



# Felix

The Student Newspaper of Imperial College London



# EDITORIAL

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## Do the Best Candidates Actually Run?

The Leadership Elections 2020 (LE20) at the Union have kicked off now, with nominations opening between now and the end of the month. A week of feverish campaigning will follow, before voting opens between the 9th and 12th of March. Events like Meet the Candidates – a live-streamed debate between contenders for major roles – will help students make those tough choices where manifestos fail to convince.

The Imperial elections have, by and large, been successful events every year. While criticism can be levied – see this week’s Comment section – there is no denying that the Union does excel at this task at this time every single year.

Many roles are hotly contested, and the elections drama gives the entire university community a welcome distraction from the looming dread of exams just around the corner.

So, there’s plenty of support and plenty of coverage for the candidates that do run. You can make your own choice for who the best of those is. What you can’t do, of course, is vote for someone that didn’t run.

The question that naturally arises for me is: well, how do I know the best candidate actually ran? When do I vote for good ol’ Ronald? Or, as he’s more commonly known, RON – or to Reopen Nominations.

I’m not convinced that a lot of the best candidates actually end up running.



You can, of course, argue that the best candidates are the ones who want to be there, and anybody else would inherently be a waste of time. But I think, taking my premise as true, that we should be asking ourselves why the best candidates don’t want to be there.

The optimal people to bring into each role would be experienced Union volunteers. They are the people who have the most insight, the most experience, the most inside knowledge, the most connections and relationships within the Union and College community. They’re the ones who actually know how things work, and can hit the ground sprinting when they start their roles.

A lot of those senior volunteers do run. I expect this year’s nominations to include a range of people with a boatload of experience. It’s the wayward children, so to speak, that we need to focus on – the boatloads of experience

that leave, vanish, flushed down the drain and lost to the community forever. Those that do not run for Sab roles at the end of their degrees, or who don’t run for Faculty Rep after succeeding as Dep Rep, and so on, despite being extremely highly qualified.

I do think a lot of these people don’t run for good reasons. Some have no interest in postponing their careers, for example. We are a highly career-focused university, so this is understandable. More power to them.

So what worries me, really, is the selection of people who don’t run because they’re sick to the back teeth of... well, everything. There are a boatload of them, too. I’ve spoken to a bunch of them this year, investigating various stories, and it’s a growing litany. They are the people who’ve been in the Union system since their very first term, who’ve fought through issues like staff vacancies,

delayed contracts, impossible room bookings, bureaucracy, whatever it might be.

What any of them end up feeling is not invigorated and motivated. They end up tired, and turning their back on the institution that should be doing everything it can to retain them. They’ve often been used up before they got to a place where they could instigate real, drastic changes.

This isn’t universal – my intention is really not to cast shade on those running this year, or in previous years. Plenty of them were the best candidates. It’s just that there are undoubtedly good people we lose every year to fatigue and frustration, rather than for any acceptable reason.

I think this should be the Union’s greatest focus – it grows stronger by building a strong, long-lasting community of volunteers who want to stick around, become Sabs, join as staff members, and so on. To do so should not be an ordeal, but rather a genuinely coveted and competitive opportunity.

This is more important than the election facts and figures. Having someone in a role is superseded by having the right person in the role. While they are impressive, the Union needs to square this great strength with one of its greatest weaknesses – retention, of staff and especially of dedicated and knowledgeable students. Once they’ve achieved that, their upwards momentum will rocket.



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# NEWS

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## Imperial Staff to Strike in February and March

*Imperial's academic staff union has voted to join the national pension strikes organised by the UCU, a continuation of the strike action from two years ago*

### NEWS

**Henry Alman**  
Editor-in-Chief

**A**cademic staff at the College have voted to go on strike in response to the ongoing national pension negotiations, as well as a local pay dispute with the College itself.

There are fourteen planned strike days across the span of four weeks, from Thursday 20th February to Friday 13th March. The final week, from 9th to 13th March, is a full strike week. Participating staff will not attend work – meaning their research, teaching, and administrative work will not be fulfilled.

The action follows on from the University and College Union (UCU) strikes conducted towards the end of last year – which the Imperial UCU could not participate in due to an under-50% turnout in earlier strike ballots – and the strikes two years ago, which resulted in cancelled contact time for Imperial students, as well as causing certain exams to be rewritten to accommodate for content that had not been taught.

The national pensions dispute centres around the University Superannuation Scheme (USS) – the pension scheme on which most university staff are enrolled – increasing its required contributions for both employees and employers. This is in reaction to an internal USS assessment of the value of its fund, which it decided was in deficit. However, other parties have disputed this valuation and its

methodology – such as the Joint Expert Panel.

The strikes in 2018 resulted in the establishment of a Joint Expert Panel (JEP) comprised of UCU and university employers' representatives – which was the primary reason for ending the last round of action. The UCU feels that the JEP findings have been overruled by the USS executive, with two pension contribution increases already imposed and another planned in the next 18 months, resulting in staff having to pay an additional 38% in contributions. This has resulted in a sense of "betrayal" amongst university staff according to the Imperial UCU.

The Imperial UCU thus voted to join national

**"A 72.45% majority voted for taking strike action"**

strike action over pensions, conducting a postal ballot between the 10th of December and 28th of January with a turnout of 54.1%. A 72.45% majority voted for taking strike action. 86.34% voted for 'action short of a strike', such as working-to-contract only and refusing to undertake any extra hours or duties – such as rescheduling lectures which were cancelled due to strike action.

The local pay dispute is between the Imperial UCU and the College specifically, as the College seceded from national negotiations for pay fifteen years ago. The ballot for the pay dispute, carried



UCU strike action in Glasgow during the 2018 action // Wikimedia

out at the same time as the pension ballot, had a turnout of 56.4%, with 67.9% voting for strike action and 84.2% for 'action short of a strike'. The Imperial UCU is therefore rolling this issue together with their

**"The strike news broke shortly after the reveal that Imperial's President has the highest salary of any university head"**

strike over pensions. The dispute centres around the imposition of what the UCU considers a worse pay rise for their members than the final pay offer

from the College management rejected by the Joint Trade Unions at the College (which represent all staff at Imperial).

The news of the strikes over both pay and pensions broke shortly after the Independent revealed that Alice Gast, Imperial College's President, has the highest salary of any university head in the UK, at £554,000 – a full £63,000 above the second-highest at LSE.

Part of this is because she has opted out of the same pension which is currently under national fire, and receives both her own employee contribution and the College's employer contribution as part of her salary, according to the College's 2018-19 Annual Report. Her withdrawal from the pension scheme essentially undermines it and exacerbates the USS' claimed fund deficit – if high earners do not contribute their equivalently large pension input, then it essentially increases the perceived

deficit.

Michael McGarvey, the head of the Imperial staff union (Imperial UCU), said:

"We have a grim determination to resolve these disputes properly. We don't take this action lightly – the impact on students is the greatest concern we had when voting. Students and their education are often used as hostages in these situations, with blame apportioned to striking staff. However, not taking action about pay and pensions affects students in the long-run; if people are disillusioned with working at universities, we can't recruit and keep world-class staff.

"We've still had no direct contact over the pay dispute from the College management, despite our offer to meet with them over a week ago."

The College, meanwhile, has sent out all-staff and all-student emails and published FAQs. In the former, they expressed

"disappointment" that the national UCU had decided to strike, and regarding the local pay dispute asserted that they had local pay rates "amongst the best in the UK sector." In the FAQs, they clarified that – just as two years ago – no reimbursement for tuition fees would be offered, regardless of any potential rescheduling or missed content. Any staff salaries lost due to striking will, however, be held in a central fund to be redistributed and fed back into student education.

*These FAQs are accessible at <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/human-resources/industrial-action/>*

*Editor's Note: for more detail of the pay dispute at Imperial, see 'Strike Action: Pensions and Pay' from 29th November 2019. Felix also covered the strikes two years ago, which can be found on the Felix website.*

## NEWS

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# College to Sell Silwood's Buildings; Reps Say they "Weren't Told"

*The College has sold part of Silwood campus, with plans to sell significantly more, while student representatives maintain that they weren't consulted and were unaware of the sale*

## NEWS

Henry Alman

Editor-in-Chief

The College has sold buildings at Silwood campus, namely the Business Centre and Science Park Units A-F. This includes one of the only large social spaces at Silwood, within Unit A, as well as the Silwood gym. It additionally plans to sell much of the rest of the campus in future.

These buildings will be leased back to the College for up to five more years. Included in the contract is a rolling break clause, allowing either the College or the new owners to break the agreement with a year's written notice at any time after three years in. This means that the direct effect on day-to-day life will be minimised for these buildings specifically, in the short-term. However, certain right-of-way paths may end up being closed off by the new property owners. The College has also promised to re-provision social spaces and to provide alternative support for large-scale events such as the famous Silfest, but has provided no substantive plans for how to do so.

Student representatives at the Silwood Union, commenting on the sale, say they were not consulted, and were unaware of the sale until coming across a page on the College website. Although the College sent out emails about both the opening of the sale

window in September and an 'open meeting' on 5th November for discussion, due to an "administrative error" they were only sent to a subsection of Silwood students, leaving many Master's students in-the-dark, with the first communication they received being on 27th January. Although numbers are unclear, the list of missed students included the Silwood Chair, the head student representative for the campus, and every other Silwood Master's student Felix spoke to.

The sale was completed in December. The purchasers are a real estate investment company, Newcore Capital, who will have free reign to develop the land as they see fit – with the only input from students or staff being via the planning permission process.

Further sales are likely to follow, with significant portions of the campus not "core to the academic mission" currently on the market. These areas include Silwood Lodge, which provides accommodation for PhD students, and the Japanese gardens, which reps say hold deep sentimental value to Silwood students and staff.

Parallels have been drawn to the sale of St. Mary's, a medical campus in Paddington, last year. The St. Mary's building held high historic and sentimental value for medical students and alumni, none of whom were consulted prior to the sale decision announced in July last year.

The sale decision is particularly controversial

given that Silwood accommodation is reportedly increasing in price next year – according to several Silwood staff and student reps, although no official figures have been posted yet. Student representatives have questioned why the service and space available on them will intentionally be cut. The College, however, has said that they are "committed to re-provisioning facilities, including social and recreational spaces, and aim to improve them during this process while ensuring as little disruption as possible", meaning their perspective is that service will not be impacted.

The areas for sale at Silwood are under the control of the College Endowment, a body which manages property portfolios for the College with a "purely investment focus", after being deemed not "core to the academic mission" in 2012. The Endowment is controlled by Alice Gast, the College's President; Muir Sanderson, the College's CFO; David Begg, an Emeritus Professor of Economics; and various partners which provide external oversight.

The lack of consultation with current student representatives has been strongly criticised, with the Silwood Chair, Conor Nicoll, offering a statement:

"Even if imperial wishes to brush off the degradation of our campus as just another business transaction, what's happening to Silwood is an insult. It's an insult to our

marginalised community which is too often forgotten. Our marginalised community which only gets attention with the sale of our property. But Silwood will stand strong and we will support our community despite adversity. For those who wish to visit Silwood or study here, I assure you, we will welcome you with open arms, even if there's less places to do so."

The situation highlights once again a previously-raised problem between students and the College: running any consultations years in advance, with little subsequent effort made to reach out to students currently at the College, means current students are left frustrated and in-the-dark. This is amplified at Silwood, where the majority of students are

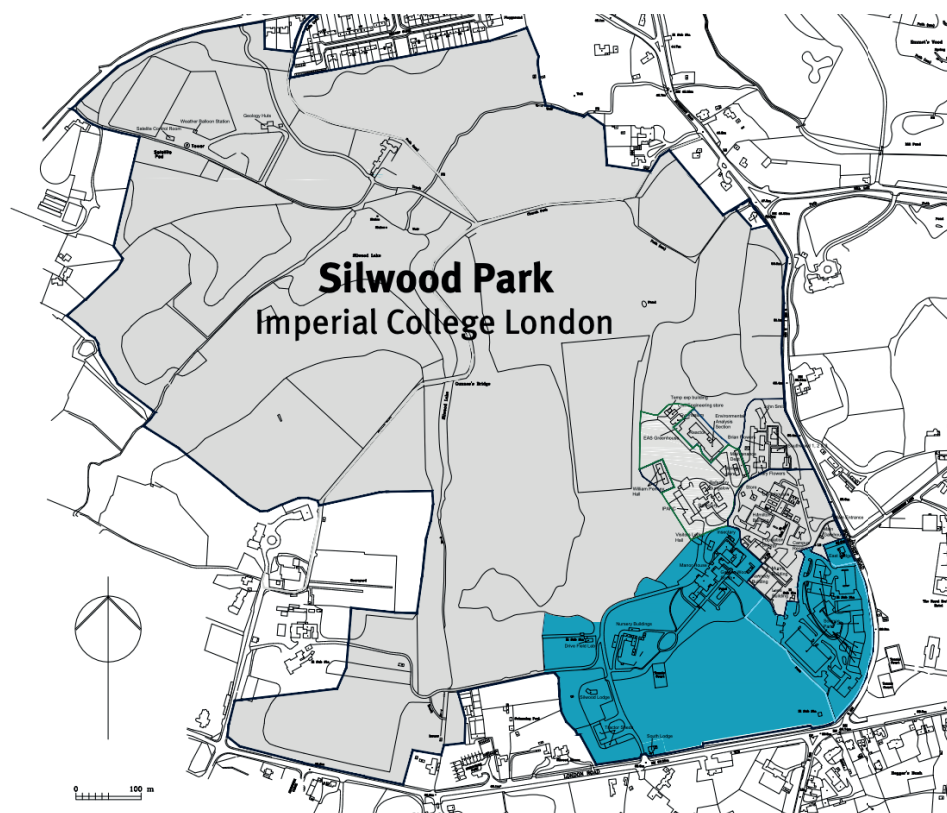
postgraduates only here for a year total. The Union President said: "Students affected by major changes at the College deserve to be involved from the beginning of the decision making process: as it stands, proactively engaging students and staff in these matters isn't a high enough priority."

A College spokesperson said:

"The community will recognise that areas such as the vacant Manor House are not core to the academic mission of the College. However some other facilities may be affected and we fully recognise the importance of facilities for students and staff at what is an important campus for the College's reputation in ecological and conservation research and education.

"We will consult with Silwood staff and students once we know more precisely what facilities need to be re-provisioned – this may vary depending on which plots are sold and the timetable of the sale.

"We are committed to ensuring that outreach and community activities such as Bugs Day and Silfest are continued as we know how important they are to staff, students, and the local community. We have identified appropriate nearby sites on campus for constructing a new pond and for putting up temporary structures (e.g. marquees etc) for events. Discussions about site requirements will occur as usual with local organising committees over the coming weeks as they start to prepare for summer events."



Blue areas indicate parts of campus for sale; list of buildings available online // IC

## COMMENT

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# Diversity and Inclusivity in the Physics Department

*Joseff Davies, a physics student, thinks that a lot more could be done in the physics department to better include marginalised groups*

## COMMENT

**Joseff Davies***Comment Writer*

Inclusivity and diversity are the buzzwords of the moment. Everywhere you look, executives are aching to talk about how they're trying their very utmost to increase the diversity of their workforce and maximise inclusivity. Glibness aside, if you value equality of opportunity, both of these things are highly important. Different groups have different disadvantages, often as a result of historical or institutional factors that negatively impact the individuals that make up these groups. The concept of intersectionality, that individuals can be a part of different groups that are advantaged and disadvantaged in different ways neatly encompasses that concept. If Imperial is to be meritocratic, it really needs to handle the different challenges that each individual experiences as part of the different communities studying here. As a gay white man with white heteronormative middle-class parents studying physics, I am definitely not equipped to discuss the experiences of all minority groups. Nevertheless, I still feel the need to discuss the diversity and inclusivity within an institution that, perhaps fittingly, names itself "Imperial" College London.

Last week I was at an Imperial LGBT+ careers fair. Stephen Curry the Assistant Provost for



Diversity flags. The Physics Department wouldn't get it // Wikimedia

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (a white man) praised the University for climbing around 100 places in the 2020

**"If Imperial is to be meritocratic, it needs to handle the different needs of different communities effectively"**

Stonewall Index. In 2019, Imperial came 266 out of 447 organisations that

took part in the Index. Although climbing 100 places is an impressive achievement, there is clearly still much that needs to be done, particularly in the Physics department. In the Department, very few undergraduates are female. There are only a handful of black undergraduates, in a cohort of almost a thousand. Of those, even fewer are black and female, and this is not to mention other intersections.

One could argue that it is not necessarily the fault of a University like Imperial College London that a cohort of students and staff is not diverse, maybe more the fault of society as a whole.

Although not diverse, perhaps Imperial is inclusive? Unfortunately, for a whole range of minority groups the Physics department is failing.

The Physics LGBT+ Network ran a survey last month to gauge the inclusivity of the toilet/shower facilities in Blackett Laboratory. There were 216 responses from Physics staff and students. From those, 43% would benefit from gender neutral toilet facilities. Moreover, of the respondents 24% believe that the current facilities are not inclusive. I am of the opinion that 24% is a somewhat worrying figure. Currently there are only male, female, and two accessible toilets,

with both accessible toilets on the 9th floor. Do the other 76% of respondents believe there to be only two genders? Or do they believe it is acceptable for someone to have to travel many floors each time they want to use a toilet during the day? Maybe we shouldn't ask Simone's opinion on that one.

In the same survey, 28% of respondents believed that they would benefit from baby changing facilities in the Department. Currently there are no baby changing facilities available. Balancing childcare with academia is already a seemingly impossible task, so why make it harder?

Imperial also struggles to manage the needs of the trans community. Although Imperial has a trans staff policy they lack a trans student policy, making it incredibly challenging for staff and the college to deal with a student that is transitioning. Naturally, this will have a detrimental effect on the student, making a difficult time even more difficult.

