ISSUE #1880

Felix

KEEP THE CAT FREE | SINCE 1949

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.



Then-Imperial President Alice Gast in 2015. Tomas Angus, Imperial College London

Former College President passes away

Professor Alice Gast leaves behind her a complex legacy.

Editor-in-Chief
GUILLAUME FELIX

Professor Alice Gast, who served as Imperial College London's President from 2014 to 2022, passed away on Monday 27th October, at the age of 67.

During her long tenure, which Imperial called "transformational", Gast initatited multiple projects and collaborations, in addition to leading the College's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, but was also implicated in a number of controversies.

Gast was born in Texas and studied chemical engineering, obtaining a bachelor's from the University of Southern California and later a master's degree and PhD from Princeton University. Her main academic interest was surface and interfacial phenomena, in particular the behaviour of complex fluids.

A highly-cited academic, she co-authored *Physical Chemistry of Surfaces*, a textbook well-reknowned in the field. Among other distinctions, Gast was elected to the National Academy of Engineering in the United States and to the Royal Academy of Engineering in Britain.

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Want to know what's going on around campus?

Sign up to our newsletter by joining the society with the QR code below:

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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:
GUILLAUME FELIX
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EDITORIAL

Surveys and contests return!

Editor-in-Chief
GUILLAUME FELIX

Happy Halloween! This year, the publication of *Felix* coincides exactly with the UK's spookiest, scariest celebration – and our newspaper is adorned with pumpkins and other seasonal elements.

The times have been busy at *Felix*, with many new copyeditors, illustrators and social media leads joining the team. If you've been willing to join but got caught in the freshers' maelstrom, know that you haven't missed the boat, and it's never too late to join *Felix*! But don't keep the cat waiting.

We are analysing the data collected from the much-delayed Drug Survey – and to keep things interesting in the meantime, we should soon open *Felix*'s very first Internship Survey... Booh! So prepare your flashbacks of awkward summertime tracklessness and tune in to your application grind trauma.

As you can see below, our New Yorker-inspired cartoon caption contest is returning this year – in other words, we offer you a 48.8gsm virgin wood pump canvas to display your wit: a unique chance to impress this newspaper's most learned readership.

Finally, I would like to praise the amazing work of Ksenia Ivanova (@bipedal_cat) for the Halloween logo this week. Her design was not featured on the front page given the serious nature of our main story, but impressed all of us.

Don't forget to check out our costume ideas in the Catnip section if you are short of inspiration for this week-end!



The Felix caption contest

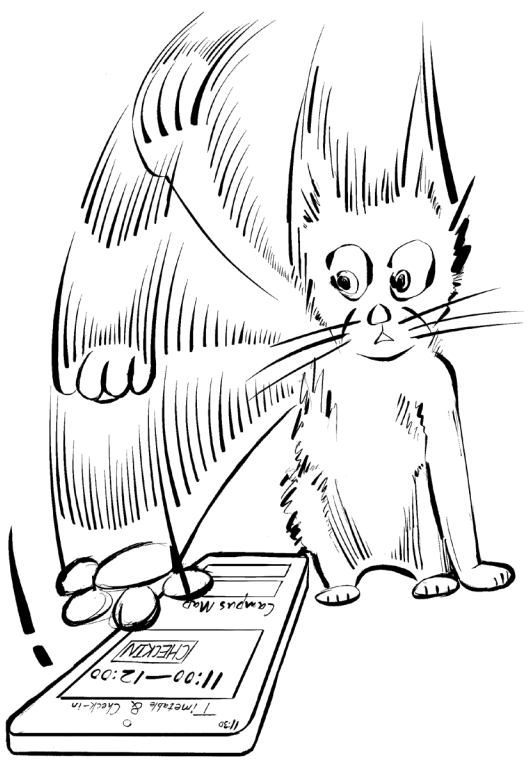
Felix's traditional caption contest returns!

Submit a caption for the image on the left by sending an email to felix@ic.ac.uk or a direct message to our Instagram account @felix_imperial.

The contest is open until Tuesday 12th November at 1PM, at which point the Editors will vote for the wittiest caption. The winnering caption will be featured in issue #1882 and on our socials.

Good luck!

Cartoon by Aaron Xiong (@aaron_invincible_666)



NEWS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

Gast served as Vice-President for Research and Associate Provost at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 2001 to 2006, and then as President of Lehigh University in Pennsylvania from 2006 to 2014.

She was appointed President of Imperial in 2014, becoming the first woman to hold the Presidential office.

As President of Imperial, Gast oversaw the construction of the White City campus, the creation of Dyson School of Design Engineering, and the launch of the Cumbria Medical School.

Gast was outspoken about her belief in international values, and concerned the harm that Brexit and geopolitical uncertainty could cause to Imperial. On the morning of the 2016 referendum result, she declared "Imperial is, and will remain, a European university."

Having worked extensively abroad, notably acting as one of America's three science envoys to Central Asia in 2010, Gast aimed to strengthen Imperial's position as global and diverse institution, launching partnerships with research centers in Europe, Africa and America.

Yet her tenure as President of Imperial was overshadowed by highly publicised allegations of bullying and misconduct. A report drafted by a Queen's Counsel lawyer in 2020 following an independent investigation found her and then-CFO Muir Sanderson reponsible for acts of "bullying" against a staff member, adding the pair had "created or contributed to a culture which involves and tolerates favouritism, exclusion, the making of disparaging comments about others and at times a lack of respect for others".

Gast recognised she had "bullied someone" and apologised for it. But Imperial's insistance on keeping the report private, until being forced to release its findings by a 2022 Information Commissioner's Office decision, did little to appease anger among student and staff.

During her time in office, the former College President also faced criticism for her position as a board member of Chevron, an American oil and gas company involved in numerous controversies. Gast sat on the company's Audit Committee from her appointment in 2012 until her passing. Chevron, believed to be responsible for the most cumulative climate pollution of any investor-owned company, was not retained in Imperial's recent Zero Index, barring it from collaborations with the College.

Gast's pay during her years at the head of Imperial was a source of controversy, too. Her total renumeration, which standing at £714,000 for the year 2021-22 was the highest of any university president in the country, drew the ire of staff unions at a time when the university had recently laid off employees, in the wake of the Covid pandemic.

The Union Council and University and College Union called for Gast's resignation following the investigation. She was eventually replaced by Hugh Brady when her contract expired in 2022, and granted the title of Emeritus Professor of Chemical Engineering at Imperial College London.

Her passing followed a "long illness", according to College President Hugh Brady, who paid homage to his predecessor in an obituary on Thursday 30th October.

"Alice was known for her towering intellect, with a unique ability to see beyond the barriers that tend to confine us – be they academic, geographic, political or societal. Her own research, which bridged many scientific fields, as well as her unwavering commitment to international collaboration, epitomised this spirit.

"Alice was driven always by clarity and purpose during a time of unprecedented challenge and change. Against the backdrop of a global pandemic, she took Imperial from strength to strength – guided by her belief that universities should be forces for good in the world. We all continue to feel the impact of her legacy – here at Imperial, and across the higher education sector. It has been a privilege to follow in her footsteps."

Lectures disrupted as strikes return to campus

Editor-in-Chief
GUILLAUME FELIX



After the demonstrations

Picket lines and demonstrations were organised on campus for the second time this month, as members of Imperial's three staff unions protested this year's pay package.

As announced earlier this month, industrial action occurred on campus from Monday 27th to Tuesday 28th October, with picket lines organised on South Kensington campus. Students and passers-by could cross the picket lines unimpeded.

According to Unite, one of Imperial's staff unions, "around 1,200" staff members were expected to walk out over these two days.

According to student reports, lectures were disrupted across faculties, with cancellations in the Maths, Medicine, Computing, Aeronautical Engineering, Electronic and Information Engineering, and Physics departments. An important number of cancellations, some without prior warning, were reported in undergraduate Maths modules.

The University and College Union (UCU), Unite, and Unison, the three labour unions which together form Imperial's Joint Trade Unions (JTU), had each voted for strike action in September, as a response to the College's sub-inflationary pay award. Salaries increased by 2% across the board, while in August CPI inflation stood at 3.8% year-on-year.

The UCU has pointed at the discrepancy between Imperial's seemingly healthy financials, which include a total reserve of over two billion pounds, and management's rejection to negotiate the union's pay claim on the grounds of unaffordability.

An Imperial College London Spokesperson said: "We remain committed to ensuring that staff are appropriately recognised and rewarded for the vital role they play. In uncertain times it is important that we plan for the long-term future of our institution for the benefit of our students and staff."

Recent revelations that the benchmarking exercise used by Imperial to determine salaries had flaws running since 2021 aggravated tensions, with the UCU saying it was "left with little choice but to go on strike".

A regional officer for Unite, another trade union, said: "In not going back to the negotiating table, our members are concerned that this sets a worrying trend where Imperial management could continue to ignore evidence and erode their pay, protections and working conditions further."

As with previous strikes, confusion caused some students to skip lectures they believed to be cancelled. Some departments such as Physics have announced that make-up lectures would be organised.

Local branches of the UCU in the universities of Leicester and Nottingham are currently on strike too, while the University of Edinburgh branch has recently voted in favour of strike action. At Imperial, six more days of industrial action are planned in pairs over the next month, with the first block starting on 13th November.

Student Experience Fund allocated once more this year

The terms of the fund, which is expected to expand, are currently unchanged.

Editor-in-Chief
GUILLAUME FELIX

The Imperial College Union opened its Student Experience Fund (SEF) for the third consecutive year.

The SEF, which was relaunched on Thursday 23rd October, automatically provides students on an Imperial Bursary with an allowance that can be used to make payments through the Union Shop, such as society memberships or Union event tickets.

The allocation varies based on the receiver's household income band, ranging from £20 for incomes between £60,000 and £70,000 to £70 for incomes under £16,000. These are unchanged from last year.

Imperial Bursaries are handed out home undergraduate students only, meaning overseas and postgraduate students are excluded from the SEF. Tom Gordon, the ICU's Deputy President for Activities, had made the expansion of the SEF to these students a manifesto point.

In a statement to *Felix*, Gordon said: "I think there are a couple of difficulties when expanding to more students, such as Postgraduate and International. Of course, accessing additional money is a key issue, but I think another one is determining who actually needs the fund in a methodological way. My key priority over the past couple of months has been getting the fund back up and running for 2025–26, but I'm looking forward to working with our funders over the coming months to expand the fund to more students."

The SEF is funded jointly by the Union, the College, and Imperial College Trust, a charity. It was established in 2023 by Dylan Hughes, then the Deputy President for Clubs & Societies, and expanded by his successor Christian Cooper for a relaunch last year.

Household income	SEF allocation
Below £16,000	£70.00
£16,000-£50,000	£50.00
£50,000-£55,000	£30.00
£55,000-£60,000	£25.00
£60,000-£70,000	£20.00

Imperial spin-off bought by American AI company

Editor-in-Chief
GUILLAUME FELIX

American cloud computing company CoreWeave has agreed to acquire Monolith AI, an Imperial artificial intelligence (AI) spin-out.

Monolith, which builds AI tool to empoyer reseach in physics and engineering, was founded in 2016 from an Aeronautics PhD project. It raised £21 million earlier this year in a Series B round.

CoreWeave annouced the acquisition on 6th October, saying: "Combining Monolith's simulation and test-driven machine learning capabilities with CoreWeave's purpose-built AI cloud enables the combined companies to offer a full-stack platform for industrial and manufacturing enterprises."

Singapore's Senior Minister visits campus

Editor-in-Chief
GUILLAUME FELIX

Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong visited laboratories in Imperial's South Kensington campus on Tuesday 18th October, before meeting with Singaporean students.

