



Number 772

Friday 1st November 2013

VARSITY

Published in Cambridge since 1947

www.varsity.co.uk



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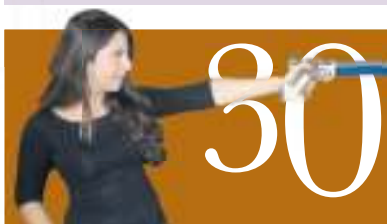
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The main demonstration took place in front of the Senate House, where demonstrators rallied together to voice their discontent

"We are the University"

Cambridge students and staff joined yesterday's nationwide strike in protest at a real terms cut to wages, with demonstrators urging others not to cross picket lines

Amy Hawkins
SENIOR NEWS EDITOR

Academics and support staff at the University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University went on strike at sites across Cambridge yesterday, in protest at what is effectively a pay cut for the next year.

Picket lines were formed at various lecture locations around the University, including the Sidgwick and Downing sites. Many students also boycotted lectures and seminars to join the picket lines in solidarity with the workers on strike.

The protest culminated in a rally outside Senate House at midday. Representatives from Unison, CUSU and the Labour Party spoke to the crowd of about 150 students who had gathered to hear the speeches. Daniel

Zeicher, the Labour parliamentary candidate for Cambridge, told the crowd that the call for higher wages was "an entirely reasonable demand."

In an effort to highlight the politics of salaries, Zeicher called attention to the government's tax cuts for the wealthy, supported by Liberal Democrat MP for Cambridge Julian Huppert. In response to this, an angry crowd member shouted: "Labour have done nothing!"

Many of the speakers drew parallels between the fight for decent pay and the fight for a decent education. Mordecai Paechter, a first year student from King's who was speaking on behalf of CUSU called the one per cent pay rise offer "insulting".

"The students will support the staff all the way," he said.

Andy Murray from Unite was similarly emphatic in his speech. "We are

sending a very clear message to employers that we are not prepared to accept a measly one per cent pay rise," he shouted to the crowd.

Glyn Hawker from Unison gave a rousing speech to close the rally. "The University would not be open ever were it not for the hardworking staff," she told the audience.

"It's time they treat us with the respect we deserve... we're done with being disrespected. We are the University!"

Before the crowd dispersed, Hawker led an enthusiastic chant of "They say cut back, we say fight back!"

This is the first time that members from of all three trade unions in Cambridge have coordinated; the universities' staff who took strike action are all members of Unite, Unison or the University and College Union (UCU). They voted in favour of the strike

motion after being offered only a one per cent pay rise for the next year. The current rate of CPI inflation is 2.7 per cent, meaning that employees are facing a decline in wages in real terms.

In the past four years, according to a statement from Cambridge UCU, staff wages have gone down by about 13 per cent in real terms. On average, 60 per cent of members across the three trade unions voted in favour of the strike.

In a statement from Cambridge UCU that was released earlier this month, the union said that their members "have not rushed into this decision to take industrial action, and are very keen to see the dispute resolved without the need to take it." They called on the University's Vice-Chancellor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz to support their claim.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

News: The campaign for all colleges to pay staff the Living Wage gathers speed (p. 8)

Rent rises and wage wars

For those of us not at Caius it is hard to maintain interest in the battle of wills currently ensuing between students and fellows over the recent 9.5 per cent rent rises (and 6 per cent rise in food charges). After all, many of us at other colleges already pay more for our accommodation than Caius students do even after the rise.

This, however, is exactly the problem. The real scandal is not that in a difficult financial climate Caius has resorted to putting up rent prices, but that students across Cambridge are consistently uninformed about what the cost of their largest expense will be.

In Cambridge there is an incredible discrepancy in rent prices from college to college. Whilst at some colleges you could be paying £800 a term in rent, at others the price can be nearly double. Add in confusing extras such as the Kitchen Fixed Charge and varying policies as to whether lighting, heating and internet are included in the bill, and it is often difficult for students to understand the pricing system of their own college,

let alone the systems of the other 30.

This is a particular problem for prospective students. If Cambridge students can still be caught unawares by changes in their accommodation, how then are prospective students – particularly those who come from schools or families where going on to university is less usual – meant to accurately guess how much money they will need to attend a particular college?

For college access officers this raises a whole range of dilemmas as to how much they tell prospective students. How are they meant to simultaneously trumpet the schemes their own college have if they know that you could have an identical experience for £500 less a term at a different college just down the road?

To a certain extent there is little we can do to change this state of affairs. After all – contrary to popular belief – most Cambridge colleges do not actually wish to place their students in financial difficulty. Some colleges really are forced to charge higher rates, either because they never had a large endowment in the first place or

because of a decrease in the value of their portfolio.

In such a situation it is the least colleges can do to be honest and upfront about the charges students will incur during their time in Cambridge, both before and after the application process. After all, they must remember that falling from third to seventh place on the Cambridge colleges' rich list is hardly enough reason enough to panic just yet.

Similarly, it is hard to argue that Cambridge colleges should be exempt from paying their employees a living wage, as last week's rally at King's campaigned to implement. The arguments against the living wage typically focus on the damage such a raise could cost small businesses, but Cambridge colleges are not small nor are they likely to be bankrupted by such a small increase in staff wages.

Besides, Cambridge prides itself on having some of the best intellectual minds in the country, so I'm sure somebody somewhere can figure out how to make the money go a little bit further.



Write to us
letters@varsity.co.uk

ON THE REINTRODUCTION OF
CAMBRIDGE SPIES

As a recent graduate with no life, I still keep up with the student papers, and was delighted to see that Cambridge Spies has returned after all of that unpleasant legal business.

Everyone loves a juicy bit of gossip – which is why I was disappointed to see that last week's installment counted a bit of same-sex experimentation as such.

This might be juicy, but it isn't gossip. Blokes having sex in the Union President's throne? Gossip. The Red Boys indulging in deeply homoerotic

team initiations? Not just gossip, but the stuff of my dreams.

In 2013, though, the idea that some anonymous men may have touched each other's bits in a private room shouldn't raise anyone's eyebrows, no matter how thin the walls are.

I hope to see a return to truly salacious titbits in the future.

*Zoab Hedges-Stocks
Murray Edwards, 2009-2013*

A REPLY FROM THE EDITOR

We would like to apologise if anybody was offended by the article in question in last week's paper (pg. 11). We never intended to suggest that it was merely the same-sex nature of the act in question that made that particular piece of information newsworthy and are sorry that it came across that way.

The real reason that item was included was entirely different, and was hinted at in the item, but not made explicit. However, we will endeavour to provide more salacious news in the future.

**Want to get involved with Varsity this term?
Drop in to our section meetings this week to find out how!**

News

Thursday 7th, 4pm at the Varsity Office

**Drinks with the Comment Team
Sunday 3rd, 7:30pm at the Maypole**

Lifestyle

Friday 1st, 5pm in Emma Bar

VarsiTV

Friday 1st, 5pm in Downing Bar

**Or send our section editors an email at
[section]@varsity.co.uk**

Varsity is recruiting photographers!

Whether you are a budding photojournalist who wants to work with our news team, or just want to shoot your friends for streetstyle, we want to hear from you

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Titchmarsh in Union gaffe

Cambridge Union President Joanna Mobed was dropped from a planned debate about national service on *The Alan Titchmarsh Show* because producers decided they would rather have a male British debater



Joanna Mobed in the President's throne in the Union debating chamber

Martha Elwell
NEWS EDITOR

Union President Joanna Mobed has spoken of her disappointment following a decision by producers of *The Alan Titchmarsh Show* to exclude her from a televised debate because she is a woman.

Mobed – a final year Linguist at Murray Edwards who became president at the start of Michaelmas term – was contacted by the daytime ITV programme to speak as part of a debate about reinstating national service.

The debate was to be part of the 'Daily Ding Dong' segment. In the initial email to Mobed, producer Simon

Gummer said that he would "really like one of them to be between two 'professional' debaters." His idea was to pit the Oxford and Cambridge Union presidents against each other.

But after expressing her interest in taking part, Mobed received this email response from Gummer:

"This afternoon I thought I had

finally got everything sorted and would be able to come back to you with the debate motion and all the details.

"However, my executive producer has decided she wants the debate to be a specific way so all my plans have got

"Could you find me a guy who would be willing to take part? It would also be best if he was British."

[sic] out of the window. She would like two men to debate the motion, 'This house would reinstate national service' so would it be possible for you to find me a guy who would be willing to take part? It would also be best if he was British.

"If you could let me know as soon as you can if this would be OK and the details of who you would like to put forward."

In an official statement, Mobed said: "Initially, the representative from ITV was very cooperative. However, I was disappointed by the decision to take the programme in this direction. Being a woman should not disqualify me from speaking on that motion."

ITV has defended its decision, saying that male debaters were needed for the debate because the discussion was about reinstating national service for men.

An ITV spokesperson stated: "As a TV programme we cast contributors in accordance with the subject matter.

"For this particular item we wanted to debate the motion of reinstating national service for men and so we were looking to cast two men who would explore both sides of the argument."

However, the National Service Bill currently under consideration in Parliament, to which the motion presumably alludes, is not gender-specific. The proposed legislation would make it compulsory for men and women aged between eighteen and twenty-six to spend a year doing community service or working in the armed forces. National Service was last instated during the Second World War, when both men and women were required to take part.

On the topic of women speaking about what is perceived as a 'men's issue', former Union Debating Officer and gender studies student Clara Spera said: "It is always distressing when individuals are blocked out of expressing their opinions... This specific situation is particularly jarring, as it only reinforces voices that tell us that women cannot have informed and important opinions about issues that might not relate directly to women."

Mobed also said that she was "a bit surprised by the request for a British speaker. When debating, what matters is a person's ability to think through and understand the issues involved."

"Gender and nationality should not be a consideration in this matter."

Responding to these revelations, a Union spokesperson told *Varsity*: "We would like to point out that the e-mails were leaked and our President did not initiate any of the press coverage of this issue."

Applications soar again

Figures from UCAS reveal a record number of Cambridge applicants this year

Christina Sweeney-Baird
NEWS EDITOR

The University of Cambridge has experienced a record number of applications for degrees starting in 2014. Officials report that the University is processing over 16,500 applicants this year, representing an increase of 4 per cent on last year.

The number of applications made before the UCAS deadline for Oxbridge applicants and those applying to study medicine, veterinary medicine and dentistry has increased as a whole from 56,810 last year to 58,200 this year.

It is thought that an increase in the number of international applicants is responsible for this dramatic upswing. The figure of 58,200 includes 11,230 applications from European Union students, which is a 10 per cent increase on last year.

Director of Admissions Mike Sewell, said: "It is great to see a record number of students who feel confident that they will be competitive applicants to Cambridge. Cambridge is committed to evidence-based admissions decisions which take into account a student's most recent exam results. Our

applicants know that their applications will be assessed fairly on their track record and that places will be won on academic factors alone."

The University of Cambridge still attracts fewer applicants than Oxford, which has received 17,480 undergraduate applications this year, a rise of 1.5 per cent.

Jon Beard, Director of Undergraduate Recruitment, argues that Cambridge's outreach programme was one of the reasons behind the rise in applications. He said: "The University and colleges work throughout the UK to encourage every student with the ability, the enthusiasm and the motivation to do well and to make Cambridge one of their five UCAS choices."

"2013 saw our most ambitious and extensive outreach programme to date. We are delighted that our work appears to be having such positive results."

Sarah Ebsworth, a second-year PPS student at Magdalene, has volunteered at University open days. She comments: "The open days were exceptionally popular this summer, and the prospective students that I met seemed really enthusiastic about the possibility of studying at Cambridge."



Who wouldn't want to study here?

Each year the University spends around £2.7m on their outreach programmes. Admissions statistics released earlier this year showed that the proportion of state school students admitted in 2012 rose significantly to 63.3 per cent up from 58.8 per cent in 2011.

Figures published by UCAS for the academic year 2012-13 show that total university admissions rose by 9 per cent to 446,000.

16,500

Number of applicants to the University of Cambridge this year

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

However, by Wednesday evening no agreement between the universities and the unions had been reached, and the strike went ahead as planned.

The strike was supported by Cambridge Universities Labour Club (CULC), who passed a motion to this effect at their policy forum on Friday 25th October. The motion stated: "CULC resolves to support lecturers

"The University would not ever be open were it not for the hardworking staff"

and university staff in their day of industrial action on 31 October. We will join with UCU, UNISON and Unite in calling upon the Vice-Chancellors of the University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University to pressure the UCEA [Universities and Colleges Employers' Association] to open negotiations on the pay dispute."

A statement from the University of Cambridge released before the strike reassured concerned students that academic life would continue as normal: "The numbers of staff involved in this strike are relatively small. The University will be ensuring there is no disruption to the students' study."

Some lectures and classes were cancelled, but most of these were rescheduled to a later date.

Caians old and new protest

Caius alumni have written a letter to the Master, while current students staged a picnic protest on Sunday, boycotting formal hall in protest at recent increases in the price of food and accommodation

Amy Hawkins
SENIOR NEWS EDITOR

Alumni from Gonville and Caius College last week delivered a letter to “senior college officials”, protesting against the recent price rises in rent and food that have been imposed on current students. The letter is signed by over 250 Caians.

Earlier this year, it was announced that the price of student accommodation at Caius would be increasing by 9.5 per cent, and food prices by 6 per cent. This was met with considerable consternation from the JCR and MCR, who felt that the student body had not been adequately consulted throughout the decision-making process.

Addressed to the Master and Fellows of the College, the letter states that the signatories “believe that an increase of this magnitude is unnecessary and potentially very harmful to the wellbeing

“The students feel that they are not respected”

of the student body. We stand firmly with the JCR, the MCR and those individual students who have registered their protests.”

Although most acknowledge that the economic downturn has caused financial difficulties beyond the college’s control, there has been criticism from some that financial mismanagement has caused the impact on students to be greater than it should be. The authors of the letter ask for “evidence that every viable alternative is being considered in dialogue with the students before the cost of these undoubtedly troubled times is passed on, something which we believe should only be the very last resort.”

The letter brands the College’s current behavior as “irresponsible”, and cites an instance where a student who was unable to pay their college bill on time due to the sudden and unexpected price rise was asked: “Can’t you borrow the money from your parents?”



Caius students and alumni have demanded transparency from the College

The latest issue of *Once a Caian*, the annual college newsletter, is highlighted for its “conflicting messages,” portraying “a thriving college, in good financial shape from increased benefactions, and a contented student body.”

“The contrast with College’s own justification for the cost increases – a ‘difficult financial situation’ – and the reports from current students, could not be more pronounced.”

The alumni also point out their key

role as current and future benefactors of Caius, and say that they “seek reassurance that the College is committed to using [their] donations as we would desire: to improve the lives of its students.”

The Master of Gonville and Caius, Sir Alan Fersht, responded to the letter on Friday. He said that he was “very pleased that the Caius alumni show such concern for the present generation of undergraduates. It demonstrates the

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Supported the boycott

right spirit of past generations to support the present and the future, and is part of our collegiate tradition.”

In his response, Sir Alan refers to meeting current freshers, claiming them to be “almost all overjoyed [with Caius]”, and that “their experience at Caius had surpassed their expectation in all areas.”

Addressing the specific concerns raised by the alumni, Sir Alan emphasised that Caius treats its students “with all respect” and “as equals”. He notes that currently, the College subsidises the accommodation and food of its students “by about 30%”.

He points out that Caius has “special provision for those who are from the poorer parts of society by having dedicated bursaries and access to funds from the tutors,” a fact that the authors of the alumni letter commended.

According to Sir Alan’s letter, Caius has a higher participation rate for donations from alumni than any other college in the University. “We would have no students at Caius but for past and current benefactors,” he concludes.

Current students have also voiced their anger over the price rises. Last Sunday, Gonville and Caius students staged a “formal picnic” on Gonville Court in a boycott of formal hall. Speaking to *Varsity* before the protest, organiser Tom Scrase said: “As a student representative you always feel held to ransom by fellows who will disregard your opinion for the rest of term if you [try to] rock the boat too much.”

“We wanted to make sure that the fellows are aware of the strength of opinion on this matter and that the student body could act in unison.”

Scrase and the other organiser, third-year engineer Bruno Sussat, met with Sir Alan on Monday morning to discuss the situation. Writing on Facebook, Scrase said: “I believe Bruno

and I had a productive meeting with the Master this morning. Obviously the proof of that can only come with time but he did promise us that we will see change.”

In the meeting, the notion was raised that “the rent increase is a catalyst for raising problems that have been simmering under the surface for several years.”

“The students do not feel they have adequate communication with the Fellowship, their wishes are not taken into account and, in general, that they are not respected. It is clear that we should widen the consultation with students in general.”

In a statement to Sir Alan, Scrase thanked him for their meeting. He said he “enjoyed [the] meeting yesterday and was particularly grateful of the extent to which you seemed committed to listening to us.”

“It feels like you have really taken on board what I feel were our key points and, along with your invitation to meet again within the next couple of weeks, I feel hopeful that together we can instigate changes that will be mutually beneficial to the fellows and students into the future.”

“We would have no students at Caius but for past and current benefactors”

Sir Alan was similarly positive about his meeting with Scrase and Sussat. He said to *Varsity*: “We all agreed that there were excellent and warm relations between the Fellowship and the Students but there were certain barriers.”

“The meeting was very cordial and constructive, and I found the two students very helpful altogether.”

Sir Alan later went on to say that: “We will work together to resolve the problems very quickly and make sure Caius remains one of the friendliest and most supportive colleges in Cambridge.”

“We are fortunate that we have a £122 million endowment. This income is used to subsidise education at the college. For every £5 spent on education, we charge £2.50. For catering, for every £5 spent we charge £3.50. The more we spend on the current generation, the less is available for future students.”
“The value of our endowment has declined, we are now the seventh richest college instead of the third.”

DR DAVID SECHER, SENIOR
BURSAR, AT GCSU OPEN
MEETING (14/10/2013)

“We urge you, if at all possible and by every sensible means, to reverse this punitive increase on the cost of living, including by reviewing the cost and necessity of compulsory meals in Hall. We also ask you urgently to address the College’s methods of financial management... it is unacceptable to us that the reasoning behind the budgetary changes should be so obscure as to remain unknown even to senior college officials, especially when so much is at stake.”

LETTER FROM CAIUS ALUMNI
(24/10/2013)

“We do treat the students with all respect... We attempt to reply fully to all their requests. Last week, they asked for greater transparency about our finances and we immediately agreed to make those figures available.”
“We are doing our best to help all students at Caius and have special provision for those who are from poorer parts of society by having dedicated bursaries... This is where we can help those who are in the most need.”

SIR ALAN FERSHT, MASTER OF
CAIUS (25/10/2013)

“I think there is a genuine feeling amongst the student body that we have an opportunity for some progress on the issue of how the fellowship engages with the student body and that this will give us a much stronger position to produce genuine negotiations in the future... It is a shame that it seems to have had to take student action to get here but... I believe we struck an important balance between sending a message but without making anybody else’s life any harder.”

TOM SCRASE
PROTEST ORGANISER

“I think Caians should have been informed more clearly on why the rent increased 9.5 per cent. It would have been better if we had been informed before... we had booked our accommodation with last year’s prices.”
“If college is struggling to keep its rooms affordable for us, maybe serving a three course meal twice every evening with plenty of waiting staff is not the best tradition to maintain.”

ENRICO BRONDELLI DI
BRONDELLO
SECOND YEAR STUDENT

Students fight back against plan to privatise student loan book

Hannah Wilkinson
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Cambridge Defend Education is embarking on a campaign against the coalition's proposal to privatise the student loan book, despite the NUS already claiming "victory" on the issue in October.

The group has held four open meetings at King's College where attendees listened to speeches on the issue and further plans for the campaign were discussed. CDE are hoping to work closely with other campaign groups to push the issue to the top of the national agenda.

"We've been leafleting people across the city," said Ani Brooker of CDE. "The privatisation of student debt is a massive issue, but something no one knows about."

After commissioning a report from investment bank Rothschild – dubiously dubbed 'Project Hero' – Chief Secretary to the Treasury Danny Alexander confirmed in June that all student loans taken out between 1998 and 2012 would be sold for £10 billion.

Whoever buys the student loan book would not be necessarily be obliged to provide the low rates of interest originally guaranteed to the students. This means that graduates could end up paying competitive rates of interest on their loans.



Money. That thing students don't have

According to Brooker the coalition's plans have been "kept very quiet." Tom, a fourth-year linguist at Selwyn, is among many students who have never heard of the student loan book, nor the government's proposed privatisation:

"I was recently considering taking out a maintenance grant I wouldn't necessarily need because I thought I'd never be able to borrow at these rates again. If the rate does change I will be surprised and disappointed."

Brooker accuses the NUS of not doing enough to raise awareness on the issue: "There aren't emails being sent out, no one is paying for a national poster

campaign – things like that that require a national infrastructure have been absent."

NUS president Toni Pearce claims to have "secured a win" on the student loan book following a meeting with David Willetts in September. After the meeting Willetts wrote Pearce an open letter promising to cap interest rates on the loans should they be privatised.

Willetts' pledge has not been codified in law. Brooker points out that he or any subsequent ministers could reverse the promise, claiming the NUS "quit while they were ahead" on the issue.

NUS were unavailable for comment

but their President has stated that they will keep campaigning on the issue. However, no new action seems to have materialised, and in the absence of NUS action, other student groups are planning to join CDE to campaign on the issue.

Conrad Landin of the Cambridge Union Labour Club is keen for his organisation to get involved in campaigning against the change and is considering tabling a motion against the government's plans. "Many people in the Labour Club are very concerned by this issue and the way education is going."

Landin also criticised the NUS's actions on the issue, saying that its collusion with government meant that "it risked becoming marginal to a lot of students in the struggles against what the government is doing." Landin also sees organisations such as the National Campaign against Fees and Cuts as having "stepped up to the mark" in representing students in the vacuum left by further NUS action.

Defend Education also hope to gain support from UCU – a teacher's union that took strike action on Thursday.

The Cambridge People's Assembly Against Austerity are supporting the cause by allowing CDE to join their "day of creative disobedience" on the 5th November. CDE has appointed a committee to decide what form this "creative disobedience" will take.

News from the Dark Blues

Ruth Maclean
THE OXFORD STUDENT

This week royally trashed Merton students did us a favour by stumbling backwards around their Front Quad as the clocks went back, kindly preserving the space-time continuum for those of us still pleasantly slumbering. From 2am to 2am, fully sub-fused Mertonians marched backwards whilst drinking port and spinning at corners, living up to their reputation as the cleverest college with this feat of multi-tasking.

But clearly Mertonians weren't able to ward off all dangers, with the police telling Balliol to hire security costing £10,000 for one of their visiting speakers. Apparently Ian Bone, a controversial anarchist, is enough of a high risk figure to warrant this huge sum. Reports are still pending on whether anyone outside of Balliol has heard of this bonehead.