In a survey run by Felix in March 2018, 40% of 300 respondents had experienced misogyny at Imperial, and over 70% had experienced peers making derogatory comments about women.

A workshop hosted by the Director of Development for UN Women UK last term triggered the conversation around misogyny amongst students in the Physics Department. There was talk of an undergraduate woman being told by

an academic that as a woman she would not be recognised unless she had a PhD. There was talk of a laboratory technician talking over a female student to another male student, despite her asking for help first. Things don't seem to have changed drastically since March 2018.

If you have recently walked through the Physics Department you may have noticed the rainbow "ally" stickers on some office doors. The idea behind the scheme is that volunteering staff members received bespoke LGBT+ ally training and are then given the stickers. A great idea, it would seem. Until you find out that only 3 of the 9 allies actually attended the training session. Other staff, have managed to simply acquire the stickers. A great idea for pinkwashing. One might begin to think maybe the Physics Department aren't doing all they could to be completely inclusive.

I'll leave you with this. Just before entering the main lecture theatre in the Physics Department, you will be greeted by a display featuring pictures of past Heads of Department, the vast majority of which are white men. When attending lectures, you will be greeted by amazing lecturers, the vast majority of which are white men. When attending tutorials, you will be helped by great tutors, the vast majority of which are white men. You probably get the idea. Although we can't change the past, we can definitely shape the future. That is up to us.

## COMMENT

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# Acting now? Five demands for the college to invest in the planet and people

*College to announce its decision on the Socially Responsible Investment Policy Working Group today. Here is what the college should do*

## COMMENT

Artur Donalson

Comment Writer

Today the Socially Responsible Investment Policy Working Group, or the SRI group for short, is due to announce their decision on months of proposals and meetings to discuss the college's contentious investments. At the time of writing, this result is unknown, but what is sure is that the SRI group has had its work cut out. During years of inaction while other universities have surged ahead. It has also received plenty of input with proposals from groups including Divest Imperial, the Union, and the Imperial College branch of Extinction Rebellion (XRIC).



The Climate Strike in November 2019 raised the flag on the college's dubious investments // Extinction Rebellion

## Five Demands for Imperial

1. Cease investing funds into non-renewable energy projects and into investment schemes reliant on these sectors. New investments should be diverted to environmentally and socially positive projects as soon as possible.
2. Strengthen and deepen democratic ways for all members of the college to be engaged with decisions on the use of college funds through regular reviews of the college funds.
3. Use environmental impact criteria, such as the proportion of graduates going into green jobs in annual reporting.
4. Create an internal fund to offset greenhouse emissions from travel for the activities of members of the college
5. Act on the social dimensions of the climate crisis - establish partnerships and scholarships for students from countries most vulnerable to the climate and ecological crises.

The XRIC proposal, published as an open letter on Twitter and Facebook, lists five key demands from the college (see box to the left "Five Demands for Imperial").

The rise in engagement on environmental issues amongst the staff and student community over the past couple of years contrasts the inaction of Imperial College administration on environmental action. It lags at 130<sup>th</sup> place, just 14 places from the bottom of the *People and Planet* league table, which ranks UK universities according to their investments and policies on ethics and the environment. This is after considering recent improvements such as

reduction in single-use plastic.

Non-violent direct action has served as the only platform to raise serious concerns over Imperial College's investments when negotiation has been met for years with inaction. And sadly being vocal seems to be the only way of making headway. The college announced the creation of the SRI last year on November 28<sup>th</sup>, after XRIC, Divest Imperial, and the UCU November announced a Climate Strike, which was held on 29<sup>th</sup> November. The five demands point to the areas that have been in the blind spot of the college. These demands

open up room for plenty of discussion, so for want of space this article will focus on three of them.

### Cease investing funds into non-renewable energy

First and foremost, divestment. At the November Climate Strike, college members publicly voiced their exasperation at the college's former policy of "stonewalling" staff and students on concerns over its investment portfolio. A freedom of information request in the past month shows that despite pressure from student-run campaign Divest Imperial since 2014, the college continues to invest directly into

unscrupulous companies such as Equinor, the oil company, and arms manufacturer Lockheed Martin. It also has significant investments in other companies with highly environmentally and socially damaging activities through other financial products it uses.

### Offset greenhouse emissions from travel

Setting up a fund for carbon offsetting, or investing to counter greenhouse gas emissions due from travel, would be effective in tackling one of the college's largest environmental impacts. Offsetting is relatively

**"Despite pressure from Divest Imperial since 2014, the college continues to invest in unscrupulous companies"**

low-cost, currently at around £25 per tonne CO<sub>2</sub>. For comparison, flying from London to Madrid and back adds half a tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> to your carbon footprint. Less than 10% of what is spent on travel currently would be able to entirely offset its carbon emissions from travel, a drop in the ocean when compared with the funds accessible to the college. The accounting systems required for this are already in place, as

# COMMENT

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has been demonstrated by the fact that through Greening Imperial's Aviation Report we now know the carbon footprint associated with travel by staff and PhD students at Imperial in 2018-19, and that around 15% of the total users in the Egenicia dataset (the travel management system used by the college) are responsible for 50% of total emissions recorded. There is even an option on the procurement system called "There Must Be an Alternative" (THEMBA) for staff to offset by investing in a charity supporting macadamia nut farmers in Malawi, providing food security and carbon sequestration in a country with serious deforestation and food insecurity linked to climate change.

Of course offsetting is not the only means of tackling the solution, it takes decades for trees to absorb the carbon equivalent to

the purchased amount when buying an offset. Shifting to lower carbon transport, for instance, when travelling within the UK or to Europe has been made needlessly complicated by the college travel provider, and can be an affordable option, especially because they do not get tax breaks for fuel. Staff and students suffer from lack of finances or, more usually, time, to purchase video-conferencing equipment or use lower carbon means of transport. Furthermore many UK research councils are currently failing to approve carbon offsets as expenses from research grants. This is a significant area for the college as staff and students are regularly required to travel for field work, teaching, and conferences. As well as avoiding high-carbon travel, an internal budget and a policy of offsetting all emissions by default would be an effective, low-cost, and

## "Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge already offsets all emissions resulting from travel"

much needed means for reducing Imperial College's carbon footprint. It would be following the lead of other colleges such as Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, which already offsets all greenhouse gas emissions resulting from travel associated with its activities.

### Act on the social dimensions of the climate crisis

Yes it is a climate crisis, not a change, and it is affecting people right now, even if in London the worst we see are images of flooded homes or burning

forests. It is heartening that, although to an extent removed to the SRI, progress is being made towards acting on the social dimensions of climate change. The college participates in scholarship programmes for students from lower- and middle-income countries, for instance through the Beacon Scholarship. That said, of the 32 current Beacon scholarships at both high-school and university level, only one is to ICL, compared to Cambridge and Bristol, which each have three times as many. In the past week, on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February, the college announced a new partnership to train future African science leaders and brought together representatives from a number of African nations. Actions like these are positive, and a lot of hard work goes into establishing partnerships. It is the right thing to do for universities like ICL to

participate in partnerships with universities in the Global South as the social capital gives strength in tackling challenges for low- and middle-income countries that are emerging from the climate and ecological crises. It is also our duty. Imperial College was founded during the time of the British empire, and the surrounding area was built up with the support of the ruler of an empire. Imperialism left its mark in many nations in the Global South far more deeply than it did on the identity of this college. History aside, some of the iron in our buildings and the elements in the electronics is extracted in these countries, where it is available and cheapest, and often at a cost to the health of the workers and to the detriment of the local environment. And in bitter irony, metal extraction is one of the areas ICL has investments into. In 2016 for instance,

Imperial College held just under £2 million in "ETFS Metal Securities Australia Ltd" which puts the money into precious metals trading and exploitation through mining with its associated by-products.

The decision of the SRI working group is to be announced on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February, the day this article goes to print. It has been long anticipated. Will the college continue pouring money into environmentally and socially damaging companies, or will it listen to the demands of its staff and students? I am hopeful that the college will make use of the momentum and be part of the change for the sake of the planet. Time is running out.

The open letter from Extinction Rebellion sent to the College is available on Twitter @XR\_Imperial and Facebook "Extinction Rebellion Imperial College"



## Felix Should be Published in Chinese

*I wrote this at 3 o'clock in the morning. Time for shitpost*

### COMMENT

#### Charles Titmuss

Comment Editor

Felix has a rather long history. Founded in the 1950s as the student newspaper, it has undergone multiple mutations, from being an 8-page brochure published once a month to its current incarnation where we push a 32-48-page issue out the door once a week. This will continue

to happen, whether you like it or not. Felix has a role at the heart of the university, acting as a curated forum for debate, a place to write about your club, and probably most importantly, as a place to test your wit against the fiendish puzzles editors. The devil is in the detail, as they say, and is sometimes the solution to 6 across.

However, Felix also has a more serious role. Its job is to report on the goings-on across campus and ensure that the student body have some measure of awareness about issues concerning them. This is

important for a variety of reasons. Knowledge of issues allows students to make informed choices and make up their minds about whether they agree or disagree with a given situation. This grants them agency, an undervalued commodity in the modern capitalist hellscape. Knowledge is power, so they say. This is all very well, but power without execution is pointless. Someone fetch my Phrygian cap.

In order to turn student awareness into action, it is necessary to have a tool through which action can be taken. This ideally

would be an effective and decisive union. We have ICU. Plagued by high staff turnover, and an apparent reality disconnect between the junior levels and upper management, ICU manages to cock up a great many things, from sexual assault to stall allocation at Freshers Fair. The only reason they haven't yet been criminally incompetent is because they have yet to do anything at all. Unfortunately, they have, for a great many years, been allowed to get away with it. I would attribute this to an attitude of apathy on the

part of the student body. Students, unless they are very involved with society management or other volunteering roles, are unlikely to encounter the short, withered arm of the Union. Students simply don't care about the Union.

Obviously, the root cause of this apathy is ICU. People simply aren't going to use a marzipan hammer to drive in a nail because it would be pointless and a waste of sugary almond goodness. However, Felix must also share a portion of the blame. Imperial is the 6<sup>th</sup> most international university

in the world. Felix and, by extension, the Union, should reflect this. People don't use things when there is a barrier to entry to its use. If Felix wants to be read and remain relevant to the entire Imperial Community there should be at least a few issues published in some of the many scripts and languages that make Imperial such a wonderful place to be. At least then, people would know they were using a newspaper to wipe their arse with.

## COMMENT

comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk



## We Get It, You Like Votes

*Joseph O'Connell-Danes, incumbent A&E chair, wishes that the Union wouldn't drop everything as soon as elections start*

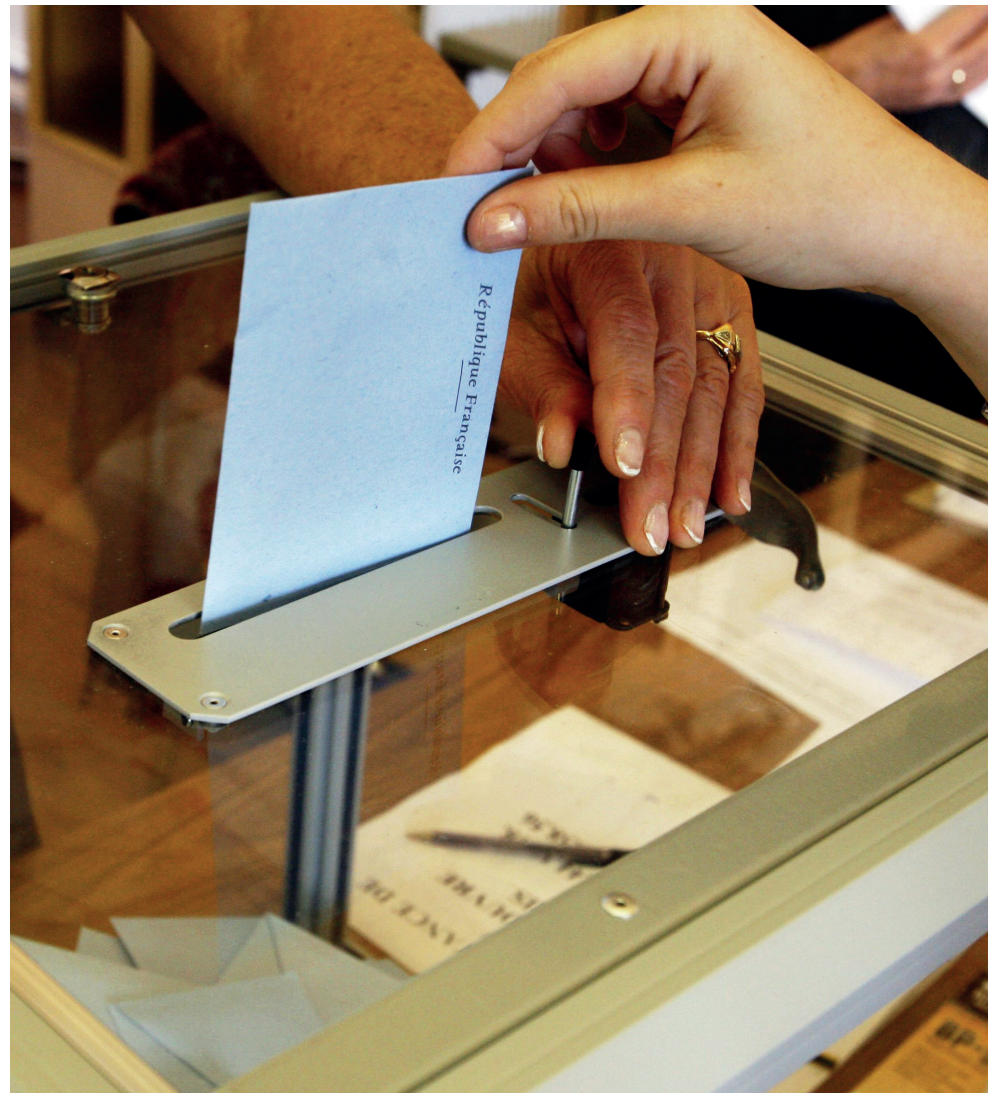
## COMMENT

### Joseph O'Connell-Danes

Comment Writer

It's no secret that the Union has had a rough couple of years. In the last twelve months, Felix has, to mention just a few, reported on: The Union's worsening financial position, dwindling sales at the bars, the closure of the kitchens due to health and safety concerns, the resignation of the managing director, the resignation of a staggering percentage of staff, and repeated failures to support CSPs and CUs properly. My personal opinion is that the organisation is rudderless, without a clear direction, and failing in its key function – acting as a Union for its members. Now, before I go any further, I would like to point out that I think we hit rock bottom a while ago and that the future of the Union, with proper leadership, looks brighter.

When people comment on the failings of the Union they will generally be met with the same retort. This will normally go something along the lines of gushing about how good the Union is when it comes to elections. Specifically, the spring Leadership Elections. If you've somehow managed to miss this self-congratulatory parade, it happens in March. Every March. In my four years at the



Elections really make the Union drop the ball // Wikimedia

university, the record hasn't been changed and talking to former students, it's been going on for a long time.

The praise goes somewhere along the lines of: "unprecedented turnout", "more roles filled", "more roles". It's true, the Union does regularly achieve one of the highest turnouts for university elections, and people standing for the majority of its nearly 800 roles. Now, there are arguments to be made about how these statistics have very little to do with the actions of the Union and more to

do with things like the size of the university, the constituent union structures, the fact that ICU includes CSP elections in its turnout figure (not a practice that I could find at any other Universities) etc. Whether any of these things are true, is not something that I care about or something that matters. My view on the matter is quite simple. The Union is good at elections. Good. Move on.

You see, in my experience as a 'senior volunteer' for the Union and in the experience of

many others that I have spoken to, this time of year is increasingly frustrating. Around about now, more and more aspects of the Union cease to function as entire teams of staff's attention is turned towards elections. Meetings upon meetings are held about increasing turnout and improving elections. Access to Union communication channels is all but prohibited because they are reserved for elections. Significant sums of money are spent on advertising and running the elections. For a decent

few months of the year, the Union stops really functioning properly.

In 2016 the National Union of Students (NUS) carried out some analysis on student union elections and election turnout. One of the key findings of the analysis was that the voter turnout was directly correlated to the number of positions and the number of candidates standing for those positions. So really, if the Union's sole aim is going to be patting themselves on the back for voter turnout, they should just concentrate on getting more people to stand for election. Ah hah they might say, increasing the number of candidates requires the resources that the Union throws at elections. However, in my experience and in talking to others, not knowing about roles is not the reason for not standing. It's that, increasingly, being a volunteer for the Union is a thankless task where you are likely to spend a considerable proportion of your year banging your head against a wall trying to solve issues that would be easy to solve if you had... adequate staff support.

The situation we find ourselves in seems to be a box ticking exercise, an easy way for the Union to claim that they are successful in reaching out and communicating with students. The reality we find ourselves in could not be further from this. Students are increas-

ingly disengaged with a Union whose goals they aren't aware of and whose actions go unnoticed. As the University grows, the voter turnout will likely increase and as the Union continues to flounder, we are likely to see more "record breaking engagement" as people use their vote in protest. All of this will justify the Union's decision to partially stop functioning for three months a year and hide the fact that, due to poor communication, the Union is becoming more and more irrelevant with each passing year.

I'm not suggesting that the Union ceases to do any work towards elections, only that, as when revising for an exam, they review their resources and importance that they attach to the event. Put it this way, if you consistently got 80% in an exam module year on year and 50% in another, it would be illogical to commit more of your resources to improving the 80% as the law of diminishing returns holds true.

