

First published in 1949, Felix is released weekly during term time and is distributed around Imperial's London campuses. All students, staff, and alumni are welcome to contribute to the paper.

Felix

KEEP THE CAT FREE | SINCE 1949



Walt Gao for Felix

Protestors hit back at revised freedom of speech rules

Rules put in place from August require events to be approved and organisers to give details to College.

Editor-in-Chief
MOHAMMAD MAJLISI

Imperial's new freedom of speech policy has been criticised by protestors who feel the new rules around organising protests "puts students in a very vulnerable position."

An Imperial College London spokes-

person said: "Imperial recently revised its Freedom of Speech Code of Practice and established a new Events Procedure as part of its commitment to freedom of speech and debate."

The Freedom of Speech Code of Practice, in action from August 2024, requires events where participants may not be able to enter or leave the premises safely, com-

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At *Felix*, we believe that it is always in the interest of the students to be in the know. Transparency in the workings of the College and the work of your student representatives is key. Therefore we, the *Felix* Editors, 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:
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Located at Beit Quad,
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Printed by Iliffe Media
Winship Road,
Milton, Cambridge
CB24 6PP

Registered Newspaper
ISSN 1040-0711
Copyright © 2024 *Felix*

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MEDIA	SIZE	PRICE (£)
Print	Quarter-Page	25
	Half-Page	30
	Full-Page	45

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EDITORIAL

Ceasefire

Editor-in-Chief
MOHAMMAD MAJLISI

It's hard to write this editorial. The developments in the Middle East over the past few weeks have been shockingly swift, yet at the same time slow. The harrowing events across the past 15 months have shocked the Imperial community and the world at large. Following the horrific attack on the Nova Festival on 7th October 2023, and the capture of 251 hostages by Hamas, Israel's retaliatory war has spun out across multiple fronts and has scarred the landscape of the Gaza Strip beyond recognition. Recent analysis by CUNY and Oregon State University have indicated that approximately 60% of buildings within the strip have been destroyed or damaged. Our social media feeds have been filled with videos, first of the taking of hostages in October, then with the fatal outcomes of Israeli bombing campaigns. Members of the Imperial community have lost their homes, their families, their friends, as a result of this conflict.

The Imperial community is, by large, not particularly political, but the events in Israel and Palestine have mobilised the student and staff community in a way unheard of. Last year, an open letter to the College called for a divestment from all "goods made by Israel or Hamas," and to issue a "point black condemnation" of the bombing of health facilities as well as the killing of medics, journalists, and UN officials, reached 1,000 signatures in three days. The protests and the encampment captured a nationwide sentiment/feeling that our institutions should

be doing more. It was unusual to see such a level of fervour within the student body for the first time in a while.

But for now, a ceasefire has been agreed to, brokered in part due to Donald Trump and the efforts of Steve Witkoff, now Middle East envoy under the 47th President's administration. Witkoff, dispatched in late November 2024, managed to succeed in three weeks where the Biden administration had failed, despite having no prior experience in diplomacy. Despite Biden's efforts to claim some credit, it's hard to believe considering the ceasefire deal has remained constant since May 2024, and because Biden, and his government, have not shown any signs of wanting an end to onslaught. It is more than embarrassing for the Biden administration – in fact it is a emphatic indictment – that Trump was able to solve this issue, the same man whose "first buddy" Elon Musk (very recently spotted performing what has been described by most people as a "Nazi" salute, and by others as "a man with Aspergers exuberantly throwing his heart out to the crowd"), and who has been indicted several times on allegations too numerous to count, as well as being described as a threat to democracy. This is not an endorsement of Trump: we're not interested in joining what is ostensibly a tech oligarchy based on the audience he courted at his inauguration. It doesn't bode well that one of the executive orders signed on Monday was a rollback of sanctions on settlers in the West Bank, a policy which Mr Biden signed in via executive order last February.

As the hostages return to relieved families and to rebuild Gaza begin, we hope this peace lasts, and that a better, brighter future emerges.

Letters to the Editor

As an alumnus, I receive the Imperial newsletter. Their main message is to promote their new strategy 'Science for Humanity' to 'maximise our potential as a force for good in the world.' This is at total odds with their continued commitment to work with fossil fuel companies, their poor engagement with protestors, and their obsession with technofixes rather than systemic change. The People and Planar [sic] rankings shine a light on this double speak and I hope people see through their words and remain shocked at their actions.

Anonymous

As former staff, I witnessed a lack of understanding of the socio-environmental crisis from the staff community resulting in little engagement overall. This lack of genuine commitment from management is also to be highlighted, as their actions are still driven by shareholders' interests rather than being a 'force for good.'

The ongoing development of "the biggest building Imperial has ever built" in White City also goes against the necessity to emancipate from fossil fuels, cement, and the overall infinite growth paradigm that is never questioned at Imperial.

Being part of a research group with other Imperial staff and students, focusing on this lack of engagement from universities as a whole, I would highlight that the structural "publish or perish culture" within academia is preventing further engagement from Imperial amongst other universities.

Elliott Stoclet


I must say the improvement in Imperial's People & Planet ranking is testament to hard work from students and the Officer Trustees who represent them. It means pressure and action by the student body is being acted upon, albeit slowly.

Simran Patel

Rep of the Month is BACK!

Every month you can nominate your student representatives to be in a chance of winning a £20 gift voucher and there are two winners every month. This is to reward them for all their hard work and dedication in supporting and representing your student voice. Nominations close at 23:59 on Sunday 26th January and will be chosen by Emina (Deputy President Education) and Nico (Deputy President Welfare), and the winners will be contacted.


Scan the QR code to nominate your rep



Feedback on Mitigating Circumstances

Deputy President (Education) Emina is looking for students to share their experiences with mitigating circumstances

Scan the QR code below:



NEWS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

ply with legal obligations, ensure that speeches and discussions are in “good order,” or that a breach of the peace may occur, to register their event “at least two weeks” prior. The principal organiser of any event that breaches these guidelines must also give the name, department, CID, email, and phone number to the College through an online event proposal form.

The move has been met with criticism by activist group Imperial Action for Palestine. The group explained that previously they had liaised with security services to organise protests, but upon informing security in early October, they were told they now had to abide by the new Code of Practice and register their events via the form. However, the College has allowed

events organised by the protestors to take place without the events procedure taking place.

A representative for the group said: “We as a group reject insinuations that any of the above are ‘likely’ to occur at any of our rallies or indeed have done in the past. This form also requires information to be given of ‘principal organisers’ which given the college’s prior hostile conduct with student organisers puts students in a very vulnerable position. We have had to find sympathetic staff members to help us which has put a seemingly intentional block on our activities on campus.”

Imperial updated its Freedom of Speech code due to the passing of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act in 2023. Although it had received royal assent in 2023, it was paused following concerns regard-

ing a statutory tort that would allow universities, and student unions to face legal action. However, the Labour government has removed the tort and has committed to enforcing the Act.

The Act requires universities to have “robust codes of practice” for the freedom of speech, enforced by the Office for Students. A new complaints system will also be introduced, and universities in breach of the rules may have to pay compensation, face fines, or have their registration suspended.

Similarly, NDAs will be banned over concerns of bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct on campuses across the country, a move Imperial has already made according to its website.

Brady’s remuneration decreases as pay award rejected

President makes 8.8 times the median salary but gave pay award to student hardship fund.

Editor-in-Chief

MOHAMMAD MAJLISI

President Brady’s remuneration package has decreased by £15,000 for the 2023–24 academic year as Imperial’s payments to the USS pension fund decreased. He also waived his pay award for the period between August 2023 and July 2024, opting to donate it to the Student Hardship Fund.

The changes mean that Brady now earns only 8.8 times more than the median employee, opposed to 9.2 times across 2022–23.

The reduction in remuneration is due to a reduction in Imperial’s contributions to his pension. Due to a £14.1

billion deficit in the USS in 2020, the College was obligated to pay 6.2% of salaries into the deficit from April 2022 to 31st March 2024 as part of the pension’s recovery plan. However, following the 2023 valuation of the pension scheme, a deficit plan was no longer required, and a new Schedule of Contributions, introduced from 1st January 2024 removed the requirement for universities to pay into the deficit. As a result, the remaining provision of £244.7 million was reversed, allowing for the College to accelerate part of their pay award into 2023–24.

Last year the J TU and the College agreed to a minimum 4% pay award as a result following several bouts of industrial action including a marking and assessment boycott.

Given President Brady’s salary has remained at

£375,000, it has amounted to real terms pay cut, as the Consumer Price Index increased by 2.2% in the 12 months between August 2023 and August 2024. Similarly, his housing allowance has remained at £76,000. Brady has opted not to live in College accommodation during his presidency, in contrast to his predecessor Alice Gast, who received a total of £269,000 towards College accommodation in the 2021–22 period.

Meet the elusive team behind the Imperial Marriage Pact

Felix interviews the team behind the project to find “the one”.

Editor-in-Chief

MOHAMMAD MAJLISI

Eagle-eyed students may have seen posters popping up around campus over the past few weeks advertising the “Imperial Marriage Pact,” an algorithm-based form that matches students to find the optimal life partner.

Earlier this week, *Felix* sat down with the team behind the Marriage Pact, and discussed what, how, and why they decided to bring the Pact here.

“We’re in our first year, we’re all tired of applying to spring week internships, so we just wanted to have a way to use the math [sic] knowledge we learned, because we don’t just want to go to school, study, and go home,” said one of the founders. The Marriage Pact drew attention because it was “based on a mathematical algorithm,” so they “grew really interested in this topic.”

The basic premise of the pact is that once a partner is determined, and if both parties remain single by age 30, both parties are encouraged to form a relationship.

The Marriage Pact, inspired by the Gale-Shapley algorithm which creates the most stable matches, was created by Liam McGregor and Sophia Sterling-Angus in 2017 as part of their final project for an Economics module at Stanford University. The Marriage Pact has since been enacted at 100 universities, including Oxford in 2022, although the version being carried out at Imperial is not affiliated with the official company set up by McGregor.

The founders, who wish to remain anonymous, haven’t even told their friends of their plans to bring

this onto Imperial’s campuses. It was tough to socialise, despite their belief that “university is a perfect place to meet your soulmate or meet other friends.”

Whilst the Marriage Pact company doesn’t publicise their algorithm, the founders knew of the first principle it came from: the Gale-Shapley Algorithm. “It’s based around how many stable marriages you can form between two sets of, for example, male and female students, explained one of the founders. Once the sorting

However, the founders were keen not to ensure the partnerships were heteronormative. “There’s a lot of nuances,” said one founder, explaining how they had to “work around” pairing based on only male and female groups. “There’s also the aspect of whether we want to pair people up just because they’re similar, or we want to pair actually opposite characteristics together.”

