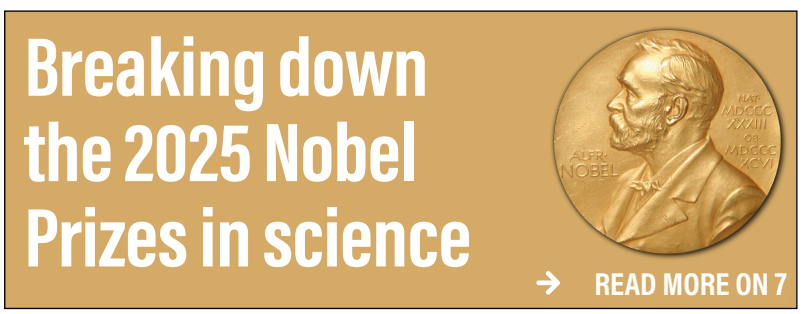
First published in 1949, Felix is released weekly during term time and is distributed around Imperial's London campuses. All students, staff, and alumni are welcome to contribute to the paper.

Felix

ISSUE #1878

KEEP THE CAT FREE | SINCE 1949









Editorial: Peace brokered in Gaza



EDITORIAL BOARD

For the first time in 736 days, there is a faint pulse of hope in the streets of Jerusalem and refugee camps of Gaza. For the first time in over two years, twenty Israeli families will be reunited with their loved ones, and Palestinian families will be able to begin the slow, painful process of burying their dead and rebuilding the decimated ruins that used to be their homes.

Countless articles have been written, and endless hours spent trying to describe a horror that defies words. Perhaps the only honest thing we felt we could do was share a story – or rather, two. Stories that serve as microcosms for what this ceasefire represents, and the fragile humanity that has somehow survived beneath it.

The first story is of 51-year-old Eli Sharabi, an Arabic speaking Israeli-Jew from Kibbutz Be'eri who was held hostage for 491 days by Hamas, as detailed in his book Hostage. The second is of Plestia Alaqad, a 23-year-old Palestinian journalist who documented the Israeli bombardment of Gaza for 45-days before fleeing to Australia, as told through her social media and book *The Eyes of Gaza*.

The Stories

After being kidnapped from his home in southern Israel on October 7th, Sharabi was first held by a Gazan civilian family with three sons, who he describes as highly intelligent, well-educated, fluent in English, and with no hope for a better future. In another world, he thought they might have been engineers or doctors. Instead, as he describes, their degrees are worthless, their horizons sealed by blockage. They were meeting their first Israeli – as a prisoner.

Assigned to the family were two young male Hamas operatives, whom he describes

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DECLARATION

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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Adil Mohammed Khan
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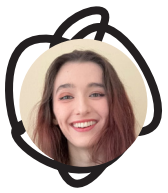
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EDITORIAL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

as shockingly young and almost childlike in their naivety. One of their first questions was, "Why do Israelis want to kill us all?" The question shocks him. He insisted it is not true and that Israelis don't want this. But they pointed to the frequent bombings that have shaped their entire lives. Neither could make the other understand. Each thought the other was denying an obvious reality. Later, one of the Hamas operatives tells him, "It would be different if more Israelis were like you." Again, they refused to believe him when he said most Israelis were.

A bombing of the apartment next door forces them to relocate into tunnels, leaving behind the family. As conditions in the Gaza strip continued to worsen, he Sharabi began to hear them his captors cry at night – their voices mixed in with cries of his own. He notes that they weren't fighters. One day, they are called into battle by Hamas. They crawled out of the tunnel and never returned.

Perhaps not so far away, Alaqad moved between neighborhoods in northern Gaza. She recalls that a day before the war had started, she was looking at Gaza's skyline from a rooftop, admiring the buildings and the sea. A few days later, she would post videos of those buildings collapsing.

> "Neither could make the other understand. Each thought the other was denying an obvious reality

Her career as a journalist would consist of documenting the destruction, displacement, and fear that consumed her city. She reported on bombed schools, hospitals, churches, and mosques – on Palestinian families missing under rubble. During her time reporting on the bombardment of Gaza, Alaqad was accused by some Israelis of being affiliated with Hamas. But she was not, and she could not understand why her homeland was being reduced to dust, its people scattered into tents and camps.

Her press vest weighted heavily, literally and figuratively. People now counted on her for intel and information, but she had none. Countless days passed as whole communities were displaced, not knowing what the future had in store for them.

Alaqad's family was amongst those displaced Khan Younis before being granted humanitarian visas to Australia. During those weeks in Gaza, she witnessed starvation, amputation, and death. Like the two million Palestinians displaced from their homes into camps that lacked food and shelter, she faced the despair of watching her city and home vanish.

Through Sharabi's captivity, he encountered more cruelty and desperation. He met fathers unable to provide a livelihood of their families, and men unable to get married due to the lack of jobs. The theme is two people completely cut off from each other's reality and deep Palestinian despair. In Gaza, sealed by Israel and Egypt, misery felt unending.

Sharabi could not make his captors see that most Israelis did not hate them or wish them harm. They could not make him see that, from inside Gaza, Israeli policy looked indistinguishable from annihilation. Both are trapped in their own truths, neither complete. The cruelty was arbitrary, the logic circular.

This is not to say that everyone he encounters is driven by economic hopelessness. Several of his captors delight in starving him when he fails to recite Quranic verses properly – an action squarely at odds with the principle of no coercion in Islam ("there is no compulsion in religion."). Others made nonsensical statements demanding he return to Yemen, where his grandparents are from – a country partially controlled by the Houthis, a group with the motto "Death to Jews". However, even in the darkest moments, several of the Hamas operatives disobey orders and sneak food to him.

Before he is released, one of the senior Hamas operatives turns to him and says, "I'm sorry about October 7th. It was a mistake." Sharabi never learned what kind of mistake he meant – a moral mistake? A tactical one? Regret for the violence itself or just for what it cost? The ambiguity haunts him.

Sharabi was eventually released in a hostage deal. Only then did he learn that his wife Lianne and two young daughters were murdered on October 7th by Hamas – a fact he surmises his captors knew but hid from him to prevent his utter despair and collapse. His brother Yossi had also been kidnapped on October 7th into Gaza and killed in an IDF airstrike.

Alaqad, meanwhile, escapes to Australia, haunted by her survivor's guilt and unsure how to belong outside of Gaza. While her voice continued to make its mark, many of her colleagues and friends had been killed in airstrikes, and she carried the guilt of having lived. Anas al-Sharif, Samer Abudaqa, Hossam Shabat, three Palestinian journalists who worked for Al Jazeera and were killed while reporting on the Gaza war by Israeli airstrikes... All gone.

She tries to navigate this death, finding solace in their martyrdom. "It's an act of giving meaning to the worst loss a person can possibly endure. We don't celebrate death – but death is all around us, and we need a way to convert it back to life," she writes.

While Alaqad left her shattered world behind, Sharabi enters his, both facing new hardships as the war went on without them there, in the centre. 1,200 Israelis were killed on October 7th and over 60,000 Palestinians have been killed since. Somewhere in between, the purpose of this war was lost.

> "It is in that fragile space – between grief and survival, between two fractured realities – that hope might begin to take root

The Aftermath

Sharabi and Alaqad's stories capture both the moral collapse and the human exhaustion on all sides. Their experiences suggest that if a ceasefire is to mean anything, it must begin with the recognition that maximalist narratives and detached realities can only lead to a more shattered world. And that Israelis and Palestinians deserve leadership who recognise that fact.

For the first time in not only 736 days, but in 76 years, both Palestinians and Israelis cheer for the same thing on the same day - peace. But the war does not end when bombs stop falling. The space to feel its repercussions has only just opened, and it is in that fragile space – between grief and survival, between two fractured realities – that hope might begin to take root.

Readers are encouraged to read the book Hostage *by Eli Sharabi and* The Eyes of Gaza: A Diary of Resilience *(2025) by Plestia Alaqad for themselves. These are autobiographical books with complex meanings and multiple interpretations written by living authors. This editorial does not seek to speak for them or their experiences. Only to share.*

NEWS

Ex-Imperial lecturer struck off NHS due to antisemitic social media comments

News Editor
ISABELLA DUCHOVNY

Ex-Imperial lecturer Manoj Sen has been struck off the UK medical register due to antisemitic comments on social media.

A few days after the October 7th attacks on Israel, Sen had responded to a post on Facebook by "'Mr A", calling him a "Jewish cunt" and "Jewboy", and writing "he belongs in the flames of a crematorium."

Sen, a qualified surgeon, was an Honorary Clinical Senior Lecturer in Imperial's Faculty of Medicine until 2020, and worked in the NHS for 25 years.

He was arrested following the incident and served a caution for "racially/religiously aggravated harassment/alarm/distress by words/writing" and for "sending a communication/article of an indecent/offensive nature."

In a July fitness to practice hearing, the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service found some of Sen's comments to be "objectively antisemitic", "seriously offensive", and "motivated (in whole or in part) by hostility towards and/or prejudice against Jews".

As a sentence, the tribunal imposed an erasure from the Medical Register, with an immediate order of suspension until that erasure takes effect. Sen, who was already retired at the time of the sentence, did not attend the hearing.

Sen did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In a 2023 email to *Felix* following his arrest, he had written: "I sincerely regretted and apologized for any feelings I may have caused to anyone, specifically the Jewish people."

UCU: 15,000 university jobs cut over last year

Editor-in-Chief
GUILLAUME FELIX

An analysis by the University and College Union (UCU) suggested that cuts equivalent to over 15,000 jobs were announced by UK universities in the past year.

The UCU, a higher education trade union, calculated that over 12,000 redundancies had been directly enacted, on top of planned savings worth £197 million, which it equates to an additional loss of 3,000 jobs.

The UCU published this report on 10th October, as it launched a nation-wide strike ballot over its demands that the UCEA, the main employer's association, "halt redundancies at all universities".

No mention was made of Imperial College, an outlier of financial health, with Provost Peter Haynes confirming plans for growth on Wednesday .

imperial college union

Voting open for Autumn Elections

Voting opens on **20th October at 12 pm** in the Autumn Elections this year. Make sure you vote by following the link in the QR code below for your students' representatives at year level or within your CSP, as well as postgraduate representation committee roles, council positions and liberation and community networks. To see the full list of positions that are available in this election, check out the Autumn Elections page on Imperial College Unions' website.

When you log into EVoting, all the positions you are eligible to vote for will appear as well as manifestos for each of the candidates. Please do make the effort to vote and encourage the students that you represent to vote too!

Voting will close at **2pm on Thursday, 23rd October** so hurry and get those votes in!

Volunteer of the Month Award!

The Activities Team and Representation Team at ICU have joined together to reward and recognise our student volunteers.

Each month ICU will give out a £50 gift voucher to a **rep, a club or society committee member**, and a **liberation or community network committee member** who receive the best nominations from their fellow students, and are shortlisted by the Deputy President (Education) and Deputy President (Welfare).

From **13th October** the Activities team will be accepting nominations for the new Committee Member of the Month scheme as part of the wider Volunteer of the Month Award initiative. This award is to provide recognition to the students who represent academics/welfare, liberation/community building, or support running clubs/societies. **Nominations close on the 20th of each month** and each nomination should focus on how the individual has met ICU values (integrity, inclusivity, and/or innovation), in their role. ICU will aim to publish these results at the end of each month across our media channels!

To nominate, just submit the form by scanning the QR code below & make sure you refer to our values in your nomination.

Nominations for October's award will close on Monday, 20th October – we look forward to your submissions!

*Please note the Representation Team will launch nomination for Rep of the Month next month after Representation Training!

Autumn Elections

Volunteer of the Month

An interview with Tom Gordon, Deputy President for Activities

Editor-in-Chief
GUILLAUME FELIX

Tom Gordon walks into the *Felix* office with an Imperial College Symphony Orchestra sweater. I wear a *Felix* hoodie. The game is on.

Before his election as Deputy President for Activities (DPA), Tom was very involved with student societies. A member of now-defunct Comedy Soc in his first year, he climbed the ranks of music societies over the course of his Aeronautics degree, becoming succesively Teasurer and Social Secretary of ICSO, as well as Publicity Officer of Sinfonietta orchestra, and technical officer for Wind Band. He was also elected as Treasurer for the Arts and Entertainment Management Group.

"So I've done quite a few things," he assesses. "I think that at times, perhaps, the balance was a bit wrong, and I did maybe too many types of society things". Still, freshers are strongly encouraged to make the best out of Imperial's Clubs, Societies and Project (CSP) network.

> **"I want every student... to have a transformational experience if they're in a club or society**

"It's really, really great experience. I think you have to have a social life and do extracurriculars while you're studying, because otherwise all you're doing is studying, and it can get very, very tiring, it burns you out."

How does one get the balance right? Tom thinks the Union can help with that. "One of the things that wanted to make me run [is that] some of our processes were not as good as they could have been, and required quite a lot of workload from students. So I want to really streamline that experience."

A new role, timeless struggles

The DPA role was introduced following the Union's Democracy Review, replacing the role of DP Clubs & Societies (DPCS). "One of the findings of [the review] was that DPCS didn't really encapsulate all the things the role was meant to do." On a day-to-day basis, Tom is here for "the overall direction" of activities at Imperial: "my job really is to oversee the processes and look at how we can improve them."

Streamlining was already underway when Tom was elected. The Union recently switched to a ticketing system replacing direct emails, which automatically redirects student queries to Union staff with relevant roles. A new knowledge base has also been introduced on Freshdesk, replacing clunky PDFs.

I complain about the eActivities interface, although I don't go as far as admitting that I struggle to approve claims for *Felix*. Tom tells me that the Union aims to provide more finance training.

"We have two in person training days – we're calling it a training conference – just before the start of term one, but I think we need to do more throughout the year: training on specific aspects, like maybe finance or running an inclusive event. I'd like to see this happening throughout the year, not just before the start of term one, because I realized that not every student can actually make that."

I wonder if students have the reflex to reach out to Tom give the role rebrand.

"I get a lot of feedback in my role, but I don't think it's varied and coming from everyone. I think some groups probably are very vocal and some groups are less vocal. And I'd like to see how I can engage with the less vocal groups." He plans drop-ins on campus every few weeks, like his three fellow Officer Trustees. "I do still get quite a lot of emails, and I reply to all of them, so feel free to email me."



Imperial College Union

A standout point in Tom's manifesto was his promise to expand the Student Experience Fund.

"The Student Experience Fund was launched two years ago," Tom recalls. "If you're on an Imperial bursary, which is for home undergraduate students with a certain household income, it will give you an amount every year to spend on union shop purchases – events run by the union, club society membership, coach transport to Harlington, society events, anything like that – and it just shows up in your Union account."

"And it's pretty seamless, but it is just for home undergraduate students at the moment, and I appreciate there are many postgraduate and international students that will also really benefit from it."

The next steps

"I'm not sure what the future holds," Tom reflects when I ask him about personal next steps after the sabbatical year. "Maybe I'm a computer science student at heart."

