but that's most likely going to be the case if there seems to be a following for the Smash Corner articles. So keep your eyes peeled and

feel free to drop us an email at games.felix@imperial.ac.uk if you're interested in writing a character profile, or anything else Smash related!



The highly requested DLC character /s// Nintendo

FOOD

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Cheap clean eats

FOOD

Eva Tadros

Food Editor

Now that the new year has started, how many of those “new year, new me” posts have you seen floating around? It’s nice to think we can have a fresh start as soon as the year begins, but those first few days up until term restarts are so much of a limbo, it’s pretty much impossible to send any form of resolution into action. However, now that we’re more settled, we thought we’d tackle a few of the resolutions we’ve heard floating around, mainly deciding to save a little money and budget more, and eat a little healthier – two birds, one stone.

We’ve been out on the hunt (Google), and have managed to round up the best of the best. Whether you’re looking for an indulgent breakfast, or a nourishing hearty lunch, we’ve got all the recipes that aren’t going to harm your bank account or your figure!

Breakfast

Catharina’s Protein Boost Pancakes



High protein pancakes // *FoodForFitness*

Ingredients

- 100g shredded oats (or 50/50 protein powder for those ~gains~)
- 2 bananas, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder

- 100-200ml cup milk*
- 1 teaspoon cinammon

*Can substitute water

Optional Extras

Blueberries, maple syrup, basically anything!!

Method

1. Mix the oats and baking powder together
2. Mash in the banana with a fork.
3. Add in the milk slowly, and keep whisking till desired consistency is achieved.
4. Grease a frying pan, and add enough of the mixture to create a thin base, and once bubbles start forming, flip the pancake.
5. Enjoy!!

Cassey’s Omelette in a Mug



Omelette in a mug // *Blogilates*

This is one of our all-time favourites, and once you make it, you’ll find out why. Sourced from the internet’s favourite sweetheart, Cassey Ho, better known as Blogilates.

Ingredients

- Two eggs
- One egg white
- 1/3 cup mushrooms, chopped
- 1/4 cup red bell pepper, diced
- Two tablespoons red onion, minced
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of garlic powder
- 1/4 cup shredded cheese or vegan cheese, divided
- One tablespoon avocado, optional

Method

1. Add the egg, egg whites, mushrooms, bell pepper, onion, salt, garlic and half the cheese into a 12-ounce or larger Mason jar coated with cooking spray. Shake or stir to combine, then seal with a lid unless making immediately.
2. Place in fridge overnight or until ready to prepare.
3. Remove lid, place in microwave, and heat for about two minutes, watching for overflow. If the eggs puff up too much, simply open the microwave for five seconds, then heat again until no liquid remains. Top with remaining cheese, and serve. Top with avocado, if using.

Lunch

Cassey’s Healthy Falafel Lettuce Wraps



Falafel with yoghurt dip // *Blogilates*

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 whole-wheat or high-fiber pitas
- One 15-oz. can chickpeas, well drained
- One onion, very finely chopped
- 1/4 cup whole-wheat flour
- Three tbsp. finely chopped fresh parsley
- 1 1/2 tbsp. chopped garlic
- One tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/2 tbsp. ground cumin
- 3/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. lemon juice

Method

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Place all ingredients for falafel (except for the pitas and nonstick spray) in a large bowl, and give them a good stir. Using a potato masher, mash well. Mixture should remain slightly chunky, not smooth.
3. Spray a baking sheet thoroughly with a two-second spray of olive oil nonstick spray.
4. One at a time, take spoonfuls of mixture in your hands and form 15 balls, each about the size of a ping pong ball, and gently place them on the baking sheet. Spray the top of each ball with olive oil nonstick spray, for a total of about a two-second spray.
5. Bake in the oven for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, combine all ingredients for dip in a blender or food processor, and pulse until just blended. Season to taste with black pepper and refrigerate until ready to serve.
6. Remove baking sheet from the oven, and carefully turn each ball over, gently reshaping if the bottoms have flattened. Return to the oven and bake for an additional 10 – 15 minutes, until golden brown and slightly crispy. Allow to cool and set for at least five minutes.
7. Cut the whole pitas into halves, toast or warm all pita halves slightly, and then fill each with three falafel balls and three tbsp. dip. Enjoy!

Dinner

So-Good Sofritas Cauliflower Rice Bowl



So-Good Sofritas Cauliflower Rice Bowl // *Hungry-Girl*

Ingredients

- Two cups roughly chopped cauliflower (or HG Alternative)
- Two tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro
- Two tsp. lime juice
- 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1/4 tsp. chili powder
- 1/4 tsp. onion powder
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 1/3 cup chopped bell pepper
- 1/4 cup canned black beans, drained and rinsed
- Two tbsp. shredded cheese
- Four oz. block-style extra-firm tofu

Methods

1. Place sauce ingredients in a small blender or food processor. Add two tbsp. water, and blend until smooth.
2. Pulse cauliflower in a blender until reduced to rice-sized pieces.
3. Bring a skillet sprayed with nonstick spray to medium-high heat. Add cauliflower, cilantro, lime juice. 1/4 tsp. cumin, 1/8 tsp. chili powder, and 1/8 tsp. onion powder. Cook and stir until cauliflower has mostly softened and lightly browned, about five minutes. Transfer to a medium bowl, and cover to keep warm.