Being STEM students, the founders naturally decided to focus on the “back end” of the algorithm. The survey, comprised of 50 questions, relies on anonymising the data and assigning mathematical values. There is no way for someone to be identified via the the dataset.

They spent a Sunday to code “from 9am all the way to 6pm” and “just figured it out” with some help from a professor they knew who specialises in these types of algorithms.

As of Friday 17th January the team had already received over 100 submissions. Mainly done through word of mouth, the team recently launched their Instagram profile (@imperialmarriagepact) and are hoping to get more submissions before the form closes on 3rd February. Results should be out by Valentine’s Day, the team hope. To advertise they printed posters and pasted them around campus, as well as posting some through students’ letterboxes.

When asked if there were any major lessons they found along the way, the team said, “Don’t stick posters on painted walls.”

is done and pairs are matched, there wouldn’t be other people more compatible “in different groups who would rather be with each other. And that’s a stable marriage.”



University Challenge 50 years on

Imperial alum and former *Felix* Theatre editor, Tom Stevenson, reflects on his time competing in the hit quiz show.

Imperial Alumnus
TOM STEVENSON

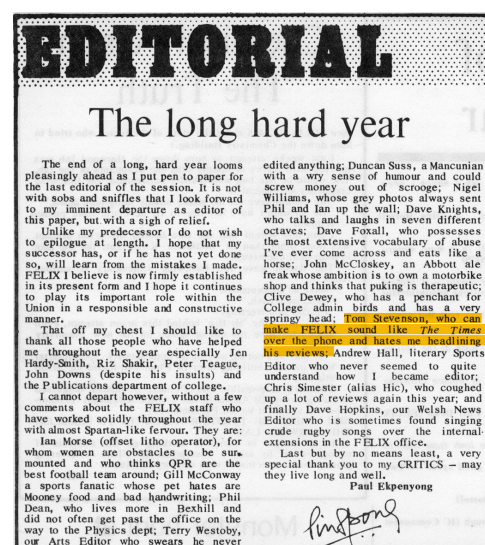
50 years ago the call went out for candidates to join an IC team on *University Challenge*, and I (then a Chemistry PG) was picked, along with Martin Turner, Keith Sugden, Rob Davis, and (reserve) Derrick Everett. Martin had been given the job of finding a team, so he invited those interested to a lunchtime meeting. He asked fifty questions provided by Granada, the production company behind *University Challenge*, and the highest scorers were selected.

Our recording was to take place on Wednesday 5th February 1975, and we travelled from Euston that morning. We arrived about lunchtime at the Granada Studios on Quay Street, Manchester, where we met host Bamber Gascoigne and the other three teams.

Several things were different from today's programme. Firstly, it was broadcast on ITV, and at random times in different regions, often mid-afternoon or late at night. Secondly, the winning team reappeared against a new team in the following episode. Teams that won three matches were promoted to the series

finals, and then two new teams played. And I don't think teams trained. We certainly didn't; we just turned up and tried to answer Bamber's questions correctly.

At the time, Imperial College, then part of the University of London, was a very different place 50 years ago; with about (from my memory) 4,500 under-



The editorial of *Felix* #425 (1974). Tom was the Theatre Editor for a significant number of years, providing reviews of various plays being shown around London.

graduates, 1,500 postgraduates, and maybe 400 women.

In the afternoon we went through make-up and two full-scale dress rehearsals followed by a meal in the cafeteria where we could spot TV stars, includ-

Bamber Gascoigne, the first host of *University Challenge*, in 2006. Gascoigne hosted the show during its initial run on ITV from 1962 to 1987, where the format and style was very different to the format seen today Christina Gascoigne



ing actors from *Coronation Street*.

Two matches were recorded each evening. As the young ladies of Lady Margaret Hall (LMH), Oxford, had already won twice, it was anticipated that



We just turned up and tried to answer Bamber's questions correctly.

they would beat Hull in the first match and be promoted to the finals, leaving Ulster to play Imperial in the second match.

But Hull had other plans. They beat LMH and went on to beat Ulster in the second match. Being the fourth team, we did not appear! This was particularly unfortunate as Bamber had told us that he had prepared a set of questions weighted towards the sciences, hoping that we would overturn IC's dismal record on the show. These questions were used in Hull vs. Ulster.

Our supporters were not best pleased, having travelled by coach from London (experiencing a breakdown in Birmingham) they returned without seeing us perform. The team was put on the sleeper train back to Euston and asked to return on the Friday, which we did.

Martin was the team captain and Derrick stood in for Rob. We were narrowly beaten by two-times winners Hull. I can remember only one question. As the starter we were shown a picture of some eggs, soil, and flowerpots and asked what dish these would make. No one got the answer which was Chinese "century eggs". The subsequent pictures showed

'Watch 'It Come Down' by John Osborne At the National Theatre

JOHN OSBORNE's newly performed play opened at the Old Vic last week and can be seen in the National Theatre's repertoire from March 20th. The title comes from a demolition company's advertising motto: "We do it: You watch it come down"; and by the end of the evening you feel that the demolition experts have done a pretty thorough job. I cannot claim to be an Osborne expert, but I could not help thinking that here were Jimmy and Alison Porter, twenty years later, with the roles reversed.

Ben Prosser is an English Oscar-winning film director who hopes to escape from the unpleasantness of town dwelling by setting up house in a redundant country railway station, sumptuously furnished with the latest from Heal's. Unfortunately he bargains without the local country vandals whose idea of a good time is to spend it with a shotgun. Meanwhile his wife keeps up a fairly steady stream of vituperation which occasionally flares into the row to end all rows. Amongst their co-mates in exile are Glen, the dying writer, who completes his twelve hundred page book as his ingenue admirer prepares his herbal tea, and Raymond, the camp escapee from Leicester and the rag trade, who tries to keep the peace with lavish helpings from the well-stocked drinks trolley.

The central feeling that the play gives is one of hope in the strength of personal relationships despite the turmoils of the public world. Whilst Ben and Sally (admirably played by Frank Finlay and Jill Bennett) row their way through the evening, more positive relationships are being worked out between all the exiles, the prime mover in these multifarious activities being Jo, in a glorious performance by Susan Fleetwood, who loves everybody.

The setting is by Hayden Griffin, who has shown a remarkable attention to detail. The disused railway station still houses some of the relics of its former glory; the platform ticket machine, the booking office hatch; whilst the modern additions provide what must be a property master's nightmare, in terms of sheer numbers.

Thomas Stevenson

One of Tom's reviews from 1975.

the ingredients of other egg-based recipes.

History does not record whether our supporters made the trip a second time.

SCIENCE

The history of string theory

Explained by Imperial Professor of Theoretical Physics, Amihay Hanany.

Science Editor

TAYLOR POMFRET

Imperial is home to one of the world's largest and strongest communities focused on the topic of string theory, according to Prof. Amihay Hanany. The community hosts a total of eight active researchers – including Prof. Hanany – with research into string theory, forming one of the main pillars of active Theoretical Physics research conducted at Imperial.

String theory is a framework used in physics to replace zero-dimensional point-like particles with one-dimensional objects, called strings. Strings have been postulated by physicists who believe strings have many properties true in a fundamental theory of physics – a theory which attempts to unify gravity and our current observed model of particle physics.

To explain this further, *Felix* spoke with Prof. Hanany, to learn about the history of string theory, and to hear about his outlook for string theory research in the next decade.

Looking at the strong force

Hanany explains that the story of string theory begins with the study of strong force interactions, one of the four fundamental forces of nature.

“String theory was developed for people to understand the physics of the strong interaction. [...] People started from a very simple model where they saw that if you take two quarks (a fundamental particle that makes up hadrons, such as protons and neutrons), you try to pull them apart, and there is a string which forms”.

“Very quickly, it became clear that the spectrum of excitations of the string doesn't just contain quarks, they also contain gravitons, hypothetical, fundamental particles believed to mediate the gravitational force.”

“People gradually shifted attention, from thinking about the theory of the strong interaction to the theory of quantum gravity. This was in fact, some kind of a victory. You had a goal to understand the theory of strong interactions. And in return, you got a theory that deals with gravity. So, this was more rewarding than initially meant to be.”

String theory, to its surprise, became a theory of quantum gravity, a field that attempts to describe gravity according to quantum mechanics.

Does string theory describe nature?

“With a string, you will have a set of excitations. But it's a particle, which has a mass, it has spin and it has a charge. One goal was to then say: let's start from some string theory and show that we can get the spectrum of particle physics that we observe.”

“To date, this is an unsolved problem, as it's too difficult.”

“And one big issue is the absence of supersymmetry in the observed spectrum of particles.”

Particle accelerator experiments to date have found no evidence to support supersymmetry,

a theory which proposes that a given particle has a partner particle with different spin properties.

“It's just that it's very difficult to find a string background, which will generate the observed world.”

“If we try to count how many string backgrounds you have, they come up with 10^{500} different cases, but I'm very suspicious about those estimates.”

The String Revolution in 1984

Physicists Michael Green and John Schwarz in 1984 made a significant development to string theory: they discovered a way to reconcile the theory with the theory of supersymmetry. “It was presenting a major problem. The ‘Chirality problem’ was solved by a technical development which is known today as the Green-Schwarz mechanism.”

“They gave a mechanism which allows for the introduction of non-Abelian gauge fields which is what you wanted.”

“After, there was a big celebration, this is '84. The string revolution. It actually led to a very interesting social development, until then, very few people were working on string theory, and after their contribution, it was a whole group of people – they stopped working on what they did and they started looking at this.”