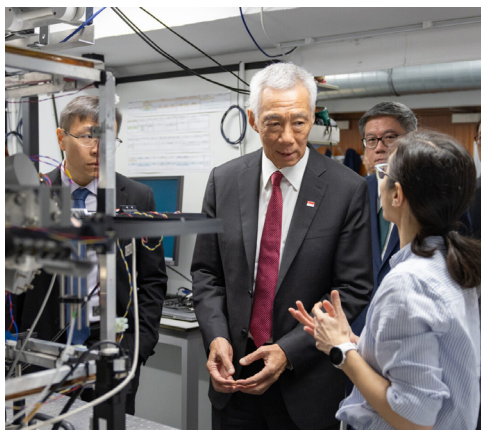
Lee was welcomed by President Hugh Brady and shown Imperial-led research in fast-growing scientific fields such as artifitial intelligence (AI), neurotechnology and quantum computing.

The research showcase included presentations of Nightingale AI, an initiative to build an AI model trained with scientific data and specialised on healthcare, and an Imperial-built quantum sensor with applications in satellite-free navigation.

Lee also held an "engagement session" with Imperial's Singapore Society, of which half of the College's 400-odd Singaporean students are members.

The Singapore Society told *Felix*, "It was a great opportunity to connect with Senior Minister Lee and have the opportunity to share with him our experiences studying in Imperial, as well as hear his valuable insights."

Lee, the son of national founding father Lee Kuan Yew, served as Prime Minister of Singapore from 2004 to 2024. The South-East Asian city state was ranked the world's fifth-most innovative country in 2025, one place above Britain.



Lee seeing Imperial's quantum enhanced inertial sensor. Imperial College London/Imperial News

"We are proud to be building a shared future of discovery and progress," Brady remarked at the event.

Last year, the College launched Imperial Global Singapore, an overseas research and innovation centre, which focusses on "high impact collaborative research projects" such as public health, climate and AI. The centre should also allow Imperial to scale up activities in the region like startup accelerators student placements.

First Union Council meeting opens

Editor-in-Chief
GUILLAUME FELIX

The first Union Council meeting of the academic year will take place on Tuesday 4th November at 6 p.m., in room 341/341 of the Huxley Building.

The Union Council consists of most of Imperial's elected student representatives, assembled to set the policy of Imperial College Union.

All Imperial students are welcome to attend and propose papers for discussion.

SCIENCE

FoNS-Make-A-Difference 2025: about the six finalist teams

The competition final hosted teams proposing innovative low-cost technologies with a positive societal impact, from Braille devices to at-home viral test kits.

Science Editor
CRISTINA CARRILLO

News Editor
ISABELLA DUCHOVNY

> **We never lost our dedication because we never forgot why we started**

Winners: D-view

Drone-based search-and-rescue system for earthquake survivors

D-View, created by Arda Kancal, from the Dyson School of Design Engineering, and Idil Igde, from the Department of Physics, won the Faculty of Natural Sciences Make-A-Difference (FoNS-MAD) competition. After the 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake, the two Turkish students were moved to develop a practical and cost-efficient survivor detector device that utilizes machine learning to analyze seismic signals. "We grew up knowing that a big earthquake is coming," Kancal told Imperial News.

When speaking about the biggest challenge phased throughout the competition, the team agrees that inaccessible data posed the largest complication: "The rubble pile medium is not something we can imitate in the lab or substitute by putting together different materials. So we reached out to many different NGOs, who very generously offered us their training sites once we explained our story and motivation. Imperial's reputation was a strong help in arranging the visits to these sites".

As competition winners with a £7000 grant and a potentially life-saving device, the team mentions discovering the power of never forgetting the "why" of it all is the most valuable takeaway from the FoNS-MAD experience: "to always take a step back and to remind yourself the reasons why you are pursuing your project, and the passion you hold."

"We never lost our dedication because we never forgot why we started this start-up," the team told *Felix*.

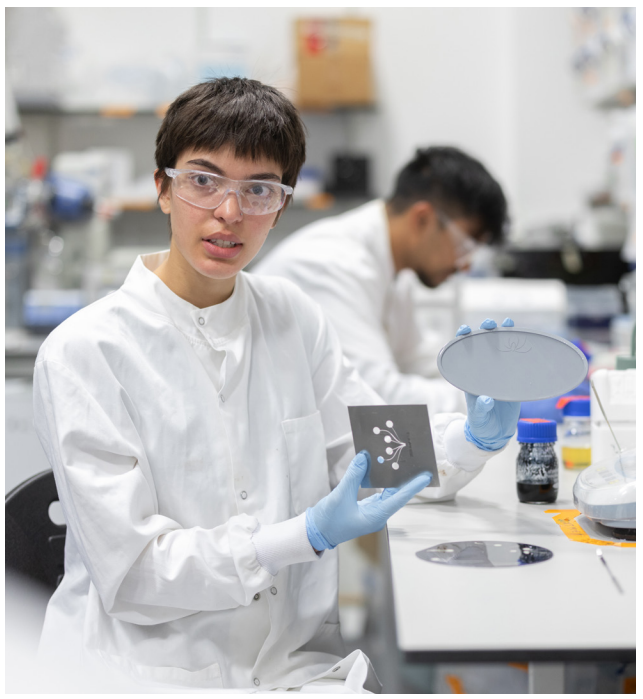
Runner-ups: ANA

Real-time brain activity now accessible through a wearable patch

Measuring brain waves via electroencephalograms (EEG) is as insightful as it is inaccessible and inconvenient for the vast majority of people who need them – but this could change.

ANA, a multidisciplinary team composed of Keeran Thayer, Szymon Ciba, and Brishti Miller, members from the Physics, Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Life Sciences departments, set off to design a wearable and discreet EEG patch linked to a machine-learning-based app to track real time brain activity. Reducing such complex technology to a low-cost, user-friendly product that offers actionable insights into mental health, focus and stress levels has earned this team the runner-up prize, £600.

The team highlights their gratefulness for having participated, particularly the creative freedom over their product and their enthusiasm for applying their degrees to a concrete challenge: "it was a great opportunity to use science and our degrees to a real-world application we feel close to. Having full autonomy and responsibility over what we were building was amazing."



Brishti Miller, ANA Thomas Angus, Imperial College London

SacchroSense

Antibiotic misuse and overburdened GPs reduced with at-home viral test kit

Antibiotic resistance is one of the most pressing global health issues, largely stemming from treatment misuse through medical overprescriptions or patient self-diagnoses.

Four Biochemistry students (Claire Shyle, Oliver Abraham, Amelia Barton, and Skanda Swaminathan) have developed an innovative, cheap, at-home solution: a whole-cell biosensor that detects respiratory viruses.

SacchroSense is based on synthetic yeast cells engineered to bind known viral markers and offer a user-friendly readout. The technology has the potential to help solve a global crisis, from individual patients to overburdened GP clinic.



Amelia Barton and Oliver Abraham, SacchroSense Team members Thomas Angus, IImperial College London

Braille pin mechanism Thomas Angus, IImperial College London



Sense++

Low-cost smart Braille tablet for enhanced computer interaction

With user-friendliness being a top priority for multinationals across all industries, increasing accessibility to those with impaired visual abilities is paramount. The massive cost of current Braille devices remains an important hindrance.

The Sense++ team have therefore designed a device that maintains accuracy and hugely reduces cost: their Braille tablet connects to digital devices and translates content, displayed by a novel pen-like pin mechanism.

This technology is combined with a software that detects the relevant content and allows for interactive experiences, reducing reading time compared to current solutions.

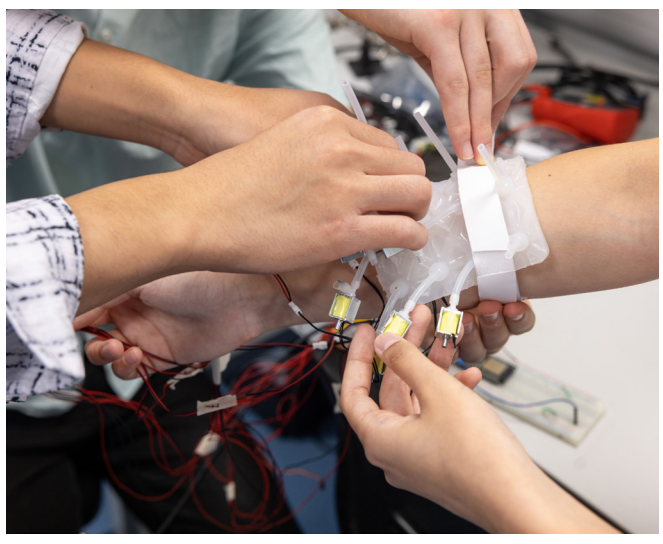
FlyeWheel

Prosthetic add-on device to improve pressure sensation

Although there have been major breakthroughs in prosthetics in the last century, the lack of sensory feedback for users generates many challenges in everyday life.

Four undergraduate students – Edwin Ko from the Department of Physics, Fiona Li and Joseph Birch from the Dyson School of Engineering, and Lucas Cheung from the Department of Physics – came together to improve prosthetics usage.

FlyeWheel's device uses sensors on prosthetic fingers and a robotic armband that can inflate to stimulate pressure. This system can be retrofitted onto existing prosthetics, making their device non-invasive and cost-efficient.



FlyeWheel armband Thomas Angus for Imperial College London

> "The presented devices are as non-invasive as they are cost-efficient

LaminaBio

Sustainable feedstock for engineered bacteria

Engineered *E. coli* have been used to produce human proteins since 1977, with applications in research, treatment development and even food and fuel production. The glucose these bacteria require for energy production is often sourced in non-sustainable ways. LaminaBio aims to leave glucose crops for human food production and feed these organisms using bacteria that can convert algae waste into glucose monomers.

Victor Carreras and Matthew Romero, from the Department of Life Sciences together with Quentin Trolliet (Department of Materials), have formed a team that hopes to convert laminarin (brown algae waste product) into usable glucose via *E.coli* genetic engineering and an innovative enzyme mix.

ENVIRONMENT

What happens when you cook garbage at high temperatures without oxygen?

Environment Writer
WISDOM O IGIOGBE

Deep in the Amazon basin, thousands of years ago, Indigenous peoples discovered something remarkable. Their cooking fires, burning low and steady, mixed with refuse, bone, pottery shards, manure, and organic waste created something almost alchemical.

Called *terra preta*, "black dirt" in Portuguese, these soils, which store massive amounts of carbon, still outperform surrounding land after centuries. At one archaeological site in Brazil's Kuikuro Indigenous Territory, scientists recorded 4,500 tons of carbon, more than forty times what existed in nearby modern villages.

The Amazonians had created what we now know as biochar. A carbon-rich material, made by heating organic matter at high temperatures of around 400-600°C in the absence of oxygen.

Biochar looks like charcoal but behaves differently. With properties such as a large surface area, slight electrical charge and adjustable pH, biochar acts like a "nutrient battery" for soils, able to hold carbon for decades or centuries.

It's this kind of potential that earned biochar recognition from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as one of the top 6 scalable negative emission technologies needed to address global warming.

The challenge now is whether an ancient practice can find footing quickly enough to tackle two of today's biggest problems: food waste and carbon emissions.

To give you a sense of the possibilities, say we converted all the world's crop waste into biochar, we could theoretically trap 1 billion tons of carbon annually. Even accounting for crop waste needed for animal feed, we're still looking at 360 million tons of carbon locked away for at least a century.

