News
Shake-up to Cambridge medical degree as students are no longer allowed to transfer to London hospitals for clinical school.

Comment
Alice Udale-Smith argues that student journalism is not just for wannabe hacks but for everybody who cares about student life.

Vulture
Sabina Dewfield takes a look at the best, worst and downright weird parts of this week’s Bridgemas celebrations.

Sport
Want to try a winter sport here in Cambridge? Varsity introduces you to the Ice Hockey Team and the Ski & Snowboarding Club.

Interview: Norman Baker MP on why the Liberal Democrats still matter (p. 8)
The real Cambridge spies

What do you think if you were the phrase “student politics”? Whatever your political position, view on CUSU, or dislike of campaigning the image conjured up is unlikely to be a particularly terrifying one.

Indeed even groups such as Cambridge Defend Education, which is often seen as being at the more active end of student campaigning, are hardly what you would consider dangerous. One of their last protests, involved them lying down in public places around the city and covering themselves in t-shirts to represent students being challenged by debt. I think we can all agree that the single most dangerous aspect of this protest was the possible trip hazard.

It is hard to imagine therefore what the police were hoping to achieve when they attempted to recruit a local activist to report back to them on student political activity. But somehow I doubt it was just the health and safety issues that were concerning them when they started investigating students.

Whilst some level of police surveillance is understandable, the Cambridge police unit involved in this particular failed intelligence gathering attempt, seem to have got their priorities laughably wrong.

Even if the police did want to keep tabs on groups such as CDE, to go to all the hassle of recruiting somebody seems unnecessary. CDE send out regular email bulletins and press releases about both meetings and protests; if we can keep up with what they are doing surely the police can too. And let’s not get started on CUSU, which positively relishes at the challenge of making sure we know what they are up to.

That the police therefore need to use such tactics to find out what is going on in the student population is worrying, both because of the lack of respect with which the police view student activism and for the sheer ludicrousness of the way they attempted to get hold of this information.

Perhaps it shows that for all the talk about student apathy, campaigning and protest by students really is something that can make our voice heard.

Indeed while many are criticising the election of an OUSU President who wrote his manifesto in crayon, the fact remains that LJ Trup managed to win the biggest majority of any OUSU election in recent years, with over 600 more votes than his closest rival.

His campaign must also be credited with leading Oxford student to the biggest voter turnout in some time. Apathy to student politics it seems is not necessarily after all.

Here in Cambridge students are continuing to engage in political issues both at a student and national level. Whether that is through joining one of the three main student political parties, getting involved in one of CUSU’s many campaigns or even running for a position at the Cambridge Union.

Whatever your view of student politics, it is not something that is ready to be written off just yet. Where’s our LJ Trup?

The outsiders of Cambridge sport

In Matt Worth’s article “The outsiders of Cambridge Sport” (very well received by the way) it was stated that Dr Patrick Barrie is the reigning British men’s singles champion. Whilst this is true, it might also be worth mentioning that he is also the reigning World Champion!

In addition, do feel free to mention that The Cambridge University Tid-winks Club (CUTwC) is also home to the current British Singles Student Champion: Francis Wragg.

Tasks to the author for aiding to raise the once considerable profile of the Noble Sport’s University representatives.

Ps. We beat Oxford on their home turf 106-6 in May’s Varsity Match. A winking recollection...

Francis Wragg

Applications are now open for the role of picture editor and our production, sub-editing & online teams.

Email Emily on editor@varsity.co.uk for more information

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Medical degree goes under the knife
London medical schools “disappointed” at decision to stop Cambridge students transferring to the city

Martha Elwell
NEWS EDITOR

The University has announced it will put an end to the practice of sending half of its medical students to London and Oxford for the clinical part of their training.

Students admitted to study medicine from October 2014 will no longer be able to move to one of six other medical schools to complete the final three years of their degree.

Dr Diana Wood, the Clinical Dean at the University of Cambridge, said that the existing system was “no longer fit for purpose”.

She explained: “The ‘pre-clinical/clinical divide’ is now widely regarded as outdated and our situation hinders innovation, since any curricular change would require coordination with courses in seven clinical schools.”

She added: “A fully developed six year programme provides Cambridge with opportunities to create innovative educational themes stretching across two Schools of the University.”

Under the existing system – which has been in place for sixty years – medical students can transfer to one of five medical schools affiliated to the University of London or one Oxford University Medical School. Cambridge medics will now undertake their clinical placements in hospitals in East Anglia.

Rebecca Green, a second-year medical student at Trinity, said that she planned to stay on at Cambridge for the clinical part of her degree, but commented: “The excitement and sheer range of cases that you would be able to experience in the London hospital is very appealing and I feel this is what attracts people to transfer.”

Peter Kopelman principal of St George’s, University of London and chair of London Medicine – the body that represents the capital’s medical schools – said that he was “disappointed” by the change.

Speaking to the Times Higher Education supplement he argued that it would be in the best interest of Cambridge medical students for the current scheme to continue.

He said: “London continues to offer medical students the greatest and most varied experience when they carry out their clinical training.”

The University of Oxford, which also sends medical students to London to complete their degree, does not intend to change its system.

A second-year medic at St Catharine’s, Ali Amin-Nejad, said: “Whilst the new scheme means that there will no longer be any competition when applying for clinical schools, I think most would have preferred at least having the choice of going to London or Oxford for their clinical years.”

As spokesperson for the University of Cambridge Clinical Students Society said that it had been closely involved in discussions about the changes.

They said that the shift brought Cambridge “in line with almost every other medical school in the country”. The spokesperson noted the stress caused to many students by the current system, pointing to many students “disappointed every year” when rejected from the Cambridge medical school.

Nathan Grundy, a fourth-year Cambridge medic who moved to London for the clinical portion of his training, said that change had come “far too late”.

He said: “It was always ridiculous that Cambridge medical school couldn’t accommodate all the students from pre-clinical and that as a consequence students were forced to move elsewhere.

“It’s all well and good suggesting that students benefited from the choice to move, but in reality it’s actually not that difficult to transfer between medical schools if you really have the desire to, even without the benefit of an established system.”

Shershah Assudullah, a medical student who decided to remain in Cambridge, said that many students do not realise that clinical training at another medical school is an option when applying to Cambridge.

He said: “Many of us just didn’t realise there was a separate application for clinical school and the possibility that we wouldn’t be able to stay. This meant that a few people were pretty upset when they weren’t accepted to stay. So I don’t think it will make a massive difference.

“Saying that though, I know lots of people who were 100 per cent adamant they wanted to leave Cambridge.”

Drunk students anger Addenbrooke’s doctors

Amy Hawkins
SENIOR NEWS EDITOR

Senior tutors at all colleges received an email on Wednesday from the Emergency Department of Addenbrooke’s Hospital, complaining about the behaviour of drunken students who had “inundated” Accident and Emergency during the shift between 6pm on Tuesday night and 4am on Wednesday morning.

Various students, many in fancy dress, had been hospitalised with facial injuries from fights or because of severe intoxication. It is believed that the students had come from a rugby or rowing event, although the colleges involved are not known.

The letter said that students were “disruptive, rude and frequently had to be told to stop wandering between the different areas of the department as they shuttled between their friends in different cubicles.”

It added: “While waiting in the waiting room other patients were disturbed by their rowdy behaviour and complained. If you could feedback to their college about their behaviour and the disruption it caused on an already busy night that would be great.”

Irena Borzym, Senior Tutor of St Catharine’s College, sent an email to her students about the incident. She noted that none of the individuals concerned were from St Catharine’s.

Dr Borzym nonetheless reminded her students about the importance of treating hospitals with “respect”: “We are very fortunate to have free access to medical help in this country. I hope that no one from this college will ever be guilty of such behaviour but I have requested that the Dean be especially harsh in his penalty if one or more of our students do behave in this way.

“Please drink and party in a responsible way which does not cause problems for other people.”

Ben Zucker, a first-year medic at Jesus, said: “Students have a responsibility to look after themselves and not be an unnecessary burden on the local health provider, however it is only natural students want to have a good time. It is the balance between the two that is essential.”

A spokesman for the University said: “The University deplores the reported unacceptable behaviour by students in A&E. An investigation is under way.”

Addenbrooke’s Hospital receives around 100,000 A&E admissions a year.

A NEW LEVEL OF STASH: Pepe Jeans London has announced a new collaboration with the University of Cambridge to produce cardigans, blazers and polo shirts featuring the University crest. “As a British fashion brand we are thrilled and honoured at being selected by Cambridge University to interpret their values into fashion collections,” said Managing Director Nish Soneji.
Climate change and you

An event at St John’s College looked at the political implications of the climate change debate and what it means for Cambridge’s research and practices

Sachin Parathalingam NEWS CORRESPONDENT

“Cambridge University is and can continue to be a potent breeding ground for climate change,” according to Professor Doug Crawford-Brown at a climate change seminar held at St John’s College last Tuesday.

The seminar organised jointly by the Cambridge University PPS Society and the St John’s Palmerston Society brought in a mixture of graduates, undergraduates and PhD students, in what turned out to be a stimulating and highly informative discussion.

The seminar began with Professor Crawford-Brown, an expert on climate change and director of the Cambridge Centre for Climate Change Mitigation Research, evaluating the risks and policy tools available for combating climate change.