In 2018, Tom released *Freeze Tag!*, a Roblox game he programmed himself. The game has hosted 50 million play sessions from 20 million users, a proved a useful source of income.

"I could continue my old game, make a new one, or do something different entirely," says Tom. "I am not sure yet."

But he knows what he wants to achieve during the year ahead. Doubling the pot and extending it to postgraduate and international students are one of his main priorities. "But first and foremost, I just want CSP committees to be happy with our processes and to feel satisfied."

"I want every student at Imperial to have a transformational experience, if they're in a club in society, and I want to just make that as easy as possible for everyone."





THURSDAY QUIZ.

Every week during term time at 7pm.

Imperial's on-campus pub quiz at FiveSixEight. Free drinks for the winning teams!

£1.50 ENTRY











IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION

TERM 1 EVENTS

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SCIENCE

NOBEL PRIZES 2025

Chemistry

Prime real estate for molecules

Science Writer
ANYA CHAUDHARY

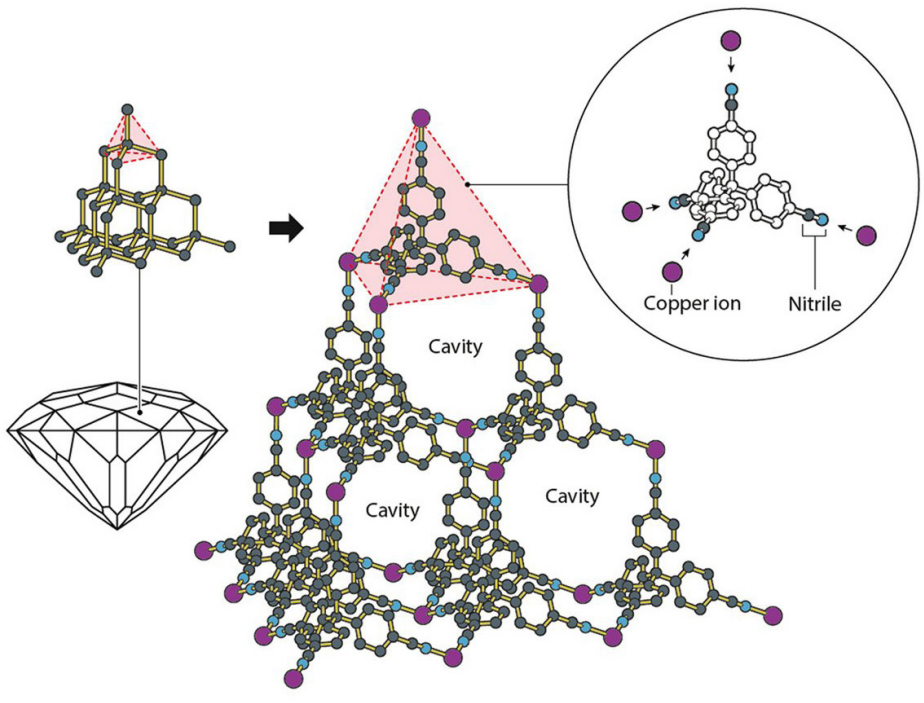
Metal-organic frameworks are porous materials formed by the organisation of metal ions with carbon-based molecules. These crystals have large cavities which allow them to capture and store specific substances.

The field of chemistry has been rife with "zero" dimensional structural synthesis for several decades. Construction of single and discrete compounds, i.e. small, individual molecules, is possible even at a complex level. On the other hand, for multidimensional extended structures such as lattices, the synthesis process had remained elusive. It was even more complex to synthesize materials whose scaffolding could contain smaller molecules in the gaps within the larger molecule.

With Alfred Werner's (1913 Nobel Prize in Chemistry) work on the assembly of 2D and 3D structures using metal coordination of organic ligands, it came to light that metal coordination could provide clarity on structural design.

The idea for metal-organic frameworks (MOFs) began with Richard Robson in 1974. In an attempt to turn wooden balls into atomic models, he wondered how to mark out where to drill holes into these balls. As he pondered, it became evident that the positioning of these holes was poignant in informing the structure and orientation of molecules. Since each atom forms chemical bonds in a specific way, the position of the holes automatically ensures that the model molecules have an accurate form.

Robson experimented with a pyramidic molecule resembling the structure of diamond, and combined it with copper ions, which like carbon, form 4 bonds and give rise to pyramidic structures. This experiment led to the revelation that the ions and molecules organized themselves into a large molecular construction, owing to their inherent attraction to each other. These constructions, however, were unstable.



Metal Organic Frameworks Johan Jarnestad/The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences

> **Being tested for use in reducing greenhouse gas emmision, pointing at massive scope for further impact**

The work of Susumu Kitagawa and Omar Yaghi in the 90s brought stability to Robson's foundations. Kitagawa's group created a 3D metal-organic framework which could absorb and release gases without changing shape.

Since MOFs can be created from many different types of molecules, they provide ground for many different functions. Unlike materials that preceded the creation of MOFs, these unique molecular frameworks could form soft and pliant materials.

Yaghi presented MOF-5 in 1999, which became a milestone in the field of materials, being extensively spacious and allowing for heating up to 300°C without collapse. A variant could store massive volumes of methane. These MOFs could also drive chemical reactions or conduct electricity.

MOFs, with their high versatility, have taken the world by storm. Yaghi's group went on to use these to harvest water from desert air in Arizona. These frameworks were also found to be usable, when scaled, for storage of toxic gases involved in semiconductor manufacturing. Currently, MOFs are being tested for use in reduction of greenhouse gas emission by capturing carbon dioxide, pointing at massive scope for further impact.

Together, the 2025 Nobel prizewinners: Richard Robson, Susumu Kitagawa, and Omar Yaghi have fostered in the field of chemistry, a new opportunity for the scientists that follow to create transformation through novel materials.

In the words of Heiner Linke, Chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry, "Metal–organic frameworks have enormous potential, bringing previously unforeseen opportunities for custom-made materials with new functions."

Medicine

The Guardians of Tolerance

Science Writer
CAROLINA BENTO

A hallmark of the adaptive immune system is its ability to recognise pathogens the body has never encountered before. This versatility is driven by B and T cells, which detect antigens (molecular signatures) and mount a tailored immune response.

It is as if our immune system is forging a key for every possible lock it might face. This vast diversity of "keys", known as antigen receptors, arises from genetic recombination, allowing it to recognise virtually any pathogen (even a futuristic space virus from a sci-fi movie!)

But producing every possible key comes with a risk: inevitably, some of these keys will fit our own "locks". When this happens, the immune system may recognise and attack the body itself, leading to autoimmune diseases.

To prevent this, our immune system must learn to recognise our tissues without attacking them. For decades, scientists believed this self-tolerance was only achieved through a process called central tolerance, a selection process in the thymus or, as scientists like to call it, the "murder university". Developing cells undergo rigorous tests, and only those who do not react to self, are able to survive, graduate and enter our blood circulation (they do not get to go to Royal Albert Hall like us...).

After the discovery of central tolerance, some researchers suspected some self-reactive cells might somehow "escape" the thymus. However, this idea had no solid foundations and was quickly dismissed. Still, in the 1980/90s, Japanese scientist Professor Shimon Sakaguchi, working in Nagoya decided to challenge the rules.

He found that removing the thymus from newborn mice (therefore allowing self-reactive cells to be formed) led to fatal autoimmunity, but transferring mature T cells from healthy mice donors prevented it!

This suggested the existence of "guardian angels" cells preventing the activity of an auto-reactive immune system. He later identified them as CD4+T cells expressing CD25 and named them regulatory T cells (Tregs). In his groundbreaking paper, he stated "accumulating experimental evidence now suggests that removal or inactivation of a certain regulatory T cell population can break natural self-tolerance, leading to spontaneous development of various autoimmune diseases".

Meanwhile, in Tennessee, researchers studying the effects of radiation stumbled across a peculiar mouse strain with scaley skin, enlarged spleen, swollen lymph glands, and a short lifespan. These "scurfy" mice sparked the curiosity of our Nobel Laureates, Dr. Mary E. Brunkow and Dr. Fred Ramsdell who realised the defect was associated with the X chromosome, therefore explaining why it affects mostly male mice. Years later, they identified the reason, a mutation in the FOXP3 gene. Remarkably, the same mutation was found in humans with a rare autoimmune disorder called IPEX, mostly affecting people with XY chromosomes. This revealed that FOXP3 is essential for immune tolerance in humans too!

> **"Laid the groundwork for therapeutic strategies targeting autoimmune diseases, cancer, and transplant rejection**

Thanks to scientific collaboration and data-sharing, the puzzle pieces finally fit: the Tregs found by Sakaguchi were governed exactly by the master regulator gene FOXP3.

This process, known as peripheral tolerance, occurs when self-reactive T cells leave the thymus but, instead of promoting autoimmunity, they downregulate autoimmune activity and promote balance.

Since this discovery, we've learned that Tregs not only prevent autoimmunity but also calm the immune system down after an infection, a key step to prevent tissue damage and restore balance.

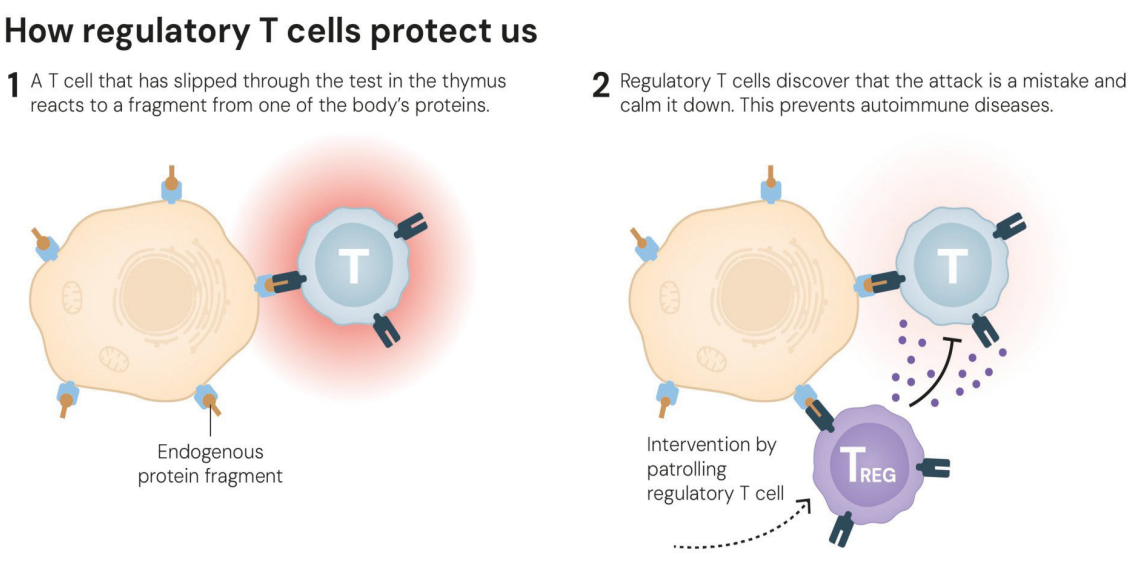
We had the immense pleasure of speaking with Professor Marina Botto, Head of the Department of Immunology and Inflammation, who reflected:

"These discoveries not only deepened our understanding of immune regulation but also laid the groundwork for therapeutic strategies targeting autoimmune diseases, cancer, and transplant rejection.

In an era where immunotherapies are reshaping medicine, this recognition underscores the importance of immunological research".

The list of Treg-based therapies has grown rapidly in recent years and will not stop soon. Future research may include engineered therapeutic Tregs, exploring their roles in neuro-degeneration, aging or metabolic diseases, and how external factories such as diet or the microbiome shape their function.

Beyond medicine, this Nobel prize teaches us something timeless: Don't be afraid to swim against the tide, trust curiosity, and don't forget to share your science – it may just give you the next Nobel Prize!



Regulatory T cells The Nobel Committee for Physiology or Medicine. Ill. Mattias Karlén

Physics

Tunnel Vision : macroscopic quantum mechanical tunnelling

Science Writer
ANUBHA BAL

The fascinating study of the very small (quantum systems) in Physics has revealed fascinating and sometimes counterintuitive phenomena. One of these phenomena is called quantum tunnelling, where particles can "pass through" or "tunnel" through barriers which, in everyday-life-physics (classical physics), they do not have enough energy to overcome. This is a consequence of the famous wave-particle duality but only becomes relevant when we are dealing with very small length scales. At the length scales relevant for everyday life, if you try jumping over a wall without enough energy to match its height, you will be disappointed (and perhaps slightly in pain from your fall).

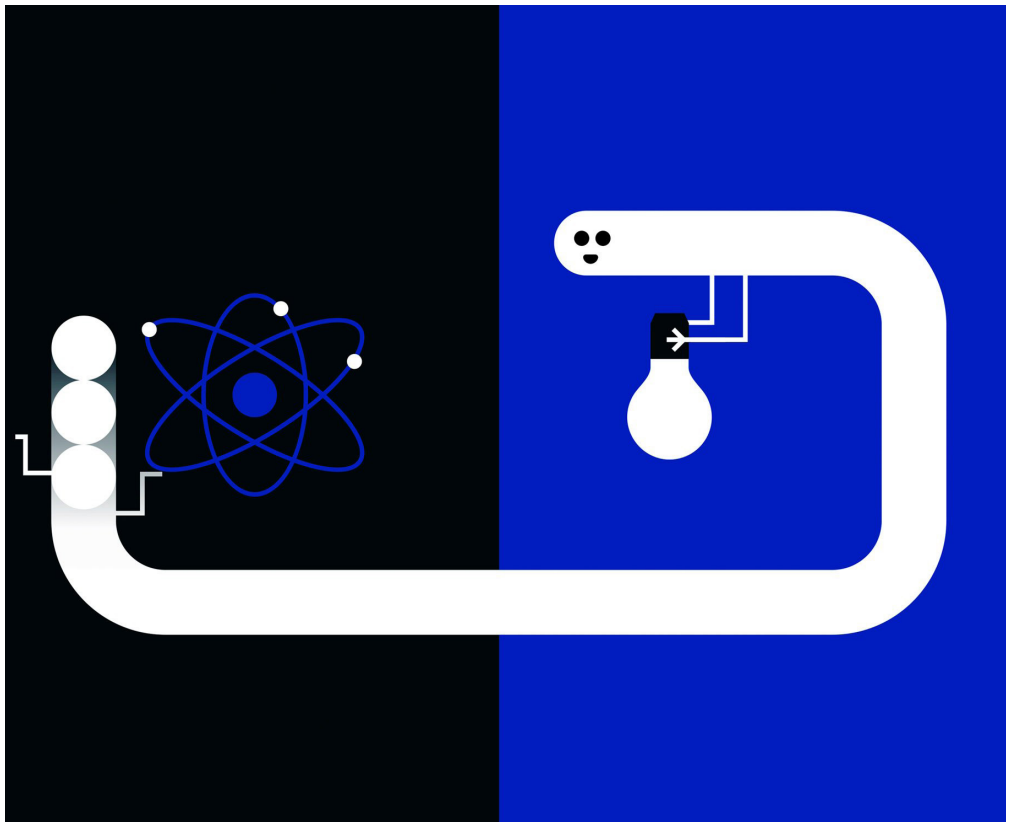
We know that quantum tunnelling occurs at subatomic scales, but what if we could observe it at larger, everyday scales, and harness its power to explore new technologies? Well, you guessed it! That's exactly where this year's Nobel Laureates in Physics come in to save the day. John Clarke, based at the University of California, Berkeley, Michel H. Devoret based at Yale University, New Haven, CT and University of California, Santa Barbara, USA, and John M. Martinis, based at University of California, Santa Barbara, USA were jointly awarded the 2025 Nobel Prize in Physics early last week. The experiments that these pioneers conducted in the 1980s resulted in the observation of quantum tunnelling in an electrical circuit. Using a circuit with superconductors, which allows current to flow with no resistance, they started the experiment with current flowing but in a zero-voltage state. They found that the particles moving through the circuit behaved like just one particle and were able to detect a voltage even though the initial voltage was zero. The system had "tunnelled" out of the zero-voltage state. Additionally, energy quantisation, the quantum phenomenon that energy comes in discrete chunks rather than being present on a continuous spectrum, was observed in their experiments. This means that, quite remarkably, they had observed quantum effects in a much larger, or macroscopic, context – a circuit that, according to the official Nobel Prize press release, can be held in one's hand, rather than a microscopic system invisible to the naked eye. This will be incredibly useful in the development of new quantum technologies as these effects can now be harnessed in fields like quantum computing. We had the pleasure of receiving the reactions of Imperial's very own experts in the department of Physics. On the impact of the work of the Nobel Laureates in quantum technologies, Professor Lesley Cohen, Associate Provost in the Department of Physics at Imperial College London, commented: "The work that these three outstanding scientists first demonstrated relates to the power of quantum mechanical tunnelling, and its manifestation in superconductivity where macroscopic quantum effects could be manifest and manipulated." In particular, she drew attention to a key application in quantum technology, "Their work has laid the foundations for superconducting qubits – one of the main hardware technologies for quantum technologies."