As a petty final point, it would be nice if the Union held itself to the same standards it holds candidates to. The number of too-close-together posters and the new sticker campaign would definitely have me lodging a complaint.

Don't forget to nominate yourself and lead the change at Imperial. STAND.



# ARTS

arts.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## What is Albion? The play may just answer that!

### ARTS



**Where?** Almeida Theatre

**When?** Until 29<sup>th</sup> Feb

**How Much?** From £10

**Deniz Ak**

*Arts Writer*

Before going to the play, I had to google what Albion was. My search revealed that, in Latin and Celtic, it could mean white, rock or crag. Albion also used to be a poetic name for Britain.

Nevertheless, not understanding the name did not ruin the experience for me. Albion, written by Mike Bartlett and directed by Rupert Gold, is a rich play with substance. Some examples of ideas explored include nostalgia, heritage, social class and the process mourning following a loss.

As I came in 5 minutes late, we were placed in an obstructed view seat for the first two thirds of the play. Following the

interval, I was relocated close to the front row, which gave me a vastly different perspective. Being in the obstructed seat, the play had to be big and clear enough for us at the back seats to feel the emotion and it did just that. However, at the front few seats the experience was phenomenal and made you feel like you were peering into the lives of the characters.

What was quite impressive about Albion is that the whole play Miriam Buether's set was based in the same garden. The scene changes were subtle and helped aid the idea of the passage of time and the changes that come with it. The music was chosen well, and I found myself wanting to request the names of some of the songs played.

The acting from the overall cast was very strong, however there were a few points that felt screechy and overacted. Despite this, I found myself enjoying the different styles that each actor brought to stage.

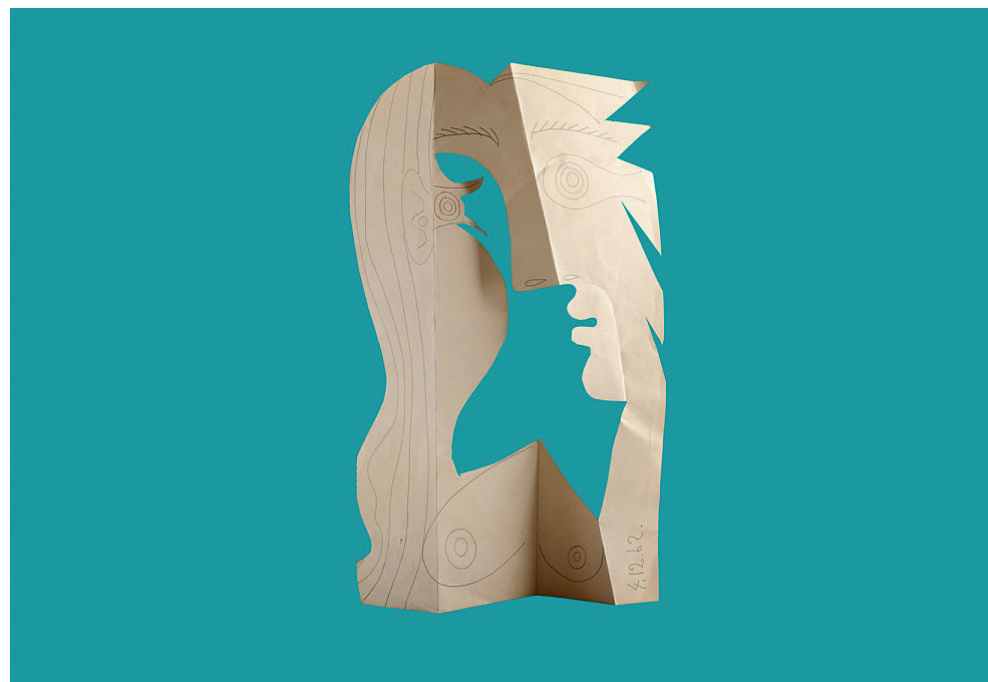
Some parts of the plot were quite extravagant and appeared slightly random to me however, for the most part, a lot of the creative choices felt purposeful.

This play was quite unique, which made it quite difficult to compare it to my previous experiences. The lighting by Neil Austin couldn't also go unappreciated since I found it helped focus the audience on the pivotal characters at chaotic parts. The audience, I felt, were grounded the whole time. My favourite scene which I felt was presented the most effectively is the appearance of the dead son, which is still vivid in my mind.

Overall, Albion was an incredibly enjoyable experience, with each member of the cast and creative team bringing something unique to the table in this impressive production.



An epic example of character interaction // Marc Brenner



A fresh exhibition showcasing the works of Picasso // Royal Academy of Arts

## Papa Papel (eng: Father Paper)

### ARTS



**Where?** Royal Academy of Arts

**When?** Until 13th April

**How Much?** £22 (concession 18)

**Amanda Hertzberg**

*Arts Editor*

If there's something even non-arts-lovers know about art, it's Picasso: he is the definition of true artistic genius. With countless exhibitions since his young age of 13 in 1895, a whole museum about him in Paris, and with some stating that there's virtually nothing in modern art that he hasn't started, curating a Picasso exhibition with a novel feel to it in today's day and age is a sincere challenge.

Royal Academy of Arts has taken on this with a storm (storm Ciara?) with their new exhibition "Picasso and Paper". The exhibition attempts to explore Picasso's different phases through his love

for paper. Throughout the 10 decades he blessed the earth with his art, it turns out he showed his love for paper in many different ways.

He folded it, burned it, ripped it, cut it in clever ways and glued it all together again. He drew cheeky sketches in Vogue magazines and folded guitar-like pieces out of card and strings. His naivete and curious exploring of different techniques shows a new side of this epic man. It is easy to forget that people like Picasso weren't always good at art. But when you're standing in front of a framed 2 inch skull he's ripped out of yellowing paper during WWII when materials were scarce, his artistic process suddenly feels more tangible.

Picasso and Paper has got a lot more than ripped pieces of paper to offer. It features a lot of his more conventional works too. There's a huge wall-sized canvas made of cut out pieces of different types of wallpaper. At first this piece has a lot of chaotic energy, but the more you

look, the more details come out, and the three women depicted entangled in their mundane activities come alive. If there is one thing that is clear through this extensive exhibition (the website tells you to allow at least 1-2 hours for it) it is that Picasso has gone through as many phases as there are stars in the sky. The blue period, the rose period. The phase where he made really big, round facial features. The phase when he drew no faces at all. Phases based on the different women in his life, of which there were many. Phases where he just printed newspaper letters on things, or etched copper.

One thing is clear from all these years of different art created by Picasso; he was always a genius. No wonder his father, a professor of art and an artist himself, gave up painting when Picasso surpassed him at age 13. If you visit Picasso and Paper you might feel like giving up painting too.

## ARTS

arts.felix@imperial.ac.uk



West meets... westernized East? // Vault Festival

## Lost Laowais

## ARTS



Where? Network Theatre

When? 04 Feb - 09 Feb

How Much? £15

Yian Zeng

Arts Writer

Christine Zhang

Arts Writer

Amidst the tide of rising anti-East Asian sentiment and Brexit-related racism, David East's 'Lost Laowais' offers a timely perspective into the nuanced aspects of cultural assimilation through the experience of British emigrants in China.

'Laowai', translating literally to 'old outside', is the common Mandarin term for a foreigner. The play was performed by members of Eschaton Theatre, founded late last year with the vision of making theatre for 'the end of the world'. Whilst

not quite armageddon, the play certainly addresses issues that are rarely touched upon: Anglo-Chinese relations, cultural assimilation, and heritage.

Despite the play being set entirely in China, we only see Chinese culture through the eyes of outsiders: the 20-something looking to find himself, the third-generation immigrant looking for her heritage, the weary expat suffering from yellow fever, and the rich diplomat's son. Our only clue into what life is really like for a Beijing local are quips from Siu-See Hung's character, including a poignant moment where she reminds Julian, the male lead, that he is paid more than his Chinese co-workers for no other reason than his British passport.

Julian, played by East himself, is introduced as an arrogant westerner who quickly grows uncomfortable and defensive when reminded of his identity, or lack thereof.

The imperialism of

Western culture makes Julian's whiteness a visa, giving him the stamp of 'normal' wherever he goes, including Beijing. When questioned 'Why China?', he does not have a better reason than cheap dumplings, reducing a complex culture down to palatable, bite-sized pieces. This feels particularly sour in comparison to Lisa, a character of Chinese descent, whose parents prioritised assimilation into UK culture over teaching her Mandarin. She doesn't have the luxury of picking and choosing parts of her culture; her 'otherness' in both the UK and China isolates her in a way Julian will never understand.

Hung's role as Lisa is an ode to the diaspora of immigrant children. Her character experiences difficulties that are sure to resonate with those of mixed heritage in the audience: estrangement, identity policing, and an inability to communicate in one's mother tongue. The difficulty in being

caught between two cultures was captured perfectly in a scene where a waitress' friendly camaraderie was cut short when she realised Lisa couldn't speak Mandarin.

Acclaimed poet Xu Zhi Mo's 'Saying Goodbye to Cambridge Again' was a recurring motif in the play:

*'Quietly I left,  
As quietly as I came.'*

The poem reflects on the freedom and mobility of wealthier Western expats and captures Roberts story arc aptly. Robert, an expat, marries a Chinese woman who barely speaks English before beginning a stilted romance with Lisa.

Robert is 1 of 3 main characters who is associated with the university of Cambridge, undoubtedly a reference to the insurmountable pressure on Chinese youth to excel academically. This is seen most clearly in Ollie's story arc, who is humorously dubbed as a 'diplo-brat' epito-

**"His deep-rooted issues with loneliness and inadequacy is an homage to the age-old saying 'money can't buy happiness'"**

missing China's elite. His deep-rooted issues with loneliness and inadequacy is an homage to the age-old saying 'money can't buy happiness'.

Despite these artistic undertones, it was clearly an amateur production, with dropped lines, incoherent transitions and at times unnatural scenes. East had the herculean task of exploring the complexities of cultural identity in a 60 minute runtime, which made

certain aspects feel rushed. Whilst there were clear attempts to flesh out the characters, at times it felt like a whistle-stop tour; briefly mentioning but not expanding on how characters dealt with abandonment, infidelity, and sexuality. Much of the humour was related to the life of expats in China, and is unlikely to be accessible to people who haven't experienced life in China, or who don't speak Mandarin.

Overall, East's production captured the inexplicable feelings of cultural insecurity well, and we left the theatre contemplating whether second-generation immigrants are indeed lucky to have the 'best of both worlds'. One of the greatest advantages of studying at Imperial is its location: London, the cultural capital of the UK. Yet, one wonders at the end of this play, for immigrants to accommodate British identity, how much of their heritage is lost?

## ARTS

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# On McQuillan's Hill: A Gay IRA Volunteer Walks into a Bar...

## ARTS



**Where?** Finborough Theatre

**When?** 4<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> February

**How Much?** £18

**Felix Swift Roberts**

*Arts Writer*

In the rural town of Gentry, old IRA volunteer Fra Maline has been released from prison – earlier than expected, thanks to the Good Friday Agreement. At the community hall on McQuillan's hill, his daughter has thrown him a homecoming party. By coincidence, Fra's sister has reappeared in Northern Ireland for the first time in twenty years and,

unbeknownst to everyone, bought that very same community hall. What follows is the tightening calculus of family conflicts, reckonings with a war most would like to forget, and a digging at secrets best left buried.

Indeed, there are treasures worth unburying in *On McQuillan's Hill* (Joseph Crilly): a rich Hiberno-English patter colours the play – this is dialogue as it should be, balanced on a knife edge between laughter and violence and ready to plunge into either as the strings of relationships entwine and slacken. I spent a childhood catching the dulcet tones of Doric and retained enough to enjoy the banter; a crash-course in Ulster Scots might get you more out of the production, but neither dialect nor accent

is thick enough to mask the action.

And what action it is. Crilly's ear for dialogue is matched by an eye for character, all complex, all broken, all believable. The men range from pitiful to malicious. Crilly isn't making a misanthropic argument: rather, he's invested in dismantling mythologies and abstractions, the blushing portrait of the freedom fighter, of the cause. War's always been a man's game, and if it reflects an innate sensibility for violence, it also reflects a need for ego-swelling, for a sense of importance. Fra Maline can't talk to his family and drinks enough units to put away a horse before breakfast. However, in his eyes he's an unrelenting freedom fighter, ready to liberate the North at a moment's notice - never

mind that he got shot in the leg on his first mission, or that he's too busy hiding a gay affair to topple an autocratic British client state. Fra is merely pathetic: another volunteer makes the point of war's cruelty, its callousness, much more starkly. Of course, this isn't anti-republicanism so much as anti-sectarianism – anti-murdering people on their way to do the shopping, anti-wiping your hands of your own crimes. It's the women of the play who must bear the brunt of the pain the self-absorption of mythologizing entails, but Crilly also gives them the grace to be flawed on their own merits. They are people, and against the pettiness of the men it is their traumas and desperate hopes that linger behind the last bow.



**Crilly dismantles the mythologies of freedom fighters and the whitewashing of violence // Johnny Vivash**

Now, the play's not a total success: in a final act that veers close to melodrama, the play takes the possibility of rural incest too seriously for its own good (for those who've missed the wasteful violence, county Antrim scenery and shoelace-knot family trees of *Game of Thrones*, this might be

one to catch). But Crilly's writing always outpaces his machinations; for anyone wanting a look at a period too often buried in memory, you'll find some rewarding views across the Irish sea on McQuillan's hill indeed.

IMPERIAL MEDICS



IMPERIAL COLLEGE

THE

# IMPERIAL VARSITY 2020

WED 26 FEBRUARY  
HARLINGTON

FRI 28 FEBRUARY ETHOS  
SAT 29 FEBRUARY HESTON

## ARTS

arts.felix@imperial.ac.uk

# Rough for Theatre II/ LoveSexIdentityAmbition

## Endgame

*A show that puts a spotlight on taboo subjects*

## ARTS



**Where?** The Old Vic  
**When?** Until 28<sup>th</sup> March  
**How Much?** From £12

**Ozibil Ege Dumenci**  
*Arts Editor*

Never in my life as a theatregoer have I felt so taken aback by a fellow audience member as I did when watching this double-bill production of two texts by the acclaimed playwright Samuel Beckett. All throughout the two and a half hour run, the gentleman who sat behind me kept bursting in enormous fits of laughter, erupting with joy, occasionally without much accompaniment from the rest of the audience. Not only did I keep getting startled by his louder-than-the-actors presence, I was also confused as I did not find either of the plays

funny, or even remotely interesting.

The performance started with *Rough for Theatre II*, a short play originally written in French and translated into English by Beckett himself. It follows two men, who might be of this world or not, as they discuss the life of a third man who is about to jump out of a window on the sixth floor of a building somewhere. I know this sounds vague, but honestly, there really wasn't much more to it. No real plot development, and no conclusion. However, my biggest gripe with *Rough for Theatre II* is the fact that it was simply tagged along to the beginning of *Endgame*, without much purpose or any connection between the two plays.

Following an interval almost as long as *Rough for Theatre II* itself came *Endgame*, which is widely considered to be one of Beckett's finest works. It's a play where once

again, not much happens, and there's too much talking. Perhaps this was intentional, an attempt to portray the monotony of life, especially for those under less fortunate circumstances. However, as a viewer, this was neither satisfying nor entertaining.

Both plays star Alan Cumming and Daniel Radcliffe, who do a commendable job carrying the verbose, emotionless scripts through the finish line. The direction by Richard Jones is slick, however, the reliance on physical comedy (for example, Radcliffe repeatedly slapping himself) looked cheap, and did not add much to an already bleak script.

Needless to say, I left the Old Vic grossly unimpressed. Given the calibre of talent both on and off-stage, I expected to be entertained, if nothing else. Instead, all I could think of was how I'd much rather be doing almost anything else.

## ARTS



**Where?** Theatre 503  
**When?** 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Feb

**Laura Casas**  
*Arts Writer*

**Aya Hayakawa**  
*Arts Writer*

**L**oveSexIdentityAmbition is a 5 day long show consisting of 4 actresses performing 16 monologues from the book *Hear Me Now* by Titilola Dawudu and Tamasha. Each monologue belongs to one of the four categories: Love, Sex, Identity, and Ambition, telling stories concerning women of colour.

The act began with Koko Brown, a humorous host who touched on the topics mentioned in the

**“The monologue brought up the topic of social inequality in a very cheerful and optimistic style”**

title of the show making us reflect on what they meant to us. After a playful introduction the performance started. The actresses walked simultaneously on stage, consisting of only four blocks, and remained there during all the monologues. This minimalistic setting was matched by the outfits of the girls: all black with

a colorful scarf which became their main prop.

‘Going to Paris’ performed by Safiyya Ingar was definitely a stand out piece. The monologue brought up the topic of social inequality in a very cheerful and optimistic style. It compared the opposite attitudes between the monologist and her

**“With tender and affectionate words she described her excessively intense emotions to her “sweetheart””**

friend who both dreamed of living in Paris. In the monologue, the girl who turned to stripping on camera tried to convince her friend to also believe they deserved to be where they wanted to be and had to fight for it. The acting was particularly impressive since besides missing the words of the friend, Safiyya managed to make it seem as if we were listening to the full conversation between them.

Another outstanding monologue was ‘REKHA’ performed by Adele Oni. It portrayed an after-sex scene of a woman who had fallen in love during the previous night. With tender and affectionate words she described her excessively intense emotions to her “sweetheart”. Although treated in a comical way, it was

saddening to understand how actions such as being treated with respect were out of the ordinary for her. After her lengthy speech, there was a heartbreaking and anticlimactic ending where she realised he had been asleep the whole time.