Food waste biochar is especially attractive because it cuts disposal costs and creates revenue streams through carbon credits, with the added benefit of soil amendments. The United Kingdom plans to eliminate food waste from landfills entirely by 2030. This is an ambitious target, and one proposed solution is to build 28 biochar facilities across the country, each processing 20,000 tons of food waste annually. At full capacity, these facilities could remove about 93,000 tons of CO_2 from the atmosphere each year while tackling the food waste problem.

Extending this thinking globally, one study found that twelve countries could lock away a minimum of 20% of their national greenhouse gas emissions using biochar derived from farm waste. India could store half of its emissions this way, and Bhutan as much as 68%.

But does this all make sense financially?

The numbers tell a story of explosive growth. Global biochar revenue hit $600 million in 2023 and is projected to more than quintuple by 2025, according to the Global Biochar Market Report. Major institutions, corporations, and governments are also backing it with serious money. For farmers that have seen up to 40% return on investment (measured by a ratio of grain output to production plus biochar input), the economics is compelling.

Something as arguably useless as sewage, when processed by pyrolysis, could supply 7% of global phosphorus needs, or 15% when combined with urine, according to research from Cornell University. Phosphorus, a very important nutrient for plant growth, is often fortified through fertilisers and could use another derivative source.

Thoroughly mix some biochar with soil across the farm, and it can reduce soil erosion, increase soil porosity and water retention, and improve how water moves through the soil. These fundamental improvements in the very foundation of agriculture could drive overall productivity.



Biochar applied to the soil in research trials in Namibia. By GIZ/Tim Brunauer - Contractual Photography Services

The farming benefits, which already seem magical, don't end there. Biochar can boost crop yields. In studies, corn yields increased 15% from biochar application alone, less than 1% less than when biochar was applied with fertiliser. Beans and rice, the world's staples, showed similar improvements. Significant boosts in food production like this have profound implications for food security and farmers' livelihoods.

However, context matters. Sandy, nutrient-poor soils see immediate benefits, while fertile soils might actually show diminished yields for the first year or two. Climate matters too: tropical regions see yield increases averaging 14.8%, compared to a measly 1.4% in temperate zones.



A pile of biochar. By Oregon Department of Forestry

If it's worth doing, it's worth doing well; and in this case, the challenge lies in logistics. Supply chain fanatics know that when feedstocks are dispersed, seasonal and heterogenous, transportation costs can easily erode project economics. Production costs have dropped from $2,700 per ton in 2013 to $1,300 in 2021, but biochar remains expensive compared to conventional soil amendments.

Quality is another challenge. Biochar's properties vary depending on feedstock and production method, with some types breaking down within decades instead of the promised century. If the hydrogen-carbon ratio is less than 0.4 and the production temperature is greater than 550°C, you can typically expect 70-90% of its carbon to be retained for up to 300 years. However, lower-quality biochar can lose a substantial amount of carbon within 50-100 years.

Big buyers are showing interest but remain cautious. Google, at the start of the year, committed to purchasing 100,000 tons of biochar carbon removal credits sourced from agricultural waste in India. Microsoft, JPMorgan, and other major firms have followed suit, but adoption remains concentrated among tech and finance companies with high margins and strong climate commitments.

Regulators of the industry are working with corporations to smooth monitoring, reporting, and verification workflows. The variability in biochar's permanence is the ick factor for companies afraid of reputational backlash. High-quality biochar credits are scarce and therefore expensive, whereas carbon accounting for methods like direct air capture are simpler.

Nevertheless, solutions are emerging. Policy incentives are materialising as the European Union now includes biochar in its carbon removal certification system. Scientists across continents are working hard to standardise operations and outputs, while decentralised production is reducing supply chain inefficiencies.

Biochar's story extends far beyond agricultural use. To name a few: banana peel and rice husk formulations can act as catalysts during biodiesel production, coffee-waste biochar can strengthen concrete, and inoculated biochar could have applications as electrodes in supercapacitors and hydrogen storage solutions.

What makes biochar's story so compelling isn't that it asks us to invent something revolutionary but that it asks us to remember something ancient and build upon it. The Indigenous peoples of the Amazon figured this out centuries ago. Now we get to scale their wisdom to feed the world and cool the planet.

Paris court rules Imperial partner TotalEnergies' advertising as illegal greenwashing

Environment Editor
OSCAR MITCHAM

On 23rd October, a Paris court found that TotalEnergies' advertising was illegal greenwashing. Total is based in France and has emitted more than 17,000 million tonnes of CO_2e since 1934.

The civil court found that Total misled the public in a 2021 ad campaign which claimed it could become carbon neutral by 2050, even though the company planned to continue expanding its oil and gas production.

However, Imperial found Total's net zero target to be credible under the last round of assessments of the Imperial Zero Index (IZI), and therefore continues to work with the company. The IZI is a set of metrics developed by Imperial to assess which fossil fuel companies it should partner with. A 2050 net zero target is the only compulsory metric under the IZI.

Despite citing a study which says the fossil fuel industry's claims are likely greenwashing alongside other evidence, assessments of whether a fossil fuel company is actually likely to meet their targets and not merely greenwashing don't appear to factor into the Index. Metrics are largely based on the fossil fuel companies' annual reports.

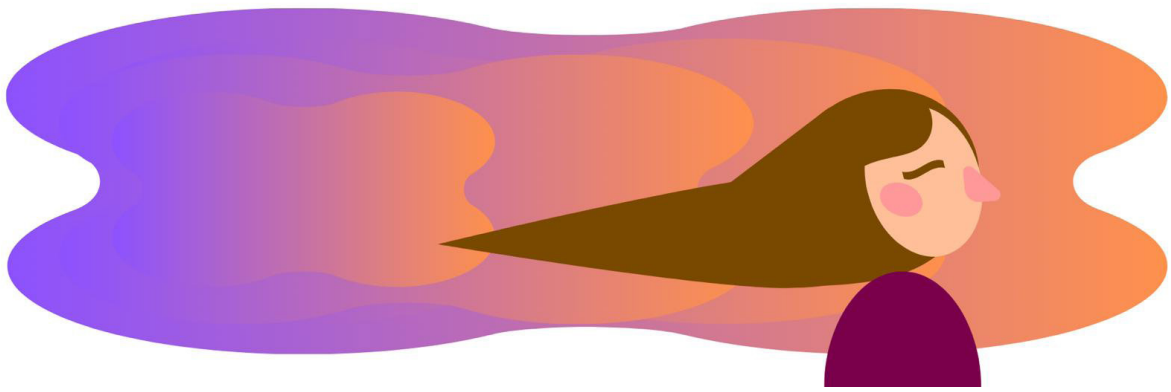
Ida Caspary, a student representative on the Socially Responsible Investment Engagement Monitoring panel, which approves the results of the IZI, said "it [the ruling] is obviously grave." She continued, "Our methodology probably should not just look at what companies promise, but also when they have been found saying things that are not true."

Julia Mitra, Union Ethics and Environment Officer, added "I also feel that a ruling like this shows a massive problem with the IZI relying on the promises of these companies, which have quite bad reputations of actually delivering on sustainability goals." Mitra said "I would love to see disengagement from TotalEnergies on the back of this ruling," concluding "I don't see how they can be considered in line with Paris [COP21], no matter what strategy they might be promising."

The ruling is not public but has been covered by several outlets.

COMMENT

The gender bias that nearly killed my mother



And why I feel so compelled to write about it.

Comment Editor
NADEEN DAKA

Nearly a year ago, I woke up to the sound of my mother screaming at 5:30 a.m. "I'm dizzy," she gasped, again and again, as if her cries could anchor her back to reality. But within seconds, her eyes lost focus, her body slackened, and she collapsed to the floor.

While my father tried desperately to wake her, I called for an ambulance. By the time the paramedics had arrived, the sun had finished rising, and the pink dawn I woke to had hardened into a cold, decisive blue.

After a brief examination, the paramedics decided that my mother was having a panic attack. They rolled her out, still unconscious, and told me that there was nothing to worry about. Their calm was almost insulting.

The truth is, she was having a stroke. And misdiagnosing it with a panic attack delayed her thrombectomy (the surgical process of removing a blood clot from an artery) by over an hour. Sixty minutes during which her brain was starved of oxygen, each passing moment etching another layer of preventable disability into her future. Instead of waking up with minimal damage, she spent the next year in a rehabilitation center, relearning how to speak, walk, and move her right arm.

I spent much of that period reflecting on the morning of the incident. I don't know much about neurological disorders, and my degree, though scientific in name, hardly qualifies me for medical triage. However, even I understood that her total unresponsiveness and spasming arms were not just symptoms of anxiety. So why, I wondered, did three trained paramedics and a team of certified doctors in the emergency room need an hour to reach the same conclusion?

> **Gender bias in healthcare is pervasive and insidious, and surfaces in a myriad of ways**

What I have since come to understand is what happened to my mother was not a tragic anomaly; it was a textbook case of how medicine too often fails women.

Gender bias in healthcare is pervasive and insidious, and surfaces in a myriad of ways – from misdiagnosis and delayed treatment to the habitual dismissal of women's pain. Even those of us untouched by catastrophe have likely felt its echo: exhaustion waved off as a hormonal imbalance, pain reframed as anxiety, suffering made out to be psychological.

Although this pattern is shocking, it is neither new nor obscure. It has been researched, written about, and dissected for decades. A cursory search of "the gender health gap" yields pages of reports and blog posts, all diagnosing the same systemic blindness and speculating on its causes.

A medical student at Imperial even told me that their curriculum now explicitly addresses this gender health gap, warning students that such disparities exist and more importantly, that they must be corrected. It seems that the statistics are there and the awareness is widespread. Yet, for some reason, progress remains stubbornly stagnant. Knowing better has not made us do better.

Where numbers fall short, storytelling begins

A large part of the issue, I believe, resides in the way we communicate it. When we read about gender bias in medicine, it often arrives packaged in numbers. There is almost an emotional detachment to how we talk about it. When I first read that women are 66% more likely to be misdiagnosed than men, it barely registered. It sounded like just another figure reminding us that our institutionalised systems are broken.

My indifference to that statistic stemmed mostly from its abstraction. I find that while numbers can confirm injustice, they cannot make us feel it. Without narratives, numbers remain lifeless.

Stories, on the other hand, breathe life into these cold facts. They fashion distant data into something palatable – something we can picture, feel, and empathise with. They are what make that abstraction human. And if anything were to move us to change, it would be the epistemic power of their words.

That is why I am compelled to write about my mother's story – because I refuse to let it dissolve into another data point in a PubMed article. In a world that is increasingly reliant on algorithms and numerical evidence, I believe storytelling remains one of the most powerful mediums of communication we have. I want her story to linger in people's minds long after the numbers fade. If it makes even a single medic hesitate before dismissing a woman's pain in the future, it will have done what I hoped for.

Of course, these stories alone are not a substitute for necessary reform. But they can insist on resisting the quiet bureaucracy of bias. They remind us about the people behind every statistic, and sometimes, that is where progress begins.

BUSINESS

Gold: The age-old hedge we still can't outgrow

Gold may seem like an outdated investment, but chaotic market conditions leave safety-seeking investors with few alternatives.

Business Editor
SOPHIE DEMARÉ

There's a lot of talk about gold at the moment. Central banks, institutional investors, and retail buyers have been pouring money into the gold market this year. This all came to an abrupt halt on Tuesday 21st October when the gold price experienced its largest daily drop since 2020, though analysts expect the market to ultimately continue its climb after a brief correction period.

It seems strange that in our modern, increasingly digitised world, we still fly bars of shiny treasure from vault to vault around the world to give us a sense of safety. In addition, to feel extra safe, we even have to pay storage, security, and insurance fees . All of this for an asset with no productive value – in Warren Buffett's words, "If you own one ounce of gold for an eternity, you will still own one ounce at its end."