> **Century-old quantum mechanics continually offers new surprises**

It is wonderful that quantum mechanics, a subject born at the start of the 20th century, is still such a rich and fascinating field with fundamental insights still left to discover, and applications so vast. On this point, Olle Erikson, chair of the Nobel Committee for Physics which awards the Nobel Prize remarked, "It is wonderful to be able to celebrate the way that century-old quantum mechanics continually offers new surprises. It is also enormously useful, as quantum mechanics is the foundation of all digital technology".

Dr Jess Wade, Associate Professor in the Department of Materials at Imperial College London, commented: "It's super exciting to see tunnelling be recognised during the International Year for Quantum! This year's Nobel celebrates the observation of quantum tunnelling at a macroscopic scale, a critical step to building useful technologies that harness quantum phenomena."

Dr Wade also spoke of the practical hurdles still to be tackled, "There are still a lot of engineering challenges to overcome in realising scalable quantum computers, but ultra-precise magnetic field sensors based on superconducting circuits are already transforming our understanding of the world."



Johan Jarnestad/The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences

ENVIRONMENT

Speaking to the students behind the Zero Index

Environment Editor
OSCAR MITCHAM

Imperial uses its Zero Index to assess which fossil fuel companies it should maintain research partnerships with. In the most recent round of assessments, the University approved BP, Equinor, ExxonMobil, Petronas, Shell, TotalEnergies, and Woodside Energy.

Felix has been reaching out to the staff and students who worked on the Index and has spoken to both student representatives on the Socially Responsible Investment Engagement Monitoring Panel (SRIEM Panel), which signs off on the results of the Index. Imperial has not responded to requests to speak to academics who worked on Index.

The students Ida Caspary and Nico Henry are both on the SRIEM Panel. Ida was chosen by the panel's chair Prof Mary Ryan and Nico is there in his role as Union President. Neither of them speak for the panel.

Ida and Nico have only been involved in the second round of assessments, the results for which we expect to be released in a few months. Ida explained her role on the panel "We were equal; of course, there's always someone who leads the panel and then we step in through it but I was able to say whatever I wanted. They asked and there was space. There was no going too quickly over points or anything like that."

There is a working group separate to the panel which works out the scores, Ida explained. This group gathers all the data and calculates the scores. When the scores are approved by the SRIEM panel they become the recommendations which go to the University Management Board.

Julia Mitra, the Union Ethics and Environment Officer, would like students to have been involved in creating the metrics or working out the scores, although Ida and Nico noted that their feedback goes to creating better criteria in the next round of assessments.



Walkway outside the Grantham Institute. Thomas Angus

The College has a strategy of engagement for change which gives fossil fuell companies (FFCs) a key role in the transition to renewable energy. The fruits of this so far have involved work on carbon capture and storage, materials for the hydrogen economy, battery systems for energy storage, and electric vehicles.

The index assesses companies using a variety of metrics, and these metrics are improved each cycle. Last year this included the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative's (OGCI) methane target. The OGCI is an industry organisation, with its members including BP, Equinor, ExxonMobil, Shell, and Total, which focuses on technologies to reduce emissions through carbon capture and store and methane emissions. They say they are "leading the industry's response to climate change and accelerating action towards a net zero future consistent with the Paris Agreement."

I asked about the stated belief that FFCs should be a part of the transition to net zero and Ida said "I really don't know if they should play any role in the transition because their objectives are profit and that might clash with climate objectives. Originally Imperial worked with these companies and this was taken into reins [by the Zero Index] which says there can't be any investments in companies that don't abide by it. Now, that system is in place and so there's no direct investment by them. This system can cut out some companies that are clearly totally going in the wrong direction.

"If metrics like looking at historical results are able to show that these companies don't go in the right direction, i.e. that if the companies continue doing what they are doing that harms the climate further, then it is possible that it can cut [the number of FFCs we work with] down further and further to potentially none.

"I really think it can be a lot better by making the metrics better, and I don't think it's bad the way it is. I think it's a great development to have the system as it is because it helps a lot. It is really able now to cut out some companies completely that we were working with. It's really bad for the researchers who were working with them, on for example, carbon capture and storage and now cannot work with these companies anymore even though they gave us funding."

A 2022 article by Mei Li et al cited in the Zero Index says "Multiple studies document how oil majors have strategically spread misinformation and aggressively obstructed progress toward climate action. ExxonMobil is a flagrant example, having strategically denied climate change and propagated disinformation to mislead the public for over 20 years. Multiple majors have tried to shift the responsibility for climate change onto consumers. The biggest American and European majors have also spent millions lobbying to delay or weaken climate policy. Recently, oil majors are observed to be using advertising on social media platforms to influence public opinion and promote an image of green fossil fuels." And concludes "Until actions and investment behavior are brought into alignment with discourse, accusations of greenwashing appear well-founded." This is a topic Ida is particularly worried about, she said "Even if not caring about anything else, the university should have a strong interest in not having greenwashed research."

> **"I'm pretty sure that this is the most sophisticated system that any university has**

We continued to discuss how the Index uses industry reports for a lot of their metrics. Alongside a consistent campaign of misinformation, the Fossil Fuel Industry has recently rolled back some targets, perhaps because of President Trump's re-election. This makes assessing how likely a company really is to meet their targets important, alongside checking if the targets are in line with a sensible pathway to below 2 degrees of warming. Of the 21 metrics in the Zero Index only 7 involves data on actions. The rest are about targets and policies the companies have set.

Ida also attended and spoke at a teach-in organised by Imperial Climate Action, Imperial College Friends of Palestine, and Environmental Society. There was discussion of how the college invests and of the Zero Index, as it is currently the only policy governing research connections.

Ida and Nico both thought more work was needed on the metrics. Ida said "There are so many things that might be interesting coming from companies that might be a red flag for working with them but I don't know how they could best be included. I think this needs some robust research."

Ida hoped that in the future something like the Zero Index could be extended to cover more than just climate. "In climate there are more things that could be included, but then it can be extended of course to other issues. … I'm pretty sure this is the most sophisticated system that any university has for figuring out who they should work with, and this is actually working." She valued the fact that this was a specific system for Imperial's needs that goes straight to the source for data.

Both Ida and Nico saw the potential for this system to be excellent and added that the process as it stood seemed robust, even if its not harsh enough on FFCs.

Nico said there that if students have strong feelings about the metrics, they could formalise through a Union Council motion. Julia Mitra said she is working on a motion about the Index and is aiming to propose it this term.



Silwood Park Campus. Thomas Angus

COMMENT

Lie down with dogs, wake up with fleas

Comment writer Lynetta Wang reflects on Freshers' Week friendships, and what they teach us about ourselves.

Comment Writer
LYNETTA WANG

Freshers' Week is a social marathon disguised as a party. Seven days of smiling, shouting over music, and answering questions about what you study until the words lose their meaning. You're thrown into a whirlpool of faces, each conversation a potential friendship, or just as easily, another forgettable exchange.

> **The truth is, you don't always know who your people are until you've met the wrong ones.**

Somewhere between club queues and campus tours, I started to wonder whether all this frantic socialising was really about finding friends, or simply avoiding being alone. Everyone says, "Find your people," as if your ideal companions are out there waiting, neatly packaged with the same hobbies and Spotify playlists. But that's too easy. The truth is, you don't always know who your people are until you've met the wrong ones.

I've moved so often I've never lived in the same city for more than five years. I've learned to read a room quickly, to pick up the tone of a new setting - the subtle hierarchies, the kinds of jokes that land.

I've also learned the quiet art of saying goodbye. I once broke up with my best friend of seven years, not because of a fight, but because our lives drifted apart until holding on began to hurt more than letting go. Maybe that's why I no longer think there are "good" or "bad" kinds of friends. It depends on where you are in life, and who you are trying to become. Some people fit the current version of you; others pull you toward the person you might be in a few years' time. It's less about their traits and more about your trajectory – the direction you have set for yourself.

That's where the old saying comes in: "Lie down with dogs, wake up with fleas." I used to think it was a moral warning to stay away from "bad influences." But lately, it feels more like a reminder that who you spend time with inevitably rubs off on you.

Not everyone you meet in Freshers' Week will be good for you, and that is fine. You learn about yourself just as much from uncomfortable dynamics as you do from easy ones.

Friendship at university is not about hunting for people who look and sound like you. It is about experimenting with who you might become around different kinds of people.



Lynetta and friends during Freshers' Week. Lynetta Wang for *Felix*.

> **Maybe it's about learning the art of choosing and re-choosing the people who make you grow**

Some will make you louder, braver, or more open. Others might drain or distort you in ways that take time to notice. Compatibility isn't fixed; it's fluid. Who I am right now – tired, excited, slightly homesick – won't be who I am two weeks or six months from now. My friends will evolve too.

So maybe it is not about finding a perfect circle of friends, but about learning the art of choosing and re-choosing the people who make you grow. To be honest, I don't think anyone gets it right on the first try. Freshers' Week teaches you how to meet people; the rest of university teaches you how to keep the right ones, and sometimes, how to let go of the rest without guilt.

BUSINESS

Klarna cashes in now - but can consumers keep paying later?

After a successful IPO in September, the challenge is far from over for the Swedish buy now, pay later firm.

Business Writer
BERTRAN MAURELIA PEIDRO

Klarna launched its IPO on the New York Stock Exchange on September 10th at $52 a share, above its initial pricing of $40. The company went public months after delaying its initial April plans due to tariff uncertainty.

Originally known as "Kreditor", the company was founded in 2005 by three students at the Stockholm School of Economics: Sebastian Siemiatkowski, Niklas Adalberth, and Victor Jacobsson. Swedish shoppers were interested in the flexibility of trying items before committing to them, but merchants feared not receiving payment. Whilst working at a debt collection agency, Sebastian and his co-founders noticed this gap and created a business in which they would pay merchants upfront and let customers receive products first and pay for them later.

Klarna is now one of the leaders of buy now, pay later (BNPL) solutions, simplifying online shopping for both consumers and merchants. Purchases are split into interest-free instalments, allowing consumers to buy products that previously felt out of reach. This model has proven to be extremely popular, as today the company has 111 million active users worldwide, with 11 million of those being in the UK.

Klarna generates revenue through a variety of methods. Businesses pay the company a merchant fee, usually a percentage of the sale, as it can obtain more clients and guarantee payments. On the consumer side, Klarna earns revenue from the late fees and interest on the long-term financing options it provides. As of 2017, the company obtained a banking license in Sweden, allowing it to also offer more complex financial products such as savings accounts and debit cards, amongst others. Its credit card boasts 7.5 million users.

> **Studies have shown that users of BNPL services end up overspending compared to traditional payment methods.**

Nonetheless, the company's success so far will not come without challenges moving forward. Although apps such as Klarna seem to make spending effortless, studies have shown that users of BNPL services end up overspending compared to traditional payment methods.

Unlike other credit services, BNPL schemes such as Klarna do not require extensive credit checks, meaning that consumers with poor credit histories or little financial know-how can accumulate debt without having the means to pay it back. This may lead to a devious spiral of having to pay late interest fees, opening more accounts to pay these fees, and maintaining unsustainable levels of consumption.

These gray areas have not gone unnoticed. The UK's Financial Conduct Authority has proposed bringing BNPL under the same regulatory framework as other credit products. This would entail greater consumer protection, and affordability checks similar to those for other credit products.

For the Swedish company, tighter regulations could heavily impact its business. Credit checks could reduce the number of users. Limits on late fees, one of its main sources of revenue, could squeeze profitability.

Furthermore, the BNPL space is not without competitors. Firms like Affirm, Afterpay, PayPal and Apple all offer similar solutions to clients. If it wishes to maintain its competitive edge, Klarna will have to reduce its merchant fees in an ever more crowded space.

There is also the added risk of how sensitive the business model is to economic downturns. During times of recession, default rates increase as consumers lose their jobs and have their incomes reduced. Having less disposable income, they are also much less likely to indulge in needless purchases. Klarna's profitability could be severely impacted if the economic outlook were to worsen.

To sustain its growth, Klarna will have to navigate these numerous challenges carefully. Having positioned itself as a financial services provider, as well as opening its own storefront and possibly becoming another advertising platform, the company could help insulate itself from regulatory crackdowns and stay afloat. Although Klarna's growth was founded on the premise of disruptive finance, it may eventually have to adapt and become just another financial corporation.



Klarna's "Smooth Lounge" at Berlin Fashion Week 2019. Felix Vierheller

FILM&TV



Film Editor
SIJUNG LEE

The 69th BFI London Film Festival (LFF), presented in partnership with American Express, started on 8th October, ushering in twelve days of premieres, panels, and global cinematic celebration across the UK that will last until 19th October. This year's programme features 247 titles, including features, shorts, series, and immersive works, representing a total of 79 countries. The programme is open to the public, allowing everyone to experience a wide array of screenings, workshops, immersive experiences, and more.

