

Imperial partnership delivers MBAs to Saudi oil employees



Sam Lovatt Managing Editor

Imperial College has been running an MBA program with the Saudi Arabian state-owned oil company Aramco since 2020, with wider collaboration dating back to at least 2009.

The program allows Aramco employees to obtain an MBA from Imperial College Business School and is paid for by Aramco. It “enables employees to develop their skills whilst remaining embedded in the workforce”, and is understood to operate on a two-year rotation. During the program’s launch, Business School Dean Professor Francisco Veloso highlighted the importance of the College’s partnership with the oil giant.

The partnership constitutes one of many that make up Aramco’s Hosted University Program, “established... to provide high quality master’s degrees from prestigious global universities to Aramco employees here in Saudi Arabia”. The Aramco website described the Imperial partnership as “Continuing to leverage relationships with top-ranked institutions”.

Prior to this, Aramco and Imperial College signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2018, heralding future cooperation and investment in “frontier technologies and developments in chemical engineering, chemistry, petroleum engineering and geosciences, advanced materials, mechanical engineering and data science.” Partnerships between Imperial College and Aramco date back to at least 2009, where the company is listed on the jipimperial.co.uk website, set up by the company Imperial Consultants to track progress and partnerships between the College and external

Changes are indeed coming - President Brady

Ameena Hassan Editor-in-Chief

On Tuesday, President Hugh Brady gave his inaugural President’s Address in CAGB LT 200. It was attended by a variety of staff from all branches of Imperial, with 182 in-person sign ups in total. At the time of writing, the livestream (available on YouTube) had been watched just under 800 times.

President Brady was introduced by Imperial College Union President

Hayley Wong, who stated that “staff student collaboration is an integral part of the College’s identity”. She welcomed Professor Brady as “[bringing] a fresh new perspective”, and “look[ed] forward to working with [the President] ... in shaping the College’s strategic direction”.

The President’s address started with Imperial’s response and contribution to the government’s Covid strategy. He described that an elective course at our very own Hammersmith hospital

in 1981 had inspired him to consider academic medicine as a career. Brady was “grateful for the warm welcome”, and said he had been attracted to Imperial because of its impressive track record. He referred to the Research Excellence Framework results from May this year, which found that Imperial conducts the greatest proportion of “world-leading” research when compared with other UK

Continued on page 3...

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EDITORIAL

Versatile Viruses

A return to normal after a pandemic has meant a return to Freshers' Fair and other Welcome Week events, which has, in turn, led to a return in Freshers' Flu.

Freshers' Fair this year resulted in 15% more signups to Clubs, Societies, and Projects than ever before. Older students will recall that the Fair was either held online or at a reduced capacity over the last two years, and this meant that even second, third year, and postgraduate students were seen making rounds at the fair, collecting their customary merchandise.

This unique opportunity has indeed brought many positives, as students have gotten a chance to rebuild their societies and replenish the ranks. Having so many people roaming freely throughout campus also meant that Freshers' Flu has had a chance to re-emerge. Certainly, attending Welcome events through livestreams during the October closures did not hold a risk of infecting anyone (being in lockdown from Covid had this added benefit!).

However, this now means that neither second or third years are immune to the dreaded Freshers' Flu, and are likely to also suffer ill effects of a sore throat, headache, and cough. A return to in-person lectures also means that students are more likely to attend lectures. Professors have expressed surprise and delight at this, one reporting a "full lecture hall, and they're all second years!" Either out of preference or pure novelty, students are much more likely to attend lectures in-person as opposed to over Panopto. Their current lack of immunity and the packing together in crowded lecture halls puts them doubly at risk.

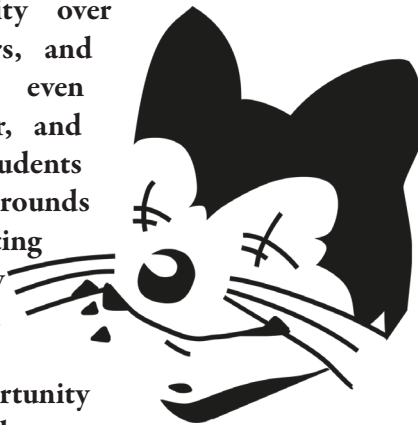
Those who have previously already experienced Freshers' Flu and

think that they might be spared forget that their immune system has had two years to forget, and they are not entirely immune.

Due to the university-wide undergraduates Mums and Dads scheme in which a group of first years is attached to a pair of older students, the 'parents' are often subjected to interacting with their 'children' in close quarters, encouraging cross-cohort contamination.

On replenishing their ranks, non departmental societies have also been hosting welcome events to encourage participation in club activities. Indeed, today's youth, though digitally connected, still crave human, in-person interaction, and this is evident more than ever in the sizeable number of 'Give it a Go' events. When sign ups were first made available, societies reported delays in confirmation and updating of the Union's 'What's On' calendar. This was entirely due to the (unanticipated) sheer volume of applications. Students across different cohorts and departments are bright tier by their common interests, and this innocuously opens them up to increased exposure.

With temperatures continuing to fall as we approach winter, societies are increasingly moving what outdoor activities they had to indoor venues in favour of keeping warm. The College, in its October guidance, is currently recommending wearing face masks in crowded places and being fully vaccinated. All these factors so far are equally relevant to Covid, which has also been making a resurgence in recent weeks. I don't know about you, but I personally would not want to be hit with a double whammy of Freshers' Flu AND Covid.



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At Felix we believe that it is always in the interest of the students to know. Transparency in the workings of the College and the work of your student representatives is key. Therefore I, the Felix Editor, on behalf of the team promise that:

We will, to the best of our ability, tell you the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

We will keep your confidence and will only publish something you say to us if you have explicitly said that we can.

We will work to expose unfairness and discrimination in all forms that it takes at the College.

We will treat fairly any article sent to us, regardless of point of view, and do our best to work with you to prepare it for publication.

Signed by Ameena Hassan
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Correction from the previous issue:

1. In the "This can't go on piece", the open letter was sent at 11:25am, not 11:25pm

Credit: Envato Elements

*...continued from page 1***Aramco MBAs**

companies on oil well test analysis.

Imperial College's Socially Responsible Investment Policy states that it will "continue to invest in fossil fuels companies that demonstrate they are actively moving towards meeting Paris Agreement targets", and that it will "influence the behaviour of these companies [through]... educational programmes". College partnerships are guided by a Relationship Review

Policy, that suggests how proposed and continuing relationships should be assessed, though "does not seek to set out absolute prohibitions". In March last year, a Scrutiny Committee was established to "review all proposed new College relationships with the limited range of countries where UK sanctions apply". Saudi Arabia currently does not appear on the list of regimes sanctioned by the UK government.

An Imperial College London spokesperson said "All Imperial's

partnerships and collaborations are subject to the College's thorough due diligence processes and are regularly reviewed."

Aramco is a Saudi Arabian state-owned oil company, the world's greatest contributor to carbon emissions since 1965, and the biggest oil exporter in the world today. The company has repeatedly refused to increase oil production to lower prices since the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February this year, and reported a record quarterly profit of \$48.4 billion for the second quarter of this year.

Aramco is majority owned by the Saudi Arabian state, and as such pays significant proportions of its profits to the government. The country's finances are heavily reliant on money from Aramco, and the company have deferred to government spokespeople when approached by newspapers in the past. This relationship leads many to speculate that dealings with Aramco and the Saudi Arabian state are one and the same.

Saudi Arabia has become a pariah state in the eyes of much of the West since Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's accession to the throne. Among many human rights abuses alleged and proven

to have been carried out on orders from MbS, the murder and butchering of Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018 by Saudi government agents led many western countries to treat Saudi Arabia in a hostile fashion.

On the campaign trail prior to the 2020 election, Joe Biden announced that he wanted to turn Saudi Arabia into a pariah state, though has more recently softened his position and travelled to the gulf state in order to try to encourage an increase in oil production following the Ukraine invasion.

Same-sex sexual activity is criminalised in Saudi Arabia, with a maximum penalty of death. It is also illegal for trans people to express their preferred sexual identity and, according to the charity Human Dignity Trust, in 2017 two transgender people were tortured to death by police in a raid where 35 were arrested.

Protesting against the ruling regime is also illegal, with a maximum penalty of death. MbS vowed, to international audience, to stop the practice of sentencing to death teenagers found guilty of protest in 2020, but resumed earlier this year. The death penalty is most commonly enacted by beheading.

*...continued from page 1***President's address**

universities.

He went on to propose that it was "now time to carve out time to refresh Imperial's vision and strategy", stating that although "performance has been remarkable", many successful departments had failed as a result of not having considered the impacts of medium to long term issues.