The top lads of the football team of a certain rural college this week marked out some city-centre territory, invading Keble to piss all over their toilets, and, after being ejected by the Dean, returning to play football on their quads. Keblites were surprised to learn that the high jinks had occurred all in the name of rivalry between the two colleges that they had not been aware existed.

Last but not least, it was recently announced that the British Quidditch Cup will be held in Oxford. Looks like we've just consolidated our reputation as the coolest university in the country.

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Debunking the interview myths

A Cambridge professor has put some of his favourite interview questions online

Thomas Evans
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

A professor from the University of Cambridge has published a selection of mock interview questions online in an effort to help prospective students get to grips with the infamously daunting interview process.

The questions have been posted on the website *I-Want-To-Study-Engineering.org* by Professor Richard Prager from the Department of Engineering. His new website states that it aims to “help you compete for engineering places at top universities”, and is free to access.

The questions are designed for school students hoping to study engineering, mathematics and physics at university. The website allows users to login and track their progress, as well as suggesting suitable problems based on past performance.

Professor Prager, a fellow of Queens' College, said to *Varsity*: “Some schools are more experienced than others at preparing their pupils for competitive engineering entrance interviews.”

He hopes that his website will be able to “level the playing field” somewhat, “by providing a collection of technical interview questions that everyone can use for practice.” This way the applications process will be slightly less daunting for prospective students.

Many myths surround the Oxbridge interview process, especially at schools where Oxbridge applications are not a regular occurrence. Rumours of weird and wacky interview questions and hostile academics intimidate many potential applicants, and some fear that this prevents them from giving their

best performance.

Professor Prager hopes that his website will be a useful tool for students from such schools.

The questions are based on topics as diverse as goats, pirates and bungee jumping.

One challenging example question reads: “I have two identical pint glasses. One contains half a pint of orange juice and the other contains half a pint of apple juice. I have a small, calibrated measuring spoon. I take 20 ml from the orange glass, put it in the apple glass and stir well to ensure thorough mixing. I then take 20 ml of the apple/orange mixture, put it in the orange glass

“He hopes that his website will level the playing field by providing interview questions that everyone can use for practice”

and mix it in. Is there more apple in the orange or orange in the apple? Or is there the same amount of orange in the apple juice glass as there is apple in the orange juice glass?”

Professor Prager commented that “The exercises on the website are designed to inspire and challenge students. We hope that this will encourage them to consider studying engineering at university.

“By developing their problem-solving skills we can also help them to turn that ambition into a reality.”



Many prospective students find Cambridge interviews daunting

What weird questions did you have to overcome to make it in to Cambridge?

Varsity readers share their own interview questions...

“What is beauty? And what is the substance of the soul?”

FRENCH AND GERMAN

“Could a weather report ever be considered poetry?”

ENGLISH

“So tell me about time.”

PHILOSOPHY

“What if this was all in Russian?”

ENGLISH

“What does it mean to be a feminist?”

LAW

“How many fingers would a martian have?”

MATHEMATICS

“How many litres of water are there on Earth?”

NATURAL SCIENCES

“Can you prove that

$$\sum_{r=0}^n \binom{n}{r}^2 = \binom{2n}{n}?$$

MATHEMATICS



Cambridge Spy Rumour has it...

The JCR President at a certain college is said to be facing vitriol from their fellow students due to their incessant sharking on innocent freshers...

A certain fresher managed to embarrass themselves slightly by doing a ‘Bridesmaids.’ Just watch the wedding dress scene and you’ll know what we mean...

In what was only a matter of time coming, a new Facebook page *Spotted: River Cam* has appeared for all you rowers out there to perve on each other on. First shout outs go to Robinson’s “hot male stroke” and the King’s men’s IV who managed to capsiz on the reach.

One new fresher was so enamoured with their new college experience, that they were thrilled to wake up one morning after a night out to find their college name and crest tattooed on their arm.

Miss Vx

Cambridge University and the arms trade: how are they linked?

A presentation at St John’s College analysed the University’s investment practice

Amy Hawkins
SENIOR NEWS EDITOR

At the start of this term, *Varsity* published the findings of a three-month long investigation into the investment practices of the University of Cambridge that was undertaken in tandem with the Cambridge University Sustainable and Responsible Investment Coalition (CUSRIC).

Our investigation found that many colleges have morally questionable investment practices, often in contravention of standard codes of ethical investment. The University, unlike UCL, St. Andrews and many other top universities, does not have an explicit ethical investment policy.

On Tuesday 29th October, Daniel Macmillan from CUSRIC, who led the campaign, and student journalist Josh Simons, gave a presentation at St John’s College on the investigation’s findings. The presentation was organised in conjunction with the Cambridge University Russell Society, a focus group established last year “for Cambridge students interested in conflict-resolution, peacekeeping and the causes of and alternatives to political violence.”

Macmillan and Simons started their presentation by explaining the endowment structure of the University of Cambridge. Cambridge is Europe’s wealthiest university – it has an endowment of £5 billion, of which £3.2 billion is tied directly to the colleges.

However, according to Macmillan and Simons, very few people actually know what is in the University’s own £1.7 billion endowment, as nearly all of it is delegated to fund managers.

When approached by the CURSIC, the University declined to reveal details of its investments, arguing that it would harm their competitive interests as smaller organisations would mimic their investment practices. However, Simon’s claimed that a recent paper, published by MIT and Harvard, has proved that exact argument is actually false.

Furthermore, Trinity College, which has an endowment of £900 million (meaning that if it was an independent university, it would be the third richest in the UK), was far more forthcoming in revealing its investment portfolio.

However, as Simons and Macmillan went on to discuss, transparency from colleges does not relieve them of their moral duties. Nearly all the colleges of

the University of Cambridge have direct and indirect investments in arms manufacturers and, more worryingly according to Macmillan, extractive companies that destroy communities in their mining operations.

Macmillan gave a particularly shocking example of the mining company Rio Tinto’s role in the Bougainville

“The University of Cambridge is Europe’s wealthiest university, with an endowment of £5 billion”

Civil War, which he described as being one of “the world’s most forgotten conflicts.”

Bougainville is a small island off the coast of Papua New Guinea. The Bougainville Civil War, which was provoked by the continued water contamination and environmental destruction of Rio Tinto’s mining operations, killed 15 per cent of Bougainville’s population. Rio Tinto is one of the most

popular companies on the list of colleges’ unethical investments.

But what can students do to change the investment practices of their colleges? Simons emphasised the plurality of methods available. For example, the Peterhouse investment policy explicitly states that it excludes investments that are “likely to alienate a sizeable proportion of the members or benefactors of the College.”

Therefore, Simons argued, Peterhouse students hold the power in their hands. If they want to enact change, they just need to prove that they feel alienated by their college investing in companies that provoke conflict, such as Rio Tinto, in order to oblige the college to divest from the company. Similar campaigns would be possible and are necessary at other colleges, Macmillan stressed.

This is not the first time that the University and the colleges have come under pressure to review their ethical investment practices. However both Simons and Macmillan, as well as members of the audience, stressed the importance of gaining and maintaining momentum in any such campaign to ensure that the University and colleges do not just “wait it out”, for the current dissatisfied cohort to graduate.

The homeless Roms of Paris

Reporting from his year abroad in Paris, Matt Appleby discusses the segregation suffered by the Roma population

Matt Appleby
FRENCH CORRESPONDENT

Under the Eiffel Tower, a woman asks if I speak English. She tells stories of sick relatives, the threat of debt-collectors. After the innocence, the hard sell: a hand outstretched for change. Though the stories may be false, the poverty is real, and her children are thin.

The tourists hold tightly to their wallets; the woman is largely ignored, and resentment grows between the rich and the Roms (The French Roma community).

The Roma Community in France is frequently labelled ‘the Rom problem’, with heavy-handed policing the most popular solution. Only last week, Romany schoolgirl Leonardi Dibrani was arrested in front of her classmates, sparking student protests across Paris. Despite a Presidential pardon, she still remains in Kosovo, where her family claim that they have been assaulted.

“The richest streets of Paris house its poorest residents”

Racism is rife and the government that purports to represent its people ignores and oppresses the Roma population. For many in France the Roma are undesirable. It is not only petty crime



Romani citizens protest about efforts to expel them from France

that they have become associated with, but also violent assault. Every Parisian has his story. Verbal abuse is a rite of passage, physical abuse a badge of honour. A Rom once asked me for a light and spat at me when I refused, a friend remembers, proudly.

The idea that the Roma are pushed

towards crime by circumstance is given little credence, but the poverty is abject and the richest streets of Paris house its poorest residents. On the Boulevard Saint-Michel, the crowds part about a child in the road. Unwashed and underfed, he is suspected of pickpocketing. Away from the Eiffel Tower, a

woman begs by a cash-point. The slick, chic Parisians pass and few have time or money. By the Boulevard Saint-Germain, the children of Roma families urinate across from the expensive boutiques. And on the Champs Élysées, men pray on the paving. Their clothes are torn and a veil drawn over their

faces. They are treated with an uneasy respect; widely considered ‘unpredictable’, they offer a cup of coins and do not look up.

It is not naive to expect a country that spends ten billion Euros on job creation to provide work and support for those least fortunate in its society. Nor is it idealistic to expect France to cater for all of its residents, without resorting to allegations of illegal immigration.

“Verbal abuse is a rite of passage, physical abuse a badge of honour”

Despite this, decades of xenophobia continue to influence governmental decisions. Former President Sarkozy expelled large numbers of Roma from France in a move branded “discriminatory” by the European Court of Human Rights. Rarely is the root cause of poverty addressed, whether in public, or in politics. The Socialists may open their mouths to protest, but they are the quietest of them all.

As I walk by the Seine, a Rom asks for change.

But I’ve been in Paris long enough, and I refuse. The street titters as the woman shouts abuse. Her intention is clear, if the words aren’t, and at last I have a story to tell.

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Living wage campaign mounts at King's

A rally at King's College continued the demand for the University of Cambridge to pay the living wage

Amy Hawkins
SENIOR NEWS EDITOR

Over 100 people gathered in the somewhat aptly named Keynes Hall in King's College last week, to discuss the local and national campaign for the living wage.

The rally was organised by Barney McCay, a second-year history student at King's and Campaigns Officer at Cambridge Universities Labour Club (CULC). Panel members included Priya Kothari, Head of Policy at Save the Children UK, and former CUSU President Tom Chigbo, who now works for Citizens UK.

A campaign run by the Cambridge University Students' Union (CUSU) to put pressure on the University and colleges to pay all of their staff the living wage has long been in place, but has recently gained momentum with the appointment this month of a CUSU Living Wage Officer.

Many colleges, however, still lag behind in paying their staff the living wage. Homerton and Jesus are two of the few to have committed to paying all their employees at least £7.45 an hour, although neither of them are yet fully accredited by the Living Wage Foundation. This is due to the fact that they have not extended this commitment to future employees, an immensely important fact according to Chigbo and Citizens UK.

"We need to make work pay...The living wage is the minimum level of pay required to ensure an acceptable standard of living for a family"

Daniel Zeichner, the Labour parliamentary candidate for Cambridge and former student at King's, called the current state of affairs at the University of Cambridge "shameful", with over one thousand employees paid less than the living wage.

Figures obtained through Freedom of Information requests in January suggest that King's employs 67 permanent



The living wage panel (from left): Daniel Zeichner, Kayte Lawton, Tom Chigbo, Heather Wakefield and Priya Kothari

£7.45

Living Wage outside of London (per hour)

148

King's staff paid below the Living Wage

20%

Children in the UK live in absolute poverty

staff and 81 casual workers for less than £7.45 per hour.

Workers on low pay are predominantly bedders and canteen staff, who look after students on a day-to-day basis. Heather McKay, a second-year student at Selwyn, noted that she is paid an hourly rate of £7.45 to work in her college bar, while she believes her bedder is paid far less. Selwyn currently employs 27 members of staff for less than the living wage – the average salary for these workers is £7.12 per hour.

More communication between staff and students was Chigbo's rallying cry. He repeatedly urged the audience to focus on "family, love and action" in campaigning for the living wage. To help students understand the reality of working for less than it costs to maintain a decent standard of living, he advised them to talk to their cleaners.

"Invest time in that, above everything else," he urged the audience.

He also suggested that campaigners avoid the temptation to shame and embarrass employers into raising the wages of their staff; Chigbo instead emphasised the pride that should come with living wage accreditation.

Kayte Lawton, from the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR), discussed a paper produced by the IPPR about the practicalities and implications of implementing a living wage.

She pointed out that five million people earn less than the living wage – one-fifth of the total workforce – and that workers at the bottom of the pay scale are predominantly young, female and working in service sector jobs.

The fact that workers employed under the living wage are predominantly part-time, or come from a household

where someone else works, means that most people earning less than the living wage do not come from the poorest households.

However, she emphasised the importance of being paid a living wage in giving workers a voice, and increasing revenue for the government. According to IPPR research, the Treasury would take in an extra £3.6 billion per year in taxation if everyone being paid below the national living wage of £7.45 per hour was brought up to this threshold.

Last year, 2.6 million children – 20 per cent of all under-18s in the UK – lived in absolute poverty. This figure will rise to 4.7 million by 2020, according to the Institute of Fiscal Studies. The UK has one of the highest rates of child poverty of any developed nation.

Unlike Lawton, Kothari from Save the Children

argued that low wages are in fact a key contributor to impoverishment: she cited the figure that two-thirds of children living in poverty have one or both parents in work.

"We need to make work pay...The

"This vulnerable set of people ... are not going to be rushing to the barricades, because if they get onto the wrong side of their bosses they lose their job, pure and simple"

living wage is the minimum level of pay required to ensure an acceptable standard of living for a family," she told the audience.

"The public sector living wage issue is a women's issue," said Heather Wakefield from UNISON. Wakefield is concerned mainly with the actions of local councils in paying their workforce adequately, especially considering that over two-thirds of local government workers are women and in part-time employment, a situation that Wakefield called a "double whammy" of low pay.

Audience members questioned why the panel was not focusing on raising the minimum wage to the living wage, leading onto a point about Britain's culture of employer philanthropy rather than workers' rights.

Wakefield conceded that pay structures are hugely complex, although Chigbo maintained that Citizens UK's system of living wage accreditation is a way of working through the complex layers of employment contracts.

The Living Wage Campaign is needed at the University of Cambridge, it was argued, because bedders and other poorly paid workers have far less freedom to protest against their wages than a student working in a bar.

This "vulnerable set of people," Zeichner said, are "people who are not going to be rushing to the barricades, because if they get onto the wrong side of their bosses they lose their job, pure and simple."

in Profile



NAME?

Tom Chigbo

CLAIM TO FAME?

Ex St John's Student and first black president of CUSU

WHERE IS HE NOW?

Citizens UK

When Tom Chigbo graduated with a degree in Geography from St John's College in 2009, he could have followed the path of many of his peers towards the big money in the city.

However, after being awarded the St John's College Larmor Award, and being named by Rare Rising Stars as the UK's number one black student, Chigbo had loftier ambitions.

Instead, he ran for CUSU President and won the election in a year of exceptionally high student turnout. He was CUSU's first black President. Among his biggest achievements during his time with CUSU was to secure funding of £35,000 to establish a Student Advice Service, making Cambridge the final Russell Group university to have a full-time student advisor.

Since leaving CUSU, Chigbo has received considerable public recognition. In 2012, the Guardian tipped Chigbo as a future Prime Minister in their profile of him as 'one to watch'. Speaking at

the time, Chigbo said: "I'm interested in people. I think the way politics is conducted in this country does not give people enough respect and recognition, and that needs to change".

After gaining an MA in Community Organising at Queen Mary University in London, Chigbo joined Citizens UK, a grassroots organisation that aims to "build the power of communities who work together for the common good."

One of Citizens UK's primary campaigns is for institutions, such as the University of Cambridge, to pay all of its staff the living wage and to be accredited by the Living Wage Foundation.

Being accredited means that an employer is committing to pay all current and future staff the living wage (£7.45 per hour nationally, £8.55 per hour in London). This entitles the employer to use the Living Wage Employer mark, granted by the Living Wage Foundation.

Speaking to *Varsity* at this week's

Living Wage Rally at King's, Chigbo commented on how students often live very separate lives from the people of their surroundings. This, he said, is "really sad."

Some colleges defend their failure to pay the living wage by the fact that their staff receive "perks" such as free meals and uniforms. Chigbo called such gestures "irrelevant", and stressed that paying the living wage is a sign of respect, giving people the freedom to spend their money how they choose.

Chigbo said: "The living wage is good for employers, good for workers and good for society. Cambridge is one of the country's most expensive cities, with 17 per cent of children living in poverty.

"If anywhere is crying out for a dynamic Living Wage Campaign, it's here. By campaigning for the living wage and building relationships with the cleaning, catering and security staff who keep the University moving, students can make a real difference to people's lives."

VARSLTY

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Applications are now open for Varsity's Lent 2014 Editorial Team

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Lent Editor

25th November
Section Editors

BCG WEEKLY PUZZLE

Balloon on a plane

This week's puzzle is partly a physics question, but more of a thought experiment. If you're sitting on a plane and it accelerates, you get pushed back into your seat. If you were holding a helium balloon on a string when the plane accelerated, would the balloon go forwards, backwards, or stay in the same place, relative to the plane?

If you want to know the answer to this week's puzzle, or find out more about working at BCG, please visit puzzle.bcg.london.com

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The Mays #22

Applications are open to edit the 2014 Mays Anthology, the collection of the best student writing and artwork from Cambridge and Oxford.

Interested candidates should email mays@varsity.co.uk by Sunday 10th November 2013.

The Mays, formerly the May Anthologies, are published annually by Varsity. The editor or editors will assemble a committee of students to invite fiction and non-fiction submissions of prose, poetry and drama, as well as illustration and photography. The committee also appoints guest editors from the literary world. The Mays is famous for having launched the career of Zadie Smith and previous guest editors have included Jarvis Cocker, Ted Hughes, Ian Patterson, amongst others.

Malala wants to go to Cambridge

BIRMINGHAM Malala Yousafzai, 16, the teenager who was shot in the head by the Taliban for going to school against Taliban orders, has revealed she would like to study in Cambridge.

Malala was targeted because of her outspoken views on universal education and women's rights. She survived the assassination attempt in Pakistan last year while travelling on the school bus.

She is now studying for her GCSEs in Birmingham. The Nobel Peace Prize nominee told an audience at the launch of her memoir *I Am Malala* that she hoped to one day study at Oxford or Cambridge.

Glow in the dark path installed in Cambridge

CAMBRIDGE Cambridge is trialling the world's first luminescent cycle path on Christ's Pieces. Pro-Teq Surfacing, the company behind the concept, claim it will reduce energy costs and the council's carbon footprint.

The path works, much like solar panning, by storing the sun's energy in the daytime and releasing it at night. The amount of light released is inversely proportional to the amount of natural light. The path glows an appropriate light blue colour.

Pembroke Oxford rugby team embroiled in sexism controversy

OXFORD The Pembroke College Oxford Rugby team caused a huge scandal this week when an e-mail written by their social secretary and distributed to members went viral. The e-mail instructed all members to pick a fresher girl to invite on the rugby dinner and 'spike her drink with a substance of your choice.'

A spokesman for the club said: "We would like to clarify that the 'challenge' proposed in advance of the intended crew date was intended to be a harmless drinking game joke, and was in no way intended to mean that the team member should lace their dates' drinks with anything illegal and/or to engage in any sexual abuse."

The email specified, however, 'You must open the bottle in advance and include a substance of your choice,' being 'as clandestine as possible.' The college has opened a full investigation into the affair.

Lord Martin Rees: "Is this universe real?"

NATIONAL Former Master of Trinity College, Lord Martin Rees, has proposed the idea that our universe may just be a computer simulation.

Speaking at the Wired 2013 conference in London last week, the leading astrophysicist and cosmologist said that evolution could lead to 'post-human' species, formed by design rather than natural selection. "They could be silicon-based, or they could be organic creatures who had won the battle with death, or perfected the techniques of hibernation" he said.

Lord Rees postulated that 'post-humans' have already evolved elsewhere, and that our universe, rather than being the sole product of the Big Bang, "may be just one island in a perhaps-infinite archipelago."

What exactly is the role of the Women's Officer?

As numerous JCRs around Cambridge question and change the role of Women's Officer, *Varsity* looks at the current and potential areas of controversy in colleges

Christina Sweeney-Baird
NEWS EDITOR

A number of college JCRs have, in the first weeks of Michaelmas, been questioning and implementing changes to the role of Women's Officer on the committee. The issue is being raised frequently because of a renewed campaign by the CUSU Women's Officer, Lauren Steele, to have an elected women's officer, separate from the welfare team, and with a vote on every JCR Committee.

Amelia Horgan, Women's Officer on the King's College Student Union Committee said: "Cambridge can be a really tough place to be a woman – the attainment gap, sexual harassment and 'lad culture' amongst other things – and to deal with this, we need a network of women's officers pushing for change and representing women's needs and interests at JCR level, and joining up with the CUSU campaign."

Many colleges currently have a women's officer position on their welfare sub-committee or a women's welfare officer who also takes on the responsibilities of a political women's officer.

Questions have been raised recently as to whether expecting a welfare officer to also represent all women in college in a political capacity is simply too great a job. The women's welfare position at Trinity Hall has been split into two, as the current women's welfare officer felt that she could not carry out the two roles sufficiently.

Moreover, many colleges simply do not have a political women's officer position on either their JCR Committee or a welfare sub-committee.

Magdalene College recently had an open meeting in which Nina de Paula Hanika, a second-year student on the CUSU Women's Campaign executive committee, proposed the creation of a new voting women's officer role on the JCR committee. The college currently has a men's or women's welfare officer on the welfare sub-committee depending on the gender of the elected welfare officer. The proposal was rejected by a majority but an amended proposal to create an elected political women's officer position on the welfare sub-committee passed with a majority. This, however, was rejected in a referendum, and the issue will now be discussed again in an open meeting.

The proposal for a form of political women's officer was met with some opposition by other attendees of the meeting, with one attendee

questioning: "If there is such a need for a JCR Women's Officer then why aren't there more people demanding it?"

In an e-mail circulated to all Magdalene undergraduates, de Paula Hanika said: "Placing this position [of Women's Officer] on the welfare sub-committee, however, does not solve the issue of the lack of women's representation at Magdalene."

"No matter how much contact and conversation occurs between the JCR

President, the Vice-President and the Welfare sub-committee, this still does not count as representation. No vote = no representation."

"This causes a trickle-down effect whereby an oppressed group is being represented at committee level by whoever the JCR President or Vice-President is, instead of their elected officer, meaning that the vote and hustings taken to elect the Women's Officer are largely redundant – representation can only

occur through an elected member of any particular group, in this case, women, having a JCR vote."