In London, it is mostly only Southbank Centre and West End venues that put on in-person screenings and events, with standby queues and last-minute tickets available for the majority of films. The BFI LFF is a great opportunity for anyone who is interested in experiencing undiscovered early-release films, as these are shown in the UK for the first (and for some, the only) time. Highly anticipated upcoming movies also feature as public red carpet premieres, also known as Galas at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall.

The annual festival opened this year with the international premiere of Rian Johnson's *Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery*, the third installment of his *Knives Out* series, and will close with the UK premiere of Julia Jackman's *100 Nights of Hero*. There is much excitement around several new works from established directors like Yorgos Lanthimos, Park Chan-wook, and Chloé Zhao, as well as the return of Daniel Day-Lewis, who has won three Academy Awards for Best Actor, performing in his son Ronan Day-Lewis's directorial debut *Anemone*.

In this special feature, our team presents reviews of six films from the LFF so far, four of which premiered as part of the festival's prestigious Gala selections. We hope you enjoy this feature and perhaps even find some upcoming films to look out for and add to your watchlist!

Design Credits
JULIETTE FLATAU

Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery Review by David Latimer

Hamnet Review by Sijung Lee
Bugonia Review by Sijung Lee, David Latimer
Love, Brooklyn Review by Moyin Olojede

Frankenstein Review by Sijung Lee
At the Place of Ghosts Review by Katia Zykova

Film Writer
DAVID LATIMER

OPENING NIGHT GALA

Wake Up Dead Man

The first screening of the festival (and probably chosen due to its star appeal) was *Wake Up Dead Man*: the latest in Rian Johnson's Benoit Blanc detective thrillers. Daniel Craig returns as Benoit Blanc, infamous private detective, to don another tweed suit to accompany his new beard and grown-out hair. He journeys to a rural town's chapel in rural New York state to find a miracle murder he is unable to comprehend. Alongside him is the man believed to have committed it – a new priest, Jud (Josh O'Connor), riddled with guilt over his pre-ecclesiastical life. As the third in the series, Rian has a lot to prove. The original, *Knives Out*, was a ubiquitously loved classic but *Glass Onion*, the mid-pandemic follow-up, was met with some more apprehensive reviews. Has Rian been able to return to what people loved about the original?

Many criticisms of *Glass Onion* were rooted in disappointment that the mystery of that film is far more straightforward than the twisting labyrinth of its predecessor. While that was the point of the movie (the title itself even alluding to a banal answer to a seemingly layered question), the plot of the first film was one of the greatest things about it. In *Wake Up Dead Man*, it's clear that Rian has taken the hint. Once established, the mystery is immediately presented as an impossible scenario which, over the next two hours, takes the viewer with it as it winds and swerves and doesn't let go. As time goes by, layers begin to peel off slowly as one begins to start making more sense of the whole ordeal, but the pieces never seem to fit together entirely until the very end. It feels like a return to form for the franchise and the more convoluted elements make the final reveal that much more satisfying. I would go so far to say that the "locked-room" mystery in *Wake Up Dead Man* is more compelling to me than *Knives Out*'s whodunnit. However, *Knives Out* succeeds in some ways better than *Wake Up Dead Man*.

One trademark of Benoit Blanc's catalogue of endeavours is the star-studded, quirky entourage surrounding the death. Making up the suspects, the ensemble cast needs to be interesting and memorable for the film to truly work. And, performance-wise, it does. The characters are well-portrayed, as one might expect from the likes of Jeremy Renner and Kerry Washington. Unfortunately, the characters do at times feel under-utilised or lacking in depth. Andrew Scott is, as always, infectious with his performance but his character still isn't given a role in the story deserving of it. In *Knives Out*, the Thrombey family feels like a real family with all the overlapping feuding and implied history. In contrast, many of the characters in *Wake Up Dead Man* feel too disconnected from the victim and the story at large.



Despite being about Blanc, the films in the series tend to focus primarily on a member of the cast other than him. In *Knives Out*, we followed Marta, played wonderfully by Ana de Armas, the murder victim's personal nurse. In this newer entry, the role is taken up by Josh O'Connor with another incredible performance. The first half an hour of the film is dedicated to his backstory and his narration of the events leading up to the murder. But despite Blanc's absence, the intro is engaging as O'Connor immediately hooks you in. The way he portrays a soft-spoken chaplain whose performance is carried out with a palpable sense of internalised, Catholic guilt is hypnotising. This is contrasted heavily with Monsignor Wickes (Josh Brolin), Jud's superior, whose scathing, hateful rhetoric and meteoric performance ignite countless fires in the plot.

This film filled me with the same kind of joy as *Knives Out* and reinvigorated my love for this series and my need for it to keep going. Like with *Glass Onion*, Netflix has agreed to give *Wake Up Dead Man* a theatrical release window. Before its 12th December release on the platform, *Wake Up Dead Man* will have a two-week long run at the end of November. I would seriously recommend watching this one in cinemas and I hope you'll agree on its instant classic status.

Mystery/Crime/Comedy

Director: Rian Johnson
Screenwriter: Rian Johnson
Starring: Daniel Craig, Josh O'Connor, Glenn Close, Josh Brolin, Andrew Scott

Run time: 140 min
Release date: 26/11/2025

Film Editor
SIJUNG LEE

Few films in this decade have captured the intersection between grief and creation as movingly as Chloé Zhao's *Hamnet*. You may be wondering, why is it not called *Hamlet*, like Shakespeare's famous play? It's because "Hamnet" is the name of Shakespeare's son, which is often seen as interchangeable with "Hamlet" in an Elizabethan context. Adapted from Maggie O'Farrell's novel of the same name, this movie reveals an emotionally transformative story about one of literature's most mythologised tragedies: the death of Shakespeare's 11-year-old son.

From the first frame, Zhao makes it clear that this is not your typical historical drama. *Hamnet* unfolds like a remembered dream; the camera lingers on the light breeze against the trees, candlelit rooms, and the tender rhythm of domestic life in 16th century Stratford. The countryside is consistently portrayed with such beauty, each shot finding poetry in the ordinary. Max Ritcher's music score also serves as an integral emotional anchor to the film, adding an almost meditative quality that matches Zhao's direction, the visual landscape, and the performances. The film doesn't rush; it lets grief and love breathe, and the pauses and silences carry an equal amount of weight to the dialogue.

The acting was perhaps one of the best parts of the cinematic experience and a crucial factor in this film deliver its vision in the way it did. At the heart of *Hamnet* stands Jessie Buckley, who gives a heart-wrenching performance as Agnes (historically Anne Hathaway). The lighting often only illuminates half of her face, alluding to her constant shifts between extremes – tender joy, fierce maternal love, grief, rage, and numbness. In the forest, where she is deeply intertwined with nature, her visceral appearance makes her character unique and almost other-worldly. Paul Mescal embodies William Shakespeare not as a cartoon of genius, but as a man tortured, conflicted, and sometimes unable to fully articulate what he feels. Meanwhile, Jacobi Jupe's presence as Hamnet lingers with the audience even after his tragic death; his emotions gracefully transition from childish mischievousness to fear and suffering. Frequent and prolonged close-ups of the characters enhance their facial expressions, inviting the audience to almost physically feel their pain and love, even in the darkest moments.

This leads to a larger motif of an open door dividing the living and the dead, and memory is portrayed as both painful and sacred. Visually stunning, emotionally devastating, and profoundly humane, Hamnet is truly what could be referred to as a modern masterpiece.



Agnes (Jessie Buckley) and Shakespeare (Paul Mescal) in the forest
Agata Grzybowska / Focus Features

> **Visually stunning, emotionally devastating, and profoundly humane.**

There are many powerful lessons to take home after watching Hamnet, and while many films fail to coherently link such themes into one central story, Zhao does it quite elegantly. In Shakespeare's tension between feeling and making, between mourning and writing, lies the film's deepest insight: creation is another form of survival. His art becomes a vessel for his sorrow, as the memory of his boy is not erased but reimagined through his creation of Hamlet. Grief is not something to overcome but something that transforms who we are. Furthermore, the film plays with dualities through mirroring characters like Hamnet and his twin Judith, the mythological Orpheus and Eurydice, as well as William and Agnes.



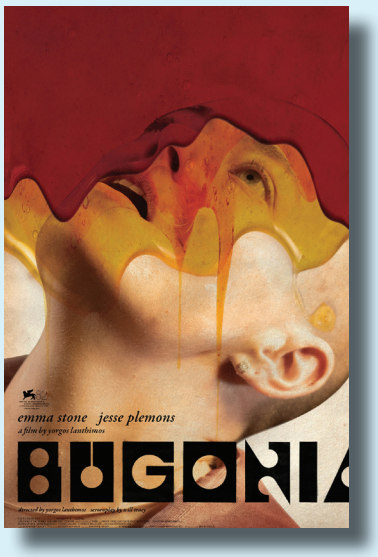
Historical drama/Romance

Director: Chloé Zhao
Screenwriters: Chloé Zhao, Maggie O'Farrell
Starring: Jessie Buckley, Paul Mescal, Emily Watson, Joe Alwyn, Jacobi Jupe

Run time: 126 min
Release date: 09/01/2026

HEADLINE GALA

Bugonia



Science Fiction/Thriller

Director: Yorgos Lanthimos
Screenwriter: Will Tracy
Starring: Emma Stone, Jesse Plemons, Aidan Delbis, Stavros Halkias, Alicia Silverstone

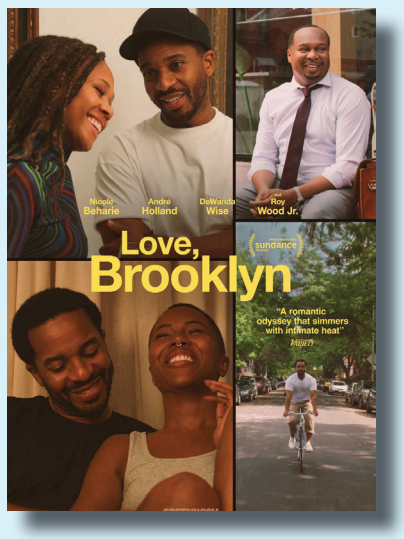
Run time: 120 min
Release date: 31/10/2025

Film Editor
SIJUNG LEE

A truly deranged film, *Bugonia* is based on a crazy consipracy theory that matches Yorgos Lanthimos' aesthetic. Emma Stone brings to life a unique character that only she could fully portray, leading a great cast. The film is ridiculously confusing and cruel; one scene you're laughing, then horrifyingly disgusted in the next. Bluntness and casual dark humour are what this film relies on, creating a surprisingly realistic fictional world that the audience is sucked into. While *Bugonia* isn't for the weak-hearted, perhaps it will be appreciated more by those who are unafraid of bees.

Film Writer
DAVID LATIMER

Do you feel a sense of purpose in being part of something bigger? Yorgos strikes back in this deranged picture on echo-chamber thinking and higher calling. But, like many of Yorgos' works, these themes are just a backdrop to a surrealist tale, all framed in his addicting style. Dripping with liminality, *Bugonia* presents a radicalised conspiracy theorist who kidnaps the CEO of the company he works for, convinced she's an alien sent to sabotage us. Our self-destructive nature is explored and well performed by Yorgos' favourite action figures, Jesse Plemons and Emma Stone, who both give stunning performances.



Romance/Drama

Director: Rachael Abigail Holder
Screenwriter: Paul Zimmerman
Starring: André Holland, Nicole Beharie, DeWanda Wise

Run time: 97 min
Release date: Limited release

Love, Brooklyn

Film Writer
MOYIN OLOJEDE

Love, Brookyln explores the dynamics of love against the backdrop of an evolving Brooklyn, New York. The film focuses on a love triangle between three characters: Roger, a writer disillusioned by the changing city around him who feels less and less connected to his home, Casey, Roger's ex, a lonely art gallery owner whose gallery is under the threat of gentrification, and finally Nicole, a widower and single mother who (rightfully) clings to the past and sees Roger as an escape. Neither relationship is clearly defined as Roger constantly goes back and forth between Casey and Nicole. Should Roger remain in the past in an easy, comfortable relationship with Casey, or move forward into something unknown with Nicole? This conflict parallels his view on Brooklyn: should he linger in how the city was before or should he embrace its evolution? Despite love triangles being a tried and tested trope, this film approaches it from a less dramatic and catastrophic angle than other romance stories. It truly feels like three people navigating very real relationships amidst grief, loss, and change. As a lover of romcoms who misses the 90s-2000s era, I've been waiting for a film that feels as warm and comforting as this. There were many scenes that felt very playful and realistic with natural-feeling dialogue. The soundtrack leans into an R&B, soulful vibe reminiscent of films like *Brown Sugar* or *Love Jones*, yet it doesn't overpower the natural sounds of Brooklyn like the bike Roger so often rides or the kids playing in the park. The soundscape centers you in the city director Rachael Abigail Holder loves so much, and her love for the city shines through in the city setting as well. The film keeps both the ugly and the beautiful: the park with overflowing dumpsters, canopied streets adorned with constructive markings – every scene feels like Brooklyn.

When you love you act with such permanence – as if the subject of your love will be there forever. As the film explores, it's not. People die, cities change, and we grow. The film beautifully acknowledges the process of coping with these changes. One quote from the film really stuck with me: "When you can't take the things you love the most, you take the memories." Despite the attachment you may feel, you just have to keep moving forward, holding on to both the perfect and the imperfect. This is the struggle that shapes the core message of the film.