The President acknowledged that staff have "made it clear that work need[ed] to be done with regards to our culture and values", and wished to reassure staff that their concerns will continue to be heard. Following on from our report in last week's Felix, President Brady has not made direct mention of the open letter. However, since the letter, a joint email from College Council Chair John Allan and President Hugh Brady was sent to all staff and students. In this email, they stated: "Bullying and harassment are unacceptable and must not be tolerated anywhere within our community", and shared a full report titled "Council Effectiveness Review" by

a higher education consultancy, Halpin Partnership. This report made 18 recommendations and eight suggestions, including increasing student and staff representation on College Council, introducing 1:1 annual appraisals, that Council holds a meeting to discuss recent events, and that "learning from [this] meeting should be communicated to the College community with as little redaction as possible."

This shift was supported further by the President, who confirmed that a People and Culture subcommittee was being set up, as per the recommendations.

He then turned to students, citing three main focuses: student hardship, assessment and feedback, and the student experience. President Brady wished to assure students that the size and eligibility of student hardship funds will be monitored closely, and that it will be ensured they are fit for purpose.

The President reiterated the importance of a "whole-institution mental health strategy", to be delivered by partnering with both staff and students, citing, as he did during an

interview with Felix "we are not the NHS, but we can help [them] transition to the NHS".

The President rounded up with looking forward, stating he was "confident that Imperial can continue to compete successfully."

Credit: Imperial College London



NEWS

Union recommends 10.2% increase in Home bursary

Credit: Imperial College Union

Nathalie Podder
Deputy President (Welfare)

On 18th October, the Deputy President (Welfare), Working Class Officer, and Union President will be making recommendations to increase the Imperial Bursary awarded to Home students. The recommendations will be made to the Access and Participation Compliance Group, which monitors the Imperial Bursary, and ensures compliance with Imperial's Access and Participation Plan. According to the plan, the College is aiming to "equalise the number of students in each quintile [of POLAR 1-5]". POLAR classifies areas across the UK into five quintiles - based on the proportion of young people who enter higher education aged 18 or 19 years old.

Based on 2020-21 and 2021-22 Imperial Bursary Surveys, 6% more students currently on bursary reported working part-time in the last academic year. Of these students, the number reporting that they are working to cover essential needs like transportation, utilities and food has increased by 10%. Additionally, bursary-receiving students have spent 10.2% more in average monthly expenditure since last year.

According to this analysis, the Union believes that, whilst helpful, the Imperial Bursary has not been sufficient in cushioning the impact of cost-of-

living increases on eligible students and is recommending a 10.2% increase to each individual bursary.

This survey did not consider the impact of inflationary rises on currently ineligible students. In 2012, the maximum household income threshold for Home undergraduate students to be eligible was £60,000. Today's equivalent would be £76,921.89, representing a 28.2% decrease in the income threshold. The Union is also recommending that the threshold now be increased to £77,000 in order to offset the impact of inflation over the last decade.

Students with a household income between £25,000 and £30,000 were 20% more likely to take up part-time work during term-time; they are also 9% more likely to do so to finance their essential needs. This represents students in Band B, and each year, they receive:

- £706 less in government loans than those with a household income below £25,000 (A1-A2), and
- £1000 less from the Imperial Bursary than those with a household income below £16,000 (A1)

Currently, only those in Band A1 receive the maximum Imperial Bursary of £5000, and those in Bands A2-B receive £4000. The Union recommends that students in Band A1-B receive the



maximum bursary each academic year.

Over the last 33 years, the average yearly inflation rate in the UK has been calculated as 2.62%, and the Union recommends that the Imperial Bursary is increased at a yearly rate of 2.62%. This would ensure that students continue to

receive a bursary amount that benefits them equally throughout their degree. Currently, by their final year, a BSc student will lose a total of £396.43 to inflation, integrated Master's would lose £799.82, and a medic would lose £2035.01.

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FRIDAY, 14TH OCTOBER 2022

COMMENT

Why I am a royalist

Sam Lovatt Managing Editor

A mong the university student demographic, it is undoubtedly trendy to be a republican (see definitions). A YouGov poll in 2021 found that when given the choice between a monarch and an elected head of state, 31% of 18-24 year olds went with the monarchy, whilst 41% went with the elected option. I suspect that if this poll was carried out with university students aged 18-24, the difference would be far more starkly in favour of republicanism. In any case, in this piece I hope to lay out my reasoning for siding with the minority opinion on the issue, and strongly encourage anyone who feels otherwise to write a response article for next week's *Felix*.

Probably the most cited argument against the British monarchy is that the institution reinforces class division, as members of the royal family acquire wealth and prestige through nothing but birthright. This argument falls apart under the most surface level scrutiny, as swathes of people are born into riches and elevated social status because their parents led prosperous careers, or are themselves living off old, invested money. Furthermore, one should ask what the effect of abolishing the monarchy would be, rather than just

**Definitions***Royalist: A supporter of a particular monarch**Monarchist: A supporter of the general idea of monarchy, rather than a particular monarch**Republican: In this instance, a supporter of the replacement of a monarch with an elected/appointed head of state. Not to be confused with the United States' Republican Party.**Pure democracy: A system of government where the elected politicians have total control over the laws that govern the land.**Republic: A system of government where elected politicians have near total control over the state's laws, save from the ability to alter certain "inalienable rights". This takes the form of the Constitution in the USA. The UK has no written constitution.*

stating that it is unfair. It is vanishingly unlikely that replacing the monarchy with an elected head of state would do anything to help those who are struggling financially in the country. Sweden, one of the most aggressively egalitarian countries in the world, is a monarchy. South Africa, meanwhile, is not.

Far from increasing inequality, monarchies can in fact decrease it, and the UK monarchy is the prime example of this, owing to its global fame. The Sovereign Grant, the total amount of money the Treasury gives to the royal estate each year, was valued at £86.3 million for 2020-21. It's worth noting that after the relatively modest (I mean relative to the whole grant, not to the likes of you and me) living costs of the royal family are accounted for, the vast majority of this grant is spent in ways that public money is spent more widely anyway. £34.5 million of this grant was to be spent on servicing Buckingham Palace, providing employment to builders, surveyors etc, and amounts essentially to £34.5 million in infrastructure spending. Dwarfing the grant, however, is the money generated by the royal institution as a global attraction.

The consultancy Brand Finance estimated in 2017 that the monarchy generates a gross uplift of £1.766 billion to the UK each year, or over 20 times the value of the Sovereign Grant. This uplift comes mostly in the form of increased tourism,

which improves the revenue of all kinds of industries, from stalls selling royal branded merch to intrigue causing millions to tune in to shows such as *The Crown*. Any economic strain caused by the monarchy is far outweighed by the financial boon it brings in.

Crucially, and often overlooked in such discussions, is the differing systems of government between the UK and successful republics such as the USA and France. Recent travesty wreaked by the US Supreme Court aside, republics with a presidential elected head of state remain significantly protected from tyranny through the inalienable rights bestowed on every citizen by their constitutions. Donald Trump could argue that the election was stolen all he wanted towards the end of his tenure as President, but he never had an inkling of power over each citizen's right to bodily autonomy or free speech. The Supreme Court does, though that's for another article.

Contrasting this with the UK system is actually quite stark. The Prime Minister of the UK has nowhere near the technical power of a President, and has historically been coined a "first among equals", as all governmental ministers have supposed equal authority over their briefs (though this is not really the case any longer). Furthermore, the UK electoral system elects a party rather than an individual. Donald Trump was the Republican candidate in the US 2016 election, but was individually elected as President. Boris Johnson was the leader of the Conservative Party, and the Conservative party won the 2019

general election, not Boris Johnson. Most crucially, the UK does not have a written constitution, a flaw in the system that Johnson and his government exploited no end during their time in office. Priti Patel should have resigned, or been sacked by the Prime Minister, in 2020 after having been found guilty of bullying her subordinates in the Home Office, as this behaviour breached the Ministerial Code. Johnson simply ignored this, and Patel remained Home Secretary for two more years. Similarly, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill proposes massive curtailments of the right to freedom of assembly. This right is enshrined in the US constitution and cannot be legislated against. No such protection exists in the UK.

A redeeming feature of the UK system is, wouldn't you have guessed, the monarchy. The PM is beholden to the King, at least on paper. Bills have to acquire royal assent to become UK law, and the King has the power to reject any that reach him. In practice, this will never happen, as a monarch overruling the will of an elected government would very quickly find themselves no longer on the throne, but the official subordination of the PM to the monarchy remains important in a soft, behavioural way. Every morning the PM should wake up in the knowledge that they will carry out their duty to King and Country, rather than to their own will.