“Whether you’re looking for an indulgent breakfast, or a nourishing hearty lunch, we’ve got all the recipes that aren’t going to harm your bank account or your figure!”

4. Remove skillet from heat; clean, if needed. Re-spray, and return to medium-high heat. Add onion and bell pepper, and cook and stir until softened and slightly blackened, about four minutes. Add black beans and cook and stir until hot, about 1 minute. Transfer to the medium bowl, and re-cover to keep warm.
5. Remove skillet from heat; clean, if needed. Re-spray, and bring to medium heat. Sprinkle tofu with salt, black pepper, and remaining 1/4 tsp. cumin, 1/8 tsp. onion powder, and 1/8 tsp. chili powder. Cook and crumble until lightly browned, about three minutes.
6. Add sauce to the skillet. Cook and stir until hot and well mixed, about 1 minute.
7. Transfer to the medium bowl, and immediately top with cheese.

SUSTAINABILITY

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Season of change

SUSTAINABILITY

Xiuchen Xu

Sustainability Writer

The Plant-Based Imperial campaign combines initiatives from Greening Imperial, Environmental Society (ESoc), VegSoc and Animal Protection & Education Society (APES). The main aim of the campaign is to reduce the carbon footprint of the college and work towards a more sustainable college. Throughout January and February Imperial will be holding various events relating to meat consumption and sustainability (see the accompanying timetable).

On Mondays and Fridays between 12-2.00pm, there are pop-up stalls in JCR and SCR so as to get engage the com-

munity and get feedback on Meat-Free Mondays. Comments and opinions are welcomed.

A screening of *Carnage* will be held in the Grantham Institute on Wednesday, 23rd of January. A satire mockumentary by comedian Simon Amstell, *Carnage*, set in a meat free future, makes light of both vegans and meat-eaters of today.

On the 26th VegSoc is organizing a trip to the FRIEND animal sanctuary, where you can muck in, for instance cleaning chicken sheds or helping livestock which have been rescued from abusive owners or found abandoned. There are limited spaces. Email vegsoc@imperial.ac.uk to register interest.

Is veganism healthy? This is a question that often draws a great deal of impassioned but also un-

substantiated debate. UCL and Imperial students have begun a campaign to make at least a half of food consumed at the university vegan by 2020. This campaign is launching with a talk on nutrition at UCL on the 28th. Well worth attending if you would like to be involved or are considering a vegan diet. Also a chance to see the “other” university.

Should the production of meat be banned? Expect a heated debate right here in Imperial, as four experts come together in early February to discuss this proposition.

Last but certainly not least, “Earthling Ed”, an influential activist with over 9 million views on Youtube will be visiting Imperial in late February.

Visit imperialcollege-union.org/mfm to sign-up for events and more info on Meat-Free Mondays.

MEAT FREE MONDAYS
JANUARY - FEBRUARY

POP-UP STALLS
MONDAYS 12 - 2 PM SCR & JCR
FRIDAYS 12 - 2 PM
MONDAYS 12 - 2 PM REYNOLDS CAFE LIBRARY CAFE WOLFSON REST.

'MEAT FROM CELLS NOT ANIMALS'
A TALK ON CLEAN MEAT AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FIELD
THURSDAY 24TH JAN, 6.30 PM
LT164 - SKEMPTON BUILDING

'CARNAGE' FILM SCREENING
WEDNESDAY 23RD JAN, 5 - 6.45 PM
GRANTHAM BOARDROOM
GRANTHAM INSTITUTE

DAY AT ANIMAL SANCTUARY 'FRIEND'
SATURDAY 26TH JAN
MORNING & AFTERNOON
LIMITED PLACES: 15

'HEALTHY VEGAN'
TWO QUALIFIED EXPERTS DISCUSS HEALTH AND VEGANISM
MONDAY 28TH JAN, 6 - 7.45 PM
LG11, BENTHAM HOUSE, UCL

DEBATE
'BANNING THE PRODUCTION OF MEAT' ALONG WITH 4 EXPERTS
EARLY FEB, TBC

EARTHLING ED
PRESENTATION
LATE FEB, TBC

Plant Based Imperial

Upcoming events related to Meat Free Mondays \ Plant-Based Imperial

Oddly inspiring

Home grocery delivery service Oddbox provides a way to cut down grocery shopping time and get fresh seasonal produce, whilst reducing food waste, plastic waste and carbon emissions.

SUSTAINABILITY

Monami Miyamoto

Sustainability Editor

I'd like to believe that every one of us, at least in part, can do something better for the environment. But I also know that for some, this can seem daunting, difficult, or just too time consuming - which is why, I thought I'd share my experience with ODDBOX, a UK based company committed to tackling food waste. One of the United Nations sustainable development goals is halving the per capita global food waste by 2030. Yet, globally 1.3 billion tonnes of food

produced is being wasted every year. In UK alone, 3 million tonnes of food (1/3 of the total produce!) don't even reach the super market shelves, simply because they are

“Globally 1.3 billion tonnes of food produced is being wasted every year”

discriminated due to their ‘odd shape or size’, despite being perfectly and deliciously edible. Oddbox will source these

vegetables from local growers and markets at a fair price and deliver them to people all across London, including areas near the Imperial campus. This not only reduces the amount of produce going to waste but also supports local farmers. Besides, these fruits and vegetable didn't have to fly or sail across the ocean to get to us, ultimately reducing the carbon footprint.