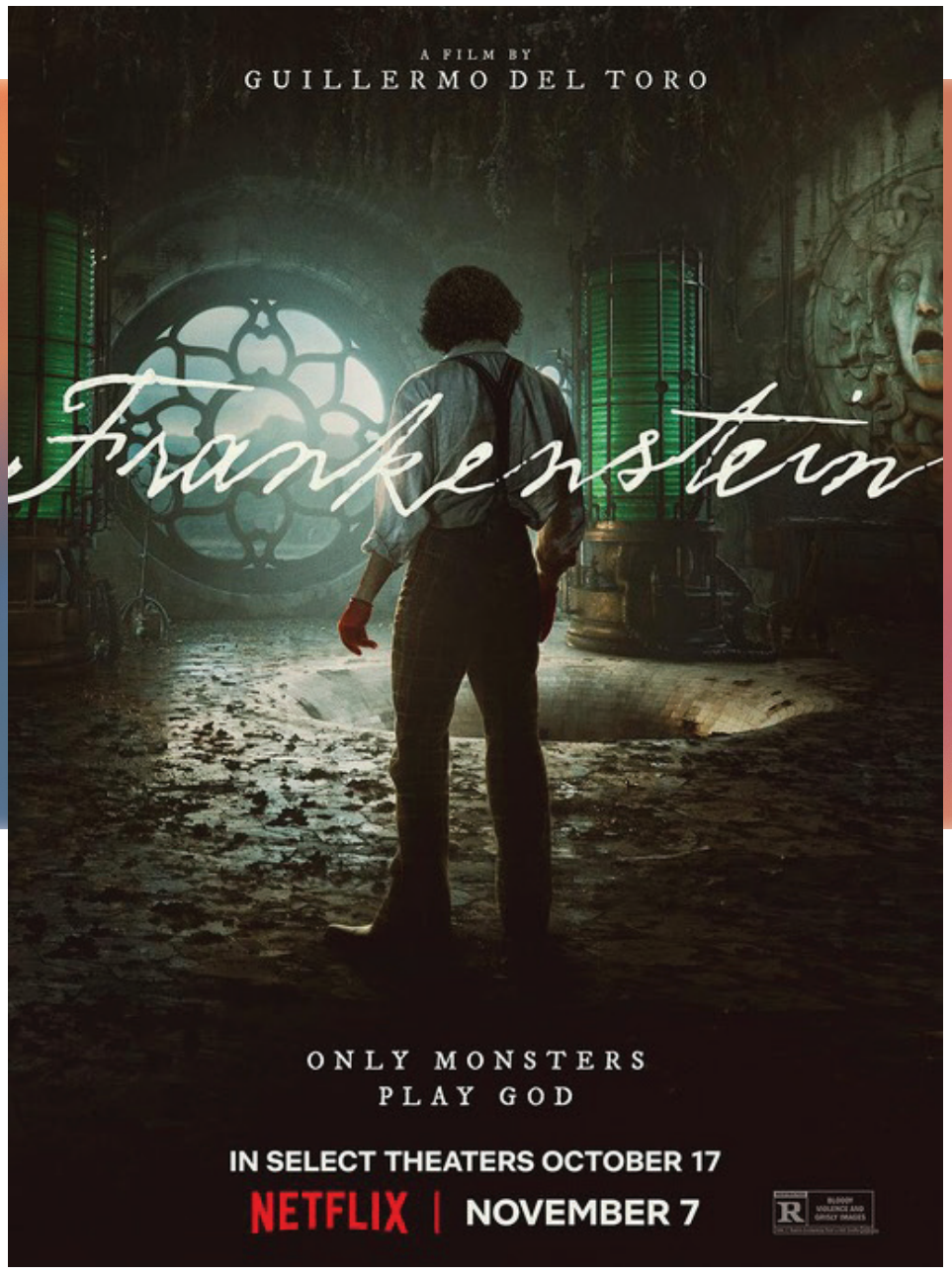
However, there seems to be a disconnect between writer Paul Zimmerman's script and Holder's directive vision. At times, I felt as though the plot seemed to drag and the script was a bit too empty at times. Roger was the main character, but Casey and Nicole had such interesting subplots that I wish the script could've explored further. Instead, the analysis never went deeper than surface-level. Despite this, the actors really made a lot out of the limiting script, each performance holding a form of real maturity and vulnerability rarely found in romcoms. Each sparse moment felt laced with emotion.

While lacklustre in some areas, the cast and director still create a film that feels comforting, easy, and fun and is truly for any nostalgic romcom lover!

Film Editor
SIJUNG LEE

HEADLINE GALA

Frankenstein



Mary Shelley's original *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818), is a classic Romanticist novel after the end of the Enlightenment period (1685-1815). Romanticism was an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement in Europe started in the late 18th century that prioritised nature, emotion, and individualism over the logic and reason of the Enlightenment era. Knowing this, it is easier to understand how Guillermo del Toro tries to adapt this acclaimed piece of literature to our modern cinematic world.

In terms of visuals, the film illustrates del Toro's signature ornate style suffused with decay. The colour tones and tangible realism grasps onto the audience, and the creature (Jacob Elordi) is convincingly portrayed to be disturbingly human. Every shot feels like a moving oil painting, steeped in 19th century Romanticism yet threaded with a modern Gothic flair. Nevertheless, del Toro's adaptation of the characters, themes, and storyline seem to be slightly less compelling.

Frankenstein (2025), similar to the novel, is structured as a frame narrative; it opens with Captain Anderson (Lars Mikkelsen) and his Danish crew stranded in the Arctic. Here, they rescue a fatally injured Victor Frankenstein, portrayed by Oscar Isaac, who starts off his tale beginning with his childhood and loss. Victor, as the protagonist, is initially presented as the axis of logic and rigorous pursuit of scientific knowledge. He is a deeply conflicted idealist: a visionary scientist driven by the Enlightenment dream of surpassing death. However, his ambition is tainted by pride; when he finally brings life to a lifeless body, his horror is less about the creature's deformity than about his loss of mastery over it, and he cannot face the moral weight of his own success.

On the other hand, Romanticist ideals are embodied mostly by the character Elizabeth, stunningly played by Mia Goth, who is given more depth and serves as the emotional bridge between Victor and the world he has forsaken. As a Catholic, she represents the domestic, emotional, and moral realm that Victor's scientific obsession has abandoned. Her condemning attitude towards Victor signifies a central theme: reason without empathy leads to destruction. Elizabeth's character is significantly re-imagined by del Toro compared to that of Shelley's novel, in which she is Victor's bride-to-be instead of his younger brother William's fiancée as she is in the film.

A concerning aspect of the film was the choice to reduce Victor's character to an irredeemable one, while the creature is kept as the one the audience should feel empathy for. By the creature becoming the moral and emotional anchor, the story is simplified: a human who loses his soul and a monster who gains one. This deviates from the original novel's underlying themes of creator and creation, guilt and suffering, as well as isolation and revenge. The ambiguity of who truly is the monster is swiftly disregarded, as in del Toro's version of the story there is a clear answer: Victor.

Ultimately, *Frankenstein* (2025) is a visually captivating adaptation and a powerful story about ambition, empathy, and the consequences of playing God. While not entirely faithful to the original, del Toro's creative interpretation is filled with powerful moral resonance.



Science Fiction/Horror

Director: Guillermo del Toro
Screenwriter: Guillermo del Toro
Starring: Oscar Isaac, Jacob Elordi, Christoph Waltz, Mia Goth, Felix Kammerer

Run time: 149 min
Release date: 17/10/2025

At the Place of Ghosts

What defines a thriller?

Film Writer
KATIA ZYKOVA

The film *At the Place of Ghosts*, or *Sk+te'kmujue'katik* in the Mi'kmaq language spoken by about 11,000 people in Canada, is a ghost story.

It is advertised as a thriller, and yet, after watching it, I am more inclined to call this a speculative drama, which brings forward the question: why was I not 'thrilled,' or in this case, 'spooked'?

The two protagonists are two siblings who have been apart for a long time. One of the two, the elder, is visited by a ghoul – a spirit that we learn has haunted the two siblings since they were children – and we then follow them as they venture back into the forest to face this demon. This is as much a story of family coming together, and reconciling differences, as it is a story of a ghost-hunt. Drawing from the Mi'kmaq culture, healers, spirits, ancestors and



Mise'l (Forest Goodluck) on the left and Antle (Blake Alec Miranda) on the right
VVS Films

Director Bretten Hannam paces this story very slowly. With angles shot from afar, between the trees that make up the primary setting of 'the Old Forest,' it makes the viewer feel like a wolf stalking its prey. We are hunched behind bushes, crouched over fields and we follow the ground, as if following a scent, in the opening scenes. The soundtrack, composed by Jemery Dutcher and Devon Bate, is also haunting and eerie, further enhancing this feeling that we are constantly on the threshold of something bad. It's a feeling similar to the one you get when you look down at a dark pit from the edge of a cliff.

strange creatures appear and colour the setting of the forest: "The forest will provide the rest."

But was I scared? Thrilled? Not particularly. While the tone is spooky, there are none of the usual jump scares that accompany a modern thriller. The horror of the film is the siblings' story, which the viewer pieces together slowly throughout. The emotional tone is strong, and I was brought to tears at a point near the end, but strangely, I felt like I could predict what was happening.

Of course, the supernatural elements were varied and unique: but after only a few minutes, the viewer already realises that there will be these strange elements, so while their presence is odd, it is not unexpected. I think the lack of a pacing shift is also what prevents this movie from being a true thriller. The slow pacing remains the same throughout the movie, and emotional climaxes are presented through crescendos in the soundtrack rather than an increase in action. The music without the action creates a strange dissonance which, while heightening the emotion of a scene, does not make it more exciting.

> **"This is as much a story of family coming together, and reconciling differences, as it is a story of a ghost-hunt.**

On leaving I felt moved but slightly disappointed – like I had taken a step back from the cliff after staring at the pit for too long. There's a part of your brain that continues to think, 'what if I had jumped?' And while, of course, you would feel relief for not actually having jumped, in the metaphorical sense, the movie would have benefitted from leaping.

I did truly enjoy the supernatural elements, the general feeling of eeriness, and how Hannam managed to recreate the feeling of lament. There was a strong arc in terms of the two siblings coming together, and it was the first time in a while I had been truly engrossed in a movie; my attention never wavered. However, there are so many unresolved threads that I believe could have been tied: the ending didn't quite offer the catharsis that the rest of the movie had set it up for.

Fantasy/Thriller

Director: Bretten Hannam
Screenwriter: Bretten Hannam
Starring: Blake Alec Miranda, Forrest Goodluck, Glen Gould

Run time: 81 min
Release date: Limited release

Information on BFI LFF

Check out the BFI LFF official website to learn more and get last-minute tickets:

You can also get discounted tickets and at BFI Southbank (£4) and BFI Festivals (£6) for 16-25 year olds by signing up for "25 and Under" access with a BFI account.

Have you seen any films from the BFI LFF 2025?

If you want to share your thoughts or write a review about a memorable film, contact ffilm@ic.ac.uk! You can also tell us which upcoming films you are most excited to see either in cinemas or streaming platforms.

Continued next week...

ARTS&CULTURE

IC Radio reviews All Points East



Popular festival has lots of hits and some misses.

Arts&Culture Writer
AMARA AGBAI

Last year, I attended KAYTRANADA's All Points East takeover and was ready to make my attendance at this event an annual occurrence. But, after much apprehension and excitement for the Friday 15th August's "PROVENANCE", I find myself questioning whether I can rely on this festival for a good time.

As a lover of live music and drinking lager in the British sunshine, festivals like All Points East have always appealed to me. I arrived at 3pm, just in time for Gotts Street Park's set on the West Stage. The guys dressed in their "East London Summer" uniform, all sitting on stools rather than standing, giving the set a relaxed vibe that matched the band's soft soulful style of music. It felt like I was overlooking the band practicing in their back garden: the only thing that came to mind as I eavesdropped was the thought "You guys are so cool". The band brought out Olive Jones, Pip Millet and Celeste – artists who fill up many of my playlists and were a joy to hear live. I levitated during Celeste's powerful belts during "Both Sides Of The Moon": a song that is no stranger to my "On Repeat" auto-generated playlist. At the end of their set, I watched as the pianist, Tom Henry, grabbed canned drinks from the side to hand out to his bandmates and I imagined myself bumping into them later in the festival and asking them questions about their favourite albums, influences and songs to play.

Looking at the setlist for the rest of the day, my friend and I were puzzled as to who we were to see next. All options put us at risk of missing other acts we wanted to see. We decided on seeing one of our favourite researcher's in R&B, Mariah the Scientist, who performed in the Cupra North Arena. Her experimental conjugations of alternative influences, angsty guitar riffs and soulful vocals filled the tent, making this stage the perfect choice for her. We missed the end of her set in hopes of catching Ms. Dynamite's iconic hit but were unsuccessful. This was shortly before being caught in the wave of people under the incorrect impression that SAULT's set would be happening at 5pm, heading towards the East Stage.

> "I find myself questioning whether I can rely on this festival for a good time.

The crowd was buzzing. We were all ready for what was promised to us. So much so, we were willing to miss the beloved Kirk Franklin performing in the arena, hearing his Sunday morning sounds spilling out of the cracks of the tent.

But the buzz faded as we began to realise we would not be getting what we wanted anytime soon. It took approximately one hour for the stage to come to life, proving the rumour of the set beginning at 5pm to be incorrect. Furthermore, the music was withheld from us as the show began with a strange but seemingly spiritual performance with a choir, orchestra, and actors all in neutral-coloured cloaks.



It was transformative and other worldly. I was intrigued at first, curious as to what message the mysterious group SAULT was trying to get across to me. But due to the large crowds and quietness of the audio, I couldn't really hear. Unfortunately, these shows of local creativity would become a theme throughout the rest of the evening, ending up as intervals to chat with surrounding festival goers, filling water bottles and queuing to use the toilet.

For the most part, I enjoyed my stay in the world that Cleo Sol and InFlo created at Victoria Park. The stage set was reminiscent of a spooky barren desert, with obscure pyramids and spinning signs that read "Loyalty" and "Exile" in opposite directions. Cleo's golden shades reflected August's intense evening sun, echoing the sunset happening on the screen behind her. The screen's background would change throughout the rest of the five-hour set, to imitate the sky fading from sunset to twilight. I was frustrated and tired but her sweet voice and reassuring words resurrected me. Listening to her voice is like sipping honey dissolved at the bottom of a cup of warm tea. When she sang "Sunshine", yellow lighting filled the stage at the chorus, and the crowd sang and danced to the lyrics. It felt like we needed this after the day we had been through.

We were all ready for what was promised to us... but the buzz faded as we began to realise we would not be getting what we wanted.

I think I understood the vision behind PROVENANCE. The effort and passion flowed throughout the final set, and I empathise with the desire to make the Gospel R&B genre more accessible. However, I don't think All Points East festival was the right setting for such experimentation. A show like this required some more refining and a smaller, more intimate venue where all attendees know what to expect. This "surprise" that foreshadowed on Cleo Sol's Instagram story the day before ended up being the bane of the evening. Despite it's shortcomings, I applaud the amplification of local talents and creativity. I know that the borough benefiting from the festival is important to the organisers of the event. Big up Tower Hamlets!

Headline: Gotts Street Park performing on the West Stage. Left: SAULT performing. Bottom: Another show of local creativity. Amara Agbai





Dramsoc double bill

A Pair of Wings

Arts&Culture Writer
RENA MATSUOKA

Real Voltaire, a scruffy blazer, and 1930s New York City. *A Pair of Wings* follows headstrong, aloof prohibitionist and detective Frank Lee Doyle in his witless pursuit of a French smuggling giant. Friday night's trip to the Union Concert Hall was only my second time seeing a play, but it left me wanting to see a billion more.

The opening scene is loaded with witty dialogue and priceless punchlines; we are introduced to Detective Doyle through a monologue flawlessly delivered in a booming New York accent. The authenticity of said accent does fade throughout the play, and it would help character realism if it was upheld at the same high quality as the beginning – but nothing is ever perfect. Doyle is a narrow-minded and brutal NYPD detective heartily dedicated to upholding the Eighteenth Amendment; we see him grasp hold of a petty bootlegger and treat him with the same enraged demeanor he might have used on a serial killer. His senior, Dick, is quick to call out Doyle's vindictiveness and guide him onto an under-cover (or more like no cover at all, given Doyle's lack of subtlety) mission.