Of course, these principles can be eroded in practice, as Johnson has shown in an exemplary fashion. The final form of this protection is, however, incredibly important, and cannot be curtailed. The British Army is sworn in allegiance to King and Country. British troops did not land on D-Day in the name of Winston Churchill. Were we to elect a more tyrannical government in the future, they would never be able to commandeer the army to enforce military rule. This is perhaps the most crucial role of the monarch as head of state - that those with true power are beholden to those with almost none. An elected head of state is somewhat indebted to those who elected them, the King owes nothing to anyone.

SCIENCE

The bat paradox

► Staff Writer Wang Guo explores the unique biology of bats, which are small but remarkably long-lived

Wang Guo Staff Writer

The animal world will never stop amazing us. Bats are the only mammals that can fly. Surprisingly, they are also amongst the most populous mammals in the world, though the exact number of bats is unknown as these sneaky animals are small and nocturnal. Did you know that bats can live up to 40 years despite being such small creatures? Or that they are capable of resisting dangerous viruses inside their bodies, where other animals would die? Let's explore these facts in more detail.

How can bats live for so long?

Small mammals are usually highly active and have short lifespans. A perfect example would be the common mouse, whose heart beats ten times faster than humans and

only live 1-2 years. Bats are even more active than mice because they can fly, which is an energetically demanding activity - but unlike mice, bats often live between 30-40 years. Emma Teeling and her group have studied the chromosomes of 493 specimens of four different species of bats to unravel this mystery. In particular, they focused on telomeres, which are long repeating sections of DNA located at the ends of chromosomes that protect the integrity of chromosomes. Telomeres shorten with each cell division, up to a point at which they are unable to protect chromosome integrity. This means the cells can no longer divide, and increas-

es the risk of suffering irreversible DNA damage that can lead subsequently to cancer. The cell enters into a non-dividing phase called senescence. The gradual accumulation of senescent cells leads ultimately to body deterioration and ageing. Bats do not have the capability to regenerate telomeres, but they have more telomere repair and maintenance genes than other mammals. This allows bats to preserve the length of their telomeres for a longer time, prolonging their lifespans.

Mitochondria are the powerhouse of the cell, proving the latter with energy to conduct its metabolic activities. Therefore, healthy mitochondria are essential for the proper functioning of the cells, which affects ultimately the general health of the organism. Contrary to other organelles, mitochondria have their own DNA that regulates their functioning. Over time, mitochondrial DNA accumulates mutations that disrupt the correct activity of mitochondria. The size of bat mitochondria

DNA is smaller compared to other mammals, which means that bat mitochondria DNA suffer fewer deleterious mutations on average. Therefore, the mitochondria of

bats are able to function properly for a longer time.

How do bats survive infectious diseases which kill other animals?

Bats are carriers of many dangerous viruses such as SARS-CoV-2 or the Ebola virus that could potentially kill them, but in reality often don't. The key resides in the immune system of bats, or more precisely, in inflammation. Inflammation is the reaction of the immune system to the entrance of pathogens into the body. Inflammation is beneficial in a short and controlled manner, but prolonged inflammation is harmful and is associated with diseases like diabetes. Furthermore, excessive inflammation can be even worse than the direct effects of an actual virus because it can irreversibly damage tissues and organs. Indeed, one of the major causes of death in SARS-CoV-2 was

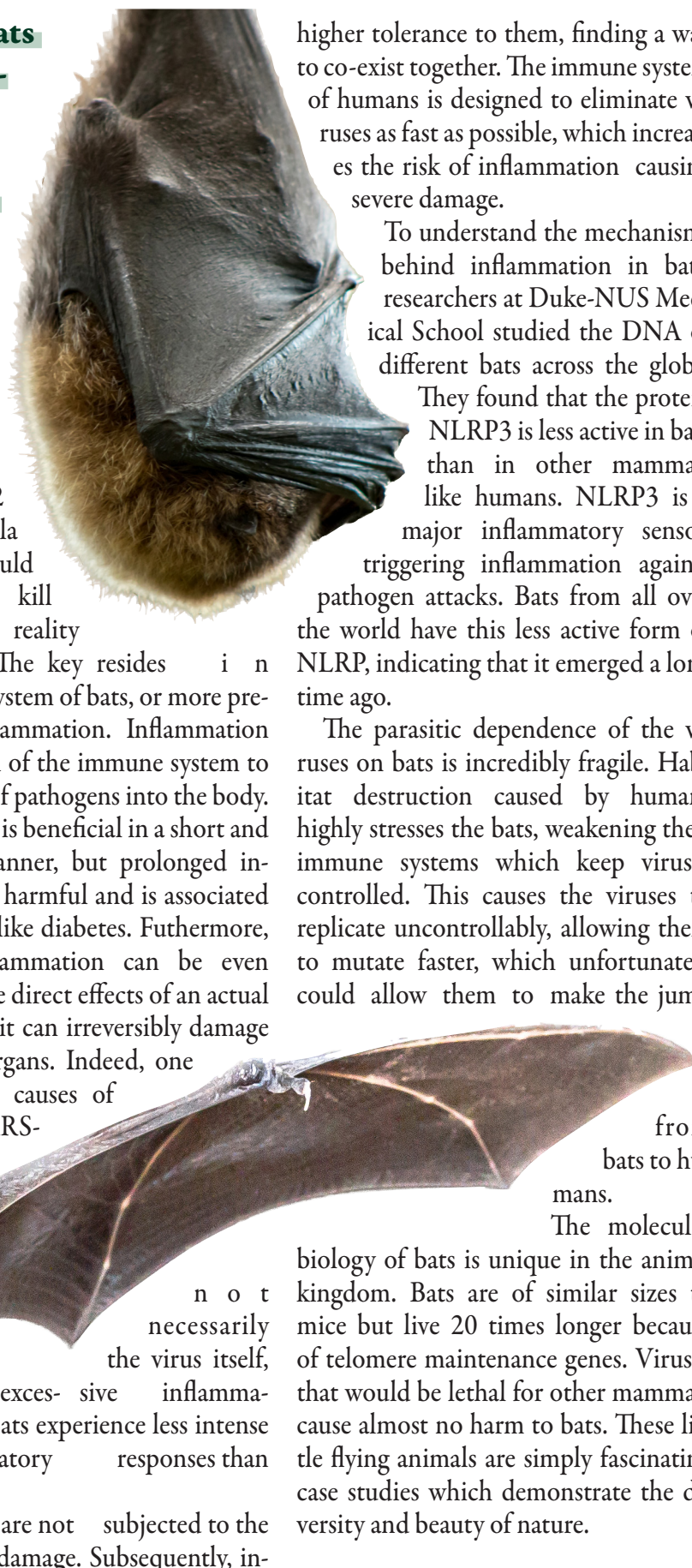
not necessarily the virus itself, but excessive inflammation. Bats experience less intense inflammatory responses than humans, so are not subjected to the same level of damage. Subsequently, instead of eliminating viruses, bats have a

higher tolerance to them, finding a way to co-exist together. The immune system of humans is designed to eliminate viruses as fast as possible, which increases the risk of inflammation causing severe damage.

To understand the mechanisms behind inflammation in bats, researchers at Duke-NUS Medical School studied the DNA of different bats across the globe. They found that the protein NLRP3 is less active in bats than in other mammals like humans. NLRP3 is a major inflammatory sensor, triggering inflammation against pathogen attacks. Bats from all over the world have this less active form of NLRP, indicating that it emerged a long time ago.

The parasitic dependence of the viruses on bats is incredibly fragile. Habitat destruction caused by humans highly stresses the bats, weakening their immune systems which keep viruses controlled. This causes the viruses to replicate uncontrollably, allowing them to mutate faster, which unfortunately could allow them to make the jump from bats to humans.

The molecular biology of bats is unique in the animal kingdom. Bats are of similar sizes to mice but live 20 times longer because of telomere maintenance genes. Viruses that would be lethal for other mammals cause almost no harm to bats. These little flying animals are simply fascinating case studies which demonstrate the diversity and beauty of nature.



Designing sustainable sanitary pads

► *Mechanical Engineering student, Naa Ayorkor Harding, spent the summer in Rwanda, sponsored by Imperial's Professional Project Fund, developing sustainable, affordable sanitary pads using banana fibres. She worked in collaboration with Minazi Consulting and Dufatanye Organisation to reduce period poverty in the Villages of Hope in Nyanza, Rwanda.*

Credit: Naa Ayorkor Harding

Naa Ayorkor Harding Science Writer

Period poverty is a lack of access to adequate menstrual health management. This includes menstrual health products, health education, and hygiene and waste management facilities. It arises largely due to economic reasons, but social, cultural, and political factors also play an important role. The World Bank estimates that 500 million women and girls are affected by period poverty globally. One such group is the women living in Dufatanye Organisation's Villages of Hope in Nyanza, Rwanda, who are unable to go to school or work for several days at a time due to period poverty.