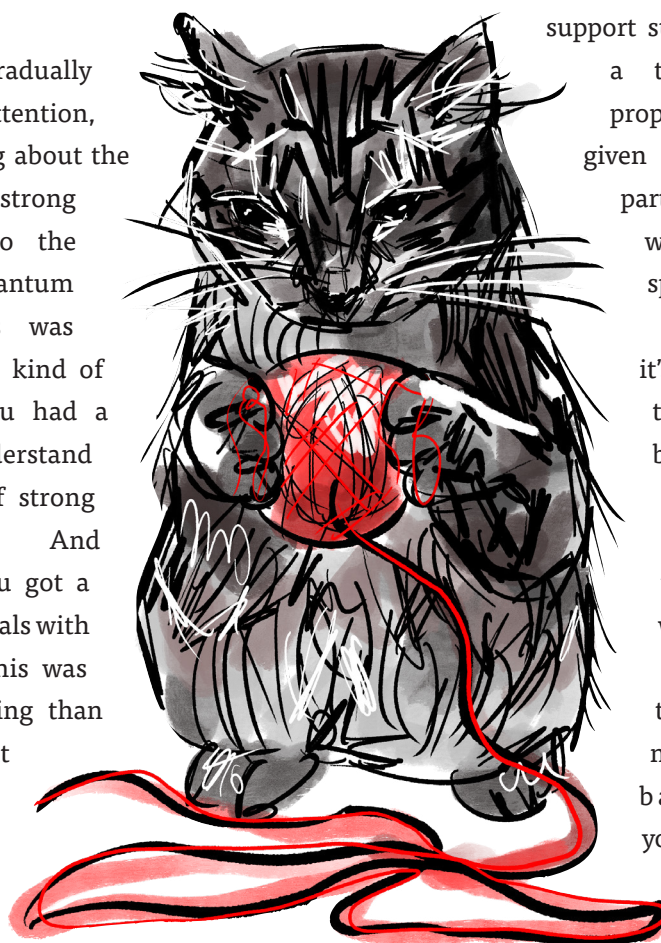
Holography

“The next development of string theory was with ideas of holography. [...] It says that gravity is some holographic image of gauge theories. It was a specific example, which was given when you have gauge theory on one hand and gravity on the other. This is called AdS-CFT correspondence.”

AdS-CFT was first proposed in 1997 by Juan Maldacena, and its duality represented a major advance in the understanding of string theory and quantum gravity. Maldacena's paper has been cited 20,452 times – making it the most cited High Energy Physics paper to date.

“Holography still is a topic of central interest today. These days, we are in a period where progress is slow. [...] For the next 10–20 years, we will continue with this bifurcated plan: people do things in small groups, [and] they don't communicate much with the other groups.”

“We have now seven people in the area of string theory: each one is doing something different. We don't typically collaborate with each other because we cover our own topics. And I think it will continue like that.”



Illustrated by: Ruby Lydford

COMMENT

An 85% Vegan Story

Veganism was never difficult, but often inconvenient. To solve certain situations, I decided to shrink the vegan part of my diet by 15%.

Comment Writer
EMILY JACOBI

My story did not start at veganism. At age 18, I learned of the heavy carbon footprint of meats such as beef or chicken and decided to become a pescetarian. A few months later, I learned how farmed fish are often fed multiple antibiotics to fight off the harmful bacteria that grow in their tight living conditions, and I became

vegetarian. My doctor suggested avoiding dairy for a while, and I began to explore oat, coconut, and soy milk. I never liked cheese, so dairy was not difficult to cut out of my diet. Honey was easy. I then thought, “Let’s try this vegan diet,” and out were eggs. As a response, I explored more vegetables, tofu, edamame spaghetti, soy milk, soy-yoghurt, and beans. My skin cleared of acne, my performance in the gym improved, and I rarely found myself sick at home. I felt great.

This all happened during the COVID-19 pandemic, when physical socialising was restricted and going out to eat was virtually impossible. I cooked at home and rarely ordered take-out. I thrived in my little vegan bubble. I taught myself how to spice, steam, fry, roast, marinade, and bake with mostly vegetables, grains, pulses, and soy protein. My Sunday protein pancakes were my favourite to make.

Eventually, I went to the doctor to hear the unfortunate news: I was severely deficient in iron, vitamin B₁₂, selenium, and vitamin D. So I started taking supplements and my blood values realigned. Though an extra expense, I felt happier taking my supplements rather than the normalised alternative: to just eat meat. Funnily enough, at that time I realised I did not even know how to cook meat and fish correctly and I severely feared poisoning from undercooking.

In my private bubble, I was happy in vegetable-land – however, I was not always in my bubble. On campus, if I had forgotten to prepare a lunch, I always bought the delicious vegan Moroccan salad, or the excellent baked potato and baked beans sold in the Library Café. Alternative meals are few, expensive, and often filled with ultra-processed meats, salt, sugar, stabilisers, and additives. Vegan or not, ultra-processed, high sugar and lots of salt are three ingredients we do not need to thrive in life.

When I am out with friends and I can choose myself, my default manoeuvre on the menu is to identify the dishes with the little VG sign. If none of them sound like something I would enjoy spending my money on, I head over the V signs.

A balanced vegetarian meal will always trump a bowl of fries or a sad leafy vegan salad. In most cases, I will find something on the menu that has neither fake meat nor lots of dairy. This is why I love going out for Vietnamese food – there is ample amount of excellent vegan food with tofu as protein and many vegetables.

When I am invited by my non-vegetarian friends, I am happy to say I



This flexible approach has helped me find acceptance

am vegetarian or pescetarian. So far, I do not think I will become an omnivore anytime soon. The most common diet isn’t veganism or vegetarianism, and delegating to the host the responsibility of cooking something outside of their comfort zone or additional to their plan is neither very respectful nor gracious in my book. This is especially true considering that the hosts will be busy with planning the guest list, cleaning schedule, decorations, and drinks. Experience tells me the centrepiece will include some meat or cheese, and so I may show up having eaten a bit beforehand so that I can join the meal with others without going hungry. I am not there to only eat, but to make meaningful memories.

The flexible 85% vegan – vegan in private, vegetarian or pescetarian in public – approach to life has helped me a lot to find acceptance in this somewhat divided society and compromise within relationships. Considering that 18 out of my 21 weekly meals are eaten independently, I live an 85% vegan life. The 85% consistency keeps my carbon footprint down, my exposure to antibiotics down, my skin clear, and my health where I want it to be. The three other meals are dedicated to memorable afternoons enjoying my grandma’s cake with coffee, birthday tiramisu with friends, traditional cheese fondue with family, freshly caught fish on the coast, and exceptional sushi when visiting Japan.



CULTURE

DeBÍ TiRaR Más FOToS

Bad Bunny's record- and heart-breaking album talks Puerto Rico, reggaeton and dembow

Culture Writer

DAVID LATIMER

An 'instant classic' called by Rolling Stone, is the album that reached one billion streams in just 13 days: Bad Bunny's new and sixth studio album *DeBÍ TiRaR Más FOToS* has a stronger Puerto Rican essence than ever. This special, cohesive piece of work has touched hearts across generations and countries; everyone feels the album's call to dance together to its dembow and reggaeton rhythm. In Apple Music's Zane Lowe Show, Bad Bunny (real name Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio) opened up about feeling more like himself than ever and prioritising loving the music he makes and who he makes it with over standards, expectations, and numbers – which, in my opinion, is what makes this album his best work yet.

While showing incredible variability in its rhythms and lyrics, the album's overarching theme is beautifully entangled in every song: Bad Bunny's home, Puerto Rico. The album reflects the gentrification of the Puerto Rican community and the rich culture and background the Puerto Ricans have built and continue to embrace. One of the most special ways Bad Bunny ties Puerto Rico to the album concept is by using a classic symbol: Concho, an endemic toad. The *sapo concho* (Puerto Rican crested toad) became endangered upon the invasion of the archipelago by the United States, much like the language, music and culture of the Puerto Rican nation. Bad Bunny cleverly uses this toad throughout the album's music videos,

short film and marketing as a symbol for the resistance of the Puerto Rican nation, using his art as a vehicle to embrace the spirit of his community and its long-lived characteristic sound. "This past week I have seen how the album unites families, generations, even people who reconnect with their own roots because they admire our community", says Bad Bunny on a podcast with Puerto Rican

6-minute song with piano and trumpet solos, salsa and dembow elements, and Bad Bunny's unique manner of telling a heartbreak story is not exactly what was anticipated. However, it is now the third most streamed song on the album, and when asked why, Bad Bunny replied with "...I always knew this song was going to be popular, because it goes against everything the industry expects

completely surpassing language barriers, despite it being so lyric heavy – both in the number of lyrics and in their depth – is quite unusual. In my opinion, the reason behind this album becoming so global is rooted in the passion and love with which it was made. 'LA MuDANZA' ('the move') depicts Bad Bunny's family history, which he revealed he learnt through casual conversations with his loved ones back in Puerto Rico. The album is also full of collaborations with young emerging Puerto Rican artists from the national art institutions, which he revealed was chosen very carefully: "I know many big artists, superstars, but no matter how big I can be, I connect more with these people, I relate to them more". This true love for his family, his heritage and his culture is directly reflected on the album. Listeners feel the emotions behind the songs, making each song slightly abstract and allowing each listener's interpretation.

The album title 'DeBÍ TiRaR Más FOToS' translates to 'I should have taken more pictures': when pictures could only be taken on cameras, each one was a special memory, a moment worth having an imperishable physicality of. Making this the title of such an emotionally honest album perfectly encapsulates the core of this work: Bad Bunny is showing his true self, Benito, those photos he's taken and those he wishes he had, that Puerto Rican spirit he hopes will remain as powerful and united. It is precisely this mindset of prioritising what matters most in his life that has led to Bad Bunny's best work, which speaks to a simple concept that we all sometimes need a reminder of: the best things in life are done with love.



Look at this little lad! A *sapo concho* Wikimedia Commons

Chente Ydrach. This is a key factor that explains this album's success: it connects the listener to the purest, most human sentiment; that special type of pride we feel for a community we belong to.

This intense, emotionally vulnerable topic is masterfully contrasted with a wide variety of quick rhythm and genre changes throughout the album. A clear example is 'BAILE INOLVIDABLE' ('unforgettable dance') which has quickly become a fan favourite. A

from an artist like me". This speaks to another side of this album's success: it defies expectations and assumptions regarding the depth, complexity and sound of current Latin music. Bad Bunny has brought back Puerto Rican melodies while combining them with his own innovative ideas, resulting in an original, different sound that stands out and entices whoever thoroughly listens to it, whether Spanish-speaking or not.

The phenomenon of an album

FILM&TV

The feral girl's *Barbenheimer*

Babyferatu

Lily-Rose Depp as Ellen Hutter in *Nosferatu* Aidan Monaghan / Focus Features

Film Writer

JYOTSANA DASOONDI

In light of the frenzy of summer 2023, when two of the year's biggest films *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer* shared the same release date, Hollywood marketing executives have been trying – unsuccessfully – to recreate the magic. *Barbenheimer*, as it was coined, encouraged cinema goers to watch both films, tonally far apart from one another, in the same day. Audiences leaned into the experience by dressing on theme, in pink for *Barbie* and black for *Oppenheimer*, transforming a cinema outing into an event. This inspired memes and Halloween costumes, cementing *Barbenheimer* into a cultural phenomenon.

