



# Felix

The Student Newspaper of Imperial College London



# EDITORIAL

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## Halloween!

Henry Alman - Felix Editor



I love Halloween. It's always been my favourite holiday of the year - a night of scary stories, creepy crawlies, screams and movies and sweets and candy. There's nothing not to love about it.

See, it feels very different from other holidays. Yes, it suffers from the same gradual suffusion of corporate nonsense - yes, Halloween decorations go up earlier every single year in a morally bankrupt attempt to capitalise on happiness and excitement. God Bless Neoliberalism.

However, it doesn't quite suffer the same cheesiness as other holidays. Or rather, plenty of cheese abounds, but it hasn't quite seeped into the public perception of the holiday yet. I still associate Halloween with some of its traditional values, with a time for ghosts and ghouls, rather than the ruin that is my cynical adult view of holidays like Christmas - which are only good because I get a day off and can drink with my lovely family at 9am without feeling quite as guilty.

Halloween still feels spooky, the way it's meant to be. They haven't robbed us of that yet, no matter how much of a superficial veneer of marketing goodness they smear over the top. I still look over my shoulder on Halloween, late at night on the streets with my breath puffing into mist before me. I still sleep a little bit less easy that night - and I relish it.

Weirdly, I developed this love without ever trick-or-treating much as a kid. I dressed up sometimes - my mum is just the

most fantastic face-painter, although unfortunately I inherited little of her artistic talent. But only once or twice did I partake in the tradition that for many people defines the identity of Halloween from their childhood. The one time I tried in the small village I grew up in, I ended up knocking at the door of a man who had had recently had a stroke - who came, and answered kindly in a rusty voice that he'd had a stroke and didn't have anything for me. I didn't understand at the time, but my mum's reaction and apology made it clear - I felt chagrined to have bothered someone going through a hard time. Maybe that spoiled it a bit for me - my first experience being the knowledge that whenever you have fun, someone else is suffering horribly somewhere.

No, Halloween became special to me after I moved to Edinburgh. My experiences in Scotland are a topic for another Editorial, but this one I'm cracking out now - The Samhain Festival.

My family took me one year - I must have been only around 12. We walked up the hill to the Royal Mile, the

cobbled ancient street descending down from the castle to Holyrood. It's full of old Victorian tenements, cathedrals, the ancient stone of the castle itself. It positively reeks of history, of Burke and Hare, of the grisly plagues and dirty streets of times past - especially late at night. Edinburgh's ghost tours almost always start from the Royal Mile, and Mary King's Close - the famous twisting alley where plague victims were blocked off to die - lies just off to the side.

Outside of St. Giles' Cathedral, there's a square (on which, for reference, lies the Heart of Midlothian - a spot for public execution in years past.) There, people gathered. Back then, it was many, but still a small boy like me could see. We waited, chatting in the cold, and through the fog they came. Automations, almost - but no, they were stilt walkers, wearing costumes such as I had never seen - ones that genuinely seemed creepy, unnerving, rather than the plastic I wore strapped to my face. I was mesmerised. There was fire, there was everything. Honestly, I don't recall much detail - it was an experience, and one that

made me realise the affinity for the appalling I feel I sometimes have. I'm drawn to the creepiness. Maybe that's why I was such an emo teenager.

I left feeling very different about the night - no longer caring for the idea of trick-or-treating, but rather determined to come back to that festival every year. It held something pure, something crystalline, something dark and morbid and attractive in that. It felt as ancient as those cobbled stones, along which those stilt walkers moved with such grace. It imprinted a love in me that will last for the rest of my life.

Now I live in London, and I haven't checked to see about equivalent events here. I wasted my Halloweens in my degree years getting drunk at mediocre parties. In my first year, I escorted an unknown IC student from Fabric to Waterloo because he was too drunk to stand, after having been pickpocketed, and then had to walk home to South Kensington - having only been in London a month. Admittedly, that was a bit of a treat, though perhaps a little too real for comfort. This year, I'm working on Halloween - indeed, I'm writing this Editorial on the night itself, letting that sensation steal over me and looking forward to the deliciously unnerving train ride home. But also, there's something just special about Edinburgh, about Samhain. I don't want to shatter that crystalline impression I have, that defined my favourite holiday forevermore.



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## NEWS

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# Imperial College NHS Trust Staff Strike

## NEWS

**Henry Alman**  
Editor-in-Chief

The strikes, organised by the United Voices of the World (UVW) trade union, took place on Monday 28th, Tuesday 29th, and Thursday 31st October, with an estimated 200 staff joining at some point over the three days. There are plans for further strike action over the coming weeks, for a total of fifteen days throughout November and December – critical periods for the hospital's operation.

The actions were coordinated with strikes from workers at other London institutions, such as the Ministry of Justice, London's Royal Parks, the headquarters of ITV and Channel 4, and the Universities of Greenwich and East London as well as St. George's University. This culminated on Thursday with a joint march between each location, ending at St. Mary's.

Imperial students have been seen attending and supporting the strikes during the week, in a sign of solidarity.

In 2017, UVW-organised action saw LSE rescind its former contract with Noonan, another outsourcing firm, and bring their outsourced cleaners in-house. This kickstarted a miniature wave of similar commitments from other universities, particularly in London – but it doesn't compare to the overwhelming general trend towards outsourcing, with an almost 70% rise in university spending on outsourced workers between 2010 and 2017.

Imperial College itself is still contracted with Noonan, though a College

spokesperson stated that they are paid a living wage. This is in direct contrast with the workers at St. Mary's under the Imperial College NHS Trust, which is a separate entity to the College but has close links via academic research – and via provision of both teaching and clinical experience for medics.

The complaints levied at the Trust by the striking workers are multiple, but a key one is pay. Currently, many are paid minimum wage by Sodexo – just £8.21 an hour – which is significantly lower than they would be paid if they were in-house with the NHS in the same roles. Indeed, the lowest point on the NHS pay scale is £9.03 an hour. UVW says that this creates a “two-tier system” between in-house and outsourced workers.

Practical considerations of surviving in London on low wages aside, several said that they felt disrespected and undervalued: “it just feels like we're considered ‘below’ the pay scale – we aren't even worth being paid the minimum they would pay anyone.”

There are further issues with sick pay. The Sodexo-employed staff are only given Statutory sick pay – in other words, only after being absent for three unpaid days, and then only up to £94.25 per week. Combined with the low wage, this has forced workers to continue despite illness – and despite the fact that they're working in a hospital, in which many patients are susceptible to infection.

Additionally, many workers claim they have not been properly vaccinated – which is one of their key demands. Speaking to those at the strike, this latter point was raised often – there



The strikers banding together outside St. Mary's //UVW

was a genuine feeling of dedication to their work, and chagrin at the idea of having to endanger the patients they work for in order to survive themselves.

One striking cleaner said, “I work 55 hours a week just to cover my rent. St. Mary's is my home, I spend more time here than in my house. Yet I am treated like a dog and made to feel like dirt.”

There is a fundamental problem with morale. Working in a hospital is always a tough job, especially in oft-overlooked roles such as cleaning or catering. A sense of internal community is important for surviving the trials and tribulations. However, the outsourced staff are not included in that – they are isolated and alienated from in-house workers, both in terms of pay, but also in other more direct ways.

They are, for example, barred from using the same canteens and staffrooms. They also

claim that they are only provided a mixed-gender, mice-infested changing room in the basement, and are often only given one or two uniforms by Sodexo – meaning they are forced to come to work in unwashed clothes.

Sodexo, the firm to which the Trust has outsourced these positions, is a multinational corporation with a billion-euro profit each year; the lack of provisions is not due to inability. It often amounts to little more than mistreatment of migrant workers – two staff who spoke to Felix claim they were told to “go home”, as in to their own countries, when bringing concerns to Sodexo.

The minutes of the Trust's latest Trust Board meeting on the 25th of September – which was after the strike was announced – do not mention the action being taken, or Sodexo staff in a related context, implying it was not discussed. In a press release after the strike had

begun, they revealed that they have firmly committed to ensuring their staff receive the London Living Wage, and will be renegotiating a new outsourcing contract to begin in April next year.

Additionally, the Trust itself also published a letter addressed to the CEO of Sodexo on Thursday 31st, which sought to ensure issues would be resolved, and stated:

“All of the staff who work in our hospitals, including all Sodexo employees, are part of one team and should be treated as such, but you have the primary responsibility as their employer to ensure their welfare and to respond to their concerns.”

Petros, one of the key organisers of the St. Mary's strike, takes a different stance, and said that the Trust needs to accept responsibility along with Sodexo. The outsourcing contract signed between the two would, he claims, have specified parameters

for factors like wages and sick pay based on how many employees were needed and the value of the contract. He further said that the Trust likely decided to hire outsourced (and mostly migrant) workers instead of bringing them in-house as a money-saving bid.

This is despite the fact that a report produced by St. George's University in November 2016, after a previous UVW in-housing bid, showed that outsourcing does not actually save money total in the end. In fact, bringing ‘soft facilities management’ workers in-house at St. George's would have saved up to £200,000 a year. Despite this, they still outsource – and have staff who participated in the strikes this week.

The St. Mary's strikes are scheduled to continue on the 11th to 13th and 25th to 28th of November, followed by the 9th to 13th of December.

# NEWS

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## Record Turnout at Autumn Elections

*The elections this year topped the charts in terms of turnout for Autumn, cresting 34% - Felix breaks down the stats and speaks to the Elections team*

### NEWS

**Henry Alman**

*Editor-in-Chief*

The Autumn elections ended on Thursday 24th October, with 329 student reps elected. Felix breaks down the data with the help of the Union Elections Team, and spoke to them about what made turnout so excellent this year.

To break down the data: the total turnout emerged at 34.31%, corresponding to over 7000 voters for the first time ever – a large improvement in a short time, given that last year was the first time 6000 voters had been reached. The record was set for both undergraduate and postgraduate involvement – especially undergraduate, with a 5% increase over last year – and sits significantly above the average turnout for UK universities.

There's a sense of competition at Imperial, between faculties and departments – so let's take

a look at the best of each for turning out.

The Faculty of Engineering blew the competition away with a whopping 40.0% turnout, with the Faculty of Natural Sciences falling behind at only 36.6%. Both, however, are carrying

**“The Faculty of Engineering blew the competition away with a whopping 40.0% turnout”**

their counterparts with results above the overall average of 34.31% – with the lowest faculty being the “IC” faculty representing students outside of the four that encompass most courses, reaching only 19.6%.

Science, however, took revenge and won out with regards to Council Rep turnouts, with 24.54%

casting their vote for undergraduate representative – closely followed by Engineering again. The lowest turnout was 9.04% for postgraduate Medicine rep!

The position with the highest turnout was, contrary to the norm, a postgraduate rep – specifically, for the Electrical and Electronic Engineering: MSc Control Systems academic representative. 24 out of 27 voters for the role turned out, leaving a truly impressive 88.89% turnout. There were five more rep positions with a turnout above 80%, and another eight above 70% - all of whom more than double the overall average!

Departmentally, there were six that broke Engineering's record, passing 40% overall turnout. The highest were Earth Science and Engineering, with 45.11% turnout, followed very closely by Bioengineering at 45.01% - with amounts to just a couple of students extra!

As a fun fact: the most hotly contested role was for International Officer, which had almost 30

candidates and went over 20 rounds using the Single Transferrable Vote system!

Felix spoke to Keriann Lee, Head of Student Voice and Communications, about who works on elections and how they generated more engagement than ever before.

Elections are run by the Elections Working Group, which is led by Keriann and features a cross-section of staff from various teams. This includes representatives from the Systems team, who manage the custom voting system and built the new complaints solution; from Representation and Activities, who ensure all relevant positions are included; and the Marketing team, who raise awareness across the College. There are then two DROs, who interpret the rules during the election cycle. It is important to note that no elected positions (such as the Union President and Deputy Presidents) are allowed to participate, to avoid risks of conflict of interest, though students are consulted via the Governance Committee – who

oversee timelines and have general oversight – and the Union Council, who determine the by-laws.

The collection of this group of interdisciplinary people requires a tightly-managed effort to pull together – and this year, they made several changes to increase participation. As Keriann said:

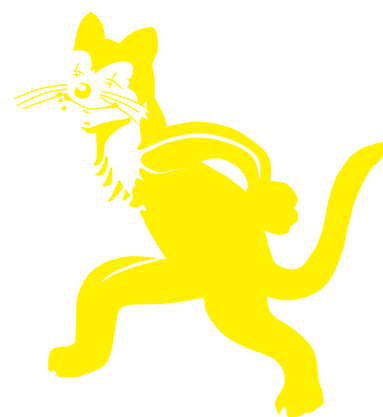
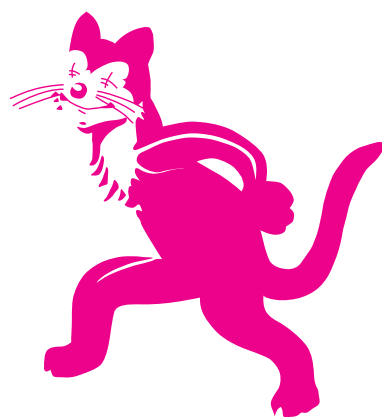
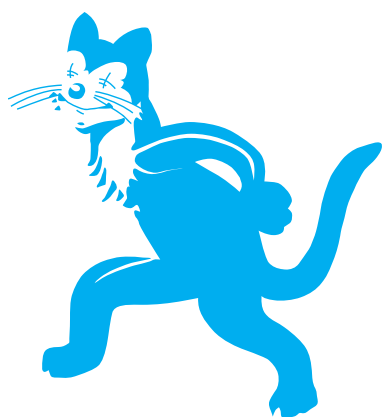
“There have been a number of improvements to our elections over the past year and a half. We have tighter project

**“Coupled with greater multi-campus promotion, we got a stronger field of candidates and a greater appreciation of Reps' contribution”**

management with dates for each poll set well in advance and laser-like focus of the project team several weeks ahead of the event; we have streamlined our complaints procedure to make it both easier to use from a student standpoint, but also easier to manage internally, with non-student facing managers serving as DROs and a separate staff member handling queries specifically.”

With regards to turnout, there have also been more direct changes. “We now spend more time during the nominations process ensuring that students understand the roles, why they are important, and what the commitment is. This, coupled with greater multi-campus promotion, tends to lead to a stronger field of candidates and a greater appreciation for the role of Reps to the overall student experience at Imperial. The result is greater investment in the election outcomes, stronger student campaigns, and ultimately higher turnout. Better segmenting of our communications is also key.”

## Felix is recruiting!



## COMMENT

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# Northern Ireland Abortion and Gay Rights

Comment writer **Andy Wang** thinks that it's about time that Northern Ireland moves into line with the rest of the UK

## COMMENT

**Andy Wang**  
Comment Writer

Abortion was decriminalised in England, Wales and Scotland in 1967 and was made available through the NHS for free. Same-sex marriage was legalised in England & Wales in 2013 and 2014 in Scotland. Unfortunately, neither of these rights fully extend to Northern Ireland.

In July, the UK government introduced the Northern Ireland Executive Formation Bill in the UK Parliament. This was a largely technical and politically neutral legal instrument required due to the ongoing suspension of the Northern Irish Assembly as the Nationalists and the Unionists could not agree on a power sharing deal in 2017. For over 1000 days, Northern Ireland has been running without a government and no legislation could have been passed in the NI Assembly.

Two Labour MPs submitted two amendments to the Bill, forcing the laws legalising abortion and same-sex marriage to be extended to Northern Ireland unless the NI Assembly can resume sitting before 21st October with a government formed. No power-sharing deal was agreed and no government could be formed. Now the UK government will have to elevate abortion right and marriage equality

in Northern Ireland to the same standard as the rest of the UK by April 2020.

The island of Ireland has been notorious for its ultra-conservative stance on social liberation, with the Republic being generally worse off than the North. Divorce was, bizarrely, not allowed in the Republic until in 1995, when the Irish people voted in favour of divorce rights by 50.3% to 49.7%. In both the North and the Republic, carrying out abortion was punishable by life imprisonment unless the life of the mother was threatened. So says the law, however in 2012, a Galway resident was refused abortion despite her deteriorating health. She died of sepsis 5 days later.

The table has turned in recent years, with the Republic legalising same-sex marriage in 2015 and allowed abortion on-demand in 2018. These archaic laws remained in Northern Ireland. It should be noted, however, that same-sex couples in Northern Ireland were able to obtain civil partnership status since 2004. Starting from June 2017, NHS England also provides free abortion service to Northern Irish residents with travel costs reimbursed. This arrangement is certainly welcomed, but it came far too late and can hardly be considered accessible, especially for women in vulnerable groups.

In 1967, legislations

from Westminster generally applied to the whole of the United Kingdom.

Northern Ireland was explicitly excluded from the Act decriminalising abortion. Since the late 1990s, devolved legislatures were set up in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland with Westminster devolving numerous powers to these regional assemblies. Abortion and marriage are among these devolved matters (except for Wales). Same-sex marriage was made legal in England and Wales in 2013, with the Scottish parliament promptly following suit in early 2014. The Northern Irish assembly voted 4 times to legalise same-sex marriage since 2012, with all being defeated by a narrow margin. In 2015, legalisation of same-sex marriage finally received majority support in Stormont, however this vote was nullified through an abuse of petition of concern.

Ironically, the biggest devil in the play is the Democratic Unionist Party. As the name suggests, the DUP supports Northern Ireland remaining in the United Kingdom with strengthening ties with Great Britain. With what I regard as one of the most egregious political hypocrisy currently in existence, the DUP stood consistently opposed to abortion rights, a policy adapted, accepted and taken as norm by millions of Britons for more than half a century,



An Abortion Protest // Flickr: Studio Incendo

and arguably, one that distinguishes whether a country is living in the present or past. The DUP has also consistently opposed same-sex marriage, a policy that once again, is widely supported across the UK.

The Nationalist camp is mostly supportive of social liberation, despite having a strong tie with Catholicism through its pro-Irish Reunification voter base. Sinn Féin, the largest nationalist party, had a reserved stance on abortion rights until ultimately in 2018, adopted a stance to allow abortion on demand. Sinn Féin has also supported same-sex marriage, while refusing to form a government with the DUP unless they agree to work towards marriage equality. SDLP labelled themselves

as “pro-life” although gave MLAs free vote on the matter. SDLP has also voted in favour of marriage equality in all the 5 votes tabled to the Assembly between 2012 and 2015.

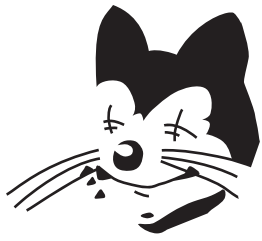
Put it this way: you know you are probably in the wrong when Catholic sympathisers are more socially liberal than you. The DUP unfortunately doesn't get it, and continued its attempt to sabotage social progression even after the UK Parliament has affirmed its stance. The DUP requested the NI Assembly to be summoned on 21st October, on the deadline set out by the NI Executive Formation Act. This was of course futile as a government couldn't possibly have been formed on the day. The DUP has also tabled

a motion “That this Assembly agrees that the legislative position on abortion in Northern Ireland will most appropriately be determined by the Northern Ireland Assembly”. Or, in other words, “we'll abuse the procedure to block it even if decriminalisation of abortion gets majority support in the Assembly, just like what we did with same-sex marriage.”

Indeed there are few major parties in Western Europe with such a hard-line regressive ideology, and even fewer parties that openly take pride in such fundamentalism. The DUP's stance is not the path history takes, and they will promptly be remembered as the antagonist in the struggle for social liberation.

## COMMENT

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# An opinion on the Hong Kong issue

*An anonymous writer gives their opinion on the ongoing Hong Protests.*

## COMMENT

## Anonymous

*Comment Writer*

The Hong Kong protests have been going on for 4 months now, with no end in sight. What started as a peaceful protest against the extradition bill has evolved (or devolved, depending on your perspective) into an often-violent movement against Beijing. Personally, I am both confused, amused and disgusted by the once peaceful rioters.

The incident that sparked the extradition bill was the murder of pregnant Poon Hiu-wing, 20, by her boyfriend Chan Tong-kai. As crimes committed by foreign nationals are not punishable under Hong Kong law, there arose a need to amend this loophole. However, Carrie Lam (current HK Chief Executive) tried to ram the bill through, which worsened public sentiment and reinforced beliefs of the erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy. This sparked the protests, as public opinion was once again manipulated. The origin of the bill however, was not unreasonable.

Furthermore, the Hong Kong police have been markedly restrained in the face of blatant violence by the protestors. In any other country, incidents such as violence targeting policemen and policewomen would have resulted in martial law, as the case was in Baltimore! In Hong Kong, protestors have caused grievous injuries such as



The Hong Kong Protests // Flickr: Studio Incendo

slashing police officers, making bombs, doxxing police officers (who are Hong Kong citizens as well) and sending death threats to their families. Protestors/rioters have also tried to steal the guns of the officers they attacked! At this point any country would have declared martial law. However, Hong Kong's administration is paralyzed. Under the central government's directive, it cannot do anything, while international media sensationalizes and demonizes it. There has been surprisingly continuous media coverage of the protests in Hong Kong while the opposite has happened for the yellow shirt protests in Paris, where similar

**“Personally, I am both confused, amused and disgusted by the once peaceful rioters.”**

violence erupted with 11 fatalities. The restraint and conduct shown by Hong Kong's police is admirable despite the insidious tactics used by the protestors.

I believe that the longer the riots/protests go on, the bleaker Hong Kong's future becomes. The reason China has not intervened yet was because they know this. As violence grips the city, businesses and funds have been considering leaving the city. Retail sales have been down 23% year-on-year, tourism has been down. Goldman Sachs estimates that since the protests broke out in June about \$3 billion to \$4 billion has left the city for Singapore. If this continues, within 10 years, Hong Kong will have no significance left. China does not really need Hong Kong as badly as 30 years ago. The Shanghai stock exchange market has now

overtaken it, while the Shenzhen one is catching up fast at #8. Hong Kong (#5) still holds an important position in the inflow of funds into China, but it is by no means essential anymore. The protestors/rioters pushing for the US to pass the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act will only

**“In the end, Hong Kong is China. The very first Article of the Basic Law states so..”**

accelerate this process. Foreign interference in the issues of Hong Kong is also clear, as evidenced by the photographs of protest leaders with leading Western officials and diplomats and NED (National Endowment for Democracy) funding of Hong Kong's National Democratic Institute. This will only further incite the wrath of the mainland citizenry and government.

As an ethnic Chinese living overseas (I am not born in China, but I do identify as Chinese), I could have sympathized with the protestors had they not shown such disrespect towards their country: stamping, burning the Chinese flag, waving flags of the US

# COMMENT

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and UK (by the way, Hong Kong's citizens were NOT allowed to vote under British colonialism!), defacing the Chinese emblem, outright racist obscene slogans against their fellow countrymen. I am absolutely disgusted when I see these pictures. Chinese politics is extremely different from its western counterparts. Most of us view social and economic stability as a precursor to the extra freedoms held as sacred in the west. This culture is still held amongst many of the Chinese, mainland or overseas. Therefore the chaos in Hong Kong garners no significant Chinese sympathy.

Additionally, I do acknowledge that Hong Kong's citizens are extremely dissatisfied with the local government. However, it has more to do with its economy and rising property prices/living costs which has turned much of the youth desperate and angry for change. However, this anger is misdirected. The tycoons, who jettisoned HK's former Chief Exec-

utive Tung Chee Hwa's plan to build 85,000 affordable homes a year, believing that this scheme would send property prices plummeting, public opinion turned against him and forced him to abandon his plan. Thus, the marked increase in property prices, which have risen 300% since 2003. Hong Kong's citizens should turn their wrath towards the city's elite, instead of the government.

Additionally, Chinese history also shapes our worldview. A hundred years of humiliation and decades of bullying by the west (the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, the full embargo led by America and constant demonisation of the Chinese government, despite it lifting 700 million people out of poverty within a century) have led to a very patriotic population that thinks itself unfairly targeted by the same West who profited as much from cheap prices as China from technology gains.