Unfortunately, we aren't as evolved as we think we are. We continue to wage wars of conquest on each other, rule nations like hegemons, and panic *en masse* about everything going to hell. In plain terms: Persisting geopolitical uncertainty, piling government debt, Trump's unpredictable tariff spats, inflation fears, rate cut speculation, and consequently unstable currencies (especially the traditionally "safe" US dollar) lead investors to seek a stable, liquid, and truly global asset. Amid such chaos, gold still seems to be their best bet.

Investors tend to go for gold because it is uncorrelated with riskier assets, like stocks or bonds. However, with the S&P 500 still rallying, the FT's Ruchir Sharma wrote this week that gold and equity markets are, rather unusually, "partying together." This can be explained by central banks' and governments' significant injections of cash into the market to stimulate the economy after the pandemic. Sharma says that this money is still circulating, and if Trump succeeds in pressuring the Fed to cut interest rates, investors will be even more emboldened. In addition, he points to the "hyper-financialisaton" brought on by the growth of trading apps, which make it easier for everyday consumers to place their bets on markets.

Nonetheless, Sharma writes "there is no good story that too much money can't spoil." He is hinting at worries about a bubble forming in equity markets, largely driven by enthusiastic investment in tech companies promising to spearhead the AI revolution.

Sharma's piece is one of many articles written this week that attempt to explain what is behind the gold market's wild ride. Sharma's colleague, the FT's Katie Martin, however, thinks that all of this noise "represents a global outbreak of huge overthinking." Times are uncertain, so investors want something that has historically proven to be resilient to uncertain times. Gold is just that, there's no more to the story here.

Crypto evangelists (and some others, too) think that digital currencies could one day overtake gold as the "safe-haven" asset. Similar to gold, Bitcoin has a finite supply and is traded global markets that aren't controlled by governments. However, we are still far from that being a reality – nowhere besides El Salvador treats Bitcoin as official legal tender, and digital assets remain highly volatile and unpredictable investments. Crucially, it hasn't provided as strong of a hedge as gold to date, as nowadays its correlation with the stock market appears to have turned positive. It seems we'll have to keep packing up our literal treasure chests in the meantime.

Gold takes a breather

Weekly gold spot price ($/Oz) - past six months

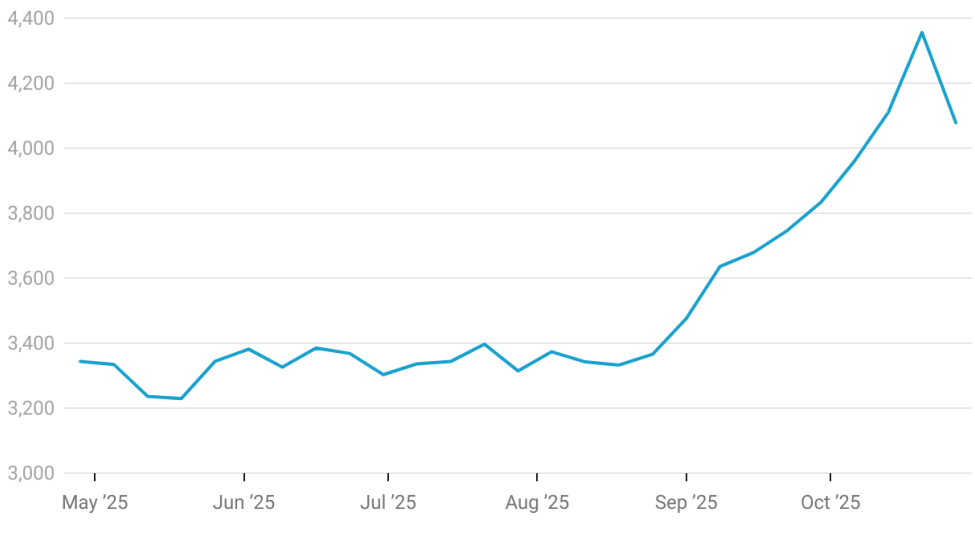


Chart: Felix • Source: Bloomberg • Created with Datawrapper

Fresh ideas brewed at Enterprise Lab's inaugural Entrepreneurship Café

Business Writer
TANYA GRACIAS

The Imperial Enterprise Lab hosted its first-ever Entrepreneurship Café on 20th October, bringing together students, staff, and alumni with a shared passion for innovation. The event provided an informal networking space where aspiring entrepreneurs could exchange ideas, find collaborators, and learn about the support available to help turn concepts into viable ventures.

> **It was great to see such a strong turnout and to watch so many useful connections being made**

The Enterprise Lab buzzed with conversation as attendees from across disciplines – from undergraduates seeking placement-year opportunities to PhD students with patented technologies – shared insights and experiences. This diversity of backgrounds sparked lively discussions and unexpected collaborations.

Organisers from the Enterprise Lab stated: "The Entrepreneurship Café is about creating a space for different groups to connect and collaborate. It was great to see such a strong turnout and to watch so many useful connections being made – moments like that really show the value of building a supportive community of entrepreneurs."

Following the success of this inaugural session, the Enterprise Lab plans to make the Entrepreneurship Café a regular feature, potentially running each month or term.

FILM&TV

Hammer horror & cheesy comedy

The perfect recipe for a Wallace and Gromit film.



Film Writer
GILBERT JACKSON

Around the late 1930s to early 1950s, British cinema took a huge leap forward. The movie production mogul, Michael Balcon had now set firm his position on the top of the Ealing Studios pyramid and, with his position, had brought the films issued forth from Ealing to the front of English cinema. First and foremost, Ealing Studios has become synonymous with the genre of "Ealing Comedy", a profile into mid-century English comedic practises, laced with laconicisms, double entendres, and some good-old-fashioned plucky English spirit.

Films like *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949), *Passport to Pimlico* (1949) and *The Lavender Hill Mob* (1951) set gold-standards for English comedic film practice and issued forth notable proponent actors in the field like Alec Guinneas, Sid James, Kenneth Williams, and Valerie Hobson. These films gave the English audience many stock characters with which to further progress English comedies: the maligned hero, the bumbling parish vicar, the crafty cockney, and the upper-class love interest.

Contrast the capers of Ealing Comedy films from the other side of British cinema, the Hammer Horror film. Hammer Studios, as Ealing was for comedy, became the focal point for all things gothic in England in the 1950s. While the Germans gave us *Nosferatu* (1922), Hammer Studios provided us with exceptional renditions of *Dracula* (1958), *Frankenstein* (1957-1974), and conjured up the bandaged walking horror in *The Mummy* (1959). The many familiar faces included Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee and Barabara Shelley.



Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit (2005)
Dreamworks Animation Studios



Dracula original theatrical release poster (1958)
Rank Film Distributors

It seems odd then, to try and fuse these two definitive, yet polar opposite forms of English cinema, but Nick Park at Aardaman always thought otherwise. Having started the Wallace and Gromit series as a pet project in Claymation when he conjured up *A Grand Day Out* (1989), Nick Park turned to his cinematic instincts and decided to let the inspiration for all the subsequent films pay homage to the various crime-capers and Hammer-screams of the 1950s, all fused with a dash of that quintessential Ealing Comedy. It is little wonder why, despite being set in a fairly ambiguous decade, the Wallace and Gromit franchise feels oddly at home in the 1950s.

When *Curse of the Were-Rabbit* (2005) came out in cinemas, it was the unveiling of Nick Park's showstopper piece. It was so much of a showstopper that he managed to beat Hayao Miyazaki for 'Best Animated Feature' at the Oscars. But what makes this film truly an endearing classic of British cinema is the fact that it relies so heavily on the features that made English cinema great in the post-war era. Ludicrous characters like the jobsworth police officer, the mad vicar, the posh totty love interest, and the caddish villain all scream "Ealing" to us from the screen. But tinged within not-so-subtle double entendres about a wife's "ravaged brassicas" and accusations of "arsin' around", the unmistakable hint of Hammer Horror seeps in: the perfectly timed thunderclaps, the dark churchyard, and even the concept of an Oliver Reed inspired werecreature of nightmares.



While Ealing and Hammer Studios are now gone, we can't help but watch them again.

Truly, this film is a perfect pastiche to 1950s English cinema. Yet, it also provides us with the bridge to link the modern styles of animation and British cinema to that of the 1930s-50s, introducing us, as children, to stock traditions in English comedic practices. Most people may often treat black and white films with carefulness, feeling that they really are from a by-gone age of traditions long past; however, if Wallace and Gromit prove anything, it's that while Ealing and Hammer Studios are now gone, we can't help but watch them again.

FIRES & FASCISM
BY IMPERIAL ALUMNI PETE KNAPP

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BOOKS

Authors of the strange

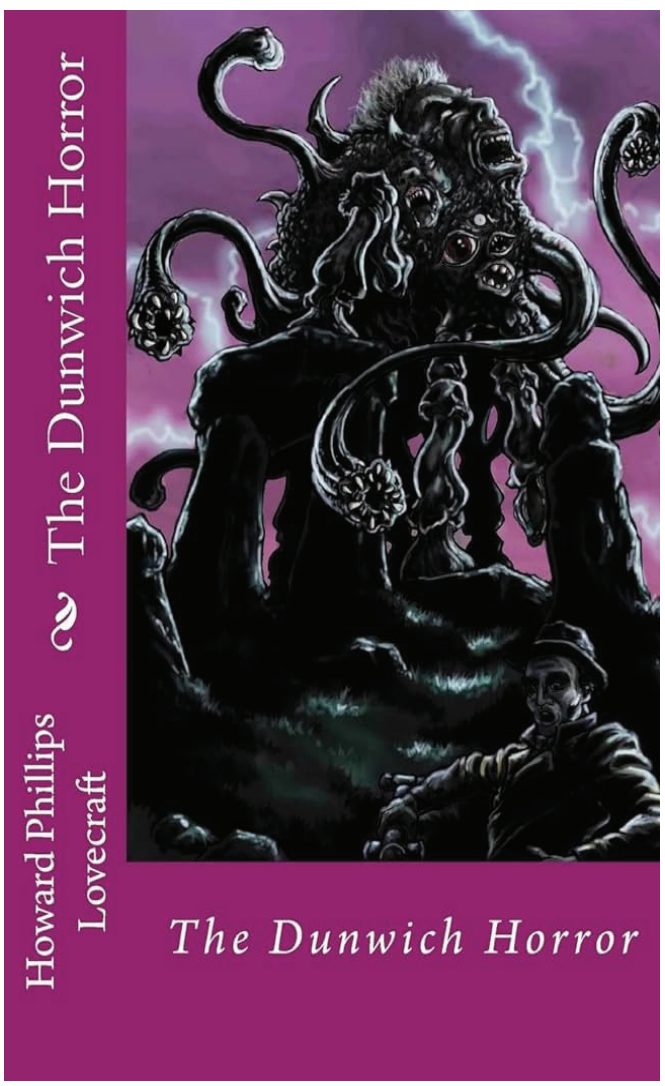


A profile into H. P. Lovecraft and M. R. James.

Books Writer
GILBERT JACKSON

At this festive, yet spooky season, one certainly finds great enjoyment in perusing the collective works of some of our most beloved horror writers. Mary Shelley, Bram Stoker, Wilkie Collins, or even – if you have the patience – Stephen King. But perhaps two authors with an unsurprising connection to the general horror genre - and the creators of two separate branches of horror fiction - are H. P. Lovecraft and M. R. James.