Christ's College JCR has recently voted to turn the women's officer and women's welfare positions into a single role of female welfare and gender equalities officer.

Speaking to *The Cambridge Student*, Christ's JCR President Charlotte Higgins said: "All of the duties and responsibilities that the Women's Officer had under the previous system will still be carried out – the aim of the motion was to restructure the JCR in a way that would make more sense, in order to ensure better welfare provision and also, as one of its main aims, even better representation for women."

"Saying that the role of Women's Officer has been abolished isn't at all true – all that's happened is that all the previous Women's Officer duties have been put together in a role with half of the responsibility for welfare provision in college (and a large part of the reason for doing so was that aspects of the previous women's role were already concerned with welfare provision)."

Clare College JCR is also currently looking into abolishing the role of women's officer. The proposal is to instead have a men's welfare and equalities officer, and a women's welfare and equalities officer each with a vote on the JCR Committee along with an additional women's Rep, without a vote, to liaise between the CUSU Women's campaign and college.

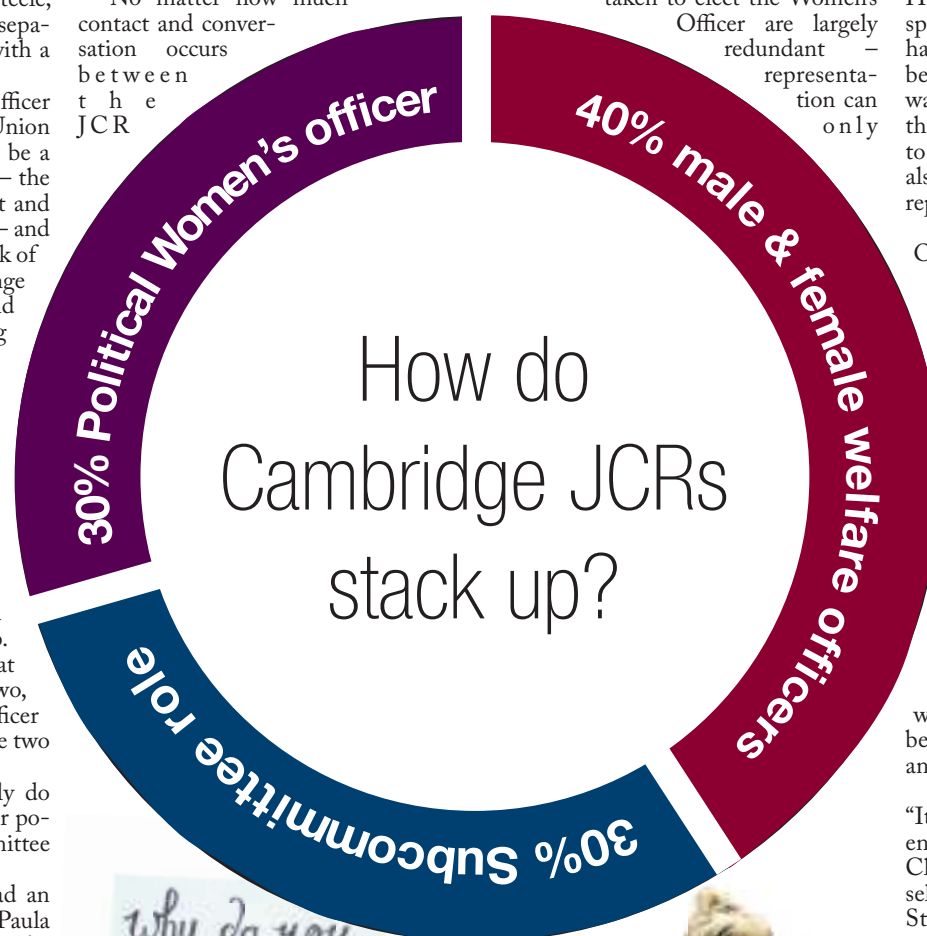
Clare JCR President Harry Peto said: "It is, of course, ultimately down to the entire undergraduate population at Clare, and not the college, CUSU, myself, or even the UCS [Union of Clare Students] Exec."

"The suggestion is being put forward to make the purpose of each officer and rep abundantly clear, to show that every member of the executive committee is there to aid the representation of all Clare students as a whole, and to ensure that freshers arrive with an understanding that men and women are represented on an equal footing within the UCS Exec."

"It is also in accordance with the fact that other positions, such as LGBT and international representation, are not voting members of the Committee."

Trinity College Students' Union is also considering plans to include the role of women's officer as a co-opted position on a welfare sub-committee,

along with the introduction of a disabled students officer and an LGBT+ officer. However such a change requires approval by the college student body via a referendum, the date of which is yet to be decided.



Favourite memory? That's far too personal!

Christina Sweeney-Baird talks to Baroness Hale, the UK's first and only female Supreme Court Justice after her talk at the Cambridge Union

Baroness Hale of Richmond has achieved many firsts in her life. She graduated from Girton College in law with a starred First, top of her year. She is the first, and only, female Supreme Court Justice. She's clearly aware of her status as someone who has achieved something special but she wears it comfortably.

In person she is witty, sharp and incredibly warm and likeable. She's the kind of person you want to be your grandmother. She'd bake with you on a Sunday before heading off to literally make law on Monday morning.

Her interests in family law and human rights cases, especially involving children, are well documented. She says of her favourite case: "The one I'm most proud of is a case called ZH (Tanzania) which is all about immigration and asylum decisions and the priority to be given to the interests of children. I'm quite proud of that one."

"Obviously I am interested in equality and gender issues, family and welfare law because I spent my whole life working on it."

Baroness Hale responds kindly to questions about the place of women. She inevitably hears the questions frequently, but she clearly still has a significant interest in the issue and is far from resigned. "When I was your age, the breakthroughs tended to be going on at the bottom: women being admitted to the Cambridge Union Society. Then I was the first woman Law Commissioner. But I think in recent years there have been women becoming CEOs of FTSE 100 companies and there are now women in very prominent positions running the media as opposed to being in the media."

In today's Eurosceptic age, judges are criticised consistently for the political ramifications of their decisions despite the fact that judges make decisions based on the evidence in front of them, and more importantly, on points



Baroness Hale speaking at the Cambridge Union

of law. Parliament legislates its intentions. Judges, in theory at least, apply that law to questionable cases.

"Although we're very unwise if we ignore the political and practical ramifi-

"When I was your age, the breakthroughs tended to be going on at the bottom"

cations of our decisions, ultimately we have to make our decisions based on law. The judicial oath is a great thing," Hale says.

Following her speech, a particularly opinionated member of the audience asks her what on earth the judges are doing applying European law in the UK. Her response is swift and

edged with annoyance: "Exactly what Parliament has legislated for us to do!"

As such a phenomenal legal academic, and now judge, I'm curious to see what Baroness Hale would have done if the law had been closed to her. "I'd be a schoolteacher. Or maybe a university teacher. But if I hadn't come here to read law, I would have wanted to read history. I don't think I would have done as well at history though."

Seeing Baroness Hale during her speech she is much the same as she is in person. It's unusual, and a pleasant surprise, to see someone not freeze up or put on a façade when they are speaking in public. Her speech is succinct and she swiftly moves on to the question and answer section of the event.

The packed chamber at the Union, and the numerous questions, are testament to how popular Baroness Hale is as a public figure. Admittedly a

significant portion of the audience are law students, but her speech was explicitly designed to be both informative for lawyers and accessible for non-lawyers. Chatting before our interview she mentioned concerns about not boring lawyers and yet not seeming too esoteric for the students of other subjects.

Before I left our interview I asked Baroness Hale a few small questions. She doesn't like to talk about her personal life but I wanted at least a couple of personal tidbits: "What's your favourite colour?" "Blue."

"Who is your favourite person in the world?" "My husband and daughter?"

"What is your favourite meal?" "My husband does a delightful pomegranate pork roast, which I love."

"What is your favourite memory?" "Oh no, that's far too personal."

And with a twinkle in her eye she's off to charm a chamber of students.

Becksistentialism comes to Cambridge

CAMBRIDGE Dr Andy Martin of the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages spoke this week as part of the Festival of Ideas about 'Becksistentialism'. He explored how Beckham's football persona stands up against the existential tradition of Parisian intellectuals.

"The point of the lecture – and Becksistentialism – is to restore, to explore the forgotten subjectivity: the mind, the soul, the enigma that is Becks. [I explore] all this via the labyrinths of French philosophy... which I think Becks helps to clarify. I go on to consider the existential crisis, being-for-others, and the significance of the haircut... the Confucian tattoo."

Tour de France route will go through Cambridge

CAMBRIDGE Cambridge will host a leg of the Tour de France when the race takes place in July 2014, it has been announced. The first three stages of the race – the Grand Depart – traditionally take place outside France every other year, and this year Cambridge will be the host of the third stage which starts in Leeds and finishes in London.

The MP for Cambridge, Julian Huppert, expressed his delight that the city will get to experience the famous cycle race. "It's an excellent opportunity for Britain's premier cycling city and a great way to continue the thrill of the Olympics."

Bomb scare brings city centre to a standstill

CAMBRIDGE Weekend shoppers were interrupted on Saturday afternoon when areas of the Cambridge city centre had to be evacuated by the police after a suspicious package was found in a bin at around 1pm.

The bomb scare led to both the Grand Arcade and Grafton Centre shopping centres being closed and the surrounding area, including Petty Cury, placed behind a police cordon as a precaution. The Grand Arcade car park was also closed.

Students and passers-by reported hearing two controlled explosions as the afternoon went on.

No one was hurt, and bomb disposal experts later stated that no evidence of bombs had been found.

Nigel Davenport passes away, aged 85

NATIONAL Cambridge-born actor Nigel Davenport – the star of the movie Chariots of Fire and TV series Howards' Way – has died at the age of 85.

His agent said that Davenport had been suffering from pneumonia.

Born in Great Shelford, Nigel was the son of Arthur Davenport, a fellow and bursar of Sidney Sussex College.

Whilst being interviewed for the *Cambridge News* in 1989 – when he was starring in a play at the Cambridge Arts Theatre – Nigel said that his father had wanted him to go to Cambridge, but he went instead to Trinity College, Oxford, where he read English.

Davenport's career spanned more than 50 years and included appearances on both the big and small screens.

Is it bedtime for King's Bunker?



Charlotte Neville
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

The first event of term at King's Bunker had all the hallmarks of a good party (notably someone walking off with a random piece of furniture), as well as

one of its best turnouts in recent memory. But concerns over spiralling costs could jeopardise future events.

Members of the Bunker committee have alleged that the Bunker overspent by £1,000 to £2,500. At an extraordinary meeting called by KCSU to review

the situation, it emerged that there had been several unauthorised out-of-pocket payments from committee members that subsequently had to be reimbursed by the Treasurer.

It was stated in the meeting that committee members held different versions of the events, leading to disagreements over what spending was justified. It was agreed that there had been a critical breakdown of communication between the treasurer and other subdivisions of the Bunker committee.

Efforts are being made to recruit replacement members and review the structure of the committee, whilst the sale of advance tickets has been suggested as a way of dealing with the up-front costs involved in organising events.

Some drinks prices have also been raised and the entrance of students from outside King's has been restricted – all in an effort to pacify the College.

Speaking to *Varsity*, Leo Kellaway, a

second-year PPS student at King's said: "Besides from wanting to put on weekly nights that were a cheap alternative to the typical Cambridge night scene,

"Committee members held 'different visions' of the events"

the purpose of the nights was also to generate extra money for the end of term mingles so that they could be better. Any profit we make is reinvested for improvement, such as the recent upgrade to our speaker system. If we overspend, as was suggested, then we wouldn't be able to put on events."

The venue was last shut down in 2009. Before this time the Bunker was a thriving venue on the Cambridge nightlife scene.



GELDOF POPS IN ON PEPYS: Sir Bob Geldof, singer, songwriter, author and do-gooder extraordinaire stopped off at Magdalene College last week to visit the Pepys Library while on tour with his Irish rockband the Boomtown Rats.

Employers want social scientists

Emily Chan
DEPUTY EDITOR

Social science students stand the best chance of getting a job after graduation, a new report suggests.

A study entitled 'What do social science graduates do?' found that 84 per cent of social science graduates are in employment three and a half years after completing their degrees.

In comparison, 79 per cent of arts and humanities graduates and 78 per cent of those who had taken STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects are in employment.

The report, conducted on behalf of the Campaign for Social Science, was based on figures released by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in August, which tracked the progress

"Employers are queuing up to hire social science graduates"

of those that graduated in 2009. The writers of the report took social science to include sociology, politics, economics, law, education, business studies and a number of other subjects.

The researchers also found that social science graduates were more likely to get jobs higher up the ladder: 7.6 per cent of those who studied social science had jobs as senior officials or managers, compared to 6.2 per cent of arts and humanities graduates and 3.6 per cent of those who took STEM subjects.

Professor James Wilsdon, Chair of

84%

Social science graduates in employment

the Campaign for Social Science, argues that the employers are "queuing up to hire social science graduates" because they "have the skills of analysis and communication that our economy and society needs."

He said: "It's time to banish any lingering myths about the value of a social science degree...The UK is a world leader in social science, and it's vital that we maintain this capacity. Teaching and training the next generation of social scientists is an investment that will repay itself many times over."

The report was unveiled at a public lecture hosted by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills earlier this week. David Willetts, Minister for Universities and Science, spoke on the future for social science, and the agenda beyond 2015.

Willetts said: "Social sciences are vitally important to help us understand the world around us. The UK is ranked second in the world for the quantity and quality of social science research we produce but we cannot be complacent."

The Campaign for Social Science, launched in 2011, is supported by 69 universities and aims to raise the profile of the social science "at a time of important changes to funding" across academia.

£1.2m for Persian poem

Olivia Murphy
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

A Cambridge University project aiming to compile the illuminated manuscripts of a 50,000 verse Persian poem has been given a funding injection of £1.2 million by the Iranian-American philanthropist Bita Daryabari.

Speaking about the project, Daryabari said: "Shahnameh is a holy book for all Persians because it was written in pure Persian during a time when the language was being influenced by Arabic. This literary masterpiece reflects Iran's history, cultural values, its ancient religions, and its profound sense of nationhood."

"Professor Melville has been the guardian of the Shahnameh and Persian literature in recent decades, and I want to thank him for keeping our poetry and literature alive."

The Shahnameh project was founded in 1999 by Professor Charles Melville, who is a fellow at Pembroke and an

expert in Persian studies. The receipt of a five-year grant by the Arts and Humanities Research Board of the British Academy allowed it to begin work on producing an electronic collection of manuscripts.

Ultimately the project aims to generate an electronic, accessible compilation of illustrations of the Shahnameh, with details of their manuscripts and their context. This would open up limitless areas of study and provide a valuable resource for art historians.

The project would make it possible to trace the development of Persian painting solely using examples from the Shahnameh.

The Shahnameh, or 'Book of Kings' is the longest poem ever written by a single author and was completed by the poet Firdausi in 1010 A.D in Iran.

It narrates the history of Iran since the first king, Kayumar, up to the conquest of the country by the Muslim Arab invasions in the early seventh century. It is a work of mythology, history,

literature and propaganda that can give insights into Iranian history.

Professor Melville said: "The main reason that the project is important is that it supports the study of Persian culture, which is currently very under studied in Europe. It also aims to show a different side of Iran and give some insight into the Iranian perspective, especially in a suspicious climate."

The funding will be spent on updating the Shahnameh project website which allows the public to view the manuscripts. More work will also be done to show the work's relevance to the modern world in the areas of Iranian politics and culture.

Daryabari is the former wife of Google billionaire Omid Kordestani and has previously given \$6.5 million to Stanford University in support of a Persian studies programme in 2007.

Cambridge undergraduates taking Asian and Middle Eastern Studies can study both classical and modern Persian language, history and literature.



Zal and Rudaba together: Baysonghor Shahnameh

Singh and *The Simpsons*

Nathan Smith talks to Simon Singh about climate change, maths and *Futurama*



Simon Singh is a world famous science writer and educator, who has inspired a new generation to take up mathematics and physics. His major claim to fame is his much lauded documentary on Fermat's last theorem and subsequent book, which explores one of the most elusive questions in science and its eventual but ultimately unsatisfying solution.

The book regularly turns up in prospective mathematicians' personal

statements in order to tick the figurative box of "further reading". All this being said, I study biology and honestly had little clue as to who I was interviewing or his impact on the geek world. After reading his latest book *The Simpsons and their Mathematical Secrets* I was keen to meet him and was invited to join him for dinner before his talk.

Simon Singh walks into the restaurant accompanied by members of The Archimedians and Cambridge

University Physics Society, who are co-hosting Singh's talk later in the evening. They were such fans I struggle to get a word in during the meal.

I'm immediately put on edge, and fear I am in line for an evening of small talk on the speed of stars relative to their distance from the universe's centre – or whatever the more mathematically inclined talk about in their spare time. Luckily I was mistaken in my assumption

"If you could have the answer to any question, what would it be?"

The conversation is varied. He talks briefly about his touring schedule, visiting one or two cities a day. It sounds hectic, though he is excited to be promoting his new book.

Despite – quite literally – having a book's worth of new material to discuss, the conversation does not steer towards *The Simpsons* or to maths. Instead, Singh is surprisingly keen to talk about other things, including climate change. Before putting his own cards on the table, he asks everyone else about their views on climate change – does everyone agree with the consensus? Is climate change happening? Is it man-made?

Many at the table are hesitant to respond, perhaps equivocal, maybe waiting for Singh to indicate if he is a warmist or a denialist? One member of the party even said: "We're all just waiting to hear your opinion so we can fall behind it." In case you're wondering (though you're probably not) I went with it's man-made. Eventually Singh explains that he accepts the consensus, partly based on his limited knowledge of climate science, and partly because he suggests that non-experts are probably wise to listen to the experts. A third of the table still seems unconvinced, and Singh seems disappointed.

Singh then asks what percentage probability that global warming was man-made and would result in widespread flooding in 100 years time – think *The Day After Tomorrow* minus

Jake Gyllenhaal – would be needed for action to be taken now.

Numbers were bandied around between 1 and 20 per cent, and when the figure is revealed at 95 per cent there was a stunned silence. The conversation is interrupted by the fact that the talk is quickly approaching.

On the brief walk from the restaurant to the lecture theatre, there was some time to ask questions (seeing as I was there as a journalist, it seemed appropriate that I should do so). I asked him for his favourite episodes of *The Simpsons* and *Futurama*. Unsurprisingly these were 'Treehouse of Horror VI' and 'The Honking' respectively; maths-heavy episodes that feature heavily in his book. On the subject of *Futurama*, Singh is optimistic for its return, citing its previous cancellations as proof. Even if it failed to come back, he was sure the writers would find a similarly geeky venture with which to entertain themselves.

"There's a 95 per cent certainty that global warming is due to mankind"

Finally, with the lecture hall filling to the brim with physicists and mathematicians galore, I ask him that if he could have the answer to any question, what he would ask? Initially hesitant, he pauses to ask whether everyone else would accept the validity of the answer given to him. Interested, I confirm that he could be assured of this (its only a theoretical question, and I wanted to see where he was going with it).

He says that he would want to know the average global temperature in 2100 if we continued burning fossil fuels at the current rate, so he could spread the presumably bad news. Without any quick fixes in sight, Singh is not optimistic about the next decade. He points that the longer we ignore the climate change, the bigger the problem we will face. Perhaps this is a good topic for his next book.

Fact OR Fiction?



Thomas Evans

Earlier this year, I came across a paper in the eminent journal *Science* entitled 'Neural Decoding of Visual Imagery in Sleep' – in other words, dream interpretation. That phrase typically evokes the image of a patient reclined on a chaise longue opposite an analyst spouting Freudian pseudoscientific malarkey. But that perception is decades outdated.

Dream interpretation and mind reading is a hot topic in neuroscience, because scientists realise that it offers a window onto how the brain works. It might shine a light on how the brain stores memories or manages emotions.

Computational neuroscientists train computers to associate brain MRI scans with seeing certain images, and using that, the computers are able to decode and interpret brain scans it's never seen before – essentially, it looks at how your brain is working to figure out what you're looking at.

Companies hope they can use this technology in the emerging field of neurolaw – using neuroscience to inform legal cases. Current research suggests that computers can identify whether a person has previously "visited" a virtually created house. The potential of this technology is that the system might be able to tell whether a suspect who denies being at the scene of a crime is lying. Some say that's scary, but regardless of ethics, it's undeniably cool.

A killer hunts the seas, takes a chunk out of its prey and leaves it to die in a red mist. This is your typical shark attack story with a single difference. The shark is on the receiving end. This is not a fictional tale: cutting off shark fins and throwing the animal back into the water is common practice.

Shark fin soup has had perhaps the greatest press coverage in terms of shark deaths and it is still a huge problem today, killing over 38 million sharks each year. In contrast, the annual number of human deaths from shark attacks averages around four. For every human killed by a shark, around 10 million sharks are killed by humans. Just for soup. So the question is, who should be scared of whom?

Progress is being made. Shark fin soup has become increasingly frowned upon in China after a campaign begun in 2006 by WildAid and fronted by basketball star Yao Ming. In 2012 the country banned shark import. In 2011, Barack Obama signed the Shark Conservation Act, attempting to close loopholes that allow people shark fins in the U.S. But

why conserve sharks at all?

Sharks are usually the top predator in the food webs they inhabit and have to the myriad years to reach of up to few

relatively small populations compared of fish on which they feed. Taking sexual maturity, with gestation times two years, and often producing very young for a fish species, sharks are prime candidates for rapid extinctions.

decline in coral reefs, one of the most diverse habitats on the planet.

We have to be realistic and recognise that, in many cultures, sharks are seen simply as a way to earn money to feed a family, and as such shark fin dealers and fisherman need to be provided with alternative jobs.

However, although undeniably sometimes

shark fin soup is lucrative, at what is over \$100 a bowl, an individual shark can be worth much more over its lifetime in the generation of ecotourism. In fact some studies have estimated the value of a single reef shark as over \$200,000 in a lifetime. Although not necessarily very this at least illustrates the fact that the gap stopping shark trades would leave creation of more jobs is possible. ecosystems dependent on a predator the seas for hundreds of thousands

15 year accurate economic is fillable. The Rebuilding which has roamed of years is not.

The message is clear. It's not oceans full of sharks that we should be scared of, but oceans without them.

In defence of... Sharks

Toby McMaster

disastrous for the marine ecosystems they patrol. Losing the top predator can lead to a huge imbalance as shark prey numbers, such as those of rays, skyrocket. This can cause massive changes in ecosystems as rising ray populations feed on other fish, driving their numbers down. Studies have shown that shark loss is linked to a

Such losses are potentially



Comment

Black history is British history

Why the revival of fancy dress trend 'Blackface' means we still need Black History Month in 2013



Priscilla Mensah

As Black History Month draws to a close, an unoriginal question, with only trite justifications for its very inquiry, pops up again – why do we need Black History Month anyway?