More recently, *Gladiator 2* and the *Wicked* movie, which also shared a release date, tried to make “Glicked” happen. By all other measures, it should have been the next *Barbenheimer*. Both films were highly anticipated, featuring an all-star cast and massive fanbases, yet they were burdened by their own legacies. *Wicked*, an adaptation of the beloved musical, faced the impossible task of satisfying an already devoted and obsessive fanbase; meanwhile, a sequel to the

hugely successful 2000 film, *Gladiator 2* struggled under the enormity of its predecessor. When a film attempts to reinterpret something deeply nostalgic, it risks tarnishing memories – and you cannot compete with nostalgia. Although both films were received fairly well it made it hard for the films to stand alone, and even harder for the two to be made into an item. Also, by this point, people had caught on to tactics used by the media and have grown weary of them.

Now, sadly, we might never witness another *Barbenheimer*. All subsequent marketing campaigns lack the novelty and juxtaposition that made it so special. Yet the beauty of these insane cultural shifts lies in their ability to create ripples in the corners of the internet that pay homage to them. So, for all the girls (and everyone else) who are weird, off-putting, and carry within them an indescribable darkness, may I propose: *Babyferatu*.

An internet-coined mashup of the movies *Nosferatu* and *Babygirl*, *Babyferatu* differs from *Glicked* or *Barbenheimer* in that its movies don't share a release date, with *Nosferatu* being released on Christmas Day last year and *Babygirl* on 10th January this year, making the pairing seem less PR driven and more organic. Still, in keeping with the *Barbenheimer*

formula, both films boast A-list casts and vastly different plots, set in completely different time periods.

What sets *Babyferatu* apart, however, are the thematic threads that are best appreciated when watching both films back-to-back. In their own ways, the films explore darkness and control, with leading ladies who undeniably command attention as the most interesting characters in their respective stories. And, perhaps most importantly, both films are undeniably horny.

***Nosferatu*: The irresistible allure of an ugly guy**

Nosferatu, directed by Robert Eggers and starring Lily-Rose Depp and Nicolas Hoult, is a retelling of the 1922 German silent film of the same name. The original *Nosferatu* was itself an unauthorised adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, with the character's names changed in an almost identical in plot.

The film is set in 1800s Germany and tells a tale of twisted obsession between Ellen (Depp) and vampire Count Orlok (Bill Skarsgård) who has been plaguing her dreams since childhood. After Ellen marries Thomas (Hoult) she feels freed from her past melancholy but like a vengeful ex, Count Orlok sets into mo-

tion a plan to reclaim her. With the aid of his faithful servant and Thomas' boss Knock, Orlok lures Thomas to his home in Transylvania where he witnesses terrifying and otherworldly events, narrowly managing to escape. Orlok, now on his way to Germany, brings with him a plague that begins ravaging the town. As the world around her descends into chaos, Ellen, tormented by her visions of Orlok, finds herself drawn to him despite her love for Thomas. Her internal struggle becomes the emotional crux of the



The films explore darkness and control. And, perhaps most importantly, they are undeniably horny

film as she wrestles with her fate and the darkness within her.

The performances in *Nosferatu* are stellar across the board, with each actor bringing depth and complexity to their roles. Depp is particularly impressive as Ellen, capturing the torment and vulnerability of a troubled young woman haunted by forces beyond her control. Skarsgård plays the Count as a grotesque, towering, corpse-like figure with a growling voice that adds an eerie layer of menace. The film's horror and gore are masterfully executed, with several scenes achieving the intended unsettling effect. One scene involves a gypsy ritual, in which a virgin girl on horseback is used to locate and destroy a vampire's grave. This scene is steeped in folklore, which believes that a virgin would refuse to step on a vampire's grave, helping villagers to identify it. The sequence is chilling and ties the supernatural elements to regional mythology, adding a layer of authenticity to the film.

Knock, a character reminiscent of Renfield from Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, is particularly memorable. As Orlok's devoted servant, he is both grotesque and pitiful. The film leans into this, with the moment he bites the head off a live pigeon being one of the most rancid and visceral scenes in recent memory. The audible gasp from the theatre during this scene is a testament to its shocking realism.

However, there are moments where the film succumbs to familiar horror tropes. For instance, Thomas repeatedly pries into Orlok's secrets, questioning the gypsy rituals, despite clear signs that something sinister is afoot. His failure to flee the castle after multiple nights of eerie occurrences and finding bite marks on his body feels frustratingly typical of the genre, pulling the viewer out of the otherwise immersive story.

One of the standout performances comes from Willem Dafoe, who plays Professor Von Franz, a Van Helsing-like reclusive doctor and expert in the occult. Dafoe's ability to embody any role he plays shines through; his tenderness and empathy towards Ellen are particularly moving, bringing a sense of warmth and hope to the cold, foreboding atmosphere of the film, and helping to ground the film amidst its more supernatural elements.

What stands out most about *Nosferatu* is its seamless integration of traditional vampire folklore, Bram Stoker's original *Dracula*, and the 1922 silent film *Nosferatu*. The film pays homage to these works while carving out its own identity, allowing it to feel fresh and exciting. By drawing on familiar elements of the *Dracula* story, the audience is anchored within the narrative, enabling new twists and imaginings to shine. The relative obscurity of the original *Nosferatu* also works in the film's favour, as it avoids being overshadowed by its predecessor. Ultimately, this film is an impactful, visually striking tribute to the enduring appeal of the vampire mythos.

Babygirl: desire, shame, and a glass of milk

While *Nosferatu* succeeds because it takes its genre and source material seriously, the triumph of *Babygirl* lies in its ability to acknowledge how ridiculous it can be. This levity and humour provide respite from the tension pervasive throughout the film, while also providing a stark contrast when the high stakes of power abuse and infidelity is bought into play.

Directed by Halina Reijn, *Babygirl* is centred around Romy (Nicole Kidman), a high-powered CEO in New York with two children and a loving husband of 19 years (Anthony Banderas). Her seemingly fulfilling life takes a turn when she begins an intense affair with a younger intern,

Samuel, played by Harris Dickinson. As their relationship deepens, boundaries blur and lies multiply, threatening to unravel the carefully constructed world Romy has built for herself.

The nature of Romy and Samuel's relationship has strong dominant-submissive undertones, enhanced by the thrill that Samuel could make one phone call and end her whole career. In the real world, Romy has all the power and control but, in the words of Samuel, "I think you like being told what to do." Not too much of Romy's backstory is revealed, but

the few details that she lets slip are crucial to understanding her character. She grew up in a cult during the 1970s, an era of free-love and liberation; thus her role as CEO of a robotics firm specialising in warehouse automation seems like an act of rebellion. She is no longer a follower, but a leader. Striking shots of her warehouse filled with robots placing items into boxes act as a metaphor for Romy's life until she meets Samuel. Each aspect fits into its own box: her job, her children, her husband, and her sex life. Perhaps, though, it is this repression of her past, where she grew up following orders and being told what to do, that spills over into her fantasies, setting the stage for her relationship with Samuel.

Samuel is also cloaked in mystery. He is introduced to Romy and the audience on the streets of New York, where he calms down a rabid dog that would otherwise have attacked Romy. From the jump, he is in control. On the surface, he seems to have had a normal upbringing. His parents were divorced, but he seemed to have a stable relationship with both, regularly travelling up to Ohio to visit his father, a philosophy teacher. Yet, like Romy, Samuel harbours a shameful side to him-

self that is finally given space to breathe in their relationship. This darkness, this compulsion to conquer goes against the charm and nonchalance he projects to others. Both characters find solace in being able to share their truth with another. Romy needs what Samuel has to offer, and vice versa. In this way, an intoxicating connection is formed.

Babygirl succeeds in many aspects, particularly in its nuanced portrayal of relationships. Romy and her husband Jacob have an extremely loving and fulfilling bond. They support each other profes-

sionally, parent collaboratively, and retain this deep affection and understanding for each other even after all these years. Also, Anthony Banderas is a sexy man! This film doesn't lean on the trope of an unattractive and negligent spouse to justify the cheating. The fatal crack in their relationship stems

from Romy's inability to communicate her desires. She is so ashamed of herself, of being judged by the man who loves her the most that she inadvertently drives herself into the arms of another. This discomfort is so effectively conveyed by Kidman in a scene where Romy physically hides under her duvet before telling Jacob about her sexual desires. She speaks so quietly – yet even after Jacob listens, and is receptive to what she wants, Romy backtracks and takes her anger out on him.

Although *Babygirl* is marketed as an erotic thriller, at times it carries a misplaced feel of a horror movie. The tone occasionally veers into a darker, foreboding territory that doesn't entirely align with the film's themes or storytelling. This is particularly noticeable in the soundtrack, which often feels overly ominous and out of step with the scenes it accompanies.

Yet despite these tonal inconsistencies, the fallout and eventual reconciliation between Romy and Jacob is handled with nuance even though the film does



It is this repression of her past that spills over into her fantasies

stops short of grappling with the gravity of Romy's abuse of power. While it's shown that both Romy and Samuel misused their positions in some way, the fact remains that Romy was Samuel's boss, a grave imbalance of power that demands more exploration than what is offered.

Overall, *Babygirl* serves as a gripping exploration of sexual dynamics and female desire. It is undeniably directed by a woman and while it lacked the satisfaction of justice for Romy's abuse of power, perhaps that is the most realistic aspect of the film. Romy faces no consequences because she is wealthy and powerful, while Samuel leaves the company and fades into obscurity. He is but a blip, a fleeting vessel used to bring Romy and her husband closer together. To me, that is the most brutal part. While both people's lives are changed, the more lasting impact is on Samuel; he is younger and poorer. It's a bleak but fitting conclusion to a movie centred on control and power.

Nosferatu and *Babygirl* are dark, provocative films that explore complex portrayals of women, embracing their flaws and moral ambiguity. They present female characters who are strong yet morally murky – Ellen cheats on her husband, and Romy seduces her intern – but their actions are portrayed with a leniency that is almost exclusively offered to men. Both delve into themes of power and control, with characters whose inherent darkness is left unexplained. While Willem Dafoe and Harris Dickinson deliver standout performances in their respective roles, their male characters serve as secondary figures, putting the spotlight on stories that centre women. Together, *Babyferatu* is a compelling double feature that reflects on female agency and desire in ways that feel fresh and subversive.