‘The N Word’ was also a well-acted performance by Chinwen Nwokolo. Taking place in a bar where a girl was supposed to go on stage to perform a song, the monologue is given by her sister in the audience. Despite the performers being forbidden to use the N word, the girl insists it is a way of self-expression. In order to avoid the girl getting into trouble, her sister talks to the organiser and decides to perform instead

**“In essence, LoveSexIdentityAmbition focuses on women of colour”**

of her. We could picture the setting, alongside all the side characters, as Chinwen switched her attention to different parts of the stage to imitate interactions and conversations with different people.

In essence, *LoveSexIdentityAmbition* focuses on women of colour but the performance can be enjoyable and interesting to a wider audience for its important message, original structure, and good acting. A great varied show to open your mind by bringing attention to crucial topics in a unique style.



Cumming and Radcliffe in *Rough for Theatre II* // Manuel Harlan

# GAMES

games.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## Gaming News Roundup of the Week - Ports, Backwards Compatability and Controversy.

*With no huge story this week, and no recent game to review I thought it would be a great chance to round up a load of different stories that happened over the last week.*

### GAMES

#### Freddie Ugo

Games Editor

#### PS5 and Xbox Series

In a recent earnings call, Ubisoft CEO Yves Guillemot is quoted saying that both Microsoft and Sony's upcoming consoles "Will be running almost all the back catalogue of the previous consoles". This is amazing news for anyone that owns an Xbox One or PS4, but also anyone that loves collecting older games from consoles like the PS1 and the Original Xbox – here I come Halo and Spyro!

The best part of this is the ability to declutter my gaming set up. It means I can have one console dedicated to each company set up on my desk and actually get to play older games at uni again! For some it also means that they could sell their older consoles and use that money to fund a new one – and for collectors it means they can much more easily switch between games on the fly without having to switch around cables every two minutes.

Another positive that comes from this is the possibility of certain games being enhanced for the next generation consoles. We have already seen this a bit with the Xbox One, enhancing Xbox 360 games via software updates – it's a great thing to see from businesses that are usually driven by profit and not much else...

#### Wonderful 101 port

Platinum Games, the developer that brought you Bayonetta, Viewtiful Joe and Astral Chain have finally begun their foray into self-publishing. Early in January, the firm secured funding from Tencent to accelerate its self-publishing ambition. Despite this, Platinum is seeking funding from us, the gamers. They set up a Kickstarter campaign for the creation of a remaster of the somewhat forgotten Wii U game 'Wonderful 101'. With their funding goal set at a little under £40,000 it seemed like that would be easily passed. Well, it was, by an insane margin. So much so that at the time of writing the campaign sits at £1,220,000 of

### "Platinum set up a Kickstarter campaign for the creation of a remaster of Wonderful 101."

funding with 24 days still to go! That means that not only is Wonderful 101 being ported to the Switch, but also a Steam version, a PS4 version, a time attack mode (yay speedruns), and a new 2D side scrolling adventure in the Wonderful 101 universe named "Luka's First Mission".

I have never played



The Kickstarter for Wonderful101 Remastered is unbelievably successful! //Kickstarter

Wonderful 101, so the opportunity to do so would be awesome. There is a passionate and vocal fanbase for this action-adventure games that has clearly shown up in spades to support Platinum. With released slated for November 2020, I sit in great anticipation for the chance to finally give this niche title a go.

Another intriguing event that has occurred with this Kickstarter, is a mysterious website dubbed "The Platinum Four". So far the website just shows 4 items on a page, with a giant '4' at the top. The first of these items is the Wonderful 101 port, with the other three simply labelled 'coming soon'. This has caused a lot of active discussion in the gaming community with many different theories as to what else could be coming from Platinum in future months. My opinion? I'm glad you asked kind stranger! One of these HAS to be Bayonetta 3. It was announced with a

teaser trailer over 2 years ago and we haven't heard anything else since about it. I also think that one announcement may come that won't shock too many people: a port of Astral Chain to other consoles. Astral Chain was a big success for Platinum on the Switch last year, and now with funding from Tencent, I imagine that they will be looking to expand the install size for Astral Chain. My final prediction is more of a hope. I would love to see Viewtiful Joe either ported to the Switch, or, if we want to go really crazy, maybe even a sequel!

#### Animal Crossing

Animal Crossing New Horizons is the next upcoming installation in the Animal Crossing franchise, and the first to release on the Switch. It is greatly anticipated by many, with its wide appeal and addictive daily gameplay loot of collecting bugs and fruit, all the while trying to clear your

debt with Tom Nook. So, how could a game that seems so friendly on the surface end up garnering so much controversy. Well – Nintendo is acting like a grandma again and not keeping up with the technology of today!

Firstly, Animal Crossing is not going to allow cloud saving. Yup, you read that right! If you lose your Switch or it breaks, there is no hope of getting your island back! Nintendo's reasoning behind this is that the game uses time mechanics and having a cloud save might allow players to effectively rewind time. Now I would understand this reason if Animal Crossing was a competitive game, but come on... it's freaking Animal Crossing! Not only this, but also you are only allowed one island per Switch. That means if you have multiple accounts you can still only have one island. Even if you buy a second game you are limited to one island, despite the fact you have

paid for 2 games. I think this is quite frankly ridiculous. People who use their Switch as a family device with multiple accounts for whoever uses this are bound to get very annoyed. On the bright side, Nintendo have acknowledged the fan backlash and are looking for ways of fixing it in

### "Animal crossing is not going to allow cloud saving. Yup, you read that right!"

time – Nintendo have a good history of listening to fans (in recent years at least) so at least we can hope they go back on these statements by the time the game is out on March 20th.

# Union Page



#icuElections

# STAND

Nominate yourself and lead the change at Imperial

[imperialcollegeunion.org/elections](https://imperialcollegeunion.org/elections)

## Shape your Union

Each position available in the Leadership Elections can influence great change at different levels of the College and Union. Consider standing for one of the nine Liberation & Community Officer roles and be the voice for our underrepresented groups and causes:

### **Black & Minority Ethnic Officer**

Represent the views of students on BME issues.

### **Disabilities Officer**

Improve the experience for students with disabilities.

### **Ethics & Environment Officer**

Promote green and ethical initiatives to students at Imperial.

### **Gender Equality Officer**

Represent students with any gender-related equality issues.

### **Interfaith Officer**

Advocate for the faith needs of students at Imperial.

### **International Officer**

Champion the needs of international students at Imperial.

### **LGBT+ Officer**

Represent any sexuality-related needs of students.

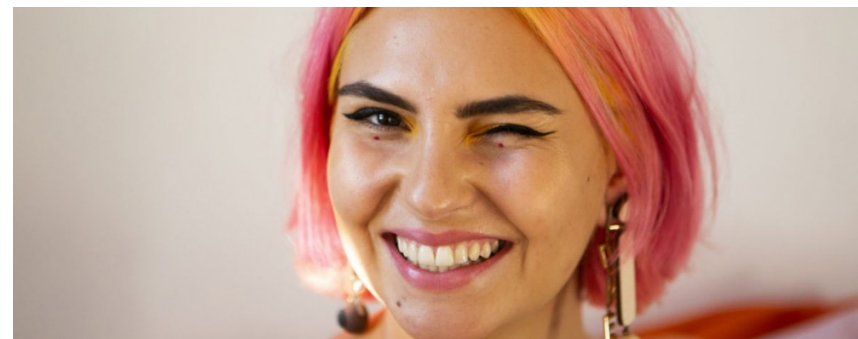
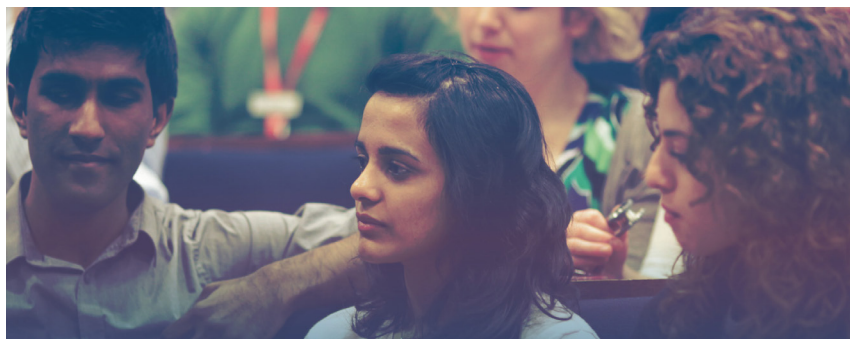
### **Mental Health Officer**

Work to improve the experience and wellbeing provisions in place for student mental health at Imperial.

### **Working Class Officer**

Represent students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Read about the 700+ positions available and nominate yourself at [imperialcollegeunion.org/elections](https://imperialcollegeunion.org/elections).



## Come along to Union Council

Come along to the next Union Council meeting where you can raise issues and have important discussions that will shape the future of student life at Imperial.

At Union Council, your representatives make some important decisions regarding issues affecting student life, such as halls rent. All students are welcome to attend.

Come to the next meeting on **Tuesday 18 February** at **18.30** in **RSM G01**. Find out more at [imperialcollegeunion.org/unioncouncil](https://imperialcollegeunion.org/unioncouncil).

## The Sex Ed Talk You Never Had

As part of our programme of LGBT+ History Month events, we'll be joined by sex educator, Ruby Rare, who will deliver a refreshing take on sex education. She'll guide attendees through all things LGBT+ sex and relationships, which are topics often missed from the curriculum.

Join Ruby in this warm and welcoming space, and share opinions and experiences, inclusive of all sexualities, genders and relationship structures. This event is open to all, so come along on **Thursday 20 February, 19:00-21:30** in the **Union Bar**.

Book your place at [imperialcollegeunion.org/ruby-rare](https://imperialcollegeunion.org/ruby-rare).

[imperialcollegeunion.org](https://imperialcollegeunion.org)



# Your Union Events

Friday 14 February



Heat 2	Thu 20 Feb	Reynolds
Heat 3	Fri 21 Feb	Reynolds
Heat 4	Sat 22 Feb	Reynolds
FINAL	Thu 12 Mar	Metric

**14** February, Friday

**Thank Goodness It's Friday**  
Metric | 21:00 - 02:00

**17** February, Monday

**Wine Tasting**  
The Union Bar | 17:30 - 19:00

**18** February, Tuesday

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

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

**19** February, Wednesday

**CSP Wednesday**  
Metric | 19:00-01:00

**20** February, Thursday

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

**Battle of the Bands (Heat 2)**  
Reynolds | 19:30 - 23:00

**21** February, Friday

**BPM**  
Metric | 21:00 - 02:00

**Karaoke**  
h-bar | 19:30 - 23:00

**Battle of the Bands (Heat 3)**  
Reynolds | 19:30 - 23:00

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

[imperialcollegeunion.org/whats-on](http://imperialcollegeunion.org/whats-on)



# FILM

film.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## Color Out of Space (2020)

### FILM

#### COLOR OUT OF SPACE



**Dir:** Richard Stanley. **Script:** Richard Stanley, Scarlett Amaris **Starring:** Nicolas Cage, Joely Richardson. *111 minutes, 2020*

**Jasmin Daley**  
*Film Writer*

**N**athan Gardener (Nicolas Cage), his wife and three children live a secluded and peaceful life. The Gardeners have managed to rip themselves away from city life and currently manage to thrive with minimal disruption from the outside world. All is well until a colourful meteorite falls outside the Gardener residence and changes the fabric of reality around the family and their home. Based on the book of the same name by H. P. Lovecraft, writer of well renowned short stories such as *The call of Chuthulu*, I can't help but believe this movie adaptation diverges slightly from what it means to be Lovecraftian.

One of the pleasures of seeing this film on the big screen is the chance to enjoy the natural beauty of the secluded forest the Gardeners live in. This is mirrored perfectly in the idyllic family dynamic that is witnessed as a definite calm before the storm. Once the meteorite lands, we are able to sense a slowly building change that affects everything from the water to the behaviors of people and animals alike. The already gorgeous beauty of the location is enhanced as if touched up by some ethereal paintbrush and despite the increasingly strange behaviour of the family in reaction to the

crash, it is the changes to nature that I found myself wanting more of. This ends up being my mistake. We soon learn that there is no bigger picture to look forward to and before long the film becomes an overwhelming and horrific assault on all the senses. Think self-mutilation, cancerous mutations and radiation burn. Later learning that some of the most awful parts of this film were not necessarily a part of the original story was incredibly frustrating. This is especially due to the interests of the film studio SpectreVision having spent nine years searching for a true to the story take on the novella.

Writer and director

**“One of the pleasures of seeing this film on the big screen is the chance to enjoy the natural beauty of the forest scenery used”**

Richard Stanley treads a fine line between making this one hundred year old story relevant and losing the essence of what it means to be Lovecraftian, which is less graphic gore but the more subtle yet overwhelming fear of the unknown and the fragility and meekness of humans in relation to the vast cosmos. If there had been a way to convey the absolute horror of the alien invaders in a way that did not overwhelm the audience with grotesque imagery, I believe this film could appeal to



Nathan Gardener (Nicolas Cage) basking in the purple hues of a fallen meteorite // RLJE Films

a larger audience with a greater cultural impact. Much of what I feel is lacking from *Color out of Space* I believe can be found successfully executed in 2018's *Annihilation*, which is itself loosely based on the same Lovecraft short story. Some of the challenges faced by the writers of this adaptation is bringing the story to the 21st century and padding out what is essentially a fifty six page story to make a feature length film. One of the choices made by the writing team was to make Mrs. Gardner a survivor of breast cancer, a fascinating decision bearing in mind that one of the core themes of *Annihilation* is also cancer and how it creates an unfavourable alternative reality for those affected by it.

Acting as a remedy to so much horror were some remarkable performances by the cast. In particular Gardner's daughter, Lavinia (Madeleine Arthur), who manages to play the role of an angst

teen mentally battling the ever-changing unravelling of her reality powerfully, taking nightmarish scenes and, at times, baffling dialogue in her stride. Nicholas Cage also does not disappoint as the patriarch, a somewhat obsessive novice farmer and avid drinker of alpaca milk. One of the more disappointing performances comes from the unnamed visiting hydrologist (Elliot Knight), our storyteller, whose sole role of reacting to the Gardner family ordeal is dwarfed by the intensity of the rest of the cast.

**“A remedy to so much horror was an ensemble of remarkable performances from some of the cast”**

For me, the audience reaction helped to highlight the more lighthearted moments of this movie. The ridiculousness of Mr. Gardner's perpetual concern for his alpacas, for example. The sad irony of this audience reaction is the deep belly laughter to scenes that were intended to be sincere moments of grief or fear. Especially seeing as producer Daniel Noah released in a statement that to his dismay many adaptations of Lovecraft seem to lack sincerity by taking the comedic route, claiming that “there was nothing funny about Lovecraft”.

As a reward for sitting through what I can promise feels like an eternity of horror, we are gifted with thirty minutes of unnecessary, unintelligible chaos which manages to end satisfyingly. *Color out of Space* manages to bring to life a short story from the early 20th century with notable qualities, including the thoughtful use of colour

and design throughout. On reflection after the film and after asking myself if all the choices made in the film were necessary, I felt torn. How else would a film be able to convince me of the unimaginable alternative reality that

**“The impact of the horror and gore ends up being unremarkable”**

could exist in the universe than by showing me how uncomfortable I feel when exposed to things so unnatural? However, the impact of the horror and the gore ends up being unremarkable despite such a brilliant start.

*Color out of Space* comes out in cinemas on the 28th of February. Catch it if you dare!



# TELEVISION

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## Gwyneth Paltrow, Class of Imperial College 2020

*Can the actress-turned-lifestyle-guru conquer streaming while plugging her brand?*

### TELEVISION

**Adam Gutnar**  
Television Writer

A brand that positions itself as aspirational is monetising the fact that it makes you feel somewhat inadequate. How else can you see yourself, when faced with a woman such as Gwyneth Paltrow, actress-turned-entrepreneur, who has had herself stung by bees to maintain a youthful complexion. Goop, the company she started as an online newsletter offering lifestyle tips to fans, has since expanded to a multimedia conglomerate. Today, there is an e-shop, an annual conference, a magazine and, as of January 2020, a Netflix documentary series. In the opening of Goop Lab, which explores the frontiers of wellness culture, Paltrow describes her motivation as a desire for more from life than making out with Matt Damon, a top contender for my favourite humble brag of 2020. She finds this higher purpose in the “optimisation of the self” and an unending drive towards experimentation.

Each episode typically focuses on Paltrow and a group of company staffers exploring a strand of wellness and health, from well-trodden topics like dieting and sex to zanier ones like mediumship and energy channelling. To stretch the term beyond what is healthy at a STEM university, there is something of a scientific method to Goop Lab’s approach and this forms the structure for each episode. We typically begin with a discussion

with one of several experts who are featured throughout the show, where they outline their credentials, goals, and introduce acclamatory testimonials from people they worked with. These treatments are then tested by company employees, who are all beautiful, but not to an extent that is unreachable if only you worked on yourself more or finally purchased some Goop products.

Gwyneth Paltrow at one point jokingly calls herself the ultimate Guinea Pig, although it is usually her staff and the experts who try the more unconventional treatments, whether it is drinking psilocybin tea or being taught how to masturbate while taped. As in ‘regular’ science, most of the trials are done in large groups, beyond just the few individuals whose testimonials will end up on camera. This is

**“It was jarring to watch a woman work through life-long anxiety issues with something as comparatively banal as working out in the snow”**

likely in part an attempt to highlight more clothing from the company, but it gives the series a sense of community that it wouldn’t have if it only focused on Paltrow. The most moving portions of



Is the background meant to resemble a vagina? Most likely. // Rachel Murray/Getty Images

Goop Lab come when people share their past traumas and receive love from others in return. Participants genuinely open up and find connection, facilitated by whatever random thing the show has them go through that week. It was jarring to watch a woman work through life-long anxiety issues with something as comparatively banal as working out in the snow. However, it was ultimately the therapy that came through bonding with others which comes off as more important than the episodes’ health fads du jour. This sense of sisterhood through shared experiences, along with Goop’s aspirational status, package well into self-contained half hour episodes and make Goop Lab tremendously watchable.