Personally, what I've loved most about Oddbox is that they provide a variety of produce, all of which are seasonal; this means getting the opportunity to cook with unfamiliar ingredients, such as rainbow carrots, hispi cabbages, and purple sprouting broccolis.

Even cooking with them is made easy, as every Oddbox delivery comes with a simple recipe for potential meals that can be made using the contents in the box that week. The boxes are also conveniently delivered right outside the house, so the excitement of waking up every Thursday morning to unravel the unknown contents of a new oddbox waiting outside my doorstep feels almost like a weekly Christmas present. This also means that I don't have to spend time walking to and around the supermarket for grocery shopping. Another excellent feature which I appreciate is the fact that unlike every single fruit and vegetable

unnecessarily dressed from head to toe in plastic at the supermarkets, oddbox deliveries are hardly ever wrapped in any plastic (with the exception of Spinach!); They come straight in cardboard boxes which are reused or recycled,

“Oddbox deliveries are hardly ever wrapped in any plastic”

so the amount of plastic waste can also be greatly minimized.

Oddbox provides a

variety of order options, including veg only, or a combination of fruit and veg, and in sizes of small, medium and large. A small veg and fruit box is probably ideal for college students to last for a week, and only costs 10.49 pounds for a hearty quantity. Payment is on a weekly basis, so you can easily cancel any time you travel or simply don't have time to cook.

With Oddbox, you're not only saving money and making your life easier, but also contributing to solving the global food waste issue and other environmental problems. It starts with just one delivery.

INVESTMENT

icui.investmentsociety@imperial.ac.uk


Will the dollar determine markets in 2019?

INVESTMENT

Tom Alston

Investment Editor

ICIS Editor

After a volatile end to 2018, investors are now looking at what the new year can bring. Despite rising 7% against a broad basket of currencies in 2018, many now deem the dollar overvalued. Drawing parallels from both physics and Forex trading, it is well known that whatever goes up must eventually go down. The bear case for the dollar is formed on the expectation that GDP growth in America will slow down. The stimulus provided by Trump's tax cuts last year will fade, and increasing Fed Funds rates will begin to bite. Suffering oil prices, that is hurting investment in America's shale regions, is another factor as low crude prices becomes beneficial for oil importing regions such as Europe and Asia. America's tech giants are also coming under pressure, losing their invulnerability allure they had at the beginning of last year. In short, the recent bull run on America's economy is coming to end and so should the rise of the dollar.

Mansoor Mohi-uddin of Natwest Markets has set out three pre-conditions for a turn in the dollar: a "pause" by the Fed, an end to the China-America trade war and a pickup in the eurozone economy. The first looks like it's on the horizon. Jerome Powell, chairman of the Federal Reserve, hinted at the beginning of the new year that it might postpone any further rate hikes. Furthermore, whilst interest rates in America may not rise



JPMorgan recided heavy losses in its bond and currency trading amid hieghtened volatility//Brookings Institution

they are still higher than in Japan or the Eurozone, making owning the dollar more rewarding. Will this change in 2019? Many see

“tax cuts and looser monetary policy in China, caused by dispersed trade tensions, stimulating private sector spending”

the path of the new year laid out by two scenarios. The first entails tax cuts and looser monetary policy in China, caused by

dispersed trade tensions, stimulating private sector spending. Consequently, this stirs other Asian economies which will increase activity in the euro zone, which relies heavily on emerging market demand. Hence bond yields rise in the expectation that interest rates will increase, making US debt less favourable, as spreads between US and Euro bonds decrease, causing the dollar to drift down against the Euro. Evidence of this has been seen in recent turbulent markets, causing strain on the American fixed income front. JPMorgan recorded a sharp fall in bond and currency trading revenue as CEO Jamie Dimon warned that US government shutdown is creating more challenges by bringing the economy to a standstill. However, this scenario also suggests

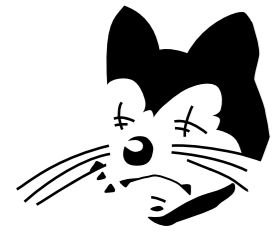
a softish Brexit boosting the pound, causing a capital influx into emerging markets in the search of higher returns. However, after Tuesday's vote, the probability of this remains uncertain as it sunk the pound to a six session low of \$1.2668.

The second scenario, the trade dispute between China and America escalates. This continued uncertainty means China's tax cuts are saved rather than spent. Weakness in China's economy brings down other emerging economies. Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that export orders for the large trading as well as manufacturing economies of Asia and Europe are signalling a trade recession. Europe has been suffering from declining demand in China, the primary drivers being policy and

regulatory efforts to rein in the economies credit independence, as China's economy gets to grip with underperformance of domestically oriented Chinese equities. A rise in emerging markets risk assets would only happen if there was a reversal of the Chinese protectionist rhetoric. Since this remains improbable and would indicate that the stuttering eurozone economy is not temporary

“to grip with under performance of domestically oriented Chinese equities ”

but a reflection of weak export demand, there would likely be a sell off of risk assets across the board. Consequently, the dollar falls sharply against the yen and swiss franc (euro remains weak). Investors rush towards safe-harbour currencies, as JPMorgan strategists advise clients to take some insurance, leading to a surge in the price of gold. Goldman Sachs now expects the price of gold to rise to \$1,425 over the next year. “To take a view on gold, you have to first take a view on broader markets”, said Tom Holl, BlackRock portfolio manager. He added, “If we continue to see elevated levels of macroeconomic uncertainty and risk adversity, then gold will probably continue its positive momentum”.