“Science can only explain what is, and cannot predict what will be with exact accuracy. While the current predictions on climate change foresee significant temperature rises in the future, we could be completely wrong or right about these estimates,” he said.

Professor Crawford-Brown also went on to note that while the current consensus is “we don’t know what’s going to happen so just don’t go there,” there are many viable alternatives one could pursue in the immediate short-term in order to address the issue.

He also shed light on the fact that the orthodox model, which maintains that developed countries are the primary contributors to CO2 emissions, is quickly becoming outdated. According to him, China is where the model has “turned upside down”. China’s carbon consumption and higher rate of innovation has resulted in the growth of its carbon footprint, which could in the future even exceed that of developed nations, he explained.

Speaking about the role of the University in mitigating climate effects Crawford-Brown said: “Cambridge does a wealth of research into climate change which has helped benefit policy decisions around the world.”

The University spends £2 million a year on reducing carbon emissions and cannot predict what will be with exact accuracy. While the current predictions on climate change foresee significant temperature rises in the future, we could be completely wrong or right about these estimates,” he said.

However Crawford-Brown cited one limitation on the University’s part and that is the need for more careful investment decisions in order to keep carbon locked in the ground. “The colleges are catching on to this, but we have to remember that companies such as Shell create the carbon emissions that they do due to the massive rates of consumption. Consumption is the beginning of this process and has to be addressed on an individual basis”.

Comment

Sam Matthews writes in defence of the University’s investments in big oil

There are two forms of ethical investment. The first works on a “do no harm” principal and involves screening out particular kinds of stocks that an investor has decided are beyond the pale. Tobacco is almost always on this list, along with alcohol providers, gambling stocks, weapons manufacturers, pornography and of course oil. The UK’s Investment Management Association counts 94 ethically managed funds, most of them run on one of the above principles.

The CUSU’s Sustainable and Responsible Investment Society Coalition advocates Cambridge joining the fund, arguing that investing from certain industries on the basis that the University should be a role model in society, acting responsibly and helping create a sustainable future that is better for everyone. No one can question this ideal.

But in reality a safer future is unlikely to be achieved by Cambridge and other institutions divesting from fossil fuels. According to the International Energy Agency, despite the growth of renewable energy and nuclear power, fossil fuels will remain the dominant source of energy generation for the foreseeable future.

Even if Cambridge divested from fossil fuels and every major institution in the world followed suit, demand for coal, oil and gas would remain sufficient for the industry to survive.

Indeed in divesting, Cambridge would be likely to fall victim to the change of the big oil to those investors who are least environmentally aware and least likely to uphold industry standards. It would be the worst of all worlds. The second form of ethical investing is based on a “do good” principle. It involves screening companies for good ethical behaviour. Many organisations already do this for consumer goods, but the practice is gaining popularity in the investment community. The power of this form of investment is that it creates an incentive for companies to improve their practices and it ensures a sustained dialogue remains between companies and those pressing for reform.

Under this system, Cambridge and its colleagues would invest primarily in those energy companies with the best records. Greenpeace has devised an index based on open environmental reporting, greenhouse gas emissions, production efficiency, oil spill efficiency, pursuit of alternative fuels and stance on climate change. Of the big oil majors it currently ranks Shell first, BP second, Exxon Mobile third, Conoco Philips fourth and Chevron fifth. Of course these companies are not perfect. Exxon continues to question global warming and BP has suffered from the Deep-Water Horizon disaster. But through engagement, responsible investors have a chance to shape the impact and trajectory of an industry which holds sway over our environment’s future.

There are two major problems with an approach that chooses investments based on environmental criteria. First, ethical portfolios do not tend to perform as well as those with the full range of stocks to choose from. As the FT notes, “sin stocks” tend to pay the highest dividends.

Over the past two years in the US, the aptly named Vice Fund (which invests only in alcohol, tobacco, arms and gaming stocks) has made a total return of 56.3 per cent; far ahead of the Ave Maria Catholic Values fund, which excludes them and returned 34.5 per cent. The underperformance of a portfolio would be of particular concern for an institution like Cambridge, a centre of pioneering and expensive research, and as such a worthy cause in its own right.

Second, there is more to ethics than just

the environment. In the 1980s, the Council on Economic Priorities, a social and environmental think-tank, noted that Marlboro maker Philip Morris, the leading cigarette company, at the time, was highly rated for its progressive policies on the hiring of women and minorities and for offering excellent day care. In 2012 ExxonMobil donated over $200 million to charitable causes and paid for its workers to carry out over 776,300 hours of volunteering. While it is easy to be cynical about such efforts they do make a significant difference and they provide a timely reminder that no industry should be considered totally irredeemable.

Cambridge University’s endowment currently stands at £4 billion, of which over £2bn is invested in global stocks. Moreover, thanks to its global reputation it is already an institutional role model among investors. Cambridge should use this power and influence to not draw the ethical investors out of oil and other blacklisted industries, but to push for higher environmental and ethical standards in those areas which need them most. If the world is to have a safer and less carbon intensive future it will owe it to continued political and economic engagement rather than sanctions.
Debating disaffiliation

Caius holds referendum on disaffiliation after Selwyn only just reject the motion

Christina Sweeney-Baird  
NEWS EDITOR

CUSU is facing yet more strife in the coming months as numerous colleges begin the process of potential disaffiliation.

Gonville and Caius JCR opened a referendum on affiliation on Wednesday, which closes at 9pm this evening, while individuals at both Robinson and Magdalene have told Varity that they are planning to raise the issue at open meetings and call for referendums next term. Robinson College held a referendum on affiliation two years ago and decided to remain affiliated.

These new calls for disaffiliation follow just weeks after Selwyn College narrowly decided to reaffiliate in a referendum on affiliation two years ago and Robinson College held a referendum on affiliation two years ago and decided to remain affiliated.

The apathy towards CUSU has been highly charged debate between Flick Osborn, the current president of CUSU, and the Corpus Christi JCR president Jamie Wilman. The Corpus Christi JCR and MCR disaffiliated from CUSU in 2010 following claims of repeated failings of the CUSU sabbatical team to support the Corpus Christi JCR and MCR committee members.

Corpus Christi is currently the only college in Cambridge to be disaffiliated from CUSU.

The arguments from both sides of the debate in Selwyn revealed much of the ill-feeling towards CUSU. Flick Osborn warned of the ‘domino effect’ of disaffiliation which is now potential coming to fruition. Jamie Wilman repeatedly made the point that JCR subscription fees represent just 20 per cent of CUSU’s budget and so the organisation would not cease to exist if numerous colleges disaffiliated.

The apathy towards CUSU has been well documented this term. It has been widely reported that 80 per cent of students have not cast their votes in the CUSU election, which means that of the individuals who can vote on behalf of their colleges and other organisations, just one in five attend and then vote.

Speaking to the Cambridge Student earlier this week, Flick Osborn said of the Council issues: “I can’t overemphasise that the Council is open to all students. Don’t withdraw because you don’t like the tone of debate; come and contribute. Communicative and challenging debate is vital to all that CUSU does.”

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Police commissioner defends attempts to spy on students

In a letter to CUSU, Sir Graham Bright says that the actions taken were “within the legal framework”

In a letter to CUSU, the Cambridge-shire Police Commissioner, Sir Graham Bright, has sought to reassure students following last month’s revelations that the Cambridgeshire police force had tried to recruit an informant to report on Cambridge student activists, including CUSU and CDE.

Sir Graham said that: “I am aware that various surveillance tactics are used in policing in Cambridgeshire and across the country. Their use is driven by an assessment of threat, risk and harm within the context of keeping people safe. I am not made aware of the specifics of cases, as this would impinge on the independence of the Chief Constable to utilise the tactics that are most appropriate in the circumstances.”

He went on to say that: “I have received an assurance from the Constabulary that the actions taken were within the legal framework set out by the legislation.”

He said: “I have been made these points to the police.”

Sir Graham is invited to speak to CUSU and CDE.

CUSU said that: “We are disappointed by Sir Graham Bright’s response following last month’s revelations that the police are trying to recruit an informant to report on Cambridge student activists, including CUSU and CDE.

He has however offered to attend in the future in order to discuss the matter.”

Sir Graham was responding to a letter from CUSU President Flick Osborn which stated that CUSU was “disappointed” at the police’s actions.

Osborn added: “We work hard to ensure that the police is always informed about any planned demonstrations or protests we support. We find the officer’s actions to covertly obtain information about our own and other student groups’ activities to be completely dismissive of our partnership.”

Sir Graham was invited to attend a CUSU open meeting to address students directly but was unable to attend. He has however offered to attend in the future in order to discuss the matter.

Responding to Sir Graham’s letter, CUSU said that: “We are disappointed by Sir Graham Bright’s response to our letter inviting him to speak to Cambridge students about recent revelations of police surveillance of students. It is crucial that students have an opportunity to ask questions and hold the Cambridge Constabulary to account.”

“Political and social campaigning be protected and students are protected. He has already made these points to the police.”

The joke is over at the OUSU

LJ Trupp has been elected President of OUSU by over 600 votes, after writing his manifesto in crayon and promising to introduce double beds for all student

LJ Trupp has been elected President of OUSU by over 600 votes, after writing his manifesto in crayon and promising to introduce double beds for all student.