In the end, Hong Kong is China. The very first



Article of the Basic Law states so. Anyone who is familiar with the Basic Law and its complexities can see that Hong Kong is an indivisible part of China. Hong Kong citizens, in my opinion, should be proud of their heritage, not try to identify themselves as distinct from Chinese people. That is how the world views us. To preserve

Hong Kong's autonomy, the best thing to do would be to prove that the '1 Country, 2 Systems' principle is essential for the city's prosperity, instead of being a recipe for disaster. The smart thing would be to convince the Chinese government that Hong Kong should be kept as a world-class tax haven (with little political cost). Showing that the

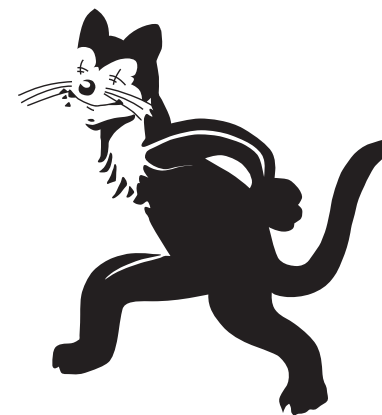
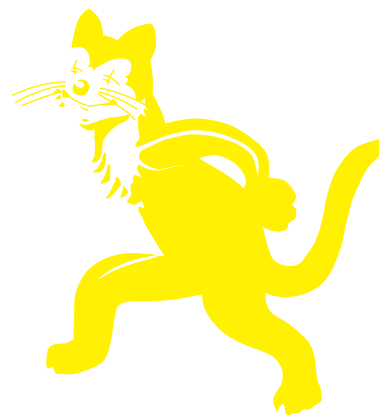
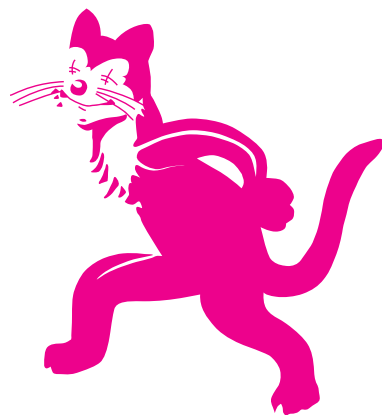
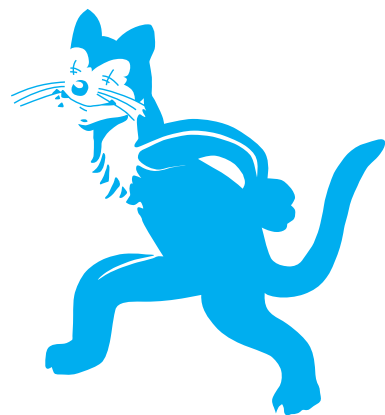
extradition bill would adversely affect this would allow for the Basic Law to be extended beyond 2047. That would be a victory for most Hong Kong citizens.

*Sources provided by the writer for this article are available upon request.*

The Hong Kong Protests // Flickr: Studio Incendo

*Felix welcomes all student opinions on this or any other issue. If you want your voice heard, whether to agree or disagree, contact the Comment editors at comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk*

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# A CONVERSATION WITH...

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*This week, Felix sat down with the Deputy President (Welfare), Shervin Sabeghi, to talk about year reps and elections, Liberation reform, and the Athena Swan and the Race Equality Charter*



**Shervin Sabeghi, the Deputy President (Welfare) //ICU**

## **Felix: How has it been so far?**

It's been busy, and never really quiets down much! It's been waves of different things. Over summer, at the beginning, there was a lot of settling in, and then there was a wave of college meetings, now it's a wave of dealing with volunteers – elections, training, and so on. It's been nice in my role to get to see a big cross-section of the College – it clues you in to services you didn't even know existed, and learn a lot more about how everything works.

## **Felix: You're someone who was quite involved with the Union as a rep and in the RCSU before entering this role – but were still unaware. Do you think there needs to be more communication about how things work behind the scenes?**

It's not necessarily crucial for students to know the behind the scenes stuff – it's like the 'swan on water' analogy. Students should see the majestic swan gliding by, while beneath the surface there's a lot of thrashing to keep it all working! I'd like to think that students who need certain services do find out about them – for example, I never needed the Centre for Academic English so didn't know about it for a long time, but I'd hope a student who did would find it.

College has been doing stuff in this direction – they just launched the new student support zone on the website, which restructures how informa-

tion about services is presented to students. Instead of being a list of services, it focuses on what areas a student might struggle in, and then directs them to the right information. The goal is for students to feel like there is an 'air' or atmosphere of support, which is what I think is often lacking.

## **Felix: One thing I hear a lot of is a new focus on "student experience" and "holistic wellbeing" and such – including the idea of a 'wellbeing hub' being built. The student support zone seems to be in that trend of centralising issues students might have so they can more easily find information. What are your thoughts?**

It's potentially beneficial. I can definitely see the value of knowing for certain that a space for your wellbeing exists, and it might help add to that air of support. If it was ever going to happen it would be a very long-term, high-level, strategic project!

I don't know if this is the best way to use that amount of resources, though – particularly space-wise given how cramped things are at the South Ken campus – and I worry about College committing to such a big project and maybe then putting off doing other important things. One thing to remember is that over the next couple of decades it seems the College will be moving to a multi-campus style. Even now only a half to a third of students are regularly on the South Kensington campus, and many more are only part-time for example – so such



# A CONVERSATION WITH...

felix@imperial.ac.uk

a wellbeing hub might not work for everyone, it isn't a be-all and end-all solution. This concept of physical spaces is dying out quite quickly.

And furthermore, I can see it damaging the personal networks of support students build up in departments with personal tutors and so on, if there's another 'one-stop shop' that's a bit more faceless and general in its presentation.

Talking of the multi-campus approach – as DPW, how do you think that might affect students and the Imperial community in years to come?

I think that the communities that provide people the greatest sense of belonging tend to be smaller local communities. So my initial thought is that it potentially has benefits – you're one student in 1000, rather than 10000. It could help with that isolation and loneliness that a lot of students at Imperial feel. By far the communities that students tell me they feel most connected to are their years, and also their clubs and societies.

That's where they may be some issue – societies either stay centralised at South Kensington and some students are distanced from that, or they fracture into campus-based ones and we lose that collective. And,

as another issue, things like the Union building are currently firmly set in South Kensington – that's not going anywhere. Perhaps another Union hub could be built at another campus, but right now it's so hypothetical and long-term that it's hard to pin down; I just don't think it'll necessarily be better or worse, just different, and the most important thing is that students have a place to feel they belong.

**Felix: Speaking of major projects – let's get back on track. You've been working on rep training recently?**

Yes – especially over the last couple of weeks. We've just had our first 'Rep Academy', which differs from how training in previous years was done. We've set aside a day for it, with group sessions and then splitting different sessions for different groups of reps depending on what they need to know – e.g. separate sessions for wellbeing and academic reps – and then everyone coming back together for a skills workshop. In previous years, training was done over several evenings over the three weeks post-elections.

This way, reps get a lot more of a social aspect to it, and everyone is in the same room together

sharing ideas and contributions. We put a lot of effort into training reps, and it's very time-intensive, but we do it because of this – because their insights are so valuable. It's pointless to elect reps if we don't equip them to do the roles.

There does need to be work done to keep improving and understanding what reps need from us, so we'll be using feedback. We also want to be a lot more timely next year – faculty and dep reps are elected in March, so waiting until October to do training isn't ideal. And CU President training needs to be looked at – we don't think including them in two random days of OT training is useful, but waiting until October just doesn't work for them, as they especially are really in the thick of it from August onwards. There's a really strong attitude from this year's OTs that the Union is only as strong as its volunteers – we're really trying to bring them into decisions more and to ensure they're equipped to do what they need to do.

**Felix: And you're also looking at reforming some of those roles – specifically the Liberation Officers?**

Currently, the Liberation Officers are very senior roles in the Union – on par with faculty reps and management chairs – but they

don't fall into any other structures. If anything under their remit needs to get done, it's just on them to do it. That means both that if they can't do it alone, it doesn't get done, and that they aren't receiving support or inter-linkage with others who might want to help. That's just not good enough, either for the rep or for the students relying on their Liberation Officers to be able to do things.

In 2016-17, an external company was brought in to review liberation in the Union, and they had some great suggestions – many of which haven't yet been implemented. I want to look at it in a more holistic way – what does it need to succeed if we really want to represent, campaign for, build communities in these groups. The kind of incremental changes done by my predecessors won't address this problem.

This is one area where benchmarking against other universities is really helpful, so I've been doing that, and it gave me some ideas of where we can go and how to restructure. The desire for change was really clear at the first Community and Welfare Board meeting a couple of weeks ago, and we gathered good feedback. We'll also look to liaise with other groups who may have a stake, such as iQ or ACS.

I'm aiming for January as a very ambitious deadline, so that if there need to be changes to the description of the Liberation Officer roles they're ready for the elections in Spring.

**Felix: You also mentioned the Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter?**

Both of these, the former old and the latter rather new, are essentially 'awards' given to higher education institutions for both their future plans and their implementation of past plans toward making positive changes for female and for BAME students and academics.

It's very much not just about hitting some quota of students, but rather what the College is doing to genuinely improve the overall experience – every single aspect.

I've been helping with the applications – this year, Imperial is seeking to maintain its Silver standard for the Athena Swan, and to be accepted for the Racial Equality Charter as this is its first year.

**Felix: Why is the College not aiming for Gold?**

In short, to be realistic. Very very few institutions have the Gold award, and though there were dis-

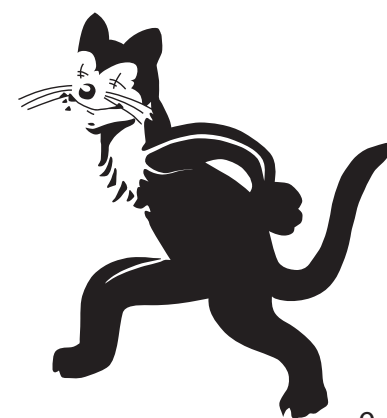
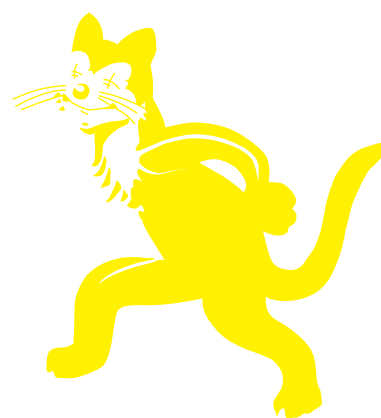
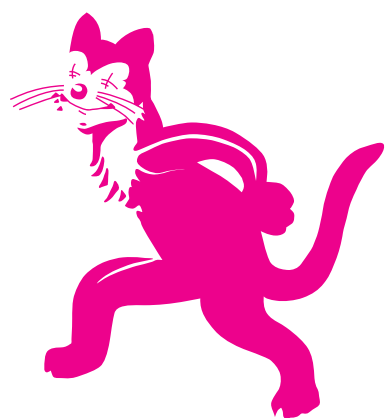
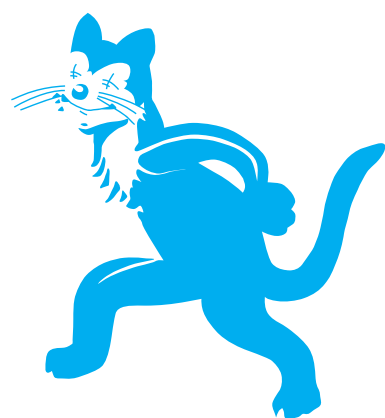
cussions about it, it was decided that we aren't at that point yet.

The Chemistry department, however, is one of only a few holders of a departmental Gold Award in the country! It's very very prestigious.

**Felix: What is your involvement with the applications?**

I'm involved both in working groups investigating specific things for the sake of the applications, as well as being part of 'self-assessment teams' along with other Union members like the Gender Equality or BAME Officers. We've been running focus groups, but the attendance has been very poor – and we need to dig into the reasons behind that, because maybe that's emblematic of a problem faced by some students. Perhaps many students aren't comfortable talking about these things. For now, we need to rethink how students will be involved, because we can't pull useful information out of poorly-attended sessions.

## Felix is recruiting!



# POLITICS

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## General Election Time

*A general election has been called for December 12th, eligible voters should ensure they are registered to vote*

### POLITICS

#### Politics writers

It would be impossible to discuss any politics in the UK without stumbling upon Brexit. Brexit has been the key political issue of the last three years, a problem that successive governments have been unable to satisfactorily resolve.

The calling of this election is directly linked to the Brexit process and will have a significant impact on the outcome.

Boris Johnson's government was formed as a result of the leadership election following the resignation of Theresa May. Theresa May's government was only possible as a result of a confidence and supply deal (a promise

to vote with the Tories) with the Democratic Unionist Party, a unionist party of Northern Ireland, providing only a very slim majority in Parliament.

Following Boris Johnson's controversial stance that a No-Deal Brexit must be an option for the UK-EU negotiations, Johnson attempted to trigger an early election twice but failed to win the vote both times. In the past, a British Prime Minister was able to dissolve Parliament at will, effectively calling a General Election. However, the Fixed Term Parliament Act of 2010 changed this. Negotiated as a condition of the 2010 Tory-Liberal Democrat coalition, this act was intended to prevent either side from being able to bring down the government by imposing a requirement for a two-

thirds vote in the House of Commons in order to call a General Election.

Despite this, in the ongoing negotiations with the EU Johnson continued to press for the No-Deal option but was defeated in a series of key votes, preventing the No-Deal scenario. These votes were partially lost as a result of 21 Conservative MPs rebelling against Johnson's government and subsequently being kicked out of the party. Some of those MPs have now been readmitted.

A Brexit deal between the EU and the UK has now been agreed, which allays the concerns of many with regards to a No-Deal Brexit. That threat having subsided, the parties that were previously opposed to the prospect of a new election have approved a

UK general election for the 12th of December. However, the approved 'deal' is only a political declaration of what a future trading relationship would look like, rather than an actual binding contract which will take many more months to hash out.

Each of the political parties, Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats, Greens, Brexit Party and others are lining up for an election that will determine who will lead the country over the next five years and impose new fiscal and social policies on the UK. Furthermore, Brexit will remain a key issue with the potential for renegotiation, or a second referendum depending on the outcome of the election.

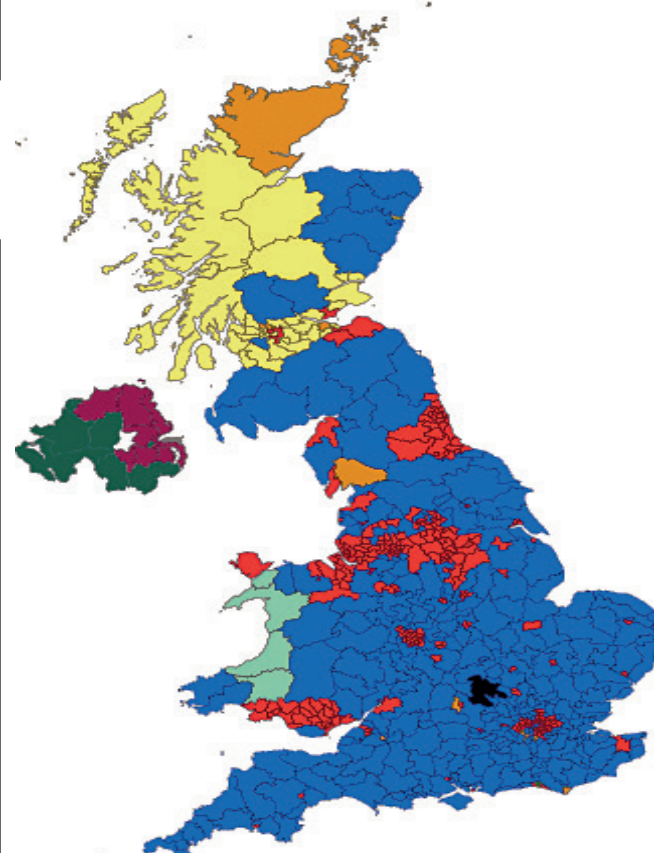
The result of this upcoming election will,

of course, determine more than just the outcome of Brexit. It will decide if you need a visa to spend a year of your course in the EU; it will determine things as varied as income tax and foreign policy to if you can access healthcare on the same basis as local EU citizens; if you will have to pay roaming charges for using your phone in

the EU; if your tuition fees change or if they'll be abolished; if recreational cannabis becomes legal; if you need a visa to remain in the UK... the list goes on. No matter who you are and which side of the argument you are on, this election will make a difference to you and your future.

**If you haven't already registered to vote using your term-time address, you can do so at:**  
[gov.uk/register-to-vote](https://gov.uk/register-to-vote)

**The latest you can register in order to vote in the general election is November 26th.**



2017 General Election map // Wikimedia

### The political parties and what they have to gain/lose with this election

#### Conservative

The Conservatives are hoping for a strong election victory that removes their dependence on the DUP and provides them with a sufficient majority to enact their economically liberal fiscal policies as well as achieving their hard-line stance on the EU-UK deal. Reduced regulation and taxes, as well as potentially reopening the negotiations with the EU with the strong possibility of a No Deal. This election may also be crucial for the direction of the Conservative party as a whole, with a significant victory moving it to the right, while a loss could lead to a revolt by the more moderate MPs.

#### Labour

Labour are also aiming for a strong election victory, that would allow them to enact their socialist fiscal policies. After nine years in opposition and a leadership change, the Labour party is almost unrecognisable from the last time it was in power. They will renationalise significant parts of the UK economy as well as increasing taxes for some sections of society, Labour are also aiming to allow a second referendum on Brexit. The Labour party is also vulnerable to a change in direction, with a loss possibly resulting in the removal of the divisive figure of Jeremy Corbyn.

#### Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats are hoping to win "Hundreds of seats," by decisively capturing the remain vote. This remains a key element of their policy, with the goal of cancelling Brexit entirely through a second referendum.

#### Green

The Greens are aiming to capitalise on the Green Wave sweeping the world. Increased awareness of the environmental movement may help the Greens to gain a couple more votes and enact their programme of environmentally and socially conscious reforms.

#### Brexit

The Brexit party are aiming for exactly that-Brexit at all costs. They could be said to match or exceed the Conservative party's aims when it comes to socially and economically conservative reforms.

#### SNP

The SNP are aiming for a strong election result North of the border in order to provide impetus for a second Independence Referendum. This is likely to hinge on the likelihood of a No-Deal Brexit and the probability of an unpopular Conservative government in London.

#### Other parties

Other smaller parties will of course also be fighting for seats across the country. While their agendas might not feature

as highly in the media, they will be hoping that any seats that they win will give them a say in the Brexit negotiating table.

# POLITICS

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## The Quest for Supremacy in the Indian Ocean and its Victims: the Chagos Islands

*A small archipelago in the Indian Ocean, theatre of decades long injustice, could prove fundamental for the power balance in the region*

### POLITICS

**Luca Ramelli**

*Politics Writer*

In the last few weeks the news cycle has been fixated on protests around the world, from Catalonia, to Chile and Hong Kong, to climate change and to Ecuador. All of these are processes which deal with the lives of countless people. These movements tend to make one reflect on the influence of the masses on the government, if not by managing to push change through, at least by showing their displeasure, sometimes through violence. Entire philosophical thoughts are founded on the analysis of such influence, focusing for example on the creation of the social contract, as Hobbes and Rousseau did. But this is not what this article will deal with; this is the story of what happens when the people are deprived of their rights because they are simply not enough strong to make themselves heard. It is, as often has been, David versus Goliath.

The year was 1965, the United Kingdom was about to relinquish its sovereignty over Mauritius, an insular state in the Indian Ocean located not too far from Madagascar. Proper independence for Mauritians would follow three years later, but in that fatidic year Harold Wilson's governments implemented the separation between the island of Mauritius itself and an archipelago located halfway between the

main island and India, the Chagos Islands. France had administered the dependency of the archipelago to Mauritius in the mid 18th Century when they claimed the territory, and they have belonged to

**“The sun was finally setting on the British Empire, although preserving as much influence as possible was certainly in its interest”**

the same colonial entity ever since. During the Napoleonic Wars, the UK captured Mauritius from France, thus also gaining sovereignty over the archipelago. But the winds had begun to change for the UK after the Second World War and the sun was finally setting on the British Empire, although preserving as much influence as possible was certainly in its interest. The Chagos Archipelago, scarcely populated and located in a key strategic position, would certainly fit this purpose. Thus, in 1968 the British Government began to forcibly relocate the two thousand inhabitants to Mauritius, to create space for the establishment of an American military base on the newly created British Indian Ocean Territory. A

document from 1966 by Foreign Office's senior advisor Denis Greenhill refers to the islanders as “some few Tarzans and Men Fridays” in a sad reference to Edgar Rice Burrough's and Daniel Defoe's masterpieces respectively.

After being constrained to leave their homes, the Chagossians were at least granted in 2002 the right to British Citizenship, allowing many of them and their descendants to move to Britain, founding a conspicuous community in Crawley, West Sussex. There, some have recently denounced the existence of a hostile environment in a period in which the Windrush scandal is still firm in the memory of most.

In 2017, the International Court of Justice was called to evaluate whether splitting the archipelago from Mauritius was lawful and what the legal consequences and obligations are that the United Kingdom has to undertake due to its continuous control of the islands.

**“The Chagos Archipelago, scarcely populated and located in a key strategic position, would certainly fit this purpose”**



American aircrafts in Diego Garcia base (Chagos Islands) // Wikimedia

To that matter, the Court answered in February that the UK is under obligation to end its administration of the islands as soon as possible, deeming it unlawful. In an ensuing vote at the UN General Assembly about the issue, the UK and the US experienced a crushing defeat 116-6, with many traditional allies either abstaining or voting in favour of the complete decolonisation of the area. Even Pope Francis asked for its return to Mauritius, whose Prime Minister, Pravin Jugnauth, defined the Chagossians' removal as “akin to a crime against humanity”. Meanwhile, in September, it was revealed that a secretive visit had taken place to the islands, the first formal one by MPs, two Conservatives and one Labour member. This was regarded by some as an expression of Britain's intention to

**“The American base plays a significant role in the fight for supremacy in Asia between the US and China”**

reassert its claim over the territory.

The UK will certainly not surrender the Chagos Islands because of a mere non-binding UN resolution, bringing to mind an issue other than post-colonialism that should be considered: the Islands' strategic importance. The American base currently, and possibly even more so in the future, plays a significant role in the fight for supremacy

in Asia between the US and China. One possible scenario if Britain hands back the islands to Mauritius, is that they could be leased by Mauritian authorities to China instead, inverting the power balance in the Indian Ocean. The bitter irony would be that by repairing a damage to the principles of self-determination and basic civil rights, these western powers could actually be doing a favour to a country which systematically disrespects them on much larger scale. Therefore, whilst the confrontation in the Orient grows in intensity, so does the grief of those deprived of their ancestral soil, and this is why it is not the last we will hear of the name Chagos.

# POLITICS

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## Understanding the 2019 Canadian Election

*Thoughts and analysis on Trudeau's minority government loss from an Authentic Canadian*

### POLITICS

**Maeve Johnston**

*Politics Writer*

Last week Justin Trudeau managed to claw his way to a minority government in an election which saw him lose his 2015 sweeping majority and came after a term that had few clear wins and was marred by controversy. There was a clear regional divide in election results, with a complete loss of Liberal (Trudeau's party) seats in the Western provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan (dubbed 'wexit') and a surge in Bloc Quebecois (a Quebec independence party) support, with the party attaining 30 seats from 10 in 2015 and supplanting the NDP as the secondary opposition in parliament.

As the second largest

country in the World, Canada naturally has a diverse and fairly disparate electorate. For example, the Greater Toronto area (GTA), where 18.81% of the population of Canada live has 43 ridings (the equivalent of constituencies) whereas the 2.1 million sq km Arctic territory of Nunavut only has one. This naturally means that metropolitan areas have the largest amount of clout in the federal elections due to increased population density. Trudeau's liberal party gained all but three ridings in the GTA - whilst historically a local majority of this scale would have gained him a federal win, the gains of Bloc Quebecois and the Conservatives prevented a majority.

The needs of the Canadian electorate as a whole are incredibly diverse, a product of

a multitude of factors including geography, industry and the history of the province and its people. Those in Nunavut are at the forefront of the effects of climate change, and have an extortionately high cost of living. Blue collar workers in the western provinces where Trudeau performed so poorly view environmental policy as squandering the plentiful oil sands and resources of the country, at the expense of their jobs (this animosity links back to Trudeau's father,

who in 1973 asked provinces to freeze oil prices, making them unable to sell higher prices). First Nations Canadians (indigenous Canadians) contend with a lack of action following the investigation into missing and murdered indigenous women that resulted in the investigating commission calling the increased rate of homicide of indigenous women tantamount to genocide. Trudeau mandated the missing and murdered women inquiry, but has done little to act

wider World. The production of the pipeline also places Trudeau in further contempt with the First Nations community, who would be posed to lose out significantly in terms of land and disruption in its construction, a further blow to Trudeau's credentials and promises to

So what of the Bloc Quebecois surge? Quebec is a province that is traditionally subject to a large amount of swing, however the extent of the Bloc victory was amongst the biggest surprises of the election. The province has a degree of diplomatic representation, with offices in various countries and separate representation in Canadian delegations. In 1995 a referendum on Quebec having a sovereignty agreement (a step below outright independence) was narrowly defeated, the culmination of years of constitutional conflict. Whether the bloc surge indicates increased public desire for independence is unclear - the main cities of Quebec City and Montreal remained Conservative and Liberal respectively, and given that many seats were gained from the NDP, whose stake in the province has been dwindling for the past 3 federal elections, the gains may be more complicated. Recent polls suggest that 82% of quebecers believe that the province should remain in Canada, and the Bloc campaigned primarily on environmental and other issues unrelated to separatism. So all indicators suggest there won't be a secession anytime soon.