The two best episodes are the ones about sex and psychedelics, perhaps because they are the furthest from the esoterism that pervades the rest of the show. What was striking about Goop when it talks about sex is how

kindly and affectionately it is able to do so. In Goop’s welcoming pastel colour palate, the male gaze and shame that are so common in portrayals of female pleasure are washed away. Guided by legendary sex-educator Betty Dodson, Goop Lab goes over the techniques of masturbation and connects it to the feminist struggle for social equality (even here I fully expect that we will eventually see the props involved as overpriced sex toys on Goop’s store, where they have infamously sold \$1500 vibrators). What appears to motivate Paltrow’s curiosity is a desire for radical freedom, unconstrained here by expectations of women, but also frequently elsewhere, by ability to spend and scientific efficacy. In another episode, she will have legitimate doctors’ recommendations about a healthy lifestyle intertwined with bunk about injecting plasma from the blood back into her skin. While the doctor’s face contorts a little as she describes this, in my mind

from shame or maybe as she suppresses a laugh, in the text of the show what is scientifically supported and what is not can meld into the something indistinguishable.

**“When first describing the show to friends, they had already begun proposing drinking games to play”**

Goop has made a name for itself in mainstream consciousness for courting controversy and giving a platform to pseudoscience, to the extent they have been accused of trolling for publicity. Whether they are promoting colloidal silver, a supplement that can turn a person’s skin permanently blue, or selling jade eggs to

insert into your vagina for alleged hygiene benefits, their products can come off as much ridiculous and potentially hazardous as they do alluring. When first describing the show to friends, they had already begun proposing drinking games to play while watching. A highpoint comes during the episode on energy fields, where a group of Goop employees receive therapy from a ‘masseur’ who does not so much touch them but waves his hands in the air 30cm above their backs. He first tries it on one of his long-time customers, who writhes and squirms as he walks around and lightly wiggles his wrist like a minimalist Nintendo Wii player, before moving onto the rest of the people in the room. After such a display, I’m not sure if there is anyone who wouldn’t want to let out at least a little moan, as the Goopers all do, once their turn comes around, just to make sure they’re not missing out. It is not difficult to see the marketing appeal of Goop as something similar.

# SCIENCE

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## My Heart is an Open (Text)Book...

...and now scientists are thumbing through it for new insights into health than we've ever known.

### SCIENCE

**Christine Parry**

Science Editor

Are our hearts overrated? They seemed to be, at least, until recently; our ability to interpret our heart rate as an indicator of health issues was restricted to a comparison against the population average of 60 to 100 beats per minute (bpm).

Now, scientists at the Scripps Research Translational Institute have taken advantage of the growing trend towards individual monitoring of healthcare data – the rise of the ‘quantified self’ – and have analysed heart

rate data recorded by Fitbits from across the United States of America. Spanning two years, involving nearly 100,000 people, and totalling over 32 million days’ worth of data, the scope of this study, recently published in PLOS ONE, is huge.

Resting heart rates are usually taken as an isolated data point and compared against the population average. But the data collected in this study over a longer timeframe (known as longitudinal data) allows for a more nuanced understanding of intra- and inter-individual differences.

Dr Giorgio Quer, part of the research team, considers this a rich source of information; obtaining longitudinal data not only

allows individuals to have an insight into their own health parameters, but when collated across populations, it can help scientists to refine their understanding of diseases, support earlier diagnoses, spot infections quicker, or eventually, determine the effects of longer-term factors such as environmental changes.

He describes one of their major findings on inter-individual differences. “It was exciting to observe that the resting heart rate of different individuals varies widely – what is normal for you, may be unusual for someone else, and suggest an illness.”

The team found that our heart rate can actually vary by up to 70 bpm from person to person, from as

low as 40 to as high as 109 bpm.

But, surprisingly, age and sex, two common culprits for population differences, were only minimally associated with this difference. Resting heart rate was found to vary according to age (increasing to the age of 50, then declining with advancing age) and sex (women’s heart rates were, on average, 2-3 bpm higher than men’s), but together, they accounted for only 6% of this variation. Even when the team included Body Mass Index (BMI) and sleep duration, no more than 10% of the difference could be explained.

Intra-individual variations also uncovered intriguing findings. The

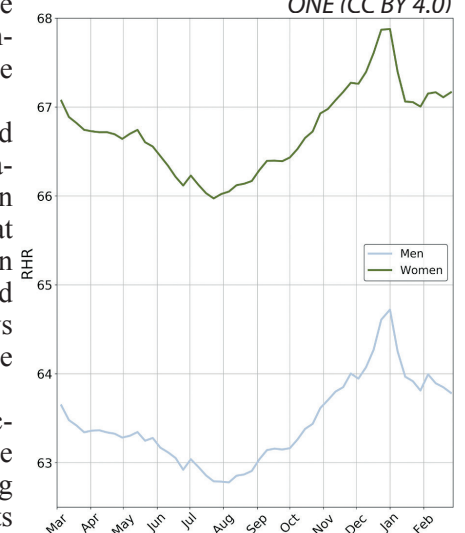
greatest variability in any individual data was found in women of child-bearing age, which Dr Quer and the team believe could help support our understanding of reproductive health. In fact, current fertility applications incorporate resting heart rate data to help identify stages of the menstrual cycle.

“We also found a surprising seasonal variation in heart rate that was lowest in July, and peaked after the holidays at the end of the year.”

The team speculate this may be due to changing exercise habits throughout the

year (read: we are lazier at Christmas) but also want to investigate the effect of climate and latitude on our heart rates in the future.

**Seasonal average resting heart rate pattern// PLOS ONE (CC BY 4.0)**



## Gamma Brainwaves: Hoax or New Therapeutic Avenue?

### SCIENCE

**Julia Dabrowska**

Science Editor

Alzheimer’s disease (AD) is the most prevalent form of dementia, characterised by a progressive decline of cognitive skills, associated with a build-up of toxic amyloid molecules forming plaques, and an increase in the activated form of tau protein. Changes in specific brain patterns, called gamma brainwaves, have now been linked to AD.

Researchers from MIT found that artificial induction of these gamma brainwaves, which

have a frequency of ~40Hz, by sound, as well as combined light and sound stimuli, decreased negative pathological features of AD, such as amyloid build-up, while simultaneously increasing the presence of microglia, the brain’s immune cells, in mice models. An improvement in the region responsible for memory consolidation and spatial memory was also observed.

Previously, the team demonstrated that light flickering at 40Hz was able to artificially induce gamma brainwaves in mice, which reduced the amount of amyloid while increasing the amount of microglia within the brain. Now, the authors

tested whether these brainwaves can also be induced by sound stimulation. In addition to improvement of memory consolidation and spatial memory, a drop in amyloid levels and amyloid plaques was seen within various brain regions. Microglia, which are responsible for amyloid clearance, increased in both number and size, and co-localised with amyloid within the brain, suggesting increased amyloid uptake. A larger blood vessel diameter in the brain was also observed; since amyloid clearance can also occur via blood vessels, this suggests more potential for waste clearance.

Next, the researchers

tested the combination of light and sound stimulation together, which again successfully resulted in induction of gamma brainwaves in multiple brain regions. Amyloid levels were reduced, while microglia increased – the same as with sound stimulation alone. However, the combined stimuli also increased the number of microglia per plaque, and the microglia surrounded the amyloid deposits, rather than simply being present nearby.

These effects occurred not just in the brain regions specific to visual and auditory responses, but also in brain areas responsible for higher-order brain functions, in particular short-term memo-

ry and executive function – importantly, effects here were not seen with either stimulus alone.

The question that remains is how these effects occur: are the combined effects a result of one stimulus influencing the other, or simply an addition of both benefits? Lead author Chinakkuruppan Adaikkan stated, “While we know it affects pathology in mice, we want to understand how because that will help us understand and refine potential treatment.”

Simple light or sound stimulation can induce effects in multiple cell types and different brain areas, decreasing the harmful features of AD

and improving brain function in genetically engineered mouse models. This is even more widespread when both stimulation types are combined, highlighting the potential of something so simple to treat a very complex disease. However, further research is required to understand how this artificial stimulation can be related to naturally occurring brainwaves, and whether this could be extended to humans.

But, while it might not be transferrable for human AD treatment anytime soon, listening to those gamma wave-inducing Spotify playlists surely can’t hurt.

# SUSTAINABILITY

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## The cost of Fast fashion

### SUSTAINABILITY

**Xiuchen Xu**

*Sustainability Editor*

**H**ave you ever thought about how clothes from Primark, ASOS, H&M and Uniqlo are so cheap? The answer lies in their unethical business model that exploits workers for cheap labour in countries abroad and their abuse of the environment with no repercussions.

Fast fashion refers to clothes that are not made to last. They are clothes that are trendy today, and out of mode by tomorrow. The clothes are sold cheaply and in large quantities to maximise revenue. Those garments move from the runway to stores at incredible speed, but they end up in the trash even faster.

Millions of customers participate in this mindless consumption of fashion, and it has led to huge environmental detriments. It is estimated that 12 billion tonnes of reusable textiles go to landfills every year,

and this makes up 30% of all total waste.

The fast fashion industry emits 1.2 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year, which is about 5% of total global emissions. To put this into perspective, this sky-high carbon footprint is more than the emissions created by air travel and international shipping.

Furthermore, fast fashion is a huge threat to water resources. This is largely due to how water intensive cotton plants are. It takes about 2,000 gallons of water to produce a pair of jeans (more than enough for one person to drink for 10 years) and it takes about 700 gallons of water to produce one cotton shirt (enough for one person to drink for over three years).

Overall, the fashion industry is responsible for 20% of all industrial water pollution worldwide. Production of textiles is said to use over three thousand types of chemicals, and textile dyeing is the world's second-largest polluter of water, as water from the dyeing process is

dumped into rivers.

Most fast fashion clothing is made from polyester, which releases two to three times more carbon emissions than cotton during production and does not biodegrade. It is

**“The fast fashion industry emits 1.2 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year, which is about 5% of total global emissions.”**

estimated that washing fast fashion pieces made from polyester releases 500,000 tons of microfibers into the ocean each year, which is the equivalent of 50 billion plastic bottles.

There is also another horrific practice of burning unsold clothes (not limited



Most fast fashion is fast to get dumped in landfills // JBER

to fast fashion, as brands like Louis Vuitton and Burberry also participate in this). This happens because of the fast fashion cycles, with many clothes unfashionable very quickly, and with no demand. The brands also don't donate the clothes, as they are worried of donations devaluing their brand.

Moreover, fast fashion brands often attempt greenwashing and pretend that their products are more environmentally friendly than they really are. They are vague about their environmental and social commitments and launch sustainability campaigns that are totally devoid of transparency. That doesn't however stop them from claiming that their products are “ethical” and “sustainable”.

The horrific consequences of fast fashion extend beyond the environmental damages, there is also a huge amount of exploitation of workers in order to produce clothing so cheap. Garment factory

workers' wage starts incredibly low at just £25 a month, and they work 14 hours a day. The workers are mostly women, and many have reported physical and verbal abuse at work. There is also no standard for health and safety; fast fashion factories lack ventilation, and workers will breathe in toxic substances and fibre dust in unsafe buildings. In the infamous 2013 Dhaka garment factory collapse, over a thousand workers were killed in a factory that supplied for the likes of Primark, Monsoon, Prada, Gucci and more. Worker's unions are also prohibited which stops meaningful changes from happening. Investigations have also found that H&M has used child labour in factories in Myanmar.

As consumers, we can combat fast fashion, mostly by boycotting their products and not spending our money on their products. There is a saying that one votes with their money, and by not spending money on fast

fashion, we can help stop the consequences. A great thing to do would be to start thrift shopping; you can find many amazing clothes for good prices in vintage shops, and many true fashionistas shop this way. When you have a clothing you no longer need, you can always donate it, or even repurpose it, as fabrics can have multiple uses. Another important thing is to have conversations and raise awareness on the consequences of fast fashion. The only reason those brands thrive is because of the lack of transparency and lack of knowledge of consumers on the true horrific nature of the industry, which is hidden with bright and cheerful advertisements. The more people become conscious of their consumerism, the less power those brands will have.



Fast fashion uses cotton which is a hugely water intensive plant // Flickr



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# FOOD

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## Paris Hilton, Domestic Goddess

*Get ready for WWII - Paris Hilton delivers a cooking video that could initiate a war between Italy and the States*

### FOOD

**Syon Lee**

*Food writer*

“Lasagne’s, like, very hard to make... Well actually I don’t think it is but people think it is but it’s actually really fun and really easy. But I guess it is a lot of steps compared to, like, making toast or something.” Well thank god we have Paris Hilton to show us how it’s done! Perhaps in a bid to reinvigorate her stagnant career, she has recently debuted “Cooking with Paris”, a sixteen-minute long tutorial video teaching you how to make her “infamous lasagne”. While the YouTube cooking video genre is already saturated with huge personalities such as the cast of the Bon Appétit Test Kitchen, Maangchi, and Binging with Babish, Paris Hilton has managed to find her niche (intentionally or not) in the world of absurdist comedy cooking.

Starting off by introducing us to her confused looking chihuahua, Diamond Poodle, nestled in the crook of her arm, she proceeds to let him roam free in the kitchen while she boasts about how good she is at cooking. “As you all know,” she begins, “Well, maybe not all of you know. People who do know, know that I’m an amazing cook”. It’s a masterclass in verbal swings and roundabouts, a style that is possibly inspired by our modern-day politicians filibustering to oppose women’s rights or declare climate change a non-issue.

According to her accounts, she spent her childhood in the kitchen, helping her mother do

the cooking and baking. However, cracks very quickly begin to appear in her story when she reveals that she has never used dried pasta before, dumping them all into a pot of cold water and promising that they will shrink as they cook so they will eventually be submerged. What follows is a comedy of errors – anything that could possibly go wrong does go wrong.

Swanning around in an admittedly adorable top, her curtain of long blonde hair violating every health code, she declares an assortment of cooking utensils as “so brutal”, tips a salt-mine’s worth of salt all over the hobs and into her beef which she was “tanning” (before adding Himalayan pink salt as a “spice”), forgets to add the onions and garlic (“I feel my lasagne should not have onion or garlic in it”), and has no idea what ricotta is even though she brings way too much. As can be expected, there’s generous amounts of product placement in the form of health drinks, “unicorn mist” and maybe her sunglasses but there also additions like a whole shop-front display of tea-towels emblazoned with catchy phrases like “allergic to bullshit”. What’s most puzzling about the whole thing isn’t the motion-sickness inducing camerawork, nor is it the complete lack of recipe details (how much ricotta are you supposed to use?) but her fingerless leather gloves she wears throughout the cooking process even after having picked up Diamond Baby with them on. She describes them as her chef gloves but they’re unlike any chef gloves I’ve ever seen. Apparently

not used for powerlifting, she explains that these gloves are used for “sliving” – “but now it’s 2020, you’re still going to see sliving but sliving it in a different way – like cooking lasagne”. If you have any idea what that means, please write in and explain it to us.

I can’t be too hard on her though. In the end, she does produce a lasagne. She may reveal it to almost no fanfare and she doesn’t even attempt

to have a taste but it’s a lasagne nonetheless. No one died (maybe apart from the poor intern who bought ungrated mozzarella) and I doubt anyone got food poisoning because I have a feeling the product went straight to the bin after shooting. It may be a low bar to set but in a world full of polished professionals who spend their time debating the utility of bay leaves or turning their noses up at green peppers, a cooking

show with zero educational value may be what we need. Even traditionally gentle entertainment like the Great British Bake Off has fallen prey to increasing technical difficulty and rising stakes, a fate that, should the series continue, Cooking with Paris would be immune to. One can only hope that this becomes a whole series but given the fact she didn’t seem to know where she was half the time, I doubt she will

make it back any time soon.

In the first issue of this year’s Fashion section revival, we brushed Paris Hilton off as passé, irrelevant, a remnant of the noughties but she has proved us wrong. She’s not only come back from celebrity death but she’s come back with an instantly viral, infinitely memeable offering. I think we can all agree – that’s hot.

### Paris Lasagne Recipe (or what I can gather)



Paris Hilton//Youtube

#### You will need...

- Lasagna sheets - 1 whole box
- Garlic - 1 bulb
- Onion - 1
- Pepper - 11 grinds exactly
- Ricotta cheese - less than 5 tubs of different brands and volumes
- Low moisture mozzarella - about a plateful grated
- Tomato sauce - 2 jars?
- Beef mince
- Salt - a generous pour
- Himalayan pink salt - a generous sprinkle
- Egg

1. Preheat oven to 350°F
2. Drop the pasta sheets into tepid water and cover
3. Grate the mozzarella
4. Tweet your progress with several novel hashtags and then decide that they’re bad
5. Mix ricotta with egg until “the correct consistency”
6. Heat a glug of oil in a large pan, wiping out excess with a paper towel
7. Fry beef mince until “tan”, flattening with a spatula as you go
8. Season with too much salt and wipe off excess with a wet paper towel
9. When beef is well-cooked and the colour of broken dreams, drain in a colander
10. Return beef to pan and add tomato sauce, bringing to a simmer and further breaking up the beef with 2 spatulas and a potato masher
11. Build your lasagne, spreading a thin layer of meat sauce onto the bottom of the lasagne dish or aluminium tray and adding the pasta sheets before topping with ricotta mixture
12. Repeat until roasting tray is full
13. Top with grated mozzarella and bake covered with foil for 35-40mins
14. Take out of oven and serve?