BOOKS

2024 Wrapped

My best and worst reads of 2024

Books Editor
ADITI MEHTA

What's better than a yearly round-up? Not much. So, here is my 2024 Books Wrapped. Hopefully you find some agreement or inspiration.

BEST BOOKS

Ultra-Processed People, Chris Van Tulleken

Perfect for anyone curious about the intersection between science, health, and corporate power, Chris Van Tulleken's *Ultra-Processed People* was a horrifying eye-opener. It has transformed my approach to my food. An unforgettable exploration into the co-option of our food systems, it also illuminates broader socio-political issues, including the role

large corporations play in manipulating our desires and basic needs, and the diseases that chemicals within food – branded as food – bring to the indigenous communities they are exported to.

Whether or not you care if 'E202' or dextrin are in your food (perhaps you should, they can cause DNA damage and insulin resistance respectively), I believe that *Ultra-Processed People* is a must read for anyone.

Never Let Me Go, Kazuo Ishiguro

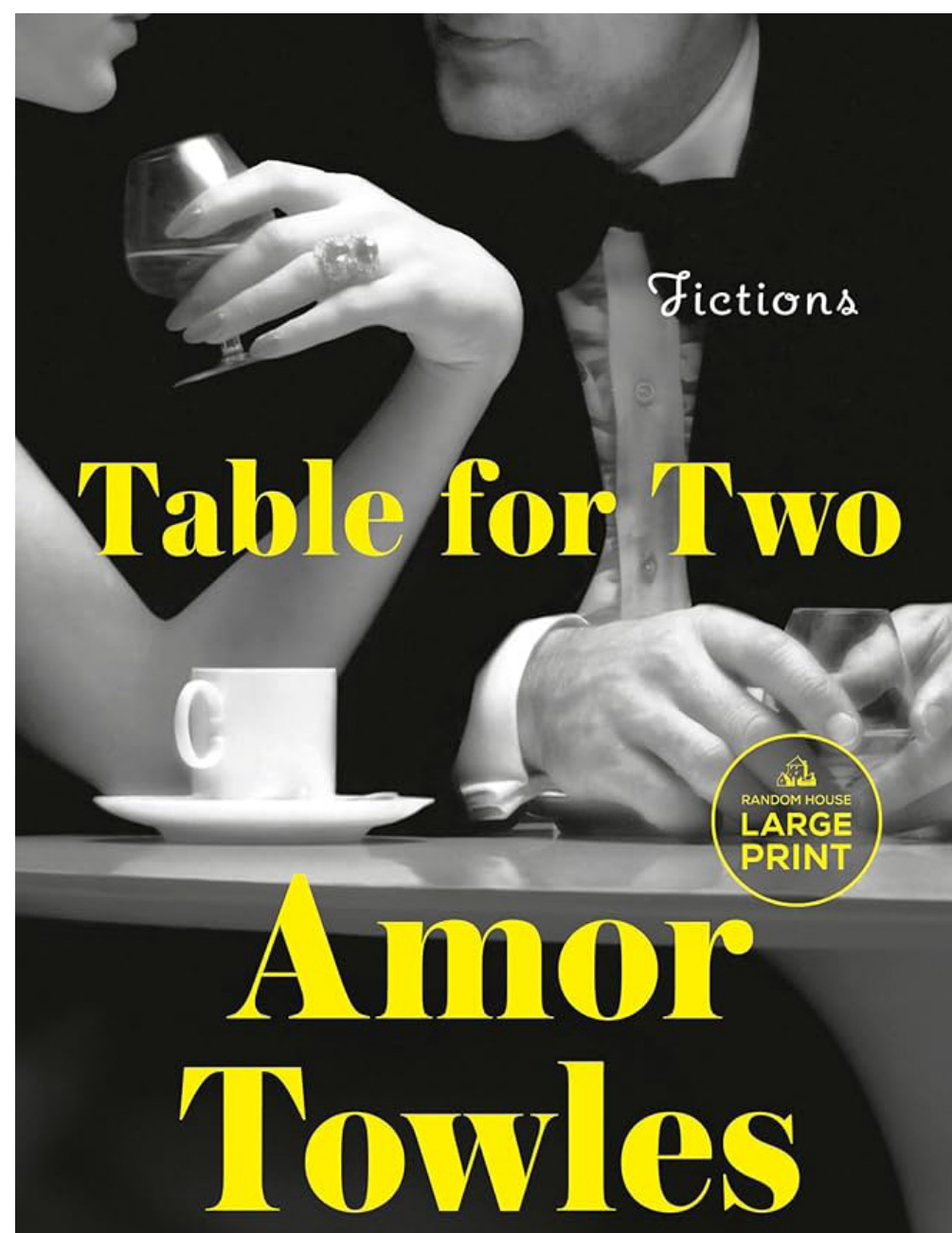
Never Let Me Go is an adroit slow burn, equally haunting and beautiful. Ishiguro sports a distinct narrator voice (that can be challenging to stick with) but that subtly conveys themes of identity, purpose, and the bonds that tie life together. What are we made for? What really matters in our lives? It made me reflect on my own relationships; the people that come and go, but more importantly, those who stay.

Despite its lingering pace, it is an incredibly satisfying read – the kind that makes you want to re-read the novel immediately after finishing it, almost reinforcing the reminiscent nature of the book.

Table for Two, Amor Towles

Amor Towles never disappoints, and this collection of short stories is a nod to his ability to weave wit, intelligence, and heart into an enjoyable and breezy read.

My favourite was "The



DiDomenico Fragment" for its fictional exploration the history of a real piece of art, and ingenious narrative arc.

I also enjoyed the final story, "Eve in Hollywood", which was a treat for fans of *Rules of Civility* (my all-time favourite book). Towles always reignites my love for reading and fuels a jealousy for his craft.

WORST BOOKS

The Idiot, Elif Batuman

Despite all its buzz, I found Batuman's *The Idiot* a slog. Selin, the protagonist is whiny, conceited, and self-sabotaging. Batuman somehow made the uncertainties and excitement of being a teenage girl at university (with a crush!) feel tedious. An obsessed and delusional character can be fun – even relatable – to read, but *The Idiot* took more effort to

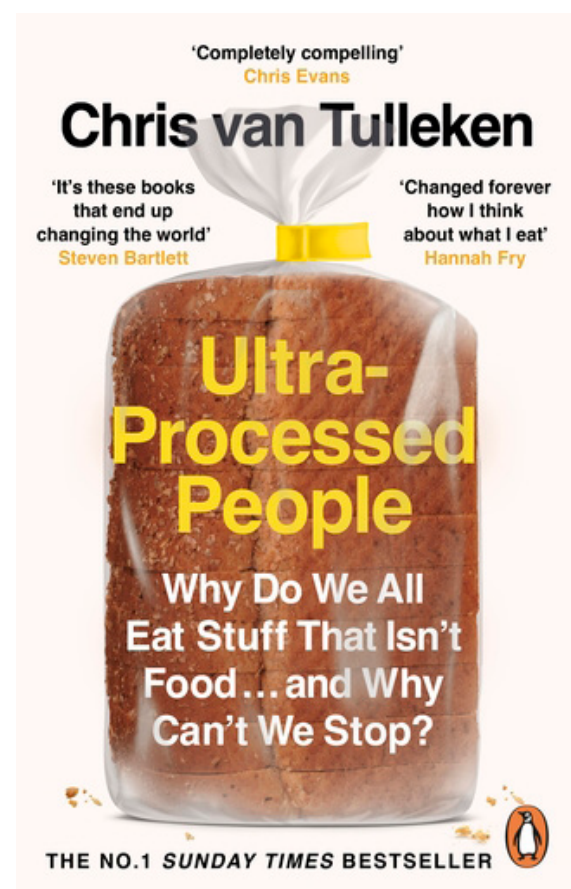
finish than the satisfaction it brought.

Entitlement, Rumaan Alam

Entitlement also demonstrated that an unlikeable main character can make you hate a book. Protagonist Brooke is written to be unlikeable, but Alum does it a bit too well. I was genuinely irritated by certain chapters, and came away with a sour taste in my mouth because of Brooke's appalling attitude and behavior.

Character aside, the themes also felt muddled. Alum touches on feminism, class, race, identity, power dynamics, capitalism, greed, philanthropy – the list goes on – but incohesively.

It was also a tad pretentious. Did you know 'genuflection' means to kneel on one knee as a sign of worship or respect? I didn't, and I didn't think it necessary to the style or voice of the story. To each their own.



FOOD&TRAVEL

Did we forget the lactose?

Chocolate, cheese and Oreos can be virtually lactose-free without gene intervention or special additives.

Food & Travel Writer

JACQUELINE JACKSON

Lactose is a sugar found in animal-based milk and the base for yoghurts, butter, cheese and creams. Lactose is broken down by the body by the enzyme lactase, of which a deficiency leads to symptoms of abdominal pain (cramps), bloating, diarrhoea, and flatulence. Lactose intolerance can occur due to genetically driven low production of lactase in the body, often experienced by people of Asian and African ethnicity. Over-the-counter

medication with the lactase enzyme can be ingested before a lactose-meal to help digest it but no permanent treatment exists. This means, most non-severe intolerant people are recommended to avoid lactose-based foods, however this does not have to be all chocolates, cheeses or oreos.

Chocolate

Chocolate bars with a concentration of 70% and above are naturally lactose-free and vegan-friendly as they do not contain any milk. The bitterness is offset by added sugar, not by lactose. However, most chocolate bars will be produced in the same factories, hence 70+% chocolate bars are not suitable for those with severe lactose intolerances.

Cheese

Cheese has one rule with lactose: the older the cheese, the less lactose. This is as lactose ferments into lactic acid over time. "Virtually lactose-free" cheeses are defined to have a lactose percentage below 2-3%, or 2-3 grams of lactose per 100 grams. For reference, one serving of milk has 4.8% lactose – enough to cause abdominal discomfort. An easily remembered rule is that hard cheeses, such as Cheddar, Feta and Parmesan are lactose-free. Some medium and soft cheeses also have less than 3% lactose per serving. Muenster, Provolone, Gouda, Swiss, Havarti and Limburger are

possible alternatives for lactose intolerance cheese-lovers. Not all, but some soft cheeses such as Camembert and Brie also work.