Of these two authors, it is very likely that Lovecraft is the more well-known. Having spent a somewhat isolationist life in New England in the early 1900s, Lovecraft is known for creating the popular genre of cosmic (or eldritch) horror. From his works like "The Call of Cthulhu," "The Dunwich Horror," and works including the fictional *Necronomicon*, Lovecraft blends many aspects of traditional New England folk horror with somewhat celestial undertones: witches, mystic cults, and forgotten villages are all twisted with the familiar, beyond-human-comprehension aspects that Lovecraft made popular.



Although, it must be said, if you didn't already know, that Lovecraft is perhaps an utterly repugnant individual. It can be said that his works of eldritch fiction are mere outpourings of how he expressed his disgust for everyone he hated: ethnic minorities, Catholics, the lower classes, pretty much anyone who wasn't a blue-blooded middle-class New England American like he was. It is little wonder that all the vile cultic practices were performed by what he perceived as "primitive cultures" and "foreign invaders". He perceived his "Old Gods" as being devilish figures not suited for the new age of America and worshipped only by "the deplorables".

> **"Lovecraft himself referred to M. R. James as one of the "modern masters of folk-horror"**

And if we are writing in the spirit of candour (which we are always), it should be said that while his overall "stories" are astonishing, his writing is perhaps a little juvenile. His repetition of themes, plot elements, and story structure get very tiring after a while – there's only so many stories of a college professor venturing into an unknown village and encountering something that drives him mad that one can read in an evening, especially if the writing is very repetitive. So where can one turn for a change of scenery?

Before Lovecraft, the very archetype of the folklore scholar was writing his own ghost stories. M. R. James was a Cambridge don in medieval studies. During his tenure, he managed to unearth the remains of several of the graves of Abbots of St Edmundsbury Abbey, which had previously been lost. In his manuscripts he had become absorbed in a realm of ancient folklore, tales of gruesome murders from The Anarchy of the 12th century, and through his studies, he had inexplicably entered into a world of mists and forgotten villages.



Dunwich, Suffolk

Lovecraft himself referred to M. R. James as one of the "Modern Masters of folk-horror", and many hold M. R. James to be "the godfather of folk-horror". He rejected the former gothic tropes of horror and instead embraced a form of horror that was more rooted in the realism that he himself had uncovered. The standard tropes of misty fenland, ruined churches, and odd tales of the murdered told by the local village-folk went from being his everyday practice as a scholar to some of the tropes most associated with the ghost stories of today. Not only that, M. R. James, unlike Lovecraft in many ways, is an exceptional writer; stories like "Wailing Well" and "A View from a Hill" are packed full of suspense, intrigue, wit, and the unnerving quality we most associate with ghost stories today.

Despite his seismic impact on the horror genre, it is surprising that James gets overlooked in the literary world compared to his contemporaries like Lovecraft. Should anyone be looking for a gripping, well-written tale of the unexpected, of murder most foul, and of strange happenings, it would be easy to abandon the Lovecraft this year in favour of M.R. James, a forgotten paragon of horrific excellence.

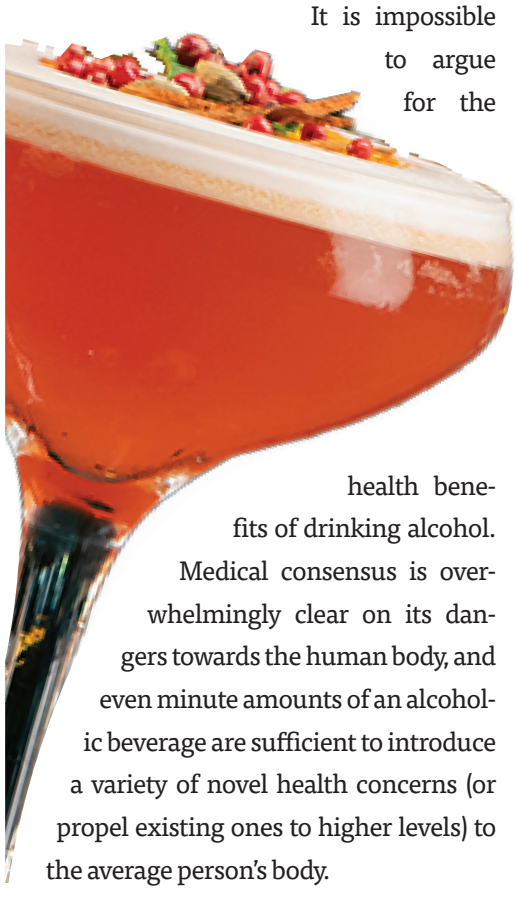
LIFESTYLE

The case for a pint – the beauty of alcohol

Why a purely health-oriented view of alcohol fails to capture the benefit of the substance to society.

Lifestyle Writer
THOMAS EDGE

Drinking is engrained in university culture. Whether this is detrimental to the shaping of young developing minds or not, it is here to stay. Waking up on the back of a long, sweaty night of tussling with fellow intoxicated Embargoes goers often prompts one to utter the all-too-familiar declaration: "I'm never drinking again." However, with millennia of rich history behind it, there are a plethora of reasons not to abandon this age-old practise.



It is impossible to argue for the health benefits of drinking alcohol. Medical consensus is overwhelmingly clear on its dangers towards the human body, and even minute amounts of an alcoholic beverage are sufficient to introduce a variety of novel health concerns (or propel existing ones to higher levels) to the average person's body.

Nevertheless, the beauty of alcohol stems not from its purely biological effects on the human body, but rather from its ability to facilitate social interaction. By suppressing the activity of the prefrontal cortex, alcohol reduces a user's inhibitions. In taking the first sip of alcohol with fellow drinkers, an unofficial agreement emerges. One in which everyone within the community agrees to collectively, as Professor Edward Slingerland of UBC quips, "put their prefrontal cortices down on the table." Without this vital evolutionary tool, lying and deception become burdensome, allowing the conversation to be steered by instinct and truth.

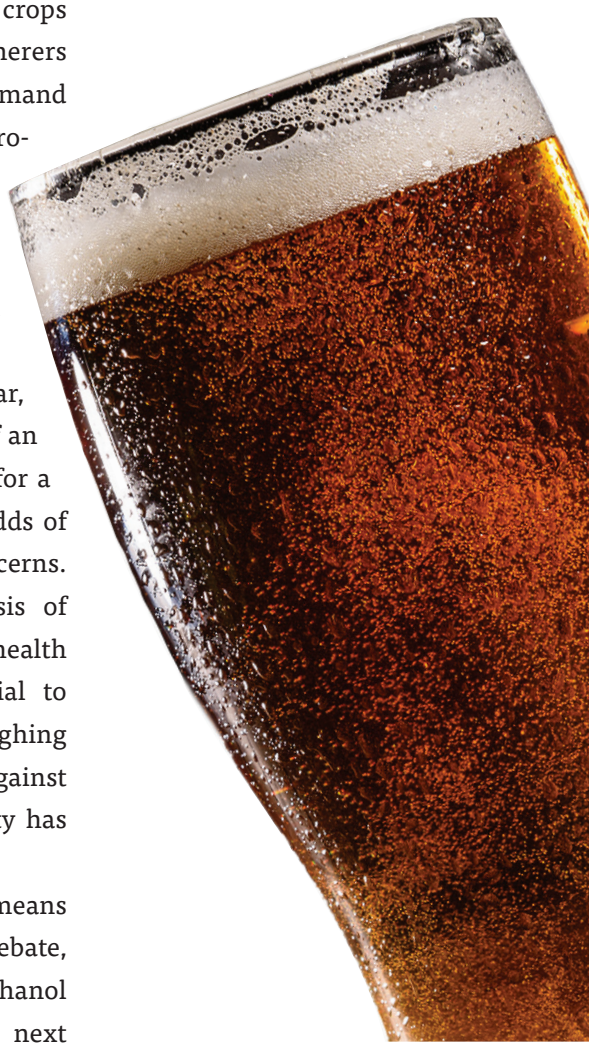
> **With millennia of rich history behind it, there are a plethora of reasons not to abandon this age-old practise**

While the truthfulness of the Latin proverb "in vino veritas," meaning "in wine, there is truth" is scientifically contestable, it nonetheless highlights the deep-rooted history of drinking as a cultivator of bonding between humans. As a fundamentally social species, Homo sapiens undertake the uniquely challenging struggle of juggling societies exponentially larger than those of other primates. For this reason, it is not unreasonable to view alcohol as a cultural technology developed to help respond to these challenges.

Some evidence even suggests that the first domesticated crops, such as the South American ancestor to corn and maize "teosinte," were harvested not for nutrition, but for their psychoactive properties. While teosinte makes for a poor nutritional crop, its high sugar content makes it useful for brewing a beer-like substance known as chicha. This discovery leads many to believe that the domestication of crops by hunter gatherers was led by a demand for alcohol production, and predates the formation of early foods such as bread.

Just as every time one enters a car, they are risking the devastation of an accident, every time one reaches for a drink, they are increasing their odds of developing a range of health concerns. Instead of restricting the analysis of alcohol to a narrow view of its health implications, it may be beneficial to explore the topic holistically, weighing its admittedly important risks against its social benefits, which humanity has reaped for millenia.

While consensus has by no means been reached surrounding this debate, as you take the first sip of your ethanol concoction of choice at your next social, lay your prefrontal cortex down confidently, knowing that thousands of years of human history sit beside you. As Franklin D Roosevelt reportedly proclaimed, as he signed away the end of prohibition: "Now would be a good time for a beer."



SOCIETIES

Whimsy & Wonder

Art Club announces their annual exhibition theme and are expecting submissions until the end of January.