For those of us on Twitter, #lJTrupp4OUSU4Change may not have been a trend at the forefront of our tweeting experience over the past few weeks.

Louis Trupp, a third-year student at Brasenose College, Oxford, has battled many by winning the OUSU Presidential Elections last week – his manifesto, written on lined paper in coloured crayon, was headlined by the aforementioned hashtag, and proposed the abolition of Week Five, double beds for all, world peace, and a moratorium on the more out-of-town colleges, among other pledges.

Dismissed by many as a “joke candidate”, Trupp has proved his doubters wrong.

As the results were announced, Trupp was filmed shouting “What the fuck just happened?” and the resounding message is one of confusion and bewilderment – the student political system has been stirred and shaken by Trupp’s whirlwind campaign, which wound up taking 1685 first preference votes, in contrast to the 975, 725, and 587 won by the other three candidates, respectively.

Trupp’s campaign video ends with the words “BEHIND THE FUN IS A SERIOUS MESSAGE”. In an article he wrote for The Oxford Student, Trupp berated “un-fun student politicians working towards a cosy Labour seat in 20 years”, drawing attention to the fact that thousands attend College JCR meetings regularly.

Whilst an opposing candidate proposed a Week Five petting zoo as part of a more-centralised OUSU-based welfare system, Trupp wrote: “I still can’t believe people call me the ‘joke candidate’.”

Trupp’s trajectory is one that echoes the concerns many have about students in Cambridge and other universities.

Following the election results, Trupp said: “I think the people have spoken and we’re gonna make a fucking big change. I didn’t run on an incompetency platform, I ran on a platform of what we need to engage people.”

As his manifesto says in blue crayon, “THE MOR HAS SPOKEN.”
Huppert pushes for student vote

James Sutton
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Cambridge MP Julian Huppert has pushed the government to ensure that planned changes to the process of registering to vote do not prevent students from being able to take part in general and local elections.

The current system registers students to vote on arrival at university; in the case of Cambridge through their colleges. The government has proposed the introduction of an individual registration system whereby students will have to register themselves independently.

Speaking to Varsity, Huppert outlined his concerns: “Students are a special case, moving every year, and there is a risk they will end up not going on the register.

“Previously, colleges registered students automatically, but this will change. I worry that many students at the University of Cambridge will therefore miss out.

“At Anglia Ruskin University, very few students are on the register now. Students may not realise that they can register in Cambridge as well as their home, and may not know what they have to do – or may not get round to it in time.”

In the House of Commons on 19th November, Huppert asked Greg Clark, Minister for Cities and Constitution, what steps are being taken to tackle this problem. Clark responded that extra funding will be directed towards electoral offices in areas with high student populations in order to allocate resources to encourage students to register.

The representation of Cambridge students in elections has been questioned before. Dr Peter Sarris, senior fellow of history at Trinity College, stood as a Labour candidate for the Newnham seat in this year’s local elections in May, but was defeated by the Liberal Democrat candidate by a 7.4 per cent margin. Dr Sarris said that despite receiving an estimated 55 per cent of the student vote, “not enough students turned out.”

Like Huppert, Dr Sarris is worried that “in many marginal seats it could have a significant effect” on election results if the government were to go ahead with the proposed changes.

Some have pointed out that in the current climate, Huppert’s advocacy of student voting rights might hinder his own chances at re-election.

Phelim Brady, Chair of the Cambridge Universities Labour Club, said: “I’m glad to see that Julian Huppert is aware of this issue, but sadly it’s his party, the Lib Dems, who have pushed through these harmful changes.

In fact, when this bill came to the Commons last year Huppert voted with the Tories against a Labour amendment which would have explicitly mandated local election officers to write to students with registration forms.”

Brady added: “It’s important that as many students as possible vote in Cambridge in 2015 so we can remove the Lib Dems from office.”

Regardless of the potential loss of votes for himself, Huppert insists: “Students deserve their say in how their local area and the country as a whole works… however they may vote, I want them to have the chance to do so.”
Interview: Norman Baker MP

Louis Degenhardt talks to the Liberal Democrat minister about why the public should listen to his party

If people voted with their feet, Norman Baker would have every reason to be worried. Aside from student Liberal Democrat executive committee members, I can count the number of students in attendance at his talk on British politics on one hand. He half-jokes that the talk may as well have been held in his constituency, as he recognises some of the adult faces.

Norman Baker is a Liberal Democrat MP and, thanks to a recent reshuffle, Minister of State at the Home Office. He's also a conspiracy theorist, publishing in 2007 The Strange Death of David Kelly, in which he questioned whether the real cause of the scientist's death had been covered up by government. Caricatured by some parts of the media as eccentric, even a bit odd, much has been made of Clegg's decision to trust him with our national security. I've anecdotally been disappointed, as a result, by the talk and subsequent interview - he comes across as perfectly reasonable, professional and actually quite sensible.

I ask if he ever feels like an outsider. "I regard myself as independent minded, I've always adopted a policy in life of not having the evidence for whatever it goes, and if the conclusions from the evidence are uncomfortable, then so be it; there's a safe segment you can work in as an MP, and if you move outside that segment then you take risks, I've always moved outside that segment, because there are things, I think, that should be said and looked into."

A substantial part of his speech focuses on defending the party's recent record. He sees policies such as the pupil premium, the raising of the income tax threshold and the closing of tax loopholes as part of a "huge list" of Liberal Democrat achievements in government that "wouldn't be happening" under the Conservatives or the Labour Party.

He concedes, though, that some government actions have been "more difficult to justify." He stops short of expressing pride in the government's achievements, but tells me "I'm proud of the Lib Dem record. Genuinely." It strikes me as slightly odd then, that he spends so long justifying Liberal Democrat actions to an audience predominantly made up of party activists - why does he feel the need to defend the government's record to a room of loyalists? Perhaps he was just expecting a bigger audience.

To be fair to Baker, he is often refreshingly frank for a politician. His description of his party's transition from a party of opposition to a party of government is in equal parts insightful and honest. He admits that the Liberal Democrats have been playing "catch up" in office, lacking the Tories' experience of holding power. His message on tuition fees is delivered from a similar stance. He is clear that as a party of protest they naively "over-promised" - it wasn't done cynically, and also hesitantly reveals - "I don't know if this is public knowledge or not" - that Nick Clegg had personally argued against the scrapping of tuition fees as party policy. Red lines will be drawn for the 2015 manifesto: "Lessons have been learnt," he assures us.

He also gives us a glimpse of the coalition's unusual working relationship. Baker describes Theresa May as "too ambitious, a "strong character". But he reveals that although they have a reason to working relationship, he had to hold a candid talk with her on joining the Home Office, insisting that it was Tory sources who had ordered the press smears on his promotion, regardless of her denial.

Baker is self-professedly on the left wing of the Liberal Democrats. He is undeniably uncomfortable working so closely with the Conservatives, but the experience of coalition seems to have brought them together, forcing a level of collegiality in spite of their fundamental differences. His assessment of Labour is scathing: "My respect for the Labour party has really gone downhill since being in government."

He is noncommittal when pressed on who he'd rather work with after the next election, but the tone of his speech - "they're far more similar than the Tories" - doesn't particularly relish the idea of being in government with Labour after election - seems to suggest a marked preference for more of the same.

Baker is keen to stress the progressive nature of the "Lib Dem in government", in contrast to the Tories, who he claims are "becoming the nasty party once again in the eyes of the public.

On Nick Clegg's idea of a National Liberal ticket to run joint Tory/Lib Dem candidates in 2015 his verdict is unequivocal: "It's not going to happen...how dare you take the word liberal/ Liberal's the best word in politics."

The Liberal Democrats are though undeniably a changed party, no longer the anti-establishment option that provided the base for much of their support. In Baker's view this is not necessarily a bad thing: "I do think we’re going to take the country by storm at the next election," he concedes. But, despite persistently abysmal polling, he is cautiously optimistic: "We will keep what we’ve got, by and large."

If he’s right, we had better get used to the idea of a Liberal Democrat government; with the polls so tight, it is not inconceivable that coalition politics in Britain might be here to stay. On poor attendance, though, it seems that, in Cambridge at least, his party have gone their work, cut out to the electorate of their right to remain, or even, in fact, of the right to have their case heard.

Femi Oriogun-Williams looks at the world of student Liberal Democrats

So what do the Cambridge Student Liberal Democrat do? Let’s browse through a term in the life of a CSLD member. This term’s calendar holds stacks of organised fun: pizza and politics, a film night, a Christmas dinner, a pub crawl. Dotted among the student Liberal Democrat executive committee members, I can count the number of students in attendance at his talk on British politics on one hand. He half-jokes that the talk may as well have been held in his constituency, as he recognises some of the adult faces.

Among them are Andrew Duff MEP, Lord Oakeshott and Vince Cable, who started out as a lowly committee member for the CSLD and is now Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills. Interestingly, Liberal Democrat Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg was never a member of the Liberal or Social Democrat student groups during his time at Cambridge, although he has been accused of being a member of the Cambridge University Conservative Association. Clegg claims he has "no recollection" of this. These evenings have given awkward young adults the opportunity to talk about politics and informally meet some of the most powerful people in the country since 1886. Julian Huppert, MP for Cambridge since 2005, also made it on to the CSLD calendar. Having gained his PhD in Biochemistry from Trinity College he is also a fellow of Clare College. Huppert said: “I was an active member of CSLD while I was an undergraduate - I campaigned heavily in the 1997 elections, and was very involved with student protests when the Labour government introduced tuition fees.”