# MUSIC

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## “OZZY ZIG Needs Gig” - 50 years on from Black Sabbath’s debut album

*This week in Felix we look back at the seminal debut album of the heavy metal fathers Black Sabbath, and wonder how this critically rebuked album became the springboard of so many different metal genres.*

### MUSIC

Emily Freeman

Music Editor

A brand-new year means a brand-new set of iconic albums turning 50, and this week is no different as Felix looks back at the seminal, eponymously entitled album, Black Sabbath. When first released, this album received critical reviews yet commercial success, and has gone on to be hailed as the birth of heavy metal. But why did critics rebuke Black Sabbath’s first attempt, and if they’re right, how did it propel the band to the fame they encounter today?

To answer these, we need some background. Black Sabbath were formed from an amalgamation of two failing Brummie bands in 1968, after guitarist Tony Iommi and drummer Bill Ward got in contact with singer Ozzy Osbourne through his ad, stating “OZZY ZIG Needs Gig – has own PA”. The magical words marking the beginning of metal itself. Osbourne brought along his old bandmate, bassist Geezer Butler, and together the four were reborn as Black Sabbath, with a few stints as The Polka Tulk Blues Band and Earth in between. In these early days, the group mainly played old-school blues and jazz, with a brief stint in Jethro Tull shaping Iommi’s style in early 1969. This can still be heard in their later albums as well as in *Black*

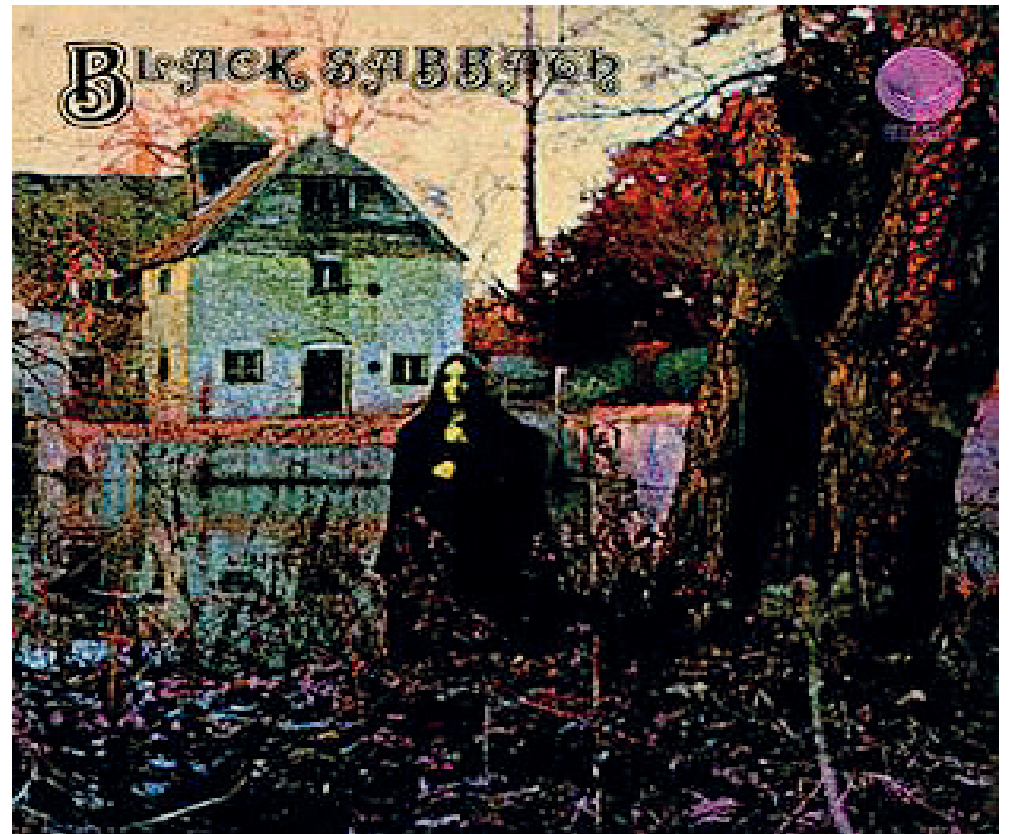
*Sabbath*. Soon after the group were picking up gigs and being peddled in front of record labels in an attempt to be signed. This wasn’t successful. Instead they were told to play pop, with Butler saying “They just didn’t get it. So they tried to make us a pop band”. Osbourne made it overtly clear as well: “Sabbath don’t write fucking hit singles”. Despite this, when Sabbath hit the studio in November 1969, they recorded their regular setlist including the pop-ier cover of ‘Evil Woman’ by Crow. Allegedly this took about 12 hours to record, and they were done in time for last orders. In January 1970, the record label Philips took an interest

**“Commercial and critical success seemed to differ due to Sabbath’s mysticism”**

and released Sabbath’s take on a pop song ‘Evil Woman’; despite the single not charting, the next month, Friday 13th February, they release the entire album on Philips’ more progressive label, Fontana.

*Black Sabbath* hit the charts, reaching number 8 in the UK and eventually reaching 23 in the States when it was released later that year. However,

Rolling Stone described the album as having “nothing to do with... anything much except stiff recitations of Cream clichés that sound like the musicians learned them out of a book”. Big oof. Yet critically the album doesn’t line up with its commercial worth. This isn’t massively saying much: critics can definitely be wrong (Rolling Stone have admitted they panned a few now legendary albums, such as *Led Zeppelin I* and *Nevermind*), and the charts can really, really be wrong as well at the best of times. Ultimately though the commercial and critical response given to the album seemed to differ due to the mysticism surrounding Black Sabbath at the time. Firstly, their name, taken from Boris Karloff’s 1963 film of the same name was intended to get people intrigued, with Butler’s logic at the time being “it was strange so many people spend so much money to see scary movies”. The title track ‘Black Sabbath’ kicks off the album with Black Sabbath’s now signature mix of suspenseful, doomy noise which was at the time a new kind of sound from a band in the charts. The dread-filled songs, now a Sabbath signature, first came from this song, based upon a dream that Butler had where he saw an apparition standing at the foot of his bed. Upon telling the rest of his bandmates, Osbourne wrote the ominous lyrics “What is this that stands before me?/Figure in black which points at me”. This was accompanied



The eerie figure in black featured was the inspiration for the title track // Wikimedia

by Iommi’s distinctive discordant riff, apparently dubbed the “devil’s tritone” by classical music. Nowadays Butler finds amusement in this origin story, explaining “I always had...psychic experiences. That was one of the very last ones I had...that was before I did drugs, by the way”. Sabbath, not doing drugs? Sounds spooky to me too.

Thanks to this song style, word got around that Black Sabbath were Satanists, probably not helped by other lyrics such as “my name is Lucifer, please take my hand” in the song N.I.B. and the enchanting tale found in the song ‘The Wizard’. Sabbath’s label played up to this, packaging the album up with an eerie cloaked figure on a pink-hued front cover, standing in the foreground of a

church. The inner sleeve featured an inverted cross and a dark poem within it. These rumours were further fuelled by the album release in the States which is rumoured to have been launched by Anton Lavey, the head of the Church of Satan. Potentially, the juxtaposition between critical and commercial success of this album may have been down to this hype around the “Satanist” band: consumers wanted to know what it was about, whereas critics may have expected more from what is realistically Sabbath’s blues-iest album. However, saying this does not mean Black Sabbath should not get the credit it deserves as one of the first heavy metal albums. Nearly all of the other songs on the album featured Iommi’s guitar style heavily, char-

acteristic to him because of his adapted playing to incorporate his plastic-fingertips, and it was these

**“Bended and discordant chords paired up with Osbourne’s voice.”**

slowed down, bended and discordant chords combined with Osbourne distinctive voice which pushed the band in the heavy direction. In the end it was these two quirks of the band, along with their blues background, which evolved their sound into the beginnings of a new genre.

# MUSIC

music.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## Yummy isn't painfully mediocre, it's fantastically stupid

*After a brief hiatus Bieber returned with a critical flop, but maybe there's something special hidden amongst the wreckage.*

### MUSIC

**Guthrie Ruby**

*Music Editor*

Justin Bieber is no stranger to a bit of controversy. Growing up is hard enough, let alone doing it with millions of eyes fixed on you. Be honest, we've all hit a paparazzi with our car or been blacklisted by the Chinese government, but imagine how much harder that is to deal with when people are also starting petitions to have you removed from your county. Considering our boy Justin stepped into the limelight over a decade ago he's certainly proven his stamina for a public bashing. All that's in the past now though. Bieber took a hiatus at the beginning of last year, now he's getting married... Justin Bieber who? Barely recognisable.

If his marketing team are pushing an image of a more mature Bieber

that's fine, no qualms with that it's about time. We'd believe them if this wasn't the seventeenth time they've tried this strategy. Though, heads will turn if you start using scuzzy tactics to get your new single to number one.

'Surreal' is an understatement when you go through the list of things the Bieber team has been doing to try and get "Yummy" to number one. Seven videos for "Yummy" were released on youtube: official, lyric, fan lip sync, beliebers react, animated, food fight, and yet another animated video. Why? Because Billboard counts all those views as streams. On an Instagram post Bieber asked fans to put the song on repeat while they sleep, buy the song regardless of streaming services already used and even purchase a VPN so that they could stream the song on American servers. The peak of this fever dream was when Bieber randomly started posting



JB eyeing up that number one spot // Justin Bieber/Youtube

photos of unknown babies on his Instagram with the caption "#yummy". The amount of other dumb shit they did could fill this page, but you can just look it up if you're still interested. Needless to say, the music community was quick to lampoon this con.

"Yummy" only made it to number two in the end, oof.

The song is bad that's why. All around poor choices were made and yet I can't help but love all of it so very much. The satisfaction is similar to watching the video of Post Malone's crowd surfing fail or Travis Scott falling off stage in autotune. Team Bieber gave themselves a big ol' wedgie.

There's a fantastic song by the comedian Bo Burnham called "Repeat Stuff" that takes the piss out of the music industry's approach to writing songs. He points out that music

from One Direction, Justin Bieber, Usher and many others is written to be as vague as possible so that anyone can think the song is about themselves. The same thing has happened with "Yummy" and it's so ridiculous that it's almost become self-parody. The first song released about Bieber's wife, Hailey Baldwin, is one of his vaguest and stupidest songs to date.

It isn't just music critics with their heads up their own asses that think this either. The general reception from most is that Bieber's return has been painfully mediocre.

**"This concoction of complete fuck-upery that has won me over"**

The obvious blunder is the use of "yummy" as a sexy word, which it isn't. Also, using "yummy" like that makes the posting of baby pictures with the caption "#Yummy" a lot creepier. Lyrically the song lacks any substance and there are a couple weird choices like when Bieber calls Hailey a "Bona fide stallion" ... which is the male horse.

The song has six writing credits, yes, it took six people to write this song. Did no one proofread this thing? Did all six of these "professionals" think this was an appropriate song for a man to sing about his wife? I just hope Bieber didn't hire them to help write his vows.

YouTube commentary comedian Danny Gonzalez covered this beautiful car crash of a single release and made a parody song. Honestly, on a technical level the parody song has better

lyrics.

The production elements on "Yummy" are all tight. Beliebers definitely aren't tuning in for new experimental stuff but the instrumental is surprisingly basic - a palatable summer chill beat that anyone could groove to. Everything in this song has been done before. There's not much else to say, it's a very simple song.

The sum of all the musical missteps and promotion scandals makes "Yummy" one of Bieber's worst songs to date, and it's this concoction of complete fuck-upery that has won me over. A bit of dumb fun that no one is taking seriously. Something special about that. So, I stand with the die-hard Beliebers on this one. It may not have made it to #1 on the charts but "Yummy" is #1 in my heart.



Artwork for JB's yummy new single // Wikimedia

# MUSIC

music.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## Spin the Bottle: The Perfect Valentines Playlist

*This playlist will light up that special day*

### MUSIC

#### Ambika Bharadwaj

Music Writer

#### Yes to Love

**Artist:** Lana del Rey

**Similar Songs:** fallingforyou – the 1975

We're Not Just Friends – Parks, Squares & Alleys

4 minutes

“If you dance, I'll dance

& if you don't, I'll dance anyway”

This unreleased song by Lana Del Rey is unlike any of her others. Instead of her usual complex narrative, the track does not carry the sound of a heart breaking. And although Lana never quite shows vulnerability in her music, the lyrics take you back to the time you had a crush on someone.

#### Pretender

**Artist:** Hovvdy

**Similar Songs:** Prettiest Friend – Jason Mraz

Weird Around You – Eerie Summer

2 minutes

“Look at your eyes like, I'm lacking a punchline”

It's never easy, having a crush on your friend and the worst part is the dreadful period between the realization & the confrontation, the pretending. This song is suspended in that moment. What distinguishes this record from any number of other nostalgic indie ruminations on suburban teenhood is the sparkling optimism

Hovvdy carry with them.

#### Goopy

**Artist:** Glass Animals

**Similar Songs:** Thinkin Bout You – Frank Ocean

Iconic – Emotional Oranges

5 minutes

“Mind my wicked words and tipsy topsy smirk”

This colourful collage is a love song written under heavy influence of marijuana.

Eclectic yet easy going, this song resembles slick rap and R&B, after being deconstructed and glued back together with pritt stick and bodily fluids. The beats ooze and groove awkwardly and even the breezy notion of getting high turns into a gross, goopy situation.

#### Slow Dancing in the Dark

**Artist:** Joji

**Similar Songs:** Dancing – Mellow Fellow

Alrighty Aphrodite – PEACH PIT

4 minutes

There's a sense that Joji is searching for peace in his life beyond failed romances and conflicted guilt. On this track, he cries in the anthemic chorus, unable to keep his intentions straight for two consecutive lines. He's cathartic at best, but there's a strange comfort in his neurotic rumination.

#### Honey Pie

**Artist:** Johnny Utah

**Similar Songs:** Restless – KakkMaddafakka

Can I Call You Tonight? – Dayglow

2 minutes

“Oh girl don't you stop, don't you stop 'till you get enough honey”

The song that would play whenever you saw

your middle-school crush, Johnny Utah has blessed us with an insanely cute track that is all about an innocent crush. It sounds like the lovechild of Tame Impala & Dayglow and its perfect for baking and day-dreaming scenarios with your crush.

#### To the Moon

**Artist:** Phora

**Similar Songs:** Lover is a Day – CUCO,

Mess is Mine – Vance Joy

4 minutes

“I think you're the one Girl, you shouldn't be so scared to fall in love”

Phora's candor leaves an inedible mark in this song which is all about glitter & dirty laundry that is a part of every relationship. The lyrics are in earnest & talk about the kind of love & respect that all relationships deserve.

#### So Hot You're Hurting My Feelings

**Artist:** Caroline Polachek

**Similar Songs:** I Dare You – The Regrettes

Where The Sky Hangs – Passion Pit

“Get a little more close to me

You're the only one who knows me, babe”

Even though Caroline gets punchy and self-mocking, this song is nothing less than a swooning track, a waltz-tempo love ballad. It's a love song about the moment of surrender, the pain preceding it, and the euphoria after and it's a perfect track to play when you want to nudge a certain someone in the right direction.

#### Uncomfortable

**Artist:** Wallows

**Similar Songs:** Song for Zula – Phosphorescent

Two – Sleeping at Last

5 minutes

“Thought it was gonna last

I'm not uncomfortable but I feel so uncomfortable”

Colloquial, casual and feel-good indie-pop with a hearty bass and beat is the fundamental of this song. The opening riff is incredible, and the elements added by the boy band make this song a worthy listen. Perfect

for driving around in the night, alone with your thoughts or with someone to share the silence.

#### Losin' Control

**Artist:** Russ

**Similar Songs:** I Fall Apart – Post Malone

Ocean Eyes – Billie Eilish

4 minutes

“She's falling but she doesn't think he'll catch her”

This song celebrates falling in love after being hurt, hoping this time it doesn't blow up in your face. The beats and Russ's soothing words make it both a ballad & a romantic song.

#### Call Me Back

**Artist:** Strokes

**Similar Songs:** The Suburbs – Arcade Fire

Dark Necessities – Red Hot Chili Peppers

“Waking up is so much fun to do

'80 movie make out party, yeah”

This drum-less ballad is one of the simplest tunes on The Strokes' album. It hurts when you find out the other person doesn't have the same feelings as you do, and you wasted so much time thinking about all the possible things you could have done together.

#### There She Go

**Artist:** Garren Sean

**Similar Songs:** Sunday Candy – Chance The Rapper

Classic – MKTO

3 minutes

“I said meet me halfway See you on the other side”

The soul filled artist would remind you of a trifecta between Daft Punk x Breakbot & Jai Paul. Garren is reminis-

cent of some of the most original gangstas of funk yet completely creates his own unique sound and on this particular solo track, Garren showcases his genre blending magic by playing a funky guitar, R&B vocals, soulful synths with a little touch of rock & roll.

#### Kaleidoscope Dream

**Artist:** Miguel

**Similar Songs:** Easily – Bruno Major

Electric – Alina Baraz ft. Khalid

4 minutes

“I taste you infinite colours

Collide in a fountain”

The music draws on R&B, pop, funk, rock and soul styles, as well as elements from electronic and psychedelic music. Miguel incorporated dense bass lines, buzzing synthesizers, and hazy, reverbed sounds in the song, which deals mostly with sex and romance.