This election is also the first since a landmark supreme court ruling earlier this year that allows all Canadian citizens abroad who were

previously resident in the country to vote in their old riding, no matter how long they have lived away from Canada. Given that there are ~3 million Canadian citizens abroad, this could potentially represent a large minority of the electorate. However the impact of this ruling is not yet and not set to be clear, as expats are not grouped as a voting bloc, and the Canadian government has not published any data

**“There is a complex balance to be made in a country that is simultaneously rich in fossil fuels and melting polar ice caps”**

on the number of expat voters.

In short, no Canadian Prime Minister can win over everyone - there is a complex balance to be made in a country that is simultaneously rich in fossil fuels and melting polar ice caps, and is marred by the legacy and artefacts of colonialism, from the state mandated cultural genocide of native peoples to the continuing battle for Quebec independence. Trudeau has thus far been lacklustre in majority government, and his reelection has produced a country politically divided. Let's see what he can do in the next term.

**“If not built, Alberta is forecast to go into a recession... however building a trans-national pipeline is counter to the environmentalist image Trudeau wishes to portray**

on the 231 'imperative changes' it concluded with. The use of the term genocide has also proved contentious for Trudeau, who declined to endorse that aspect of the report, yet used the term in a speech to describe the issue.

The production of the TMX oil pipeline is demonstrative of many of the geographical and cultural conflicts in Canadian politics. If it is not built, the province of Alberta (which already has unemployment above the national average) is forecast to go into recession. However building a trans-national pipeline is counter to the environmentalist image Trudeau wishes to portray to those in metropolitan areas such as Montreal and Vancouver, as well as the



Irish Border Road Closure Warning // Geograph.ie

# POLITICS

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## Protests Sparked Over Political Stagnation in Chile

*How a \$0.04 rise in metro fares has led to fatal protests in a country plagued by inequality*

### POLITICS

**Harvey Dolton**

*Politics Editor*

Over the past two weeks large scale protests have engulfed Chile's capital, Santiago, and spread to neighbouring cities. Triggered by a now-suspended rise in the price of metro fares in Santiago, police brutality has sparked further resistance from the public. Felipe Hernandez, a law student who was gathering case studies at a local hospital, told a reporter that "There was a journalism student who was beaten so badly she could not talk, or remember her name. Her whole body was bruised after being kicked and clubbed." This is just one case of many, with at least 470 people suffering bullet wounds at the hands of law enforcement and over 20 fatalities as a result. Last weekend saw the demonstrations peak with at least one million people gathering in the capital to corroborate their displeasure over the state of Chile's socioeconomic landscape. High healthcare costs, inaccessible education fees and huge disparities in income equality were prevalent issues addressed on the tens of thousands of placards displayed over the past fortnight.

The country's attempts to manage the demonstrations with the deployment of armed forces has been criticised as an attempt to quash the movement, derived from desperation and deep rooted structural inequality, before it was able to build momentum. In reality, such actions further polarised a country that has been labelled by the Organisation for

Economic Co-operation and Development as the most unequal country of the world's thirty richest nations, with the richest twenty percent earning almost nine times more than the poorest twenty percent. The protests haven't been for nothing, however, with the country's president Sebastián

**"The deployment of armed forces has been criticised as an attempt to quash the movement, derived from desperation and deep rooted structural inequality"**

Piñera announced a reshuffling of his cabinet in which he will replace eight ministers, including interior and finance, despite declaring that authorities were 'in a state of war' with protestors late last week. There have also been changes to the ministries of economy, labour and sports. Chile also announced on Wednesday that it would be pulling out of its role as host of two international summits, including a UN conference on climate change, which may be disappointing to certain leaders of less developed countries who were hoping to use the location to highlight a

need for financial support from economic superpowers to the LEDCs who will be affected most by the crisis.

The problem of inequality in Chile was highlighted over the weekend, when it was reported that there was a distinct lack of availability of medical care for people injured in the protests with staff blaming inadequate medical supplies, including shortages in surgical gloves, syringes and masks in the country's capital. In fact, supplies reached such a scarcity that practitioners were forced to withhold medical supplies from patients who were near death in favour of those in a better physical condition, according to an unnamed healthcare worker in Santiago. A Chilean physician estimated that multiple patients a week

died due to a lack of basic equipment. One central hospital in particular, Posta Central, has seen its deputy director ban human rights observers

**"Supplies reached such a scarcity that practitioners were forced to withhold medical supplies from patients who were near death"**

from entering and staff have been seen buying

padlocks to prevent further access to the facility. This is in stark contrast to private hospitals nearby which were under no such pressures.

Historically, state welfare has been a major issue in Chilean politics. The privatisation of both healthcare and pensions occurred in the 1970s and remained largely unchanged until the early 2000s, during which a centre-left coalition, known as the Concertación, introduced a minimum pension for the bottom sixty percent of earners. The reform, although a step in the right direction for many, lacked the impact that many Chileans were hoping for and economic inequality has been a persistent problem. The country is no stranger to political activism, most recently due to the unaffordable state of

**"Political parties in Chile have continued business as usual without further reform"**

education due to privatisation, which spurred student movements at the end of the last decade. However, political parties in Chile have continued business as usual without further reform. In light of the current unrest in the country, it's clear that the people of Chile want drastic economic reform and improvements to a welfare system that is considered archaic by many.



Thousands flood the streets in Santiago // Wikipedia

# ARTS

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## Great Expectations

*A fantastic, traditional production of a Dickens Classic that is definitely worth going to see!*

### ARTS



**Where?** Southwark Theatre  
**When?** 18th Oct – 28th Nov  
**How Much?** £18–£22

**Charles Titmuss**

*Comment Editor*

**M**y week began this Monday with Great Expectations. I was richly rewarded by a play that was wonderfully acted and brought to life the world of Pip, Miss Havisham and Magwitch.

For those of you unfamiliar with the plot, it follows the life of Pip, an adopted blacksmith's son. Pip, whilst mourning for his dead parents, meets

Magwitch, an escaped convict, for whom he steals food and tools. At the same time, a capricious misandrist Miss Havisham, brilliantly portrayed by Tiwalade

**“The play brought to life the world of Pip, Miss Havisham and Magwitch.”**

Ibirogba-Olulode, takes an interest in Pip as a companion for her protégé Estella. Pip is suddenly swept out of his poor station in life by a myste-

rious benefactor with the announcement that he has Great Expectations. The plot unfolds from there: those with any interest should watch this play. It was fantastic.

In his journey Pip, played by Joseph Payne, meets a colourful assortment of Dickensian characters that each member of the cast captures perfectly. Jamie Foulkes is the simpering Mr Pumblechook, Alice Franziska is the cold and cruel Estella and Guy Clark presents what I can only describe as the most lawyerly lawyer I have ever seen on stage or screen. The cast portrayed each caricature perfectly in true Dickensian fashion. Each member of the cast worked to capture the excitement and mystery

of the plot capturing the audience in the world of Victorian London, now the sinister dark marshes, now Miss Havisham's decrepit abode.

The set was very minimal, the staging unusual. The stage was in a narrow, long corridor between two stands. The proximity of the audience to the action gave the production an intimate air which helped with imagining the space as it transformed from street to graveyard. Miss Havisham was granted an elaborate wheelchair in which Ibirogba-Olulode slumped imperiously. The cast, when Pip was lost in reverie, whispered from the darkness of the end as an atmospheric chorus, perfectly rehearsed and



Joseph Payne as Pip // Corner Shop PR

choreographed.

In the midst of it all Pip, narrated his life's events in an excellent use of the source material, with a wonderful ability to convince the audience of his character's age and station. He evolved from frightened seven-year-old

boy to confident London dandy before our very eyes. A striking performance.

Overall, a stunning show from the young actors at the National Youth Theatre REP season. Ian McEwan made a surprise appear-

## Gaslight- A Play About Mental Delusion

*Gaslight is a production raising important facts about the realities of mental abuse*

### ARTS



**Where?** Playground Theatre  
**When?** 21st Oct – 10th Nov  
**How Much?** £18-£20

**Charles Titmuss**

*Comment Editor*

**I** had always assumed that 'gaslighting', a form of psychological manipulation which systematically breaks down another person's grip on reality, was a very modern phenomenon. Imagine my surprise when I found out that its etymology derives from a play first written in 1938. Gaslight tells the story of a woman, Bella, who is being persuaded

she is quite mad by her husband, Jack. He hides her possessions, plays sadistic tricks on her and continually threatens her with violence or the madhouse. Mysteriously, she also hears footsteps on the forbidden top floor of the house through the ceiling.

**“The term “Gaslight” derives from a play that was first written in 1938”**

So far, so gaslighty.

It seems initially as though the whole play

will be consist of Bella being slowly driven out of her mind. I'm all for deeply moving theatre, but two hours of this sad fate does not sound like an appealing prospect, especially as I've brought my companion here for her birthday. It brings to mind that one time when I watched 12 Years A Slave for my friend's 15th birthday, which was just as uplifting and joyful as you could imagine.

Fortunately, and almost entirely out of the blue, a dashing police detective, played by the excellent Joe McArdle, shows up to save Bella from her terrible spouse. It turns out that Jack is an infamous murderer that has shown up back at the scene of the crime to recover valuable

gems he never found in the initial slash and grab. The eponymous gas lights fade whenever he ascends to the top floor to search. Horror ensues! Mostly at the faintly ridiculous, but as I will begrudgingly admit, rather clever plot.

This particular production of Gaslight laboured somewhat. In the words of my companion, 'I was bored until the detective showed up'. The dialogue was sometimes slow and meandering. Jordan Wallace's characterisation of Jack could do with a little more sinister intent and Jemima Murphy, as Bella, could use a smidgeon more confused lovesickness. Nonetheless, the play really got going once the detective appeared on the scene. Striding around

on stage, eliciting laughs from the crowd, McArdle proved to be a wonderfully energetic addition to the production.

One factor that they overemphasised was

**“McArdle proved to be a wonderfully energetic addition to the production”**

the Baker Miller Pink, a shade designed with pseudoscience to pacify and calm those looking at it. I can't say I noticed any effect, either on me or by

its inclusion.

Overall, the play was a good watch. The clever use of lighting for the flickering gas lamps, the thrill of the hunt for the treasure and of course, the triumph over the wicked husband by the noble force of the law made for a pleasant conclusion. Unfortunately, real cases of gaslighting do not follow such a course. In a world where people are slowly waking up to the realities of such subtle abuse in the domestic sphere, how relevant is it to have a play where the good guys always win?

## ARTS

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# The Lovely Bones: A Different Viewpoint on Death

*The Lovely Bones offers a new perspective on loss in a warmhearted and relatable fashion*

## ARTS



**Where?** Rose Theatre  
**When?** 22nd Oct -26th Nov  
**How Much?** £18-£22

**Aya Hayakawa**  
*Arts Writer*

The first thing to capture your attention when entering the theatre is the great mirror which extends above the stage. The reflective structure is only one of many creative tools present in this production through which the main character's unique story-telling is done. The minimal but effective set design includes the use of salt to distinguish different

settings and chalk sketches drawn on the floor during the play.

In the theatrical adaptation of Alice Sebold's bestseller *The Lovely Bones* (2002), Susie Salmon, a fourteen-year-old girl in heaven, tells us about life on earth after her murder. The mirror gives the audience a second perspective with which to observe and interpret the lives on stage, in relation to Susie's life in heaven. These two distinct worlds merge seamlessly and beautifully reflect Susie's ethereal yet still tangible presence on earth, which influences other characters' thinking.

Though it may seem like a dark and depressing basis for a play, the upbeat tempo, witty dialogue and Susie's amusingly teenage

mindset introduce a humorous aspect and keep the audience engaged with the story. In addition, the unexpected responses of her family and friends show the spontaneous and human side of their character. The contrast allows the audience to explore the situation from a fresh perspective.

Nevertheless, what most stand out are the emotional bonds between Susie and her loved ones. The characters on earth deal with nostalgia and saudade while being forced to let go of the past. Meanwhile, from heaven, Susie guides her family to who her assassin is, as a way to move on herself. The few scenes where Susie manages to cross the boundary

portray the characters' suffering intensely and emphasize the feeling of helplessness as they let out a cry of rage and agony. Even as onlookers, we connect with them at a personal level and find ourselves identifying with the emotions of various characters. Out of the cast Charlotte Beaumont gives a particularly moving performance as the main character Susie, with Catrin Aaron and Leigh Lothian also delivering poignant performances as Susie's mother and classmate respectively.

Adapted for the stage by Broyony Lavery and directed by Melly Still, Birmingham Repertory Theatre's *The Lovely Bones* is on tour in the UK until the end of November 2019. A play to be rec-



Two perspectives on the stage // Pamela Raith Photos

ommended to any young adults because of how it covers the painful topic of loss and breaking apart in a warmhearted and relatable way. The 1-hour delay of the performance and the few technical

issues on the night seemed a minor inconvenience in comparison to the depth of the meaning behind the play, which left us with a greater appreciation for life.

# Meet Me at Dawn: Stun Me at Dusk

*Hardwick and Oldham enthrall audiences with a powerful performance that transcends the script.*

## ARTS



**Where?** Arcola Theatre  
**When?** 9th Oct – 9th Nov  
**How Much?** £15-£27

**Tesni Haddon-McMillan**  
*Arts Writer*

According to Greek myth, Orpheus loses his lover, Eurydice, and laments so painfully for her that the gods themselves weep and help him on the terrible quest to reclaim Eurydice from the underworld.

This tale of longing and devastation was the source of inspiration for

playwright, Zinnie Harris, when writing *Meet Me At Dawn*. Harris explores the pressures and tribulations of grief through the characters of Robyn (Marianne Oldham) and Helen (Jessica Hardwick) who wash up on an unknown shore following a violent boating accident. In only an hour of performance, we share in the shock, fear and love of these two women. However, the performance definitely plays out in a crescendo, building not only in drama, but also quality.

I found that the first portion of the script—particularly in the case of Robyn—was clutching at profoundness. This dialogue appeared forced and out of place. It is clear

that what Harris wanted was to reveal a twist in the play by creating an element of mystery, yet this was not quite deliv-

**“The play continuously builds to a high-quality dramatic crescendo”**

ered. The experience is made more jarring by a glaring red backdrop. Fortunately, the performance takes an urgent and beautiful turn once this ploy is overcome and the link

to Orpheus and Eurydice becomes clear.

Realising the true extent of their misfortune, Robyn and Helen turn on each other. The confrontation is driven by a fear of death, projected anger and lost time. Oldham and Hardwick deliver a convincing and emotive performance; the sheer fury of the women horrifies. During the exchange, all ambient noise has ceased, only adding to the intensity of the scene. Thankfully, the well-placed organic humour remains throughout, and this is a true testament to the bond between the two lovers.

Robyn and Helen are typical, mundane and wonderful characters; the

actresses themselves are truly stunning in their roles. Helen is excitable, insatiable and full of life. Hardwick endears her to us as an audience with her positivity and pure talent. Robyn is far more serious and anxious, the sensible one of the pair but Oldham conveys her adoration of Helen so sincerely.

The jewel of the play comes when Robyn asks for too much, losing her soulmate as a result. Oldham expresses her sorrow and agony with a haunting display of emotion. She is nothing short of exceptional and many in the audience—including myself—were moved almost to tears. Following Robyn's breakdown, Helen returns to her

for a final few moments together. The soft flame she brings between them provides contrast to the stress just before. The couple are calm and accepting, content together. This touching ending leaves the audience with a real appreciation of life and love.

*Meet Me At Dawn* is a testament to human emotion and a showcase of raw talent. The beginning may leave much to be desired but the scenes to follow more than make up for it.

## ARTS

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## [Blank]- Giving Justice to Women's Voices

*[Blank] focuses on bringing women in the criminal justice system back into the dialogue.*

## ARTS



**Where?** Donmar Warehouse  
**When?** 11th Oct -30th Nov  
**How Much?** £10-£40

**Poppy Hayes**  
 Arts Writer

A mother who excitedly enters into a new alluring relationship is later horrifically murdered by her new lover. Another mother navigates the demands of her eldest daughter who desperately appeals to her to help fund her habits. Two young girls, who meet in foster care, struggle over the power balance of a shared bedroom. These are a mere snapshot of the 100

scenes which complete Alice Birch's [BLANK], of which she has allowed directors across the country to select from, in order to create their own masterpiece plays. Each scene was created and inspired by women affected by the criminal justice system allowing us an insight into their ever-spinning, ever-flawed, world.

Director Maria Aberg has carefully selected 30 of these scenes to create the Donmar Warehouse's own incredibly haunting version of Birch's [BLANK]. This creation was born to mark the 40th anniversary of theatre company Clean Break, which was founded by two female prisoners who believed in the power of theatre and wanted to keep

the subject of women in prison at the forefront of our discussion. I can honestly say that the founding mothers of Clean Break have achieved their goal, at least within myself, as days on I am still left contemplating the beautifully woven scenes which have stemmed many conversations.

The majority of scenes were brief, standalone snippets of how the prison system impacts the many facets of a woman's life. However, it was not difficult to see the strands which ran between the vignettes. During the latter half of the play, we switch drivers and instead gain an invitation to a dinner party where a group of friends gather together to eat, drink and be merry.

Amongst the guests is Shona Babayemi, one of Clean Break's very own, who is set to meet the group for the first time, accompanying her new girlfriend. We come to know the group as a community serving bunch; a solicitor, therapist and publican amongst them. With the help of Babayemi's provocative dialogue, she unveils the hypocrisy and all too near parallels which run between our group of philanthropists and the wonderful women we met earlier. With the same actress playing both a quirky activist with a seemingly innocent weekend habit and the aforementioned desperate daughter, we are reminded of the similarities rather than differences that we



The company in [BLANK] // Maybanks

all share as women and encouraged to contemplate our own blind self.

The monumental acting delivered by the entire female-only cast coupled together with the poignant setting was ever so slightly dampened by the, at times, unrealistic dialogue. This however is an afterthought to

the sheer awe that the audience sat in as we marvelled at both the wonder of the cast and the stark reality of their stories. An absolute must watch.

## Lungs: Royalty takes over the Old Vic

*'We are good people... We are good.... Are we?'*

## ARTS



**Where?** The Old Vic  
**When?** Until 8th Nov  
**How Much?** From £12

**Ozibil Ege Dumenci**  
 Arts Editor

Running for a mere three weeks at The Old Vic, *Lungs* promised to recapture the magic that Claire Foy and Matt Smith brought to the first two seasons of *The Crown* on Netflix to the stage. I'm not one to blindly buy tickets for the sake of the play's star power (I made that mistake

once with *When We Have Sufficiently Tortured Each Other*, starring Cate Blanchett and Stephen Dillane), but as the tickets went on sale back in June, I found myself frantically attempting to get in the virtual queue while trying to board my flight back to London.

*Lungs*, written by Duncan McMillan, starts off as a discussion at Ikea between a couple on whether they should have a child together. Plagued by the state of the world we live in, their dilemma is whether two smart, good people would contribute to overpopulation and bring forth another life which would result in a carbon footprint the weight of the Eiffel Tower.

In just 90 minutes, the play covers an immense amount of material, examining the lives of this modern, suburban couple;

**"Smith is great, and his chemistry with Foy is unparalleled to anyone else in recent memory"**

what it means to be a good person; and what can and can't be done to save our planet from damnation.

It argues that if people truly had the planet's best interests in mind, not only would we not be having children, but we would be killing ourselves, something no one is willing to do. Does this make us all selfish?

Although the script often opts in for broad strokes, moving from one moment in the lives of the characters to the next abruptly, the focus is always razor sharp. The staging is simple, with minimal yet effective lighting and sound. The audience is placed behind the stage in addition to the usual auditorium set-up, which adds to the feeling of peeking into the characters' lives. Despite the frequent and considerable

time and location jumps, the play flows brilliantly. The fast pace and the ever-changing nature of the play keeps the audience on their toes regardless of the vastly conversational tone of the play.

Smith is great, and his chemistry with Foy unparalleled to anyone else in my recent memory. However, Foy is absolute-

**"Like all excellent theatre, it paves the way for personal reflection"**

ly transcendent in her role, taking every sentence and making them resonate with such depth that the audience can't help but be drawn in. The acting is so profoundly affecting that it elevates the already extremely relevant, relatable, and ultimately important script.

The ending is so magnificent and devastating that it leaves the audience to ponder on the meaning of this bleak yet beautiful life. Like all excellent theatre, it paves the way for personal reflection, letting the audience have an incredibly personal, intimate reaction to what they have seen. It's just a shame that it is only running for such a short period.





"Spot" the syphilis!// soane.org

## Hogarth After Hours – A Rushed Masterpiece

### *A Great Introduction to Hogarth*

#### ARTS



**Where?** Sir John's Soane's Museum London

**When?** Until 5th Jan

**How Much?** Free

**Evlyn Forsyth-Muris**

*Arts Writer*

**O**n a cold and slightly wet October Friday night, I made my way to the Sir John Soane Museum in Holborn. Located in the late John Soane's house, the museum is a rabbit warren of impressively decorated rooms and secret cupboards; mirrors, artwork and sculpture line every wall and surface. Look out for the compass directions on the walls, they might help you find

**"For those not familiar with Hogarth's work, he is said to be the father of comics."**

your way out again! I would recommend visiting just to see the house, but that's not why I was there. The museum has temporarily expanded its already significant William Hogarth collection with pieces on loan from the National Gallery and private collections to create a complete collection of Hogarth's series.

For those not familiar with Hogarth's work, he is said to be the father of comics. A strongly business-minded man, he used

the power of the printing press (and the introduction of copyright laws on images) to sell a vast number of images from his 'series'. These were paintings (usually two or more and reproduced as etching prints) that follow the downward spiral of a character's life typically ending in syphilis or death. Intrigued by the immorality of humans, Hogarth's works, whilst impressive and fascinating, are rarely cheery. His one major attempt at a positive series 'A happy marriage' lies unfinished, possibly out of boredom.

Visiting the works as part of the Soane's museums late's is a vastly different experience to exploring them on your own on a Saturday afternoon. The tour begins with the sophistication of a gin and tonic accompanied by a short introductory talk from our passionate and clearly knowledgeable

guide. A prior knowledge of the artist is not required as she lead us through the stories of Hogarth as a man and the inspiration behind the creation of his series; by the time I left the room to start viewing the artworks, I felt I might be as much in love with Hogarth as she is.

Guiding you through the house, the tour stops at each of the series on display with the guide explaining the story and pointing out interesting,

**"[T]he flow of the tour was impeded by the logistical errors on the museum's part."**

and frequently humorous aspects of the paintings and prints I wouldn't have spotted otherwise. For example Hogarth's obsession with immorality and chaos is ever present in each work in the backdrop, such as in the destruction of buildings or furniture, or even just the presence of something upturned.

The culture in which the series were painted is integral to their message, so I was grateful to receive contextual commentary from our guide and not be solely dependent on reading the placards. I particularly enjoyed learning that he felt 'The Four stages of cruelty' was so important he needed to make it more accessible by producing a cheaper wooden print to sell to medical students. His relation with his audience seemed sincere and involved, 'Marriage a-la-mode' was a response

to criticism that his paint-work observations spared the rich.

Unfortunately, the flow of the tour was impeded by the logistical errors on the museum's part. Moving around the house in a group of 15-20 it was impossible for us all to look at one artwork at the same time so often you couldn't see what the guide was so wonderfully explaining. In addition, we were endlessly rushed from each room to make way for the following group meaning we often didn't have time to properly appreciate the works. But despite all this Hogarth won out and I know I'll be going back to appreciate his creativity at my own leisure.

Hogarth: Place and Progress exhibition runs till 05th Jan 2020 with free entry but pre-booking required. After Hours tickets cost £25 and take place on 8/11, 22/11, 06/12, 03/01.

## ARTS

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# Translations – Mythical Ireland speaks the Common Tongue

*Nothing is lost, but is easy to lose yourself, in this fierce production of a play that looks at the value of a language.*

## ARTS



**Where?** National Theatre  
**When?** Until 18th Dec  
**How Much?** From £20

**Waleed El-Geresy**  
*Arts Writer*

Director Ian Rickson's new production of Brian Fiel's play *Translations* is staging at The National Theatre. Set in an 1833 hedge school in Baile Beag (English: Ballybeg), an Irish speaking community in County Donegal, the play explores the lingual boundaries that divide us and define us.