He adds some friendly advice: “I enjoyed my time in CSLD, and learned a lot from it – I’d recommend students to be involved in it. However, don’t become a party hack – and keep a life going as well!”

There is certainly little financial reason not to join one of the student party group at the University. Yearly membership rates range from £1 to £5. CULC and CSLD, as well as opening up their memberships to students and academics across both universities in Cambridge, are also the cheapest of the three main student political organisations in Cambridge. Disappointingly, CULCA’s life membership does not cover the all the social costs of Conservative student life. It only entitles members to “receive a discount on social events such as Port & Cheese parties and the Chairman’s Dinner.”

As for the CSLD, in a coalitional political climate, the Liberal Democrats have never looked so promising as a means to get your voice heard on the national political stage. But student groups like the CSLD really communicate the views of ordinary students to the increasingly elite world of parliamentary politics.

Even though CSLD is open to Anglia Ruskin University students, just like CULCA and CULC its current executive committee is comprised exclusively of Cambridge University members. That may not bode well for the future.

Femi Oriogun-Williams looks at the world of student Liberal Democrats

So what do the Cambridge Student Liberal Democrat do? Let’s browse through a term in the life of a CSLD member. This term’s calendar holds stacks of organised fun: pizza and politics, a film night, a Christmas dinner, a pub crawl. Dotted among these jaunty evenings are events where students are given the opportunity to meet those who have used the CSLD to get their foot in the door to the world of party politics.

Among them are Andrew Duff MEP, Lord Oakeshott and Vince Cable, who started out as a lowly committee member for the CSLD and is now Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills. Interestingly, Liberal Democrat Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg was never a member of the Liberal or Social Democrat student groups during his time at Cambridge, although he has been accused of being a member of the Cambridge University Conservative Association. Clegg claims he has "no recollection" of this. These evenings have given awkward young adults the opportunity to talk about politics and informally meet some of the most powerful people in the country since 1886. Julian Huppert, MP for Cambridge since 2005, also made it on to the CSLD calendar. Having gained his PhD in Biochemistry from Trinity College he is also a fellow of Clare College. Huppert said: “I was an active member of CSLD while I was an undergraduate - I campaigned heavily in the 1997 elections, and was very involved with student protests when the Labour government introduced tuition fees.”

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Paris ups its security after shootings

Matt Appleby reflects on last week’s shootings and asks if the capital is prepared for future attacks

The word spreads across the city that over the river, a man has been shot. Later, a second shooting and a hijacked car.

Questions have been raised about how prepared Paris is for this type of attack. Poorly, on the evidence. Perhaps police intelligence could not have prevented Friday’s threat to the offices of the television network BFMTV; a lone gunman is difficult to predict. The locations of the shootings on Monday, though, deserve more scrutiny.

The offices of Libération, the far-left newspaper founded by Sartre, are well within central Paris, as are the headquarters of the Société Générale bank. France’s financial hub benefits from a twenty-four hour guard; in the wake of an attack on a media outlet, the watch was tightened at newspapers citywide.

Yet despite the increase in security, response was still painfully slow.

It is unnerving that, even in an age of super-surveillance, a man can hide in plain sight. The suspect, having hijacked a lift to the Champs Elysées, is reported to have escaped via the Metro. The Parisian rail service operates ten thousand security cameras, but by Saturday evening, the trail appeared cold.

A journalist was critically injured, and the suspect remained at large. Coming eventually to the suburb of Bois-Colombes, the gunman hid for over a day, with some sources reporting that he had attempted to commit suicide, before being found on the third floor of a car park.

The sole suspect Abdelhakim Dekhar is not without a previous criminal record. Known for supplying firearms in the infamous Rey-Maupin affair, he served four years in prison from 1998. Three officers and a taxi driver were killed that day.

The police force can hardly be expected to predict who will commit crime, but it stands to reason that those at risk of reoffending should be kept under watch. As it was, Dekhar was able to procure a hunting rifle without alerting the authorities.

Though violent crime in France has fallen sharply, the risk of the guns is never far away. As is customary, the problem is set to worsen. Rising poverty and the popularity of French fascism pushes more to crime each year.

The advent of 3D-printers risks an explosion in gun ownership, free from the usual channels of smuggling. Already in the UK, police raids in Manchester have uncovered plastic guns; France cannot be far behind. As secure as we feel in the falling statistics, France must prepare for future crime, and with considerable speed.

Abdelhakim Dekhar awaits trial, having been charged for attempted murder and kidnap.

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

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.
Universities debate use of GPA
As Oxford Brookes University introduces the American Grade Point Average system for degree classification, some argue for a uniform change to grading

Emily Handley NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Several UK universities are considering the introduction of a pilot scheme for grade point averages, following suggestions that current degree classifications are becoming outdated.

According to a report published in the Guardian last week, more than twenty institutions are in talks about revising the honours system already in place. Instead of assessing the work of undergraduates on a linear scale of, say, a first, 2:1, 2:2 or a three, there are plans to replace this with a grade point aver-

age (GPA) system, as is currently used in American universities and in other countries around the world. Although UK degrees are still regarded as valuable qualifications, it is hoped that the GPA system would provide a more accurate record of students’ achievements.

The proposal for this new system has been the brainchild of a group of fifteen students from Emmanuel College, Cambridge, led by student activist David Willetts, who after Oxford Brookes became the first UK university to introduce it alongside the existing classification for honours degrees earlier this year.

Students have routinely criticised the current degree grading method, which has existed for 200 years after being intro-

duced by the University of Oxford, for being unfair and vague. For instance, a 2:1 only differentiates between can-

didates who have achieved 60 per cent or 70 per cent and not those who have achieved borderline results such as 61 per cent or 69 per cent.

GPA advocates have argued the current system is not a “crude” method of selecting the most suitable candi-

date for employment after graduation, as it allows a clearer overview of the different areas of a student’s academic record.

The website change.org places the proposal for this new system at the centre of the debate on student achievement at Oxford Brookes University, where eight students have launched their own campaign. The proposal for this new system has been the brainchild of a group of fifteen students from Emmanuel College, Cambridge, led by student activist David Willetts, who after Oxford Brookes became the first UK university to introduce it alongside the existing classification for honours degrees earlier this year.

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date for employment after graduation, as it allows a clearer overview of the different areas of a student’s academic record.
Council crackdown on housing
Charities work alongside the council to address homelessness in Cambridge

Chloe Clifford-Ashby
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Cambridge city council’s fraud team are leading a crackdown on illegal council home subletting, a trend which is contributing to the city’s housing problem.

The fraud investigators have discovered five sub-let council-owned properties and one housing association property in the last few months. There was also an instance of public being left empty, while the tenant moved to another city. These homes were reallocated to new tenants.

None of the tenants have been prosecuted, but the council is “conducting full criminal investigations” and seeking legal advice to determine whether the individuals have committed an offence. The sub-let and abandoned homes were identified thanks to an anonymous tip-off.

The city council commented that the problem is “real and immediate”, and that Cambridge’s homeless are being deprived because of it. Catherine Smart, Executive Councillor for housing, added: “People who cheat like this are not cheating the council, as it still gets the rent. They are cheating other people in Cambridge who are desperate to get rehoused.”

There is a large and increasing demand for affordable housing in Cambridge. Councillors have recorded in 2011-2012.

The council has just accepted a plan to build 275 new homes near Babraham Road, on the southern edge of Cambridge. Councillors have praised the project, developed by Hill Residential, for the significant amount of social and affordable housing it contains: 40 per cent of homes will fall into this category.

With substantial reductions in governmental aid, national and local charities are shouldering a heavy portion of the burden. Cambridge-based charities such as Jimmy’s provide short-term emergency accommodation for homeless men and women in Cambridge, while Wintercomfort provides free breakfast and showers for individuals who are sleeping rough.

A number of student-led initiatives are attempting to alleviate the hardship of homelessness. Streetbite organises groups of its team to bring food, hot drinks and conversation to people living on the street, while Cambridge RAG is donating some of the money raised through its activities this year to the Cambridge City Foodbank.

The government has recently provided Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI) – a social care and health charity – with £144,000 grant to spend on helping homeless immigrants in Cambridge. CRI suggests that there has been a significant increase in immigrants sleeping rough. They believe that immigrants are particularly vulnerable to becoming homeless because they are not aware of their rights to access welfare and accommodation.

The grant will fund welfare centres and patrols of CRI workers who will be able to communicate in several languages.

“There’s a lot of stigma and incorrect stereotypes associated with [homelessness], which means people are often automatically excluded from opportunities that the rest of us take for granted,” says Jen Durrant of Streetbite. “The lack of affordable housing, the lack of funding for support services and the impossibility of getting a job when you don’t have a secure address all mean that the odds are stacked against you.”