To help combat this, researchers from the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Imperial College London, and sustainable development start-up, Minazi Consulting, are attempting to produce environmentally sustainable, affordable, high-quality sanitary pads for the women of the Villages of Hope, using the fibres of the banana tree. Central to the project is the challenge of making the manufacturing process as simple as possible using locally available materials.

The groundwork on the project, sponsored by Imperial's Professional Project

Credit: Naa Ayorkor Harding



Banana fibre

Fund, began in August 2021 with lead researcher Naa Ayorkor Harding conducting market research to understand the women, their lifestyles, needs and wants. Research was also conducted into the feasibility of extracting and using the fibres embedded in the trunk of the banana tree to make a sanitary pad. After this initial four-week sprint in Rwanda, development of different layers of the proposed sanitary pad began, with technical and project support offered by the Minazi Consulting team, and PhD Student and Minazi Projects Director, Aakeen Parikh.

Over the past year, the team developed the absorbent core of the sanitary

“
GLOBALLY, 500 MILLION WOMEN AND GIRLS ARE AFFECTED BY PERIOD POVERTY

pad, arguably its most important layer. Banana fibre was selected as a key material due to its relatively high absorbency, and its abundance in Rwanda; 90% of all households in Rwanda grow banana trees.

The next big challenges are developing the top-most and bottom-most layers, known as the acquisition and impermeable layers respectively. In 2022,



Naa Ayorkor talking to two women in the Villages of Hope.

over a seven-week period from July to August, researchers trained the local site team, teaching them how to produce the absorbent core, how to build a full-pad prototype, and how to conduct scientific experiments in parallel with work done in the labs at Imperial. Additionally, there was further research and development of other layers of the pad, such as the impermeable layer, which is also expected to be produced locally. Over

the coming academic year, the team will continue development of the key layers, making the production process cheaper and even simpler than it is now. All of this will be part of Naa Ayorkor's final year project in Mechanical Engineering.

Tech Writers Needed!

Interested in writing about tech? Whether it's new releases, retro throwbacks or a piece on technology's impact today - contact science.felix@imperial.ac.uk to get your article in *Felix*.

Edited by: MARIE MORI

ENVIRONMENT

Green growth or degrowth?

Nadia Nik Arif Environment Writer

As we enter a new age of economic and technological advancement, we are presented with a challenge unlike anything before: the impact of growth on the world we live in. The climate crisis is here, but whilst some call for a different way of developing, others are beginning to question the economic growth model. Is it sustainable to grow in the same way as before, or should we be looking at new ways to progress?

In recent years, the term “green growth” has been increasing in popularity. In simple terms, as the OECD defines it, green growth refers to the continuation of economic growth whilst ensuring natural assets to keep providing resources. Therefore, some think this strategy would be the best way to keep the economy growing without damaging the environment.

However, Mike Joy, a researcher from the Institute for Governance and Policy Studies, describes green growth as an oxymoron. Joy highlights the fact that “growth” and “green” cannot work with one another. Joy continues to say that for an economy to grow, extraction and usage of natural resources is necessary. The process of doing so will then increase the usage of energy. His question is: how is this environmentally sustainable?

Many focus on the growth of the clean energy industry, and how this factors into the green growth strategy. However, Mike Joy points out the vast difference in the energy density levels between renewable energy and fossil fuels. Due to renewable energy’s low energy density level, we would need larger areas to provide the same energy as fossil fuels. Joy continues to mention that moving away from fossil fuels is

essential. However, exclusively leaning into the dependency of a clean energy swap is not ideal, especially in the short term. Joy suggests a shift in focus to reduce consumption and waste instead.

This leads us to degrowth. The World Economic Forum describes degrowth as a way to scale back on the usage of natural resources. Supporters of the degrowth

strategy challenge the GDP metric as a dominant way to measure a growing economy, highlighting how the metric lacks environmental and social well-being. Victoria Masterson, Senior Writer for the World Economic Forum, proposes that degrowth will focus on shrinking economies (however not reducing GDP) by using less natural

resources and putting environmental and social well-being ahead of profit.

Masterson points out that if the world continues to grow as it is, major climate events will occur. However, opponents of degrowth argue that economic growth has led to significant beneficial findings to society, such as medical treatments. Arguments of

degrowth are often from a very Western-centric viewpoint, ignoring the fact that colonisation and the spread of Western power have caused other countries to be underdeveloped comparatively. The argument that all countries should now focus on slowing GDP growth is seen as a privileged standpoint, as developing countries have not reached the same

Yet there are fundamental issues with growth targets modelled by the past. If we are to truly develop in a way that creates a more sustainable future, we need to consider the areas and sectors in which degrowth would be more appropriate. However, arguably every country and sector is different and should therefore be considered on a



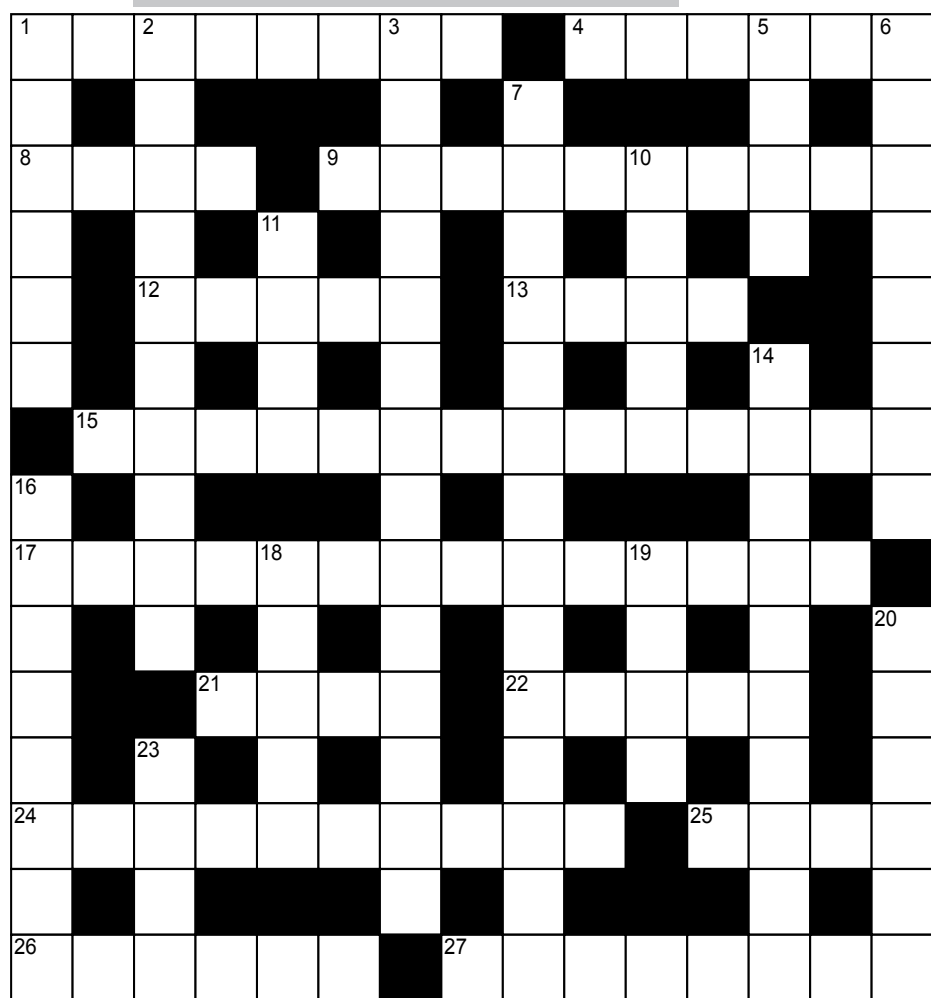
Credit: Envato Elements

growth level as developed countries.

Green growth and degrowth both have positives and negatives. Green growth is something which should be prioritised in many cases around the world as it allows for the areas which need further development to grow in a more environmentally sustainable way without sacrificing future progress.

case-by-case study. Fundamentally, we need to look at all the options to decarbonise and develop sustainably, but this needs to take historical reference and climate justice into account just as much as climate solutions.