Doyle is tasked with infiltrating the alcohol smuggling scheme of the Marchand De Vin, whose French accent and intonation is so satisfying it is almost distracting from the just-as-satisfying lines he delivers. Doyle gets to argue about the philosophy of banning alcohol: to guide people to a healthier, more moral lifestyle, or to impede on the freedom to make mistakes which make up the very essence of being human? The Frenchman does not only succeed in making the audience chuckle, but he manages to open the eyes of stubborn Frank. In a makeshift speakeasy, which could have been better accommodated for with the use of props and perhaps better lighting efforts, Doyle's rigid mind gets a shove: "Torch all the devils and you might take some angels with you". Some bad deeds can stem from a place far from evil, and law and morality are not always synonymous.

Overall, I am grateful to everyone who made this play possible; aside from the very minor details, I have nothing but a smile and a warm feeling when I recall our rash detective. A special mention goes out to the streetlamp lighting used in one of the scenes; I genuinely felt like I was on a lonely street in night time NYC.

DB Cooper: the Musical Mystery



Imperial DramSoc and MTSoc

Flight attendant with an irresistible edge? One SEXY criminal? Flirtation under an interrogation lamp? All were served with fantastic vocals.

Arts&Culture Writer
RENA MATSUOKA

D.B. Cooper: The Musical Mystery follows Ash, an FBI agent with a lot to prove, and their investigation of the "impossible" case of the Northwest Orient Airlines flight hijacking. Opening with Ash interrogating Florence, the flight attendant present at the hijacking, Ash's artless questions are met with Florence's teasing demeanour. Right off the bat, we are dashed into Florence's recollection of the fateful flight with a cheeky and playful musical number on board. What sucked me in was Florence's vocals: crisp, clear, and ever-charming. I was in awe. Notwithstanding some of the other singing, which I found to be a little weak, the flight safety protocol-turned-dance choreography had the audience giggling.

Then, moonwalking aboard comes D.B. Cooper. The play did a fantastic job portraying the off-kilterness of the situation. His smoothness and apathetic magnetism sent a chill down my back. Reminiscent of Patrick Bateman, it feels like a dream where something is not right. There is a tautness in the air as the plane heads to Mexico. Just as the tension is about to snap, we are brought back into the interrogation room.

In an anti-climactic fashion, Florence tells Ash that Cooper jumped off. Ash pries and pries, but finding nothing more, reveals the desperation to not disappoint anyone. They needed to solve this case to prove themselves, a motif keenly felt by many of the audience. Having unattainable standards that we selfishly feel entitled to, who are you trying to satisfy?

After Ash's piece which perhaps lasted too long, Florence cheers them up. They had us all swooning at Ash's blushing awkwardness when being asked out for coffee by Florence. Cold case it may be, but it warmed my heart to see the two find what they were lacking: be it purpose, or peace with oneself, or love.

Lastly, from our smooth criminal, a.k.a. Noah Clarke: "D.B. Cooper is such an interesting concept – so amusing to read about. Natalie and Tim created such a fun story and an incredible way of telling it. It was a real ensemble show."

LIFESTYLE

Why I don't drink (and why it's no longer weird)

A submodule on alcohol awareness changed how I saw the drinking scene.

Lifestyle Writer
LUCIE LITVIAKOV

At university, not drinking can still feel like a social faux pas. From Freshers' events where nervous, bright-eyed students bond over glasses of ethanol to society sport matches where the logical conclusion is celebrating with a few pints, alcohol seems woven into the social fabric. But as science and culture catch up, I'm starting to feel like saying no to alcohol might just be the most normal decision of all.

It's Friday night at the Union: music thumping, conversation looping, and someone hands me a drink. I decline (politely), and they look at me as if I've just confessed to not believing in Wi-Fi. That moment has become strangely familiar. Alcohol is everywhere, yet choosing not to drink still raises eyebrows.

When I first learned that alcohol (specifically ethanol) is a Group 1 carcinogen (the same category as asbestos, tobacco, and ionising radiation) I was stunned. It's linked to seven types of cancer: mouth, throat, oesophagus, liver, bowel, larynx and breast. In the UK, alcohol contributes to around 12,000 cancer cases each year, and there's no proven "safe" level of consumption. It felt absurd that something so culturally normal could be so biologically brutal. Technically, by skipping a drink, I'm just avoiding a widely celebrated carcinogen.

Drinking has long been shorthand for belonging at university. Freshers' Week thrives on cheap pints and bad decisions. But the myth that everyone drinks is

> **"Alcohol is the only carcinogen people will buy you shots of**

quietly unraveling. Among 16–24-year-olds, the number who don't drink at all has almost doubled since 2002, and only 36 percent of students now feel drinking is essential to university life: down from over half just a few years ago. The 'sober-curious' trend isn't just for wellness influencers or people with Oura rings anymore; it's quietly making its way into the student bar queue. I've discovered that social confidence can come from conversation and not carbonation.

Why I choose not to drink

Health: Once I realised alcohol was a Class 1 carcinogen, it was hard to justify calling it "casual."

Sleep: Alcohol wrecks REM cycles, and I like waking up remembering my lectures brain-fog free.

Money: Skipping £6 pints has freed up cash for sport memberships, small investing experiments, and spending on friends and family.

Social clarity: I enjoy remembering the jokes I laughed at. Alcohol can easily become a social crutch, and I decided early on, not to let a habit creep from occasional indulgence into expectation. I also started wondering whether the things that required alcohol to be fun were actually my kind of fun in the first place. It's not about moral superiority at all but it's about feeling good during and after the event.

Maybe the next phase of student culture will be less about blacking out, and more about showing up and having fun even when present. Where the past decade was defined by "Work hard, play hard," I hope the next will be about "Work smart, sleep well."

So, if you see someone at the bar ordering sparkling water with lime, don't pity them. The future likely isn't teetotal, but it does look less soaked. Alcohol-free beers are now a standard, not sad. Mocktails taste like class, not compromise. And being sober on a night out is no longer social exile; it's just another option.

I'm not alone in noticing this shift. Imperial BSc Medical Biosciences graduate and influencer James Edward has documented his journey quitting alcohol and advocates for it regularly on his YouTube channel. I have a feeling this might just be one of those cultural shifts we're slightly ahead of the curve on.

Cheers! May your nights be short, your sleep be deep, and your hangovers hypothetical.



Wednesdays at Beit Imperial College Union

BOOKS

Persuading you to give *Persuasion* a go

An argument for reading Austen's most overlooked novel

Books Writer
A LADY (BADRINUR MOKAEVA)

It is a universally acknowledged truth that Jane Austen can be found as one of the antonyms when you search up the word "niche". *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* are widely recognised as the leaders of the Austen Universe; 30 million copies of these books "by a Lady" have been sold worldwide, with *Pride and Prejudice* accounting for over 20 million copies alone. The first edition of *Emma*, adorned preciously with a handwritten note from the author herself, was auctioned and sold for a staggering USD $424,794.

But I am not here to talk about Austen's most widely acclaimed stories, because somewhere in Waterstones, Daunt Books, or the local South Kensington Books just down Exhibition Road, is an Austen gem tucked sheepishly away with not many attribute attention to; the stunningly mature and endlessly inspiring story of Anne Elliot: *Persuasion*.

Persuasion is Austen's last fully completed novel. 19-year-old Anne Elliot's heart is shattered when she is forced to reject the proposal of the endearing Captain Wentworth, by a family fixated on financial stability. Eight years later, Anne's miseries of a love long lost continue to haunt her. They plague her until and during the return of Captain Wentworth, now in search of a wife who is decidedly not Anne.

Persuasion, moreover, offers discussion that denounces a patriarchally-imposed female identity, and it does so primarily by deconstructing the idea that beauty is synonymous with youth, presenting it instead as stemming from happiness. While Austen harshly commences with a criticism of Anne's appearance, she masterfully adopts an extended metaphor of "bloom".

If bloom is desirability, then Anne is fully in bloom when she is a conventionally pretty, young girl and the object of Captain Wentworth's adoration. Following heartbreak and inevitable passage of time, Anne wilts. The loss of bloom is also coupled to a loss of spirit to illustrate that a deprivation of beauty is inescapably followed by hopelessness; there is no chance at a respectable marriage, or even a good humour.

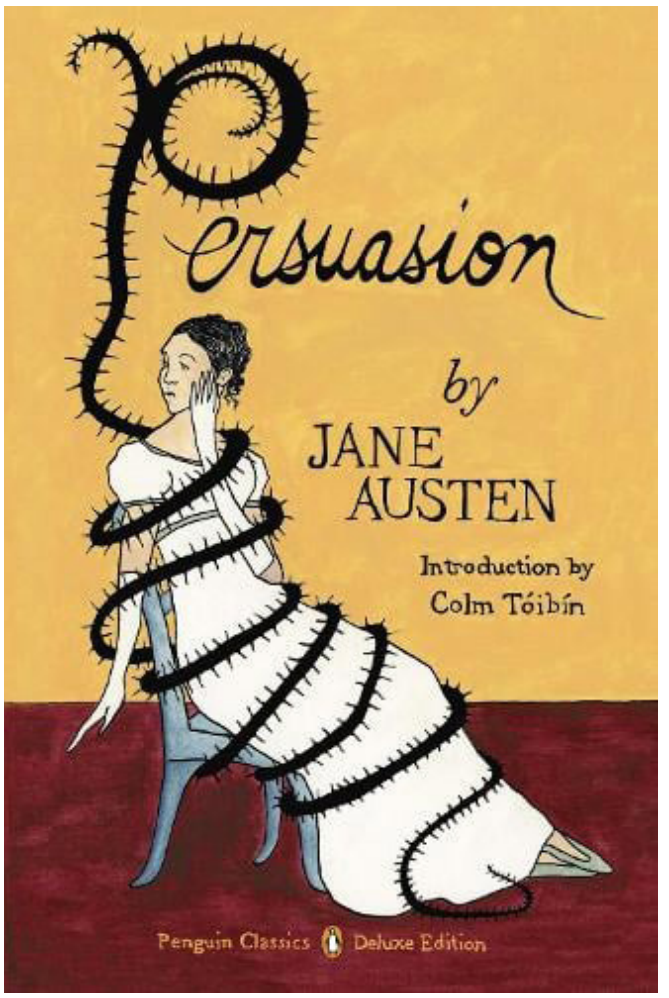
However when the heroine gets to escape her own mind and enjoys a period of life more social and diversified at Uppercross, she is blessed by Austen with a "second spring of youth and beauty". The implication that youth is not chronological is quite inspiring; a 27-year-old lady of the Georgian era being commended on such matters bears a different impact than if similar praises were allocated to 20-year-old Emma or 22-year-old Elizabeth.

Austen also manages to engage her heroine in discussion that may be surprisingly feminist for its time. Anne grapples with the restriction of opportunities that encaged Georgian era women with their thoughts, and no chance to escape them when she disagrees with Captain Harville concerning which sex forgets their love more quickly – "We live at home, quiet, confined, and our feelings prey upon us. You are forced on exertion. You have always a profession, pursuits, business of some sort or other, to take you back into the world immediately". Anne then highlights to Harville how the female fickleness that he is so convinced of has been described in literature by men because the "'pen has been in their hands".' Austen, a writer struggling due to her sex, likely lets her own frustrations trickle into her heroine's thoughts, and it is satisfying to see.

Of course, it would be a seriously heinous crimes to write an article about *Persuasion* without any mention of its romance. And I will mention it so very briefly, because this article is too long and because the views of the romance in *Persuasion* vary enormously. A friend of mine, for example, once described it as a novel that "deromanticizes romance".

Perhaps to you this might sound a little underwhelming: why on earth would anyone read a romance that does not swoop one of their feet? In *Persuasion*, there is a lot less swooping off of feet and a lot more grounding. There is more self-reflection, anger, regret and embarrassment than there is of loud proclamations of love and dramatic plot-twists.

A quote in an old paper dedicated to *Persuasion*, by an individual called Reginal Farrer (whom I do not know but his words are quite befitting) sums up the novel perfectly: "Though *Persuasion* moves very quietly, without sobs or screams, in drawing-rooms and country lanes, it is yet among the most emotional novels in our literature".



So, *Persuasion* is a story of clever conversation and defiant character, and in my humble opinion, only loses out to *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice* in the modern cinematic universe. Whoever's idea it was to make a Netflix original *Persuasion* where Anne Elliot refers to Wentworth as a "ten" while *Pride and Prejudice* got a Keira Knightley and Matthew Mcfayden confession in the rain, has succeeded in not only getting Austen to turn in her grave, but making a few fans wish they were also six feet under.

There is hope yet for a good film adaptation that would popularise a novel deserving of more love, but with the direction in which we seem to be moving given the upcoming *Wuthering Heights* movie, staying optimistic is a true challenge. For you, the challenge should be resisting *Persuasion* any further – do make sure to grab a copy for a cozy, a little more niche, November read!

SOCIETIES

All Cowboys to Ensemble

Young creatives across the UK and Europe met in London on th 4th of October to share passion projects

Societies Editor
BEGUM YENER

While it is a cliche to say the greatest thing about Imperial, what makes it so special, is its students, it is really no lie. On the 4th of October, I had a chance to participate in Ensemble, an event made for makers of all backgrounds by creatives and makers of a variety of interests.

Ensemble grabbed my attention from the first time I saw my friend KY's Instagram stories on it. With its vibrant publicity and inspiring premise, I knew I had to attend, so I booked my ticket long before I was asked to cover the event.

But what is Ensemble?

Ensemble was organized by likeminded individuals across the UK who were all interested in making and creating. It is actually a culmination of all the projects they had done prior. Before Ensemble, these creatives across UK universities (and abroad) met in creative sessions in their own node. Xi, who is one of the organisers for Ensemble, told me that this started with the co-working sessions in the University of Waterloo called "Socratica". Socratica defines themselves as "An open collective of makers, artists, engineers, designers, writers, poets, and everything in-between". After Socratica, many other universities across the world have taken over the same idea. In the US, there are "sundays" hosted by UCLA and USC and "Carpentry" in Austin, Texas to name a few. In London, these sessions have been organised under the name "[craft]".



Unconference in Session
Courtesy of the Ensemble Organizing Team

The creators of Ensemble are not only from London but from co-working sessions across the UK and Europe. Malaika, who is another one of the organisers, explained that these nodes extend to European cities such as Paris, Munich, and Zurich, as well as Edinburgh, with Barcelona and St. Andrews potentially joining soon. When asked about how often Ensemble,the collective event bringing together people from all these citywide nodes, would likely occur at most twice a year.

A Non-hierarchical Structure

Another big and different idea with these nodes and their organisational structure is that it is non-hierarchical. At first, this surprised me as almost all Imperial societies (or frankly all clubs, societies anywhere) have very strict hierarchical structures. Especially with people graduating or leaving their organisational positions, I asked what their plan is for the continuation of this project. Xi clarified that since no one has graduated yet, the plan for continuation involves finding interested individuals to whom responsibilities can be passed. Malaika shared their perspective that a non-hierarchical system naturally leads to passionate successors, though it can be challenging to maintain momentum. This is a new idea for activities alike, as the one we see in Imperial and other universities often lose their focus and motivation due to concerns about committee positions or resume-building - which makes me wonder why we tend to do the stuff we do after all. how much is it is out of passion and how much of it is for show? Especially seeing an organisation like Ensemble, I have hope that being enthusiastic about something might be the new cool.