Hundreds of people sleep rough in Cambridge every night

The biggest sale of student debt to date

Government has sold a stock of student debt worth an estimated £900 million

Martha Elwell
NEWS EDITOR

The government this week sold a portfolio of student loans worth around £900 million to a private debt agency. The privatisation of the loans – which were taken out by students in the 90s – is part of the government’s plan to raise £160 million despite their worth being estimated at more than five times that amount.

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Toni Pearce, President of the NUS, said: “This announcement is extremely concerning and is one that will see the public subsidising a private company earning a profit from public debt, which is incredibly problematic.”

The government is selling the loans for £140 million despite the two months being estimated at more than five times that amount.

Pearce said: “The impact of this sale won’t only affect borrowers, but will affect everybody: the simple fact is that selling these loans on the public market would be better off for the government in the long run.

“Selling off the loan book at a discount to secure a cash lump sum now doesn’t make economic sense.”

It is thought that the coalition ultimately wants to sell all publically owned student debt. Concerns have been raised that this can only be profitable for private companies if the limit on interest for repayments is raised, increasing the burden on those who have bought student loans.

However, cabinet ministers have said that sale of the student loan book will not result in increased interest rates for students. In June, Business Secretary Vince Cable said: “I have ruled out categorically changing the terms of interest rates charged to graduates with existing student loans taken out before 2012... Work on the feasibility of selling the outstanding student debt continues.

“However, the [Rothschild] study contained a proposal which suggested a change in interest rates charged to existing students – that proposal was comprehensively dismissed two years ago and will not be taken forward by this government.”

NUS President Toni Pearce said: “We recently secured assurances from David Willetts that terms and conditions on student loans would not be changed as the result of a sale, but we want to see all students protected on this by law.”

1990
Creation of student loans company
  » Founded to provide low interest loans to students
  » Average loan is £390
  » 28% students take one out

1998
Introduction of tuition fees
  » Dearing report suggests students should pay
  » Labour passes Higher Education Act 1998
  » £1,000 fees introduced in 1998/1999

2004
Cap raised to £3,000
  » Student loans now worth over £2.7 billion
  » Approximately 80% now take out a loan

2012
Cap raised to £9,000

2013
Government sells £900 million worth of student debt

Inquest into Cambridge student’s death concludes it was an accident

Cambridge

An inquest into the death of Marcus Hughes-Hallett, who died while on holiday with his family in Malta in August 2012, has concluded his death was accidental. Hughes-Hallett, 20, was a student of Mathematics at Queens’ College. He drowned after getting into difficulty swimming between underwater caves in Santa Marija Bay off the Maltese island of Comino.

His father raised the alarm when he failed to reappear after several minutes. He was removed from the water and flown to hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Smoking banned in all Cambridge hospitals

Cambridge

A smoking ban on the campuses of Cambridge University Hospitals will come into force on 1st January, 2014. The ban will apply to all areas of campus, including research institutes.

“I have spent a large part of my professional life dealing with the terrible effects of smoking – deaths from cancer, emphysema, lung transplantation. As well as this smoking costs the NHS and society billions each year”, said Dr Keith McNel, a heart and lung transplant physician and respiratory medicine specialist at Addenbrooke’s Hospital.

“It’s only right and proper that we lead by example, and make Cambridge University Hospitals a smoke-free campus.”

Cambridge Blues join up with Cambridge United

Cambridge

Director of Football for Cambridge United Jer Geoghegan has said that a collaborative effort between Cambridge United and the University Light Blues football team could be beneficial for both clubs.

They are currently running the Light Blues team with coaching following the exit of Che Wilson as their manager due to studying commitments.

Speaking to Cambridge News, Geoghegan hopes United’s involvement will prove fruitful: “The university is massive in this city and the club hasn’t historically been able to forge any meaningful relationships with it, but there are so many so many students in Cambridge, it’s something the club should be doing because there could be long-term benefits.”

Geoghegan hopes that the collaborative process can encourage more Light Blues will eventually become involved in United.

Stephen Hawking “disappointed” by Higgs boson discovery

Cambridge

Stephen Hawking told an audience at the Science Museum that he thought that “physics would be far more interesting if [the Higgs boson] had not been found.”

He also admitted that he had lost a bet of £100 with an American academic about whether the so-called “God-particle” would be found. Evidence for the existence of the particle was announced at CERN last year, and earned Professor Peter Higgs of Edinburgh the Nobel Prize for Physics.
Frederick Sanger died on November 19th 2013, at the age of 95 years. But who was he? First, the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, a leader in the Human Genome Project, is named after him. A quick Google search reveals that he was one of only four individuals to receive two Nobel Prizes (the others being Marie Curie, Linus Pauling and John Bardeen, while two organisations – the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross – have also won multiple Nobel prizes). These were both in chemistry, the first in 1958 and then again in 1980.

Both are highly impressive accolades to say the least, yet somehow don’t seem to capture the incredible impact and influence that he had on biology as the inventor of both protein and DNA sequencing. It is hard to over-emphasise the importance these discoveries have had on modern biology, so instead imagine the world without Sanger. The human genome would never have been sequenced; the specific design of medical drugs against protein targets would be no more than a pipe dream; our understanding of inherited diseases would be next to non-existent. Indeed, much of biology, from genetics to biochemistry, would be based much more on passive observation instead of targeted alteration than it is today.

And yet despite all this, he remained a modest man who shunned the spotlight in favour of the lab bench. He refused a knighthood as he did not want to be called ‘Sir’, although he did later accept the Order of Merit.

Sanger matriculated at St John’s College in 1936, reading Natural Sciences. It was at Cambridge that he met his future wife, Newnham undergraduate Joan Howe, whom he married upon graduation in 1940. The couple had three children: Robin, Peter and Sally.

Sanger was a Quaker, he was a conscientious objector during the Second World War. He stayed at Cambridge and divided his time between studying for a PhD and aiding the war effort by carrying out applied research into nitrogen uptake in potatoes.

A man of many firsts, Sanger produced the first DNA whole genome sequence for the virus Phi X 174 and sequenced the entirety of the mitochondrial genome (mitochondria are effectively ‘energy making factories’ that populate, in some form, all cells with a nucleus). This was the first time a ‘human’ genome had been sequenced. Scientists from across the world have paid tribute to him. Craig Venter, one-time rival and one of the most controversial living scientists, described Sanger as “one of the most important scientists of the 20th century.”

Sir Mike Stratton, director of the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, said of Sanger: “Fred was an inspiration to many, for his brilliant work, for his quiet determination and for his modesty. He was an outstanding investigator, with a dogged determination to solve questions that have led to transformations in how we perceive our world.”

Such words of high praise would undoubtedly be called hyperbole if applied to another man, and such tributes show what a cornerstone Frederick Sanger was to the foundation of modern biology. But perhaps the best words to describe Frederick Sanger are his own: he was a man “engaged in the pursuit of knowledge.”

INSTITUTE OF ASTRONOMY: The Northumberland Telescope, first built to find the planet Neptune, has had its renovation completed this week. The Northumberland is the only remaining large instrument from the early days of the University Observatory, and dates back to 1833 when the Duke of Northumberland (later Chancellor) expressed a wish to donate the telescope to the observatory.

Double Nobel laureate and Cambridge alumnus Frederick Sanger dies, aged 95

Nathan Smith

ScIENCE EDITOR

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Evolution laid out in a beaker

Katherine Armstrong

Everyone knows that Darwin's theory of evolution germinated while on the Galapagos Islands and about the profound impact of his research. Here, however, is the man who "created his own Galapagos Islands" and studies evolution from 4000 vials of bacteria: Richard Lenski.

For the last 25 years, he has kept frozen E. coli and observed its evolution in order to understand the process in other organisms. The experiment began with 12 lines of identical bacteria in separate flasks which were filled with glucose solution and kept at body temperature. After 75 days, some of the strains were frozen, and this practice has continued ever since.

The main hypothesis Lenski wanted to test, he says, is Stephen Jay Gould's assertion that, repeated a second time, evolution would have gone in an entirely different direction. 58,000 generations of E. coli later, it is clear that this is not the case. Some said that bacteria in such a stable environment wouldn't provide any valid information on evolution in nature, but in fact Lenski and his team did see an accelerated process of evolutionary change.

For example, the fitness of the strains has improved by an average of 70% over the whole experiment. Fitness is measured by the rate of reproduction, meaning that the most recent cultures can double 1.7 times in the time it took the original cultures to double once. Furthermore, all 12 lines improved at a similar rate, suggesting that in broad terms evolution is reproducible, but six lines evolved differently to the rest.

These lines developed defects in DNA repair and rather than dying out as was expected, just had higher rates of mutation. One of the mutations that occurred in the appearance of two different types of E. coli in one flask: a type of bacteria that created large colonies with large cells, and one that created smaller colonies with smaller cells. Against all expectation, neither type conquered the other. Instead, they formed an eco-system where factors such as competition prevented one type from taking over.

The frozen samples of E. coli are what really make this experiment extraordinary. As previous strands of the bacteria can be observed at will and compared to the new ones or indeed to each other, it is possible to see the entire process of their evolution. Lenski has created a living fossil record that allows him to track evolutionary development as it happens. How many people can boast of that?