The question is undoubtedly difficult, often provoking extensive thought pieces, the tones of which fluctuate between frustration and despair.

For those of us pro-Black History Month, the question falls alongside a series of others, namely: "Is there a need for the Afro-Caribbean Society, black and minority ethnic (BME) or women's spaces?" These questions, often asked unassumingly, shed light on a misunderstanding entrenched in our approach to minority difference, opportunity and rights in Britain.

Year on year, I have found myself answering the contentious question in ways that are confusing rather than explanatory. This year however, it would appear that I have found a one word answer: blackface.

Blackface is the act of darkening one's skin tone to imitate that of a black person. Historically used by white performers to mock and demean black identity, it has resurfaced as a widespread trend in recent years, particularly within student communities as a form of costume.

Situated ironically at the end of Black History Month is Halloween, where this "trend" rears its ugly head – or rather, face. Cambridge has not found itself exempt from the hideous culture of blackface. Though seeming an innocent act involving a paint brush or some pens, modern blackface costumes lie at the heart of why Black History Month remains needed.

Central to cultural or racially appropriated costumes is a mystification of the subject's identity. That identity is considered an othered commodity which can adorn the wearer as they see fit and be dropped as soon as the night is over. Though a lighthearted joke to some, this costumed identity, for all its scariness, represents a daily reality to

others.

Black History Month is essentially about bringing the British black experience to the fore. Done right, it empowers a national minority, whilst in turn teaching the wider population that the black presence is integral to British identity and should be respected and understood as such. It is so much more than the commemoration of the Windrush or the abolition of the slave trade.

There is no better indicator of the deliberateness with which British history is taught than Michael Gove's recent and abortive attempt to rid the national curriculum of Jamaican-born nurse Mary Seacole. The outcry from minority ethnic communities raised questions as to why Mary Seacole meant so much. After all, she was half white.

To protestors and petitioners this was a mere technicality; her removal would have meant losing another one of the few black British figures school students have exposure to. The consequence would have been to further distort a view of the British experience in which ethnic minorities play no part. Seacole's erasure would have sent a message to students of BME origin that their value in history, inextricably

tied to their value in present British society, was incidental at most.

An argument often lobbed against Black History Month is that it maintains black history as a tokenistic aspect of the British experience, only to be taken out of the box once a year. The alternative would be students going through the educational system year after year, learning only about Winston Churchill and other "traditional" figures.

This is not to say that Black History Month does not have its flaws – or that I consider the long-term goal is that it remains fixed within one month alone. Black History Month strives to be more than a recounting of the slave trade. It attempts instead to be a clear and developed delineation of the struggles – and more importantly the achievements – of black figures against the historical tide of oppression.

However, Black History Month still struggles with the problems that come with focusing predominantly on the slave trade. Not only does this distort how young and impressionable black minds measure their worth, but it inadvertently mystifies racial oppression as a distant memory, disabling our ability to use black history as a platform on which we teach respect

and sensitivity of difference.

Ideally, black history would find itself an equal component in British culture and within the British curriculum throughout the year. It would be diverse in its focus, incorporating international figures such as Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah and Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, alongside domestic figures such as Stephen Lawrence. It would cease to be so US-centric and rather look closer to home, where it would find an ongoing campaign by ethnic minorities to find a place within institutions where they remain underrepresented. These would be the first steps towards truly respecting difference.

Truthfully, we are far from claiming Black History Month as superfluous or unnecessary: *BuzzFeed* articles dedicated to incidents of blackface serve to highlight racial misunderstanding predicated on the foundational lack of diversity in education.

Black History Month is not an indefinite solution, however. In order for us to achieve the freedom of discontinuing it, something we should consider an end goal, we need to celebrate and contribute to Black History Month and its continued attempt to underpin the black British consciousness.

The re-Branding of politics



Jeremy Wikeley

I can't stand Joanna Lumley. It's a completely irrational hatred. But until now I haven't spent much time getting to the bottom of it. The recent criticism levelled at Russell Brand's foray into politics is a good excuse to do so – he's edited an issue of the *New Statesman*. What is it about celebrities getting involved in politics that is so irritating?

Because they really are annoying. And it's not just the obvious punchbags like Geldof and Bono. The phone-hacking scandal has pulled all sorts of would-be statespeople out of the woodwork. Even Steve Coogan, a masterfully subtle comic when he wants to

be, is insufferable as soon as he gets on a moral high-horse. I think there are two answers. The first is unsettling, the second is rather promising.

First, it seems odd that people promoting such good causes should attract such vitriol. After all, in many cases the involvement of celebs is instrumental in securing public interest and, subsequently, a positive outcome.

Who knows how long the Ghurkhas could have been waiting for justice if Lumley had not swooped to their aid? Live Aid and Live 8 directed a great deal of money to Africa's poor, money that otherwise would have stayed in our pockets. It was not until certain celebrities were outed as phone hacking victims that News International's activities provoked such widespread public outrage.

So it may well be that celebrities are becoming increasingly involved in political issues because we, the public, are not always interested in these issues for their own sake. We need prompting. The reason we can't all have nice things, like decent wages, a responsible press or functioning public services, is that we're all too easily distracted

by the nice things that other people have. It's not that we're wilfully bad. It's just that, important and fascinating as they are, justice and equality don't come with bells attached to them. And people like bells.

"What is it about celebrities getting involved in politics that is so irritating?"

Celebrities, for all their manifold flaws, have bells galore. (For 'bells' insert wealth/ looks/talent/all of the above). When they talk, we listen. We like to think that we make political decisions rationally. The presence of celebrities in politics is an uncomfortable reminder that, most of the time, we don't. And it's quite possible that the awareness of this disjunct is the real root of our irritation.

Yet there is another story going on here, one that's infinitely more positive.

Celebrities, for the most part, are not getting involved in what one might call 'traditional' politics. Rather, they lend their weight to specific campaigns. And these causes tend to be issues that our political establishment hasn't the guts, foresight or initiative to address: poverty in the developing world, ordinary people whose lives have been turned upside down by an immoral media, forgotten soldiers.

And when celebrities talk about these things, we listen. And this is proof that, with a little prompting, people's political sympathies are remarkably broad. The range of human empathy stretches further than the political establishment, determined to secure our votes by appealing to our self-interest, will ever admit.

Because if it were conceded that the average voter might actually care about problems taking place beyond their own garden gate, politicians might have to actually start doing something about these problems. And that's the last thing they want. If the rise of the celebrity politico encourages our politicians to think bigger, it'll be worth every ounce of irritation.



Simons Says

JOSH SIMONS

"Family, love and action," said former CUSU President Tom Chigbo. Repeatedly. He was painfully nice so I am loath to criticise, but I was not moved by his message: love a little more and you might just solve poverty.

Talk to your bedder was his first message, and this part was persuasive. He stressed the importance of engaging with those you are campaigning for. Indeed, the whole living wage rally expressed an idea I think is powerful: institutions which can afford to ought to ensure their lowest paid employees earn enough to meet their basic needs.

Many point out that the economics are not so simple. But those who fear a rise in unemployment if the living wage were to apply nationally have to explain why, when similar arguments were made prior to the introduction of the minimum wage, there were neither significant job losses nor a fall in hiring rates.

Part of the explanation lies in efficiency theory, which holds that rising wages increase productivity and potentially spending power too, and thereby promote growth. Moreover, the minimum wage is set at an intelligent level precisely to avoid demolishing jobs.

However, this is only part of the answer. Arguments for the living wage are easy to apply to law firms and banks. They can afford it.

The problem of affordability does not undermine the living wage campaign, but it does mean that it ought to be intelligent regarding whom it targets. Blanket statements, like asking us all to love a little more, or suggesting that the living wage ought to be enforced in legislation, which undermines the very idea of it being a civil society campaign, are careless.

In part they are careless because they are reductionist, however rhetorically satisfying. Even large companies which employ a significant number of individuals on or around the minimum wage often cannot afford to pay their entire staff the living wage.

What's more, the lives of those targeted by the living wage campaign would be transformed by focusing on other, deeper problems. Class always matters, particularly in Britain. Perception of ability, social mobility and education are vitally important issues, yet are so casually bandied about by politicians that they have lost much of their urgency.

I do not have enough space to explore these issues properly. Suffice to say that there are different types of people on the minimum wage. I have worked two minimum wage jobs where I do not think I ought to have been paid more.

However there are others who have children or elderly dependents for whom the living wage campaign matters. For their sake, we must insist on subtlety, and understand the full range of factors that prevent individuals from earning enough to meet their basic needs.

Light blues without borders

International students tell all about fitting in and getting on in Cambridge

"You need to learn how to drink. British people love to drink." This was a piece of advice given to me by my cousin, a student at the University of Bath. It made me nervous, for I wasn't very good at drinking, nor did I particularly enjoy it. I remember flicking through his photos of freshers' week on Facebook, every single one of them taken in a club and looking very jolly. Did I really have to party "hardcore"? Go out night after night in a row? Growing up in Singapore, there wasn't much of a chance to drink or party until we finished school. Once or twice we would do it underage but mostly, given the interminable drudgery of long school hours and mountains of work, there was simply no time.

I suppose everyone feels a little jittery about freshers' week, but I worried a lot about silly things like whether people would understand my accent, or whether they would want to make friends with me. I became extra conscious of my status as an ethnic minority: back home, I was used to being part of the majority Chinese Asian community. I felt uncomfortable standing out.

It is tempting to rely on befriending other students of the same nationality. But surely the point of going to a foreign country to study is to experience difference, to encounter new people and their perspectives? True, the English love their drink (they also love music festivals and football), but deep down we all love our mothers and we all bleed red. I find it strange that they have their porridge with honey and oats, while they find it strange that we have our porridge with chicken or frog's legs. Yet we are curious about one another and we had a lot to share. I think I have done well so far: my friends have come to visit me in Singapore and I have become a better drinker.

Yeoh Lai Lin is a third-year student from Singapore



When I first left Finland to study at Cambridge, I thought I already knew everything about British culture. Bookshelves filled with Terry Pratchett and *Harry Potter*, rows of old VHS tapes featuring *Blackadder* and *Monty Python* and Saturday nights spent watching *QI* shaped my illusions about Britain. I could hardly contain my excitement when I found myself in Cambridge, finally rid of the (in my opinion) introvert, grumpy and reserved Finnish culture.

When I arrived, I was surprised by the feelings of culture clash. It was remarkably difficult at first to understand what British people actually meant. In Finland, hinting is not really in our culture, whilst in Cambridge a phrase as simple as "We should go for coffee sometime" can apparently have at least three different meanings, not all of them legal.

If you ask a Finnish person how they're doing and they feel pissed off, you can usually tell by the fact that they respond with the words "I'm pissed off." British people will usually respond with "I'm fine", coupled with the slight raising of one eyebrow or the minuscule pursing of lips. So confusing...

The angry looks and huffs received before realising that ending sentences with 'please' is the key to all doors tell their tale (there is no proper word for 'please' in Finnish, so it took a while to learn). However, I must say I enjoy the fact that people here tend to say sorry even if you're the one whose toes are being stepped on, compared with the phrase "ugh" favoured by most Finns to express their feelings. It's the diversity here that makes me happy I chose to step out of my own culture and it's been well worth it. Apart from tuition fees. Screw you, British bourgeoisie!

Pernilla Ekholm is a third-year student from Finland



"Can you read in English?" was one of the first questions I heard sitting at this year's freshers' fair stall of the Czech and Slovak Society. I reluctantly nodded, somewhat suspicious of why a man was asking a university student whether they can read in English. I was then handed a copy of *The Watchtower* – a monthly magazine of Jehovah's Witnesses. I didn't really understand all of it. But I doubt it was because of my English.

When I spoke to my Czech friends studying in the UK, they all said the same thing: don't go there thinking you'll make any British friends, because it's not going to happen. They could not have been more wrong. For the first term in Cambridge I listened to the advice given to me. Whenever anybody politely asked me a question in the kitchen I panicked, convincing myself I couldn't understand their accent, and blurted out something that usually had nothing to do with their initial enquiry.

And when I did actually make an effort to speak to British people, I made the rookie mistake of doing it on a night out or when in a big group. People act a lot more loud and rowdy when among friends, especially new ones that they want to impress. Girls especially tend to shout over each other, giving you the feeling that whatever you were saying wasn't that important.

But I gathered up the courage to join a bunch of British people for a corridor dinner, and found they were actually interested in where I come from and that I could actually understand their accent. Being loud with them was fun and when they did laugh at my pronunciation, it was always in a friendly way. All these people come from different backgrounds, and I found out many of them felt a bit scared in the beginning like me.

Bara Golanova is a third-year student from the Czech Republic



Soundbite news, Syria, and me



Hunadda Sabbagh

Scroll down your Twitter feed, scan newspaper front pages and you will see endless headlines relating to Syria. Not without reason given the magnitude of the conflict. Being of Syrian origin and with family living there, there is a personal connection to the war that is raging on your computer screens.

I have been actively avoiding most news relating to Syria, not for any complex political or ideological reasons, but simply to protect myself from getting seriously depressed. All the time. If I see a headline with the word “Syria” in it, I just keep on scrolling.

I guess you could look at this as an amateurish experiment in psychological health. I thankfully don’t feel depressed even though I have every reason to.

This voluntary ignorance might

come as a shock to a lot of people. Surely it’s neither sensible nor educated to actually avoid news? Also, nobody likes to feel completely oblivious to what’s going on in the world. Or in Britain. Or just in Cambridge.

When something big happens, say the Bin Laden assassination, a Vesuvian eruption of statuses and tweets light up the social media world. This is truly one of the greatest phenomena of our century: the ability to be informed 24/7 and publicise your opinion on these matters just as frequently.

What is it that we’re really reading, though? The news that we’re consuming is micro-news, titbits of information giving us the minimum dosage of the full story, and if the story is not sensational, there are photos on Facebook that will be more entertaining. So the stories have to shout at us loudly and seize our attention at the expense of intelligent and thought-provoking analysis.

This seems to be creating an ever-widening gulf between the consumers of news and the subjects of said news. It is distorting and simplifying our view of the world and the people in it, whilst simultaneously convincing us that we are more informed than ever.

Does finding out that a car bomb

has gone off in Baghdad again, killing 10 people this time, make us any more informed about the city, its inhabitants and the situation as a whole? No. It dehumanises those for whom the story is most significant; they become mere statistics. We end up thinking that Baghdad must be a hell on earth beyond anything we could ever imagine. And so we don’t even try imagining. We just file Baghdad under “Awful places to live” and feel very, very sorry for everyone who calls the city home, without actually finding out any more about them.

The way that we are being fed updates you’d think that the Middle East is the only place in the world where anything bad ever happens. The image of the region that is projected by the media makes it seem like vast swathes of the region are engulfed by never-ending violence, a sort of Armageddon if you will.

I am not saying that I would choose to up sticks and move to Cairo tomorrow, because it is not quite as safe as my quiet little room in Howard Lodge, but ask anyone who’s been there recently and they’ll tell you that it’s not Armageddon. Really.

I don’t think that we should just go ahead and ignore everything; I’m

only saying what I’m saying because news about Syria is everywhere and I’m trying to retain my sanity. What I really do need to know is how my family are, and the news can’t tell me that. Even if I were to read about the details of every attack from whichever side, frankly there’s nothing I can do

“News about Syria is everywhere. I need to know how my family are. News can’t tell me that”

to affect it and that feeling is not good for anyone.

The Guardian website recently published an extract from Rolf Dobelli’s essay ‘Avoid News: towards a healthy news diet’ which highlights in great detail the potential health risks of constant exposure to news bites, such as the release of excess cortisol which deregulates the immune system. Not forgetting stress.

We all need to accept that we can’t know everything that’s happening all the time everywhere, and we don’t

really need to. Switching to picking and choosing the things that are most important to us, and then reading in depth about them, seems a better way to go about it to me. Be discerning, because maybe knowing a little about a topic is worse than knowing nothing at all, as it can distort your perspective on an issue and distance you from the reality on the ground.

To combat this, one can’t extol enough the virtues of investigative journalism, in-depth documentary and cultural exposure. Short of actually living in a country, these are three of the most successful ways of gaining real insight into the lives of others. I’m not saying that news channels don’t do this, because they do and they always have done, some to a mind-boggling level of insight.

It’s the endless sound bites fed to us through the non-stop news feeds that are the principal culprit, because they tend to remove a layer of analysis and add a veneer of sensationalism. There is so much top quality journalism on the internet and the blogosphere is so rich with personal accounts that we just need to look a little harder, and think a little deeper about the issues that move us. Then we become more closely connected to the people behind the stories.

No transphobia in our media



Sarah Gibson

Since the story on Roberta Cowell in 1954 and the outing of April Ashley in 1961, the interest of British press in the lives of trans* people has only increased. Despite the drive for greater inclusion in society, a greater understanding of the diversity of trans* people’s identities, and an increase in legal rights, the media’s coverage of trans* people is largely the same as it was six decades ago.

Trans* people have been identified as one of the groups targeted by the press, and past experience does not give us much hope that their ways are likely to

change in the near future.

The Daily Mail publishes a story about trans* people once a day, sensationalising our lives, questioning our right to medical care and jumping at any story where a trans* person has committed a crime.

But it is not just the tabloids who act like this: at the beginning of this year, a piece by Julie Burchill, which was so full of hatred and slurs that it was later classified as a hate incident, was published and then retracted by the Observer only to be republished by the Telegraph.

Closer to home, our very own student papers have also been complicit in this, demonstrating just how deeply ingrained this behaviour is. Even news about increased inclusion, such as when the NUS LGBT campaign rephrased its language about women to specifically include some non-binary identities, is not free of this. Headlines like the Tab’s “NUS campaign changes definition of ‘woman’” twist the real meaning of the story and mislead the

reader into believing vast, inconvenient and unnecessary changes have been made at the behest of the pushy trans* people. This constant onslaught has led to over half of trans* people identifying the media as having a negative effect on their wellbeing.

For decades the media have had complete control over how trans* people are portrayed and they have not been kind. If I asked you to describe trans* people, without using the archaic and misleading soundbites “trapped in the wrong body” or “sex change”, would you be able to?

“It’s time we stopped telling each other myths”

Would you have remembered that not everyone identifies as male or female, or that not everyone wants medical or surgical intervention? Could you

tell me what the difference between transsexual and transgender is? You might think that this is all superfluous knowledge but it’s this lack of basic understanding that forms the basis for so much transphobic hatred.

The true reality of trans* people’s experiences has been ignored and erased by the press, replaced by an easily digestible fabrication, designed for the sole purpose of selling papers. Strict templates are used to reduce us to one-dimensional characters – the sob-story, the beauty queen or the criminal – and on issues that really affect us, our voices are disregarded in favour of cisgender ‘experts’. While the silencing of an entire minority may seem like something out of an Orwellian dystopia, this may be closer to the truth than we let ourselves realise.

Our student newspapers should not be perpetuating this state of affairs as it simply boils down to bad journalism, alienating parts of its readership and unfairly and inaccurately reporting the news through under-research. With

The Tab’s rapid expansion, TCS’s history of success, and Varsity’s impressive list of former editors and writers – including Gaby Hinsliff, Archie Bland, Amol Rajan and Jeremy Paxman to name but a few – changes we make here may well go on to have a lasting effect on the British press. Growing our own culture of inclusive journalism would not only improve our papers but would also instil fantastic values in the next great journalists-to-be.

As clichéd as it is, every one of us will have an effect on our society and if we choose to ignore our ignorance, we will teach those around us to do the same. History will show whether we chose to seek enlightenment or if we buried our heads in the sand and let time pass us by.

It’s time we stopped telling each other myths, as if they were fact, and it’s time we stop letting the press do the same to us. The diversity of human experience is a story worth telling so let’s tell it right, free of slurs and sensationalist half-truths.

Sidgwick Says

Should parents fund their children at uni?

EMMA
CLASSICS

I don't think what your parents earn should have any bearing on your opportunities as a student.

ROSHNI
MEDICINE

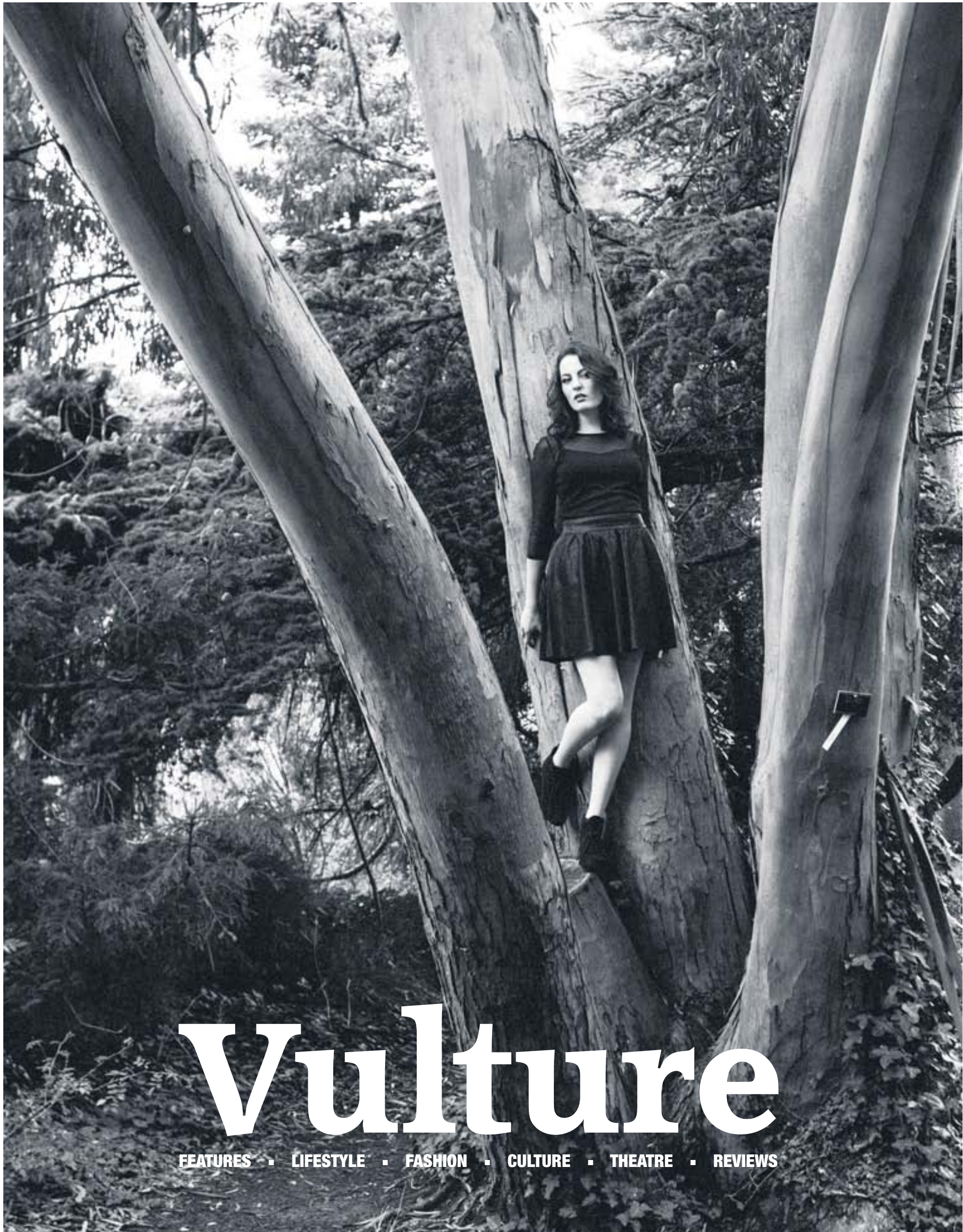
The age of 18 isn't necessarily when parents want to stop supporting their kids; it's imposed by the system.