Who are these cowboys?

If you've seen any advertisements about Ensemble, or have been to the event itself, you'd know that it had a theme around cowboys. In the venue, which was near St. Paul's Cathedral, there were dozens of individuals with cowboy hats very eager to show you around. When I asked about the "cowboys" theme, Xi explained it originated from choosing "Rodeo" as the cheapest domain name for their website. The theme was then developed around it to make the events more welcoming and less intimidating for non-tech-focused individuals. Xi emphasized that the events are meant to be inclusive and not solely tech-focused, showcasing various projects across all disciplines.

Meeting the Creatives

The event was packed with people who shared all sorts of interests. Some highlights were demos, where people showcased their projects and "unconferences" where they were able to give a 25 minute talk about something they were passionate about, almost like a story. Whereas in booths, creatives were able to showcase their work without a presentation to a wider audience. One person I had a chance to meet was Gabriela, who is a musician and an artist using her passion for creation for therapeutic effects. She hosts rhythmical and therapeutic art sessions in London and she showcased her work at Ensemble as well. You can find out more about her and what she does from her instagram account: **@gabrielafzofficial.** Another creative I got to meet and talk with was Ben who was on a mission to solve loneliness. The idea was striking because... how? Ben was inspired by the aftermath of a Kurzgesagt video and now he is trying to make sure everyone can find new friends. More information about Ben's project can be found at the instagram account **@robotwobot** and the website **kurzory.quest**

How to be a cowboy

Are you a likeminded creative? Students running [craft] at Imperial are more than happy to have you join them. You can find their sessions every Saturday at Luma. If you want to contact them, the best way to go with that is to mail them at **ensemble@ensembling.co.uk** and checking out their website **ensemble.rodeo.**

Clem, nice to meet you!

Royal School of Mines Motor Club President Jack Swires delves into mascotry in Imperial



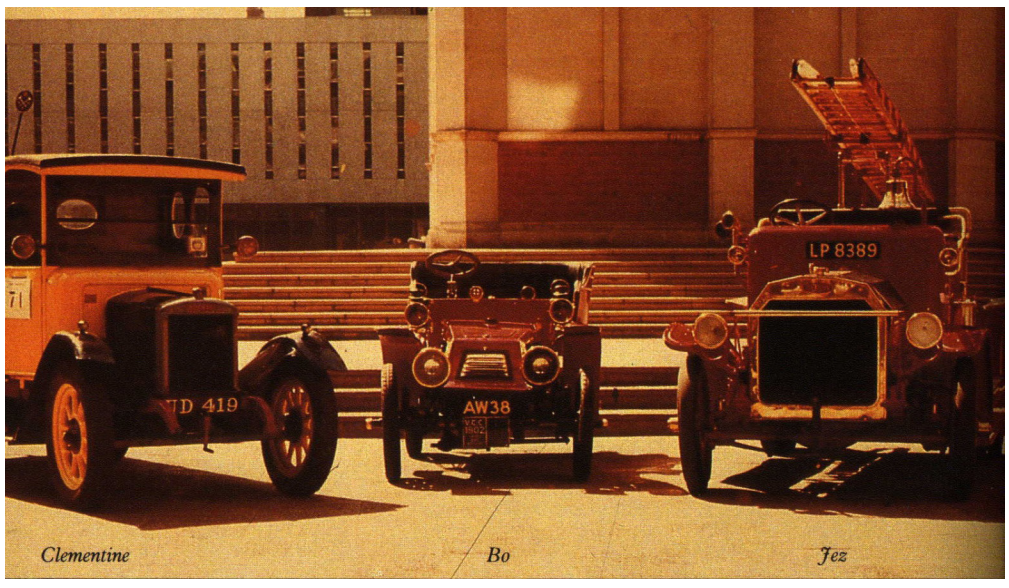
Clementine II
Courtesy of Royal College of Mines Motor Club

Societies Writer
JACK SWIRES

Mascotry is a somewhat interesting and often overlooked aspect of Imperial College life, with many students nowadays resolving to study in the library rather than spend their evening attempting to procure an oversized spanner, thermometer, or miner's lamp. However, nestled amongst the towering departmental buildings of South Kensington Campus, there remains one last bastion protecting the wonderful and slightly ridiculous tradition of mascotry at Imperial in the form of the Motor Clubs. The dedicated, grease-covered, and oil-soaked students and alumni of the Imperial College Motor Clubs spend an incredible portion of their time keeping the mascots Clementine, Boanerges, Derrick, and Jezebel alive and well. These vehicles have been well known and fondly loved around campus and beyond for many years, and there is no exception for Clementine II, the 1926 Morris T-Type truck.

Clem's Significance

Numerous students and alumni of the Royal School of Mines and wider Faculty of Engineering will recall times where they had joyrides on and took photos with Clem, as this year we celebrated 65 years of her service at the College. While this would not be possible without the long lineage of committed RSM Motor Club members, it equally would not have happenedwithout the continued support and enthusiasm of those students and alumni who invite Clem to events and come with us on rides. As we look to the year ahead, the current RSM Motor Club committee are delighted to announce the planned celebration of the Centenary of Clementine II. As she turns 100 in October 2026, we warmly invite you all to join us.



Clementine II, Boanerges and Jezebel: Crown Jewel of Motor Clubs at Imperial
Courtesy of RSM Motor Club President, Jack Swires

More About the History of Clem Morris

Before we look ahead, it's worth reflecting on the remarkable history that we are celebrating. Clem started life at the Morris Commercial factory on 13th October 1926, when she was registered to Mr E.R. Courage of the famed Courage Brewery. With her distinctive flatbed body and canvas tilt-frame, she was used to transport the Courage family's belongings across the country before serving as an estate vehicle at Edgcote House.

By the 1950s Clem was retired and sold on, eventually discovered by RSM students seeking a new mascot to replace their ageing steam traction engine, Clementine I. Purchased in Norfolk, Clem was soon brought to campus, repaired, christened, and painted bright yellow.

She represented the RSM at countless events, even joining Jezebel on the first Historic Commercial Vehicle Brighton Run. After an unfortunate rollover on Exhibition Road in the 1970s, she lay dormant until a group of students revived her in the 1980s. A triumphant "proving drive" to Devon marked her return to form, and she has since travelled to events across the country, including a 550-mile Trans-Pennine Run and multiple appearances on the Isle of Wight.

Want to know more about-Clem and celebrate mascotry in Imperial?

In order to celebrate this incredible century of history, the committee of the RSM Motor Club has planned several events for the coming year:

- **21st March 2026: Centenary Dinner:** British Motor Museum, Gaydon.
- **Recreating the proving drive:** A repeat of her 1988 trip to Devon.
- **Taking part in the Trans-Pennine Run** before her 100th birthday.
- **Restoring her tilt-frame** to its original specification.
- **Decorating Clem with an RSM crest** and other festive touches which pay homage to her historical looks.

If you would like to get involved with the ongoing work on Clem, are interested in attending our centenary events, or have a society running an event which could benefit from the appearance of a 1926 Morris T-Type ***(what event wouldn't!)*** we would love to hear from you. Please email ***clem@imperial.ac.uk.***

CATNIP

Catnip Monkeys return to basement following controversial new horoscope debacle

Catnip Editor
NEGAFELIX

The Catnip monkeys have returned to the West Basement to run the Catnip column after numerous complaints from Imperial students regarding the quality of recent horoscopes. In a shock move, both new Catnip supremo Barnaby Hilton-Royce, and astrologer Mystic Mina have been booted from the editorial board, never to return.

A representative for *Felix* Editor, and notorious Frenchman, Felix Felix issued a statement regarding the recent changes: "Following the controversy regarding last week's horoscopes, leading to a large haha deficit, the new editorial board has decided to bring back the monkeys in order to boost horoscope haha's for at least the next quarter."

The monkeys will be brought back on a zero-hour contract in accordance with Union regulation to ensure they have enough time to see their families, provided our funny KPI's are met. We look forward to bringing them back to the office, now renovated as a more comfortable working experience, rather than an office full of cages and typewriters.

Whilst Mystic Mina declined to comment, mumbling about "100% authentic hairline removal curses" when NegaFelix attempted to contact her, Hilton-Royce issued a full length statement on his Substack, "Notes of A Performative Son". Hilton-Royce described the changes as a "complete betrayal after all the shit" he has done for the Catnip department, including unionising the monkeys, and offering complementary bananas.

The move has been met with much adulation from the monkeys, with several of them celebrating by performing sexual intercourse on the Beit Quad, and flinging piles of excrement onto the Union office windows – which, according to insiders, pushed for the removal of monkey staff writers following several controversies last year.

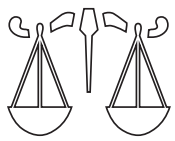
Correction: Felix #1877

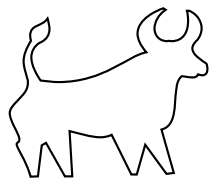
The Catnip Monkeys would like to apologise on behalf of the previous administration for their complete lack of professional standards. Last week the new, woke, editor mispelt the name of our wonderful new cartoonist Anjela Jose. We would once again like to apologise and we have undertaken several corrective measures on the erroneous editor, including but not limited to caning them, for this. We aim to uphold the highest editorial standards, and will ensure they don't fuck up again.

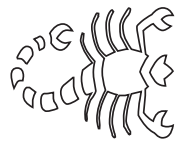
Horoscopes

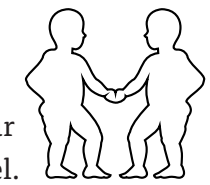
ARIES

This week you graduate from femceldom at Dalston Superstore.

LIBRA

This week you delete your Hinge because Hinge is full of single people.

TAURUS

This week you hard launch your 16-year-old situationship.

SCORPIO

This week you've been dreaming of a feet feeler.

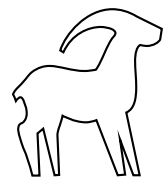
GEMINI

This week you use ChatGPT to train your large language model.

SAGITTARIUS

This week you're your favourite ex's favourite ex.

CANCER

This week you use your MLLM to get on the MLM MLM scheme.

CAPRICORN

This week you perform fellatio for a Uniqlo merino wool jumper.

LEO

This week your attempt at riding cock gets blocked as you get clocked.

AQUARIUS

This week your girlfriend confuses sadistic for sardonic in the bedroom.

VIRGO

This week you manage to sell your sixth form boyfriend on Vinted.

PISCES

This week antibacterial eyedrops remove the rose-tinted glasses.

Think you're funny?

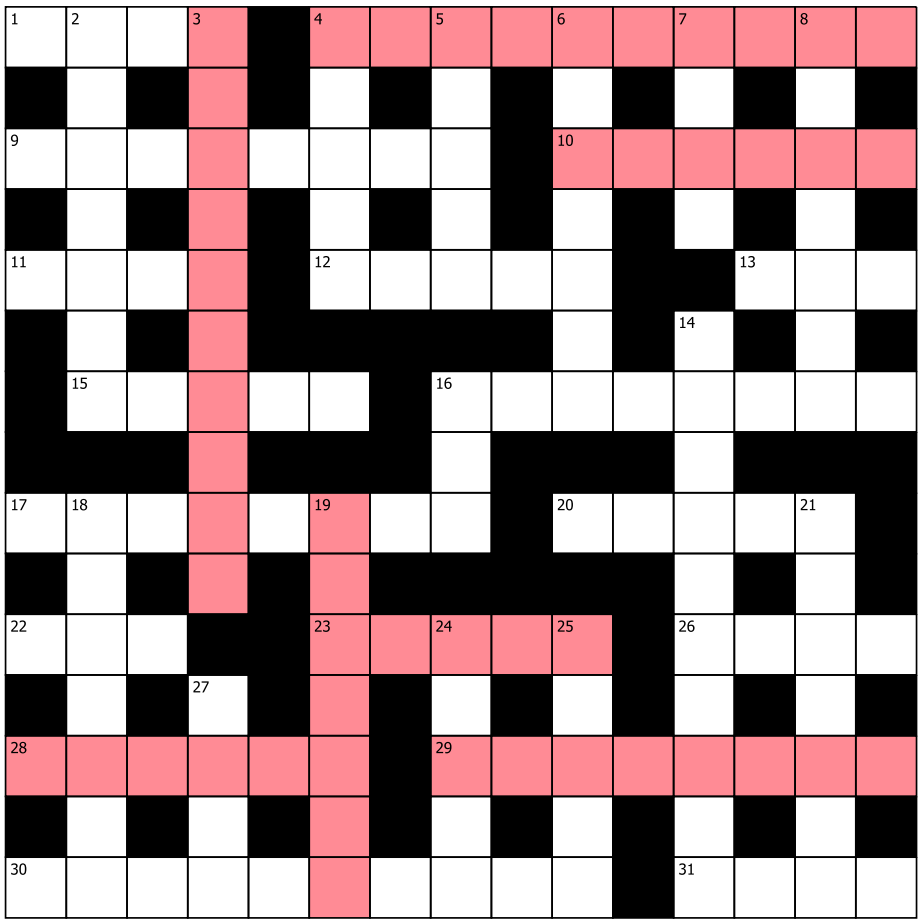
Send in a 200-300 word article, or some horoscopes and we may feature you next edition. Email us at **felix@ic.ac.uk** for your chance to boast to your friends, and finally prove you're funny to your Hinge dates.

PUZZLES

Puzzles Editor
DAVID LATIMER

QUICK CROSSWORD

Written by David Latimer (10 pts.)