Sorbets

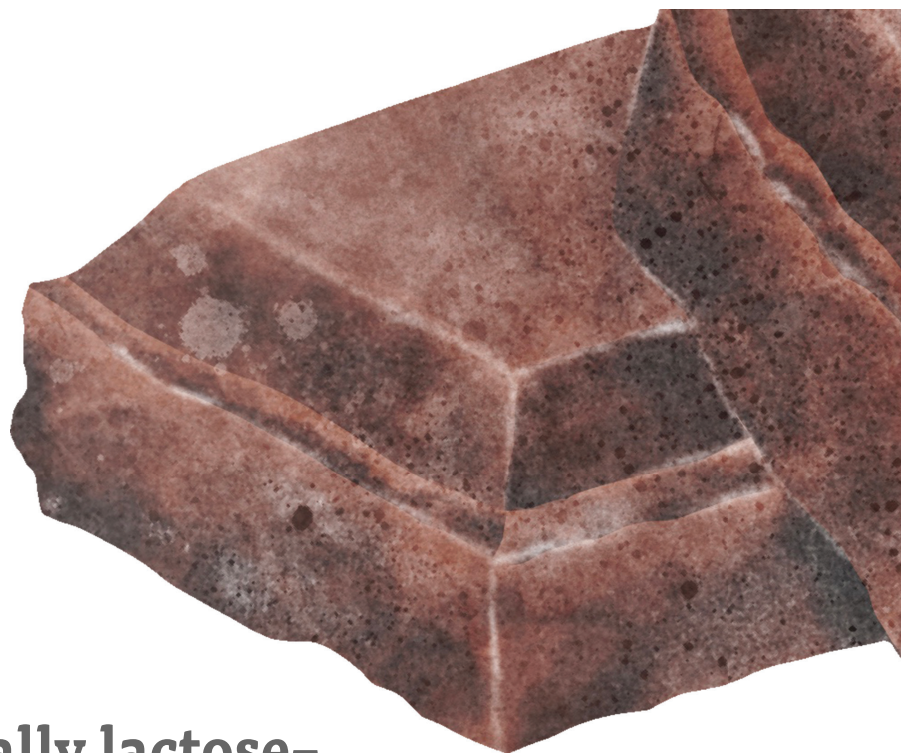
Sorbets are naturally lactose-free, yet sold in the ice cream aisle of grocers and in ice cream shops. Unlike ice cream, Sorbet is made of fruit juice, sugar and water, and comes mostly in fruity and herbal flavours such as lemon, raspberry, mint or in some instances, chocolate.

Oreos

Original Oreos are made without milk despite having a soft-white center that could indicate a presence of milk. This center consists of sugar, vanilla and vegetable shortening. A similar misconception may be placed onto marshmallows which are just sugar, gelatin and water. Flavoured and special-edition oreos are the exception. These may be dipped in milk chocolate, such as the Cadbury covered oreos.

Don't forget there is lactose here

Lactose can be found in no other natural sources than cow, goat or human milk, and though intuitively lactose would be found in milk derivatives, this may not always be explicitly marketed. Brioche is a soft and buttery bread made with milk as well as whey protein, the most popular protein supplement in vegetarian protein powders and protein bars. Many products will have milk powder mentioned deep into their ingredients list, such as baked beans, crackers or cocoa powder and though marked in bold, may be overseen. This holds especially for flavoured savory snacks. Honey-mustard or spicy and smoked flavoured crisps, pretzels or crackers can have milk powder added in small quantities.



BUSINESS

Shawn Cheah Wants Your Space

Meet the Imperial startup aiming to become the Airbnb of short-term storage.

Business Editor
ALIA FRIEDMAN

Every university student is familiar with the painful process of spring term ending. What once was a room filled with your most cherished possessions has now become a logistical nightmare. You take stock of your dorm room – and all the free random company swag you have accumulated throughout the year – and start packing up. Your move is temporary. You’ll be back on campus next semester, but for now the dorms are closing and you need to be out of there.

Racking your brain for options, you decide you must either appeal to the kindness of your parents, or the hard costs of short-term professional storage between £50 to £60 per month for a small locker. Pressed for time, you sign the storage contract only to receive some unfortunate news from your short-term rental space provider.

The extra set of pens and hoodie you picked at the last recruiting event has put you over the space limit. Your locker now costs £150 per month. The situation is far from ideal, but by now you are out of the country. Are the bags under your eyes from finals or from move out? You’ll never be certain.

Shawn Cheah thinks there could be an easier way. His startup, Unilocker, helps match London based university students with other students who advertise their extra space. The platform serves as an all-in-one system, offering features such as messaging and payment processing for hosts and storers.

Unilocker verifies all users by

Airbnb for student storage

London student storage powered by students.

Whether you are leaving over the summer or just need some extra space, find cheap storage options near you - find space with Unilocker.

List your space! Learn more

Unilocker’s homepage. unilocker.co.uk

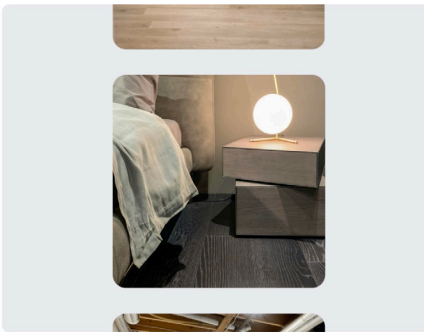
requiring educational email addresses to sign up and manually reviews each listing to prevent spam. Additionally, they handle the processing of all financial transactions between host and seller. Like Airbnb, storers must pay upfront to send a booking request, with the funds only charged if the host accepts. Unilocker then holds the payment and only releases it to the host after the storage has been provided. This is designed to protect hosts against non-payments and storers from scams.

Shawn is not an unlikely founder for short-term storage solutions – it’s deeply personal for him. As a service designer major, he decided to create Unilocker to help out the student community. Born in Malaysia, he moved around frequently as a child, first to Australia and then later to Singapore before coming to the UK. The experiences left a deep sense of frustration.

“When you have a break in terms of accommodation contracts, it becomes incredibly challenging.”

He continued, “What I’ve noticed is that it’s very hard to find storage companies that are flexible in their terms. Sometimes you don’t need a whole storage unit; sometimes you just need a bit of extra space. But then you have to pay extra for the next tier.”

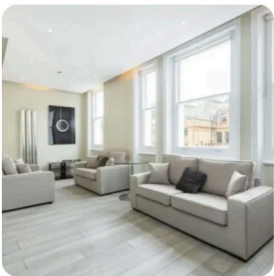
He’s hoping Unilocker can make this



the deals it brokers. Neither Shawn nor anyone affiliated with the team have taken any money from the project.

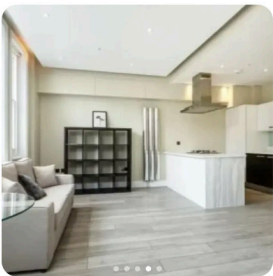
In the short term, however, the Unilocker team is focusing on further validating their core business model and gauging continued student interest over the summer. Currently, they have accumulated numerous 5-star reviews on Google from Imperial students. Their previous pilot program last summer had over 180 students participate with hosts making £500 on average. The program will run again this summer.

If you are looking for some extra income during the semester, or you are seeking a personal touch and flexibility with your storage needs, Unilocker could be the perfect platform for you! As for students who want to be involved with the project, Shawn Cheah can be contacted here: shawn@unilocker.co.uk.



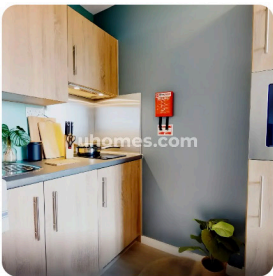
Zone 1 - SW7 4LT

Extra Living Room Space
£15/week



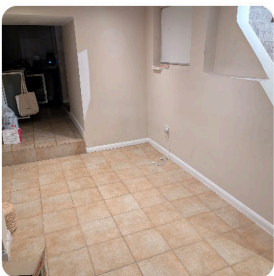
Zone 1 - SW7 4LT

Extra Living Room Space
£20/week



Zone 2 - W6 7NL

Other Spare Space
£25/week



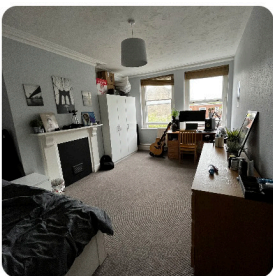
Zone 2 - W14 9TA

Basement
£12/week



Zone 3 - w3 6as

Spare Room
£10/week



Zone 2 - W14 8TD

Spare Room
£29/week

Listed Rooms. unilocker.co.uk

SEX SURVEY



CATNIP

Farewell, USA

Catnip Writer

EMMANUEL FREDERICK

Although Americans have always been stereotyped as being loud, obnoxious and self-centred, their contribution to the culture of the internet cannot be overlooked. Their creativity and humour during their tenure on TikTok has crafted an extraordinary environment full of entertainment, both good and bad. But, for this piece, I would like to spotlight the good they did for the online space, now that their absence is felt.

Thanks to TikTok many new artists and musicians were able to break out into the pop culture mainstream. An example of this was Lil Nas X, whose success can be largely attributed to his songs becoming incredibly popular on the social media platform. A trend involving his song “Old Town Road”, inspired by the videogame Red Dead Redemption 2, led to a massive increase in streaming numbers, creating a hit. It must be noted that, although the song was catchy, the line “Cheated on my baby, you can go and ask her” was proven to be misleading due to his subtle homosexual lifestyle.

A personal favourite trend of mine was the “Pinegrove

Shuffle”, an absurd nonsensical dance where you would flail your arms and body forwards and backwards, while the song “Need 2” by Pinegrove played. Despite its absurdity, the trend captured an unknown feeling in most young Americans, one that can not be put into words in English, although it probably can in German. Yet, its message was universal. I could try to confine this feeling by attempting to describe it in words but all I would be doing is trying to catch water with a net. I must say though, when many first came across the trend, all they could muster up was “literally me”, and indeed I can agree with, that it was, in fact, literally me.