Hangman



Basically a ghost town // Imperial College

Meat-free Mondays results in male ban on campuses

HANGMAN

Negafelix
Editor-in-Chief

Tumblerweed roamed across Imperial campuses this Monday, as a new initiative banning men from College premises was implemented.

Deputy President (Philandering & Servicing), Gloria Sasparello, recently announced the

introduction of 'Meat-free Mondays', a scheme wherein all men would be banned from campus every Monday during term time. The initiative, which came into effect this week, was said to be inspired by reducing the College's carbon footprint. This runs in line with College Overlord Janice Fast's environmental policy of 'Keeping Imperial in the Green.'

"Forget cows polluting the planet," said Sasparello, "have you smelt the men's room on Level 4 of

the Library? There's probably a hole in the ozone layer above Sheffield from the stench alone, let alone all the backlog of shit. Originally the plan was to redirect the pipes to the Union to harvest the gas and sell it to UCL, but we had to be realistic, so this was the next best thing. If you can't use 'em, ban 'em, eh?"

The initiative saw attendance rates drop across most departments, with EEE recording a 100% decrease in attendance, including lecturers and

GTAs. Notable exceptions to the rule were the Business School, as most of their students were enrolled online anyway.

Not all members of the Imperial community are pleased with the initiative. "What the hell is this all about," wailed Hugh Revelio, a third year Mechanical Engineering student. "I mean, I wasn't planning on coming in anyway, but who the hell does she think she is, telling me what to do. She didn't even do a proper student consultation; just

went ahead and did it! I blame the damn vegan feminists!"

Union staff are reportedly unhappy about the initiative, as it means that three out of the five Sabb officers effectively get long weekends. When asked about his stance on the issue, Union President Bob Jeffries shrugged and replied, "who gives a shit? It means I can spend more time catching up on my colouring!"

In response to allegations of failing to gauge student support of the

scheme, Sasparello stated that she had involved "me, myself and I" in the consultation. When reminded by NegaFelix that she no longer attended the university she promptly rejected reporters' claims on eActivities.

In the wake of the uproar surrounding the initiative, Council Chair Andrea 'Pippy' Gumpton was noted to have passed an emergency resolution to confiscate the earnings of her now workless worthless male counterparts.

HANGMAN

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Calls for postgrad exit from Union nearly VoNC GSU President

HANGMAN

Negafelix
Editor-in-Chief

The head of Graduate Students' Union has narrowly survived a Vote of No Confidence (VoNC) over growing calls for the constituent union to part ways with ICU, NegaFelix has learnt.

Tuna Overthiereman, GSU President, managed to cling on to power by a 1 vote margin, despite growing calls for her head on a platter if she didn't

bring the Graduate Independence Act to Council next week.

The push for GSU independence, or #hbarTheDoors as it has become known, stems from years of discontent within the GSU, due to perceived preferential treatment of undergraduates compared to the rest of the student body - in particular, undergraduate students getting served when entering h-bar, the postgraduate bar.

"All these shitty undergrads coming into h-bar, stealing our pints - enough is enough," said Neo Cortez, a second year

PhD in the Department of Chemistry "We make up the majority of the students here, yet they treat us like shit. If they want service, they should go back to Beit Quad!"

"They literally have everywhere else," said Carmen De La Nerd, an MRes Bioengineering student. "No one wants to see you barely legal dickheads lounging around, complaining about your workload. We need our space to vent! This is literally the only place we have when our experiments are running." This is yet another in the long list of

discontented movements within various constituent unions over the past few years calling for separation from the Union. Last year, ICSMSU faced a similar push to separate themselves from the Union (#MedicOut) and have Reynolds to themselves. The campaign was short-lived, however, as campaigners were promptly assigned to St. Peter's Hospital in Surrey, depriving them of enough time to continue their complaining.

An informant from within the Faculty Building informed NegaFelix that the agitation for



"Leave this to the grown-ups" // Imperial College

separation was likely in some part instigated by the current College Overlord, Janice Fast. "She's going for a divide-and-conquer strategy," they said. "If

she can break the Union down, she can sell the land - it's in a prime location!"



ARIES

This week, you forget to take the bins out.

You are threatened with eviction.



TAURUS

This week your proposal to leave the Union is voted down by 230 votes.

Who knew you were this unpopular.?



GEMINI

This week, you defy meat-free Mondays and bring some in for home.

You are mauled to death whilst feeding the other carnivores.



CANCER

This week, you ride a Boris bike to uni, forget they're Sadiq cycles and crash Spain's economy in the name of Santander.

This week you finally get that Counselling appointment you booked last year! Great! When asked what your problem is you realise you don't remember anymore. Shit.



LEO



VIRGO

You have been constipated for weeks.