The smoky, comforting smell of burning wood greets us – a sign of what is to come. A muddy, earthen ground sprawls across a misty stage, at

**“Translations revolves around the story of the Ordnance Survey mapping out Ireland in 1824”**

the centre of which is a square schoolroom littered with books. Every aspect has been carefully designed by Rae Smith

and Neil Austin to create a convincing atmosphere. A girl (Liadán Dunlea) is trying to speak the simple Irish sentence: “My name is Sarah”. This is a phrase that we all take for granted, but for Sarah this sentence holds the key to unlocking one of the most valuable things in life: a connection to her kin. According to one of the hedge schoolteacher's sons Manus (Seamus O'Hara) - it holds the key to sharing all the secrets that have thus far been inaccessible in the lonely world that is her own mind.

*Translations* revolves around the story of the Ordnance Survey mapping out Ireland in 1824. Lieutenant George Yolland (Jack Bardoe) is an orthographer on the mission who has fallen in love with Ireland. The Survey documents place names with Owen (Fra Fee), a native, helping George – an English outsider who is keen to learn the language. The two consider the sound, etymology, and of course history behind a name. Fiel's play makes it apparent that in Anglicising the place names the essence of the places is lost in translation. The history of the people is embodied in the language that they speak and the names that they have chosen. Language forms a channel to the past in the same way that it forms a barrier between cultures in the present. The mountains and sea that separate England and Ireland are mirrored in the differences in language: the ‘contours’ of the cultural map.

Ciarán Hinds gives a very compelling perfor-



**A family united: Seamus O'Hara, Ciarán Hinds and Fra Fee. Image by Catherine Ashmore // Cathetine Ashmore**

mance as the passionate, yet often red-faced, schoolmaster Hugh who feeds his flock a diet of Latin, Greek and Arithmetic, but notably no English. In his view, it is a “plebeian” language and poets like Wordsworth who choose such a base tongue to express themselves are simply nobodies. On this point, one of the few things that could be criticised is the littering of Latin and ancient Greek throughout the script, that could be confusing for some due to the pace. However, the nudge-nudge wink-wink lusting after the fiery-eyed goddess Athene described in the verses of Jimmy Jack Cassie (Dermot Crowley) was hilarious.

Fra Fee as Owen gives an outstanding portrayal of a young man with good intentions who comes to terms with the true nature

of his work translating Irish place names into English. In particular, the scenes with his brother Manus have tense,

**“Dunlea's portrayal of the almost mute girl is a stellar demonstration of performance that touches us simply through body language and expression”**

palpable undercurrents. His loyalty gradually grows and his discomfort with the task he is performing comes to a head as he passionately narrates the story behind a place whose name is simply a butchered Irish version of ‘Crossroads’, but whose history involves a strange story about a man with warts and a well - something untranslatable.

There is also a darker and more cynical side to the play. When Captain Lancey (Rufus Wright), an unforgiving English redcoat, forces the community to use the Anglicised place names, the cast effectively portray the image of a broken people. Notably, Sarah, who regresses back into her repressed, silent state. Dunlea's portrayal of the almost mute girl is a stellar demonstration of a performance that touches

us simply through body language and expression.

Language can inspire us to be who we are, but as the play and the wonderful cast and team so aptly portray, it can also be used as a tool to oppress others and take away their identity. Indeed, director Rickson realises this is not just a historical issue, and makes it known in stark fashion that history may be repeating itself in a dramatic and novel climax that leaves us thinking about oppression in modern society. All in all, a worthy play to see if you wish to see a quality cast and team put on an emotional production that will leave you thinking much more deeply about the role of language in shaping the past and the present.

# MUSIC

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## Pony: sterilisation of bedroom pop or an intentional shift in creative direction?

### MUSIC

Pony



**Artist:** Rex Orange County.  
**Label:** RCA Records.  
**Top Tracks:** 10/10; Pluto Projector; It Gets Better.  
**For Fans Of:** Benny Sings; Cuco; Rufus Wainwright. 34 minutes.

**Guthrie Ruby**  
Music Editor

There are lots of bedroom pop artists breaking into the mainstream these days (Clairo, Gus Dapperton, Boy Pablo, Omar Apollo, etc.), but the undisputed king is Rex Orange County. After featuring on Tyler, the Creator's *Flower*

*Boy*, Rex leapt from 500 followers on SoundCloud to being one of the biggest new names in the music industry. Since then we've been waiting eagerly for his third album.

Two years in the spotlight appears to have left Rex a little shell shocked.

**"The 'hazy Sunday morning' charm of his older material has been entirely abandoned."**

Much of the focus of *Pony* is his struggle in new environments and being separated from those he loves. While this shift has certainly left him with some good material to write about, it seems as though it's also caused a rift in his style. The "hazy Sunday morning" charm of his older material has been entirely abandoned. I hesitate to say this is intentional as particular tracks on *Pony* are clearly trying to capture the cushy/youthful energy of bedroom pop – "10/10", "Never Had The Balls" and "Face To Face". All those songs fuckin' slap there's no denying, but they're missing a soul. Possibly the style didn't hold its colours through the wash of label and

executive influence. Even worse, songs like "Always" and "Stressed Out" are void of originality and drone on in places.

While the bedroom pop themes suffer, Rex's larger sounding orchestral-infused tracks are doing him wonders. The power supplied by RCA records has granted him access to expand the amount he uses large numbers of instruments. The utilisation of weightier instrumentation appears across the album and is more prominent in tracks like "Pluto Projector" and "Laser Lights". Rex hits his stride with these grandiose compositions in "It Gets Better", where the indie and operatic pop genre influences of the album come together



Thinking about the good ol' days // Pitchfork

beautifully. There is certainly a comparison to be drawn to operatic/baroque pop artist Rufus Wainwright, with Rex being the modern-day version.

Rex's strong storytelling is his main play here, but it leaves a desire for more creative wordplay. There are a few great tongue-in-cheek lines that catch you off guard – "Sometimes you gotta cut a bitch out". Also a few

get you in the feels – "I open up when shit gets built up this high/ She makes it easy to cry".

The album displays many of Rex's strongest traits, unfortunately just not the best instances. Track-by-track the album lacks consistency as it fails to walk the tightrope of jolly and depressed. Hopefully Rex's next project can be pointed in a clearer direction.

## Cigarettes After Sex - Cry: A collection of ruminations on love

### MUSIC

Cry



**Artist:** Cigarettes After Sex.  
**Label:** Partisan Records.  
**Top Tracks:** Pure; Touch.  
**For Fans Of:** Alvvays; Japanese Breakfast; Yellow Days. 40 minutes

**Ambika Bharadwaj**  
Music Writer

With their second album, *Cigarettes After Sex* are back with more noir dream-pop, echoey guitars, and amazing vocals. Greg Gonzalez sounds deep in love, as he whispers the lyrics, slow-as-molasses, in songs like "Pure" & "Touch". His penchant for

lovely, lilting melodies, and the sound, with the loud bass and interlocking guitar lines, give a rich texture to the nine tracks, which progressively cascade into different stages of a relationship, similar to mini-narratives, about random sexual encounters and misadventures.

Songs like the dusky "Heavenly" or the elegant "Falling in Love" are hypnotic, but the hooks are splendid examples of songwriting. The former opens with a sound that carries a slight amount of urgency in it, accompanied by the bass and the vocals that work off of each other gorgeously before waves of guitar punctuate the softness of the chorus ("Because this is where I want to be/Where it's so sweet and heavenly").

Although the humour that was present in the earlier album has been replaced by a deeper sincerity, even the song, "Hentai", the Japanese anime form of pornography, feels like a contemplation on love, with Gonzalez crooning the words "Beautiful hearts are in your eyes", and makes you wonder if it's meant for someone or something.

Sonically, the new album sounds like an impressive collection. It's quite easy to write a bunch of slow songs with similar chords, but the band is immensely talented and their work has a certain truth and sadness that helps them create a record that feels as smooth as silk and moves in a way that is similar to a well-directed movie, and even though

some critics say that every song sounds the same, it's their similarities that become their strengths, gradually setting a hazy, unshakable mood. "All the blatantly audible influences become irrelevant, leaving *Cigarettes After Sex* with a sound of its own, created with scant tools and seemingly minimal effort. Like the best sleight of hand magicians, the trick's conjured before you, then gone.", one of the critics claimed.

Where most indie and pop bands often overshadow their lead vocalist in echo, reducing them to just another component within the wistful drift of sound, Gonzalez is the centre of attention here. *Cigarettes After Sex*'s sound is the trademark loud bass and interlocking guitar lines,



This is what your lungs look like after cigarettes after sex // Pitchfork

which are very clearly defined – but there's no doubt that the focus is Gonzalez and the lyrics. The album washes you over with a drowsy haze, the kind of feeling you get when you stay up all night, talking to someone, and the words fill your heart with a certain

longing, and through wallowing in its own mire and coming out the other side, *Cry* becomes one of those restrained albums where tempo, repetition, and muted composition construct an entire story within the pauses between the notes and the ideas between the lines.

# MUSIC

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## The Loyle Carner Starter Pack: A “How To” Guide

*A fan of Loyle Carner and his music? Ever wanted to be the man yourself? Then follow this easy six-step formula.*

### MUSIC

#### Guthrie Ruby

Music Editor

I should start by saying that I do enjoy Loyle Carner’s music. It’s just that since the release of *Not Waving, But Drowning* his musical formula has become annoyingly apparent. The guy has talent and lots of people get something from his music, but he ain’t immune to criticism. Now that I’ve completely convinced you I’m not a prick for writing this, let me take you through the six steps you need to become your own mini Carner.

Before step one you’re going to need a stage name. Loyle Carner’s real name is Ben Coyle-Larner. See what he did there? So, my stage name would be Ruthrie Guby. Alright now let’s hit the studio.

1 - Every rap song needs a beat, so that’s where we’ll start. Carner’s beats reflect his “down to earth” style/brand by using acoustic instruments and

samples. A nice crisp drum kit with a good high-hat and rim click sound is guaranteed to match more than half of Carner’s discography. Maybe throw in an open high-hat or variation on the kick drum, but don’t make yourself work too hard. On top of your drums you’ll need a catchy melody

**“... all we have to do is garner a following of millions and produce a collection of songs...”**

that can loop and not get annoying. If you’re stuck on which instrument to choose then just pick the first piano you see. If you can’t play an instrument don’t worry, you’re going to need a friend like Tom Misch eventually and I’m sure they’ll be able to riff something better than you can.

2 - Now that you’ve got something to rap over it’s time for you to show off your vocals. The contents of Carner’s verses are diverse enough to make them difficult to group into one category, but his choruses are a different story. Write something either two or four lines long, the simpler the better. The most important part of this step is that you must **repeat what you wrote twice**. It’s important that people are able to sing along after just one listen. Even if you have a talented songwriter (e.g. Jorja Smith) featuring on your track you still need to wedge in there with a doubled-up simplistic chorus.

3 - You’ve got the catchiest parts of the song sorted, now you need some substance for the verses. Carner doesn’t get worked up over a lot, so your approach should be as thoughtful and considered as possible. Present your chosen topic in words that seem like they’ve been inspired by a conversation with a

### the Loyle Carner starter pack



The meme format inspiration // Amanda Hertzberg

therapist – a healthy way of looking at it. The key part of matching Carner’s style is recreating his timbre. The best way I can describe it is “breakfast tea rap”. Like a sleepier Rejjie Snow or Mick Jenkins but without talking about ass. Reasonable tempo, no sign of aggression/anger, and low energy.

**“Maybe throw in an open high-hat or variation on the kick drum, but you don’t want to make yourself work too hard.”**

4 - Hey presto! You’ve made a song, but you aren’t fully living the Carner lifestyle. Mums are great right? We’ve all

got a guardian we love and cherish, but you’ll need to turn that love up to eleven. Carner loves his mum like Kanye loves Kanye. Jean (his mum) even has her own track on *Not Waving, But Drowning*, a touching letter to her son. Please don’t think I have a problem with this step, it’s actually my favourite piece of his repetitive nature. His love for Jean is not a bad thing, it just is a thing.

5 - Human connection is at the heart of Carner’s albums, and nothing screams human connection more than a collection of secretly recorded voice memos. In *Not Waving, But Drowning* Carner had recordings of chilling in the studio, the World Cup, talking to a cab driver, etc. Once you’ve got your memos, pick four or five and wedge them in there at seemingly random moments.

6 - Lastly, you’ve got to get the “uh”s. The “uh” is a staple of the Carner style.

Got a moment in a track that feels like it’s missing something? Just exhale shortly and make a vague noise. For some reason this is the one that bugs me the most, probably the reason I decided to write this. I’ve combed the lyrics, crunched the numbers, and mathematically proven that from debut to second album Carner has become more repetitive. There was an overall increase in “uh”s of 134% from album 1 to album 2, with a track by track increase of 155%. In album 2 there was an average of one “uh” every 26 seconds. I could pull up my working or make a chart, but you likely started reading this to escape using your brain.

Phew it’s all done, and look at us, just a couple of Carners. That was the hard part. With our toolkit formula perfected we’ll soon be topping Carner himself. Now, all we have to do is garner a following of millions and produce a collection of songs with millions of streams.



Me listening through the album for a second time // Phil Sharp

# MUSIC

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## Nick Cave's Piercing Exploration of Grief

*Nick Cave's new record 'Ghosteen' deals with loss with a defter hand than previous work, finding moments of beauty amongst the grief*

### MUSIC

#### Ghosteen



**Artist:** Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds. **Label:** Ghosteen Ltd. **Top Tracks:** Bright Horses; Sun Forest; Hollywood. **Fans Of:** Leonard Cohen, Fred Neil, the Gun Club. 68 minutes

#### Cara Burke

Music Writer

**H**unched among a small crowd in Rough Trade East, bags on our laps and posters bundled awkwardly around us, we heard Nick Cave and the Bad Seed's *Ghosteen* for the first time. It was the album's premiere and I was at an

album playback party only a week after its release had been casually announced via Nick Cave's Q&A website The Red Hand Files. It was an intimate session. We sat, uncomfortable, still, and completely silent until the music had been played.

*Ghosteen* appears just four years after the tragic death of Nick Cave's son Arthur and three years since the release of *Skeleton Tree*, an album written primarily before but delivered after his death. Where *Skeleton Tree* was a bleak, dark, immediate reaction to a life-shaking tragedy, *Ghosteen* is a frank exploration of a grief that ebbs and flows, revealing moments of comfort, and

it is riddled with fantasy and wonder. Nick Cave's uncharacteristic falsetto rings hauntingly out, trembling but strong, over the analogue synthesizers. The album is not so much a demonstration of his own emotions, but an attempt to share them. He forces the listener to engage with these feelings. "Hollywood" finishes the album off by telling the story of Kisa Guatami, who could not find a household untouched by death to save her dying baby, and Nick Cave creates a connection with anyone who has experienced grief with the reminder that death is a part of life and love and it touches us all. This connection is a feat he has been attempting over the

past year in his frank and open Red Hand Files.

In one answer, he described finding his wonder and natural curiosity again following his son's death, and this comes across clearly in *Ghosteen*. Whilst Arthur's death punctuates the whole album, the songs are full of bright images and moments - even the cover depicts picturesque animals, with a lion peacefully lying beside a lamb. "Bright Horses" breaks this image: "We're all so tired of seeing things as they are / Horses are just horses and their manes aren't full of fire", Cave sings, but the fantasies and spirits that he claims are key to surviving through grief are painted



Beauty After Grief // Wikimedia

beautifully in the music.

If you're looking for nice background music or something to sing along to, then this album is not

for you. But sit down and have a listen if you want some music that taps into your emotions and hurts.

## Sick Boy lookalike bringing the disco vibes

*We're a week away from Denis Sulta's biggest show in London yet, as he takes his Sulta Selects series to the mighty printworks next weekend. But what will the Scotsman bring to the Press Halls? Will it be hot air or even hotter heels on the dancefloor?*

### MUSIC

#### Martin Flerin

Music Editor

**T**he white hair, the Scottishness, the pomp he brings to his sets - a lot of the elements of 26-year-old Hector Barbour's alter ego point to the man from *Trainspotting*. But while the difficult path that Hector was on may well have led him to the same kind of sorry existence that his on-screen counterpart lived through, it was thanks to Denis Sulta that Hector saw the light.

Hailing from an artistic cocoon, Hector first

**"He vibes with every stomp, jump and fist-pump in the audience"**

wanted to become a free-style skier. It was through dropping out of university and getting a job at a Glaswegian record store that he fell in love with disco. A few years and a move to Berlin later, his sound now has a new depth to it. It ranges from pimped-up disco house on his *Sulta Selects Volume 3*

to an edgier, underworldly clang on the little taste test we've had from his upcoming EP. *Aye Spoke Te Sumwuhn & They Listenhd* is coming out on Ninja Tune the day before the big Printworks debut.

Why Sulta? As it turns out the name is the epitome of the change in Hector's mindset which allowed him to become who he is today. A flip of the switch. The young Barbour had been struggling with trying to establish himself in the music business and felt a void around him following his departure from university. Drugs and depression took their toll. When, eventually, he

got better, he decided to turn it all around quite literally - and from his then creative moniker Atlas, Sulta was born.

The rambunctious blonde vibing with every single stomp, jump, and fist-pump in the audience in front of him can be a lesson to us all. After all, it was a friend's simple act of kindness which was the catalyst for Denis' turnaround. It unlocked not only a creative force which is carrying the Scot to the top of modern house music, but also added a positive entry to the list of musical alter egos exploring the manifestation of the self as a projection



Denis Sulta at EXIT Festival in 2017 // Vladimir Veličković

for the audience. David Bowie moved to Berlin to retire one of his most famous alter egos but for Hector, Berlin was just the beginning. The thin white duke may have lived off

peppers, cocaine and milk for months, but all that Sulta lives off now are good vibes.

# MUSIC

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## JESUS... this record is disappointing

*Kanye West's latest album is shit*

### MUSIC

#### JESUS IS KING



**Artist:** Kanye West. **Label:** Def Jam. **Top Tracks:** Selah; Use This Gospel. **For Fans Of:** Kanye West Singing. 27 minutes

#### Miles Gulliford

*Music Editor*

**K**anye West needs no introduction. By the time this is published he will undoubtedly have kicked up a fresh onslaught of headlines that even dedicated fans must be jaded with at this point. In other news, research suggests that narcissists are more likely to be successful than people with healthy attitudes to self.

Kanye West's latest release *JESUS IS KING*

### "The whole thing just slaps. Trust me" - Kanye West

follows his 2017 pattern of releasing trimmed down records, with a run time short of half an hour with every track under 4 minutes. The most obvious thing that distinguishes it from *Ye* is its attitude to life, while *Ye* explores the jagged edges of West's bipolar disorder, as well as West's complex relationship with women, *JESUS IS KING* finds Kanye returning to the religious roots that shone through on gems like "Jesus Walks" more than 10 years ago.

*JESUS IS KING*'s gospel influences are

apparent in the album's palette. The opening track is amongst many others to revolve around layered, soulful vocals, although autotune and a touch of compression give them a distinctively modern sound, reminiscent of Bon Iver's recent outings, or perhaps more obviously any number of modern-day croon rappers. Numerous gospel samples (including a reuse of father stretch my hands) provide the basis for tracks. None of these however, are innovative or interesting.

On *JESUS IS KING*'s strongest tracks we find Kanye's following of *Kids See Ghosts* and *the Life of Pablo*, packing thick sub-bass and explosive percussion into the climax of "Selah". The LP brims with eclectic instrumental choices, from the aforementioned gospel vocals, which find

different contexts on each track; from Psychedelic on "Water", to epic on "Selah", and of course passionate and soulful on "Ever Hour" and "God is"; moody classical guitar on "Closed on Sunday"; and glossy, bubble-gum synths on Pi'erre Bourne-produced "On God".

Features from Clipse (Pusha T and his brother) stand out for their blunt, well-crafted rhymes, Kenny G's appearance on the same track fits surprisingly well. Unfortunately,

**"Ultimately, not a word or tune from Kanye's mouth adds value to the record"**



**Even the cover is uninspired // Pitchfork**

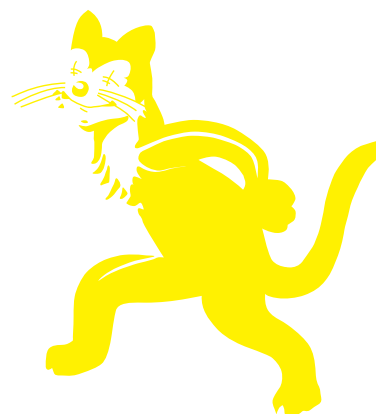
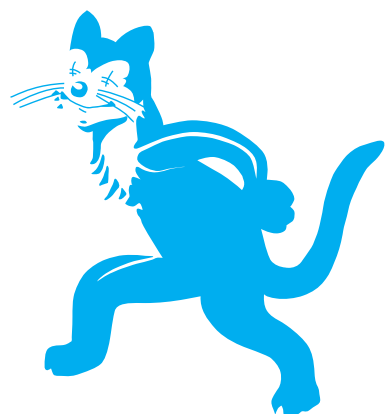
West's songwriting kills the listenability of tracks; it is evident the Keeping up with the Kardashians star has little to say, his religious message incoherent and inconsistent, and his verses filled with inane bars on not "letting his family starve" and people judging him, which come across as blander and more unrelatable than ever. Upon further rumination, not a word or tune from Kanye's mouth adds value to the record.

West also treats listeners to his un-autotuned

voice, an abhorrent timbre that manages to be thin and painful on the ear at the same time. The grating of West's vocal chords is worsened when they carry the weak melodic lines of tracks like "Closed on Sunday" and "On God"; please don't subject yourself to them.

Ultimately, while *JESUS IS KING* brings a few interesting tracks to the table, most don't warrant a second thought. A first listen is generous, and no listening is best.

## Felix is recruiting!



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

# THROWBACK

books.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## A Yorkshire Lad

*This week, we feature a short piece by an Imperial alumnus about his experience at the College back in the day - and how the friends made here will always be special*

### THROWBACK

**Ken Allen**

*Imperial Alumnus*

We were physics freshers in 1956, graduating in 1959. In those days you could get a double bed-sitter with breakfast in upmarket Cranleigh Gardens off the old Brompton Road for £7.50 a week each. You could pick up lunch in Queenies, a College restaurant, for 1/3 pennies, which equates to 11p in today's money.

On graduating, after a year in Hertfordshire with English Electric, my friend Dave went off - as did most of my contemporaries - to California, where he eventually founded Altos Computers and at one time employed 1600 people in a factory that seemed me, when I visited him, to be more akin to a five-star hotel.

I instead stayed in East London and took over the family mechanical engi-

neering firm on the death of my father in December 1959, at the age of 21. We were both lucky to have been presented with a great opportunity at a time when we were both able to make the best of it: Dave made on-board computers for the American navy and I made coin-slide mechanisms when the UK decimalised its currency.

In 2004 I met by chance Lynda White who was the senior mathematics tutor at the College. She mentioned that she wanted a few prizes to be sponsored to encourage the students and I was very pleased to be in a position to help. They're called the Allen prizes and are still offered now.

But these prizes would have been called the Allen-Jackson prizes. My friend Dave was sadly killed in a mountain cycling accident in 2001. The group of his close student friends sent him off with a poem: "A Yorkshire Lad", which I'm sharing with students today.

### A Yorkshire Lad

*He came down from Yorkshire  
When our lives were young,  
He rang the bells and drank the beer  
And kissed some fresh and eager lips*

*He came down from Yorkshire  
When that old Queen's world endured  
To rush through dark, dank musty halls  
And there to eat and talk for one and three.*

*He came down from Yorkshire  
To hear the blessed wisdom of the West,  
And sat enthralled and sometimes slept,  
To comprehend some more the measured beauty of the world.*

*He came down from Yorkshire  
To the sun-drenched land of promise  
He built the boards and sold the dream,  
And freed himself to live again*

*He went back to Yorkshire  
To breathe once more that childhood air  
He sailed beneath the black star sky  
And knitted up the frayed ends of his life.*



Ken, Dave, and their friends from their many years in the Imperial community // Ken Allen







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# TELEVISION

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## BBC One's latest conspiracy thriller *The Capture*

*This paranoia-inducing psychological thriller explores the uneasy topics of surveillance, "deepfakes," and a flawed judicial system.*

### TELEVISION



**Creator:** Ben Chanan  
**Starring:** Holliday Grainger, Callum Turner, Ben Miles, Laura Haddock

### Jia Qi Tan

Television Editor

BBC's recent crime thriller *The Capture* presents an intriguing case of how technological advances, in this case, facial recognition and deepfakes, accelerate surveillance and threaten our privacy and integrity in the modern world. It begins with a string of seemingly unexplainable events slowly unveiling piece-by-piece with a plot twist after another. It challenges everyone's stance

and actions and will leave you questioning, "Can we believe what we see?"