Parents shouldn't be obligated to pay; it's our duty to pay for it once we get a job.

AMY
LAW

Yes – children shouldn't have to suffer financial hardship when they're gaining vital skills.

CECILIA
HISTORY



Vulture

FEATURES • LIFESTYLE • FASHION • CULTURE • THEATRE • REVIEWS

Somewhere to write home about

A selection of postcards from Cambridge students around the world

Dear Varsity,

There's something wonderful about travelling to somewhere unknown, free of preconceptions and prejudices; simply going and seeing what happens. This September I travelled to Budapest, before taking the train to Vienna. What I found truly wonderful about Budapest is the clash that defines it: it is at once an old, noble city and yet also one that shows the cracks of Soviet influence. It's perfectly normal to spot a grey concrete monstrosity squatting alongside a majestic white and gold edifice, dilapidated, with shattered windows and cobwebs strung across the door frame. Budapest is a city of contradictions: the ruin-bars for instance, built in hollowed out interiors of bombed townhouses, are the perfect mix of cool and class. Once you cross the border to Vienna the divide is less apparent: now forgotten broken down parts have been scrubbed away to leave a gleaming white-marble exterior. But Vienna's charm lies elsewhere:

in the atmosphere of a forgotten city, a window into the roaring 20s where intellectuals sipped hot chocolate with slices of Sacher Torte, and went to the opera in horse-drawn coaches. From Budapest's version of the Statue of Liberty to Vienna's Ferris Wheel, I believe the wealth of these two cities lies in their undiscovered, unexploited facets.

Best, Natalia M-H.

WIEN
25 OCT
965832



I visited the two most sacred Buddhist sites within two days of arriving in Burma. At Kyaiktiyo a cool breeze sweeps incense and bell-borne prayers around the gold-leaf encrusted boulder and off the precipice it balances on. It is quiet there. A hushed roar wraps the base of Shwedagon Pagoda as thousands leave offerings and reverently bathe statues, treading on mats laid across the sizzling hot tiles. Contrasts continue in the centre of the country. On one day I watched the afternoon downpour creep over Mandalay, and fled down the winding hill road before it. Eight hours down the Ayer-awaddy by boat, I breathed in the cooling air at sunset in Bagan, where rain is rare and respectfully bare-footed tourists are challenged by the sun and dust at each of thousands of brick temples.

It was not all temples and tourist traps. I met a man in Kalaw who runs a house for children from conflict zones, who has delivered over 200 babies, and who had his legs branded as a political prisoner. While gliding past tomato vines growing on buoyant reed mats anchored in Inle Lake, I learned that the government has prohibited expansion of these thirsty, vital, floating gardens to ensure plenty of water reaches their hydro-electric dam under construction downstream.

I made the choice to visit Burma, and so should you. The people want your presence and your money more than well-intentioned principles and politics. You cannot understand the reality of the country until you have met the Moustache Brothers, a trio of comics. "Take photos! Tell your friends!"

- Love, Courtney L.



Ciao!

Three months into my trip around Italy, fresh from an exhausting eight days in Rome - dodging Segways, glimpsing Raphael frescoes over the tops of baseball caps and being thoroughly sweaty all day every day - I made a wise detour into Lazio's neighbour regions of Abruzzo and Molise. On top of being idyllic and comparatively unfrequented, these small provinces explode in festivity through the end of April to the beginning of May - which was perfect timing for me. In Ururi, one of four Italian-Albanian towns in Molise, I witnessed the annual Carrese, which involves three bull-led chariots bombing it through the crowded streets, each followed by a phalanx of horsemen, spurring the bulls on with lances. In Abruzzo's Cocullo, a town in the hills above Sulmona (the birthplace of Ovid), I saw the Festival of San Domenico, where a large icon of the

saint is wrapped in live snakes and paraded through the town. On enquiring of the locals the origins, or purpose of this ceremony, I was told that they "have a lot of snakes". These regions have great infrastructure for visitors, and the lush green valleys rising to snow-caps, the perched medieval villages and vibrantly maintained traditions make them amazing to visit.

- Take care, Jim H.



San Domenico & his snakes



"Les Français sont psychorigides", the professor declared to the huge lecture hall filled with exchange students. We had come to Paris with dreams of bohemian artists, freshly baked bread and wine by the Seine: were the French really as uptight as he suggested?

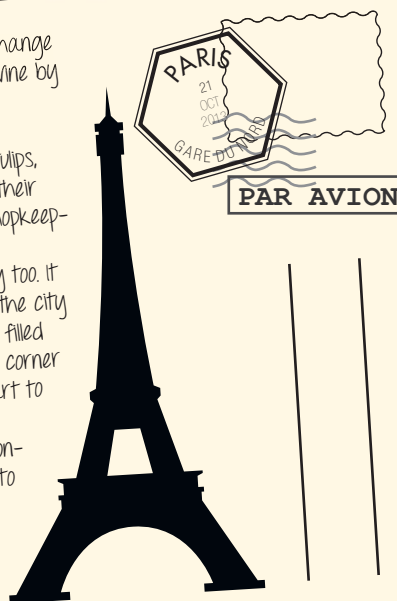
First impressions seemed to confirm this view: our essays were strictly structured into "deux parties"; trips to the Jardins revealed the straightest hedges and perfect paths between the tulips, nothing like our sprawling parks. The Haussmannian boulevards drew lines across the city with their identical facades. Everyday life in Paris was governed by social codes: being extra polite to shopkeepers, waiting patiently for surly waiters, dressing immaculately just for a lecture.

Strangely, this all contributed to the Parisian charm, but there was another side to the city too. It may seem constrained; yet it is buzzing with cultural life. At the annual Nuit Blanche, when the city stays awake and mad installations appear everywhere, I came across a beautiful courtyard filled with bubble machines. In the summer there is a musical version, with a band on every street corner and people dancing down the boulevards. And incredible street art is everywhere once you start to look.

The people defied their unfriendly stereotype as well, as cultures mixed at markets, and conversations were struck up beside the canal on a sunny evening. Et bien sûr, they know how to passionately protest at the drop of a hat.

Psychorigide? Not really: like any city, Paris just needs to be discovered.

Love from - Felicity K.



"Don't trust the police." Hardly reassuring words as we landed in Moscow airport, but they weren't unpredictable. We learnt many more "don'ts" within days: don't bother trying to smile at people (it won't be reciprocated), don't buy meat from the dubious vender stalls, and, above all, don't trust the traffic lights. My stereotype of an undeveloped, potentially dangerous city was rapidly being confirmed, especially when we discovered barbed wire and guards on our in and out of your home.

But Moscow is full of surprises. I hadn't expected the beautiful parks (complete with giant public beanbags), or the juxtaposition of traditional architecture with 70s tower blocks (of which the Russians are supremely proud), and I was certainly ignorant of how Westernised the city had become. You could hardly drive two miles without another McDonalds poster

МОСКВА
1283432
Почта России

shouting at you. Here, however, it was competing with 'Starlite', an American diner specialising in artery-clogging, heart-stopping milkshakes that taste fantastic. And all while eating an American burger, you could glance at the hammer and sickle on the buildings, and your waitress would understand nothing but Russian. The effect was disconcerting. Nothing seemed unusual – and yet everything was slightly different. But then that's what Moscow is: a city of contrasts, a familiar dystopia.

Слюдовыто, Bryony

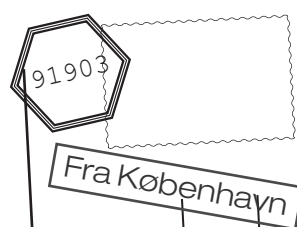
Copenhagen feels like a truly modern city, one that changes with the times while retaining scattered hints of its past. When I moved there with my family this past summer, I learned to love the contradictions this has created in the compact capital.

Although it has a vibrant democracy with a politically active people, on a midnight stroll I found guards a few minutes from the apartment standing still as mannequins guarding a royal residence.

It houses the headquarters of Maersk, a massive business conglomerate, and identifies itself as a hub of international trade. However, it also houses within its walls the socialist commune of Christiania, whose houses are dilapidated and whose main street is lined with public marijuana stands.

There are all the trappings of decadence and opulence that one might associate with aristocracy, with its magnificent Opera House, museums and palaces, and yet Copenhagen is one of the most economically equal countries in Europe. The grey skies and buildings, along with the notoriously cold people, misled me to imagine it as an unemotional and frigid place to live – and yet the jazz clubs, music festivals, and amusement park suggest otherwise.

Love, Paul T





the VARSITORIALIST

PHOTOGRAPHED BY DAVID HURLEY, MAGDALEN HOYT, DANIEL WORRALL AND GEORGIA EHLMANN OF SIDNEY SUSSEX EIKON PHOTOGRAPHY SOCIETY



This week's focus is the Mercury Prize, the highlight of the who's-whos and what's-whats that characterise a year in UK music. It can be a bit confusing, trying to differentiate the genuinely good from the token shortlisted, so we've taken the time to run through all the nominees. Anything that doesn't appear on here, avoid. (Except David Bowie. We missed him out because, let's face it, what was he going to do with a Mercury Prize?)

Happy listening!

OPEN EYE SIGNAL
John Hopkins (*Immunity*)

RIGHT HERE
Rudimental (*Home*)

LIGHTENING BOLT
Jake Bugg (*Jake Bugg*)

RETROGRADE
James Blake (*Overgrown*)

ONE FOR THE ROAD
Arctic Monkeys (*AM*)

GREEN GARDEN
Laura Mvula (*Sing to the Moon*)

F FOR YOU
Disclosure (*Settle*)

PLAYLIST OF THE WEEK THE MERCURY PRIZE

Cambridge English Dictionary

The definitive guide to the Cambridge language.

BNOC (n.)

Pronunciation: /bē-nok/

1. acronym, complete phrase 'big name on campus', although Cambridge and college also apply
2. a reputable individual known for their social prowess or notoriety
the BNOC was a constant of the Cindies VIP bar

-schweff (v.)

Pronunciation: /ʃweff/

1. to flirt with or hit on openly, without consideration of the judgement of those involved or around you
his blatant schweffing was so unashamed, you couldn't help but be impressed

Forgoing foodie fads

Kat Geddes laments Cambridge's slow uptake of the Cronut

What is it that's missing from your life? When you wake up in the morning, what could fill the depths of that vast, inescapable void? Fortunately, only one thing: the warm, buttery goodness of a Cronut.

A cro-what? Exactly. How can you expect to live a long and fulfilling life when you don't even know the meaning of the word? Allow me to enlighten you. The Cronut is the lovechild of the croissant and the donut. Two poor but very individuals sitting on the bakery shelf who sought solace in each other's company. The product of this happy union was the Cronut: a round, deep-fried fluffy croissant dusted in sugar and drenched in glaze.

The Cronut was originally conceived (and trademarked) by chef Dominique Ansel in New York, but has since spawned siblings in Pittsburgh, Saint Louis, Los Angeles and even Sydney, Australia. All bear slightly different names and ingredients, but the mania for them has been identical worldwide. Foodies in New York queued for hours to try the delicious morsel, some forking out as much as \$40 for an expedited tasting on the black market. An Australian

bakery in Melbourne launched the Chantilly cream-filled "dossant", each chimney-shaped pasty oozing filling like an early Christmas present.

For the few of you who see Cronuts as an insufficient reward for flying across the Atlantic, the fad has also hit London. In just one hour, you too could be filling the emptiness in your life with 'cronuts' from Ayres the Bakers, Wild & Wood, Cocomaya (where the cronuts are dressed in beautiful edible flowers) or Kooky Bakes. It might be time to book that train

ticket you've been talking about since you arrived.

The absence of Cronuts in Cambridge raises a broader, more terrifying question – what other edible delights are we deprived of in this city?

What unknown treasures lie just beyond our reach?

Unfortunately, it seems, quite a lot. Biskies, for example, are the befuddled offspring of three parents: biscuits, cakes and cookies. Their soft, pudgy form is attributable to their

fluffy buttercream interior, and can be sampled at Partridges Market, Chelsea, every Saturday. Only a few pounds for a cloud of happiness.

Gourmet macarons are also conspicuously absent. Parisian macaron house Laduree sells macarons in heavenly flavours such as Madagascan vanilla, salted caramel and gingerbread. Pierre Hermé and Yauatcha also craft beautiful and exotic macaron flavours, but cannot compete with the creative might of Australian pastry chef Adriano Zumbo, whose weird and wonderful macarons include pancake and maple syrup, salted butter popcorn, and apple pie.

Unfortunately for us Cantabrigians, these delights cannot be sampled in our rooms, but provide an excellent excuse to leave the bubble. After all, how can we study without such essential tools? As the days shorten, the nights lengthen and shivering becomes a local pastime, how can we survive with only the sadness of leftovers to comfort us? I think we all know the answer to that question. Which brings this article to an end.

See you at the train station.



The year is 2004. *Shaun of the Dead* takes the UK by storm, and I can't help but laugh as a desperate Simon Pegg lobs vinyl records at zombies. A few weeks later, I see a Young Enterprise group selling kitsch bowls made from 12" and 7" discs melted down and moulded into whimsical knick-knacks.

Things weren't looking too good for vinyl back then. From being threatened by a sexier, slimmer and shinier audio storage competitor, to being deprecated as the ideal missile to fight a zombie apocalypse, the future was bleak for the humble record. And let's not speak of the whippersnappers set on boiling LPs down in the attempt to make a quick buck and add a few credits to their CV.

But oh, how the (turn)tables have turned! It's 2013, and figures released last week by the British Phonographic Industry reveal that vinyl record sales are at a 10 year high. I can see my 2004 self, frosty pink iPod Mini in hand, rolling her eyes in disbelief that I too am now a contributor to the statistic that 18 to 24 year olds are buying more vinyl than any other age group under 50.

Eager music fan I may be, but trained audiophile I am not. With an aural ability that is less Lassie and more gammy-eared mutt, I would probably struggle to differentiate a vinyl pressing from a FLAC, AAC or 256 bit MP3 on a blind listen. My iTunes library contents together play longer than man can survive without water. And yet this abundance of digital music spanning genres, decades and countries wasn't enough to stop me from wanting to experience the vinyl record revival.

Unlike well-behaved digital files, squeezed into itty-bitty bytes, I've found that owning vinyl is akin to having a gremlin. Records need to be carefully supervised, stored out of direct sunlight and kept bone dry. Expose the rascals to any of the above and they'll become warped, bulbous troublemakers, spitting and hissing at

any chance they get.

However, I cherish every crackle and hiss of these records, my ear tuning in to every play, discovering a new quirk or distortion each time. The very act of playing a vinyl is problematic, however, in that playing them is precisely what damages them. But, as anyone who enjoys live music will know, it is often the technical hiccup that reanimates the track you

have listened to countless times. Ageing vinyl offers the listener a new perspective on what we now assume to be a fixed experience.

Vinyl aficionados extol the sonic warmth of the medium, but be warned: this very warmth will probably end up burning a hole in your pocket. From looking after turntables to buying discs, investing in vinyl isn't for those lacking in heart or dollar.

And yet, for the vinyl aficionado,

the thrill is in the physical experience. She embarks on intrepid adventures in her quest to perfect her collection. She risks asbestos poisoning as she roots around her uncle's attic in search of the Bowie LP vaguely mentioned in conversation two years ago. Rising at the crack of dawn, she treks to car boot sales in far-flung parishes in the hope of uncovering her Holy Grail: a pristine pressing of Pink Floyd's *The*

Joanne Stewart waxes lyrical about music's guilty pleasure...

For the love of vinyl

Dark Side of the Moon, perhaps. She will find herself on her knees in dusty charity shops, calling on the spirit of Dr Barnardo to take pity on her by miraculously revealing a 12" of Prince's *Purple Rain* behind the moth-eaten cardigans.

Graham Jones, author of hit book *Last Shop Standing*, suggests that vinyl "has saved many record shops and it is the reason that since 2009 more independent record shops have opened

in the UK than closed." Resident in Brighton, Rough Trade East in Brick Lane and the record stalls in Cambridge's own Market Square all offer original or remastered LPs, rare 7" singles along with more current indie offerings from the likes of Vampire Weekend, The Black Keys and Arcade Fire.

The aesthetic appeal of records shouldn't be dismissed as vacuous shelf props, either. Take *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. A tiny iPod screen cannot do justice to the trippy LSD magic of that cover. Look at the 12" case – a true miniature cardboard canvas – and ask yourself which famous face would you want to be stood beside in the lineup? Which hat would you don from the eclectic collection of boaters to stripy bonnets?

That record was revolutionary at the time not only for production values, but also for being the first to print lyrics on the back of the cover sleeve. Reading those lysergic etchings while being blinded by the dayglo riot of the cover art proves *Sgt. Pepper's* to be a psychedelic masterpiece. For such a grandiose album, replete with lyrical and visual nuances, it comes as no surprise that the tangible product is so completely in tune with the music.

A personal favourite is the 1969 *Let it Bleed* by The Rolling Stones. The cover is a surreal pictorial concoction of a vinyl being played by an antique phonograph, whilst the record changer supports several items, including a tyre, pizza and a gaudy iced cake by the beloved Delia Smith. Imagining the idea of a modern day equivalent – perhaps a Hummingbird red velvet cupcake smushed onto an iPod Nano – just doesn't cut it for me.

While I profess my newfound appreciation for vinyl, I can't say that I will be completely surrendering my white USB cable to analogue any time soon. Whether it's played through an iPod or spun on a turntable, my primary concern is that the music is good.



How (not) to swap
EMILY DEAN

Term has started, but the workload hasn't yet had the chance to overwhelm you, and everyone is still keen to make new friends. Or enemies. Or lovers – everyone has their own tactics.

Swap season is upon us. Gird your loins, line your stomachs and turn on the charm: it's time to rifle through the dressing up box and bulk buy the cheap wine. That oldest and noblest of Cambridge traditions is back, and boy are we ready. Forget vacation work and pre-term essays: I don't even remember what "I'll-hit-the-ground-running-this-term-I-promise" ever meant.

Everyone has their preferred swapping locations. With the Mahal missing in action, Curry King now rules supreme as the dirtiest and cheapest of all swap-houses. Take one or two steps up the ladder and you'll reach the likes of Mai Thai and Curry Garden, where the food can just pass as edible – depending on how much you've drunk by the time it arrives – and the waiters don't always stare daggers at you. The Ritz of seedy swap-houses has got to be Sesame. The mildly terrifying, brothel-like interior décor of the small, windowless rooms is all but eclipsed by the glory of karaoke. The only downside: when you stumble out of your underground lair having just belted out a pitch-perfect version of 'Wannabe', you realise that you are a very long, cold walk from the promised land of Life and Cindies.

Alternatively, you could go for the more prestigious formal swap. With these, however, come several dilemmas. To gown or not to gown? To penny or not to penny? And, most pressingly, what do you do now the porters are growing suspicious and you are all trapped hiding behind the battlements of a snowy Trinity rooftop?

The next hurdle to be tackled with swaps is the theme. From the conventional 'Tarts and Vicars' and 'Rubik's Cube' spring the less ordinary: 'Sluts and Lobsters', for example. A word of warning for the indecisive amongst you: a slutty lobster costume really is something that has to be seen to be believed. And absolutely unnerving. Or try something else imaginative: ditch the toga party and go for 'Childhood Heroes'. With that said, I point-blank refused to go as Carenza Lewis from *Time Team*. Despite actually being my childhood hero, action slacks, a fleece and a trowel is a look very few people can pull off, let alone on the dancefloor of Cindies.

Swap culture may spawn the kind of outrageous behaviour the *Daily Mail* revels in, and yes, sometimes it can go too far. But if you can work out which of Sainsbury's cheapest wine you can reasonably down in under an hour (here's a tip: don't take a bottle of port to a swap. It's neither big nor clever and will end badly for everyone involved) hoard your engineer pennies and remember to book your table under 'St John's College', you'll do just fine.

Lucy's Cookbook

As we all know, there is nothing more deliciously indulgent or quintessentially English than an afternoon cream tea. I love it because it's such a social occasion, turning simple procrastination into an event – with jam on top.

You could go and spend fifteen or twenty-odd in one of Cambridge's many swanky establishments, but frankly, the cake is never as good as I expect, the scones are more often than not disappointing and they NEVER give you enough cream! (Innuendos to yourselves please.)

In my opinion, the best option is to make your own. I can hear you groaning from here: why do we have to when we can just buy it? I promise you, it is really easy. Plus, your taste buds and wallets – although maybe not your waist lines – will thank me at the end. The ingredients you can buy for very little money will be enough to make dozens of cream teas.

Lucy Roch



INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 215°C. **Put** the flour, salt and baking powder in a large bowl, **cut** the butter into lumps and **rub** into the flour until the mixture resembles crumbs. To do this, **scoop** up the flour and butter and **squash** against your fingers.

Stir in the dried fruit, then add most of the milk. **Work** the mixture until the milk is incorporated, **adding** the rest if necessary. It should be really quite sticky.

For individual scones, **roll** the mixture onto a well-floured surface until about an inch thick and **cut** out rounds using a cutter, or a glass if you don't have one. **Brush** some milk onto their tops: it makes them go nice and brown. **Place** on a floured baking sheet and **cook** for 16 minutes.

Or do what I do: **halve** the mixture into two lumps, **whack** them straight onto a floured baking sheet, **pat** them out to about an inch thick **cut** a deep cross into them, **glaze** and **bake** for about 23 minutes. **Break** each one into quarters to make four scones. **Serve** with lashings of butter, jam, cream, and your favourite tea.



OVEN-FREE TEA

If college has not provided you with the magical appliance that is an oven, you can make drop-scones, which are even easier.

Mix 100g flour and 2 tsp sugar together in a large bowl. **Stir** in a beaten egg lightly and quickly (don't **beat** the mixture, be gentle!) with enough milk to make a batter the consistency of thick cream.