CRYPTIC Crossword Grid



CRYPTIC Crossword Clues

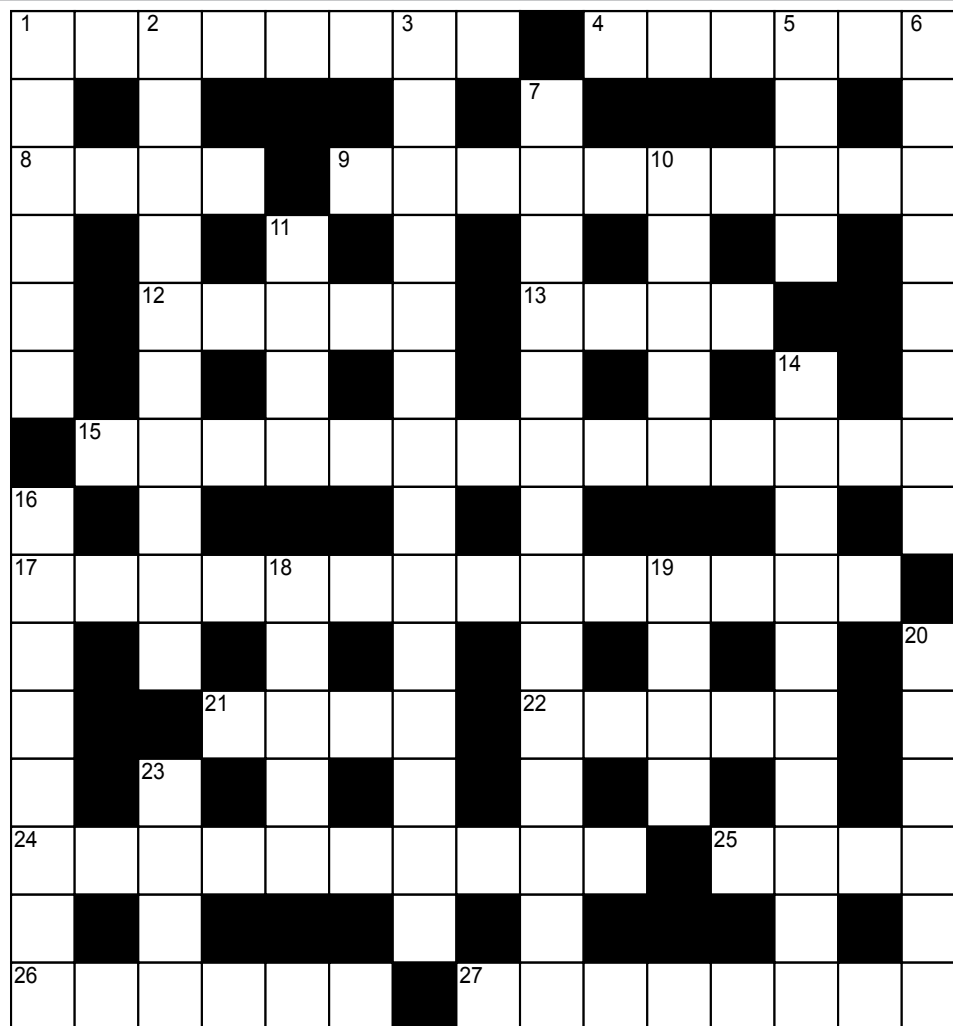
Across

- 1) Doubt I heard PM's daughter this time. [8]
- 4) Sadness most head bankers got before they did this? [6]
- 8) The monster is back again, and one's already gone missing. [4]
- 9) Nasal tract balm dad put in, wiggling back and forth. [10]
- 12) Bird on this is almost a cooked one? [5]
- 13) Assessment of credit company swaps. [4]
- 15) In a tailspin, I change tact, working in radical movement. [14]
- 17) Excitedly reply "I've a tenth!", when asked your lung CO2 volume after doing this? [14]
- 21) It is, in itself, an expression. [4]
- 22) Can I get our last oxygen to be explosive? [5]
- 24) It shuttles money down the tubes? [10]
- 25) A blemish of wartime. [4]
- 26) Stagger about woodenly? [6]
- 27) Wait a minute, shaking sandy toe about. [6 2]

Down

- 1) Dig around great lake's opening to find new compound. [6]
- 2) Type of peas that makes for a sweeter sleep? [5 5]
- 3) Loves patron of sculpture art installation, needing to voice all lustful emotion next to its nearest exhibit immediately. [5 9]
- 5) A possibly dire theme park attraction. [4]
- 6) Particular animal waits around – in large numbers. [8]
- 7) Police officer hell-bent on entering house? [14]
- 10) Cooked ham is topped by nothing, on a beach. [5]
- 11) Request containing large number of points. [4]
- 14) Game I reportedly picked over Ludo on a former day's end. [10]
- 16) This station had gone into expansion. [8]
- 18) Trace mixture of chemicals will do this. [5]
- 19) He died, but not soon enough. [4]
- 20) Scrap heap in Switzerland. [6]
- 23) Dance for experienced front-man. [4]

REGULAR Crossword Grid



REGULAR Crossword Clues

Across

- 1) Movement of a top. [8]
- 4) West African rice dish. [6]
- 8) Sob, weep. [4]
- 9) Insular worldview. [10]
- 12) "____-ho!", sailor's call. [5]
- 13) Harvey ____, assassinated civil rights leader. [4]
- 15) That responsible for droplet formation. [7 7]
- 17) Treatment focussing on quality of remaining life. [10 4]
- 21) Not soft. [4]
- 22) Kind of central American plant. [5]
- 24) Of a vase or gatepost. [10]
- 25) Tree with seeds used in pesto. [4]
- 26) Possibly a requirement in a tenancy agreement. [2 4]

Down

- 1) Rowdy throng. [6]
- 2) In all seriousness. [10]
- 3) Characteristic often observed in children. [14]
- 5) Solution to friction. [4]
- 6) Glaringly bad. [8]
- 7) Through which one's mind is like putty. [9 5]
- 10) ____ Keller, deafblind activist. [5]
- 11) That whose meat is veal. [4]
- 14) You can use it to hear speech without sound. [3-7]
- 16) Squid-inspired Nintendo videogame. [8]
- 18) You can't translate it directly. [5]
- 19) Girl's name and tropical fruit. [4]
- 20) Sad ode. [6]
- 23) You receive it on a certain social media app. [4]

Points

Cryptic, regular crosswords

5, 3 pts

Reverse Cryptic

3 pts

You can send your solutions to fsudoku@ic.ac.uk before Wednesday 9th at 12:00!

Reverse Cryptic

-HER + previous FEAT (achievement) = FEATHER
 -L = 50 = many, surrounded by COVER = canopy; CLOVER is a plant.
 -CARNEGIE = anagram (sort) of A GENERIC, and is a famous hall.

You are given a cryptic Clue (C), an Answer (A), and have to give a Reason (R) as to why the correct answer is A. Practicing this will help you solve the cryptic crossword above.

C: It beats her at dancing. [5]

A: HEART

R: _____

C: It was fired, but in the preceding direction it's fifty-fifty. [6]

A: BULLET

R: _____

C: Jolly teatimes on these floors. [10]

A: MAISONETTE

R: _____



CATNIP

Top 10 must-haves to decorate your room:

Negafelix

Catnip Reporter

Have you just moved into an empty room? Negafelix presents our top ten decor picks:

1. Hugh T. Brody Poster

Felix will be releasing a poster of College President Hugh Brody t-posing on ALERT. This is a lovely addition to any bleak wall.

2. Laundry beanbag

You already know you'll be using something to pile all your dirty laundry, and you weren't going to sit on it anyway.

3. Lava lamps

These puppies are absolute catnip for the cool people in your year

4. Printing Press

You're really interesting. People want to read what you have to say. Make it easier for them. (or join Felix)

5. Reflective 3M tape

There will be many times when you forget your bike lights at home, but when you tape yourself up head to toe in 3M, drivers can still see you

6. Vitamin D capsules

Highly recommended for Physicists and anyone entering Huxley.

7. Social interaction stamp card

Give yourself a treat after talking to 10 new people.