### The backstory

Ex-soldier Shaun Emery (played by Callum Turner), formerly accused of a war crime in Afghanistan, has been acquitted due to the video evidence that has been deemed faulty. In the midst of celebration, Emery accompanies his barrister Hannah Roberts (played by Laura Haddock) to the bus stop with Roberts heading off on the bus. But the CCTV footage says otherwise, with Emery appearing to physically attack and kidnap Roberts. DI Rachel Carey (played by Holliday Grainger) is assigned the case, who goes on to identify Emery via facial recognition and arrest him. With Roberts's disappearance and eventual death, CCTV re-

cordings inconsistent with the truth, the emergence of a third party equally invested in the mystery, DI Carey has to plough through layers of facade before she uncovers the truth.

### Surveillance and "deepfakes"

*Big Brother is watching you.* This is not only the truth in George Orwell's 1984 but also in *The Capture*, where as a suspect your every move is being watched, your phone calls listened to, your locations tracked. One key conflict centers around the fact that surveilled content is considered inadmissible in court, which is used to justify the approach of "correction," where footages are falsely altered to convict suspects. It is truly ironic that *The Capture* begins with the discharge of a

criminal (whom we later found out did commit the crime) and ends with an innocent man taken into custody, both on the basis of faulty video evidence. Consider this: CCTV evidence is often perceived as one of the most trusted, objective source. With the introduction of "deepfakes," where one's image is superimposed onto a source material with machine learning, has video evidence lost its objectivity it once had?

### Does the end ever justify the means?

Widely explored in media, famously in *12 Angry Men*, the presumption of innocence serves as the basis of our system of justice and is a legal right of the accused in a trial. This is another theme echoing throughout the story and serves as the primary motivator

for Roberts, plotting to expose the practice of correction in the intelligence world. In *The Capture*, Roberts, a human rights lawyer, seeks to defend her Islamist client Faisal Dahmani who was taken into custody based on altered footage proving Dahmani a terrorist. The intelligence service thinks otherwise based on wiretaps and intercepts that are inadmissible in court and falsifies CCTV footage to convict Dahmani. Here we are forced to ask, do the ends justify the means? The service claims to save thousands of lives removing terrorist threats as such. Does prioritising the so-called safety justify the violation of privacy? Does it justify falsifying evidence? Does it justify one's life, one's integrity, one's innocence? We have a clear answer, but who is there to ask the question

and make the decision is the uneasy truth we have to face.

### Controversial ending

Whilst many find the open-ended ending to be disappointing, claiming

### "Does prioritising the so-called safety justify the violation of privacy?"

it "messy" and "untidy," I find it rather satisfying, realistic, and thought-provoking. Although I have a preference for the typical happily-ever-after endings or at least one where justice is served, I have to admit Ben Chanan's conclusion to the multi-layered conspiracy wraps up the series well, leaving room for the audience to decide for themselves between the dichotomy of human rights or lives, rather than forcefully imposing an opinion or the other.

### Final thoughts

All in all, I would wholeheartedly recommend this conspiracy thriller to anyone, especially to thriller enthusiasts like myself. It's a quest after truth and fairness; it sheds light on numerous controversial topics yet covers each with such depth and thoughtfulness. Everyone stands with their own versions of truths, but how do we know that the truth is indeed the truth?



BBC One's *The Capture* // IMDb

# TELEVISION

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## Binge of the Week: *Barry* (Seasons 1 and 2)

*Bloody BLOODY brilliant*

### TELEVISION

#### SEASON 1



#### SEASON 2



**Creator:** Alec Berg, Bill Hader **Starring:** Bill Hader, Henry Winkler, Anthony Carrigan, Sarah Goldberg

**Ozbil Ege Dumenci**  
Television Editor

Despite taking the States by storm, *Barry* has been a pretty low-key show on this side of the pond. With 30 Emmy nominations, the HBO show tells the story of Barry (Bill Hader), a hitman who follows his target to an acting class in Los Angeles, and, by some miracle of fate, decides to pursue acting.

### An experience

*Barry* intertwines two completely different worlds beautifully, with both developing so smoothly and intricately. The influence of each one on the other is clear. They complicate each other; they complement each other. These two worlds, one of a brutal war-veteran-turned-hitman, Barry Berkman, and one of the struggling actor, Barry Block, really sound like two different shows at face value, but the show uses this to its advantage, constantly comparing and contrasting the two worlds, letting them collide, and most importantly, letting Barry make mistakes that cause his past to constantly catch up with him, no matter how hard he tries to run away.

It's very out there, but this approach allows it to cover a lot of ground.

The show is hilarious at times, but it would be a disservice to call it a comedy per se. It is the journey of a man struggling to make himself get better against all odds. Despite the absurdity, the progression of events is natural. Although shocking at times, the show makes sure that no plot point is simply there to act as a twist and throw the audience off, even though they do just that more than occasionally. The show takes you from laughing out loud to gasping for air within the next scene.

### The acting

The acting and characterisations are very strong across the board, although there's a few people who go above and beyond.

**"Henry Winkler plays the role of failed-actor-turned-acting-coach, providing a lot of comic relief"**

Henry Winkler plays the role of the failed-actor-turned-acting-coach, providing a lot of comic relief. A lot of what he says, and perhaps more importantly, the way he says them are so exceptionally funny, yet I have no doubts that such people really do exist in Hollywood. However, where Winkler deserves the most credit is in the scenes where his character shows emotions. This



*Barry*, Season 1 // Amazon

is rare, but beautiful as many rare things are.

Anthony Carrigan embodies the upbeat Chechen gangster NoHo Hank so perfectly that the audience can't help but sympathise with him. Sarah Goldberg pulls off Sally, the girl-next-door who Barry is deeply infatuated with exceptionally well. Sally is so grossly unlikeable, which is exactly what the show needs her to be to work. Goldberg has a strong monologue late into season 2 that not only sums her character up perfectly but also really shows off her acting chops.

However, the real MVP of the show is none other than Bill Hader, who's co-created, executive produced, starred in, co-directed and co-written the show. Hader has a way of pulling Barry off, displaying the character's

internal turmoil with every inch of his being. It is a strong performance, yet it is his wonderful attention to detail, subtlety and precision as a writer and a director that makes the show.

### Season 1 vs Season 2

The show is gripping from the get-go. However, I think it would be accurate to say that the majority of the first season is spent setting up the show. It is wildly entertaining, but it is only a hint of what's to come in season 2. Both seasons are short, so I promise you'll get to season 2 in no time anyway. So, sit tight and enjoy season 1.

Overall, the second season superior by far, as less energy is spent into establishing things and more on building things up. We find out more about what makes Barry

himself, with flashbacks to his military past. We get to see what makes him snap, what makes him kill, and what makes him want to stop killing. It is all quite beautifully profound, really.

There is a few episodes that rise above the rest in season two. ronny/lily plays out a lot like a one-take sequence and is so bonkers that I had to do a double-take to make sure it wasn't a dream sequence. I'm still not quite sure, but maybe that's the beauty of it. The penultimate episode of the second season, *The Audition*, is, in broad terms, everything that makes the show great. The season finale, *berkman > block* is so incredibly bleak and honest and real that it was refreshing. The acting in this episode alone by Hader and Winkler is so extraordinary and special. Overall, the second season

finale is probably one of my favourite TV episodes of the year.

**"It's difficult to put *Barry* into a box"**

### Should you watch it?

A big yes. It's difficult to put *Barry* into a box, but that only means that regardless of what genre tends to rock your boat, there is surely something in *Barry* that would tickle your fancy. Overall, *Barry* is brutal, it's grimy, it's smart, and it's provocative. It's honestly great.

The show has been renewed for season 3, which is expected to air starting March 2020.

# FILM

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## Zombi Child

*Zombi Child manages to be visually gorgeous, taking advantage of the oft-overlooked beauty of Haiti, but manages to lose a sense of respect for Haiti by abusing clichés in the final scenes*

### FILM

#### Zombi Child



**Dir:** Bertrand Bonello.  
**Script:** Bertrand Bonello.  
**Starring:** Louise Labèque, Wislanda Louimat, Mathilde Riu. *103 minutes*

**Jasmin Daley**  
*Film Writer*

Despite opening with bloodshed (thanks to a slice-and-dice scene with a giant fish) *Zombi Child* is not the slasher the name may suggest. Rather, it is an uncovering of the Haitian history behind the term 'Zombi'. The story follows Haitian earthquake survivor Melissa as she becomes acquainted with the love-struck Fanny at the elite Maison d'éducation de la Légion d'honneur. Alongside the schoolgirls story we are taken back to Haiti in 1962 where Clairvius Mackenson Biju is cursed, killed and, with this being a zombie film, I think you can guess what happens next...

It is rare in modern cinema to find a picture filmed in Haiti; the stunning tranquillity and vibrant passion of the island mean that director Bertrand Bonello's efforts pay off gorgeously on-screen. Bonello's aim was to portray the voodoo Haitian zombie origin, as evidenced by his comment at his *Zombi Child* Q&A at the London Film Festival. Feeling, however, that it was not within his cultural jurisdiction to portray it directly, he invented the French storyline to tie it all together. The effect



Louise Labèque and Wislanda Louimat as Fanny and Mélissa // MUBI

of this feels disjointed at first, with the scenes in Haiti playing like a docudrama and the girls' school scenes like a very well-behaved version of *St Trinian's*. The decision to straddle the two storylines finally bears fruit in the final act where connections between Clairvius and the girls begin to emerge. Some of the film's sense of respect for Haiti seems to dissolve towards the end when clichéd Voodoo conventions are used, against which I had assumed the movie was trying to fight.

Despite being a docu-

drama, Bonello leaves a lot to unpack thematically. Melissa is classified as one of the few people of colour in her school, thanks to Bonello's ceaseless panning across classrooms, corridors and canteens to portray the overwhelming white homogeneity of the all-girls boarding school. When Melissa then reveals her aunt is a Mambo (Voodoo priestess), there is a lot less tolerance from the other girls when she subsequently starts to behave strangely, failing to notice the changes in Fanny. With a Mambo as an aunty and

having lived through the 2010 Haitian earthquakes, it seems Melissa is made to be an abstract symbol of 1st and 2nd generation Hattians living in France. Bonello is sure to show that Melissa is able to connect well with her peers through their music and pop culture, while also being reminded by family not to forget her origins.

Using Bonello's words 'A zombie is someone who keeps their head down', we see the different types of 'zombie' we may encounter in day-to-day life. Those who are living

and breathing but feel nothing, those who are reborn thanks to medical advancements, and, most

**"If you are looking for something without heaps of blood for Halloween, I present to you *Zombi Child*"**

blood-curdling of all, the *Zombi* that were real in Haiti decades ago. If you are looking for something without heaps of blood for Halloween this year, I present to you *Zombi Child*. I can guarantee you will leave believing that Zombies are real.

*Zombi Child* is available to watch on MUBI, an online streaming service free for students from 18th October – 16th November.

# GAMES

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## Fallout 1st, not the 1st, 2nd or 3rd thing wrong with this game...

*Bethesda presents another way to alienate, extort and otherwise piss off their main audience. With the introduction of a new premium service that provides features that should have already been in the game at a pricey £11.99!*

### GAMES

**Freddie Ugo**

*Games Editor*

Bethesda. A name which, until recently, brought joy to many people's ears. On the 14th November 2018, this all changed; the release of Fallout 76 was the beginning of a year of seemingly endless controversy. Why are we bringing this up again you ask? Well, after all the issues which have cropped up over the last year (which will be covered later) Bethesda still haven't seemed to have learned their lesson. Fallout 1st, a new subscription service for Fallout 76 is coming for the price of £11.99 a month! Wait...what?! No – I am not joking.

To fully understand the absolute absurdity of this we must first understand what went wrong with Fallout 76. Although, a better question is probably what didn't go wrong! For starters, the premise of the game already had many early sceptics when announced during E3 2018. It is an always-online Fallout game with no NPC's and reliance on player interaction. I think most know all too well the issue with always-online games – trolls – so many trolls. To make this even worse there is a mechanic in the game which allows for the production of a nuke. These nukes can be fired on the map and destroy someone's base they have spent HOURS on.

The in-game controver-

sy was not even the worst part. A special edition of the game was available for pre-order called the 'Power Armour Edition'. This edition was sold at a steep \$200, advertising a canvas duffle bag as one of its selling points. The issue was that it did not come with a canvas bag and instead was a cheap tacky nylon bag. This instigated a barrage of complaints from the fanbase. At first, the Bethesda support team ignored the complaints until they faltered and said, "We aren't planning on doing anything about it." Clearly, this is not how to handle accusations of this nature, so eventually Bethesda relented; however, the fanbase was far from pleased. Players

**"A new subscription service for Fallout 76 is coming for the price of £11.99 a month"**

upset about the swapped bags were entitled to 500 atoms compensation. To put this into perspective, 500 atoms is worth around £5. That's right!

It took until June the following year (2019) for Bethesda to start rolling out the promised merchandise, 7 months after initially intended... poor form Bethesda. But oh boy does it get worse. In December 2018 Bethesda



Oh pip boy, what have they done to you! // Bethesda

decided to ban 3 players for supposedly cheating. The players argued that they were using mods but not using them to cheat, and as such, it became a case of the player against the developer with no concrete evidence either way. To put this to rest, Bethesda told the players they would be unbanned if they each wrote an essay on why cheating is detrimental to online games. This once beloved companies' solution to potential cheaters was to treat them like school children; I honestly could not make this up if I tried.

You would think after that that they would learn, but no! In April 2019 Bethesda started selling Repair Kits in the Atom Shop. A shop that uses atoms as currency, which as mentioned earlier is purchased using real money. Repair kits measurably affect the game and thus it took Bethesda less than 6 months to break their promise of only cosmetic items being available from the Atom

Shop.

Now this brings us to this week, and oh boy what a week it has been for Bethesda. They announced the release of Fallout 1st, a subscription service to Fallout 76 which costs £11.99 a

**"Both the Fallout and Fallout 76 sub-Reddit's are riddled with ESSAYS on why Bethesda needs to take a step back"**

month. What you get for this purchase is not even worth it and is the most blatant money-grabbing scheme I have seen in a long time. With it you get private servers, unlimited storage for crafting components and a placeable

fast travel point; these features arguably should have been in the game from the get-go. With Fallout 1st the player also gains 1,650 atoms per month and access to the Ranger Armour Outfit. This goes to show how badly Bethesda knows its audience. The Ranger Armour Outfit is from Fallout: New Vegas, many fans favourite game in the franchise, (hilariously not even developed by Bethesda but instead the original creators of Fallout, Obsidian). Why would they hide a fan favourite item behind an obscene paywall? The only answer to all of this is that Bethesda is getting greedy and somehow has gotten away with it until now.

Luckily, players have started to push back. One man, David Chapman from Indiana, purchased the Fallout 1st domain before Bethesda could and riddled it with satirical explanations of what is on offer, such as "This sh\*\*\*y community

has been begging for the ability to play alone in private worlds since before the launch of Fallout 76 (like what a Fallout game should be), and we begrudgingly announce that they are coming to the game with Fallout F\*\*K YOU 1st."

Further push back can be seen with players in-game putting up signs saying "Boycott Bethesda". Not only this but both the Fallout and Fallout 76 sub-Reddit's are riddled with ESSAYS on why Bethesda needs to take a step back and re-evaluate themselves.

In an industry increasingly surrounded by bad business practices (looking at you EA, Ubisoft, Blizzard) you cannot help but worry what the future holds when even once loved Bethesda has joined the ranks of trashy companies. Hopefully, all of the backlash will send a message, but one can only hope.

# GAMES

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## POV: Cytus 2: Electric Boogaloo

### GAMES

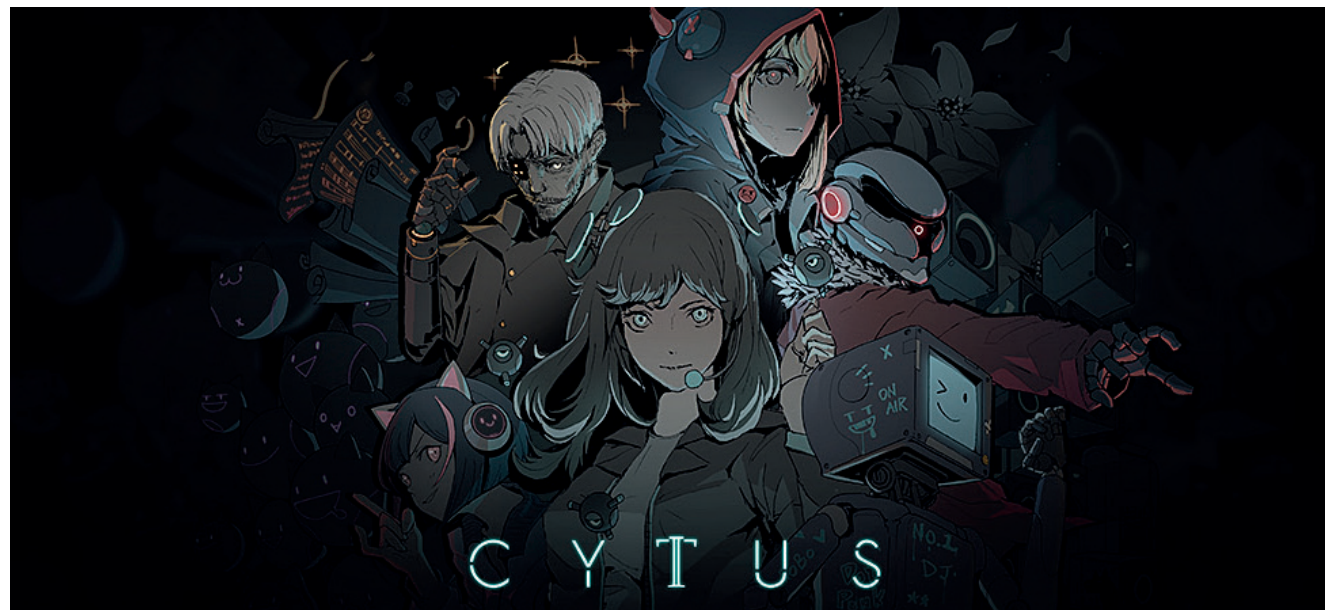
**Freddie Ugo**

*Games Editor*

Hey all! This week I have been doing something a bit different: I have been religiously playing a mobile game! Now before you pull out the torches and pitch-forks, hear me out! Cytus 2, released January 2018, is a rhythm game developed by Rayark Inc. This game did not seem like much to me at first but once I started playing I was instantly hooked. It is relatively simple but quickly ramps up in difficulty until you are playing at speeds you didn't even think were possible. The gameplay involves a line which rises and falls on the screen in time with the

music. When the line goes over a circle, you press the circle. There are notes that you hold, notes you drag and on the hardest difficulty some notes that you swipe (surprisingly hard at a fast pace). The feeling is extremely fluid, once you get into the rhythm it becomes second nature and is so satisfying. It can be frustrating playing very high difficulty songs but with the difficulty ranging from 1 to 15, there is a lot of option to choose exactly what pace is good for you. I am now up to the stage of playing level 14 songs and I still have not got bored.

The game is packed full of original music, with each playable character having a distinct style, from Dubstep to Heavy Metal to Jazz. You start the game with 5 characters and must pay



With great aesthetic and music, there's little to fault with // Rayark Inc.

£10 to unlock each new character. This seems a bit obscene but I have nearly 100 hours in the game and have not spent a single penny yet. That's right, the game is free!

Cytus 2 shines in its gameplay, but the story

and art style compliments it so well that it must be mentioned too. The story is told through a fictional social media where people not only message and post different stories but also perform virtual reality concerts. It starts

harmless enough but quickly devolves into a very dark and twisted futuristic psychological mystery. The character designs are also top-notch with the beautiful pastel shades complimenting play by not being too

hard on the eyes. Anyone that likes rhythm games such as Osu or TapTap Revenge should check this out. Enjoy your week and I will see you all next Friday!

## POV: The Ingenuity of the Emulation Community

### GAMES

**Connor Winzar**

*Games Editor*

This POV is dedicated to the breathtaking (cue Keanu Reeves) community of coders that make emulation possible. For those unfamiliar with the term, video game emulation is the practice of running or simulating games on machines that they're not meant to be running on – for example running Nintendo Game Boy Advance Games on an iPhone or PS1 games on a Nintendo Switch. In other words, emulation is the mighty techno-sledgehammer that knocks down the barriers between gaming platforms,

providing jailbroken consoles – consoles that have had their base code edited – with the ability to play any type of game. I've been giving it a go with a PS Vita that has been completely kitted out with an emulator system called Retroarch, allowing me to play a digital version of every single Gameboy Advance game I own.

The zanier end of the hobby is putting emulators on not only different consoles, but also household appliances – oh yeah, I'm talking about the running "can it run DOOM" joke. The iconic shooter has become a benchmark for how far gamers will go to ensure the continuation and preservation of their dearest memes. As a result, I'd dare to say that with every

piece of new technology comes greater potential for DOOM memory! If there's a digital interface, it can run DOOM. It's been emulated on ATMs, The Touch Bar of a Macbook Pro, and even calculators. Just like the game's protagonist, this joke is too angry and persistent to die.

However, for all the pleasantries that I associate with emulation there can also be some shady stuff – in particular, viruses. So, so many viruses. This especially applies when downloading ROMs, which are the files that contain the information needed to run the game. There are also concerns with piracy, as one can download ROMs for games they don't own, and the risk of bricking

your console while jail-breaking.

In short, video game emulation is a blessing. However, it is strongly

advised that you research it thoroughly before getting started! For those interested in kitting out consoles or even your

computer with the ability to emulate old classics, there are a plethora of guides online.



When money isn't enough, withdraw Doom // Youtuber Aussie50

# GAMES

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## Poll: Lego Games! The weirdest great franchise.

*Repeating last week's poll so we can get more responses. This week's theme is Lego games! A franchise close to our hearts with Lego Star Wars, Lego Indiana Jones and many more!*

**What is your favourite Lego game?**

*Open submission*

**Which do you prefer, the games or the movies?**

A. Games    B. Movies

**Which famous movie franchise should be made into a Lego game next?**

*Open submission*

**What was your first experience with Lego?:**

- A. The toys
- B. The games
- C. The Lego Movie
- D. What is Lego???

**On a scale of 1 to 10 how much did Lego Princess Leia turn you on?**

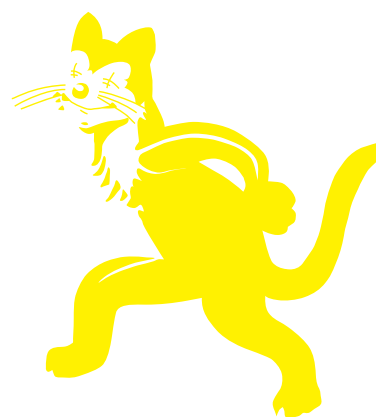
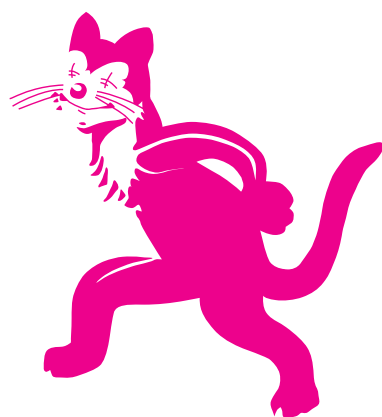
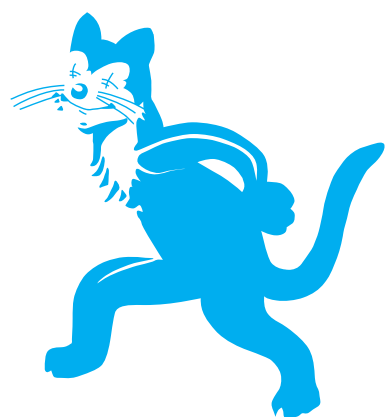
*Open submission*

*Submit your answers into the Microsoft survey - accessible through the Felix Facebook/Twitter page or scanning the QR code. No need to download an app! You can just hold down the screen on Snapchat or use your standard camera and it will scan the code for you. We'll get back to you next week, with infographics and more questions!*



Hmmmm. Filthy casual I smell... // bricklink

## *Felix is recruiting!*



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

# Union Page

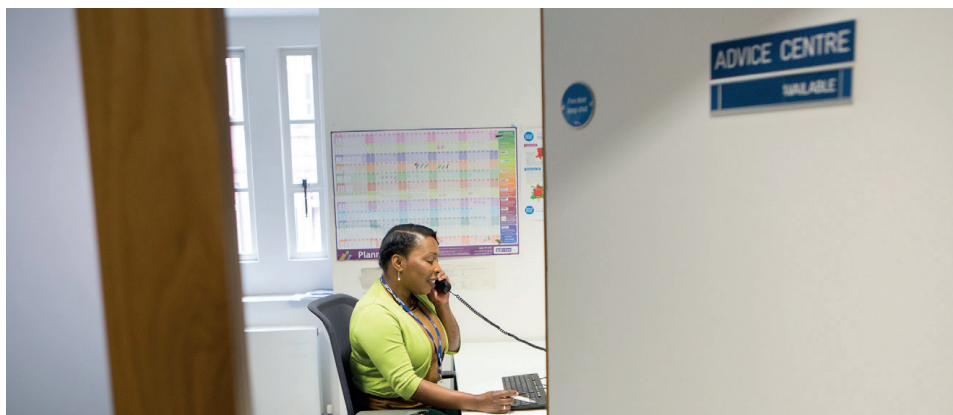


## Comedy Night

Witness some of the UK's finest stand-up comedians work their magic on stage in the Union Bar on Monday 4 November. This month's acts include Simon Brodtkin, Lloyd Griffith, Holly Kavangh, Nick Huynh, Tawfik "Toffee" Ramses and will be MC'd by Sonia Aste. £6 tickets (tickets are £4 on the door) include one drink and you can choose from:

- Small Wine (Red/White/Rose)
- Carling Cider Pint
- Carling Pint
- VK
- Single Spirit Mixer
- Draught Soft Drink (Coke, Lemonade)

Doors open at 20:00 and the show starts at 20:30. Buy your tickets at [imperialcollegeunion.org/comedy-night](https://imperialcollegeunion.org/comedy-night)



## We're here for you

The Union is here to support all Imperial students in the following ways:

### Academic support

If you're facing problems regarding your studies, you can get advice and support from our professional adviser.