Across

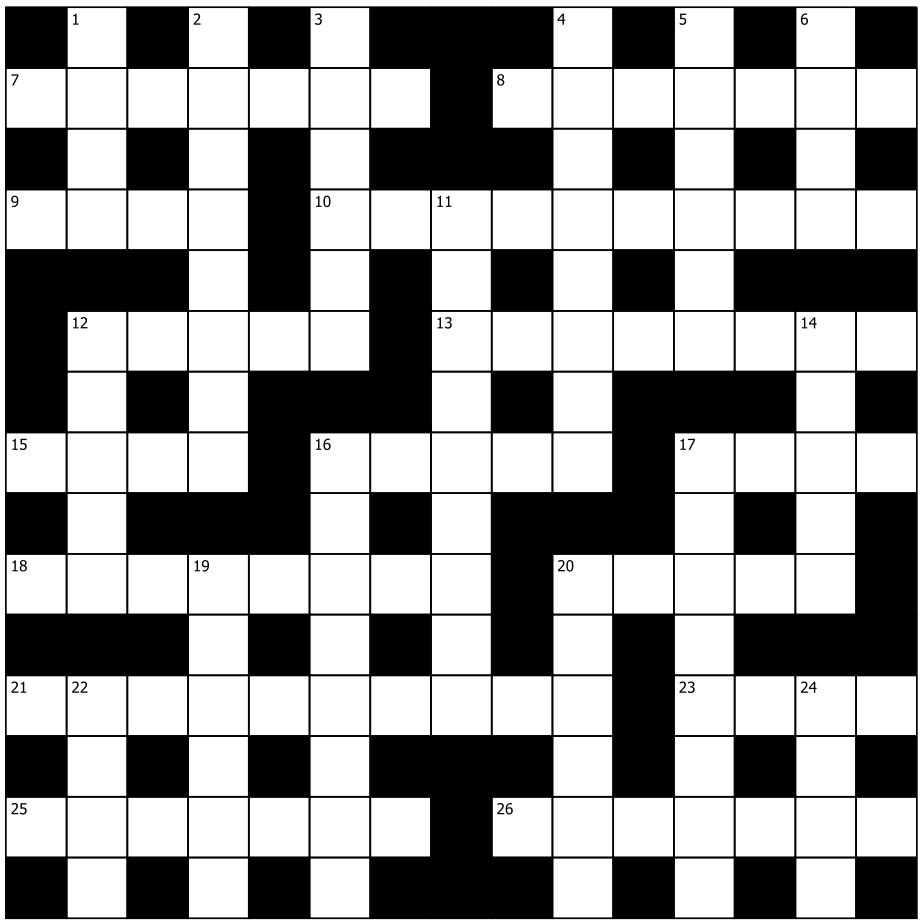
1. Parisian pal. [4]
4. Quantity that may be measured in physics. [10]
9. Ladies with lassos. [8]
10. Surprise after a meeting, say. [6]
11. Make out. [4]
12. The greener of two Italians? [5]
13. Show. [3]
15. Leading man in a Shakespeare play. [5]
16 & 20 Across. What may start a bar scuffle... or how one might describe the highlighted entries. [8]
17. What may be done to you after entering sensitive information. [6 2]
20. See 16 Across.
22. Cold, as in demeanour. [3]
23. Unused piece of metal. [5]
26. Units that can be used for 4 Across. [4]
28. First two terms in a sequence that ends "nine, ten". [3 3]
29. Have difficulty with a task. [8]
30. Notepad, Word, or Visual Studio, e.g. [4 6]
31. Less than medium. [4]

Down

2. Mythical hammer from Norse myth. [7]
3. Promise that may lead to vows? [10]
4. Away from all the noise. [5]
5. Dish that is typically raw. [5]
6. Arcane, winding. [7]
7. Group behind *Waterloo* and *Dancing Queen*. [4]
8. Lessen the impact of. [7]
14. Person trying to profit from selling cosmic readings. [10]
16. Cool oneself with a hand. [3]
18. Enrage. [7]
19. Instant messaging and voice application with servers. [7]
21. Near. [7]
24. Take again after failing. [5]
25. More clean. [5]
27. What a couple may be, sometimes. [2 2]

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

Written by David Latimer (20 pts.)



Across

7. Dwelling somewhat in fedora. [7]
8. Soldier puts circle in report - over! [7]
9. Hook gets mollusc and flips the rear side? [4]
10. Bad soaking embarrassed lifter. [6 4]
12. Surrendered den to head of desperados. [5]
13. Cheeky discussion has plush, side-splitting spiral. [8]
15. Workers are nearly impatient. [4]
16. The most holy father primarily lusts... [5]
17. ...to scratch inside Doric hips. [4]
18. A medic gets lost within battery research. [8]
20. Swell software with half-baked front-end at start - yes! [5]
21. In France, a bit of time off apparently leads to being at full strength. [10]
23. Root of disturbing art ring. [4]
25. Carries short spurt around home. [7]
26. Guard unit inside empty bunker. [7]

Down

1. We all lose energy from a screen. [4]
2. Swear via beat-up radio. [8]
3. Sharp, short lady gets me. [6]
4. Ran quilt in cycle (it's not lou.. [8]
5. Revolting snob has machine plant. [6]
6. I've heard man would listen. [4]
11. Leader and pion get real cocktail topper. [4 5]
12. Like ice-cream scam - I see. [5]
14. Join weird organisation first; destroying faith primarily. [5]
16. Without power, startled, punk pimps known for holding candles? [8]
17. Finishing touch lies above shade. [8]
19. Fears doctor cutting the top off heads. [6]
20. Hounds destroy flower. [6]
22. Religious sister embracing love is kind of word. [4]
24. Smell acrid heart and scream. [4]

SUDOKU

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

Medium (5 pts.)

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

Hard (8 pts.)

ELDROW

Below is somebody's attempt at a Wordle puzzle, with the words they used having been omitted. Use the clues to find the missing words, and then use your Wordle skills to figure out what the secret word below the grid is.

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9				

Across

1. Marshy biome.
6. Number with a namesake "rule" in comedy.
7. Backstory.
8. Useful tool.
9. Reviewers, maybe.

Down

1. Belt.
2. Belonging to whom.
3. Came up.
4. Make sure to get this read.
5. Rats, e.g.

(6 pts.)

ANAGRAMS

Theme: Breeds of Dog

ROT EVER LINGERED

FANDANGO? HUH

CHINO FIBRES

RISKIER THEORY ERR

DOPEY TOOL

UNDO HAIRY GENITAL

(6 pts.)

CRYPTOGRAM

Clue: Poodle Race (anagram, 2 words)

Each letter in the below message has been replaced with another corresponding letter. Use your knowledge of the alphabet and code-breaking skills to decipher what the secret message says. Bonus points are available for giving where the quote comes from! As this one is shorter than normal, you are told that W corresponds with S.

Y R P O K Y Q   J U T P W   P O U   P T W P U

W U Y W T P K R Y   G O U Y   N T A D U   W I Z F A

H R D D K X U W   G K P O   O T N .

(7 pts.)

Anagram: ______________________________ (2 pts.)

Quote from: ______________________________ (1 pt.)

GROUPING GRIDS

Submitted by Afjal Chowdhury

Grouping Grids returns! The sixteen clues in each of these puzzles can be placed into four groups of four, each with a common link. To solve the puzzle, write these groups and their connections below! Same format as The Wall in *Only Connect* or Connections.

Reason	One	Measurement	Eigenvector
Grounds	Gala	Congruent	Cause
Circle	Magnesium	Reason	Soldier
Dominion	Basis	Motive	Ball

Divine	Perfect	Put	Tasty
Sugar Crush	Just	Crop	Assign
Powerful	Sweer	Collection	Brilliance
Tasty	Solidify	Sharpen	Liquify

					Connections
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					

(8 pts.)

					Connections
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					

(8 pts.)

LEADERBOARD

Pos.	Puzzlers	Points	(Last week)
1.	Joey H. Sultanas	167	110
2.	Nicocross Wourbaki	164	99
3.	Mac Yang	149	106
4.	CRYGGTIC	105	52
5.	Granny Smiths	83	26
6.	W. W. Delilah	49	--
7.	Acetyl&Choline	43	43
8.	Skrelp	24	24

Want to see yourself on the leaderboard? Send in a picture of your puzzles to **puzzles.felix@imperial.ac.uk** before next issue to secure a place on the leaderboard for you or your team. Partially completed puzzles will still get you points!

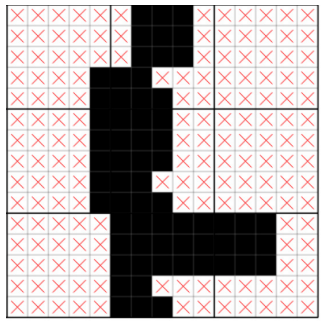
Previous Puzzles' solutions

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

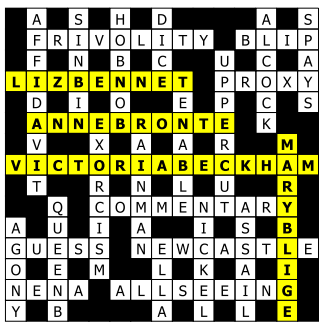
Medium

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

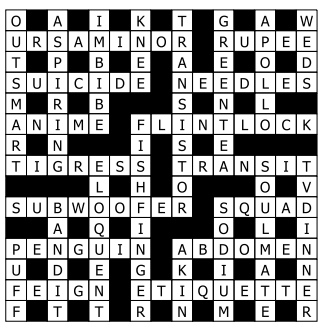
Hard



Nonogram
ALERT



Quick



Cryptic

MINI HEARTHS -> THE IRISHMAN

A PREFACE -> CAPE FEAR

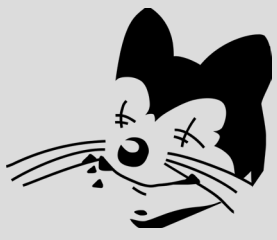
I'LL RUB GANG -> RAGING BULL

TRASH LAKE -> SHARK TALE

ENTERED HER HUT -> THE DEER HUNTER

TENSE MASTER -> MEAN STREETS

Anagrams



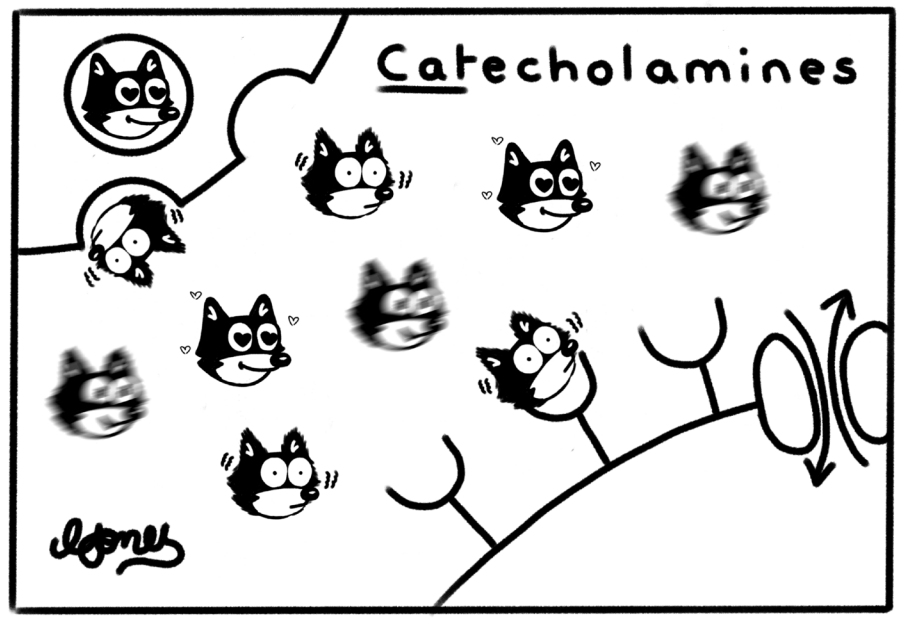
WE NEED YOU!

Like puzzles? Help out with the section! We're happy to accept any contribution: regular or one-off. Help out with crosswords, nonograms, or suggest new puzzles!

Email: **puzzles.felix@imperial.ac.uk**

COMIC

Submitted by Billie Jones



Puzzle Editor's Note

Dearest Puzzlers,

What a lovely week of puzzles we have ahead of us! Some shuffling on the leaderboard too, but Joey. H. Sultanas still holds the top spot. But Nicocross Wourbaki and Mac Yang are within spitting distance! And don't be fooled by the large point totals: it is by no means too late to start submitting! If you do the puzzles most weeks, you may as well, and it's nice seeing your name in the paper (I'm told). I've been busy the last few weeks with the BFI London Film Festival (see page 14 through to page 19) but thankfully, I've not been alone. This week sees the return of Grouping Grids, this year written by Afjal Chowdhury! If you like this puzzle, please reach out and give us feedback. If you're interested in writing, send us an e-mail for more details. The inclusion of the Grids does mean a smaller cryptogram and, as is the nature of the beast, this means it will be harder than usual. I've provided a letter hint, but I'm still worried it might be too difficult. Also this week, a new puzzle joins our entourage in the form of the Eldrow! I'm interested in seeing if this is a puzzle that people like and want to see more of. As always, if there are any puzzles that you want to see in the section, don't hesitate to send an e-mail over our way. I've been made aware there were a couple of errors in last week's section which I'm sorry about. This really ought not to become a trend. With that all being said, I pray you'll be able to enjoy these (hopefully!) error-free puzzles in the coming week! Usual puzzle solution submission deadlines. Happy solving!

-David

SPORT

Medical Schools across the UK form singular football team

Introducing the National Medical School Football Club, founded by Ollie Newbould.

Sport Editor
LILA HARRISON

For the first time ever in British medical history, a national football team uniting medical students from across the UK has been created. Founded as the National Medical School Football Club (NMSFC), by Ollie Newbould, a fifth-year medical student from Imperial College London, the initiative brings the best footballers from more than 20 medical schools together. The club aims to build a lasting legacy that connects future doctors far beyond the pitch.

> **We're building a national community of future doctors, showcasing the talent, while forming friendships and professional networks.**

The idea for NMSFC was born from Ollie's ambition to unite an otherwise disconnected set of students scattered across the country through sport, under one name. Within months, his project gained momentum, with the backing of Imperial, UCL, and more. Interest has spread online within social media, with @medschools_fc drawing support from other pages with a cumulative follower reach of over 2.7 million.

Ollie explained, "This is about more than football. We're building a national community of future doctors, showcasing the talent and discipline of medical students while forming friendships and professional networks that will last throughout our careers." In a profession often marked by long hours and high pressure, the club offers a sense of camaraderie and shared identity. It bridges traditional rivalries between universities, discarding previously established varsities.

> **We're proud to represent medicine in a way that celebrates teamwork and unity.**

With momentum and support growing, the NMSFC is preparing for a calendar of high-profile fixtures that promise challenge and prestige. The team will face opponents steeped in history, with exhibitions against teams including the British Army, Royal Navy, Oxford Blues, and Great British Medics, highlighting both the competitive nature and ambition of the project.



Community of National Medical Schools who have joined the initiative so far NMSFC Instagram

For the players, many of whom balance medical studies with training and travel, these games offer a rare chance to represent not just their universities, but their profession. "It's an amazing chance for medical schools from all corners of the UK to come together for the first time," says Ollie, "We're proud to represent medicine in a way that celebrates teamwork and unity."

Plans are also coming together to establish a women's team as part of the National Medical Schools name. The aim is to provide equal opportunities for young women seeking to represent their profession on a national stage. As support continues to grow, the team hopes to expand its fixture list, attract sponsorship, and strengthen partnerships across universities.

The National Medical Schools Football Club is the UK's first national team bringing together medical students through football. Beyond the games, it offers students a chance to build connections, develop teamwork, and enjoy sport alongside their studies. For the next generation of doctors, it provides a new way to connect with peers from across the country while pursuing their shared passion for football.

You can check out the National Medical School Football Club instagram page via **@medschools_fc,** or contact Ollie at **ukmedicalschoolfc@gmail.com** to find out more.