INGREDIENTS

For a batch of scones, you will need:

225g/8oz self-raising flour

½ teaspoon salt

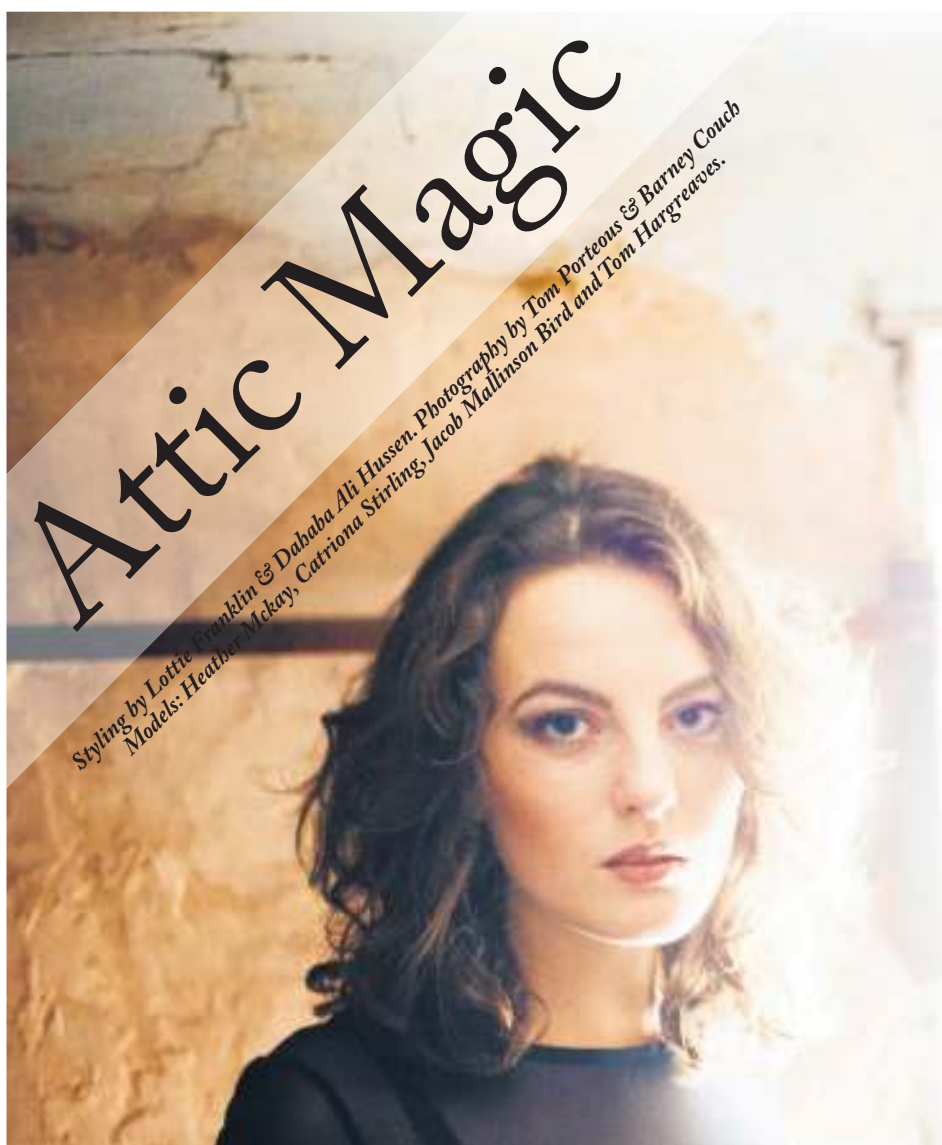
1 level teaspoon baking powder

50g/1½ oz butter

60g/2oz raisins or sultanas (or whatever dried fruit you want if you're being creative)

150ml/¼ pint milk (plus a little extra to glaze)

Lightly **grease** a large frying pan and **place** on a medium heat. When hot, **drop** the mixture in spoonfuls so they make roughly round pancakes, and **cook** until bubbles rise to the surface of the pancake and burst. **Flip** and **cook** until browned on the other side. **Place** in a tea towel to keep warm while you cook the others. **Serve** with butter, or jam and cream, or however you want really – I went for some fresh raspberries.



Attic Magic

Styling by Lottie Franklin & Dababa Ali Hussein. Photography by Tom Porteous & Barney Couch
Models: Heather McKay, Catriona Stirling, Jacob Mallinson Bird and Tom Hargreaves.





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Investing in the Sublime

BETHAN KITCHEN

I was asked to describe myself quickly in one word. I said “frustrating”. I feel that this is how most people would sum me up, at least as one of the top five ‘Bethan-defining’ words. And I think this is because I never feel entirely satisfied in the moment, and I somehow always feel the need to share this dissatisfaction with everyone around me in the most pitiful way possible. I’m always focused on what I should be doing, could be doing, or what I’m going to be doing in the next moment. I unnecessarily lose the enjoyment of single moments simply due to my irritating obsession with the future or contingent.

I’ve started to realise why I want to invest my life in creating beautiful things. It is the experiencing of these things that places me right in the centre of the present moment. And when I’m in its centre I never want to leave.

The best way I can exemplify this is by talking about my love affair with Handel’s *Messiah*. The *Messiah* and I have a relationship going back four years. I was 15, one of 300 young people, standing in the Royal Albert Hall at the BBC Proms, singing the soprano section. Two moments that evening took possession of my body so that all I could do was what the music asked me to. The first I found in a single note of the Amen Chorus, which for me represents a celebration of the entire oratorio.

The other moment happened immediately after the *Messiah*’s end. On hearing the silence, nobody dared clap, move, even breathe, because the moment beforehand, that almighty finish, was simply too powerful to let go of yet. This was also quite a difficult moment when another part of my body was urging me to cry in awe of what had just happened. If you haven’t experienced a moment like this, the closest I can compare it to is an orgasm. You know, that uncontrollable, irreplaceable moment of ecstasy that takes your body above the realms of ordinary existence? That.

On arriving back to college from a music concert last week, I was confronted by friends with the argument that attending such scenes is only a means to satisfy a desire for a specific identity, which they attach to the culture surrounding a piece of art. Apparently, one only ever participates in art to feel ‘cool’.

It is the normalisation of this view that makes me sound a bit dickish in the paragraph above – classical music, Royal Albert Hall, the need to mention this – what does that say about me? Of course there’s an extent to which taking part in artistic culture can attach you to a particular image. But I want to make some space here for celebrating a connection we may find with aspects of art purely because of the bodily instincts the piece of art can provoke. Why do you think we dance, really?

Poetry back in Motion

Sir Andrew Motion speaks to **Ella Griffiths** about his time as poet laureate, his friendship with Philip Larkin and new ways of making poetry accessible to all

Sir Andrew Motion is a man on a mission. As poet laureate, his aim was simple: “To stick up for poetry, to make a conversation about poetry, to make the manifestation of poetry, not just mine, but other people’s, as conspicuous as I possibly could.” All in a day’s work then.

Born in 1952, Motion has been part of this poetic conversation since his time as an English student at Oxford, where he held weekly discussions with W.H. Auden. How was this experience for such a young poet? “He was kindly and looked extraordinary because of that amazingly crumpled face... I’d go and tell my friends that I’d just been having a conversation with God”.

After graduating, Motion applied for a teaching position at the University of Hull, encouraged by the presence of

influence upon Motion’s own poetry, which shares a similar clarity and sparse style: “Larkin writes poems which, even though they have their complexities and subtleties and nuances, and so on, they are written in a language which is familiar, which is something I’ve always tried to do myself.”

However, Motion cites Edward Thomas as the most prominent inspiration for his own poetry, embracing this “distinct tradition of English pastoral lyric writing.” Indeed, the poet is fascinated by intertextuality: “I don’t have an anxiety of influence, rather the opposite, I have a sort of welcome of influence.”

In his recent collection, *The Customs House*, this emphasis on dialogue is tangible in the first section that owes much to twentieth-century war poetry: “That was the plan, anyway, partly as a way of creating an immediate historical wind-tunnel for the poems to live in but also because people like me, who have never been on the front line, writing about these extreme and terrifying situations can very easily get caught grandstanding and advertising their sensibility in some rather revolting way.”

Motion succeeded Ted Hughes as Poet Laureate in 1999. Despite finding it rewarding, he has been candid about the effects of the post upon his own writing. Over the decade in the position, Motion wrote about bullying, homelessness, climate change, terrorism and the Iraq invasion.

Was this sequence of commissions a barrier to his creativity? “Yes, it was. And by the end of it I’d had quite enough of it, thank you very much, and couldn’t wait to stop... There’s no question: when I stopped being Laureate I felt energised, I felt like I was a child again, really.”

Instead, Motion focused upon the role’s practical potential: “I decided that the writing bit of the job, which had always been the traditionally expected

“I don’t have an anxiety of influence, rather the opposite, I have a sort of welcome of influence”

Philip Larkin. The two poets became “proper friends” over a period of nine years, and Motion, as one of Larkin’s literary executors after his death in 1985, would later write *Philip Larkin: A Writer’s Life*.

What was it like being his friend’s biographer? “I kept reminding myself that if I was writing a book it would be a very big mistake to assume that the Larkin I’d known for the last ten years was the Larkin that existed in previous parts of his life. It was also a big mistake to think that a version of him that he showed me was everything”. Despite Motion’s uncertainty, the book won the 1993 Whitbread Prize for Biography.

I ask whether Larkin was a big



Sir Andrew reading at Seven Stories, Centre for Children’s Books

bit, should really take an equal or even a back foot to the doing bit of it.”

This practical focus included efforts to reform English teaching in schools. Criticising how poems are “routinely used as a means of having a conversation about something else, rather than as an end in itself,” Motion vowed to “put the poetry back into poetry.”

He describes the Poetry Archives, an online collection of audio clips featuring poets reading their own work, as his proudest achievement, hoping to show how “the meaning of a poem consists as much in the noise it makes as it does in the words that we see written down on the page. They are meant to be spoken, enjoyed and not just drearily studied.”

He sees new technologies as a vital tool in this attempt to energise responses to poetry. The internet has created “a much broader spectrum of poetries now than say, forty years ago when I started out. It’s frightening and exciting. I wish we had a crystal ball. I’m sure all publishers wish they had a crystal ball too, because there are extraordinary opportunities opening up for multi-media version of poems, which I can’t wait to happen.”

In 2012 he followed Bill Bryson in becoming president of Campaign to Protect Rural England. Why is saving the countryside so important to him? “It’s for all of us, that’s the whole point. It’s like poetry – it’s for all of us.”

“Well it’s all art isn’t it?” Or is it?



Grayson Perry considers the possibility of measuring good art

Olivia Murphy
ART CORRESPONDENT

“What makes good art?” It sounds like a daunting essay question, or worse, small talk at a dinner party. But this is the question that Grayson Perry attempts to answer in this year’s Reith

Lectures on BBC Radio 4. Perry treads the tightrope between academic and flippant rather well: an artist, potter, Turner Prize winner, transvestite and, most importantly, very entertaining.

An interesting question that Perry raises is how we tell if art is good, and how good it is. Perhaps we should

consult empirical measurements such as how many people see the artwork? This might seem sensible except this probably puts a Mickey Mouse statue in Disneyland Paris as one of the best pieces of artwork that currently exists.

Another plausible measurement could be how large the artwork is. Maybe bigger really is better? If this is true then at the age of six I produced a valuable piece of artwork by ripping wallpaper off my bedroom wall and colouring the exposed plaster green.

So where else can we turn for answers? Perry suggests that we ought to look to the Greeks and their concept of the Golden Ratio. This seems sensible, especially as it is argued that this calculation lay behind works like the Parthenon. Nevertheless, is art really reducible to a formula? A numerical approach seems rather cold.

Perhaps we must seek the opinion of ‘experts’ in order to find out what constitutes good art. Perry suggests that a tight-knit group of curators, artists, dealers and bigwigs decide what’s in vogue, sometimes literally, through

a code of winks and nods. Let’s take Damien Hirst. Maybe Hirst would have been noticed by the art circles regardless but it’s hard to see how a little help from Charles Saatchi was damaging. In 1991, Saatchi offered to fund Hirst’s work, which was exhibited in the Saatchi Gallery. As a result Hirst was nominated for the Turner Prize.

I hear the more cynical among you cry: “Well isn’t it all about money?” Yes there is a view that if your art doesn’t fit inside a Chelsea apartment then you are never going to make it. Perry wittily portrays this idea of art as an asset through the acronym ‘SWAG’: silver, wine, art and gold. This poses an interesting question: if art is defined by the framework that it is seen through, then is art as an asset still art?

How then do we measure it art, if not by value or popularity? I would suggest that we act on gut instinct. First impressions often stay with us despite how much rationalising we do later. So, go for it, like what you want, it isn’t a crime. Unless you destroy other people’s artwork... that probably is a crime.

A new Dirty Blonde ambition

Louise Banable talks to new student band Dirty Blonde about making a mark on the music scene

“Alt. Baroque! Oh God, that’s the most pretentious thing I’ve ever said.” Guy Clarke laughs, shaking his head. His statement is the result of five minutes of confused conversation attempting to define Dirty Blonde’s genre of music. This discussion set the tone for the interview, which showcases the intriguingly chaotic and mosaic nature of the band, a quality that comes through in their music.

They can’t really be blamed considering the band is still in its nascent stages. Composed of six members – Esther and George Longworth (Vocals), Mike Campbell (Lead Guitar), Ed Dakin (Rhythm guitar/ Keyboard), Guy Clarke (Bass) and Jack Mowat-Maconochie (Drums) – Dirty Blonde has been together for less than a year and have already enjoyed significant success.

Their first gig was in the legendary Camden venue The Dublin Castle, and when asked about it the excitement is palpable. “There is nothing more satisfying than looking out into the audience and seeing at least one person, preferably more, just rocking out,” George Longworth says.

When asked to describe their live show, Guy is quick to quip, “Fucking great!” which is followed by laughter from the others. “[The promoters] have asked us back for two nights,” George states proudly. There’s no disagreement on this topic, Dirty Blonde truly believe in the importance of putting on a show and are confident in their



Dirty Blonde, left to right: Jack Mowat-Maconochie, Guy Clark, George and Esther Longworth, Ed Dakin and Mike Campbell

performance.

Guy and George are no strangers to performing. Last year, Clarke took on the task of playing Marlow in a one-man show adaption of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. Both the show and Guy’s acting were greeted with rave reviews, with the production taken to London over the summer and performed in the Arcola Theatre.

George too has built up a reputation within the Cambridge theatre scene, having performed in a variety of pieces, from musicals to arty dramas about troubled adolescents. When asked whether the interest in theatre has any impact on the music, Guy responds by relating it to song writing rather than

performing. “Storytelling is a very valid thing. I often find my songs end up telling some kind of story.” George interjects: “Guy is just a very, very good writer of words.”

The band takes a very collaborative approach to song writing: “There’s a conscious effort within the band to make sure everyone gets a look in with the song writing,” George says.

The others nod in agreement. “The way it works is that someone comes along with an idea for a song and everyone else sort of adds their own bit and it develops,” Ed Dakin explains.

Of course, this way of working presents its own obstacles. Esther Longworth describes how she wrote a

song for five female voices and a drum and they decided to try and turn it into a band song: “We were all looking at each other getting angrier and angrier.” Overall this slightly chaotic way of working seems appropriate for a band still searching for its style. Commenting on the band’s efforts to collaborate, George muses, “politically speaking [...] and also in terms of the diversity and influences in the music it’s wise.”

Influences are something this band has in spades, ranging from Freddie Mercury to Fleetwood Mac and Led Zeppelin to Philippe Jaroussky. “Freddie is the man,” Longworth tells me. “Oh yeah, Freddie, Freddie definitely,” other members of the band chime in.

While there is plenty of enthusiasm and spasms of agreement at the mention of certain names, each band member seems to retain an individual identity when it comes to influences. “Absolutely John Bonham and Led Zeppelin,” drummer Jack Mowat-Maconochie declares. “I also listen to the drumming in Kings of Leon and Jamiroquai.”

Guitarist Mike Campbell admits: “I have very little on my iPod that’s recorded after 1950.” After the first set of names are thrown around Esther chuckles, “By the time we get round to everyone it’s going to be clear why we have no set style. It might even really be a strength rather than a weakness”. George adds: “It’s something we’re working on at the moment but we’re

not in a rush.”

As the interview came to a close a student associated with the show *Burlesque* arrived to audition Dirty Blonde for a potential part. I was invited to stay and hear them play live. It was during that performance that I realised that the decision to stay was the most important part of the interview. It’s all very well asking the band

“There is nothing more satisfying than looking out into the audience and seeing people rocking out”

who their influences are and to describe their live show but if they can’t follow it up with great music then there’s not much point. And they followed it up perfectly. The Longworth siblings’ vocals soared without the aid of a proper microphone. They danced, they sweated, and the rest of the band demonstrated their instrumental talents. I knew I was watching a band that meant business.

When I asked what their aspirations were Guy smiled, “Top ten best bands of all time.” “Yeah,” George joked, “I’m sort of thinking maybe number one but I’d be happy to be second to The Beatles.” That might be pushing it a bit at this stage, but I speculate Dirty Blonde is a band that will do more than just turn a few heads.



THE COFFEE TABLE BOOK CONNOISSEUR

Hello readers! This week, I’ve been in Oxford exploring their cultural scene. On returning from my travels, I was struck with a desire to read more about dystopian literature, a topic that, sadly, I do not know well.

To rectify this problem, I’ve asked my trusted advisor on all things dystopian, **Charlee Buzzard**, to inform me on the wonders of the genre and why narratives that follow the destruction of whole civilisations are actually a fantastic source of literary pleasure!

BRAVE NEW WORLD

Often cited alongside Orwell’s 1984 as a classic work of dystopian fiction, it is difficult to compress the scope of Aldous Huxley’s work into a few lines. The novel explores capitalism, genetic engineering, human passivity, the loss of individuality and much more. This book should be read by every human being for its eloquent articulation of a society that pursues stability and contentment above purpose or meaning.

FARENHEIT 451

Worth reading for Ray Bradbury’s unusual writing style alone, this novel centres upon a world in which books are forbidden and, when located, burnt by ‘firemen’. Published in 1953, *Fahrenheit 451* is not a dated read. The emptiness of Bradbury’s world, with its substitution of intimacy and thought for rapid and meaningless entertainments serves as an enduring threat to the modern world.

HANDMAID’S TALE & MADDADDAM TRILOGY

Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* is an undeniably powerful book. In a totalitarian theocracy where fertility is rare, Offred’s body has been claimed by the state for reproductive purposes. More recently, Atwood’s *MaddAddam* novels deal with the collapse of civilisation, the power of storytelling, beginnings and endings. As ever, Atwood’s writing is beautiful, brutal and strange.

THE CHILDREN OF MEN

P. D. James explores in chilling detail the whimper of mankind approaching extinction, when sudden and absolute infertility strikes the human population. James’ novel is compellingly readable, with the pace and tension of a good thriller yet rich and deep in its themes.

THE CHRYSALIDS

Better known as author of *The Day of the Triffids*, John Wyndham here presents a post-nuclear world inhabited by a Puritan-style community who abhor any genetic mutation. Wyndham is adept at creating a sense of the familiar, and as we read about David, hiding his mutation from the rest of community, the intolerance and commitment to ‘purity’ that surrounds him is a pattern we can easily recognise.

THE DECLARATION

As the teenage (and all too human) desire for meaning and identity lends itself well to a protagonist’s struggle against a totalitarian state, many of us get our first experience of dystopian literature at a young age. Suzanne Collin’s *The Hunger Games* will be known by many but Gemma Malley’s *The Declaration* contains an interesting premise in a population struggling to cope with immortality.





Playground

HANNAH PIERCY

What do the writer of *Downton Abbey*, the director of the National Theatre, and Sandi Toksvig have in common? It starts with 'F' and ends in 'S', and no, for all you finalists suffering from premature exam term stress, it's not Firsts. It's the Footlights.

It can't be denied that the company has spawned some of the best British comedians, their impressive alumni list including Douglas Adams, Emma Thompson, John Cleese and David Mitchell. But are the Footlights the only destination in Cambridge for would-be Mark Watsons? Absolutely not. While the Footlights produce some good shows, some of the best comedy nights are the independent sketch shows to be found at the Corpus Playroom or the ADC.

The best comedy I've seen in Cambridge was undoubtedly Zoë Tomalin and Siân Docksey's *Carpet Diem!* In contrast, my worst comedy experience was the Footlight's 2013 Canada Tour. Admittedly this was before the tour had taken place, so presumably the show lacked some final polish. It certainly lacked some final laughs. The awkwardness of sketches the cast evidently expected to be funny, while the audience sat there in a bemused state, was, quite frankly, excruciating.

Now, of course I'm not saying all Footlights productions are bad and all independent shows are good. But it's worth remembering that Cambridge comedy, as anyone who's ever been to a Smoker knows, is very variable.

I suppose comedy's subjective nature makes this difficult to avoid. Think of the clichéd internet dating profile (you know, the one we'll probably all be writing in a few years' time. Start drafting now.) and that awkward acronym, 'GSOH'. What counts as a Good Sense of Humour? Whatever it is, I thought I had one until people started labelling my sharpest witticisms 'dad jokes'. I blame the parents.

So if humour is something we all have our own ideas of, and it's impossible to pick out successful comedy shows before they're performed, is there a standard approach would-be comics should take? If you want my advice (which I'm sure you don't), I'd encourage auditioning for just about everything. Being funny takes practice.

One of the things I'll never regret doing in Freshers' Week is auditioning for the Footlights' Pantomime. Of course I didn't get the part, and of course my audition was probably terrible. But it sticks in my memory as a fun experience, getting guidance and (probably pitying) laughs from the Footlights' audition panel.

While I'm now sticking to what I'm good at – criticising everyone else – I'd strongly urge those that do have a talent for comedy to get out there and get auditioning. Let's sweep our preconceptions under the rug, seize the carpet puns, and revel in the many comedy opportunities to be found in Cambridge.

10 Questions with James Ellis

Varsity speaks to the actor playing David Frost in the upcoming *Frost/Nixon*



James Ellis is the first person to portray David Frost posthumously

Third year theology student James Ellis studies at Peterhouse. In 2012, he played Eddie in *A View From the Bridge* at the Corpus Playroom. He has gone on to play roles as various as Samuel Byck in *Assassins* at The Space at Edinburgh Fringe, Williamson in *Glengarry Glen Ross*, Cliff in *Cabaret* at the ADC, and Jerry in *Betrayal*, at the Corpus Playroom. He also directed this term's week one ADC main show *The History Boys*.

How and why did you start acting at Cambridge?

I'd done lots of acting at school, but I spent my first term here crying because I was too nervous. Then my friend Jessie was producing *A View From the Bridge* and persuaded me to audition. I was fortunate enough to get a great part and work with some lovely, talented people. I just carried on from there.