### Non-academic support

If you're having problems outside your studies, such as financial, housing, or legal affairs, we're here to help.

### Support for sexual violence

If you have faced sexual violence, you can get support from a Sexual Violence Officer.

### Wellbeing support

Being at university can be hard and sometimes you just need someone to talk to and someone to listen.

For more information, go to [imperialcollegeunion.org/advice](https://imperialcollegeunion.org/advice)



## Tell us your idea

Do you have an idea on events and projects the Union should create to make an impact on the College community and improve the overall Imperial experience?

Tell us your ideas and we can make the Imperial community bigger and better. Everything we do stems from an idea a student had, so we're always on the lookout for more.

We can provide you with dedicated support from student officers and Union staff, as well as funding and resources to take your idea from the drawing board into reality.

Submit your idea at [imperialcollegeunion.org/your-idea](https://imperialcollegeunion.org/your-idea)



## Postgrads have their say

The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) is a biennial survey completed by Postgraduate Research (PGR) students in which they assess the College (and their experience) on areas such as Supervision, Research Culture and Professional Development.

Your Deputy President (Education), Ashley Brooks, along with the Graduate Student's Union and Representation Team, have collated the comments from this year's PRES to write a report, which summaries students' feedback and provides College, and the Union (new for this year), with recommended actions that can be made for improvements. We've taken these recommendations to College via the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC), with changes being tracked by a newly formed sub-group, with the DPE and GSU reps sitting on both groups.

Visit [imperialcollegeunion.org/responses](https://imperialcollegeunion.org/responses) to read the full report.



Make great memories

FiveSixEight.

## International Stout Day

7 November 2019  
FiveSixEight

**1** November, Friday

**Thank Goodness It's Friday**  
Metric | 20:00 - 02:00

**Bop**  
Reynolds | 20:00 - 02:00

**6** November, Wednesday

**CSP Wednesday**  
Beit Bars | 19:00 - 02:00

**4** November, Monday

**Comedy**  
Union Bar | 19:30-23:00

**7** November, Thursday

**Pub Quiz**  
h-bar | 19:30 - 21:30

**5** November, Tuesday

**Super Quiz**  
FiveSixEight | 20:00-22:00

**Bonfire Night**  
h-bar | 19:30-23:00

**Games Night**  
h-bar | 19:30-23:00

**8** November, Friday

**Thank Goodness It's Friday**  
Metric | 20:00 - 02:00

[f](#) [beitbars](#) [f](#) [hbarpub](#) [f](#) [reynoldsbarcx](#)

# INVESTMENT

icu.investmentsociety@imperial.ac.uk

## What are cryptocurrencies and what is happening in this space ?

### INVESTMENT

**Issa Bqain**

ICIS

Investment Student Writer

Cryptocurrencies are digital assets which are intended to be used as a medium of exchange. Traditionally, the supply currency can be controlled by a central bank or the government, however this is not the case with cryptocurrencies. Within this system, the safety solely lies in the hands of parties called miners. These people use their computers to help verify and timestamp transactions hence adding them to a record in accordance with a particular timestamping scheme. In exchange, these miners earn fees in a form of cryptocurrencies and at the same time they bear the costs of the machines, cooling systems and electricity.

Consequently, this forms a blockchain, which is a continuously growing list of records called "blocks" that are linked and secured using cryptography. For example, Bitcoin uses SHA-256 to link its blocks, a cryptographic hash function for their proof-of-work scheme. Namecoin utilises a domain name system, while Litecoin was the first to use a script as its hash function which acts as a password-based key derivation function. Each block usually has a hash pointer which connects to the previous block which also has a timestamp and transaction data. Therefore, these peer-to-peer network transactions are recorded permanently and do not disclose the

identity of its users.

This results in difficulty tracking transactions compared to traditional banks where transactions can easily be tracked. With Blockchain, transactions can be performed with minimal fees using private and public keys as opposed to steeper fees often charged by traditional financial institutions.

In addition, Blockchain makes cryptocurrencies virtually impossible to manipulate as transactional data would require altering the data of the previous block, requiring the support of multiple users.

Therefore, cryptocurrencies are considered to be decentralised, meaning there is no central bank, authority or institution tasked with regulating the currency and verifying the transactions. The difficulty in tracking transactions with cryptocurrencies have resulted in it being widely used in online black markets or other nefarious activities, most notably through Silk Road which was an online market used for selling drugs. Global governments have responded differently to cryptocurrencies; for example in the West, many leaders in governments and the finance sector have criticized its use. This includes John Bogle, founder of asset-management firm Vanguard Group, who warned investors to "avoid Bitcoin like the plague". Famed investor Warren Buffet has described Bitcoin as "probably rat poison squared" and a "delusion". However, in the East, President Xi Jinping has controversially gone against the grain and is actively campaigning for China to seize the opportunity to



**Bitcoin was a highly sought after cryptocurrency, peaking in value at the end 2017 before declining // hackernoon**

adopt blockchain-based cryptocurrencies and plans to develop its own digital renminbi (RMB).

This comes as no surprise since mobile payments are widely used and accepted in China where both Alipay and Tencent are widely used. This system makes use of a unique QR code to carry out transactions. However, in many Western countries, the use of physical money is still the standard. In China, there is an estimated 45% of the population using mobile payments however in the UK, France and Germany this is only 16.9%, 13.7% and 11% respectively. It is clear that other countries are at different stages of accepting the use of technology as a safe and viable platform to make purchases, let alone adopting decentralised cryptocurrencies. In recent years, a US-based start-up called Flexa created a payment app which made it easier for consumers and sellers to trade using cryptocurrencies including Bitcoin, Ethereum and the Gemini dollar. This was expected to serve up to 30,000 stores including

Starbucks, Whole Foods and Nordstrom. However, at the same time, the value of these currencies has been very volatile; between December the 15th and the 22nd 2017, Bitcoin dropped in value by £3463.6, representing a 23.4% decrease. Consequently, it is clear why retailers are not keen on accepting them as a form of payment and investors are proclaiming it to be the next big bubble. With these statements from public figures allied with unpredictable events, it has made the public and

retailers apprehensive to make a move to cryptocurrencies.

### In the news

On the 18th of June 2019, Facebook publicly announced that they are working on Libra, a cryptocurrency, with 28 partnering companies. Facebook launched this project to produce a global cryptocurrency payment system which was safe, reliable and easy to use. But growing concerns regarding Facebook's recent scandals regarding

Cambridge Analytica and the way in which they handle users' data has led to extreme push back by regulators and authority figures. Amid ongoing scrutiny, a quarter of partnering companies have walked out on the project. Notably, PayPal left the partnership on the 4th of October and this triggered several companies to leave the partnership the following week. This begs the question; will we now ever accept cryptocurrencies?



**The Libra Project had many initial partners across various industries // hackernoon**

# INVESTMENT

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## Dollar, Euro, Sterling and all their friends: The Foreign Exchange Market

### INVESTMENT

**Shivan Parmar**

ICIS

Investment Student Writer

The Foreign Exchange market (Forex or FX) is an over-the-counter market in currency-pairs which is the largest and most liquid market in the world. An average of \$5.1 trillion is traded every day, compared to \$84 billion traded daily in equities' markets. Like how you might trade in sterling for euros before a trip abroad, large banks

**“An average of \$5.1 trillion is traded every day, compared to \$84 billion traded daily in the equities markets...”**

and corporations trade currencies. They do this both to hedge against international currency and interest rate risks, as well as to speculate on geopolitical events and diversify portfolios. The most common currency pairs traded on the FX markets are Dollar-Euro, Dollar-Yen, and Dollar-Sterling. Additionally, popular currencies are the Swiss Franc, the Australian Dollar and the New Zealand Dollar. Note that only floating currencies are traded, not fixed currencies.

There are two main ways to make money from the foreign exchange

markets. The first is to benefit from yields of different currencies. The central bank of each currency will usually set a base interest rate, which strongly determines the interest generated by saving in a money account of that currency. For instance, if the UK were to raise interest rates tomorrow from the current 1.75% to 2.25%, then this would make saving in a UK-based money account far more attractive, and so investors would rush to buy sterling and take advantage of this, which would increase the strength of the sterling.. This opportunity is the real money maker of the currency exchange markets – it allows speculators to move money to a currency which they expect to pay a higher rate of interest. Additionally, currencies are bought and sold for so-called ‘carry trades’ – hoping to profit off an increase in the value of a particular currency.

To determine whether a currency is overvalued or undervalued, forex traders will sometimes use the notion of purchasing power parity. This expresses a measure of what the exchange rate ‘should’ be based on the ratio of the cost of a basket of goods in two different countries. In the long run, exchange rates are expected to move towards rates which equalise the price of a basket of identical goods and services in any country. An entertaining simplification of this model is the Big Mac index, which compares the cost of a Big Mac in hundreds of countries, adjusted for GDP to account for the effect of



The Renminbi (RMB) is sometimes known as the Yuan, which is actually a unit of the currency// Neerav Bhatt, Flickr

**“For instance, if you had £100 to invest in Japanese Yen, you could borrow up to £9990, and then invest £10,000 in Yen”**

cheaper labour costs in poorer countries. The other reason that trading the currency markets is so profitable is that a high level of leverage is available, up to a magnitude of about 100:1. For instance, if you had £100 to invest in Japanese Yen, you could borrow up to £9990, and then invest £10,000 in Yen. This hugely amplifies the profits and losses which can be made through Forex trading; huge returns can be achieved from a small amount of starting capital. Moreover, the interest rates charged on

foreign exchange transactions for large banks and institutions are negligible, due to the size and liquidity of the market. Aside from the straightforward spot price on foreign exchange rates, an eclectic zoo of FX derivatives exists to hedge against, and speculate off, currency risk.

### The regulators

Until 1976, foreign exchange rates had been governed by the 1944 Bretton Woods Agreement between the U.S., Canada, Western European countries, Australia and Japan. This bound each country to keep its country's exchange rate to within 1% by tying its value to the value of gold and using the IMF to settle temporary imbalance of payments. The Jamaica Agreement tore down the Bretton Woods Agreement, increasing the instability of the financial markets for investors, and necessitating the adoption of financial derivatives to hedge against this new risk. Moreover, the advent of globalisation increased the demand for

such instruments from multinational companies. A peculiarity of the foreign exchange market is that it is very lightly regulated, with none of the clearing houses or regulatory institutions characterising other markets. Instead, trades take place off the back of credit agreements, essentially metaphorical handshakes. There is no such thing as insider trading in foreign exchange markets, it's legitimate to trade off any information you happen to hold about countries and governments.

### Role of world politics

The foreign exchange market is also interesting because of how strongly it is affected by a range of macro-economic factors. For instance, the trade war between China and the US led to the dollar strengthening against the yuan. This is because of the two countries, America is a net importer of Chinese goods. The tariffs on these goods mean that less will be bought, and so the demand for the yuan is decreased. Thus,

the yuan depreciates in value against the dollar (it can also be interpreted as the dollar strengthening against the yuan). It is worth noting that the effect of the base interest rate on the value of a currency is not so straightforward. A low interest rate spurs consumer confidence and

**“... how strongly it is affected by a range of macro-economic factors”**

growth, which is generally positive for the value of the currency. However, this is balanced by higher interest rates generating foreign investment in a country, increasing demand for the currency and thus its strength.

## TECH

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## Automation &amp; Virtual Assistants

## Finding Shortcuts to Daily Life Tasks

## TECH

**Sudarshan Sreeram**  
Tech Writer

The past decade has seen the rise of digital virtual assistants and a big boom in the home automation industry. If you've seen the movies "Flubber" (1997) or "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" (1968), you'll know what I'm talking about; from machines that cook you a breakfast meal to a virtual assistant that develops an intimate relationship with its creator, these movies represented an over-optimistic view of where humanity's future was headed. Yet, here we are, more than a decade later, with lightbulbs that change colours with voice commands and virtual assistants that have limited contextual awareness. It's not to say that we haven't lived up to the expectations of the

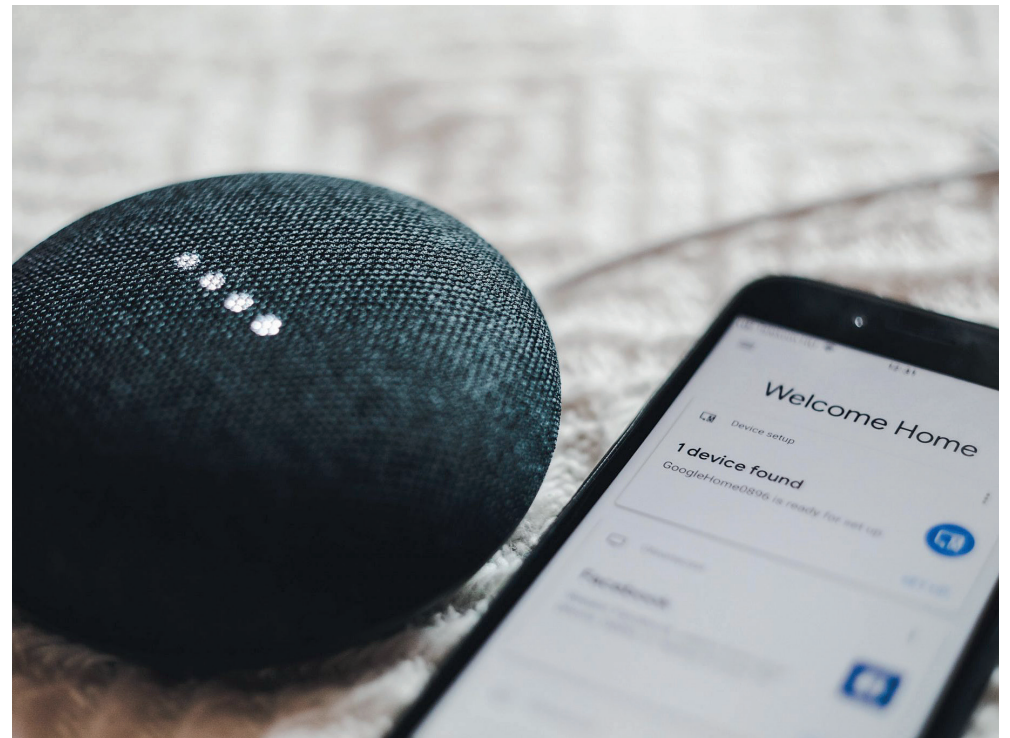
filmmakers and audiences of old. It's just that today's world puts forward challenges related to safety and privacy that makes the development and distribution of these products challenging.

Today's assistants represent a step towards a future of managing

**"Companies are pushing research that make systems more capable for human interaction."**

daily life tasks with intelligence augmentation and artificial intelligence. Google's virtual assistant stands out with its controversial and highly impressive feature set. With the proposed ability

to make calls to book a table at a restaurant or an appointment at a salon on your behalf, it's currently the most capable in terms of speech recognition and conversational awareness. While these capabilities are 'scarily' good, it certainly is a step toward our surrender to the robot overlords. Just kidding - in reality, it's a step toward better assistants throughout the industry as competition pushes innovation forward. Google has access to huge custom-curated datasets for backend algorithms to train and learn from, so it's no surprise that their assistant is far ahead. Other assistants, although not as "smart" as Google's implementation, make use of extensions to expand their capabilities; Amazon does this with Alexa skills, and Apple with Siri Shortcuts. However, these companies are heavily focused on pushing research that make these systems more capable for



Bence Boros // Unsplash

human interaction.

Coming to home automation, virtual assistants are integrated into smart-home speakers that act as central hubs for other internet-connected, smart-home devices such as lightbulbs, power sockets, thermostats, security cameras, or door locks. These devices are aimed at easing the 'pressure' on managing our daily lifestyle; in other words, they automate tasks and make living convenient. Basically, all devices connected to a central hub can be either controlled with your voice or through a connected smartphone.

Most smart-speakers, except Apple's HomePod and the Sonos One, focus less on audio quality. Rather, their main purpose is to serve as a 'voice box' of sorts for the virtual assistants they house. Another category of central hubs include smart-hubs, which slap a touch-screen display on a smart-speaker for additional information. With a slowly increasing demand and market for

these internet-connected smart devices, companies are continually supporting and expanding a wide range of products catered to smart-living.

On the digital automation side, Apple's Shortcuts app takes an interesting approach to expanding the capabilities of Siri. Shortcuts are drag-and-drop scripts that have a logical flow similar to that of a flowchart and almost act as a programming language with the

**"We're waking up to an increasingly internet-connected world each day."**

capability to manipulate data from different apps to automate tasks. These shortcuts can then be triggered manually, through

voice commands with Siri or with NFC tags. Another platform is IFTTT (If This Then That), which doesn't have a set focus on virtual assistants but has a similar approach to Siri Shortcuts by connecting different apps and frameworks. The potential of these platforms in helping towards accomplishing daily life tasks are literally endless. Though, the ideal would be for an assistant to handle this process on its own instead of the end-user performing the setup and triggering the tasks.

With better datasets and increased funding on machine learning and natural language processing research, it's expected that the conversational abilities and contextual awareness of these assistants would vastly improve as we head into the future. Furthermore, with microwaves and refrigerators now possessing the capability to link up with the internet, we're waking up to an increasingly internet-connected world each day.



Sebastian Scholz (Nuki) // Unsplash

# SCIENCE

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## From the lab to your plate – the science behind 5 intriguing foods

*Missed your weekly dose of food? Ex-Food Editor (and your newest Science Editor) Julia is back and easing into her new role with a fusion of the two for a light read...*

### SCIENCE

**Julia Dabrowska**

*Science Editor*

Most foods are simple – some ingredients grow on trees, bushes or in fields, others are taken from animals, and depending on their nutritional value, undergo some level of processing. But with the modern era comes change, and as science is increasingly being installed in the kitchen (food science is even a discipline in its own right – petition for Imperial to introduce it as a degree? Stay tuned), we've chosen to unravel the science behind 5 interesting examples below.

### Astronaut/space food

Granted, this may not be the most commonly consumed product on the list, but perhaps you've wondered about it nevertheless. Food taken into space must fit multiple criteria: be compact, have a light mass and of course a high nutritional benefit, all while being preservable for a long time period and consumable in a weightless environment. Freeze-drying, or lyophilisation, solves most of these problems, and even causes less damage than other dehydration methods that use higher temperatures. The product may be pre-treated by revising the formula or concentrating the product in preparation for freezing. Next comes the freezing

stage, during which the material is cooled below its triple point (the lowest point at which the solid, liquid, and gas phases can coexist) in a rapid manner to avoid the formation of large ice crystals, which can result in poor texture and loss of nutritional value. Finally, drying occurs in 2 phases: the primary phase, which involves lowering the pressure to a few millibars using a partial vacuum and supplying heat to cause sublimation of the ice, and the secondary phase, which aims to remove unfrozen water molecules by using higher temperatures than the previous step. This results in a light, crumbly food that can easily be restored by rehydration with water,

### “The material is cooled below its triple point (...) to avoid the formation of large ice crystals”

filling the microscopic pores caused by the procedure.

### Nitrogen ice cream

Not only used for making ice cream, but certainly the most delicious way to enjoy nitrogen (welcome to 2019, where we apparently enjoy consuming the elements of Group 15), so what's the secret? Simple: a standard ice cream mix is made, and then liquid

N<sub>2</sub> is poured in. The temperature of liquid nitrogen is -196 degrees Celsius, so the ice cream is frozen extremely rapidly and no ice crystals are formed - resulting in a highly creamy texture (and definitely a much cooler ice cream to brag about). However, if not fully evaporated, liquid nitrogen can create solid, brittle, glass-like shards, so be wary of any sketchy-looking offers for this treat.

### Popping boba

Finally, something you're likely to have tried in your lifetime. No idea what I'm talking about? Two words: bubble tea (although popping boba have also been used as frozen yoghurt or ice cream toppings, so hey, boba lovers rejoice). If you've ever ventured beyond the classic milk bubble tea with tapioca pearls, you might have even had bubble tea with popping boba. Flavoured, usually fruit juice-resembling liquids are thoroughly mixed with powdered sodium alginate, and then, drop by drop, dripped into a bowl filled with cold calcium chloride, creating small spheres which we know as boba. The magic lies in the calcium solution which forms the thin, flexible skin of the boba, and results in that delightful juicy POP.

### Edible foam

We've gone through the not relatable, uncommon and basic, so now it's time for a little more class with this Michelin-level molecular gastronomy. To



**Strawberry jelly, vanilla and lime foam at Whisk Desserts // Julia Dabrowska**

understand the creation of culinary foam, let's take a look at its composition: 2 phases (aqueous and gaseous), with a thin film at their interface in which large amounts of gas bubbles are essentially trapped - in this way similar to an emulsion of fat and liquid. To generate this, natural flavours, such as fruit juices, stock, or herbal infusions, are mixed with a stabilising surfactant, such as lecithin or monoglycerides, in order to reduce the interfacial tension between the aqueous and gaseous phases of the components and facilitate molecule adherence. Without this, the forces of liquid and air within the bubbles would counteract, rupturing the bubbles and causing the foam to disintegrate. A mechanical force, usually whipping, is then applied in order to introduce air into the mixture and create the aforementioned bubbles. A network of

interconnected films between bubbles, known as lamellae (no, not lamellipods biologists... but close enough I guess?), is what gives culinary foam its relative stability.

### Candyfloss

If you've never had candyfloss/cotton candy/barbe à papa/fairy floss/insert term for that fluffy pink sugary goodness here, have you even had a childhood? Anyway... let's keep this one short and sweet. First, specially flavoured solid sugar is placed into a small bowl, melted using a heating element, and then squeezed out through tiny holes into a larger vessel by centrifugal force (yes, centrifuges are not only for RNA extraction). The miniscule holes result in extremely thin threads of sugar, while the instantaneous increase in surface area and exposure to cooler air means that when

they emerge on the other side, they are already solidified. All that's left now is for the machine operator to gather the sugary strands into portions, and your horribly-sticky-yet-delightful-sugar-coma-childhood-memory-concoction is ready to

### “(...) fruit juices or herbal infusions, are mixed with a stabilising surfactant such as lecithin or monoglycerides”

consume.

If anyone ever told you that science isn't cool, let them live without. More boba for us.

# SUSTAINABILITY

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## California Fires puts pressure on the US to improve Environmental policies

*With a total of 17 wildfires burning in California this week, the USA's businesses and councils are increasing actions against climate change.*

### SUSTAINABILITY

**Leah Denoun**

*Sustainability Writer*

For the past week, statewide wildfires in California have been blazing, having turned to ashes more than 80 000 acres, most in the counties of Sonoma and LA. The biggest fire is the Kincade Fire in the North of California. As of now, the fire is only 15% contained and has burned at least 74 000 acres, leaving more than a million citizens without electricity or service.

Nearly 200 000 people have been ordered to leave their homes, while an astonishing 4000 fire-fighters are battling the flames. Fire department representative Jonathan Cox says it could take "weeks, if not months" to extinguish the fires fully.

It is becoming more and more evident that the frequency and intensity of these fires are highly linked to climate change,

more specifically they are linked to wind and soil conditions.