8. A waterbed

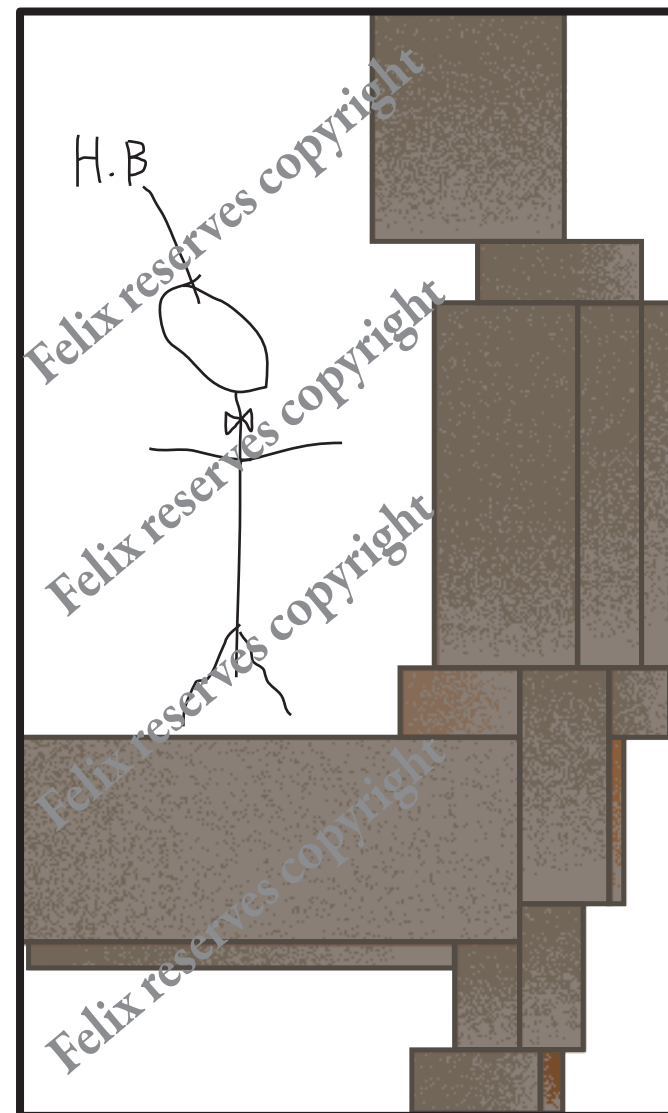
For when (if) things get sloppy

9. Space for cone

You're kooky and fun. A wild child. There is no doubt that one day soon you will, in an act of unprecedented recalcitrance and wit, drunkenly steal a traffic cone. You'll need somewhere to hide it from the cops.

10. Many rice cookers

Hall wardens say rice cookers are dangerous. Stick it to the man by plugging nine of them into the same outlet in your room



ARIES

This week you floss your teeth using your flatmate's skinny little forearms



TAURUS

This week the fact that your sunburnt skin looks like a prune doesn't make up for the lack of fibre in your diet



GEMINI

This week the clap totally cures your crabs



CANCER

This week the first rule of fright club is don't sneak up on me



LEO

This week Lizzy surpasses Philip in limbo



VIRGO

This week you mistake your testicles for a stressball



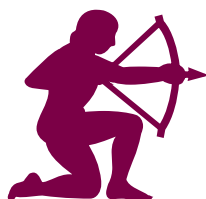
LIBRA

This week you baby bird your flatmate their kebab when they come home drunk



SCORPIO

This week you actually use Felix for cat litter



SAGITTARIUS

This week you viscerally shout at a toddler who laughs at you when you fall off your bike



CAPRICORN

This week you high five your professor and crack their rib



AQUARIUS

This week you flagrantly cheat on some coursework and still get a third



PISCES

This week you hide your poor body odour by drying some trout in the sun on your desk

Autumn Elections '22



TIMELINE

- Nominations Open**
Monday 17 October
- Nominations Close**
Tuesday 25 October
- Manifestos Deadline**
Wednesday 26 October
- Start of campaigning**
Thursday 27 October
- Voting Open**
Monday 31 October
- Voting Close**
Thursday 3 November
- Complaints deadline**
Thursday 3 November
- Results announced**
Friday 4 November



FILM

Edited by: JONAH HEWETT

Film Review

Bones and All: Leave sensitivity and food at home

Director: Luca Guadagnino

Writers: David Kajganich, Camille DeAngelis

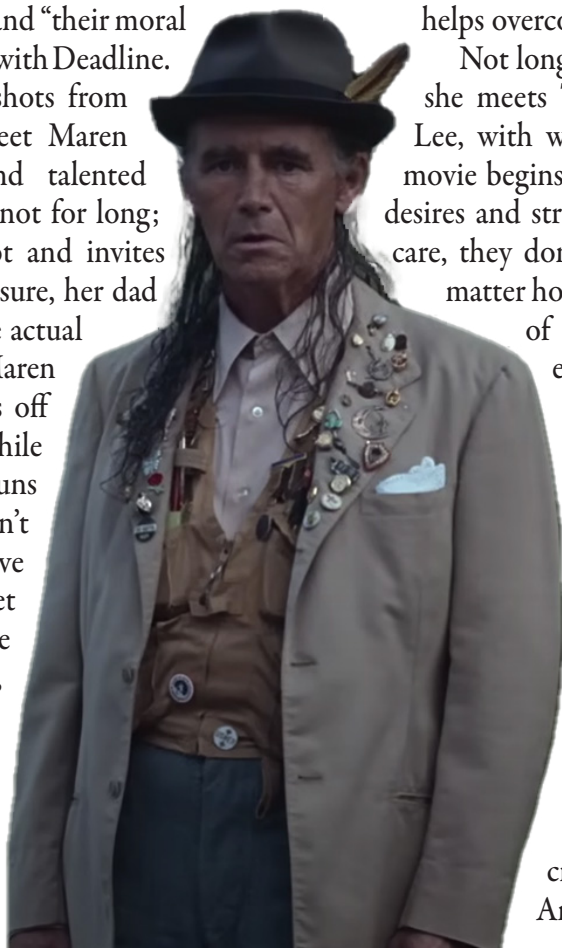
Starring: Timothée Chalamet, Taylor Russell, Mark Rylance

Release: 23rd November 2022

Mike Buzadji Film Writer

“Do you think I’m nice?”: the question that bothers the main characters throughout their journey. Luca Guadagnino’s latest film depicts cannibal romance, a fable of love, forbidden desires and self-discovery. *Bones and All*, based on the 2015 novel of the same name by Camille DeAngelis, is not a horror story. The film director “wasn’t interested at all in the shock value”, it’s about “these people” and “their moral struggle”, he said in an interview with *Deadline*.

The movie starts with the shots from the school, where we first meet Maren played by the incredible and talented Taylor Russell. She’s alone, but not for long; another girl comes in the shot and invites her to a sleepover. Maren’s not sure, her dad won’t approve. Only during the actual sleepover do we find out why; Maren gets too comfortable and bites off the finger of one of the girls. While they scream and panic she runs off home. Frank, her dad, doesn’t think twice; they pack and move before the authorities can get them. The next morning she wakes up alone. Her fleeing dad, frightened of her desires for human flesh, left her with an envelope of money, her birth certificate and a recording. That’s where her journey of self-discovery begins.



As we watch the movie, we travel and experience the world of cannibalism through her eyes. We meet more “eaters”, find out about their lifestyle, skills and politics. The first one appearing after Maren is Sully, played by Mark Rylance, whose performance overshadows everyone in this movie. He’s got the perfect creepiness to his character, his crazy eyes and soft-spoken voice bring chills to the audience. However, the movie is not dark. Its self-aware humor

helps overcome those eerie and nasty scenes.

Not long after Maren gets into this world she meets Timothée Chalamet, who plays Lee, with whom the main romance in the movie begins. They bond over their common desires and struggles. Both wish to be nice, to care, they don’t want to harm innocents. No matter how absurd and ruthless the actions of the characters are, there’s still empathy from the audience. In the same way the characters question themselves, we’re also confused about our feeling towards them. Cannibalism is taboo and seems out of the ordinary, but in this story it’s just a metaphor for something that makes them different, not “normal”. They’re like that and they have to deal with it. “Either you eat, you off yourself, or you lock yourself up.”

Director Luca Guadagnino created this aesthetic of the American Midwest in the 80s.



Credit: Warner Bros.

Costumes, music, environment; it all radiates this somewhat cosy, warm vibe, if you put it apart from cannibalism for a second. The shots and editing lead you through this emotional rollercoaster that doesn’t let you take your eyes off the screen.

All of the actors showed amazing performances and fitted well within the story. Taylor Russell managed to show this little girl going through struggles of this ethical dilemma that comes with cannibalism. Timothée and Mark, as well as other “eaters”, have the perfect creepiness and mystery to their character, but still remain unique in their beliefs. However some of the characters do lack the development and details of their stories. The ending felt sudden and didn’t really resolve the journey of the main character. But perhaps it all adds to the mystery and leaves space for viewer interpretation.

This story is not a horror or a thriller, its goal is not to scare, but such extreme use of cannibalism makes it difficult to see through it. Only after the screening can you sit and process everything that just happened. It’s about the horror of loneliness, the struggle of being an outsider, not ‘normal’. Finding that special someone, who loves you as you are ‘bones and all’.

What’s on this month?



The BFI London Film Festival is still going until the end of this week, after which it continues online on the BFI Player where you can still catch some great films, including many new short films for free



Film Society runs weekly screenings of hand-picked films, from classic classics to modern classics. Follow them on Instagram @filmsoc.ic to see which film is on each week and get tickets!



The Prince Charles Cinema in Leicester Square is running a series of curated old and new horror films this month as part of their HorrOctober programme. Check out their website to book.