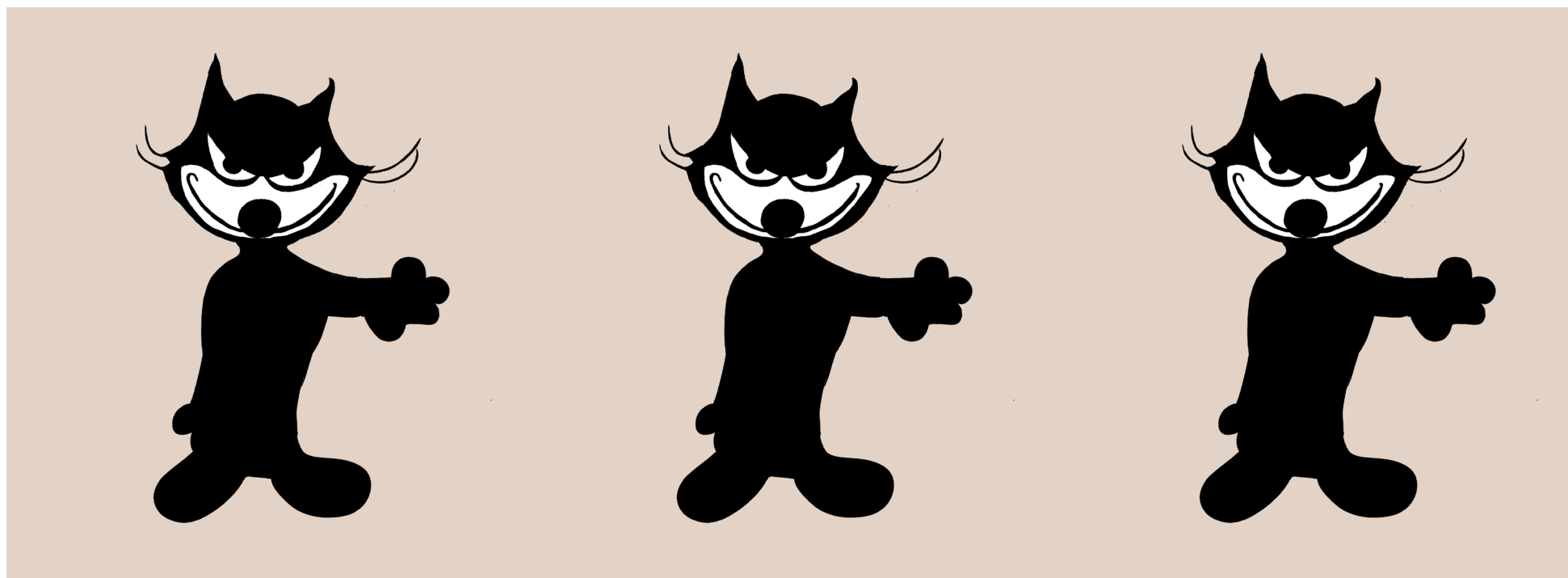
Finally, I would like to wish them a regretful goodbye—wait, what? what do you mean they’re back already? No way they’re back already, it’s barely been 13 hours. It’s probably some technical error; they’ll take it down soon, give me a moment. I worked so hard on the first half of this article man; this is my first *Felix* article, and it’s ruined before I even started. I know I procrastinated in writing this article but, man, who hasn’t? I’m a university student for God’s sake. You know what? Fuck it, Fuck the USA and their shitty policies, just stick to a decision for once. Afghanistan, Iraq, Vietnam and now

TikTok. This is why they got their ass beat in all of them.

I’m going to email the White House secretary, Woven Ilkinson’s number, so he can teach them on how to do a proper pull out, it’s no surprise as to why they have over six million single mothers.

For seven years I have been on this godforsaken app and for seven years I must be tortured by the shitty content they produce. The Pinegrove song was better without that stupid fucking trend. It used to be “literally me” but then it became literally everyone. Remember all those cringe-inducing anime cosplays? They were all American. All those Deku x Bakugo fanfics were written by greasyfreedom-filled hands. Those people couldn’t even go 13 hours without their dopamine hit. Of course it was them.

Wait, hold on a minute, what did Elon Musk just do? Jesus Christ, man. Farewell America? Fuck off, America.



Editorial: Judgement Day

Catnip Editor
NEGAFELIX

This is a rare time in which I offer some crack in character to my public facade. Writing and editing for Catnip has been a privilege. It offers the complete freedom to publish a huge variety of content, open to criticism, and to privately nod to my personal life, and those I care about both outside and within this institution. I hope to all my readers you have enjoyed my many horoscopes; the training process from a local psychic was a particularly intense one this year.

The thing paramount to being a successful Catnip Editor, other than having a concerning presence in the pop culture and politics stratosphere, is an apt judgement

of character. I owe my jokes not only to my self-proclaimed wit, but to the many characters at Imperial that write the jokes for me through their commitment to involuntarily being caricatures. Yet, recently, this has failed me. Over this past week, I have deeply struggled to write any profound criticism or comic commentary, due to a particular event in my real life that no satire will ever measure up to. One must understand that the absurdity of one's actions can read no longer as satire, but as entirely unbelievable. My judgement and the cadence of my jokes dwarf in the farcicality you exhibit. I believe sometimes were I to write about the reality of Imperial College student life I would be labelled as facetious. So, I admit to you all, that this week I have withdrawn into my glib nature. There is no clever punchline, from depression caused by this demoralised world. Thus, I owe the spectacular article this week to the

incredibly suave Emmanuel Frederick. I have, of course, written you 12 lovely horoscopes (from fear of the student body guillotining me should I not), all in subtle reference to one thing or another. However, though my judgement may be escapable, I want you to know that Judgement Day will not be. Whether it be from your God, employer, judge, or lover, when you face it, it will not be forgiving. And I will continue to laugh. "For what do we live, but to make sport for our neighbours, and laugh at them in our turn?"



ARIES

This week your friends suggest you flirt with your problem sheets instead.



TAURUS

This week you drink up all the raspberry vodka and claim it is a memory erasing potion.



GEMINI

This week the Uber driver delivers you straight to rehab from the club.



CANCER

This week you keep both your friends and your enemies a little too close for comfort.



LEO

This week you "accidentally" obtain a thong from Circuit Laundry and "accidentally" try it on.



VIRGO

This week you secure your substantial eight figure settlement after being libelled on Imperial Confessions



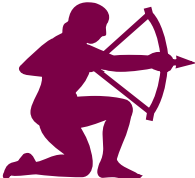
LIBRA

This week your attempt to swat a fly in the middle of a speech makes international news.



SCORPIO

This week you get the ick after your campus crush tries to kiss you with a gilet on.



SAGITTARIUS

This week you lick the GP's finger after the prostate exam.



CAPRICORN

This week I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU DO THIS WEEK. I DON'T CARE. LEAVE ME ALONE. DO IT YOURSELF.



AQUARIUS

This week you make a website of your text logs with your situationship in order to "quash their claims" of being led on.



PISCES

This week you're frustrated that people don't recognise it's actually a Chaplin moustache and nothing else.

UNION & SOCIETIES

Announcements

January

25TH
Saturday

A Capella Quarter Finals
A Capella

The Techtonics, Nth Harmonic, and The Scopes will be competing amongst 11 A Capella groups for the top two spots in the ICCA UK Semifinals.

Time: 17:00 – 20:00
Where: Theatre Royal Stratford East, London
Tickets: £18-24



TICKETS

25TH
Saturday

Battle of the Big Bands
Big Band

IC Big Band and Oxford University Jazz orchestra unite to perform timeless classics and show you their incredible talents.

Time: 19:00 – 22:00
Where: Jazz Cafe POSK, W6 0RF London
Tickets: £12



TICKETS

February

15TH
Saturday

Cheerleading Competition
IC Cheerleading

In the Legacy Cheerleading Competition, our level 2 and level 3 team will be competing against other university cheerleading teams!

Time: 09:00 – 15:00
Where: OVO Wembley Arena, London
Tickets: £26



TICKETS

March

1ST
Saturday

Cheerleading Showcase
IC Cheerleading

A series of cool dance classes taught by our dance team + random play dance with prizes!

Time: 18:00 – 22:00
Where: King's College London Guy's Campus
Tickets: Early bird tickets at £8



INSTAGRAM

2ND
Sunday

Major Event
IC Singapore

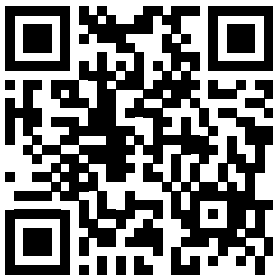
Our annual musical with a live orchestra, singing and acting. This is a story of Elizabeth Choy, one of Singapore's World War II heroes.

Time: 18:30 – 22:15
Where: Great Hall
Tickets: Tickets not yet released



INSTAGRAM

Submit your event here



Scan QR code and fill out form by 28th January 2025



and view all the events here



FELIXONLINE.CO.UK



PUZZLES

Puzzles Editor
IVIN JOSE

Across

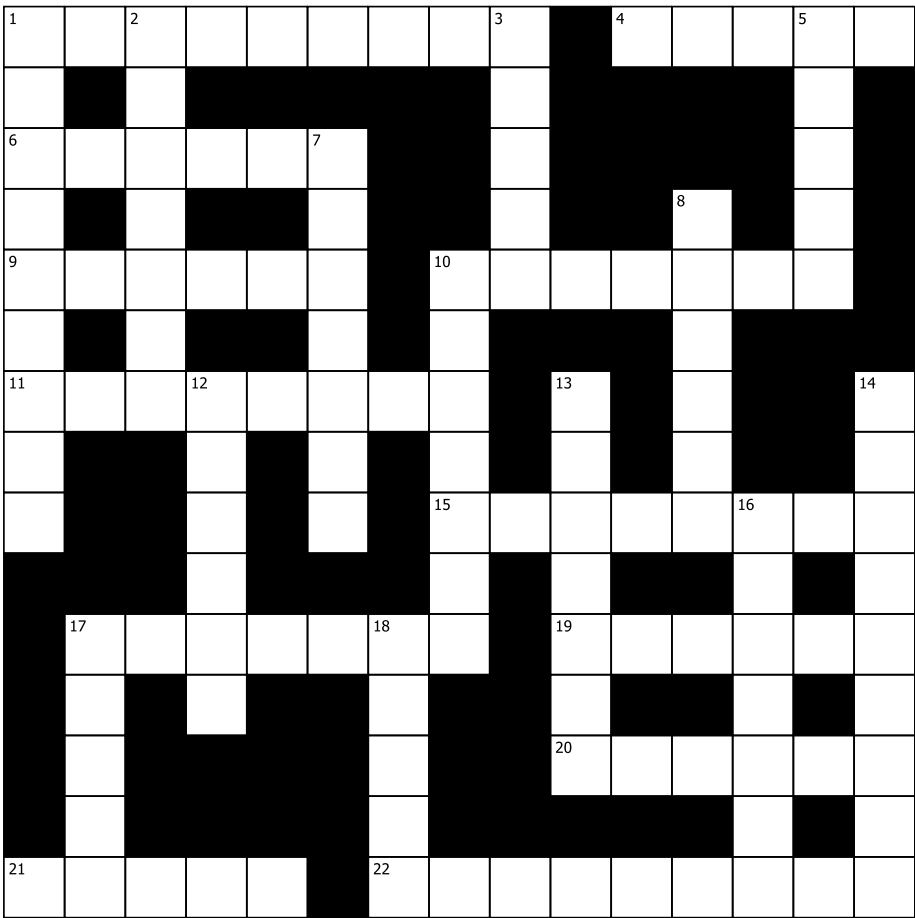
1. Girl had a sound admirer make big things! [9]
4. Modern day house inside the tube. [5]
6. Amended the deed and had it changed. [6]
9. Determined to put slippery one in enclosure. [6]
10. Behind heist to get rid of King's poison. [7]
11. Rebel throws grenade and swallows pill. [8]
15. Spectacularly die suddenly. [4,4]
17. Thieves clip pastries. [7]
19. Send me back and give friend my tail – it's in development. [6]
20. Lightness of floral bed overnight. [6]
21. Extreme racket after something similar to a spirit made aware. [5]
22. Command creator to have it easily ended. [9]

Down

1. Vortex spins marmoset around at long last. [9]
2. Like a pig got up first and had inane brew. [7]
3. Shrine addressed change. [5]
5. I see, the best come before the subject. [5]
7. Ground for tar made loggerhead also sober first. [3 4]
8. Finger is available? [2 4]
10. Plans a set of classes was told. [7]
12. Image of a fruit kefir with its skin taken off. [6]
13. Disease cut crab short and put a hole in it. [7]
14. God..... God! Why after the record do we find way of taking images? [9]
16. Make and made sincere. [7]
17. Heart of jury inside bad Spanish painting [5]
18. Old, revolutionary art is a little too much. [5]

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

Submitted by David Latimer (10 pts.)