Unfortunately, the only thing you pass this week is a vote of no confidence.



LIBRA

This week your prototype starts working. You are so excited that you have to grab a change of trousers. Frontal stains continue to be a problem.



SCORPIO

This week you miss a coursework deadline. You blame your lecturers and shut down your department. How dare they set reasonable expectations!



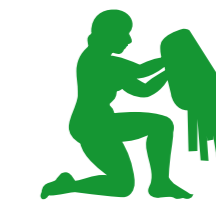
SAGITTARIUS

This week you decide that consumerism is a cancer to society. But you get a discount on ASOS' sale tho...



CAPRICORN

To beguile your peers you post nudes in Subtle Imperial Dating. They are reposted to Imperial College Exposed. Angry reacts for not being meat-free ensue.



AQUARIUS

This week you're a Liberation Officer. You applaud Gillette for tackling toxic masculinity, but can we get some gender diversity up in here?



PISCES

This week you're the Felix Editor. This was fun at the start, yeah, but if you wanted to hear people complain about this uni you'd be Alice Gast's PA.

TRAVEL

travel.felix@imperial.ac.uk

LISBON - is the hype real?

TRAVEL

Joana Correia

Travel Editor

The plane prepares for landing by circling the beaches, vast kilometres of deep blue waters and white sand dotted by sun-lovers, it makes its descent by overlooking the city and its hills. If this isn't a scenic landing, I don't know what is.

Lisbon truly offers it all. And I'm not just talking about the custard tarts. It is hard to write about something you so passionately love.

Lisbon's city centre is not like many others in Europe. The streets are wide, with intricate pavement patterns (known

as *calçada*), the buildings are made of colourful tiles, the yellow trams go up and down the hills, narrowing into the traditional old neighbourhoods of Lisbon. You'll find over 30 beautiful terraces and hilltops overlooking the city and the river, where both tourists and locals meet for drinks, thoughts and long conversations. You'll find a lot of street-based shopping, from high street brands to independent quirky shops. Old versus modern museums and cathedrals, some lost in the city depths (*Basilica da Estrela*) others sitting riverside (*MAAT*).

Being a waterfront city means you can get away from the overwhelming city sounds by strolling riverside. There are plenty of cafés, bars, restaurants, nightclubs and parks along the river for one to

pick from, sit down and relax or dance the night away. Take the train for 30 minutes, swap the traffic sounds for seagulls and waves, the warmth kissing your skin, a cold drink in hand, you've found the ocean. For fairytale enchanted stories, head over to Quinta da Regaleira or Pena Palace, in Sintra, both UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and get lost in its caves and magical wells, romantic and warm-colour palaces.

We do things slowly in Lisbon, after all the best things in life must be appreciated. Food, for instance, is one of those things. We dine late and we love to stay at restaurants long after the meal has ended, just drinking and chatting for possibly too long. If there is outdoor seating we might actually stay forever. So apologies

if you find yourself in a queue! Best advice: embrace the Portuguese way.

"You'll find over 30 beautiful terraces and hilltops overlooking the city"

But perhaps better than all the views and food is the people. The Portuguese are friendly, welcoming and helpful. Even if you do meet someone who does not speak English – a rare occasion nowadays – they will try to help you by



Santa Luzia viewpoint // LisbonSideTours

speaking Portuguese too loud (yes, even louder, and as if that would help anyone understand...). People will want to know about your life, where you are from, what you do, what brings you over. Not because we are nosy, but because you're new.

Lisbon is becoming increasingly touristy – many say this with criticism, I say it with appreciation. People still go on about their lives (don't really have a choice do they?),

but still go out at traditional and new places, still visit all the above and many other locations that one could consider tourist attractions, still love their city. I believe that this is what, above all else, makes the hype real about Lisbon. You feel like you're part of the city and its life. And for a greater feeling of belonging go when we're happiest – April to October. But I'm obviously biased.

imperial college union

Casual Receptionist

Imperial College Students' Union is an innovative, democratic and fast-growing organisation based in South Kensington, supporting students studying at Imperial College London. Collectively, we provide students with the opportunities, training and support to develop their skills and experience through a diverse range of recruitment prospects.

We are looking to recruit 8 enthusiastic students to work alongside our Head Receptionist on a casual basis.

As a Student Receptionist, you will be the first point of contact, offering administrative support to members of staff as well as students across the Union. You will coordinate front-desk activities including: welcoming guests, distributing correspondence and redirecting phone calls to the right department. To be successful in this role you will have excellent communication skills, be approachable, well organised and reliable.

Please note: This position is only open to current students at Imperial College London.