MUSIC

Edited by: JOE RIORDAN
TARA PAL CHAUDHURI

DON'T MISS THE GIG - IN YOUR OWN HOME! FOLLOW FELIX MUSIC ON SPOTIFY

ONE: OPEN SPOTIFY. TWO: SEARCH "FELIX MUSIC". THREE: CLICK ON OUR PROFILE (IT'S EITHER THE ONE WITH THE CARTOON CAT PROFILE PICTURE OR NO PROFILE PICTURE DEPENDING ON IF WE GET ROUND TO CHANGING IT). FOUR: FOLLOW US. FIVE: SIT BACK, RELAX, AND LISTEN TO ALL OF OUR CAREFULLY CURATED PLAYLISTS (ONCE WE MAKE THEM). OR JUST SCAN

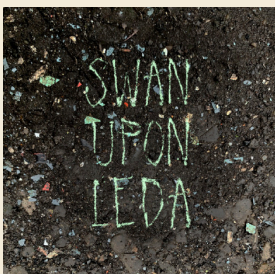


THIS CODE,
WHICHEVER'S
EASIER.

Single of the Week

'Swan Upon Leda' by Hozier

Don't be fooled by Hozier's familiar mellifluousness – enchanting string arrangements, deep, soothing vocals and warm acoustic guitars. Having heard Egyptian feminist author and journalist, Mona



Eltahawy, speaking in Dublin, Hozier decided to translate what he heard into a song. In the wake of Mahsa Amini's death in Iran and the upturning of Roe v. Wade in the US, you'll find the song's lyrics hold a lot more depth than what initially meets the ear, reminiscent of the misleading softness of alt-J and, in another era, Simon & Garfunkel.

TODAY IN MUSIC HISTORY

IT'S 1940 AND BRITISH ROCK AND ROLL LEGEND, CLIFF RICHARD, IS BORN HARRY RODGER WEBB IN LUCKNOW, INDIA, DURING ITS COLONIAL ERA. MEANWHILE, IN 1972, 14-YEAR-OLD MICHAEL JACKSON RECORDS AND RELEASES 'BEN', WHICH REACHES #1 IN THE US ON OCTOBER 14. INTERESTINGLY, LYRICISTS DON BLACK AND WALTER SCHARF WROTE THE BALLAD ABOUT AN EVIL KILLER PET RAT, BEN, FOR THE SEQUEL TO A MOVIE CALLED *WILLARD*.



Gig Reviews

Down The Hatch-ie!

Australian songstress Hatchie brought her dreamy, cosmic sound to London and we were blown away



View online here!

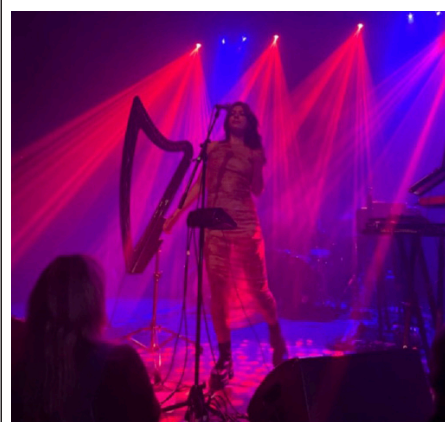
Written by Amanda Paul Music Writer

This may have been the best night of my life. No, seriously. Ever since her album *Giving the World Away* came out in April, I'd been so excited to see Hatchie play at Village Underground. I spent the whole journey there practically wriggling with excitement.

When we arrived, the spacious, industrial Village Underground was scattered with only a handful of people, including a middle-aged man with a handmade poster for his kid who was playing in the show. The atmosphere was calm; generic pop music played in the background and the room was glazed with soothing, yellow light. It was beginning to fill up and the low hum of people's chatter started to build. Out of the shadows a tall figure emerged, dressed in a white shirt and a plain black dress. There she was. You could see people's heads turn as she gracefully made her way through the room, hoping to catch a glimpse of her.

After a few cans of some organic, zero-waste cider (which, by the way, I really don't recommend), the lights dimmed and there on stage was Winter, our first support act. She had her hair in space buns and wore black fishnet, it was giving goth girl. But when she started to sing, to my surprise, out came a sweet, melodious sound. With reverb for days, textures and layers that were rich yet light, and a stunning bell-like voice, she set the bar high for the evening. My favourite song was *'Violet Blue'*, featuring a deliciously chromatic bassline and perfectly-used whammy bar, she created a sense of unease within a greater theme of comfort. I loved her duality.

The second act was a complete contrast to Winter's sound. London-native Tatyana brought an electric energy to the room with her harp and MacBook. As



Tatyana and harp (photo: Amanda Paul)

I write this, I'm reading the notes I made during the gig: "giving charli xcx lockdown album, v techno, so fabric" (for all you freshers, Fabric is a techno club in London). That essentially sums it up. Her expert combination of glitchy vocals, complex harp solos, and interesting scales thrilled the audience and got us all dancing. It was particularly interesting to hear electro-pop production go hand-in-hand with an R&B-style vocal

quality, overall a very unique artist.

And then, the main event: Hatchie herself. Clutching a white bass, she made her way on stage with the band. I was in shock at how loud the bass was, I could feel it in my chest and throat. As the first song played, a strange feeling rushed over me; I'm not usually one to become overwhelmed but Hatchie did something to me that night. I can hardly describe the emotions I went through but I'll do my best here.



Hatchie with her band (photo: Sorina Andrei)

Firstly, props to the drummer - Hatchie leaves no bar unfilled so they were definitely sweating by the end of the night. Not only was the drumming super tight and consistent, but it was also powerful without taking any attention away from the rest of the band. The guitarists and keyboardist also played their part in recreating the magic of the studio-recorded tracks, not a single note sounded different from the original versions.

Hatchie also did incredibly well to translate the raw emotion conveyed in the songs of her album into her live performance. I genuinely feel as though this album was *made* to be performed live. This was especially true during her performance of *'Quicksand'*. Ditching her bass for this number, you could really see her feel the music and it really came through in the way she sang and performed it, it almost looked like she was possessed by it. I was genuinely mesmerised, so much so I started crying but that's just what her music will do to you. There was something so cathartic about getting to scream "I used to think that this was something I would die for" with her, almost like my life was a movie for 3 short minutes. It really shows that Hatchie writes big, stadium dream-pop songs.

She was also incredibly charming while talking to the audience, always thanking us and making it known just how excited she was to be in London. A particularly heart-warming moment came after the crowd had sung almost as loudly as her and she remarked: "Wow, I've only been playing shows like this in Brisbane".

I felt a real wave of sadness after the show ended and I only get that feeling after shows I'll remember forever. If you haven't already, listen to her album, and if you get the chance, catch her live. You won't regret it.

MUSIC

Gig Reviews

Here Comes The Bryde

*Bryde performs at Hoxton's Folklore*Written by **Zanna Buckland** Books Editor

I saw Bryde perform once before, at the 2018 Latitude Festival in Suffolk, and I've been following her music ever since. A folk-rock artist from Wales, Bryde (Sarah Howells) writes the kind of music I aspire to play: rich, raw vocals accompanied by striking lead guitar riffs, heavy bass backing, and energetic drums. Her lyrics are moving and emotional, especially on the newest album *Still*, which speaks of love in all its unique, messy forms. The title song 'Still (shadow)' and 'Hill I'm Dying On (unrequited)' are two prime examples.

The concert on Wednesday 5th October, at the Folklore venue in Hoxton, was a very different experience from her performance at Latitude – intimate and wholesome. Folklore is a lovely little eccentric space



Bryde (photo: Zanna Buckland)

decorated in a woodland theme, with lots of greenery and colourful mood lighting, and I would definitely recommend looking out for gigs happening there (despite the slightly unsavoury location in North-East London).

Howells' voice has a soulful clarity to it that, paired with her stirring lyrics, is enough to bring tears to

your eyes. The band's renditions of 'Peace', 'Algorithms (cyber)', and 'Honey' were bold and ethereal, and made me wish I had a breakup to mourn while listening. Howells is also a master on lead guitar; her vocals-and-guitar-only songs – like 'Epilogue' – acted as a breath of calm among the wildness of the other songs.

I may be biased here, but a few rough starts with untuned guitars and wrong keys did nothing to detract from the pure revelry of Bryde's set. If anything, Howells' responses to these slipups made the gig all the more enjoyable. The camaraderie between the three band members pulled you in, like sharing inside jokes with them. Howells filled the interludes between songs with anecdotes and quips, talking about how she played in a band at school, and about their drummer's recent engagement. The nature of Folklore also meant that we were able to meet the band and briefly chat to Sarah Howells after the gig had ended – no VIP tickets necessary!