What's the most exciting thing about *Frost/Nixon* as a play?

In terms of our production, we are making it very ensemble-based which is something that isn't done very often in Cambridge theatre. For me as an actor, being the first person to portray David Frost posthumously is amazing.

Which politician do you respect the most?

Winston Churchill and Clement Attlee, for very different reasons. I think Churchill's leadership of the country during the second world war is a great example of courage. Clement Attlee's dedication to making healthcare a right rather than a privilege is amazing – you only have to look at the furore over healthcare in America now to see how incredible that was.

Do you think you would make a good politician? Why/ why not?

I think I'd be good at the public side of things – politics is to some degree an acting career – but I couldn't stomach the underhandedness of it all. And the hatred. Is there anyone so hated as a politician? No, that's not for me.

What's the best production you've seen at Cambridge?

Bash at the Corpus Playroom. There was so much tension, and at points the monologues made you feel sick but it was wonderful to watch, really visceral and truthful. They really did justice to Neil LaBute's fantastic script.

Which character have you most disliked playing in your time as an actor? Why?

It's difficult to talk about a character I've disliked because you gain an affini-

ty to every character you play. Certainly the most difficult part was Jerry in Pinter's *Betrayal*. There is so much subtext in that play and I really struggled to get it right, but I still really enjoyed playing him.

What is one show you would really like to act in?

Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. Biff, what an incredible part.

Do you get stage fright, and if so, how do you cope with it?

Yes, sometimes. Generally I'm sick if I get it. Before the first performance of *Assassins* at the Edinburgh festival this year I was an absolute wreck and had to be looked after by our amazing producer Lily Parham. Generally though I take some time to myself to get calm and I'm fine – the moment before I go on stage it vanishes and I enjoy it all.

What is the nicest thing someone has said to you?

My friend Lauren described me as a very moral person once, that really stuck with me. And any time anyone has called me kind – kindness makes such a big difference to other people, so it's something I try to be.

Tell us something you have learned during your time as an actor in Cambridge.

That you can always be better. When I came to Cambridge I thought I was brilliant. That was so arrogant and wrong! I have so much to learn, and a performance is never finished, you can always add something to it. I still have lots to learn as an actor.

Frost/Nixon is on at the ADC from 5th-9th November

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY OPERA SOCIETY

THE MAGIC FLUTE

The first opera the ADC has seen in almost a decade, *The Magic Flute*, has set the bar extremely high. The story has been brought into the time of the Grand Tour, a setting which, with its enthusiasm for the classical past (and its opportunity for period dress), subtly complements the performance.

The cast of the opera, directed by Robert Hawkins, is crucial to its great success. Joel Williams's Tamino displayed almost flawless top-range vocals, while Anna Cavaliero's Pamina stunned the audience with beautiful emotion, particularly in her second act aria. Johnny Hyde's comic timing as Papageno was spot on, and allowed for any onstage/offstage 'magic flute' issues to be resolved with some quick improvisatory expression.

What the Queen of the Night (Billie Robson) lacked in stage presence, she made up for in her diction (something the other singers could have paid slightly more attention to), not to mention her coloratura notes, achieving clear, bell-like tones in an aria that is traditionally one of the most difficult in the world of opera.

Xavier Hertherington's Monostatos steals every single scene he's in. He is

perhaps the one person whose acting is even better than his singing – and this is not to put his singing down in any way at all. Hertherington had the audience in the palm of his hand with a performance that, I have been told, is different in every rehearsal, and looks set to be so every night.

The 15-person orchestra began with the odd tuning issue, which did not do the singers justice. However, the band coped extremely well with the restraints of the ADC pit, such as the need to relegate the superb keys player to playing on an unconvincing-sounding electric keyboard. Musical Director Quintin Beer's conducting made sure that the ensemble remained outstanding.

The choreography was simple yet effective, and although rather excessive in the second half, it was weaved into the relationship between two principle characters with comic effect. The main stage piece, a Greek pillared arch, fitted seamlessly into every scene, and harked back to the classical past with which the Grand Tour was concerned. It also left room for the statues to be wheeled on and off, the chaise longue to announce scene changes, and provided something for Monostatos to hide behind.

The attention to detail that must have gone into this opera is actually not obvious at all, because the production was so slick it appeared to be completely effortless. As far as student opera goes, *The Magic Flute* is in a league of its own.

Caroline Hopper

BIRMINGHAM STAGE COMPANY

JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH

The Birmingham Stage Company is no stranger to children's literature. It knows what is needed to engage young children in live theatre, and, judging from tonight's performance, this includes pantomime-style villains (James's evil Aunts), fart jokes and a main character you can relate to. But this is not all *James and the Giant Peach* has to offer. The production cleverly encourages children to read, and makes excellent use of the props familiar to children in their everyday lives.

Initially, James reading from the book seemed an awkward beginning. But with later readings and some clever miming of the evil aunts' nagging, it started to seem like an artistic decision intended to link the fun of the play to the fun of reading. The everyday props used in the production supported this emphasis on children's creativity, as an orange hula hoop conveyed James' journey into the giant peach, a toy helicopter swung over the audience on a wire, and sharks 'swam' around the stage on skateboards and scooters.

The simplicity of the props and set was also demonstrated by the giant peach itself. Although for the scenes inside the peach an impressive rotating

set was used, initially the peach was a giant balloon pumped up in front of the audience. The balloon later returned to the stage, and was batted around by the excited audience.

Audience participation is another important part of children's theatre – everyone had great fun helping the peach stay afloat. The cast's energy levels were also crucial to this. Although at times it reminded me of summer camp leaders' over-enthusiasm, children were clearly able to engage with this exuberance.

As well as tackling the crucial issue of children's creativity, this production featured some excellent performances, while a particularly impressive musical score sculpted to fit specific on-stage actions.

Tom Gillies was thoroughly convincing as the slightly awkward James, getting his posture and movement exactly right throughout. Iwan Tudor as the Grasshopper perfectly got to grips with incorporating the animal's characteristic leg movement, while Rhys Saunders made a fantastically humorous and ever-grumpy Earthworm.

While this production probably won't revolutionise your notions of theatre, it is a great example of how inventive children's theatre can be. It does important work in making theatre and literature accessible to children in today's world of technology, but is also an evening of enjoyable nostalgia and cheerful entertainment for all those young at heart.

Hannah Piercy

Greek tragedy in London: enter the mob

Finn Brewer speaks to Constance Chapman, director of *The Bacchae*, about this contemporary twist on Euripides and why she chose to relocate the play to London in the midst of the riots of 2011

The *Bacchae* by Euripides is a famously unconventional and challenging play, and in their new version the Cambridge Musical Theatre Society attempts to reimagine the tale by setting it during the 2011 London riots. Combining chants, infectious drumbeat rhythms, and a large and very physical chorus, it aims to be a thought-provoking and entertaining piece of political theatre.

The original Greek tragedy is brutal and violent: Dionysus, the god of wine, ritual madness and ecstasy, seeks revenge on the house of Cadmus, of which Pentheus, King of Thebes, is

"Singing songs, dancing, and performing ecstatic rituals in large numbers, the Bacchantes have considerable presence onstage"

the head, for the death of his human mother. This version departs from the original in many significant ways, including the omission of Dionysus from the cast.

Director Constance Chapman, reading the reviews of other recent productions of *The Bacchae*, was struck by how each one would say that they "just couldn't capture a god", and I was thinking, 'What are they doing wrong?'... Actually I don't think they're doing anything wrong, but how can you capture a god on stage with a human actor?

Seeing Dionysus as "a part of human nature that everyone in the chorus embodies", the show's creators have instead gone for a direct opposition between Pentheus and the possessed mob of rioters.

Setting this play during the 2011 riots raises once again the questions of why the riots began and how we should interpret them. One recalls how the historian David Starkey controversially said on *Newsnight* that the riots were the result of "a particular sort of violent, destructive, nihilistic gangster culture" – in his words, a "Jamaican patois that has intruded in England [...] whites have become black".

This production hopes to tackle such reactions head-on by incorporating text from newspaper reports, and recasting Pentheus as a David Cameron-like Prime Minister, borrowing the rhetoric of Cameron's speeches at the time ("This is criminality pure and simple").

The main ideas for *The Bacchae* came to Chapman while she was performing the play in the original Greek when the riots began: "I put two and two together."

The chorus of Bacchantes – the followers of Dionysus – in the original was too fascinating a medium to ignore. Singing songs, dancing, and performing ecstatic rituals in large numbers, the Bacchantes have considerable presence onstage, and so they're the ones "you're going to side with, that the audience is going to really listen to."

Or at least, initially: "There's this awful moment of realisation where you think 'Gosh, how did I get swept up in that, how did I believe that the chorus were doing right?'"

The Bacchae's original soundtrack is at

the heart of this idea of the seductiveness of mob violence. Watching a rehearsal, I couldn't help but tap my foot to the call-and-response chants, drumsticks, and oil drums that the cast were working with. Chapman says the score was inspired by *Stomp*, and Musical Director Katie Lindsay plans to incorporate dubstep too.

Dubstep is itself interesting in this context. Its origins lie in dub music and reggae, which were often powerful vehicles for protests by minorities and outsiders in Britain. Today, it is seen as a feverishly joyous form of dance music. This duality makes it the perfect choice for a production which aims to question the irresistibility of the mob.

In *The Bacchae*, music and movement have an infectious power that draws in Agave, in this version the daughter of Pentheus, giving her a means of symbolically rebelling against the law and order her father stands for.

Chapman hopes to provoke a debate over how we should see the riots in the play, instead of giving us a single interpretation. She says: "I think theatre should always be a talking point, so whether you agree or don't, you should always come away thinking, 'Why couldn't I agree?', and discussing it."

By showing both the seductive joyousness and the mortifying violence of the Bacchantes, *The Bacchae* seeks to explore the divisive debates the riots have provoked, while at the same time asking questions about the ever-recurring tendency towards violence in human nature.

The Bacchae will be on at the ADC Theatre from 6th – 9th November at 11pm



Celebrating drama without borders

Looking forward to *Shoot Coward! Three Plays from Latin America* and the African Caribbean Society's *Culture Fest* leads Rebecca Rosenberg to muse about the cultural diversity of theatre in Cambridge

The Cambridge arts scene will experience an invigorating injection of cultural diversity over this week, with Cambridge University African Caribbean Society's (CUACS) annual *Culture Fest* on tonight, and *Shoot Coward!*, a trio of Latin American plays on at the Corpus Playroom.

These two events look set to

combine colourful, original new material and artists from varying cultures and countries. This is the first time that the plays comprising *Shoot Coward! – Secret Obscenities, Bony and Kin, and Looking Into the Stands* – will be performed in English, in the United Kingdom.

Shoot Coward! presents three plays by dramatists from Venezuela, Chile and Puerto Rico, spanning from the 1980s to the 2000s. The plays cover a vast geographical range, offering an extensive survey of Latin American theatre.

Executive Director Fergus Blair initiated the project as he was interested in Latin American literature and had realised the work had received virtually no exposure outside South America.

It is difficult, for non-MML students at least, to think of a single key figure in Latin American dramatic and literary culture off the top of their head, although most should have heard of Gabriel García Márquez, Isabel Allende or Roberto Bolaño. Latin America, indeed, offers a vast range of literature and theatre that is often overlooked. That said, Blair tells me that he has been in

contact with a prolific American translator of Latin American theatre, Dr Charles Philip Thomas, whose translations are beginning to trickle into the US and UK.

The experimentalism and originality of the three Latin American plays means that *Shoot Coward!* could be spearheading movements towards other cultures in order to unearth dramatic treasures to perform. Indeed, we could see more culturally diverse plays being introduced to the Cambridge scene.

Someone who is certainly keen to encourage more cultural diversity in Cambridge theatre is Rhianna Ilube, publicity officer for CUACS. She describes the beauty and originality of *For Coloured Girls*, which was performed at the ADC last year, highlighting the significance of the all-black cast.

The director of the play, Justina Kehinde, will be performing at CUACS's *Culture Fest* tonight, an annual repertoire that brings together young and up-and-coming artists from Cambridge University and beyond. This will be a rare opportunity to see various performances with a distinctive African-Caribbean stamp in Cambridge.

So, is the aim of these artistic events

to teach us about cultures and countries we have little contact with? *Culture Fest* is primarily a celebration of, not a lesson in, African-Caribbean arts. Similarly, Blair, Maddie Skipsey and Madeleine Heyes (the directors of two of the plays), stress that *Shoot Coward!* will be a discursive rather than a didactic experience, spanning political, social and metaphysical commentaries.

"Blair initiated the project as he was interested in Latin American literature and had realised that there was virtually no market for it outside South America"

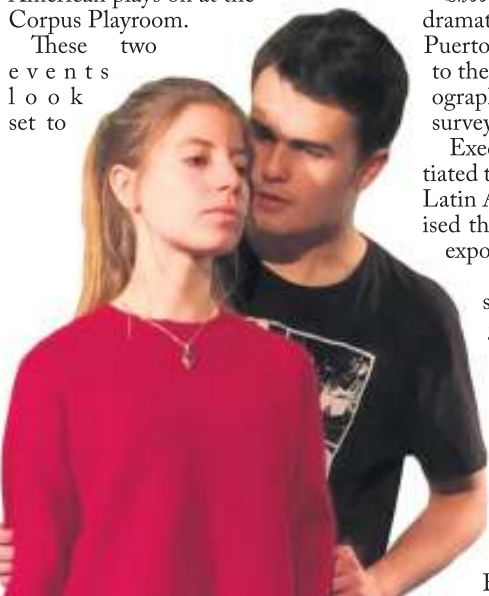
However, attempts to regard the plays in a detached manner are often impossible as the explosive nature of Latin American social and political history shines through, making

contextualisation inevitable. These plays are distinctly Latin American and provoke a different form of discussion to that of British or European arts. Skipsey describes how, unlike the UK, in Latin American countries "they don't know how long the government and state apparatus is going to exist" – everything is in constant flux.

The distinctive cultural stamps and origins of the two shows do not mean that they can or should be pigeonholed into the categories of 'Latin American theatre' or 'African-Caribbean arts'. Ilube says that CUACS is open to all: everyone has the right to be interested in other cultures. With *Culture Fest* and *Shoot Coward!*, the emphasis is on fun and excitement, and their aim to entertain gives them a universal appeal.

Paying too much attention to cultural contextualisation and symbolism in the arts often ends up as reductive; instead, we should embrace the diversity on offer in Cambridge – art, after all, is the property of no one nation.

Culture Fest will be at the West Road Concert Hall tonight at 7.45pm. *Shoot Coward!* runs at the Corpus Playroom until 2nd November



MAD ABOUT MUSEUMS

AT
EARTH SCIENCES

LUCY MEEKLEY

The Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, located on the Downing site, is dedicated to exhibiting the diversity of plant and animal life around the world and across every time period. It opened in 1912 in memory of Adam Sedgwick, one of the founders of modern geology. However the collection started long before this when early geologist John Woodward bequeathed his fossil collection to the University in 1728. Since then, the museum has gathered around 1.5 million specimens.

This is a highly academic museum and a fantastic resource for any earth scientist, with cabinet upon cabinet of rocks, minerals and fossils. Admittedly, for the casual museum-goer, this can seem a little daunting or dull at first. But do not be put off – there are some absolute gems on display. One only has to step back for a moment, and consider the tremendous task this museum has undertaken, to realise they are looking at something extremely special: displaying over 500 million years of history is no small feat.

There is a range of dinosaurs on display. Some of the most impressive include an enormous Iguanodon skeleton looming by the entrance, and the skull of a Tyrannosaurus Rex. Tucked away on a wall behind a cabinet, it is easy to miss one of the most important fossils relating to the dinosaur world: the archaeopteryx. This provided the missing link between dinosaurs and birds, and is a crucial piece of evidence to support Darwin's theory of evolution.

The museum's chief interest in Darwin is as a geologist. He began to build his scientific credibility collecting fossils during a voyage of HMS Beagle. A display of his cabin aboard the ship contains his field notebook, microscope and an assortment of the samples he collected.

One area of the museum shows the variety of animal life found within East Anglia. Displayed is a 125,000 year old hippopotamus skeleton and various other teeth and bones which suggest that rhinos, bears, wolves and mammoths were also inhabitants. A highlight is the skeleton of a giant deer with an incredible antler span of 2.5 metres.

Hidden at the back is my favourite part of the museum: the Whewell Gallery. William Whewell was a brilliant scientist, philosopher and master of Trinity College. This gallery is dedicated to his work in mineralogy, and is home to a dazzling, multi-coloured array of minerals such as malachite and fluorides.

This is not a highly interactive or decorative museum, but it does not need to be. Curators could have just selected the most exciting pieces to display, but I think that would be missing the point, and would ruin the fun of finding your own highlights among the collections.



Whale ivory necklace on display at the Art and Power in Fiji exhibition

comedy

VIKKI STONE

CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE

I've been trying to think of a different way to say hit-and-miss. Having failed to do so, Vikki Stone's tour show *Definitely* was an almost perfect exemplar for that phrase.

At times it was very funny, with highlights including a character portrait familiar to all of us in Cambridge of her ex-boyfriend Tarquin, with his fondness for red chinos and phrases like "epiphenomenal imbroglia", and a song about Brian Cox (the physicist, not Agamemnon) which explored more physics-based innuendo than I'd thought possible (warping her black hole, swallowing his milky way etc etc) – this was perhaps the only time the jokes came fast enough to keep the audience laughing consistently.

At other times it fell far too short:

Deal or No Deal with cheese, the 'best fucking opening song' and the 'Philip Schofield song' were intelligent, but required too much build-up for a punchline that didn't quite hit the mark.

While some of her surreal comedy was beautifully weird – it's not often you see a woman in a Clare Balding mask being pushed around on a camel by an audience member wearing a 'Vikki's Mum' t-shirt – some of it was just strange without being funny: her closing song featured a volunteer dressed in a huge canine costume, complete with Bane-esque voice production of an imagined conversation between her and her dog.

In the same vein, she went on for far too long about finding bags of dog refuse by the side of the road before playing some heavy techno and pretending to throw shit at the audience.

Her target audience seemed to change with every joke – her wild variances between late 80s pop culture and talking a bit too much about Twitter and *Britain's Got Talent* left me feeling bewildered rather than genuinely amused.

Although it was funny in parts, I left feeling that the show had gone on for a bit too long (two hours including an interval break) without enough punchlines to jokes that didn't entirely deserve the length she allocated to them.

Toby Fleming

film

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS

PAUL GREENGRASS

Tom Hanks shines as the eponymous captain of a Maersk cargo ship, making the journey down the Horn of Africa from Salalah to Mombasa. His ship is targeted for attack by a small group of Somali pirates, fishermen under the control of a local gang leader. Although he and his team try desperately to evade them, the four Somalis eventually succeed in boarding the ship. They take the Captain hostage and demand money – millions of dollars in fact – but when two of the pirates sustain injuries at the hands of the crew, they agree to take \$30,000

from the ship's safe and get out. They leave in the lifeboat, except this time they have an extra person with them: Captain Phillips. Cue a long game of cat-and-mouse, the big ship following the little boat across the seas to the coast of Somalia.

The drama and intensity of the very human narrative, based on real events that happened in 2009, is perfect for cinema. The director, Paul Greengrass of *Bourne* trilogy fame, certainly knows how to make a gripping film. We jump from one claustrophobic ship interior to another, the restless camera blurring nationalities as it flits from one terrified human face to the next.

The tension mounts and mounts, moments of relative calm followed by harrowing power struggles between the pirates, while the Captain's life hangs in the balance. When the faceless might of the US Navy is added to the mix, you begin to wonder how any of the lifeboat's inhabitants, American or Somali, will ever make it out of this ordeal alive.

Audiences who aren't enthusiasts of

the US government's military doctrine may find cause for complaint with the focus on the power of the American army, especially the invincible nature of its Navy Seals – the slow-motion sequence where they pack gun after gun onto their sculpted torsos is memorable, if for slightly the wrong reasons.

The Somalis too get a rather rough deal onscreen, with little chance for character development beyond the generic 'bad guys'. This is, however, an action film, not a humanitarian drama, and as the genre goes it is an intelligent and moving portrayal of our hero's traumatic fight for survival.

Hanks, as the Captain, is endlessly watchable: the ultimate everyman, he becomes the viewer's husband, father, brother, son, a fair captain who continues to put himself in the line of danger on his crew's behalf and we demand to know his fate, however awful it may turn out to be.

The power play between Captain Phillips and the Somali captain is

also what it means to the people who use it, seems central to the way the Museum organises its exhibitions.

This motif is seen repeatedly in the many splendid artefacts that follow. Weapons such as clubs and spears are of course used in warfare, but they are also symbols of power that are in general owned by chiefs and priests. Notable among these are the *saisai*, a spear composed of four heads bound to a central shaft, which hangs trident-like and fantastical above one of the display cases, and the *vunika*, a deadly looking club with delicate whale ivory carvings worked into the nubs on its head. These weapons show status, but they also have spiritual meaning.

The sea is everywhere in this exhibition, and whale ivory, pearl shell and turtle shell ornament many of the objects. The Fijians did not hunt whales and this made whale ivory all the more precious – it was only obtained from beached animals, or from trade with the Tongans, and later the Europeans. Tabua, presentation whale teeth, were and are the most important of Fijian valuables. They are offered as gifts at important events, and also mark political alliances.

The arrival of the Europeans into the lives of the Fijians is marked by objects such as a whale-tooth necklace that has been bound in calico, a material considered valuable and desirable for its novelty and foreignness.

Art and Power in Fiji is excellently curated, using objects to bring moments from Fiji's pre and post-colonial history to the viewer. Visitors to the museum will not be disappointed.

Chloe Clifford-Astbury

complicated, both of them respecting and yet unwilling to trust the other. Phillips is told that the whole hostage episode is "just a job" and is promised that he will not be harmed, and so seems initially resigned to his time in the lifeboat. As the film progresses however, we realise with terrifying clarity that this has become so much

more than an average business transaction.

Lara Ferris



music



JAMIE CULLUM

CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE



"Sit back and watch my scrawny frame invade your feelings," crooned the little man at the piano in front of his teeming audience. No longer the bare-faced boy of 10 years ago – when he released his first album, *Pointless Nostalgic* – Jamie Cullum presented us with a night that 50s Hollywood would be proud of.

Despite his scrawny stature, and his four-piece band, he dominated the stage with songs that would find a home in the golden age of cinema,

from old classics like 'I'm Over It' to the infectious rhythm of his new song 'When I'm Famous'.

I went to the Corn Exchange expecting a lavender-toned evening of smooth jazz and tinkling piano. Nothing special, just easy listening and chilled background music. But this bundle of talent, returning to the UK stage after a four year absence, showed us why this was the *Momentum* tour.