Indeed, climate change has led to an average increase of 3 degrees Fahrenheit for this time of year in California. This signifies hotter winds during wildfire season and drier soils. The combination proves to have immeasurable impacts on the number, size and power of the fires; 15 of the 20 largest fires in California history have happened since 2000 and the area burned has increased by 500%.

The current climate trends could signify a longer wildfire season. However, generally, it is uncertain what climate change will mean for the future. The fires may be less frequent, according to a study by Guzman-Morales and Gershunov from January 2019.

With powerful natural disasters increasing not only in rate but also in proximity to large cities, will the US rethink its current Climate plan?

The country's Presi-

dent seems set to leave the Paris agreement as soon as possible; his administration is said to be beginning the official withdrawal from the Paris accords on November the 4th. As the fires will undoubtedly have effects on the country's economy as well as Californians health and way of life, politicians, institutions and major companies are retaliating by installing acts and encouraging the citizens to take action, despite the White House's agenda.

For them, the fires have sparked new conversations on current and future plans to decrease carbon emissions. For instance, democratic congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has been very active on twitter to remind the people to act quickly before the consequences of climate change become irreversible. "This is what climate change looks like," she wrote of a photo of the fire. "We have 10 years to cut carbon emissions in half. If we don't, scenes like this



California Fires are currently only 15% contained // US Air Force

can get much worse.". She continues to strive for the acceptance of a Green New Deal - legislation centered around sustainability, focusing on tackling climate change and fixing the current economic inequality.

States are trying to adopt legislation to transition to cleaner energy sources, but the deadlines remain distant. For example, the 9 states making up 16% of the US's electricity demand, including California, Washington and Nevada have enacted 100% clean energy legislation with targets between 2040 and 2050. To decrease carbon emissions, California is inspiring other states to join their zero-emission

vehicle (ZEV) mandate requiring automakers to sell electric vehicles.

There is also a notable increase of commitments from cities: since 2017, 80 cities have committed to 100% renewables.

Finally, two major energy companies, Xcel Energy and National Grid, have aimed to dramatically reduce carbon use. Xcel, for example, plans to go 100% coal free by 2030 and 100% carbon free by 2050.

There has been some pushback from the administration against most of the acts put into place. For instance, they are trying to revoke the changes that California had made on the Clean Air Act to make it stricter. Nonetheless, the

general consensus from Americans is positive: 71% say they want the federal government to do more on climate change, while 67% say it will have a positive impact on the economy and jobs.

This year, after the major wildfires in the Amazon, 230 institutional investors raised USD \$16.2 trillion in assets. As the California fires are expected to grow during the week, will they play a role in moving the deadlines for climate action and increasing funds? One thing is sure, if we want to act before it is too late, we must continue to make changes in the courtroom as well as in households, and we must make them now.

## Have a Halloween that isn't spooky for the environment

### SUSTAINABILITY

**Xiuchen Xu**

*Sustainability Editor*

It's the time of the year for trick or treating! However, being festive does not mean we should pollute and bring damage to our beloved planet.. Halloween activities can be incredibly wasteful, so here is a

look at three ways we can make Halloween more sustainable.

#### Costumes

Halloween is the peak time for fast fashion, the clothes bought are likely only worn once before it is discarded, or never used again. This uses us a huge amount of resources, and the waste will end up in landfills. Instead, you can

consider making your own costumes from old fabrics and clothes you no longer wear. DIY is both fun and rewarding, your costumes will impress your friends even more when you tell them you made it yourself. Upcycling is a great way to help the environment.

#### Pumpkins

Waste of pumpkins is predicted to be the highest

ever this year, with eight million pumpkins being dumped. Food waste is already huge problem in the UK, and there are ways to target pumpkin waste. When you carve out the pumpkin, you can use the insides in many creative ways, for example, you can bake it into desserts or make soup with it. The seeds can be toasted, and it makes a wonderful garnish. The

main part of the pumpkin is versatile too, you can bake it or cook it into a curry. The possibilities are endless, get creative.

#### Candies

The big brands for sweets such as Nestlé, Mars and Hershey, and all their subunits, are known for their unsustainable and unethical practices. They use huge amounts of

water for their production, they farm unsustainable palm oil, which destroys habitats, and they create a huge amount of packaging. Look for candies that either use sustainable palm oil, or do not use palm oil. Or even make your own snacks! Brownie points if they are also vegan.

# FOOD

food.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## Post-Halloween Budgeting Secret: Beware the Supermarket Powers

*The secret to having the money to be passed out in a haze of chocolate and sugar as Home Alone comes on the TV and still have heating for the winter*

### FOOD

**Ameena Hassan**

*Food Writer*

**D**ear Readers, I bring to you a little known secret. Writing in the dark of night while someone left the Felix closet unlocked, this London-dwelling resident can finally reveal it to you. Have you been salivating over your next piece of chocolate, only to be deterred by high prices and substandard chocolate coins? Look no further, for I have the secret to your salvation.

For the next two weekends, the influx of the nasty mini handout bars will abate, and prices of normal bars will come down. NOW is the time to buy. Halloween is over; there are no frantic parents looking for their child's next sugar high. The horrific price gauging we have been experiencing for the last month is going to see a "throwback", if you will, to summertime prices for a limited time – just until about mid November. Why, you ask? Well, I have 5 years of experience shopping through Asda, Lidl and Tesco shelves as a teen looking for their next

sugar hit. That means I can tell you mid-November is when the money-grabbing, holiday-profiteering supermarkets start advertising Advent calendars (just more overpriced chocolate that has probably melted twice before reaching shelves).

After the Advent calendars come the price hikes in fancy chocolate. Now, as people visit family over the years' end, they tend to be forced into buying holiday packs, specially designed to hold as little chocolate as possible while still advertising the holiday. It appears extracting money for overpriced chocolate is

not exactly profitable (I'm not buying 273 grams of chocolate for £7!), so supermarkets then take the initiative to hike up prices for ordinary, normal chocolate during this season. These hiked up prices remain throughout the Christmas month and through to January for the office New Year Parties. There is no drop in prices despite the general resolutions of "getting healthy" and "not eat as much chocolate", because we all know that Valentines' Day is just 'round the corner. Now, you may feel that Valentines' Day doesn't apply to you, but who doesn't want choc-

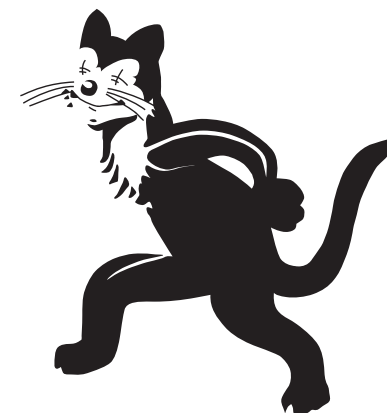
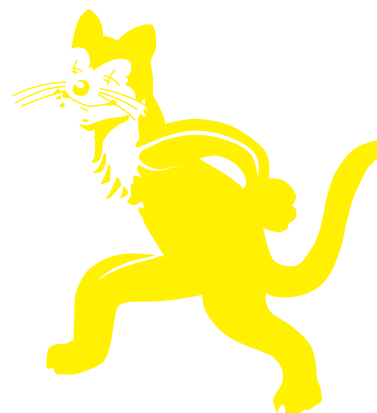
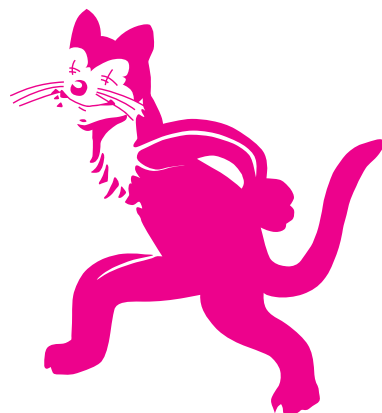
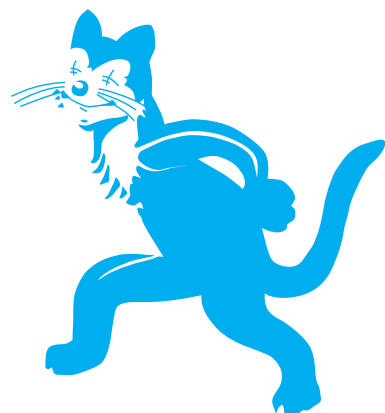
olate when your mates are getting their girls chocolate left AND right? Exactly.

**"The supermarket powers come together for 3 months to gain as much profit as possible"**

In conclusion, the juicy little secret I wish to impart is that the su-

permarket powers come together in this glorious 3-month period to gain as much profit as possible, preying on the sweet teeth of the poor student looking to just get through to March. If you were me, you would already have gotten your box of chocolate supplies to last you until then. If not, this may very well be your last chance to ensure you have the money to be passed out in a haze of chocolate and sugar as Home Alone comes on the TV and still have heating for the winter.

*Felix is recruiting!*



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

# FOOD

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## VQ: The Restaurant that Never Sleeps

### FOOD

**Zahra Deji-Abiola**  
Food Editor

We all know how it goes. The night starts out with good intentions. You've handed in your coursework with just 2 minutes to spare. You want some fun. You round up your friends and dance the stress away while screaming Beyoncé lyrics at the top of your lungs, having the time of your life as a student in one of the best cities in the world. That lasts like 10 minutes. Then someone gets kicked out, someone else disappears and ends up in the other side of London all while you are making bad decision on the dance floor with your ex. Only one thing can fix a night like this. Food.

McDonalds is the place of choice for students when it comes to that. You know what you are in for and they have many locations that are open late at night. Then there are the kebab and chicken shops conveniently placed close to the club with reasonable yet slightly higher prices than they should be. They haven't done us wrong yet. And yet, I still I think we deserve more. We deserve space and comfort while we eat as much food as we can get our hands on. That's where VQ comes in. They are a chain of 24 hours restaurants (with a few pesky outliers) that are willing to accommodate the tired and tipsy that stumble in through the night with never ending breakfast. We gave them a visit sober to see if they deserve to see us at our worst.

To start, we had their chicken and waffles. An American southern

classic with enough grease and sugar to lull any drunk to serenity. It came as 3 boneless fried chicken pieces on top of 1 waffle which was a weird ratio. The chickens could barely fit and it would have plated much better to have a second waffle. Nevertheless, the taste did not disappoint. I found that the breading was well seasoned and paired perfectly with the intense sweetness of the waffle. Having the fillets dipped in their maple syrup was a religious experience. It's a shame that that this isn't part of their breakfast menu because this would definitely get me going in the morning.

We still needed to try

**"Having the fillets dipped in their maple syrup was a religious experience"**

out another comfort food for eating the humiliation of the night away, so we got the apple crumble. This was another sugary treat and with some custard in a bowl to the side. The custard was without a doubt the highlight of the dish with the smooth, golden liquid warmed us up from the inside out. The size of the bowls made it hard to incorporate the two treats with each other – a problem that only be heightened in a drunken state – but that's what you have the sober friend for.

Outside of their comfort food we needed to also trial the establishment as an actual restaurant. Their smoked salmon tagliatelle looked and smelled amazing, with enough salmon to ease the wound to our bank accounts, but there just wasn't enough cream sauce. Due to this, the whole thing just ended up being dry even though the taste did, otherwise, deliver.

Now I'm not going to lie to you. Some of the prices had our student



VQ's apple crumble, with a golden custard as the highlight of the dish // Zahra Abiola

wallets shaking in their overdrafts. But that's why this place is different. It's not for when you bought one too many rounds at

the bar and are worried about how you are going to afford the uber home let alone your post-club meal. It's for when you need to

bad decisions, you can feel above it too.

From Aldgate to Bloomsbury to Clapham, they have restaurant all over London, so you are bound to pass one on your way back home. There is even one in Fulham (where they started out) that is open 24 hours and has a 24-hour alcohol licence if you want to keep the party going for some inane reason. Their breakfast menu is always available so you can have your full English at 4 am while wondering how you ended up in this situation with some semblance of a functionality surrounding you.

**"VQ is not for when you bought one too many rounds - it's to be waited on after running after your friends all night"**

be waited on after having to run after your crazy friends all night. Like they say, you are what you eat. So maybe – just maybe – if you eat above your actual mood of regret and



Enough salmon to sate the appetite, but lacking in the crucial sauce! // Zahra Abiola



# FOOD

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Juicy veg, bold herbs, delicious flavours, and doesn't break the bank // Zahra Abiola

## Pizza Union: The Cheapest Pizza You'll Find in London!

### FOOD

**Zahra Deji-Abiola**  
Food Editor

I'm going to let you in on one of London's better kept secrets. Pizza Union. They don't even need a gimmick. This pizza place has 12" pizzas starting at £3.50. No coupon code. No Instagram exclusive. No witch making you promise your first-born child in exchange for some genuinely affordable food in London. That is genuinely what their margherita will set you back by. And this is legit. This isn't a case of sneaky advertising or a loss leading campaign. The average price on the pizza menu is £5.50 with the highest price on there being £6.50. And yes, I did the math. I am an Imperial student after all. These thin crust, Italian style pizzas are really that cheap. There is no doubt that eating here will save

**"This pizza place has 12-inch pizzas for £3.50 - no coupon, no Instagram exclusive"**

you some dough. Sorry, couldn't resist a cheesy pun. Okay I'll stop now. Back to the food.

Even with these prices, Pizza Union still manages to only cut slices and not corners. (Yes, I lied, I still had one more in me.) They aren't stingy with their toppings. The herbs on the pizzas we got were front and centre when it came to flavour. The peppers and onions were sweet and juicy. Everything on our plates looked and (most importantly) tasted fresh. If you want, you can watch the whole thing be made from

scratch in front of you in their massive stone oven.

They rather impressively manage to incorporate the huge device into their aesthetic for their restaurants. It works as a spectacle but doesn't stick out like a sore thumb. Speaking of their aesthetic, they do seem to love their pink. From the menus to the plates - pretty much everything there uses pink as the accent colour. And sometimes not just pink - neon pink. Against their bare brick walls, you can find neon signs plastered tastefully around the building. Really fun to sit under when its dark outside. I have your next Instagram post sorted. You're welcome. They have the overdone hipster fake-run-down aesthetic going on with half painted walls and peeling wallpapers that I couldn't help but roll my eyes at. Still the wood tables and stool make for a really casual dining experience.

I'll save you all the embarrassment I had to

endure when I first went in and had no idea how to actually order my food as it was news to me. They really commit to the laid-back aesthetic by having you do most of the service. You go up and make your order at the till and leave with anything you can get right away a buzzer with their logo on it. And yes, it is pink. Find yourself somewhere to sit and relax until your buzzer goes off, indicating the completion of your freshly cooked pie. Go over to their pickup station and exchange your buzzer for your masterpiece.

**"The pizzas are really thin - so look elsewhere for a carb galore"**

For our trip, we had the Pollo and the Carne. The chicken wasn't dry which

is something I find that many pizza joints struggle with. The crust ended up rather burnt and hard in a few spots though. The mozzarella on our pies were melted to perfection. To keep it real with you, these pizzas are really thin so if you are looking for a carb galore, you'll have to find another spot. The savings don't stop at the pizzas. Their cocktails start at £3 and they've got a great gelato selection that you should ask about after if you find space for something sweet after your meal.

You can find them in King's Cross, Aldgate, Dalston and Spitalfields. Watch out for their new spot in Hoxton opening soon. If your London geography is any good you will realise that none of these stores are particularly close to South Kensington. Not close at all actually. They all managed to be in either north of west London. I know - it's not fair. It's what we get for being

situated in one of the most expensive areas in London. The effort to get to one of these places and back is probably making you second guess this entire review but think about it this way. You can take this as an opportunity to leave your troubles behind on campus and explore London. The British Library is a great change of pace from Central Library. Reward yourself during the study breaks and you can pop over to the King's Cross branch to grab a slice or two. You can even see what's on at the Wellcome Collection while you're in the area. Work up an appetite visiting the iconic attractions around Southwark before heading down to the one in Aldgate to finish it off. To me there is no better thing to make plans around than food. London is a treasure trove of great food stops that can lead to some even better memories if you let it.

# CONSTITUENT UNION

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## CGCU

### Fatima Khan

CGCU Vice President

*The CGCU shares the experiences of its members who have participated in National Service*

The UK stopped National Service (NS) in 1963. Before that, from the ages of 18-21, all males were required to serve in the Armed Services for 18 months. In some countries, however, service is still required. The Republic of Singapore is no exception; ‘boys become men’. Here are the stories of the experiences of Imperial Engineers in NS, reproduced from Guildsheet Issue IV.

### Andrew Ng (42nd Singapore Armoured Regiment)

22 months. That is the amount of time it takes to complete 2 academic years here at Imperial. It was the amount of time that I spent in the Singapore Army. I served in the Armoured Infantry, operating alongside armoured fighting vehicles and main battle tanks.

I often get asked “what was it like serving in the army?” It was loud, dirty and tiring. However, at the end of the day I got to blow stuff up – something most 19-year-olds get a kick out of. The sulphur from puffs of gunpowder irritates the eyes, the shockwave from the cannon on the Leopard II Main Battle Tank knocks you in the chest, and the rattle of gunfire rings in your eardrums.

These are just some things that no video game, documentary, or book can hope to describe. Every person who has served in a combat unit will have his definitive moment,

a moment by which he remembers his stint in active service.

For me, this was during the last night of my final multi-day training exercise. A combat march that was planned to last 2 hours in the pitch darkness of the night dragged on for longer. Low on rations and water, each man burdened with gear, my company perched atop a hill. We watched the sun rise over the objective we were assigned to capture. A raid that was planned to occur in the night became a daylight assault. Improvising as we must, eventually we achieved our objective, bringing to an end an arduous mission.

Resourcefulness, resilience and resolve. These traits are what I took away after 22 months.

### Xerxes Chong Xian (On his experience of Basic Military Training)

A typical day starts as early as 5 in the morning, when across the bunks a flurry of activity is set off as recruits scramble to wash up and assemble. Commanders do not take lateness lightly, with punctuality measured

down to the second.

Push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups, and timed runs are the bread and butter of any day’s activities. I recall fondly my company’s pre-meal routine, where each recruit had to complete a minimum number of pull-ups before the platoon could proceed for meals.

With Singapore’s strict gun laws, most Singaporeans have never seen a gun in person – let alone handled one – making the ‘Weapon Presentation’ a momentous occasion for each recruit.

Performed under the cover of darkness, symbolically representing the need to shield an army’s assets from the prying eyes of the enemy, each recruit is presented with the iconic SAR-21 assault rifle. Affectionately referred to as our “wives”, a soldier is rarely seen without it by his side.

The dreaded field camp represents the climax of Basic Military Training. Recruits will head into the jungle to hone their individual fieldcraft, where they would be at the mercy of the elements. Torrential downpours, blistering tropical sun, dense undergrowth, and

humidity so palpable it feels like your thickest winter coat is strangling you. Digging of ‘shell scrapes’ (shallow trenches which also doubled as our beds), combat movements as a section, and situational tests result in a bone-tired, mud-encrusted soldier at the end of each day. Encounters with snakes, scorpions and the occasional wild boar add to the flavour of the experience.

My nights were spent comfortably nestled in my

**“My nights were spent nestled in my shell scrape, clutching my rifle and contemplating my very moist existence”**

shell scrape, which resembled a bathtub of brown soup, clutching my rifle as I attempted to come to grasp with my very moist existence. Being

far from civilisation, a tilt of the head leaves one enthralled by the millions of bright stars dotting the night sky. This coupled with the tranquility of the rainforest and the lull of its nocturnal inhabitants offered a brief respite from the most arduous portion of basic training.

### Sean Chai (OCS)

Many recruits would probably describe the ‘tough times’, so here’s my take on the funnier side of the experience. Here are the top 2 ‘LOL’ moments in my NS life.

Ambushing the enemy with his pants down (literally): sometimes the call of nature is just too strong and when you’re out in the wild, the jungle is your toilet. Trying to conceal our movement, we slowly leopard-crawled towards the enemy position – taking care not to alert them to our presence.

Once we were within firing distance, we readied our rifles and tried to spot the enemy through our scopes. Expecting a highly camouflaged and entrenched enemy position, little did we expect 2 bare bottoms facing us. Needless to

say, we caught them off guard and completed the mission successfully.

Then there was the ‘jungle chef’ incident: sometimes the lack of food messed with our minds. Infantry officer cadets go through a three-day survival training course where they learn to live off the land and build shelters from available materials. During this time they are required to demonstrate certain skills they have been taught, including the identification and preparation of plant food – in this case the Simpoh Ayer leaf. Typically, the leaf is prepared for consumption by boiling. The lack of food must have gotten to one particular cadet because he decided to roast the leaf, placing it directly above the fire, almost setting fire to it and the surrounding structures he built.

Despite national service being a compulsory two-year thing, on the brighter side it has left us with these fond memories. Also, they give you free food, clothes, and housing, plus the occasional allowance. What’s not to like?



Recruits banded together after training // Sean Chai

# CONSTITUENT UNION

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## RCSU

**Michaela Flegrova**  
RCSU VP Education

When you think of the RCSU, you probably picture the amazing events we run, all of the free condoms we give out, and the Facebook posts about people stealing some really heavy things from other Constituent Unions and for some inconceivable reason having a lot of fun doing that. Many of you might not realise that your Year Reps and Dep Reps are also a crucial part of the RCSU - we oversee both the Academic and Wellbeing Representation Networks and coordinate representation in all four Natural Sciences departments.

As the head of the Academic Representation Network I was excited to meet most of our 24 new academic year reps this Thursday during our Rep Welcome event (at the time of writing this had not taken place yet, but I am already certain it will be a blast). Our reps are one of the most important

**“Our reps are one of the most important parts of the Union”**

parts of the Union – they can influence departments to enact real change and make sure the voices of

students are heard. You hopefully already know who your reps are, but if you don't, next week will be your chance to meet them!

Talking to your reps throughout the year is important and giving them feedback doesn't have to be limited to surveys. A brief chat to your rep about what you think could be improved can go a long way. Based on student comments, student reps can ask lecturers to adapt their lecturing style (is the writing on the board too small? Does the lecturer use too many PowerPoints? Is the pace too fast? Tell your rep!) or lobby the department to make significant changes to labs, lecture courses, or the way tutorials are run. Talking to your reps directly is more effective than waiting until SOLE

or the NSS comes out because by then it might be too late for you to feel the impact of any improvements.

**“Student reps can ask lecturers to adapt their style or lobby the department to make significant changes to labs, lecture courses, or tutorials”**

If you're interested in being at the forefront of change, keep an eye out for the by-elections. There are 8 more Academic and 5 more Wellbeing Rep positions waiting to be filled. Not sure if Year Rep would be a good fit for you? Chat to your Dep Rep or get in touch with me to see what the role

entails and how you could make a difference in your department.

Come along and learn who your reps are, get some nice RCSU freebies, and leave any feedback you have so far about your course!

## Meet Your Reps Week

### Where?

In your departmental common areas – look for a purple RCSU flag and a table full of freebies!

### When?

At lunchtime, between 12-2:

- Monday 4th November in Chemistry
- Tuesday 5th November in Physics
- Thursday 7th November in Maths
- Friday 8th November in Life Sciences

## RSMU

**Chris Carter**  
RSMU President

Hey everyone, hope you've all been having a good time since my last column. This

week I've got a brief summary of the events we'll be running in November!

### RSMU Bar Night (07/11/19)

Our second annual Bar Night, we're once again hiring out the Union Bar for a night of fancy dress,

traditions and fun! This time the theme is 'Once Upon a Time', so bust out your best public-domain fairy-tale costumes and have a good time! As well as yards, we'll also have a variety of other forms of entertainment available, as well as prizes for the best costumes. 7pm,

Union Bar

### MasterMines (21/11/19)

Next up is the fantastically named 'MasterMines' quiz! Returning for its second year, this quiz pits teams of students and staff from both

departments against one other for a range of prizes. There'll be common rounds like music and pop culture, alongside more specialised Imperial-centric rounds like earth science, materials, and RSM trivia, so be sure to come along! 6pm, RSM G01

Natural History Museum for a session of ice skating. Tickets include a session on the rink and a hot drink after, so be sure to join us at this festive event! Time TBD, NHM Ice Rink

That's all we've got planned – our DepSocs and sports clubs will also be running events and training sessions throughout the month (why not come to RSM Lacrosse training, Mondays at 12 in Hyde Park – not so subtle plug)!