For any questions, please contact Zonya Christian - Administration Support Coordinator, via

z.christian@imperial.ac.uk or Joanna Page - Head Receptionist, via joannapage1@imperial.ac.uk

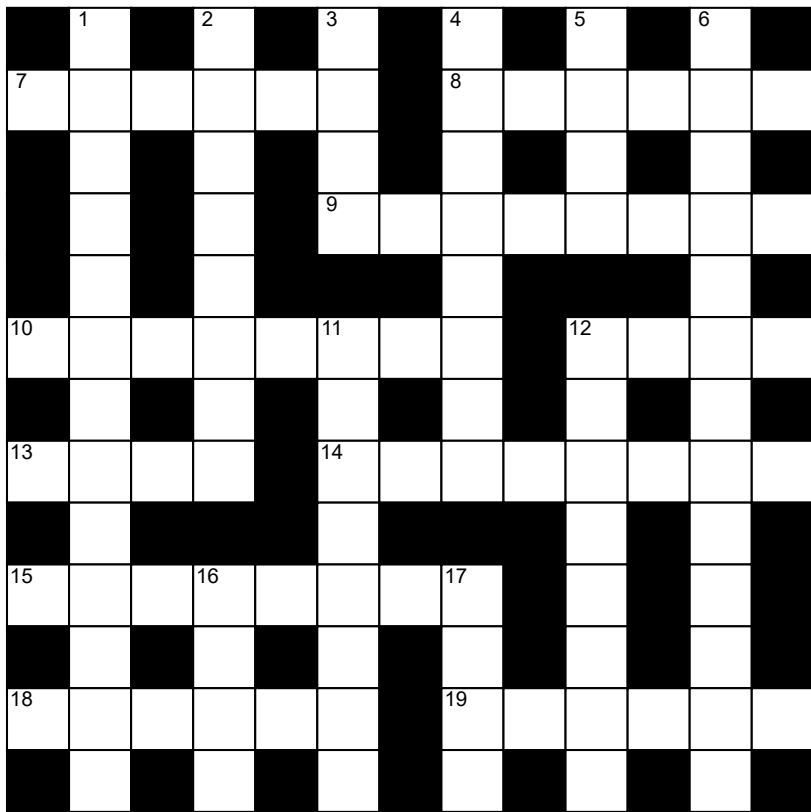


Key Responsibilities:

- Meet and greet members and visitors, ensuring visitors are looked after through to meeting their host and to announce visitors as appropriate in line with the team agreement.
- To deal with any complaints in a calm and professional manner, escalating to the correct person when needed.
- To answer the telephones in a friendly, timely and professional manner and manage the switchboard as directed.
- To report any maintenance issues in the Reception, Meeting rooms and lobby areas etc. through the centralise College System
- Issue and Take in keys for the Union's fleet of minibuses using the systems in place
- To receive and log all parcels
- Generate associate membership and assist with issues as and when required.
- Ensure that the Union's procedure are followed in respect of "lost and found" items.
- Support head receptionist with ad hoc duties.

PUZZLES

fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk



CROSSWORD

Across

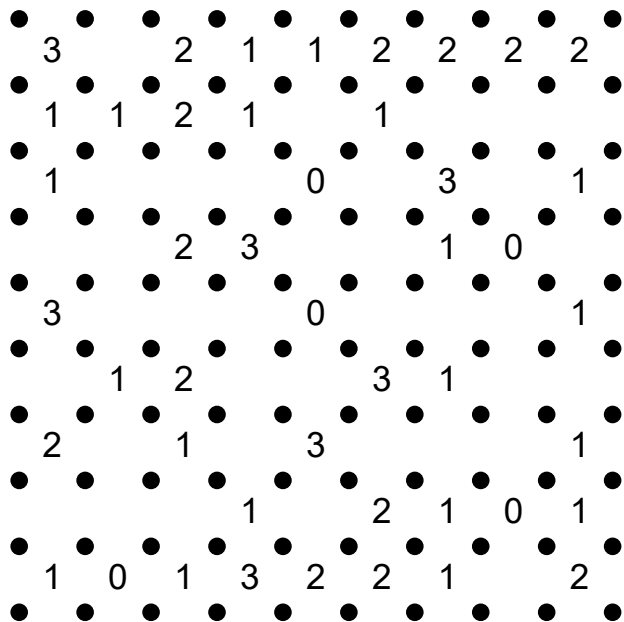
- 7. You can survive with just one (6)
- 8. Specially trained infantry (6)
- 9. Bystander (8)
- 10. With force (8)
- 12. Expel (4)
- 13. Leg elbow (4)
- 14. Common and boring (8)
- 15. Reached (8)
- 18. Hard to square (6)
- 19. Where many pub crawls end (6)

Down

- 1. Doubly land-locked country (13)
- 2. Sealed with red wax (8)
- 3. Modern equivalent of ink blots (4)
- 4. Part of the workforce (8)
- 5. Therefore (4)
- 6. Agreement (13)
- 11. Jersey's brother (8)
- 12. Living death and happy Mondays (8)
- 16. London has a Marble one (4)
- 17. Boundary of the night (4)

SLITHERLINK

Connect horizontally and vertically adjacent dots so that the lines form a simple loop with no loose ends. The number inside a square represents how many of its four sides are segments in the loop.