Bursting onto the smoky stage with the energetic opening song, 'The Same Thing', Cullum has taken a notable departure from his earlier work. No longer the detached sitting pianist, in his musical absence, he has evidently become a performer. Dancing around the stage, jumping into the audience and plucking the strings of his piano, Cullum was sure to keep his audience entertained.

A keen photographer, Cullum's interest in the aesthetic was obvious. From the carefully staged lighting, to the cameramen

filming the intimate action by the piano, to Jamie himself filming his four-piece band as they took solos, it was easy – and expected – to feel as if we were watching an iconic film.

With projections of the performance split across two screens behind the stage, this gig was self-consciously constructed. Cinematic and sultry, these black and white screens provided an intimacy that enhanced the forceful beats of his songs.

Pulling down a white backdrop behind his head for his cover of 'Pure Imagination', Jamie was clearly aware of creating the perfect shot. Seeing his silhouette on the screens, layered with swirling

lights, added a magical quality to the raspy tones of the song; in its purity, we really were transported to 'a world of my creation'. As in cinema, dramatic moments were nuanced by softer ones. 'Save Your Soul' was a particular highlight. Spotlit and alone, Cullum went back to his roots with intricate piano work.

His cover of Rihanna's 'Don't Stop the Music' was also refreshing, highlighting the influence of R&B that was also seen in his frequent beat-boxing and his new song 'Love for \$ale'.

His versatility was incredible, his stage presence formidable and his personality endearing. Joking about Cambridge life and sighing at lyrics about fatherhood, Cullum was both performer and friend. Sexy and stylish, this was an unexpected delight.

Charlotte Chorley



music



LA NUOVA MUSICA

TRINITY COLLEGE CHAPEL



La Nuova Musica consists of a small band of musicians: a cellist and an organist, plus a group of seven singers serving as a chorus, as well as some soloists. Despite their modest size, the group filled Trinity College Chapel with an energetic evening of Schütz and Bach as part of Cambridge Early Music's ongoing concert series this year.

The group performed a selection of motets by Schütz from *Kleine geistliche Konzerte* and motets by

Bach. The first motet, 'Eile mich, Gott, zu erretten' by Schütz was a passionate rendering of the piece, with alto Esther Brazil providing a taste of the rousing music to come. Next the audience was treated to 'Komm, Jesu, komm', a piece which included the full instrumental and vocal power of the group, energetically directed by David Bates. The piece starts with subtly intertwining vocals, but then is invigorated as the tone becomes more rejoicing.

Three Schütz motets followed with varying soloists, showcasing emotional performances of the relatively short pieces. The two sopranos, Charmian Bedford and Augusta Hebbert, provided a particularly engaging performance of Schütz's 'Erhöre mich, wenn ich rufe'. Their melancholic tone reflected the quiet power of the lyrics.

The entire group then collaborates to perform an invigorating rendition of Bach's 'Jesu, meine Freude'. The

group engaged with the emotional core of the piece, showcasing the motet's diversity. The emphases on 'nicht', in addition to the heavy pauses after the word, brought gravitas to the lyrics.

In contrast, the fifth verse is rousing and defiant, the bass singers bringing strength to lyrics such as 'trotz der Furcht dazu' (defiance to fear as well!). The group moved smoothly between the different themes and tones of the piece, to finally provide a well-rounded and satisfying final verse.

Their rendition of Bach's 'Der Geist hilft', highlighted Bates' energetic and joyful direction of the group. He pushed and pulled out the sublime

harmonies, and expertly rounds off the chorus. Schütz's 'Sei gegrüßet, Maria' was a particularly emotive piece and the two soloists are to be congratulated for their subtle and reflective performance of the piece.

The group's final motet, 'Singet dem Herrn', provided a rejoicing and zesty performance to finish off their repertoire. The repetition of 'Singet' and the enunciation of the harsh 't' consonant punctuated the deep, rich harmonies.

Despite the group's size, Nuova Musica gave us diverse motets with various tones and different choral configurations. The overall performance showed their versatility, showcasing the strengths of their members. They are to be congratulated on their exuberant and emotive evening.

Becky Rosenberg



Cambridge ACS present Culture Fest 2013

Music

CULTURE FEST

2013

The Cambridge University African Caribbean Society host an evening of music, drama, fashion, poetry, food....you name it, they've got it.

7pm, 1st November
West Road Concert Hall
11 West Road

Event

SCHUBERT & MAHLER

The Cambridge University Musical Society play Schubert's Symphony No.5, and Mahler's Symphony No.1 in D. Conducted by Ben Glassberg.

8pm, 2nd November
West Road Concert Hall
11 West Road

Music

JOOLS HOLLAND

Jools Holland returns to Cambridge. Mel C is his special guest, but don't let that put you off.

7.30pm, 2nd November
Cambridge Corn Exchange
Wheeler Street

Film

THE ROOM

Cult classic *The Room* returns to Christ's Films. Expect lots of audience participation.

7pm & 10pm, 9th November
Yusuf Hamied Theatre
Christ's College

Comedy

STEPHEN K AMOS

BBC2 mainstay Amos plays the Junction hot off his critically acclaimed Edinburgh run

8pm, 15th November
Cambridge Junction
Clifton Way

Theatre

THE BACCHAE

An ambitious re-imagining of Euripides' masterpiece, set in London during the 2011 riots.

11pm, 6th-9th November
ADC Theatre
Park Street

Reviews & Listings



FOR THE LOVE OF SPORT

Roxana Antohi
SHOOTING

I know, I know, guns are bad. That still didn't prevent me, as I was getting ready to go shooting, from feeling like a Cambridge version of Lara Croft. So I put on my leather jacket and went on my exciting mission.

Half an hour later I was already having second thoughts. It turns out that the range where the Cambridge University Revolver and Pistol Club (CURPC) meet is quite far away, on the banks of the Cam, under the Elizabeth Way bridge. Walking alone in the dark, holding a machine with killing potential was the last thing on my mind – not being kidnapped was my top priority.

But when I finally arrived at the bridge, a door opened out of nowhere and I was invited into the well-lit shooting range. If you think that the people you'd find in a place like this are all potential maniacs, training to shoot their cheating wife or annoying neighbour, you'd be dead wrong. While they consider shooting fun, the people here think of it as a sport – which, as I was about to discover, it really is.

First, the CURPC Captain, Alex Hackmann, showed me how to use an air pistol (named 'Magpie'). I expected a dislocated shoulder upon firing it and I was pleasantly surprised to discover that there was no recoil whatsoever. This didn't make things easier, though. While my first shot actually hit the target, the next few got further and further away. It turns out shooting really is a sport – after a couple of minutes, my arms were shaking violently under the weight of the gun.

And the wonders it could do for my concentration! I can never normally keep my mind on something for more than 30 seconds at a time – but I was most definitely captivated while aiming again and again.

Things got even more exciting when I took the rifle. It was heavier than I expected – and after about five attempts at trying to find a way to hold it, I was sure my only way of getting a target would be to hit it with the back of the rifle rather than shoot at it. But when I finally got it right, the scariest thing happened – I loved it!

Although it was heavier, I found it much more comfortable to hold than the air pistol – and easier to aim. It still required a lot of concentration, but this felt like 'the real thing'. The end result was fantastic – I didn't shoot off the target once, and I managed to get three shots right in the centre (and no, it had nothing to do with the Captain showing me how to use it by firing it three times).

It only occurred to me when walking back that I had used a machine which could have killed someone if they had been in range. The thought did make me a bit wobbly. Regardless, I am impressed by the skills required in this sport, though I'm still slightly mortified by my newfound love for guns.

Fast-paced action at the City Race

The Orienteering Club put up a great event on Saturday, where the adrenaline rush was caused by uncrossable paths, unpredictable weather and even a bomb scare

Zuzana Strakova
ORIENTEERING CORRESPONDENT

The city centre swarmed with strange-looking people holding maps and compasses last Saturday, swiftly weaving in and out of the crowds. This is what the Cambridge City Race, held now for the third time, must have looked like to the uninitiated.

The race is the flagship event of the year for the University's orienteering club (CUOC). A lot of hard work goes into it, and although the club does not do it for money, the race is a major source of their funding. The preparation for the race has been tough at times, but as Joe Hobbs, one of the organisers, remarked at the end of the race, "the final week seemed to see things come together, the maps and numbers turned up and the weather held off (mostly)."

Orienteering combines the skills of fast running with precise navigation. Competitors are faced with a course that usually encompasses about 20 to 30 check points, called controls, joined by a straight line.

The order in which these controls have to be visited is set; the route between them, however, is not. The runners have to make extremely quick decisions in order to execute the route in between the controls in as little time as possible. Meaning orienteering challenges both body and mind.



The dangers of serene Cambridge awaited the competitors around every corner

On the day of the City Race, the organisers had to set up the arena at Jesus Green for the arrival of the 350 or so competitors from the early hours of the morning. The weather seemed unsure as to whether to welcome the competitors with rain or sunshine, so in the end it settled somewhere in the middle.

With starts between 10.30am and 1.30pm, competitors set out at one minute intervals on the intricate courses expertly planned by CUOC's Mark Salmon. The minute preceding the traditional five beeps, which signify the start, was enriched by the start

marshalls warning the competitors of the dangers of Cambridge in the form of the cyclists who "plague" the roads and, even worse, the crowds of pedestrians blocking the streets. Unfortunately, the event coincided with a graduation day, so the crowds were the major problem facing the runners as they set out into Cambridge's streets and colleges.

With the longest men's course being 7.5 km straight-line distance and the longest women's course 6.5 km, the runners ended up covering a significantly longer distance, as Cambridge's winding alleyways provided more than

enough of a challenge.

The major obstacle that awaited runners of all courses was a speciality of urban races: the high frequency of uncrossable walls and hedges that often led to nasty surprises in the form of being halfway between two controls and suddenly realising it's impossible to carry out the ideal route choice due to an uncrossable feature. For many, however, this is the fun of orienteering – finding the quickest route between controls without losing time by pondering the decision for too long, but at the same time making sure that no nasty surprises lurk along the chosen route.

Thanks to the months of preparation, the event ran relatively smoothly, but as Joe Hobbs comments: "We like to think that we planned for all eventualities, but I have to admit I didn't foresee a bomb scare." Luckily, even that did not stop the competitors from successfully returning from their courses.

In the end, the winners of the two main categories of men's and women's open were Leon Foster and Jo Reeve. Carrie Beadle of CUOC upheld the prestige of the home club by racing into third position on the women's open course, and ex-member Ben Windsor proved the efficacy of a CUOC upbringing by taking second position in the men's open event. See you again in two years' time.

Saturday lectures mass runaway

The Hare and Hounds took on the RAF and the Eastern Counties last Saturday



St Neots witnessed a runaway en masse last Saturday, in the form of the University Hare and Hounds Club members

Chloe Beckett
CUHH CORRESPONDENT

The Hare and Hounds waged war last week against the RAF and Eastern Counties, in a cross country match that did not fail to deliver the excitement it had promised. Undeterred by the overcast morning, the formidable RAF side, or indeed the harrowing thought of missing Saturday morning lectures, the Cambridge cross country runners arrived en masse at Priory Park, St Neots last Saturday. In fact, with a burst of autumnal sunshine and a varied course of open field and forest, the runners were rewarded with idyllic cross country conditions.

The first to scale the course were the ladies, who completed two laps of the

undulating and leafy circuit of Priory Park to total five kilometres.

The girls of the Hare and Hounds put up an impressive fight. First to finish was Cambridge's ever exceptional Alison Greggor, who dipped under 18 minutes with a time of 17mins 59sec. Greggor ran an evenly paced and strong race, and glided to the finish line with more than a 10 second lead. With two easy wins this term now under her belt, the former Varsity champion looks to be on good form.

Equally impressive this week was the performance of Liz Mooney – a first year at Newnham, who cemented her fourth place finish at Fen Ditton last week with a similarly speedy fourth place at St Neots. The second Cambridge lady to finish, Mooney ran

a well-judged, smart race, and finished in 18mins 32sec, just three seconds behind the third place finisher.

Whilst Mooney and Greggor demonstrated the depth of the club members' talents, the other Hare and Hounds ladies certainly showed its breadth. With Lauren Major, Katy Hedgethorpe, Alice Feslier-Holmes, Chloe Beckett and Jane Thomas jostling for position throughout the race, the Hare and Hounds were able to claim the consecutive places of eighth through to twelfth. Alongside the work of all of the Cambridge ladies, gaining these places led the women of the Hare and Hounds to victory over the RAF and Eastern Counties.

Meanwhile, the Hare and Hounds men were less successful. Facing a fierce

field of Eastern Counties athletes, the Cambridge boys fought valiantly to finish second in the team standings, behind the Eastern Counties but in front of the RAF.

The standout male runner of the day was Alex Short, who claimed second place in a field of 57 and completed the 7.5 kilometre course in a speedy 23mins 2sec. From the start of the race, Short was locked in a ferocious battle for first place with Eastern County runner Neilson Hall. Despite being in close contention for much of the race, Hall's fast finish ultimately got the better of Cambridge Blues runner Short.

Similarly gutsy runs were demonstrated by Will Ryle-Hodges and Sean Pohorence, who were the second and third Cambridge runners home respectively, claiming overall positions of ninth and tenth. Although they began the race amidst a group of strong Hare and Hounds runners, it was Ryle-Hodges and Pohorence who came through, with just two seconds between them, to claim valuable points for the club.

Whilst hopes of ultimate glory were slightly dashed this week by an unexpectedly strong cohort of male Eastern Counties runners, the overall shape of the Hare and Hounds is not to be undermined. Both the women and the men demonstrated strength as individuals and as a team.

As the first Varsity selection race looms ever closer, the Hare and Hounds are sure to be found in the next few weeks consolidating these early cross country performances with relentless training sessions. In two weeks, the Hare and Hounds will return to take on the Met League.

Official start for the Boat Race campaign

Last week saw the opening of the 2014 Boat Race season, at the London offices of the official sponsor of the men's race, BNY Mellon. *Varsity* went to see how the squads are feeling about this year's race

Roxana Antohi
SPORTS EDITOR

Last Thursday the official challenges of the BNY Mellon Boat Race and the Newton Women's Boat Race were issued by Cambridge at the autumn reception, which acknowledges the start of the Boat Race season.

Traditionally, the official challenges are laid down at the start of every season by the president of the previous race's losing University Boat Club to the president of the victorious club. Both the Oxford men's and women's boats won the 2013 races, so it was up to Steve Dudek and Esther Momcilovic of Cambridge to issue the challenges on behalf of the Light Blue Clubs.

The reception was a glamorous affair held at the offices of the men's sponsor, BNY Mellon. Among the guests were four time Olympic gold medallist and Oxford alumnus, Sir Matthew Pinsent, and London 2012 gold medallist and Cambridge Blue, Anna Watkins, who was unveiled as the new BNY Mellon Boat Race ambassador.

Anna will work alongside the BNY Mellon Boat Race Team over the season to develop greater awareness and participation in rowing. Commenting on her new role, Anna said "It is a real honour for me to become ambassador for the BNY Mellon Boat Race. Rowing has really captured the public's imagination since the London



The four Boat Club Presidents were the centre of the attention at the official opening of the 2014 Boat Race campaign

Olympics. I am delighted to have this opportunity to play a role in such a globally-recognised event."

Speaking fondly of her university days, Anna added that she was grateful to have had the opportunity to row while at Cambridge, and pleased that she has managed to take it as far as the Olympics. She nonetheless emphasised the fact that she now has to be completely unbiased when it comes to the

two teams, in her newly-acquired capacity of ambassador.

With all the free-flowing champagne provided by Bollinger, one of the official partners, and the large number of illustrious sports people and business people alike in attendance, it was easy to forget that what was being celebrated was, after all, a student event.

The owners of the large number of dark and light blue blazers told a

different story. Less used to the spotlight and more focused on the two trophies towering over the guests, the rowing rivals eyed each other across the room, reminding those who might have forgotten that this was a serious matter.

Steve Dudek, the Cambridge President, described the evening as "exciting," because "it's the first time we see Oxford in public – it all becomes real".

Although the challenge represents the official recognition of the Boat Race season, the squad has been training 12 times a week since late August.

Speaking about the development of the Club so far, he considered himself "very pleased with the progress we've made and pleasantly surprised by the fitness and rowing capability demonstrated by a lot of the guys." Compared to previous years, he described his squad to be "physically the strongest we've ever had – the fitness is pretty much through the roof," although "in terms of rowing ability we're pretty rough, as some of the guys haven't rowed for Cambridge before – but they are very willing to work hard and improve."

On the women's side, returning Blues Caroline Reid and Holly Game were equally excited about the new season: "training is really good, really promising, there is a big change from last year. We now have twice the number of people we had last year, almost 40, which brings a more competitive edge as well as a drive to self-betterment."

With so much enthusiasm and optimism, it's difficult not to raise your hopes that this year will finally be a Light Blue one. Following last year's results, we can only hope that some lessons have been learnt and victory will be on our side come 30th March, when the Newton Women's Boat Race will take place, as well as 6th April, the date of the BNY Mellon Men's Boat Race.

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Sport

FOR THE LOVE OF SPORT

Varsity tries a new sport every week. See what Roxana Antohi thinks about this week's challenge, Shooting, on page 30.



Provisions for disability sport, such as wheelchair basketball, are currently lacking for Cambridge University students, although they are found at other universities

It's not all about the Paralympics

Varsity adds its voice to the calls for better disabled sport provisions in Cambridge

Roxana Antohi
SPORTS EDITOR



The London 2012 Paralympics were, for many, a game-changer. Watched by almost four billion people around the world, they were the best, biggest and the most successful in history. But a year later how much has changed in the public perception of disability and in particular of disability sport?

A survey by disability charity Scope shows that 20 per cent of people are more aware of what disabled people can achieve. 70 per cent of children aged 8-12 have found the Paralympics to be more inspirational than the Olympics. The same percentage said the Paralympics changed the way they view disabled people.

To have such a great turnaround in people's perceptions of disability in such a short period of time is beyond what many dared to dream of. Elite sport is also thriving. But the Paralympics legacy involves day-to-day life too; it involves participation of those who don't have dreams of competing at an international level. As Cambridge-bred

2012 Paralympics gold medallist Jonnie Peacock said in a BBC interview, "Sport is all about enjoyment. I didn't start because I wanted to be in London 2012, I did it because I enjoyed it".

And this is the simple truth – the same way most able-bodied people want to do sport just for fun, so do people with disabilities. For them, life is not a dichotomy between either being a Paralympian or never doing sport – on the contrary, in the vast majority of cases it's all about having fun, enjoying yourself and socialising.

Unfortunately, this is one thing that we forget about. We go around our daily lives, we watch the Paralympics, we are inspired by those we see on TV, those who have overcome great adversity in order to reach that level of sportsmanship, but we forget about those disabled people that are closer to us – our friends, our neighbours, those in our community. We don't think about how hard it can be for them to do a sport.

If you want to play, let's say, badminton – all you have to do is look up a club, online or elsewhere, join and enjoy. Think about people with a disability wanting to do the same – imagine them phoning the club, being encouraged to join, but upon mentioning that they are – for example – in a wheelchair, the conversation turns sour because there are no accessible facilities.

Imagine those people being

disappointed, phoning another club, and another, and receiving the same answer: they are more than welcome to join, but the facilities are not adequate. Imagine the same people having to let go of their dream to play, not because they don't have the potential but be-

"There are no clubs for inclusive sports and there are few provisions in the clubs already formed for disabled students."

cause they are forced to do so by the lack of facilities and support.

Now think of those almost 500 students at Cambridge with physical or sensory impairments who find so much support from the Disability Resource Centre and from the University in their academic studies, but can't play the sports they want to because there aren't enough provisions for it.

There are so many inclusive sports one can do depending on the disability, but at the moment there isn't anything centralised within the University that would allow a disabled student to have a go at them. There are no clubs for inclusive sports and there are few

provisions in existing clubs for disabled students.

What we do have is a fully accessible newly-built University Sports Centre which could be used by so many students in their pursuit of sporting activities. Students with disabilities might still be put off from using it – either because of shyness, or because they don't think it's possible for them to try something, or simply because of the location of the centre.

This is why *Varsity* is drawing attention to the issue. This is the official start of our campaign to raise awareness and start making provisions for disability sport within our University, in order to make sure that any student with or without an impairment can play a sport if he or she wants to. This is why, in the past few weeks, we have raised the issue with the University Sports Department, the Disability Resource Centre, as well as the Cambridge City Council. Everyone has been supportive and willing to co-operate towards making the University a more inclusive place.

Great results in disability sport can be achieved at Cambridge, but what our campaign is really aiming for is inclusiveness, openness, fairness. We should have equal opportunities to try whatever sports we want, at any given level, from perpetual beginner to golden Paralympian.

SPORTSCENE

Light Blues see Oxford crumble in first match

VOLLEYBALL The Cambridge Blues played their first home match this season against Oxford. Considering how heated the last Varsity match was, the expectations of the Cambridge team were that Oxford would once again not give up easily. But little of that was shown in the first set, when Cambridge clearly dominated their opponent and won 25:7. Outside hitters Alessio Strano and Greg Peters succeeded against a slow Oxonian block again and again. The second set started in a similar fashion and it was only due to service errors and inconsequent play that Oxford earned 14 points. In their last set Oxford finally woke up and an even game developed all through to 15:15. Things changed when Alexander Frank started serving and Cambridge gained more than six points in a row. Beaten and demoralized, Oxford was unable to come back a second time and Cambridge won 3:0 in sets (- 07, - 14, - 18).

Light Blue Golfers defeated by 'The Society'

GOLF Every year, the CUGC's first team takes on ex-Blues in one of the most anticipated fixtures of the term against the Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society (O&CGS). The O&CGS, founded in 1898, is one of the oldest golfing societies in the world. Known simply as The Society and carrying the motto 'serious fun', its members are all ex-Blues, having taken part in the annual Golf Varsity Match themselves. The fixture was a stern test for the CUGC's players as they are looking to gain some momentum early in the season. Fighting through heavy rain, experience beat youth. The Society clinched a 19 - 13 victory over the CUGC, reinstating the trend of the usually victorious O&CGS that had been disrupted by a surprise win for Cambridge last year.

Netball Club undefeated

NETBALL The Blues continued their unbeaten run this season with a home victory against Birmingham on Wednesday. After a series of careless mistakes in the first two quarters saw the light blues struggling at half time and down 14-21, it took some tactical reshuffling and fresh legs going into the second half to change the game. Inspired by raw determination and some excellent defensive work from Player of the Match, Laura Spence, the Blues were able to break down the Birmingham attack and level the scores going in to the final quarter. A nail-biting 15 minutes ensued but the Light Blues were soon able to find their flow and began to dominate the increasingly frustrated opposition. The game ended 36-30.

Find more match reports online at
www.varsity.co.uk/sport