Science correspondent

James Forstythe

Cancer is the current terror of medicine, which has grown in infamy as the likes of cholera and smallpox have been countered by sanitation and vaccination. Cancer is a complex range of diseases that requires different approaches for therapy when compared to other illnesses. In future cancer patients may be treated with different vaccinations from bacteria, usually MRSA and countless others that continue to plague humanity.

There is a plethora of bacteria inside a single person - collectively called the human microbiota - and there are more than ten bacteria for every single human cell in the body. Many of these bacteria are symbiotic; the organised that can; some help us in our daily struggle to survive in a variety of ways. One example is the production of vitamin K by the gut microbiota in the intestines, an essential vitamin that the body cannot produce itself. Recent papers published in Science this month detail the positive effects of the microbiota on cancer therapy. The presence of the gut microbiota was found to boost the effects of three anti-tumor regimens in mice, whilst its absence had a detrimental effect on the treatment.

Furthermore, all 12 lines improved at a similar rate, suggesting that in broad terms evolution is reproducible, but six lines evolved differently to the rest.

The microbiota may also have an effect on chemotherapy. The CTX antibiotic drug was observed to cause digestive problems, by causing villi to shrink and letting certain species of bacteria into the spleen and lymph. Feeding these bacteria to mice cancer treatments led to an increase in the immune system in the spleen.

The need remains for tests in humans before we can feed specific bacteria to patients or reduce their antibiotics, but the influence of gut bacteria on the immune system is now apparent.

Are microbes allies in our war against cancer?

The stem cell controversy may seem like a state topic to some: the debate has had its heyday in the years of the second Bush administration, reaching a heated climax in 2006 when theuppy-hugging President signed a controversial veto that restricted federal funding to research involving the destruction of human embryos.

When in 2009, Obama reversed these executive orders, biomedical labs across the country echoed with long-held sighs of relief. Stem cell research has made comparatively few headlines since. Nevertheless, the issue is still relevant today. Several US states maintain a ban on all human embryonic stem cell (ES cell) research, and public opinion on the matter remains strongly divided. A Gallup poll published this year, for instance, revealed that a third of all Americans believe that human stem cell research is "morally wrong." In 2010, a quarter of Britons and an astonishing 60% of Austrians said that human stem cell studies should be totally forbidden.

I think that much of the aversion stems (pun intended, I'm afraid) from ignorance as to what this kind of research actually involves. I completely accept the idea that not everybody should maintain a comprehensive knowledge of all modern science, so I cannot blame why some people hear the words "embryo research" and picture cackling biologists creating Victor Frankenstein's around the world, with unbridled threat for humanity. But there's another side to the story.

The microbiota can help fight cancer. One of the lines Lenski observed had defects in DNA repair and rather than dying out as was expected, just had higher rates of mutation. One of the mutations that occurred was the appearance of two different types of E. coli in one flask: a type of bacteria that created large colonies with large cells, and one that created smaller colonies with smaller cells.

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It may not always be earth-shattering, but student journalism plays an important role in university life

Alice Udale-Smith

What is student journalism for? After a term as editor of *Varsity* I really ought to have a response, yet the perfect soundbite continues to evade me. It would be all too easy to launch into a well-rehearsed speech about the importance of student led investigative journalism, with impressive sounding goals of “holding the University to account” or “greater transparency for student actions”. Student journalism also exists to champion these worthy issues and stand up the energy to be thoroughly expressive. It does (and should) aim higher than simply cultivating the highest number of Facebook likes. There is something refreshing about student-led journalism, with its impulses into investment in fossil fuels, but from a purely selfish perspective, student newspapers also serve as training grounds for students in skills that are often neglected in lectures. Neither is this experience limited to wannabe hacks who want to rack up enough experience to beg, borrow or brag their way into a real journalism job. It is a collaboration between designers, programmers, writers, illustrators, photographers and people like me who are simply rather noisy. Whichever category you fall into, the creative freedom that comes with running a student paper is simply unparalleled, and something we are unlikely to experience again in our working lives. It is for this, self-serving, reason that so many student journalists first get involved in *Varsity*. But who can blame us when we’re having this much fun? Student journalism is not just about filling pages with the trivial, the vulgar and the petty; it is varied, creative and expressive. It does (and should) aim higher than simply cultivating the highest number of Facebook likes. There is something refreshing about student journalism’s ability to muster up the energy to be thoroughly noisy about what is going on. Student interest in CUSU has never been less enthusiastic, the average student struggling to muster up even a good strong enthusiasm for CUSU anymore, yet for all its faults, student journalism can never be criticised for its lack of interest or participation in student life. Ed say it’s one of the best ways to truly contribute to it. Just be prepared to say goodbye to your degree for a while first: there’s always the holiday to get on with that.
Dude, who’s my monorail?

With faltering faith in student politics, are crony manifestos the way forward?

Felicity Osborn
Cusu President

CUSU – why should anyone care? Why do students need a central students’ union anyway when JCRs and MCs do so much excellent work in colleges? What does CUSU even do?!

Central students’ unions have a fundamental role in protecting the quality of students’ university experiences in a time of unprecedented turbulence in the Higher Education sector. Tuition fees have risen and several Vice-Chancellors have made statements advocating further rises. The student loan book is on the verge of being privatised, with potentially terrible consequences. International students could be charged to use the halls; landlords may soon be permitted to check student visas possibly resulting in dangerous racial profiling. National political issues do not bypass students. A central students’ union with a strong, united voice is absolutely essential in campaigning about cuts. There is not even a single debate about one college’s affiliation to CUSU; it’s about the importance of representation of students beyond the walls of the college. Your JCRs and MCs do excellent and important work ensuring your college provides what it should; they’re an essential part of CUSU’s structure. Through affiliated common rooms with good channels of communication, CUSU can represent your needs and interests at the highest level of University decision making.

This is where your educational experience is defined, which is much of what CUSU’s work entails. CUSU is an organisation run by students, for students. From policy-setting at CUSU Council where any student can propose a motion to direct the sabbatical team, to its engagement in formal or informal campaign groups such as JCR, MCR, faculty and autonomous campaign representatives, CUSU relays heavily on student involvement. If you think CUSU is irrelevant, engage with us in dialogue; the more you’re involved, the more effective and productive CUSU will be. Withdrawing only makes the student voice weaker; there is power in numbers and CUSU is only as strong as the students behind it.

CUSU provides free sexual health supplies to your JCR and MCR to distribute to you, it runs a huge Shadowing Scheme – the first of its kind in the country, it runs the Student Advice Service; it’s conducting research on the cost of living in Cambridge. It funds the autonomous students’ union anyway it can – for a student hub building in the city centre; it funds the autonomous campaigns for a student union. It’s about putting the students behind the walls of the college. Your JCRs and MCs do excellent and important work ensuring your college provides what it should; they’re an essential part of CUSU’s structure. Through affiliated common rooms with good channels of communication, CUSU can represent your needs and interests at the highest level of University decision making.

Nathan Akehurst
Osusu Candidate

To say that Louis Trup’s victory spells ‘the end of student politics’ is somewhat overly melodramatic, but it certainly represents a severe – and to my mind positive – shock to the system. It’s important to understand that Trup’s voters are not a homogeneous block. There are those who voted for no other reason than the fact that they found him funny. There are those who enforce apathy and pretend that their ‘apoliticism’ is not the defence of the status quo that it amounts to, but that think it’s cool to hate student politics without any especially defined reason for doing so. And there are those who simply haven’t ever seen their student union do anything that affects their lives.

Then there are those who are fully aware of what their union does and oppose its existence or its work for political reasons. There are those across the political spectrum who aren’t opposed to CUSU but do perceive it to be dominated by the establishment. I was a candidate in this year’s election, but had not been, I’d have voted Trup. Every year in CUSU there are slates named after their presidential candidate, drawn from informal bureaucracies such as the Labour Club or the common room presidents’ committee, who form on a basis of mutual self-interest and very little shared vision. There is no space outside elections where every person can vote on what their union does. I stood because I wanted a union that made itself relevant, firstly by giving everyone a chance to vote on policy rather than personality, and secondly by being willing to take tough campaigning action on issues such as the soaring cost of living or the arcane elements of the Oxford disciplinary system. There were slates in those in the Trup camp with such a message and those that militantly reject it. But regardless, his win sparked a debate that has been bubbling under – should we have a central student union, and if so, what should it do? What do we really mean by ‘representation’, ‘engagement’ and ‘democracy’ mean in practice?

Personally I believe that central student unions, even at Oxbridge, are necessary and do important work on welfare, representation and liberation issues. Common rooms are important but not ubiquitous. I am however unconvinced that the machine-like nature of student politics and certainly do attribute the perception of irrelevance and stagnation of student unions to properly engage. Trup’s win is to be applauded because he is more than just a joke candidate. In a week he sprung from nowhere to a victory that campaigns which had spent months preparing couldn’t come close to. Despite his promise of a monorail around Oxford. He represents something new, in that he is more than a joke candidate. What that something is, and how the bureaucracies of student politics will react to it.

The art of doing nothing at all

Jennie King

It’s a myth universally acknowledged that an undergrad in possession of free time must be in a state of blissful productivity. Right? Wrong. It’s not that time is precious, time is money, time is short. Culture has rebranded time as relaxation in its most productive guise. For years we muddled through re-runs of the 35 funniest reactions to this chair’, or reading Buzzfeed articles entitled ‘The 15 most bone chilling simulations you can send your friends’, or I’m such a disaster revel the Jedi mind tricks ‘I have no time for that!’ and ‘what a reaction that followed. A fragrant mix of mindless drivel – I was shocked by the incomprehensible and incomprehensible, but not ubiquitous.