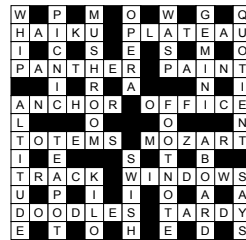
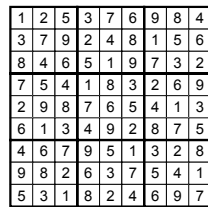
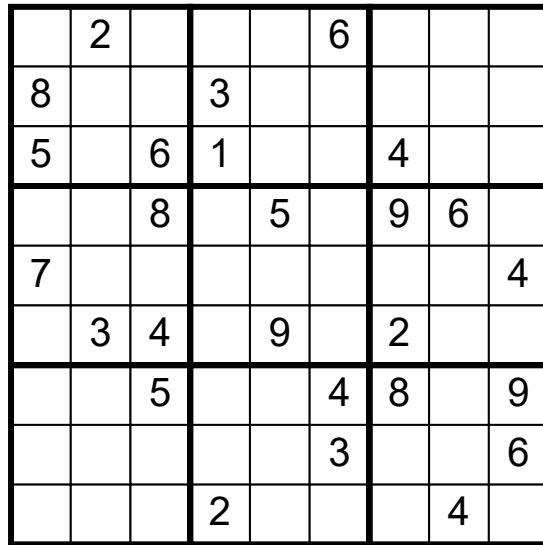


NONOGRAM

Colour in some of the squares to make a picture. Each number represents a block of consecutive black squares within that row/column. Each block needs to be separated by at least one white square.

SUDOKU

Fill all the boxes with a number between 1 and 9. A number can only appear once in a row/column, and only once in each sub-box.



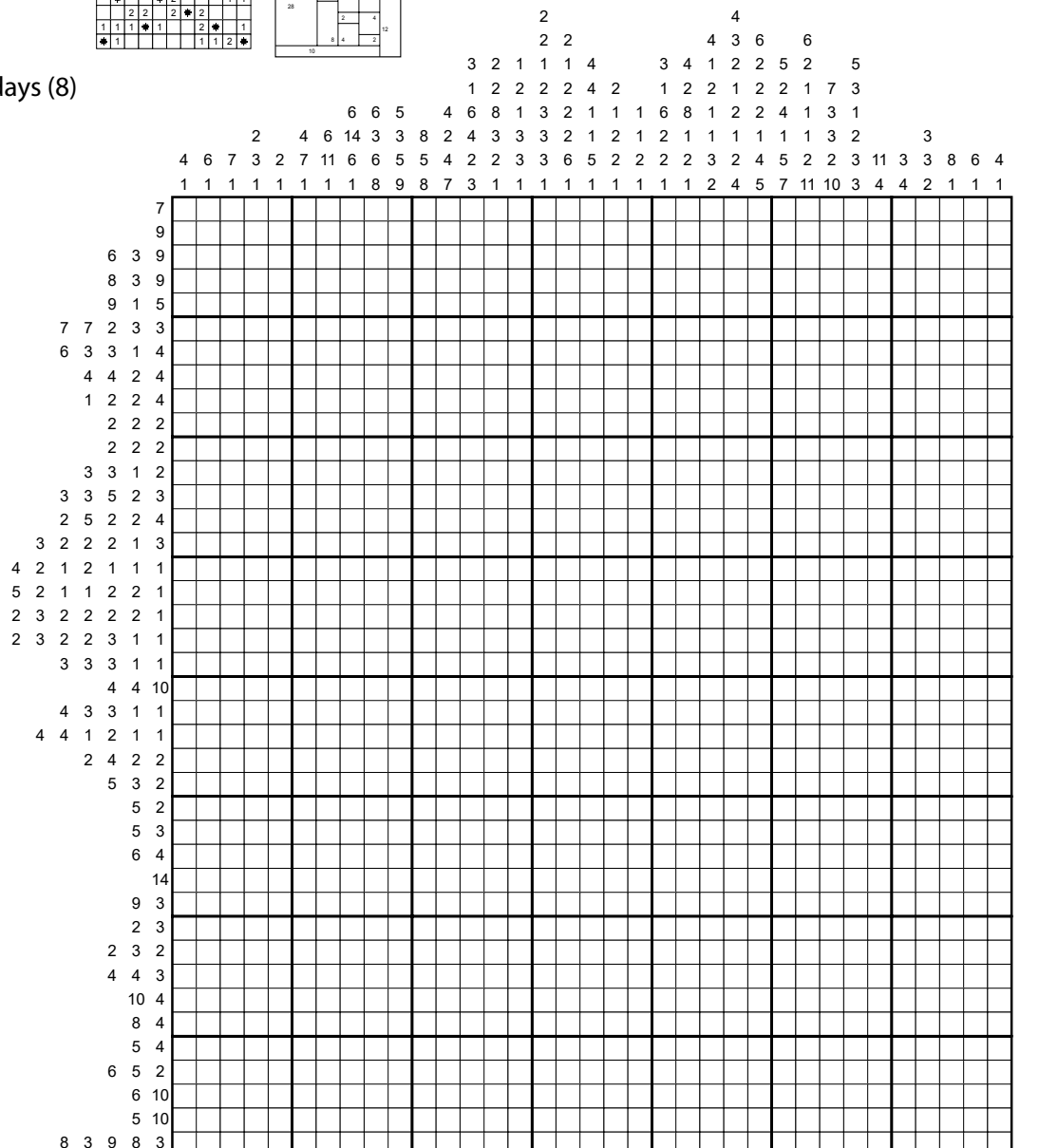
(New Year, new) FUCWIT

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|----|
| 1 | Maxiane | 17 |
| 1 | HoneybunnySnugglepuff | 17 |
| 1 | Luncheon Pals | 17 |
| 1 | KBLB | 17 |
| 1 | Fleesh and the tooters | 17 |
| 1 | Lilmonix3 | 17 |
| 1 | Castiel | 17 |
| 1 | Those Left Behind | 17 |
| 1 | Trollheim | 17 |
| 1 | Wooloomooloo | 17 |
| 1 | Big H's Boys | 17 |
| 1 | Shark | 17 |
| 1 | Rock, Flag & Eagle | 17 |
| 14 | Yeet Infection | 16 |
| 14 | Fresh.O.G | 16 |
| 14 | TH3_G1NGA_N1NJA | 16 |
| 17 | Computer Magic | 14 |
| 18 | Quizlamic extremists | 13 |
| 19 | S. B. S. | 10 |
| 19 | Dancing Queens | 10 |
| 21 | satu lipa | 7 |

Send your solutions to fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk before Wednesday midday to take part in the leaderboard!