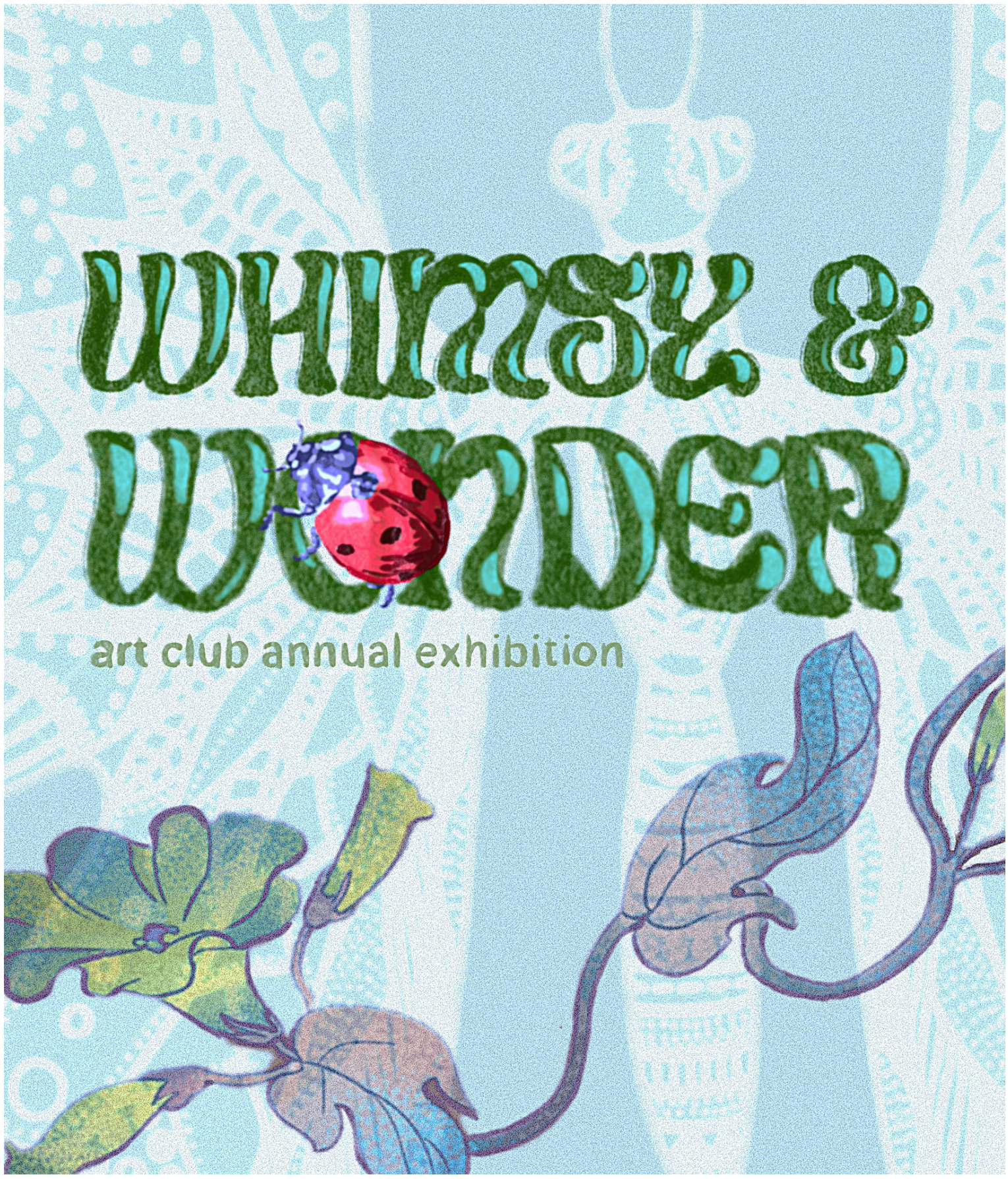
Societies Writer
ZAHIR THEBAULT

Art Club has historically run an exhibition of members' works each February in the Blyth Gallery. This year, the exhibition will open its doors on the 3rd of February, 2026 but will hang in the foyer of the City and Guilds building, which is an exciting opportunity to potentially show our art to a new audience.

Whimsy & Wonder will be the theme of the exhibition this year. We are announcing this title early so you have plenty of time to curate your drawings, paintings, sculptures, or photography. The exhibition is open to both members and non-members, and you can make your artwork in one of our workshops or in your own time.

Your submission to our exhibiton could just be a fun thing or the beginning of your artistic career! We are supported by Mindy Lee of Imperial's Blyth Centre who has a great deal of experience in mentoring artists; Art Club can put you in touch with her. Art Club can also help you develop your art by supplying materials and studio space!

The theme, Whimsy & Wonder, is quite loose, so you can absolutely do your own thing if you prefer! (We know a lot of you will just paint your cat and that's ok.) Contact **artclub@imperial.ac.uk** if you would like to exhibit. You have until the end of January!



ARTS&CULTURE

Review: From the Pyre

Arts Writer
LILA HARRISON

The Last Dinner Party have always felt familiar since their debut; there is something quintessentially British about their sound – perhaps it is Morris' soaring vocals, with a Kate Bush-like timbre, the ornate, often gothic lyricism, or maybe the production skills of James Ford (Arctic Monkeys, Blur, Foals, and Pulp.) Either way, I am entirely unsurprised that *From the Pyre*, their sophomore album, maintains the standard they set with their debut.

Where *Prelude to Ecstasy* emphasised orchestration and baroque pop – this record balances that grandeur with moments of intimate vulnerability. Abigail Morris' vocals remain at the core of the sound, capable of soaring operatic highs one moment and hushed, aching reflections the next. You can really feel how she wants every word to be interpreted.

The band matches Morris' unwavering fearlessness. There is still an orchestral underpinning to the record, with folky violins and rock riffs forming the canvas. I particularly enjoy the use of dynamics on this album; the bridges and outros particularly know how to swell. This is a theme within and between songs – in "I Hold Your Anger" Morris' anxieties and familial (albeit, with a touch of nepotism) pressures are laid over barer instrumentation, while tracks like "Count the Ways" have infectious, loud hooks. I also enjoy this bands' appreciation for unexpected chords and melodies. The songwriting is brave, but well placed, and still accessible.

Nishevci's conducting in the string department is a particular highlight. The arrangements bring so much technical awareness to the band, which is a testament to its mixing and mastering, for instance in "Woman Is a Tree." The lyrics match the instrumentation incredibly across this song, and the entire album, word painting is truly at play here. Every member has her role – I of course, love the fact that this is an all-female band, but another obvious standout to me is guitarist, Emily Roberts. "Second Best" was written predominantly by her. One can tell.

The Last Dinner Party are at their strongest, and certainly at their most unique when they embrace contrast, a theme continued over to this album. The melancholy and the joy, the intimacy and the obvious, the folk and the rock; this album is never hollow. Yes, it could have been braver, but the genre change can wait until the third album. For me, this is well crafted, sonically pleasurable LP ready for your autumn-winter frustrations and heartbreaks.

Tim Burton's Germ influences



Still from The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari, dir. Robert Wiene. Open Source

Arts Editor Emeritus
GILBERT JACKSON

The films of Tim Burton have become a staple for the avid Halloween enjoyer, and it's right to assume that the combination of his gothic storytelling and his unique animation style, make his work emblematic of the hallow season. To the artistic eye, however, Burton's work brings to life a now forgotten style of artistry that flourished in the early 20th century in the German Empire and then the Weimar Republic; German Expressionism.

German Expressionism was a movement set at exposing the raw emotions behind all things: faces, landscapes, scenery, and bodily features. All we cast in the expressionist lens to expose what lied underneath the flesh. In France, the movement was cast as Fauvism, a colourful outpouring of detail. In Germany, and other northern lands, the character of expressionism took a more visceral approach, dealing with the more carnal aspects of sexuality and the grotesqueness of the human form.

In the early 1900s, the Blauer Reiter movement championed by Kandinsky and Marc, as well as the Secessionist Movement lead by Klimt and Schiele, cast a huge trail of power in

> **The subjects [of German Expressionism] live within the confines of their emotions**

nan Expressionist

the expressionist movement that many rejected. Klimt had often received criticism at his exhibitions for his overtly sexual themes, particularly with depictions of his muse Adele Bloch-Bauer (Schiele would then take sexuality to all its extremes, depicting nude figures in states of orgasmic intensity.)

Fast forward to the late 1910s, and the Weimar Republic was reeling in a state of anarchy and pain, but also sexual freedom and emotional intensity. Artists like Otto Dix, Ludwig Kirchner, and Käthe Kollwitz showed the raw forms of pain, suffering, sensuality, and debauchery. Contorted features, and twisted backgrounds put the emotion not only onto the person but into their surroundings – the subjects live within the confines of their emotions. The 1920s then saw the beginnings of German Expressionist Cinema, and the pioneer directors Fritz Land and Robert Wiene had applied the same artistic techniques to their films, creating oddly shaped backdrops that blur the line between childlike fantasy and twisted horror.



Self Portrait with Physalis by Egon Schiele. Leopold Museum

It is little surprise then, following on from the likes of Dix, Kollwitz and Lang, that Burton's own style could flourish. No matter which Burton depiction you take, whether it be Corpse Bride, The Original Batman films, or Beetlejuice, Burton has a way of creating that same mixture of fantasy tinged with unnerving horror. Each background seems to be a collection of odd geometric shapes stuck together in black and white, and even the characters have grossly exaggerated features which add to their own personae.

In many ways, Burton leaning in towards the designs of German Expressionism have enabled him to amass a cult-following for his filmography. It is no wonder given that in combination with his story telling, his visual style provides undertones which allow us to easily pinpoint each character's motives and sentiments before they've even had a chance to say their lines. As a result, one of Burton's stock tropes is to have some of the characters make unusual departures in character from their overall appearances. This can often leave the viewer in surprise but allows us to make connections to his characters on a more emotional level, and see our emotions as visual representations when in the real world such things are often put under wraps.

We often see directors as unique visionaries (which they are) however we sometimes forget that even film directors are continuations of an on-going series of artistic movements, just in a very different medium. Burton and his fellow director-in-arms Henry Sellick still carry the torch of expressionism to this day, and should you find the time to rewatch their films this Halloween, perhaps have a thought for their fellow expressionists who paved the way before them. And if that doesn't convince you, remember that the Nazis hated Expressionism, so that must mean it's exceptionally good.

AMS reviews: The Elephant's Head

Arts Writer
MIGUEL CARREIRA

On 15th October, Alternative Music Society attended its first random gig night of the year. To take advantage of London's live music selection, a random Wednesday was picked, and after a society-wide poll comprising five gigs scattered around London, we landed on Black Nylon and The Drive – two emerging Irish post-punk bands playing a free gig at The Elephant's Head. Beating landmark locations such as The Windmill and The Garage, this unassuming pub in the middle of Camden was the setting for a gig that would make me question the hearing abilities of its sound engineer, as my ears still hurt the next day.

First up was Black Nylon, who, combining fast-paced, bass-driven songs with slower distortion-packed tracks, proved to be quite the versatile act. Making interesting use of dynamics, their music features strong buildups and intensely rhythmic drum patterns. A highlight of the performance was the last number, "She's my lady," which included an echo-laden sustain overlaid with sparsely spaced guitar riffs, culminating in an uplifting, vaguely U2-reminiscent ending to the show. Displaying a confident stage presence underscored by sharp, somewhat spoken, vocals, the Dublin-based band delivered a solid hour-long set that challenged their status as the supporting act for the night. Sadly, their music cannot be found on any streaming platforms, but I will definitely be looking out for them when they come back to London.

The Drive., a Cork-based shoegaze band on the first leg of their UK & Ireland tour, offered a rather ethereal sound permeated by distortion-heavy reverbs. Darker in tone than Black Nylon, their music combines the vocalist's powerful delivery with deeply emotional lyricism. The performance also featured intense buildups and repetitive riffs that, at one point paired with an electronic beat, got the audience to dance. The vocalist's sunglasses and on-stage mannerisms reminded me of a young Grian Chatten, although he is not alone in this emulation of the Fontaines D.C. frontman: in a performance earlier this year, Black Nylon's vocalist can also be spotted in a tracksuit that is strikingly similar to Chatten's iconic Romance outfit. With Fontaines D.C. having cultivated an image that is so synonymous with Irish post-punk, it seems that these young Irish bands may be struggling to define themselves away from that image. Regardless, both bands have managed to create unique and promising sounds, and I look forward to seeing how they develop within the Irish post-punk scene.

Having no expectations coming into this gig, I was pleasantly surprised to discover The Elephant's Head, a refreshing reminder of the free venues making live music accessible to London gig-goers. I hope to be back soon for future AMS gig nights (though I might bring earplugs next time).

CATNIP

Union dressed for distress

Nightmare gala turned HR nightmare.

Catnip Editor
NEGAFELIX

A recent party held in the Union Offices has come under fire for "tasteless costuming." Bystanders at the event recount seeing several characters in "unsavoury garb" which left many onlookers questioning what is considered scary and what is "blatantly unsanitary".

"This is the one time of year I can dress in a slut's skin, and no one questions it," the host, who wishes to remain anonymous, said.

Catnip insider Juby Roy, dressed as a bag of limes, spoke with some of the party goers shortly after they were evicted from the Union Offices. One party goer – dressed as "Prince Andrew Abroad" and wearing nothing besides a pair of ill-fitting speedos with "Pool Britannia" written on the back – told NegaFelix "I don't really see what all the fuss is about. Halloween is supposed to be scary and slutty, right? I'm impressing my boyfriend by stripping away my responsibilities!"

Many bystanders were appalled at the bacchanal that took place at the event. One witness insisted that they witnessed the Prince Andrew Abroad and a girl dressed as Bonnie Blue engaging in intercourse on the Union President's desk.

"It's just not right," said the witness. "Shagging in the Union Offices where people pretend to work every day is just a step too far. Two Nonces shouldn't make a right!".