One thing about live music that I realised I missed during the pandemic was how different it sounds when watching the band play in real life. Songs also tend to be altered to fit into a set, which gives them a quality distinctive from the recorded versions. One of my favourite songs that they performed on the night has to be 'Flies', which manages to be soft, heavy, tranquil, and chaotic all at once, and is infinitely more enjoyable live than coming out of my shower speaker. Even though the set was relatively long, clocking in at around 70 minutes, it was still disappointing when it came to an end.

On the whole, it was mesmerising to listen to, and an excellent live act to see as my first one in four years. Smaller gigs are incredible for properly experiencing music, especially when you're familiar with the songs, and I'm looking forward to taking full advantage of the multitudes of artists that choose to tour in London and throughout the UK (now that we're free of masks, hand sanitiser, and lateral flow tests). Bryde was completely surreal in the best way possible, and if the other concerts I choose to go to are even half as good as this one, it will be money well spent.

Take a Dip in the Discography with our Spotify playlist!



Bryde (photo: Zanna Buckland)



Felix Recommends

I'll Sing what She's Singing

*How faking it makes you a great composer as well as a great actor*Written by **Gilbert Jackson** Music Writer

"Oh...Oh God...Ooo Oh God...Oh...Oh...Oh... Oh God...Oh yeah right there Oh! Oh...Yes YES..." – Meg Ryan in *When Harry Met Sally*

Autumn is a wonderful time of year: trees wearing their finery of red and gold, crisp frosty mornings, woollen knitted jumpers, hot coffee during the day and hot chocolate during the night; a wonderful time of year indeed. It needs no explaining then, that after a hard day of work, coming home to a cup of tea, a warm bed, and the perfect movie is the best way to end the day. A fabulous autumnal watch would be the all-time classic Billy Crystal / Meg Ryan rom-com that is *When Harry met Sally*.

The story pans out the collision between two personalities. Meg Ryan's character wants to live the perfect life and often strives to find the perfect man to live it with. Billy Crystal's character wishes the same thing, but despite the friendship that his character

and Ms. Ryan's character have, he remains adamant that a man and woman can't be friends since they'll always want sex at some point. Lo and behold, they do have sex at some point, so he was right in some ways.

*'When Harry Met Sally' starring Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal. Castle Rock Entertainment and Nelson Entertainment*

One of the most obvious scenes where we realise they may not be friends all the time is the scene where, after Billy Crystal's character boasts he knows when a woman is 'faking it', Ms. Ryan gives the performance of the decade by exploding into an orgasmic fury of moans and screams while beating the table. Of course, this is proof of Ms. Ryan's supreme acting talent and shows that faking an orgasm is a dramatic art. However, art has a way of bleeding into different media and we can often find instances where drama, art, and music combine. Needless to say, faking orgasms is very much a musical art as well as dramatic one.

The proof for this statement can be found in a work of 20th century music titled 'Sonata Erotica' by Erwin Schulhoff. Schulhoff was an archetypal figure present in the Dadaist movement during the era of European Reconstruction in the aftermath of the Great War; a man truly living *la vie Bohème*. In the new Weimar Re-

public, a sense of hope in despair was clear to see in the increased output of German sensual art and music embodied by the music halls and cabarets; an orgy of scantily clad women, raucous music, cocktails and sexual liberation all blurred in thick clouds of cigarette smoke. It was the true artistic culture that would eventually succumb to the boot in the face by the brute, brute hearts of German nationalism. Schulhoff's works were targeted by Nazi censorship and Schulhoff himself would die in captivity after attempting to flee to the Soviet Union.

The *'Sonata Erotica'* is perhaps the most raw musical work to come out of this movement. Written in 1919, it exemplifies the sexual lifestyle of most people living within the Cabaret sector of society. It is a piece written for Soprano solo in three movements, each characterised by a different portion of the sexual act: foreplay, intercourse and post-coitus. Like most pieces of music for voice, there are clearly written notations, dynamics, lyrics, and phrasing.

The... 'prelude' if you will, consists of the woman inviting the man to have sex with her. The man, presumably, pleasures her as the music directs her to give staggered moans of varying dynamics with long pauses followed by sudden *forte* outbursts of moans again. The second act, which is a segue from the first, is where the man makes his entrance. The moaning now is directed to be more staggered but rhythmical. *Glissandos*

from high to low pitches give her performance more flavour and occasional interjections of "not so rough" or "do it faster" cut across the texture as the dynamics become increasingly louder and louder. The segment is followed by her crying out "faster, faster, faster" in ever-increasing pitch, tempo and dynamic, before she climaxes with "JETZT" ("NOW") at *ffff* dynamic and *prestissimo*. The notation on the score is wild and covers over three octaves of pitch while overall descending in pitch and dynamic before ending on a quiet note.

The last movement is very visceral. The woman in post-coital quivering tries to make conversation with her lover while occasionally having aftershocks. She asks questions such as "how was that for you?" followed by "do you really love me?" The music directs a long pause while the woman makes mild agitated rustling at her lover's lack of interest. The man remains unresponsive. At the end she asks if "they can be reasonable" but to no avail. Instead, the score directs the woman to piss in the toilet and leave.

The audio experience of this piece is very visceral (headphones would be a helpful recommendation when listening to it). Even though the entire piece is scored with every musical direction possible, the details post-coitus, for example, are so strikingly real even though everything has been scored and performed; for the soprano's character the performance is for her lov-

er's pleasure, but for the soprano herself and the composer it is for the audience's pleasure. The audience, therefore, is privy to the act itself and is entranced by the vivid imagery conjured by this impressive score.

We are shown how even the act of average sex and how even roles like foreplay and the variations of sexual acts that ensue can be summed up in a disappointingly short ten-minute piece. This gives the audience a conundrum: the piece portrays a real and genuine night of pleasure but is juxtaposed with the fact that, since it is a musical score, the noises coming out of the soprano are all composed; all fake.

Meg Ryan showing us how a man couldn't always know that a woman is faking an orgasm and proving her point was a piece of artistic craft. It requires one to convince your partner that you're having the time of your life when in actual fact it's mediocre at best. But to be convincing, one must think about what words to say, what sounds to make, how loud one screams and at what pitch as shown in *'Sonata Erotica'*. Of course, during the act such thoughts are instinctive but when you see it phrased like this and written out, it is obvious that faking an orgasm is no different to composing a well-crafted piece of music.

Album Reviews

Always Rock On

The band embraces a bolder, more energetic sound on their third album, Blue Rev, which might be their best yet.

Written by **Neel Le Penru** Music Writer

It's been 5 long years since Canadian dream-poppers Always' impressive sophomore LP, *Antisocialites*, in which the band very much proved that they were more than indie/bedroom-pop one-hit-wonders, thanks to refinements to the writing and production since their strong 2014 debut. The question, after a troubled wait (that, along with the global pandemic, saw the band lose demos to a stolen recorder and gear to a flood), was: could they do it again? The answer: most definitely.

The band's latest effort, *Blue Rev* — released last Friday — is already being talked about as one of the best albums of the year. Over the course of 14 fairly snappy tracks,

the album takes the best of Always — the melding of gloriously jangly guitars and dreamy synths with singer Molly Rankin's ruminations on life, interspersed with energetic riffs and punchy bass lines in a retro-nostalgic sound that never strays into stereotypical pastiche — and turns things up a notch, quite literally in this case: the band's energy is palpable throughout, starting from the relatively (by Always standards) frenetic guitar solo on opener 'Pharmacist'.

Perhaps this dynamism stems from the fact that *Blue Rev* was committed to tape in live takes over the course of just two days (with the band's signature fine-tuning afterwards). Where much of *Antisocialites* could be characterised as the meshing of delicate melodies and punchier moments delivered with careful restraint, *Blue Rev*, though not shy of some tranquil passages, fizzles boldly, often awash with droning and distorted guitars, almost like a more tender My Bloody Valentine record.



Always continue rocking on (photo: Adrian LaMoury)

The same parallel came through on stage too: the band took to London's Islington Assembly Hall on *Blue Rev*'s release day with great zeal, playing a 20-song set



The trio at it again, back after a series of tragedies

spanning their 3 albums. Arguably a testament to *Blue Rev*'s writing as well as fans' dedication to the band, songs both new and old proved to be crowd-pleasers; the band's renewed vigour got the crowd moving — which was disappointingly absent when I last saw Always perform — and chanting along with them. I, for one, had a stellar time — and I'd highly recommend anyone with a taste for indie/dreampop/rock to check out/revisit Always too.

University Challenge try-outs are on



First round trials

18/10/22—Blackett LT1, 6 PM

20/10/22—Skempton 301, 6 PM

**21/10/22—Charing Cross, Reynolds, Brian
Drewe LT, 6 PM**

24/10/22—White City, MSRH, G23-24, 6 PM

If you have any questions about the try-outs, send an email to quiz@imperial.ac.uk