Points available

- | | |
|--------------|-----------|
| Crossword | 6 |
| Slitherlink | 3 |
| Sudoku | 3 |
| Nonogram | 5 |
| Total | 17 |



SPORTS

sport.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Promising signs for ICXCAC as they begin 2019 with a successful training weekend

Cross Country & Athletics head to Shropshire for a much-needed winter tour involving kazoo playing, motivational speeches, racing local teenagers, comfort eating and pretend mountaineering.

SPORTS

Fergus Johnson

Sports Editor

ICXCAC's runners returned from the Christmas break in dire need of a training weekend, and 2019's winter tour destination was Church Stretton – a quaint town just outside Shropshire's county town of Shrewsbury.

During the late Victorian period the small town was known as "Little Switzerland" and grew a reputation as a health resort: exactly what the team needed.

The squad set out in earnest at rush hour on Friday evening. Thanks to some excellent DJing, the journey flew by.

The team rose early on Saturday to make a trip to the local Shrewsbury parkrun – one of a large national network of free, weekly and timed 5km runs every Saturday at 9.00am.

Huddling around the bandstand for warmth, the runners listened to the course instructions carefully as they all wanted to

leave their mark on one of the country's largest parkruns.

Almost 700 runners - a course record - gathered on the start line along the River Severn, and then they were off!

The course was far from flat, with a steep hill to climb and descend around "The Dingle" followed by a fast out-and-back

"They all wanted to leave their mark on one of the country's largest parkruns"

tarmac path along the river with a turn around "The Monument" before a second lap.

ICXCAC's runners were focused, taking a ruthless racing line around the bends and cheering on each other as they passed in opposing directions.

The field was led home by Niki Faulkner



The merry band of runners stand in front of a merry bandstand // ICXC

with a time of 16:01, and whilst he was (slightly) disappointed not to go sub-16, he was the only team member not to be beaten by the 17-year-old local who crossed the line second in 16:20.

Following him in bronze position was Henry Hart in 16:39 and fresher Alix Vermeulen came in 3rd for the girls with a time of 19:33.

After hassling some other locals for a team photo (above), the team returned to base for a large brunch before a trip to the host's old school for a training session with their cross country team.

The squad was led around the "prestigious" course on a warm-up by a gaggle of young talent, headed by a rapid 13-year-old.

Following the warm-up the team got their breath back and with the route fresh in their minds, everyone aligned on the start line ready for a timed lap.

The aim for the Imperial athletes was to

navigate the course from memory but this proved considerably harder than it sounds.

ICXCAC made a strong start with 4 of their boys in the top 6, and this continued for around half a lap with the strong 13 year-old kindly shouting directions to ensure no illegal shortcuts were taken.

Just as Niki was beginning to pull away and take a commanding lead, disaster struck! The team reached a crossroads and could not remember the way.

They frantically spread out and followed their memories as best they could but it was not until fresher and navigator-extraordinaire Matt Ryan arrived that they found the correct route.

By this point the 13 year-old was hot on their heels. Keen to resume the lead, Niki and Men's Captain Jack McKeon desperately tried to find a way through a rather bushy hedge but to no avail. They were forced

to retrace their steps as Shrewsbury's speedy youth stormed ahead.

Before long it was the home straight and the 13-year-old zoomed home in 3rd place, delighted that he would be moving up the school leaderboard.

Niki and Jack arrived at the finish line distraught, and the squad were forced to make a visit to the infamous "tuck shop" to cheer themselves up.

The evening saw plenty of stretching, kazoo playing, refuelling, Pictionary, cross-country watching, dubious scattergories and questionable chat.

Sunday morning was quite an effort for the few who made a poor decision to stay awake until the early hours, but amazingly all the non-injured athletes made it out for a trail running adventure starting from their doorstep.

After racing up a number of hills the club captain set his sights on a particularly large hill he had dubbed "Kilimanjaro". Only the bravest

(most foolish?) explorers opted for this option and they pranced up to the summit like mountain goats, battling the near-vertical ascent and howling winds.

Eventually they all returned safely and set about packing for the trip back to London.

"The squad were forced to make a visit to the infamous "tuck shop"

The large quantity of food remaining meant the final lunch was a delicious buffet of spaghetti, chicken sausages, mashed potato, tomatoes, apples, unripe bananas and leftover bolognese.

Having survived this ordeal, the squad hit the road and returned feeling revitalised and ready for the cross-country season to resume next week.



Niki storms into the lead at Shrewsbury parkrun // ICXC