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I personally believe that central students’ unions are a vital part of what politics is about. It’s hard to imagine what education would be like without them. It’s an idea that links what you do to a mining activity of some sort, sometimes dull, sometimes of interest, but I would make it more engaging, enabling. A better form of student voice weaker; there is power in numbers and CUSU is only as strong as the students behind it.

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Over the summer I joined the protest in New York against the acquittal of George Zimmerman. The scale of the crowd was phenomenal. The anger with Zimmerman and the legal system was obvious. No justice. No peace. /TH is is not to say that the Women’s Campaign is not a positive influence in other aspects of our lives, such as in the realm of humour failures it sets them back by /TH ere will be no Russell Brand–esque revolution. Change will be iterative. It will be painfully slow.

Students’ demands will be initially ignored. But that doesn’t mean that they are not heard.
**Why I love...**

Although Bridgemas technically fell on a Monday this year, there's still no better start to the week than Cambridge Christmas festivities. There's so many things to enjoy about this time of year. Not only is it still Autumn – the leaves are changing colours into fiery reds, yellows and oranges that fill up the pavements with unrelenting speed, (only to be swept away I sometimes think to myself, sadly) – but you're still with friends, and away from the familial awkwardness of pushing the brussels sprouts to the side when all you really want is the meat. Your friends wouldn't care. Mum does.

The first thing to love about this time of year? Decorations. Bright lights, bubble-like cities don't have the same kind of ring to it as the Cee-Lo Green original, but the Cambridge City Council has already begun hanging them up! The same can be seen with the many pubs enticing people out of the cold and into the warm rooms with a good ale.

Mulled wine and mince pies. I could stop there but, just think about it, the taste of hot mulled wine after coming in after a long day out in the cold (or in the UL where central heating in North Wing seems non-existent) is heavenly. Add mince pies to the occasion and it's a perfect way to eat delicious food, and escape (momentarily at least) the feeling of essay dread and panic.

And finally, among the many other things to enjoy at Christmas, it's presents! Giving someone a nice gift, or receiving one, is a great thing but one of the most enjoyable elements of Bridgemas is the added challenge of the student budget. Secret Santa is nothing new, nor are price limits in general, but make it £10 and the pressure of getting an expensive and thoughtful gift is reduced massively. Last year I was given a mug shaped like a toilet. I guess it's the thought that counts.

Words by David Godwin
All illustrations by June Tong

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**Why I hate...**

I love Bridgemas. I really do. The lights, the friends, and the increasing sense of freedom as another term at Cambridge comes to an end. Yet I can't help thinking the concept is fundamentally flawed.

First of all, it's a bit early. I mean, I can party harder than Charlie Sheen – but for a whole month? It's kind of pushing it if I'm honest. Also, I think the world has come to the universal conclusion that Christmas food is a bit shit. We all subscribe to the lie every year that we like mince pies and fruitcake, though I for one can't keep up the illusion for more than a week. Two months of pretending brussels sprouts are a seasonal delight is two months too much for me.

And what about Christmas music? Does anyone like it? I'm a massive Slade fan, but every time I hear Noddy Holder scream "It's Christmas" I want to slay every glam-rocker I see, though admittedly such sightings are much rarer these days. And Cambridge makes it worse – they have a habit of singing carols without the oh so necessary irony. I suppose it's all well and good, but it seems half of them are in Latin, and unfortunately loquor non est labium.

On a more serious note, I can't help feeling it brings out the worst excesses of Cambridge. The drink, the pomp, the butter-toffee accents. I'm not a Puritan; drink is lovely. However, when Bridgemas becomes an excuse to suit-up and drink-up then suddenly I'm not a fan. Maybe it's time to go all Tiny Tim, but surely Christmas is about inclusion – not exclusion – and Bridgemas should be the same.

So this year, invite round that random Anglia Ruskin student you met at Lola's. Make peace with the Land Economist next door to you, and buy him some chocolates – or some socks. Even invite your friend up from Oxford to show them the error of their ways. You don't have to go crazy overboard though; John's can still go fuck itself.

Words by Nathan Smith
We wish you a merry ubiquit- mas

Sabina Dewfield ponders on the meaning of Christmas, John Lewis adverts and multiculturalism

A nyone who has recently been browsing on the John Lewis website will have noticed a little festive touch. Nothing too gaudy or offensive, just... unavoidable.

"Give someone a Christmas they’ll never forget" – the ironically forgettable slogan of the department store’s Christmas advertising campaign – dominates the front page alongside links to Christmas hampers, Christmas trees, Christmas Jumpers and Christmas toys.

And, lest we forget, there’s the all-important opportunity to watch the Christmas TV advert (although, who hasn’t already seen – and passed judgment on – the hare and the bear?). Who is so worried about missing the TV advert of the season that they rush to the JL homepage to hit ‘play’? Oh... you? You haven’t seen it? Right. I’ll just wait here then.

Then there’s the A-Z of Christmas. I thought I’d have a quick bet with myself about any of the following traditionally festive words would appear: perhaps ‘F’ for Jesus, ‘N’ for Nativity, or ‘H’ for Holy? Brace yourselves. No, ‘J’ is actually for jewellery, jigsaws and juicers (naturally), ‘N’ for nail-art, Nintendo and jazzy gifting (p熬ticularly ‘N’ for Nativity, ‘M’ for Miss America designed to uncover the conspiracy, declaring emphatically on prime time TV: “Everyone knows that an evergreen tree decorated with lights and ornaments in December is a Christmas tree.” Classic.

It seems to me that, in their respect- able attempt to divide religion and the state, American politicians have failed to recognise that ‘cultural tolerance’ is less about ignoring people’s religions and more about celebrating them. Moving back to the frankly less entertaining European perspective on the Yuletide, Christmas in England seems almost devoid of any relationship to the church.

Personally, Christmas can be defined as: lighting over decorating the tree, Santa, telly, eating too much, family, presents and paper crowns that always tear because mum went for the cheapest crackers. More regrettably, Christmas has become synonymous with parties, drinking and, inevitably, wearing your choice of a) santa hat b) reindeer antlers c) tinSEL. What, then, is Christmas for?

I love Christmas. I love the community feel, the festive light and colour, being with my family, food, fireplaces. It is Christmas, pet se, that I’ve got in it for The following is hardly earth-shattering, but bear with me. In the UK, 60 percent of the population is Christian and 25 percent are not religious. 85 percent of the population do not regularly attend a place of worship (for clarification, ‘regular’ means once a month) which means that – taking into account other religious denominations – there’s a sizeable proportion of self-defined Christians who perhaps go to a chapel every now and then.

Those who go to mass at Easter and Christmas; watch Carol’s from King’s on the telly, but struggle re- citing the Creed off by heart and are ‘unlikely to know anyone getting angry about teaching evolution.

For this reason, the Christmas that we celebrate here in Britain is profoundly different to, say, Spain (where I live) and even America. As you would imagine there is a lot more religious imagery in the Spanish Christmas than the British one. In America, however, where a staggering 80 percent of the population is Christian; 40 percent attend church at least once a week; and half of all Americans allegedly reject the theory of evolution, most retailers have almost completely censored the word Christmas, replacing it with the generically tolerant Holiday.

As you can imagine, there’s quite a few Americans who wouldn’t call themselves fans of that rebranding; especially the hilarious attempt by the White House to describe the ostentatious decorations – think at least one lavishly decorated 8-foot Douglas fir per room – as ‘Holiday trees’.

A particularly Captain Obvious quote from a former Miss America designed to uncover the conspir- acy, declaring emphatically on prime time TV: “Everyone knows that an evergreen tree decorated with lights and ornaments in December is a Christmas tree.” Classic.

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I remember a few of years ago being absolutely mortified when I accidentally wished a very good friend of mine, who I knew very well was Jewish, a “Merry Christmas”. I immediately retracted my statement and, back-peddling wildly, managed to stutter out, “No, gosh, I’m sorry, obviously I meant Hanukkah, I-I-I’m sorry, I wasn’t thinking. Sorry.”

Before I had even started my pathetic bumbling, however, she had grinned, replied with a genuine “Merry Christmas to you” and reached out for a hug. An awkward silence hung on the air for a second before she clar- ified, “I’m not offended. Why would I be?”

“Christmas has evolved into a day of acknowledging the elements of traditional religion that we still want in our lives”

She was right. Holidays are fundamentally linked by the purpose they serve: to bring together the community for celebration and reflection. After all, she knew that my Christmas was hardly the most evangelistic affair. I have a decorated tree and gift-giving; she has a decorated bush and gift-giving. We were basically reading from the same page, albeit from a different book.

Perhaps it’s offensive to have such a pick-and-mix attitude to religion; taking all the fun parts like love, family, sharing and goodwill and forgetting the whole bloody Crusades, hea- then-converting history.