NegaFelix attempted to obtain a witness statements from several wealthy, foreign exchange students, however they quickly exited the interview after two men dressed as a ReformUK candidate and another as a piece of paper titled "Oxford Study" entered the room.

Several attendees have already made mention that the College's "woke agenda" has gone too far, preventing students at the College from expressing their temporary, chosen identities for one night only.

"The College is clearly trying to strip us of our fluid identities," two white men dressed as the men in black from *Men in Black* told us. An engineering student followed this up and explained that "forcing our given labels on us when they ask for College ID at the Union gate is offensive. Tonight, I am Batman."

The Union President has declined to comment.

Horror-scopes

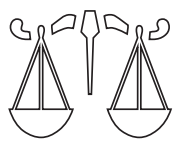
This week, we offer guidance from the stars on which Halloween Costume will guarantee you the greatest chance of success to pull across the Halloweekend. All costumes are gender-neutral, and we can offer discounts if you purchase via our affiliate link on the NegaFelix website.

ARIES



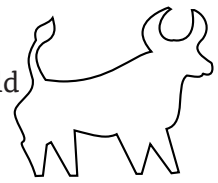
This week you should dress up as an endoscopy mouth guard.

LIBRA



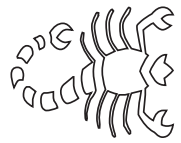
This week you should dress up as a stick of Hagaromo chalk.

TAURUS



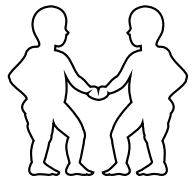
This week you should dress up as sexy Aunt Gladys from *Weapons*.

SCORPIO



This week you should dress up as your mountain of unattempted problem sheets.

GEMINI



This week you should dress up as a HireVue screening window.

SAGITTARIUS



This week you should dress up as a performative woman for a change.

CANCER



This week you should dress up as the victim of a Snakebite.

CAPRICORN



This week you should dress as a sexy French university newspaper editor.

LEO



This week you should dress up as the first Goth cartoon baddie that awakened any psychosexual development stages.

AQUARIUS



This week you should dress up as Nightwing, you slutty, slutty boy.

VIRGO



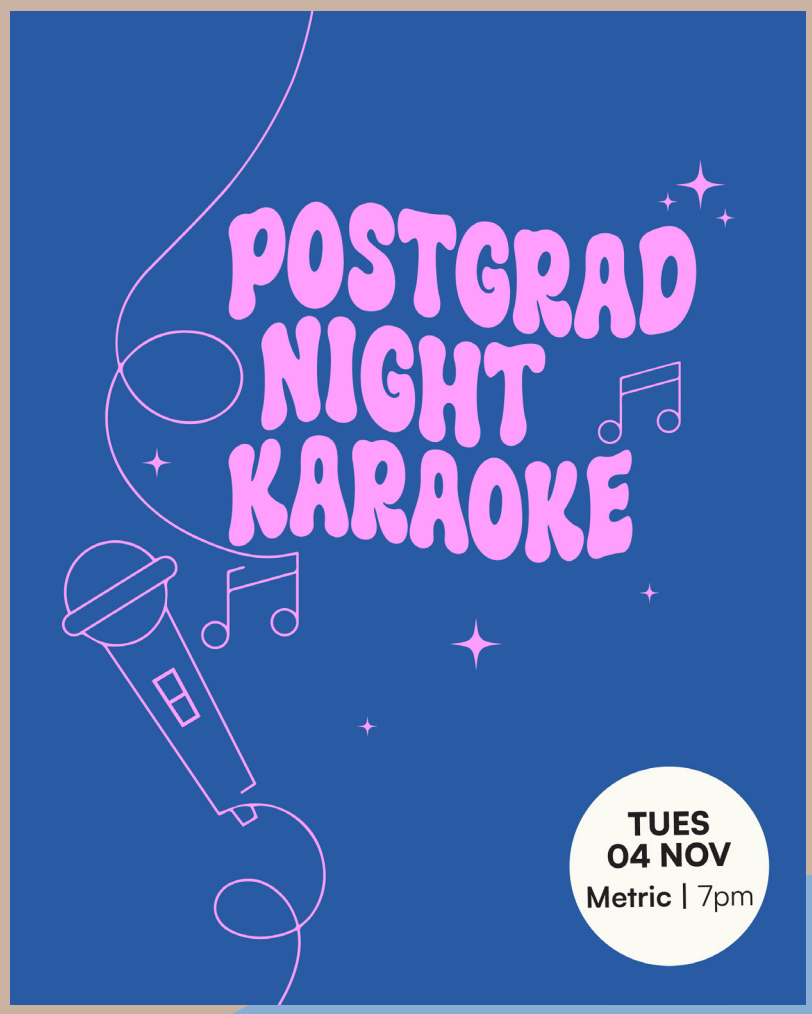
This week you should dress up as Elphaba and collect a gaggle of lost freshers to be your winged monkeys.

PISCES



This week you should dress up as the effervescent vibes of the Huxley Tunnels.









IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION

SCAN HERE TO FIND OUT MORE:

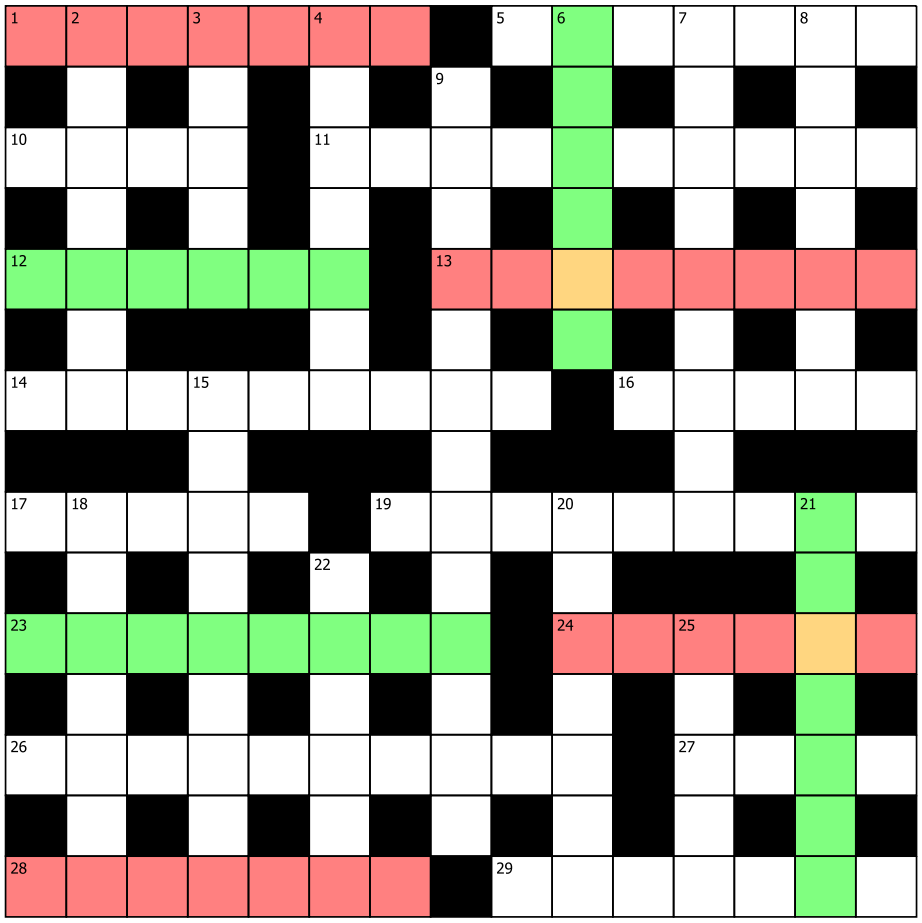
PUZZLES



Puzzles Editor
DAVID LATIMER

QUICK CROSSWORD

Written by Gravid Latimurder (10 pts.)



Across

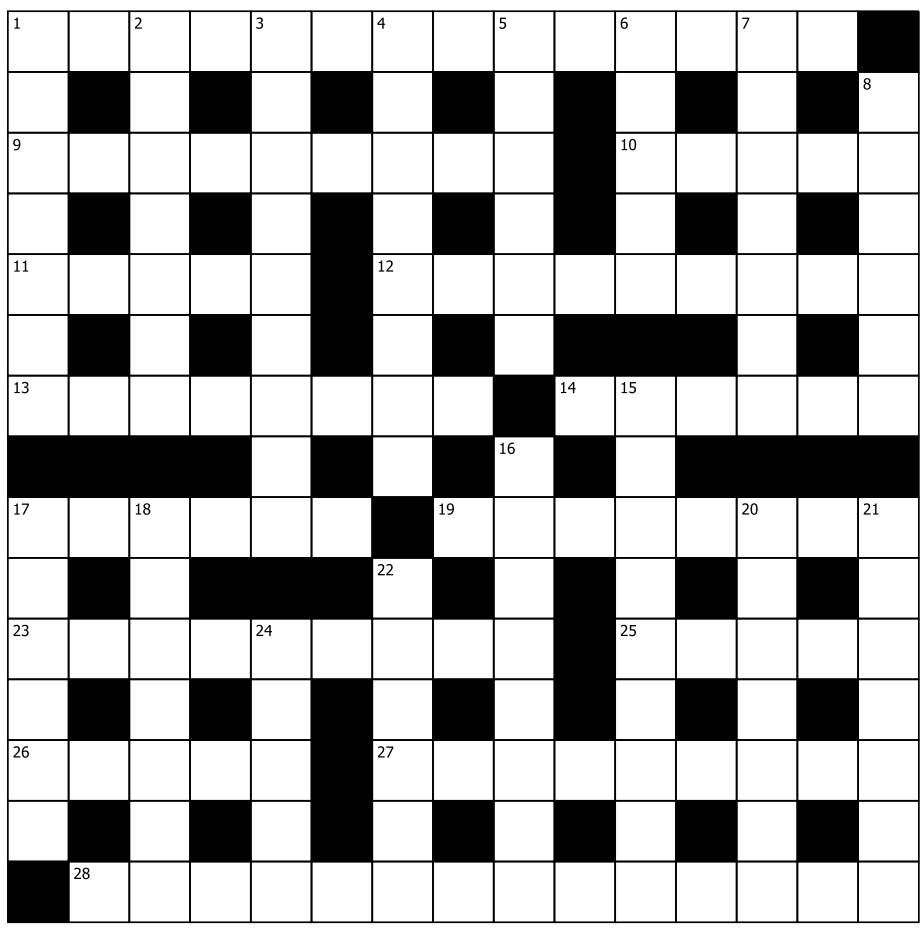
1. Of illegitimate parenthood. [7]
5. Wise with money. [7]
10. An articulated trailer. [4]
11. How the word "open" may be presented. [4 6]
12. Smallest denomination of US currency still in production. [6]
13. Smothering. [8]
14. One may be often spotted? [9]
16. Shoes with a lot of holes. [5]
17. Covered in needles. [5]
19. Style of being. [9]
23. Small pieces of multi-coloured paper. [8]
24. Unwanted growths. [6]
26. Cool down, as a situation. [10]
27. The universal solvent. [4]
28. Shrinkage from lack of use. [7]
29. Dressed up. [7]

Down

2. What country connects a Childish Gambino song with the band behind Ventura Highway. [7]
3d & 20d. Ritual for children... or a hint to this puzzle's highlighted entries. [5 2 5]
4. Small piece of hair. [7]
6. Bless. [6]
7. Not being specific. [2 7]
8. Unimaginably large. [7]
9. Stranger showing unexpected kindness. [4 9]
15. Body of text accompanying a bid. [9]
18. What one may work on. [7]
20. See 3 Down.
21. Subject of a windfall. [7]
22. Join to. [6]
25. Florida city. [5]

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

Written by Gravid Latimurder (20 pts.)