#### Loving is Easy

**Artist:** Rex Orange County

**Similar Songs:** Such Great Heights – The Postal Service

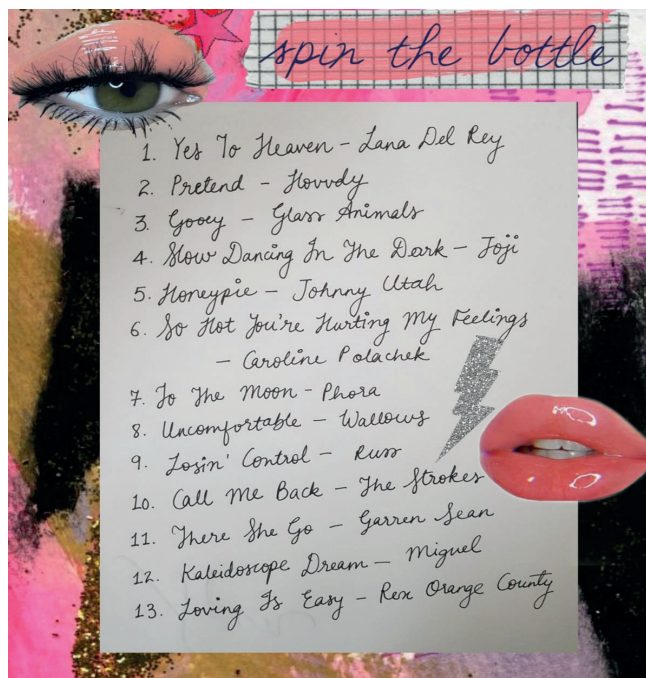
5 Years Time – Noah & The Whale

3 minutes

“I was all on my own, almost glad to be alone”

In “Loving Is Easy,” O'Connor lays down instrumentation so bright and delightful, it

almost comes off as juvenile—the keyboards and drums sound like they could've been lifted from a toy set. He also possesses a conversational, bouncy voice that's easy to hum along to.





# CONSTITUENT UNION

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## Cheesy Curly Fries: The Key to Successful RCSU events

RCSU

**Marine Coispeau**

*RCSU VP Activities*

**Gabriel Michaels**

*RCSU Events Officer*

**Karl Lee**

*RCSU RAG Officer*

**Mihir Varsani**

*RCSU Sports Officer*

Unconsciously, by coming to study at such a culturally rich university, and proudly harbouring that red lanyard as a fresher, we tend to associate ourselves to separate and diverse student entities: an imperial undergraduate, an RCSU member, a life scientist, and a biochemist, for example. As recent political events have shown, a national identity may overtake a continental European one. One of the biggest challenges that the RCSU faces is to bridge 3000 students from Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biochemistry and Biology together as a single entity beyond their

departmental level. One way of promoting this is through the social, sport, and RAG organisation of large interdepartmental events. It is, however, important to bear in mind that we wish to achieve this by working alongside the departmental societies and without event cross-interference. Thus, event logistics (dates, times, location and types of event) and publicity methods need to be carefully planned out, overcoming a number of hurdles. Our successes and failures provide the opportunity to develop as the Activities Committee as well as reflecting on why it is we volunteer.

In the RCSU one of our fundamental aims, especially within the activities team, is to create events bringing you wonderful people and your wonderful cultures together. At Imperial we celebrate our differences, and we wish to reflect that in the events we provide. As evidently as within people, the more distinctive and more

plentiful the activities the more joyous the fruits of interaction and participation.

Foodie lover RAG officer Karl Lee shares his RCSU success guide through a beautiful and stomach-teasing analogy where events are the key driving force (on top of dedication, motivation and teamwork of course!):

“I recently visited the Union Bar to test out the refreshed edition of Imperial College Cheesy Curly Fries. I breathed heavily as I clutched the warm box of fries, eager to taste the greasy goodness within. Opening the box, I separated a chunk of cheesy potato and lifted it into my mouth. The air was tense. My taste buds erupted in a violent hurricane of sensations: salty, fatty, crispy, soft – all combined so ingeniously together in a torrent of tastiness.

I think of the RCSU just as I think of those cheesy curly fries. A sticky but delicious mess, reminiscent of that complex matrix of

potatoes, oil, and melted cheese. Individually, each bit of the RCSU is not particularly strong, just as an individual potato fry is not particularly noticeable or flavourful. Yet as a whole, it is a powerfully delicious force; a union between a diverse range of students. The slew of RCSU events and activities; pub-crawls, quizzes, charity events, nights-out – this is the thick, cheesy glue that brings departments together. Broadsheet, the Science Challenge, BAHfest, and many other initiatives that make the RCSU different - these are the jagged, crusty edges, a mix of melted cheese and burnt potato. Finally, the immense body of students that form the RCSU; these are the fries, the key basis of the whole structure; the element that is essential to the dish”.

Next up, table tennis fan and Sports Officer, Mihir Varsani reflecting upon sports as a major driving force for a stronger union: “Within sports, the divisions between depart-



Mihir, Karl and Marine at our latest RAG x RCSU axe throwing event // RCSU

ments of the faculty can be exploited to create unity. The competitive nature of sport allows social events to be created that pitch departments against each other. Throughout my degree, I have found that representing your field and trying to prove your superiority over the others is a strong incentive for participation. However, events must be organised so that the competitive nature is utilised in a friendly manner as faculty cohesion must be promoted over further enhancing the divisions. Creating events to fit these criteria has proven to be difficult, particularly

when implementing them on the large faculty-wide scale”.

All in all, the successfulness of any student led organisation should rely on efficient teamwork and communication to lead and promote diverse events. It is as a team that we celebrate our successes, as a team that we confront the bumps along the road and as a team that we give back to the Imperial Community. Hence it is a priority that the voice of every member is heard to not only generate ever more original events but also ensure that they have fun in the process!

# Science Challenge

sciencechallenge.org  
scichal@ic.ac.uk

Interested in science communication?  
Think you can communicate science in a  
creative, engaging manner?

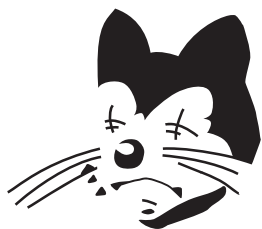
Submit an entry  
for a chance at  
winning £1000!

A chance to think about science in a wider societal context  
Deadline: February 18th

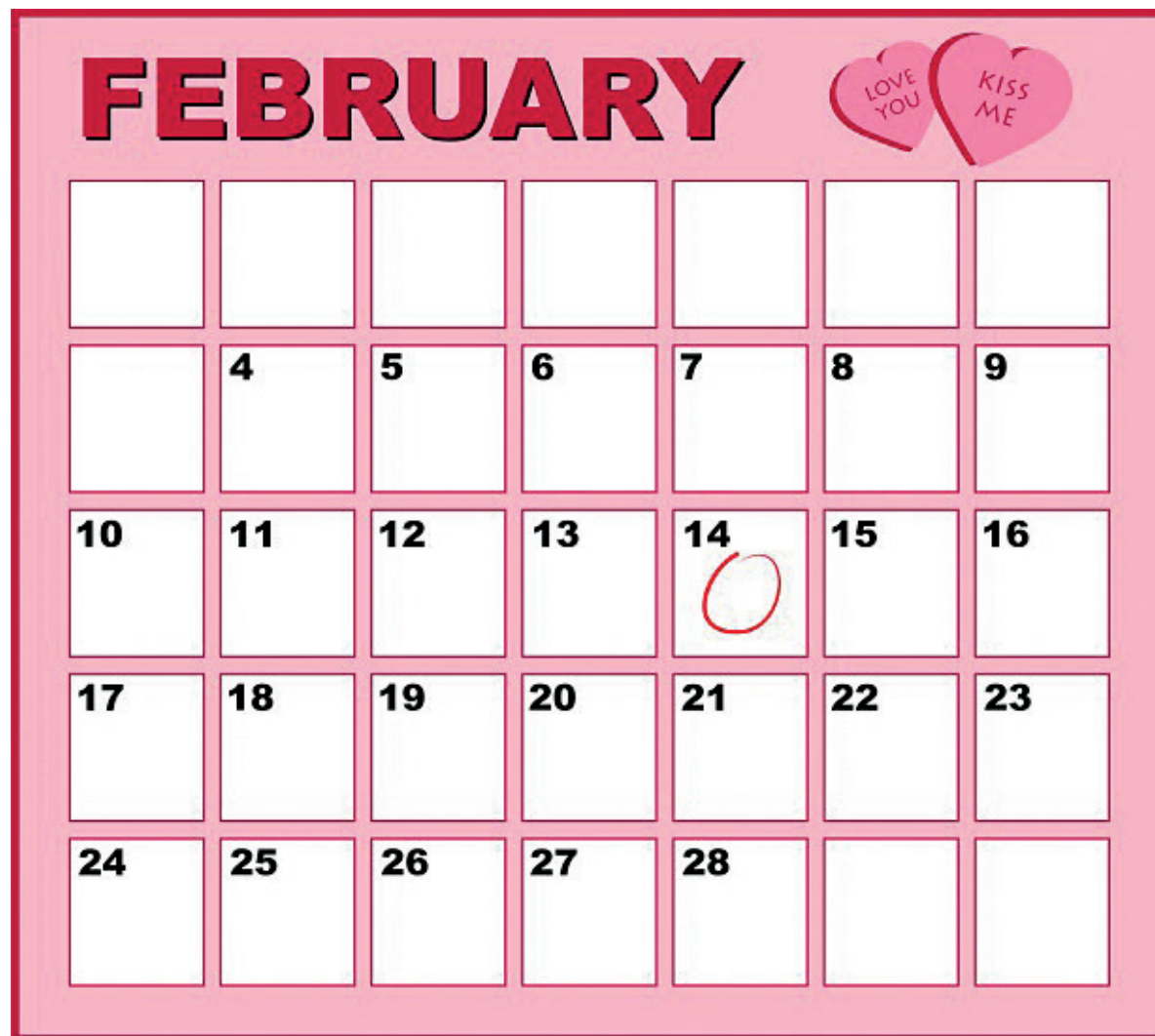
Visit [sciencechallenge.org](http://sciencechallenge.org) for contest rules and questions.

Presented by the RCSU with support from the RCSA





# Hangman



Pink is my favourite colour and I am a real and genuine man//Public Domain pictures

## Days You Should Be Celebrating But You're Not

### HANGMAN

Negafelix  
Editor-in-Chief

While St Valentine's Day gets a load of attention, the guy was a loser. So rather than celebrating his day, here is a list of better occasions for Feb 14th.

#### Number 1. National Ferris Wheel Day

38 children last year were born on a Ferris wheel meaning that the probability that one of them is reading this article is 0%. Because they're babies.

#### Number 2. Pet Theft Awareness Day

Did you know that Valentine's day was actually created in the 40's by a gang of opportunistic Dachshund thieves that offered free meals to couples while their fellow crims stole hundreds of pounds? Think about that next time you kiss someone.

#### Number 3. Parents' Worship Day

In some parts of India children use the 14th of February to show their love and appreciation for their parents. Just goes to show how desperate some people get during a dry spell.

#### Number 4. National Condom Awareness Day

There is a serious crisis of young condoms getting knocked over crossing the road or accepting gifts from strangers going on right now. Condom parents! Teach your kids awareness!

#### Number 5. Quirky Alone Day

This one is for all you people out there that are so quirky that you sometimes randomly scream at parties. You're so cool and everyone wants to be you.

#### Number 6. Great Yard Bird Count Day

This one is for the older members of the NegaFelix readership. If you sit in your front room and record the time and day of when women come past over the course of a week you will save time and energy. No point perverting if there ain't nobody to perv on!

#### Number 7. International Book giving Day

Buy Amazon shares now!!!!

#### Number 8. Federick Douglass Day

I have no idea who Frederick Douglass is but the charades game that my co-editor is playing with me allows me to tell you that he was a huge Lady Gaga fan. He must be so grateful to Pete Buttigieg for helping get his name out. What a man!

#### Number 9. Manchan Day

This guy asked God to send a plague to Ireland in order to deal with the overpopulation problem but ended up dying in the plague that started that year. So metal.

#### Number 10. World Sound Healing Day

This is the day of the year that some people have been training for. The Primal Scream Olympics in Reykjavik kick off at 11am GMT and feature events such as who can spit food the farthest by talking and chewing at the same time. ESPN 11 every day next week.

# HANGMAN

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## Straight Guy Sleeps With Other Men to Prove to Friends that Having a Girlfriend Won't Tie Him Down

### HANGMAN

Negafelix  
Editor-in-Chief

For decades, it has been observed that there is a spike in male homosexual intercourse in the days leading up to Valentine's. While multiple theories have been posited, none have gained as much traction as that of men sleeping with other men to prove that they can still have fun and be mad lads even after getting into a relationship.

Men entering into

heterosexual relationships are often given the toxic stereotype of being BoRiNg and never being WiLLiNg tO cOmE oUt fOr a PiNt. But this is often untrue, and men have taken to the sheets to prove the unwavering strength of their inner hard man.

Hearing that these men are giving each other brojobs and sleeping with other men, you might be thinking, 'wait, this sounds kinda gay', but you are dearly mistaken. The men participating in this ritual insist that they are straight; they have girlfriends, after all.

When asked if whether he was a closet homosexual or bisexual, a source tells us, "Well it obviously wasn't gay because we never made eye contact. Granted he was nailing me whilst I was pinned against the wall, his hot breath against my ear and our hearts beating in perfect synchronicity, and... Well anyways we never made eye contact. So it wasn't gay. I'm fucking straight bro."

Sen Febton, who lectures a course at Impenis College London on what constitutes homosexual sex, confirms this: "It's true, it's not gay if you



Socks keep my feet nice and cosy// Pxfuel

don't make eye contact. And doesn't count if you wear socks. And, studies show that if it doesn't count either if it's a three way, even if it's three men."

Another brave fellow testified to the reliability of these cardinal rules: "One year, I almost forgot to say "no homo" but thank god I remembered at the very last minute,

right before he left my flat the morning after. My girlfriend would be so mad if she found out I was having gay sex, but yea that was a real close one."



### ARIES

This week you start thinking about graduation. While you thought it was hilarious to apply for a job in a jelly factory last year you are now considering your career choices.



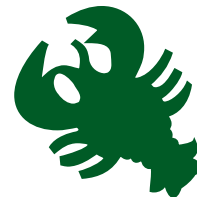
### TAURUS

This week your mate asks if he can sleep on your sofa so that he can "see how Londoners live".  
-  
You tell him to piss off and pay for a room.



### GEMINI

This week you look up the value of personal injury claims. Do you really need both eyes?  
-  
On your bike.



### CANCER

This week you find out what the opposite of diversity is.  
-  
University.



### LEO

This week, to avoid looking like an arsehole, you break up with your partner the day before valentines day.  
-  
You are Boris Johnson.



### VIRGO

This week you find out that sad and lonely people take long, hot showers.  
-  
That explains your heating bills.



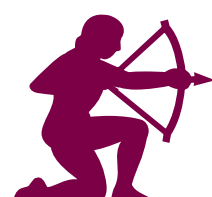
### LIBRA

This week your compulsory flight back to Jamaica is cancelled due to the storm.  
-  
Looks like its Border Force 0 - 1 You



### SCORPIO

This week you find yourself with a older man behind you and a younger in front of you.  
-  
Your darts team has been asked to line up in age order.



### SAGITTARIUS

This week you battle low temperatures and February blues by opening all your windows and mxing out the heating  
Climate emergency beach days can't come fast enough.



### CAPRICORN

This week you find out that traders has an anagram.  
-  
It's not a good anagram.



### AQUARIUS

This week your crush still hasn't asked you out and Valentine's Day is getting closer.  
-  
You resolve to ignore him even harder till he gets the message.



### PISCES

This week after your girlfriend tells you she thinks buying chocolates for Valentines is clichéd, you mysteriously gain 4 kilos.



# SPORTS

sport.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## En garde: Strong performances for Fencing

### SPORTS

#### Filip Aniés

IC Fencing: Vice President

For the first time since 2014, Imperial Men's 1st has conquered the BUCS South Premiership! This follows a weekend hosted by University of Kent, where matches were played in a round-robin format. Arriving with 6/6 victories from previous matches, University of Oxford was the main rival, with losses only against Imperial and UCL. At least 3 victories on Imperial's side were required to secure the title.

The first day featured matches against UCL and Bristol. The match against UCL was won comfortably, with a lead of 45-25 after fencing épée, and with sabre won with the

scores 45-16 (with Ian Ren scoring an impressive indicator of +14, of +15 possible). The final result was 129-85. In the following match against Bristol, the épée team once again fenced for a comfortable lead of 45-21, with three bouts passing without Bristol scoring a single hit (despite the possibility of double hits in épée). The final score was 135-98. With this, a victory against King's College the day after would secure the title. After an even start in foil, Hugo Briais fenced a perfect bout of 5-0, leading to a 35-27 lead. This was too much for King's to catch up on, and Harry Peck scored the conclusive hit half-way through the last match in épée. The victory of 135-105 against King's turned out to be crucial, as Oxford ended up winning the last bout 114-123,

despite an Imperial victory of 125-114 earlier in December.

The Premiership title is the result of a great season performed by a hard-working and committed team. Whilst Imperial has long had a strong épée team, led by Harry Peck and James Odgers, a combination of weapon and BUCS rules makes foil and sabre more heavily weighted when final scores are added up. Therefore, Hong Kong top foilist Aaron Lee was a very welcome addition last year, and was elected Team Captain to lead the team through this season. This year also saw the addition of UK top sabreur Ian Ren, who has fenced formidably throughout this year and clearly been a contributing factor to the league title.

In the same weekend, Imperial Women's 1st also



Men's 1<sup>st</sup> team post-league victory // Basia Banaszak

had a strong performance, winning 3/5 matches. The épée team was particularly successful against UCL, with the score 45-11. Another very impressive performance was done by Francesca Cavallo, who - despite primarily being an épéeist - stepped up in foil against Kent and reduced a total disadvan-

tage of 87-101 to 97-105. This was enough for the team to eventually win with the scores 121-116, with Francesca once again dominating in the decisive bout. The team was less lucky against Bristol, where an initial disadvantage of 17-45 after foil was caught up to 102-106 before the final

épée bout, which had to be won by at least 5-1. Unfortunately, the match was narrowly lost with the scores 107-109. Overall, the Imperial Women's 1st placed themselves #4/6 in the league, securing their position in the Premiership for the forthcoming season.