### RSMA Dinner (22/11/19)

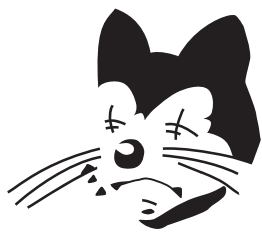
This annual highlight brings together current and former RSMU students. Hosted by the Royal School of Mines Association, this dinner is always a highlight, with good food, good company and good speeches (and maybe even a song or two...). It's open to all students but geared towards third and fourth years, and tickets are available now! 7pm, Rembrandt Hotel

### RSMU Ice Skating

Finishing off another month at the RSMU, we'll be heading down to the



The RSMA Dinner 2013 - a taster of the event to come! // RSMA



# Hangman



We call ourselves the bois but it is actually ironic // [lookatmyfuckingredtrousers.blogspot.com](http://lookatmyfuckingredtrousers.blogspot.com)

## Newly revived Tory society terrifying everyone

### HANGMAN

**Negafelix**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

Disaster struck last week's Sports Night which culminated in the resurrection of the Conservative and Unionist Party Society.

Onlookers reported that a group of IC Polo players had gathered together to see how much port they could drink. After 60 bottles of W & J Graham's 'Ne Oublie' Tawny Port the group collapsed but not before summoning the spirit of the long defunct Tory society. The spirit rose up into the air, laughing maniacally and possessed the body of Chomas Toss and his polo

cronies sending a burst of power through the bar and turning them into the new Tory soc committee.

NegaFelix supernatural correspondent M.Meg commented "With that much port and braying they will have hit critical mass early on. A single 'How much does your father earn again?' was probably enough to set the whole process off"

What had begun for many as a relaxed night with friends became suddenly charged as everyone's trousers turned into red chinos.

Witness to the scenes in the bar Aran Faylward said "It was really annoying. I spent hours at home cutting the perfect knee slits into my jeans

and all of a sudden I was swamped in red cotton".

However, the ex-Polo soc members rallied the whole bar, winning back the support of the crowds by drinking even more port from their shoes and

**"With that much port and braying they will have hit critical mass early on"**

buying bottles of Grey Goose for anyone that asked for it.

The night threatened to

devolve with some suggesting a shopping trip to the King's Road, followed by a table at Embargo's and the singing of songs learnt on Gap years but further debauchery was halted by the arrival of the Left Forum Torybuster squad singing their theme song. They didn't have any Torybusting Proton packs due to austerity cuts over the last nine years so they resorted to throwing coal instead. Unfortunately, like the miners' unions they were quickly crushed under port-sodden suede shoes.

The new group have already released their society's events schedule for the next term prompting significant interest from the student body.

**"Unfortunately, like the miners' unions, they were quickly crushed under port sodden shoes"**

Events include 'Coming to have a look at the Jag', 'Red Leb on Queen's Eyot' and regular Wednesday evening 'Razzing'.

Feb Senton 3rd year IEI, however, was disappointed by his experience at a CV building evening

that the society ran.

"I was expecting at least some advice on getting a job but the moment I walked through the door I was tarred, feathered and mocked for needing to even write a CV. Luckily I still managed to grab a couple of business cards so I am not writing off the whole experience".

The 22s Tie Club have complained to the Union about an infringement on their historic right to be the most obnoxious group at Imperial but were reminded that as they couldn't officially exist they had better suck it up.

# HANGMAN

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## Central Library staff get creative collecting fines

### HANGMAN

Negafelix  
Editor-in-Chief

**T**Overdue books at the library have become an ever increasing menace over the last few weeks. In order to ensure their safe return, the library has been forced to take desperate measures, by hiring a necromancer and their legions of undead slaves.

Central Library's manager Dhris Tanks said, "We decided it was time to rattle some bones. And no I don't mean those weirdos that have sex on third floor. Those little shits have what's coming

to them, I can't even get my hands on a copy of Ghastly Alice's Autobiography- The Art of the Oil Deal". She further commented that students should be thankful for the unique life skills that come with the experience of monstrous beasts knocking on their door. "It will be helpful when student finances come for their loan repayments. Things go bump in the night"

When asked why college security weren't employed instead, an informant, commented "Tanks only wants to teach the students a lesson, not forbid them from entering the library because it's 1 person over

capacity. The advantage of using skeletons is that they always mechanically walk through the right door, like well oiled machines. Most importantly they don't ask questions and can't catch mumps."

When asked how sustainable the book recovery programme was Tanks did not respond. Upon asking the Necromancer, he responded, "I've been collecting souls for nigh on seven centuries, but it has never been so difficult! I've been wandering around the Business School for weeks now and everyone has sold themselves to something known as 'Finance.'" When asked about his success with returning the

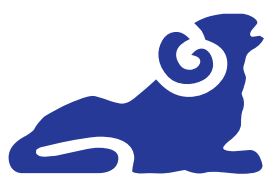


The Librarians are coming for you and they are very disappointed // Flickr

books to the library, he declined to answer, muttering something about a "liber morticus." Each

skeleton merely grated its teeth in response to requests for interview, although some were later

found hiding in Sabbijay Doods cupboard.



**ARIES**

This week you try to spice up your personality.

-  
You snort a whole Bart's Special tube of oregano.



**TAURUS**

This week you get arrested for flashing children.

-  
Turns out your naked body doesn't count as a 'treat'.



**GEMINI**

This week you start Nap Society at Imperial.

-  
You accidentally start a Chinese sleeper cell.



**CANCER**

This week you drink so much port at Sport's Night that you accidentally revive Tory society.  
"Hey Crispin, want to go shopping on the King's Road?"



**LEO**

This week you are excited about series 4 of Rick and Morty. In search of people to talk about it with you go to IQ.  
-  
Never seen so many Jerrys in your life.



**VIRGO**

This week you're an academic dep rep and you decide to skip all your lectures. You've been attending too many to accurately represent the average student experience anyways.



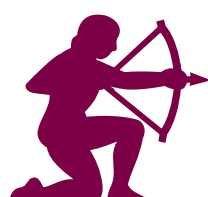
**LIBRA**

This week your girlfriend breaks up with you. You may have misheard her, but you're not sure how "gas lightning" is your fault.



**SCORPIO**

This week you do a Myers-Briggs personality test for a Spring Week application.  
-  
Your result comes out as CUNT.



**SAGITTARIUS**

This week your request to follow Jordan Peterson's finsta is accepted.  
-  
A suprising number of mug cake recipes.



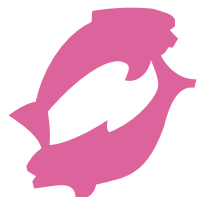
**CAPRICORN**

This week your wi-fi cuts out.  
-  
You resort to sending dick pics by carrier pigeon.



**AQUARIUS**

This week you go trick-or-treating as Winnie the Pooh.  
-  
You were looking for honey but you got a re-education camp in Xinjiang

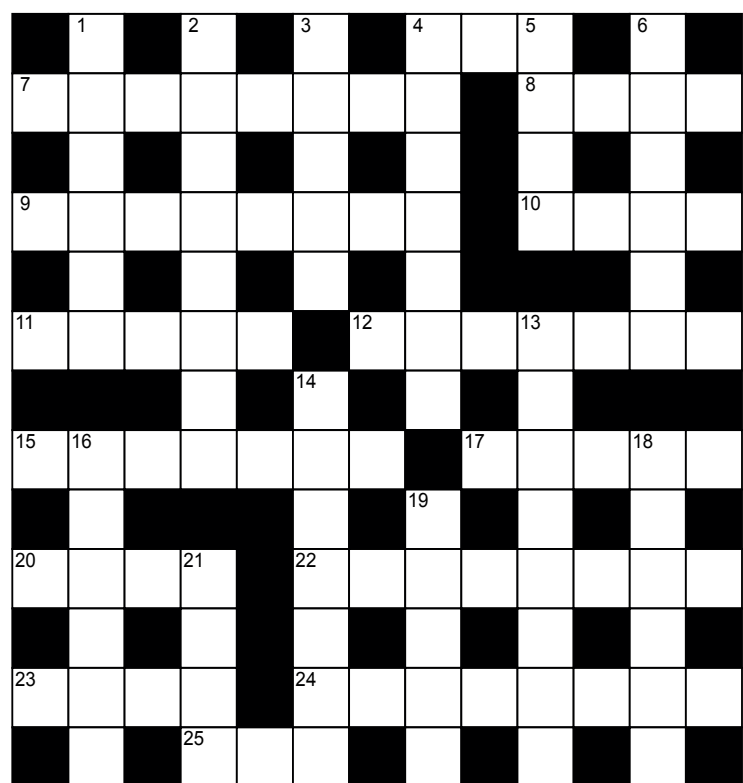


**PISCES**

This week the Union accidentally changes your room booking from EEE to Tripoli.  
-  
Still smells better than the Physics Common room.

# PUZZLES

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**Across**

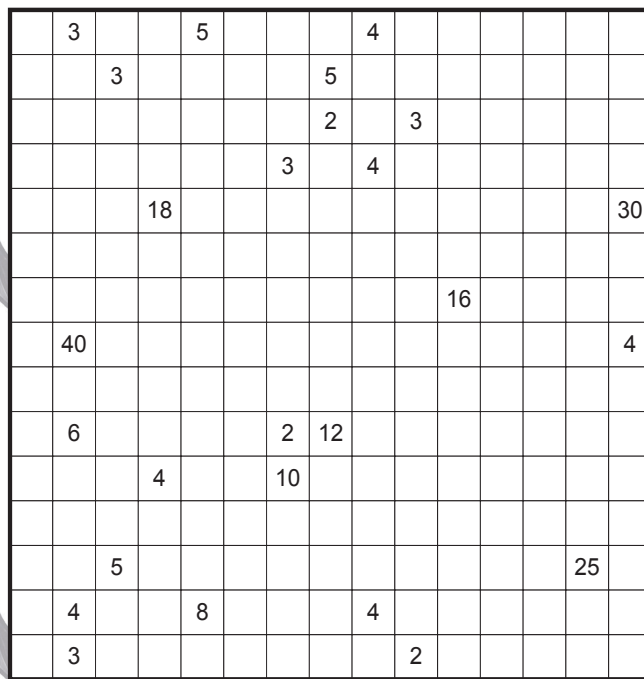
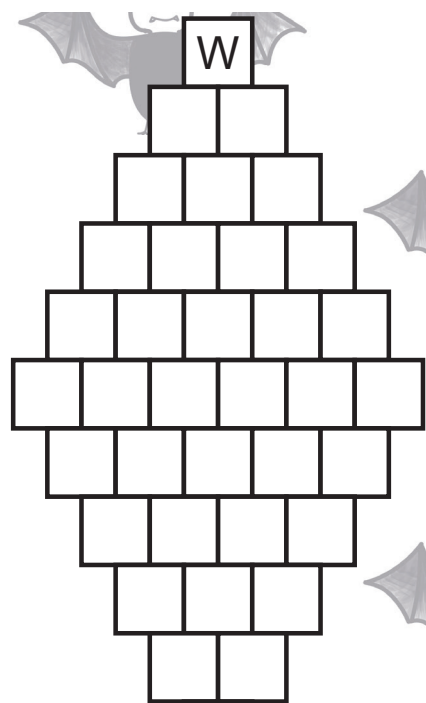
- 4. Scion (3)
- 7. Neurological disorder that will let you cut sick shapes on the dancefloor (8)
- 8. Valuable rocks (4)
- 9. Narrow tube pasta (8)
- 10. The moon landing to some (4)
- 11. Fleetwood Mac song (5)
- 12. Type of lizards (7)
- 15. "Use me but as your \_\_\_\_\_—spurn me, strike me, neglect me, lose me." (7)
- 17. Who's fault the Mumps outbreak might be (5)
- 20. Some of us have until the 31/01 to get one (4)
- 22. Drive faster than (8)
- 23. Midwestern swing state (4)
- 24. Appalling behaviour when a plane lands (8)
- 25. Dashboard metric (3)

**Down**

- 1. Useless pokemon move (6)
- 2. Another name for a German Shepherd (8)
- 3. Sold by a cutler (5)
- 4. Don't want to share this one (7)
- 5. 2014 Russell Crowe movie (4)
- 6. Death Valley state (6)
- 13. Only 3 ever escaped (8)
- 14. The dude with a bunch of annoying witnesses that come knocking on your door (7)
- 16. American rock band, or something to slip to your ex-wife (6)
- 18. Suffice (with) (4,2)
- 19. Some offroad cars (5)
- 21. The original bro (4)

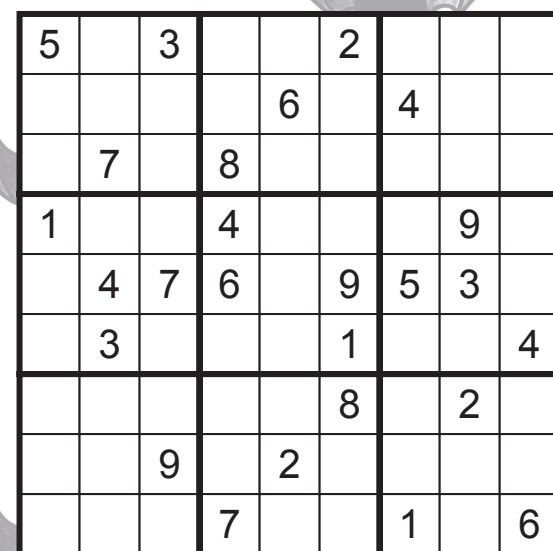
**WORD PYRAMID**

Each row is an anagram of the letters in the row above, adding or removing one letter. Clues: Backwards baby's cry (2) - Murphy's \_\_\_\_ (3) - Humpty Dumpty avoids this now (4) - Permit (5) - Yesterday's evening (6) - \_\_\_\_back girl! (Song title) (5) - Beyonce, singing about a video game (4) - Native language of South-East Asian landlocked country (3) - Look! (2)



**SUDOKU**

If you don't know how to do this by now, I'm disappointed.



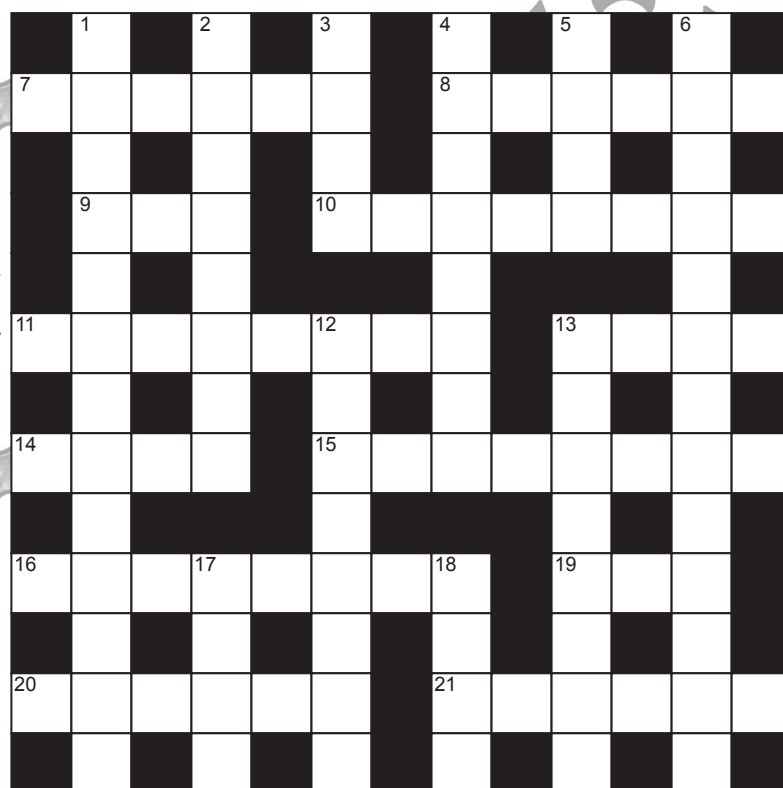
**CROSSWORD (2)**

**Across**

- 7. Started by a referendum on 23th June 2015 (6)
- 8. What Moriarty calls Mycroft Holmes, or snow-human (6)
- 9. Rare plurality shared by Slovene and Arabic (3)
- 10. Itinerary (8)
- 11. (obsolete) What your heart does when your crush looks at you (8)
- 13. Sleepy announcement (4)
- 14. A Dryad's home (4)
- 15. Your local ring or pearl dealer (8)
- 16. To leave all your stuff to people when you die (8)
- 19. A bit (3)
- 20. Tongue or tongue-like, but also English, Chinese, Italian, etc. (6)
- 21. Students training at a military academy (6)

**Down**

- 1. Promotional message from Head Editor of Felix, something anyone can do (5,3,5)
- 2. Vulnerability or determines how bright your picture is (8)
- 3. Suffix to describe inflammation (4)
- 4. What UK said they were going to do from the EU, but like, later (8)
- 5. Beef (4)
- 6. Taking someone out for a romantic night on the 31st (9,4)
- 12. When your favourite wife dies so you make her a UNESCO World Heritage Site (3,5)
- 13. (archaic) Christmas (8)
- 17. Compulsion (4)
- 18. Computing students think they can do this to GCHQ (4)



# PUZZLES

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## FUCWIT

- 1 TNT
- 2 O1G
- 3 GodBlessHK
- 4 Péché
- 5 RIPPCR
- 7 F\*\*\*URhys
- 8 RIP Pat
- 9 LochyMonsters
- 12 MB

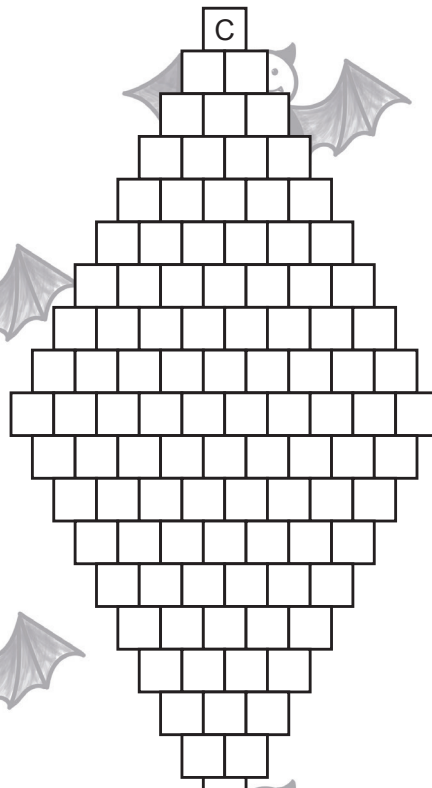
Send your solutions to [fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk) before Wednesday midday to take part in the leaderboard!

## Points available

- Crossword
- Crossword (2)
- Sudoku
- Sikaku
- Word Pyramid 1
- Word Pyramid 2
- Nonogram
- Total**

- 99
- 93
- 81
- 65.5
- 59
- 57
- 56
- 54
- 28

- 6
- 6
- 5
- 2
- 2
- 2
- 2
- 5
- 28**



## WORD PYRAMID (2)

Each row of the word pyramid is an anagram of all the letters in the row above it, adding or removing one letter. Clues: A place of despair (2) - Anna's heart after that plot-twist (3) - Kind, good (4) - Subculture that can't get laid (5) - Customer (6) - A hundredth (7) - 12th December (8) - What Parliament is doing to BJ's withdrawal agreement (9) - Angle measuring instrument (10) - Spins spindles in animal cells (9) - Small but negative. So negative. (8) - Book holder for preacher (7) - As Sun is to Solar System (6) - A Ferb-shaped key (5) - Too high in London (4) - Lord of the Rings' tree boys or otolaryngologist (3) - In for Pierre (2)

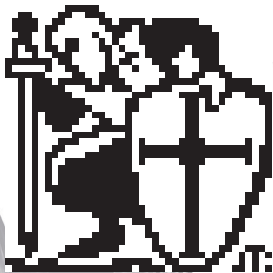
1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	4				
1	1	1	2	4	1	3	1	3	1	2	1	4		
1	1	1	2	2	1	9	1	9	1	4	6	5	4	2
8	10	11	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	11	7

BOO! Did I scare you, Puzzlers? It turns out <7Across in Crossword 2> has been delayed again (So there goes a terrific word pyramid delayed yet again), and I don't actually have a girl to ask out on a <6Down, Crossword (2)>. You'll be needing <nonogram> by the looks of the pound recently! Even with such sad tidings, I bring to you our scary masterpiece: 2 semi-scary (not really) pages of puzzles! Special mention to TNT and O1G, who were able to complete the nonogram, and were awarded an extra 2 points as a result. We've had a (vampire?) bat infestation here at puzzles; say hello to Alucard who got into the printers late last night! (Hopefully Alucard doesn't tamper with the nonogram resolution too!)

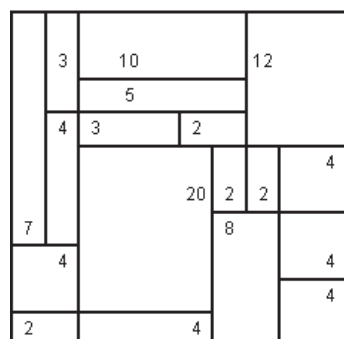
## Last week's solutions

Trivia solutions:

- 1. Letwin Amendment
- 2. 39
- 3. Namibia
- 4. George Gershwin
- 5. Harold Godwinson aka Harold II
- 6. They all contain Jeremy Paxman



7	4	8	1	2	3	6	5	9	S	D	C	D	Y	L						
1	6	9	5	7	8	4	3	2	U	P	R	O	A	R	E	R	O	T	I	C
5	3	2	9	6	4	1	8	7	S	C	A	M	B	U	O	Y	A	N	C	Y
3	7	1	4	9	5	2	6	8	W	A	N	D	E	R	E	R	F	A	T	E
4	8	5	2	3	6	9	7	1	C	A	E	A	I	E						
9	2	6	8	1	7	3	4	5	F	U	R	Y	V	E	T	E	R	A	N	S
6	1	4	7	5	2	8	9	3	L	O		E	S							
8	9	7	3	4	1	5	2	6	P	A	R	A	L	L	E	L	B	I	T	E
2	5	3	6	8	9	7	1	4	R	N	V	U	A	E						
									A	L	C	O	V	E	K	E	L	V	I	N
									Y	N	R	E	L	N						



W	V	X	P	H
F	A	L	E	B
J	R	G	C	D
Y	U	N	K	O
Q	S	I	T	M

- 5 1 2
- 1 3 3 3
- 1 10
- 2 2 1 2
- 1 2 1 2
- 3 2 1 2
- 9
- 2 7
- 1 3 3
- 2 1 1 3
- 2 7 2
- 3 1 1 1 1 2
- 3 1 1 1 3
- 3 7 2
- 3 1 1 1 2
- 3 1 1 1 1 2
- 3 7 3
- 3 1 1 3
- 5 5
- 13

## SPORTS

sport.felix@imperial.ac.uk



Bike the UK for MS Team // Laura Bosomworth

## Bike the UK for MS visit Imperial

Learn more about this amazing charity and make the most of their visit on campus on the 7th November at 6:30pm in CAGB 640.

## SPORTS

### Laura Bosomworth

*Bike the UK for MS Ambassador*

Next summer, Bike the UK for MS cyclists will be hitting the road once again as they pedal to raise funds and awareness for Multiple Sclerosis.

The charity, founded by University of Bath student James Whateley, started in 2014 following his experience of cycling across America as a 19 year old and meeting Bike the US for MS on route. Having met some incredible people living with MS, hearing their stories and seeing their outlook on life, he wanted others to experience the same – travelling the country, pushing yourself out of your comfort zone,

all whilst supporting those who need it most.

Five years on, Bike the UK for MS now offers a range of supported trips every summer including the classic John O'Groats to Land's End and Sea to Sea routes. With no sign up fee and a manageable fundraising target, students from all across the country are signing up to explore the country on

**Travelling the country, pushing yourself out of your comfort zone, all whilst supporting those who need it most.**

two wheels.

The charity works closely with the wider MS Society. On route, riders stop off with local MS groups allowing them to meet the communities their fundraising directly supports. Alongside the local support, Bike the UK for MS helps fund national research projects with the MS Society to one day Stop MS.

Hazel May, who was taken part in a ride with Bike the UK for MS, says:

“The rides and experiences that I have had are probably the most fun I have had on a bike. The scenery through Scotland was exquisite, as was witnessing an actual mermaid in a loch (a weird lady with a mermaid tail on flailing around in the shallows), these are things I will never forget. As we headed south, even better

memories and friendships were made. In Bath, as with many of our stops on this trip, we met with MS societies and met the people who we were fundraising for. These meetings made the trip even more special and the miles mean so much more. The way the trips are organised means that everyday all you have to

do is get up, eat and ride at your own pace. Therefore, this means you can blitz it from A to B or meander and find a spoons should you feel like it. The way the team works enables this level of flexibility and thus these trips are for everyone and I encourage everyone who has a bike to go and do any of the rides on offer.”

Feeling inspired? Go along to their information evening on 7th November 6:30pm in The City and Guilds Building - Lecture Theatre 640 (South Kensington campus) to find out more about the rides Bike the UK for MS has to offer.



John O'Groats // Laura Bosomworth