Across

1. Close to death, navel skin taken off after disturbing frighten too! [4 2 3 5]
9. Examines headless animated rube before making precautions? [9]
10. Explosion engulfing strange chest. [5]
11. Stakes made tense after a vanquishing of ecstasy. [5]
12. You can't move after assistant muddles clarity... [9]
13. Allowing larger creepy-crawly to speak. [8]
14. Curses crop being carried by galleon. [6]
17. Below entomb walls, prior company could slow you down... [6]
19. Energy and strange colouring surround horrible harbouring of a malevolent gaze. [4-4]
23. God, the autumn cycles and is joined with the rotten earth. [3-6]
25. More engineering around work tool used to kill zombies? [5]
26. Search for weapon. [5]
27. Old bride maimed with bottom of saw to discover way she treats her hair. [9]
28. Underhanded tactics from shield and sword, mostly. [14]

Down

1. Fainter rambling from soldier from hell? [7]
2. What goes around the globe finishes just short of Italy. [7]
3. Stored away twisted verse in inaugural necromancy reading exhibit initially. [9]
4. Snaring climbing bit with sharp sound. [8]
5. Make certain that maladroit seer gets snug after clipping wings. [6]
6. Traitor found where belfry conceals. [5]
7. Someone knocking on the door... Victoria is it...? Or...? [7]
8. Teasing after strange gowns... [6]
15. ...madly obscured by growing plant disease. [9]
16. Tyrant finished by nobleman. [8]
17. Ruined arch stores weapon in spiritual centre. [6]
18. Maleficent bundle mostly stocked. [7]
20. Hey! With fish, there's screaming! [7]
21. Someone who seeks to break you down is of French requirement. [7]
22. Before even cutting bridal, stew in terror. [6]
24. The Ring messes with near adjusted head. [5]

ANAGRAMS

Theme: Scary Movies

INTO DEFIANT SNAIL

MACHETE HUNTED PINE

LONE WHALE

CHAPS DILLY

CLANK SWAB

MALT TOKE

(6 pts.)

NONOGRAM

Written by Xi Ting

Use the margin hints to complete the puzzle! Each number refers to the distribution of filled squares in each row and column. "2 4" refers to a row with a two consecutive filled squares followed by four consecutive filled squares, with blank space(s) in between. This halloween-themed, extra-large puzzle with have extra-large points associated with it! Hope you all enjoy!

(15 pts.)

																					1					
																					1					
																			1		1		3			
				2		1													1	5	1		1			
			6	2	1	1		3						2				3		3	2	1	2	1			
		4	1	7	1	3	3	5	1	5	2	4	2	1	3	6	5	2	1	3	1	2	1	3	1	
	6	6	5	3	8	1	6	7	15	15	18	15	15	15	15	7	6	6	6	7	9	16	9	7	6	
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						4	11	7																		
						4	11	7																		
					4	5	5	7																		



CRYPTOGRAM

Written by The Quizzler

Clue: Cube Yawner (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!

S X K F T M H N W F L Z S A V X W V H D M

X Q N Z M C Y M S Z X F H Z F O X Q N Z H R

H Z S Y H R . S Y Q W X O V F F W M Y T

X H N A M X W O H N M L Q R R T . S X ' W H

I S A O S X T . S O H Z ' X I M

M D M N T K V M N M . I Q X X V M T C F Z ' X

J Z F K K V M N M S H Y .

(7 pts.)

Anagram: _____ (2 pts.)

Quote from: _____ (1 pt.)



LEADERBOARD

Pos.	Puzzlers	Points	(Last week)
1.	Joey H. Sultanas	299	234
2.	Nicocross Wourbaki	285	219
3.	Mac Yang	224	162
4.	CRYGGTIC	205	149
5.	Granny Smiths	156	120
6.	Gerald's Groupies	73	33
7.	Myley Smyley	56	56
8.	W. W. Delilah	49	49

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

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

Hard

L	A	C	E	D
A	G	I	L	E
M	O	V	I	E
P	R	I	S	M
S	A	L	E	S
A	L	E	R	T

Eldrow

"Is light made up of particles or waves? Quantum mechanics says it's both. How can it be both? It can't. But it is. It's paradoxical but it works."

Anagram: CILLIAN MURPLY
Quote from: Oppenheimer

Cryptogram



Cryptic

GAWKED MAINLAND -> DEAD MAN WALKING

STAYED BENEATH TUBA -> BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

ANAL DANDIES -> ALADDIN SANE

MAROONED GAY DAME -> MOONAGE DAYDREAM

DEAD COPYIST -> SPACE ODDITY

DOOMING DADS -> DIAMOND DOGS

Anagrams



Link

Common Link: First Words in Springsteen Albums

Born To Run / **Born** In The U.S.A

Darkness On the Edge of Town

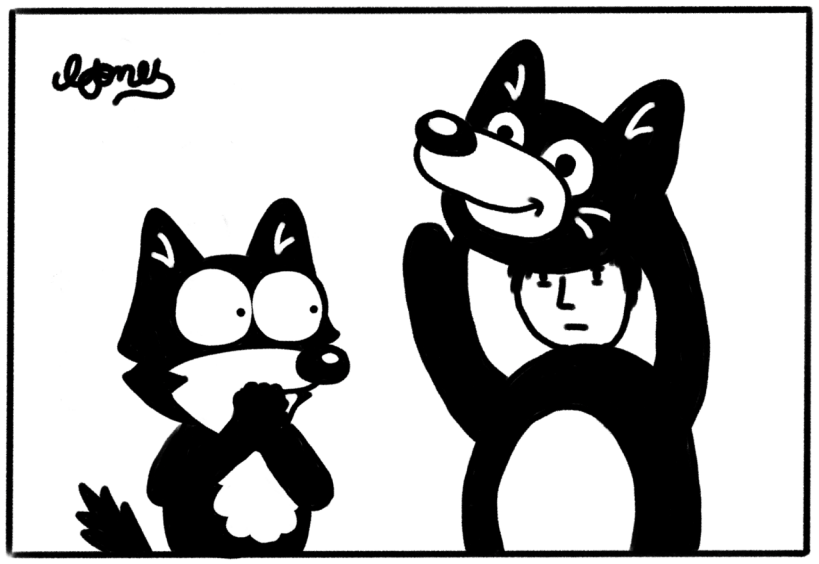
Lucky Town

Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.

Tunnel Of Love

COMIC

Submitted by Billie Jones



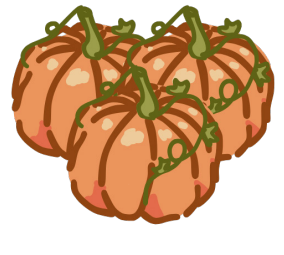


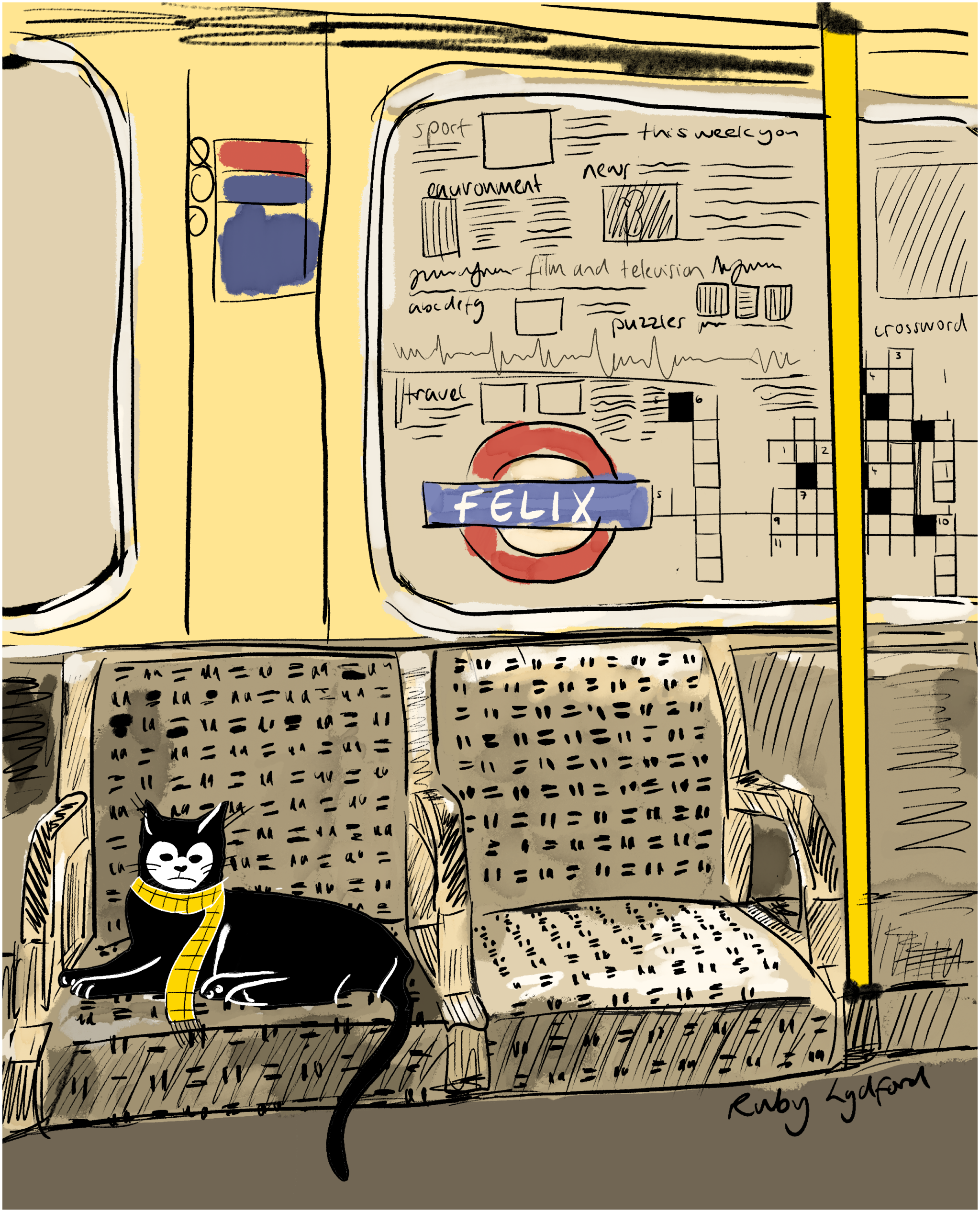
Puzzle Editor's Note

Dearest Puzzlers,

Happy Halloween! I hope you're all having a wonderful holiday season and are very ready to spend (at least some of) Halloween weekend with these puzzles stuffed between the poorly cut-out eyes in your ghost costume. Speaking of this week's puzzles, we have an extra special large nonogram for you all to solve; tell us how you feel about it. Accompanying this are the regular ol' collection of anagrams, cryptogram, and crosswords. I hope you notice they all have a somewhat spooky theming. I will be spending the weekend going to Halloween parties and going out like one typically does, all in costume of course. Which is why I'm excited to see what costumes you all have this year! So, please, alongside your puzzle submissions this week, could you also attach a picture of your terrifying costume? There may be some points involved... But with most of that being said, and the leaderboard mostly stable (mostly, I see you Gerald's Groupies!) I will leave you all to this fetidly fascinating fixture of frames and fun. Happy solving!

-David




sport
this weekend
news
environment
film and television
puzzles
travel
crossword
FELIX
Ruby Lydford