## ICSWP: LUSL 2s triumph against Barts 2s

### SPORTS

#### Tom Alston

ICSWP: 2<sup>nd</sup> Water Polo Team Captain (LUSL), aka El Capitan

12	11
Imperial LUSL 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team	Barts LUSL 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team

On a cold winter's night in February the London Universities Sport Leagues (LUSL) 2<sup>nd</sup> team, a team of elite and high-performance athletes arrive in the dwelling of Shadwell. Petros, who from now on shall be called God, leaves the Porsche and Company he owns at home and arrives

in his typical European style, by moped. They arrive at Queen Mary's pool.

One can only describe this establishment as "A Chernobyl Style Call of Duty Map". Paint and rust

**"One can only describe this establishment as 'A Chernobyl Style Call of Duty Map'"**

flaked from every surface, and despite being a place of abundant liquid, water was certainly not the bountiful fluid. After a brisk warm up the match starts immediately. No.

6, who was later donned with the name Prick, takes the ball confidently. After grappling and physically abusing half our team, the 2s knew the only response to violence is even greater violence.

Prez grabbing the suit of her opponent pulls her underwater, and after hearing a gurgling plea of "let go of my suit b\*\*\*h" utters "how kind of you to ask ... no". By this stage God had taken several blatant hits to torso from Prick and comes to El Capitan pleading to pummel this excuse of a water polo player into oblivion. He holds the high ground and reluctantly forbids the act.

The score reads 10-7 coming into the final quarter, but as if by coincidence the score board and clock become "inop-

erable". Though nay, fear not because the "ref" proclaims himself in charge. Finlay receives a sublime through pass, he grapples the ball coils himself up and performs the art of the backshot perfectly placing the ball in the top corner, giving the two-finger salute to girl who kicked him moments ago. 10-8. Sir Lancemop scores seconds later followed quickly by Thanos. 10-10. After a quick restart Prick fouls and takes a shot 11-10, but God replies with a fantastic dummy shot 11-11. With one-minute left to go the ball falls into the hands of acting goalie El Capitan. He brings it forward, pauses, thinks about his pink hot water bottle awaiting him at home, and hurls it towards the bottom right.



El capitan's wild water polo team // ICSWP

The ball sails past the face of an astounded goalie. 11-12!! Though elate not. For apparently "A goal was missing on our side... so it should of ended 12-12." Bewildered and amused El Capitan was, for Bart's must think him

a fool. But fray not he is in charge of the input to BUCS play. #Upthe2s #FollowDocandu

## SPORTS

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## Imperial College Boxing Club continues unbeaten run

Amy Hodgkin and Callum McCarthy smash the competition to bring back gold medals from their recent

## SPORTS

## Connor Roberts

IC Boxing - Chair

## David Stringer

IC Boxing - Publicity

After causing an upset on Oxford's home turf at their Town vs. Gown event last month, Imperial College Boxing Club were looking to continue their run of form at the annual BUCS boxing national championships. For only the second time in the club's history, IC Boxing Club put forward its best boxers to do battle with the toughest university competitors from across the UK. Two fearless Imperial boxers took on the challenge and made the journey to the Wolverhampton University venue on the 31st January.

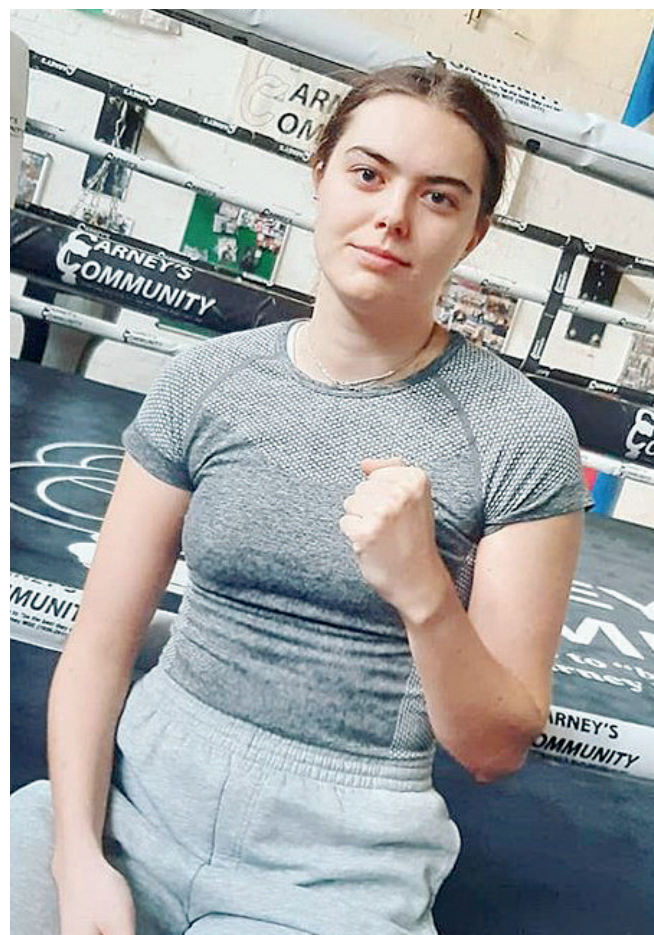
The championships are

**"Amy charged out of her corner to make sure she landed the first punch of the quarter final"**

a 3-day tournament-style competition, with competitors divided up according to weight and experience. Quarter-final matches commenced on the Friday, where Amy Hodgkin, an aeronautics PhD student from Cambridge, found herself matched with a Brunel University boxer in the female 0-5 bouts 64-69kg category. Accompanying Amy



David 'Rocky' Stringer claims a split decision win against an Oxford boxer at Town vs. Gown boxing show one week before BUCS // Oxford University Boxing Club



Amy 'The Hammer' Hodgkin fighting fit in the build up to BUCS // IC Boxing

were three of the best coaches in the business, drawing on over a century of boxing experience: former GB Olympic team coach George Burton, former London amateur boxing captain Franky 'Fingers' Finn and star coach 'Shakey' Shaheed Fontaine. Over the past 4 months each has passed on their boxing wisdom to give Amy the edge in the ring, perfecting the art of 'hit and don't get hit'.

Seconds out... Round 1! Amy charged out of her corner to make sure she landed the first punch of the quarter final. Being much taller than her opponent, as well as adopting a southpaw fighting style (meaning she boxes right hand forward with a left hand power shot), made Amy an awkward target. The Hammer used her superior reach and slick

body movement to evade the Brunel boxer for the whole bout, all the time managing to land fast jabs before following up with devastating backhand power punches.

**"Coach Shakey urged his boxer to 'stop playing with her food' and go for the knockout"**

This tactic paid off: after the third and final round of 2 minutes, Amy was crowned the victor by ringside judges in a unanimous decision. Onwards to the semi-finals.

Always hypercritical and seeking perfection from their boxers, the coaches gave Amy some pre-semifinal advice to tighten-up any weaknesses she showed from her first bout. Coach Shakey urged his boxer to 'stop playing with her food' and go for the knockout. This was good advice. The semi-final started in similar fashion with Amy dominating from the start. Her shorter adversary charged out the corner, hoping to get on the inside of Amy's long reach, but the Imperial boxer was too clever and hit back. Hard. The barrage of punches that followed were to connect flush with the face of the opponent, forcing a quick intervention from the referee who called a 'standing 8' count. Upon recommencing the bout, Amy pounced again.

## SPORTS

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## with record double gold medal haul at BUCS

competitions. Imperial's Boxing continue to stack up the titles.

This time the ref had seen enough and stopped the bout. Amy secured her ticket to the final by first round stoppage.

The day of the final arrived. Amy needed to overcome a boxer from the top sporting university of Nottingham to become national champion. The first round begun with her challenger yet again charging forward and desperate to get inside of the taller boxer's long reach. Nottingham clearly had a game plan. It was Mike Tyson who once said: "everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth". The Nottingham plan went out the window, with Imperial's boxer using some clever foot movement to dance away from her opponent and quickly tire them out. Then, when the moment

was right, The Hammer unleashed a single powerful backhand that rocked the Nottingham boxer and resulted in a standing count just before the end of the first round. The second round started with Amy still full of energy, but her opponent already looking defeated. It was inevitable: with the Nottingham boxer's hands dropping, Amy took full advantage by ending the fight with some more powerful backhands. The result: Amy national champion by stoppage in the second round of the final!

When asked what preparation gave her the edge, Amy told us she was confident because of how hard she worked: "I trained every day just for this moment! 5 days of boxing plus a 4-mile



All smiles from Callum and the coaches after battling hard to secure gold. From left to right: Coach Franky Fingers, Coach Burton, Champion Callum and Coach Shakey Shaheed. //IC Boxing

morning run and hill sprints every week. I even kept this up over the Christmas break!"

However, Imperial's

day was not finished yet. Biomedical PhD student Callum McCarthy from Bletchley was looking to earn Imperial's second gold medal of the day. Being in the elite 8-15 bouts category for 52-56kg male boxers meant there was only one other boxer in the whole of the UK at Callum's level and so he had a straight final. For the first

**"It was still all to play for as both competitors were full of energy and hungry to be crowned champion"**

two rounds Callum and his Newcastle opponent traded combinations of lightning-fast punches that made for exhilarating viewing. Callum's straight

shots to his opponent's head kept him at bay before unleashing the occasional right hook to the body to break him down. Callum went into the third and final round arguably with a slight edge, but it was still all to play for as both competitors were full of energy and hungry to be crowned champion. The third round started in similar fashion before... BANG. Callum landed a straight backhand that gave the Newcastle boxer the standing count. 60 seconds to go. Both gladiators are throwing everything at each other. Then, with 20 seconds left, the Newcastle boxer has backed Callum onto the ropes but the Imperial boxer cleverly twists away and turns it to his advantage, landing a few punches in quick succession to give his opponent a standing count again and seal a dominant victory. Callum McCarthy: second Imperial champion of the day by unanimous decision in the final!

Callum's success came down to his game plan: "You've put the work in,

you know you're fit, so really put the pressure on them early!"

Imperial BC's gold medals at BUCS brings their tally to 5 out of 5 wins for the year. The club is looking to continue

**"Imperial BC's gold medals at BUCS brings their tally to 5 out of 5 wins for the year"**

their unbeaten record next month when they will be sending boxers to Roehampton and Bristol uni boxing shows. Among those being sent will be a few Imperial students boxing in their first ever bouts after joining the club in October. Email [boxing@ic.ac.uk](mailto:boxing@ic.ac.uk) to find out how you can support your Imperial boxers at these shows.



Don't mess with these two! //IC Boxing

## SPORTS

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## IC Waterpolo – (egg)beating to victory: Part 1

## SPORTS

## Anastasia

## Kolesnikova

ICSWP: Women's Waterpolo  
Captain (BUCS)

Imperial College Swim and Water Polo – chances are, you've seen an ICSWP hoodie or beanie around campus. But who are these people, what is their legacy? Why are they participating in shameless self promotion by having an article in Felix for Varsity 2020? I have caught up with two of the captains playing on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> for a chat.

Sasha is the captain for LUSL 1s. He's young but experienced, playing for BUCS alongside his captainship. LUSL 1s are composed primarily of BUCS players and Orlando – a legend who for some reason, has recently disappeared. Whether he was there in the first place remains to be seen. Tom is the captain for LUSL 2s – quirky, with powerful dance moves, he #ups the twos with a sense of identity and purpose. The 2s are a mixed bunch – most of them start out as beginners when they join the club and stay there for the banter that is passed through generations of 2s players. From very old (Petros) to ones that look like a mop (Lancemop) they rise past all limitations and surpass everyone's expectations. Here are the secrets to their success.

### Nastya: What teams are in your league and who have you played so far?

Sasha: We have only played a couple of games so far. We play UCL in their square pool, who we have destroyed, Imperial 2s, Imperial Medics and

Barts 2s, who we have to beat because somehow they're at the top of the league so far.

Tom: We play most other unis – Bart-holomew's, KCL, UCL, Imperial Medics. So far, we have only lost against KCL and 1sts. Unless you count that time when we won against the medics, but conceded the game because we brought too many players.

### Nastya: How did you form and train the teams?

Sasha: Usually everyone has training Monday, Wednesday and Friday. LUSL has a session on Saturday and BUCS has a session on Sunday. We encouraged everyone to come as much as possible, and

### “at some point it got really violent and there were six people all over each other”

whoever trains gets the spot in a game. We've managed to always have 13 players per game. We thought that the 4<sup>th</sup> years, who came with previous experience, should play as much as possible, so that they can learn the British rules. We wanted to have more inexperienced players to play for the firsts as well, as LUSL 2s have 21 players in their team, but we couldn't as that's strictly disallowed.

Tom: Out of the team, only Petros played before. Henry says he was a polo captain, but we all know that's a sympathy card. I had to recruit freshers with the promise of lots of bad nights out and bev-

erages... No, I'm joking, but we have a Saturday session only for LUSL, so we're not intimidated by the BUCS players any more – that's been really helpful. The most important thing to training is to have good team spirit, shit chat and banter on the side.

### Nastya: What is your team like and how do you involve everyone?

Sasha: Our team is made up of mainly BUCS players, as this year we have had a large joining of experienced 4<sup>th</sup> years and complete beginners, and Orlando. He's disappeared recently, but we miss him and hope he comes back. Since the LUSL rules state that there must be two girls in the water at all time, our team is split about evenly for girls and boys – I usually have 5 girls on the team per game. That way Alex is in goal, two girls are outfield, two on the bench.

Tom: There's 21 players in the team. For the first time ever we've had enough girls to have a BUCS team and girls to play on the LUSL team only. I have appointed Clem as my “go to” girl in the LUSL 2s team. I think in the group chat, I can come off as a little intimidating, and not quite as approachable as I'd like to be, especially for the girls. Clem always talks to them and gets them to play. She also does the subs – she knows more about how much they want to play, ect. I just have to be conscious when writing Facebook posts to not only talk about the guys, and not have the banter be too laddish – I can be susceptible to that sometimes, but it's about making sure the girls included and there's

enough girls playing to make them want to keep coming and playing.

### Nastya: What's the goalie situation?

Sasha: We usually have Alex, who used to be a goalie for St Andrews women's team or Joe, who is the men's BUCS goalie.

Tom: Ahaha, the goalie situation. It's as if I can find a goalie. There are no LUSL 2s goalies, so I usually steal some from the other teams, depending on who's around. There's loads of good goalies in the club, but not LUSL 2s goalies. Have I considered training one up? I mean, it's always hard to “sacrifice” a fresher, as they want the glory of having scored the goals, playing outfield, and it's hard to convince a fresher to stay in goal. Maybe next year, but unfortunately, my time as captain will be coming to an end, so, that next year's problem. Also, Giovanni, if you're reading this, you twat, you were supposed to be the one that's coming to play our goalie.

### Nastya: What's the relationship between LUSL 1s, 2s and the BUCS teams?

Sasha: We're all good friends I think. Being captain this year has made me more vocal in BUCS games and has given me more authority. I don't personally have a preference between LUSL 1s and BUCS teams.

Tom: You know like if you had a little brother, and you love them dearly, but if they do anything better than you, you start feeling sick and you have to be better than them at all cost. That's kind of the relationship between the 1s and 2s, with the 2s

being the little brother, who gets all the love and attention and has all the best shit chat and who is actually quite good and makes the 1s scared. It's what happens when we played the 1sts last week, they started out letting us score some goals and being all nice and lovey-dovey, then the LUSL 2s scared them and they got quite aggressive. LUSL 1s have to make sure they win, otherwise they're going to have a massive fit – don't tell Sasha I said that. As for the BUCS teams, the BUCS girls always get my girls to play for them, so they're really close, but the BUCS boys are generally a bit more laddish compared to us. BUCS guys and LUSL 2s don't mix too much, but

### “Match twat goes to the person who did the dumbest thing during a match”

they support each other in and out of the pool.

### Nastya: What are the highlights of the season?

Sasha: Finlay's backshots have not worked that well this year – he hit the keeper in nose in UCL. Oh wait, that was last year. The UCL game was quite messy - Simon threw the ball after the whistle, at some point it got really violent and there were six people all over each other. None of the refs knew what was going on, it was a mess. I scored UCL's goal into Joe by backhand. Joe was

in goal, I was trying to pass him the ball, but since they insisted on playing using a size 4 ball, it just skimmed under his arm into the net. We still have four games to play and Barts away is usually the best game of the season.

Sasha scored ucl's only goal into joe by backhand – ball skimmed under arm into the net

Tom: Hussein getting a match twat award for every match of the season so far. Match twat goes to the person who did the dumbest thing during a match. There was one time when Hussein asked me if he can get in next, I said yes. Halfway through the game he jumped in the water without telling the guy to come out. Another time when he was standing in the shallow end in Ethos, the ref called him for jumping, and he was holding the ball, looking at the ref like “what do you mean I'm standing?” Petros scored a few amazing goals, still waiting for someone to score a bicy (bicycle-kick the ball in the goal). Finlay's had a few great ones – he's famous for his back shots, but he's not done many this year. I've got a spreadsheet with the different types of shots people do, and he's on two backshots and I'm on one, so he needs to watch out for the backshot trophy to be taken by someone else.

Will their hopes and declarations prove to be true?

Stay tuned to find out, or come watch the epic Varsity game on 28<sup>th</sup> February, at 20.30 in the Ethos pool!

Look forward to the next installment of the Q&A next week 21/02/2020...