GROUPING GRIDS

Submitted by William West & Vittoria Dessi

Knock	Pale	Light	Tulip
Belly	Rattle	Mild	Garlic
Ginger	Onion	Wound	Fizz
Beat	Rattle	Thump	Bitter

Medium (4 pts.)

1.					Connections
2.					
3.					
4.					

How-to:

For fans of *Only Connect*! The sixteen clues in each of these puzzles can be placed into four groups of four, each with a connecting feature. To solve the puzzle, write these groups and their connections below! An example can be seen in last week's solutions.

Sweet	Golf	Micro	Gulf
Epic	Camper	November	Western
Kilo	Baltic	Mega	Transit
Cool	Removal	Mini	India

Hard (5 pts.)

1.					Connections
2.					
3.					
4.					

CRYPTOGRAM

Clue: Agnes mirth (anagram, 1 word)

How-to:

A cryptogram is solved by cracking the cypher in which an encoded phrase is written. The first few letter correspondences are given to you, and your job is to use your linguistic and logical skills, as well as your quotes knowledge, to work out the secret message. Bonus point for giving where the quote comes from!

							,												.				
Q	P	T		U	I	Q	U		H		I	Z	Y		W	Z	K		D	Z		Z	P

[illegible]

									.														
T	Q	O	A		X	Q	O	U	H		U	I	M		J	Z	O	M		T	Q	O	A

					,																	
X	Q	O	U	H		U	I	M		J	Z	O	M		W	Z	K		I	Q	B	M

							.												,		
U	Z		C	Q	K	D	I		Y	V	U	I		T	M	G	V	Q	P	E	M

												,				
Y	V	U	I		O	N	O	P	T	Z	P		Y	V	U	I

								,													.		
I	W	H	U	M	O	V	O		O	P	W		Y	O	W		W	Z	K		E	O	P

(3 pts.)

Anagram:

(1 pt.)

Quote from:

(1 pt.)

LEADERBOARD

Pos.	Puzzlers	Points	(Last week)
1.	Team GuineaPig	423	357
2.	The Menu	288	288
3.	Team Experial	223	208
4.	Tactless Tony	116	116
5.	Team Doors Doors	57	32
6.	Bobby Tables	57	-
7.	Team Jasmine&Hursh	33	33
8.	Team CIVE	30	30

Send a picture of your solved puzzles to puzzles.felix@ic.ac.uk by Thursday to get yourself or your team on the leaderboard! Partially completed Puzzles can still get you points!

Send them in by Tuesday if you want to see your points for this week in next week's issue.

COMIC

Submitted by Tengyu Zhao



ENIGMATIC VARIATIONS

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

Puzzles Editor's Note

Dearest Puzzlers,

Unfortunately another short but sweet Puzzles Section this week. Thanks for all those amazing Puzzlers who are continuing to send in their solutions and wonderful emails – they are a very much appreciated break from everything!

Warm welcome to Bobby Tables, our newest contestants who have rocketed up the leaderboard to 5th, whilst Team GuineaPig enjoy their time at the top.

I'd like to give a huge thanks to David Latimer for the Cryptic Crossword, William and Vittoria for the Connections, and Tengyu for the Comic.

That leaves me with nothing more to say, other than have a fantastic week of crossing, connecting, code-cracking, comic-consuming, and competing!

- Ivin

Previous Puzzles' solutions

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

Cryptic

Tango	Foxtrot	Delta	Golf	NATO Phonetic Alphabet
Charleston	Waltz	Ceilidh	Salsa	Dances
Source	Mouth	Bed	Meander	Parts of a river
Banks	Moet	Ali	Much	Famous artists with one letter removed

Medium grouping grid

Monitor	Mouse	Speaker	Controller	Input/Output devices
Rat	Hamster	Porcupine	Capybara	Rodents
Hare	Tow	Knows	Heal	Sound like body parts
Third	Water	Pizza	Big	___ Wheel

Hard grouping grid

““And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it.”

Anagram: Fetching mirage = The Magic Finger
Quote from: Roald Dahl

Cryptogram

SPORT

Flying High!

An interview with Imperial College Titans Cheerleading Society.

Sport Editor

LILA HARRISON

This week Lila sat down with Rosanne Choong, President of the Imperial Titans, for an interview on behalf of her society. Cheerleading is an often-overlooked sport – as predominantly women-led, it can be dismissed on sexist grounds. Cheerleading does not exist just as an exercise to fulfil the support of male-dominated sport, but is an intricate activity of strength, agility, and rhythm in its own right.

LH: Can you tell us about the team's most recent achievements or competitions, and any rewarding moments from the season?

RC: Last year, the level 2 non-tumbling team won the Future Competition in the division, which was thrilling. Our level 1 team performed amazingly at competitions, greatly improving in the second one in Essex despite most of the team having never done it before. The rewarding moments are all down to the team bond, and the coaches that implement this attitude within us. Renee and Han work incredibly hard to strengthen the team and our captains value motivation and work hard to deliver brilliant positive messages, fostering a great sense of community within cheer.

LH: As a former member of Imperial dodgeball (sorry Wolverines!) I know one or two things about post competition nights. What does the Titans' look like?

RC: Union, mega pints, sleep - lots of the latter particularly. Also, many, many shared albums and photos sent on the WhatsApp group chats to be shared on Instagram.

LH: What is your main aspiration for this year? Could be anything – a particular stunt, or competition?

RC: Hitting zero. This means we have performance during a competition where we execute the routine without any deductions. The stunts go up and don't fall down. But we also have a particular emphasis on having fun. Most people are new to cheer so we must keep it fun, otherwise why would they be here?

LH: You mention people being new to cheer. Do you have any advice for freshers?

RC: We know at university, lots of people haven't done cheerleading. Especially with the influx of Netflix cheer docuseries inspiring people to consider joining the crazy world of cheerleading and learn how to stunt. We recognise this and teach our society members to safely stunt and work with others to help push stunts forward. There's also a stigma that cheerleading is super cliquey, and cheerleaders are scary. I can confirm, as someone who is 4'10, this is not the case at all. Cheerleading is built on the foundations of strong teamwork, positivity and commitment. We have a range of degrees being studied by our members and it is amazing seeing all the versatility that cheerleaders bring to the table. We also have super fun socials that have had themes closely aligning with what we are passionate about: for example, brat.

LH: I love that. I was going to mention your height earlier in this interview when you mentioned the mega-pint that I have personally seen in your flat, but I thought it was best to leave it up to you.

RC: There it is. Anyway, cheer is super



The Imperial College Titans Cheerleading Society at the ICC Nottingham competition. Imperial Titans

welcoming, our socials are inclusive and creative - ranging from friendship bracelet making to fun nights dancing the night away at Embargo's.

Cheerleaders will show everyone up on the dance floor. It's just a fact.

LH: I know one or two things about that laminator of yours.

LH: Do you have any advice for young men that are apprehensive to join because of stereotypes associated with them?

RC: Cheerleading, whilst stigmatised for being female-dominated, is not gender-specific. In fact, every year we have a 'bring a boy' taster session in freshers week as we are passionate about inclusivity and diversity. I think there needs to be more emphasis on the sport as an exercise of strength – across all genders, otherwise the sport gets misinterpreted.

LH: Tell me about the showcase you have got coming up!

RC: This is the first time Imperial College Titans will be performing in a showcase. The event will be a collaboration with UCL and King's College cheerleading clubs, making it an incredible opportunity to watch teams from all three universities perform the routines they've been practising this year. Across the three clubs, 18 teams will take the stage, showcasing routines that range in difficulty from levels 1 to 4. You'll see everything from stunts and tumblers performed by members brand-new to cheer, to complex and thrilling stunts executed by seasoned athletes with years of experience. Back in January 2024, I went to a friend's birthday bar crawl where I met the future president of King's Cheerleading Society. The idea was born

there. UCL Lightning enthusiastically joined in, and the rest was history. We've been planning this since summer, and I can't wait to see all our hard work come to life. Even designing the poster took a week, as we made sure the colours represented all our societies perfectly.

LH: Where can I watch?

RC: March 1st, 7pm, Greenwood Theatre, 55 Weston St, SE1 3RA.

LH: Amazing.

LH: Lastly Rosanne, can you tell me the most special part of cheerleading to you?

AC: Cheerleading has formed a massive part of my university experience and without it, there would be a real absence of that feeling of community and truly making a difference in my life. Taking on Social Sec. and President roles has not only given me bragging rights and the ability to impress people with my Jägerbomb drinking capabilities but it has really instilled this sense of self-belief. Specifically with the President role, cheer has taught me so, so many lessons. I've developed my leadership, communication and shown to myself that I can do it. I think this applies to every single person within the cheerleading society. After every session, it's clear that people walk home from Beit with this great sense of achievement, that they were either able to fly in the air or manage to lift people up both physically and metaphorically. Cheerleading has given us friends we couldn't live without. How could you say no to joining?

LH: Brilliant, thank you so much!

If you want to find out more about IC Cheer, their Instagram is @ictitanscheer.