Of course, Christmas is much more mean- ingful to those who are actually celebrating the birth of Jesus. It’s a powerful and resonating message of love, forgiveness, patience, compassion – in fact most of the basic human values we hold dear. It seems that Christmas has evolved into a day of acknowledging the elements of traditional religion that we still want in our lives, rather than vehemently rejecting the parts we don’t.

Perhaps the biggest complaint we’ll all hear at this time of year is the fact that Christmas, which is just as important to Christians as Rosh Hashanah is to Jews, and Eid is to Muslims, has been hijacked by com- panies to sell products – the class- ical commercialisation of Christmas.

To complain about commercialisation, however, is deliciously ironic. The commercialisation of Christmas is aimed at the commercially-minded. Companies and department stores aren’t dragging people out of church on a Sunday, kicking and screaming. They provide what the modern, Western, quasi-secular Christmas is all about: excess. Shameless decorating; too much food and drink; presents for all the family; hours spent in py- jamas watching Love Actually and Elf. Christmas is a blow-out celebration, something to look forward to during the bleak months. Sounds cynical, but it’s not. I literally cannot wait.
Motivation for the Winter Marshmallow

As darkness descends over Cambridge, daylight is swallowed by a serpentine set of streetlamps snaking its way through the city. The rain is unrelenting and the wind is unforgiving. Looks like another night indoors.

You have the company of your most faithful friends (Facebook, BuzzFee’d), you’re wrapped up in your duvet, and your worries drift away with the rising steam. If this sounds too hard, get your laptop, and host a Downton Abbey thon from the comfort of your carpet.

Inviting friends over is the easiest way to avoid being a hermit this winter. You don’t need to dress up or leave the house.

Better yet, head to Sainsbury’s and buy some fondue night anyone? Promise the company of your most faithful friends, fondue night anyone? Promise the company of your most faithful friends (Facebook, BuzzFee’d), you’re wrapped up in your duvet, and your worries drift away with the rising steam. If this sounds too hard, get your laptop, and host a Downton Abbey thon from the comfort of your carpet.

A guy ran into me on the try line, he did score, but ducked his head and got me right in the collarbone!

Was it worth it though?

Not really, we were going to win anyway.

Charlie Nye

PHOTOCREDIT

What is your biggest struggle at the moment?

I study law. It’s a lot of reading, but I don’t regret choosing to study it. I don’t know what I want to do with my life. I don’t really want to be a lawyer.

Sarah Lombard

What’s the best piece of advice you’ve ever been given?

Work to live, don’t live to work.

Phanos Anastasiou

Where were you before here?

I was in the army as an artillery instructor, operations officer, and military police officer. The army gives you very different responsibilities. You are in charge of someone’s life.

Stephanie Taic

LUCY CAVENDISH
Our flapper fascination

Saskia Walker
Lifestyle Contributor

Friday 29th November 2013

After a term of being committed to cooking well, you've reached breaking point – as has the bank of unwashed utensils. This week, for your delight and delectation, I bring you not a recipe, but a review. We will go around the world in seven (non-Cantab) courses, accompanied (obviously) by none other than the good old Sainsbury's ready meals. As well, at 2 for £6, the noo-

Indian
Chicken tikka masala, £1.80, 7/10
From India's finest cuisine to the rich aromas and delicate spices of the Orient, curry was next on the list, and I have to say was greeted with great anticipation by my trusty tasters. Creamy and filling, with a good level of spice for a curry, it was brilliant value at half price and was awarded the most points so far accord- ingly, despite the health front (that health wheel was not happy). Even more exciting was the naan bread I purchased to go with it, 2 for £1.75 and easily 'grilled' in a toaster.

Italian
Bolognese or chicken and bacon bake, 7/10
The bolognese from the Classic Italian range was everything you would expect a bolognese to be. There was pasta, there was mince, it was “en- joyable but not memorable” (Alex Cook, engineer) and came out equal to the risotto. The chicken and ba-

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Smoked haddock, pea and spinach ri-

Asian
Shepherd's pie, 8/10
World weary and travel worn, we

British
Singapore noodles, 6/10
Ever onwards to Singapore and its fabulous noodles. Or not so fabu-

Chinese
Chinese chicken curry, 5/10
Their Chinese counterpart fared even worse, bringing up the rear of the table and then some. It lacked any definable taste, which was odd as it was the spiciest of all the ready meals. As well, at 2 for £6, the nood-

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From India's finest cuisine to the rich aromas and delicate spices of the Orient, curry was next on the list, and I have to say was greeted with great anticipation by my trusty tasters. Creamy and filling, with a good level of spice for a curry, it was brilliant value at half price and was awarded the most points so far accord- ingly, despite the health front (that health wheel was not happy). Even more exciting was the naan bread I purchased to go with it, 2 for £1.75 and easily 'grilled' in a toaster.

Italian
Bolognese or chicken and bacon bake, 7/10
The bolognese from the Classic Italian range was everything you would expect a bolognese to be. There was pasta, there was mince, it was “en- joyable but not memorable” (Alex Cook, engineer) and came out equal to the risotto. The chicken and ba-

Lucy's Cookbook

Lifestyle

Aft er a term of being committed to cooking well, you've reached breaking point – as has the bank of unwashed utensils. This week, for your delight and delectation, I bring you not a recipe, but a review. We will go around the world in seven (non-Cantab) courses, accompanied (obviously) by none other than the good old Sainsbury's ready meals. As well, at 2 for £6, the noo-

Healthy
Smoked haddock, pea and spinach ri-

Asian
Shepherd's pie, 8/10
World weary and travel worn, we

British
Singapore noodles, 6/10
Ever onwards to Singapore and its fabulous noodles. Or not so fabu-

Chinese
Chinese chicken curry, 5/10
Their Chinese counterpart fared even worse, bringing up the rear of the table and then some. It lacked any definable taste, which was odd as it was the spiciest of all the ready meals. As well, at 2 for £6, the nood-

Lucy Rich

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The weather outside is frightful, but the fire is so delightful — there is no excuse but to fire up your wardrobe with some sizzling party dresses to get into the Christmas spirit. There may still be a month to go, but the festive season comes round very early in Cambridge. This week, we looked at the vast array of Christmas attire available on the high street from frocks and fur coats to Christmas jumpers — yes they are a must and totally acceptable to wear around college. No longer are they the embarrassing hand-knitted present from an elderly relative, worn once and then hidden at the back of the wardrobe. The Christmas jumper is now a festive season staple, even featuring on high-end fashion catwalks for the likes of Burberry. For how long will this popularity last? As a comforting classic that cheers up the last few weeks of term, it doesn’t look like it will be anytime soon.

Lottie Franklin & Dahaba Ali Hussen

Photography by Alice Taylor, clothes modelled by Cambridge students.
The art of passing notes

Notes Editor Jemima Moore on magazine publishing in the age of the internet

Packed with theatres, galleries, museums, concert venues, actors, writers, and artists, Cambridge is an ideal city for culture. There’s so much to see that it’s very easy for much of it to pass you by; I’ve seen plenty of theatre in my first term here, but I’m also made aware of great shows and events that I’ve missed. Most of all, I regret not going to see more of the new and the unusual.

Like most freshmen, I’ve been caught up in starting my course, making new friends, going out, and somehow squeezing extracurricular commitments in between. In this hectic cycle, the weeks fly by and keeping track of cultural events isn’t easy. Fitting them into the work-life balance is harder still. And why should we make an effort in the first place?

The first answer to this should be the quality of the culture on offer; Cambridge can certainly deliver. Every so often a show like Jerusalem at the ADC comes along and attracts everyone lucky enough to have a ticket.

There are weekly concerts of consistently high standard, such as King’s College Choir, while the city has hosted AlunaGeorge and other great bands and there have been a few of five-star movies on at the arts Picturehouse (Blue Jasmine, Gravity and Philomena, to name a few).

So there’s a range of high-quality culture for everyone. But culture is worth more than just its entertainment value, especially when it takes us out of our comfort zone and makes us consider something that we’ve never seen before.

Last year I saw Elizabeth Price’s Turner Prize-winning film This Woolworths Choir of 1979. Weaving together clips of pop music, photographs of 14th century architecture and archive film footage, the film recreates a fire in Woolworths furniture store in fantastic detail. I can’t say that I understood what it meant, or that I saw everything Price was trying to draw attention to. But at the very least, I was moved afterwards to see film in a different way: how we’re affected by it, and how we’re drawn into a strong sexual engagement with it. And that, I think, is what good art does: it makes us see the world differently.

We need to have a open mind towards the new and unknown. Why not go and see a play in Greek, or an artistic burlesque show? Both were on in Cambridge recently. In such a culturally rich environment, there’s bound to be novelty as well as quality.

Next Friday, I’m going to the Fitzwilliam Museum to see Edmund de Waal’s exhibition of white porcelain, with one of the pieces commissioned specifically for the Chinese gallery. It’s not what I’d usually see – I don’t normally see porcelain outside of an antiques shop – but even if I don’t like it, seeing it will be an experience worth having.

The Coffee Table Book Connoisseur

With the constant flow of new books from publishers, the time of giving and receiving is certainly a fun one.

This week I’ve pulled together some gift ideas for your literary friends or indeed for yourself.

Haroun and the Sea of Stories

Salman Rushdie’s short novel Haroun and the Sea of Stories is an absolute delight. Haroun’s father is the greatest of all story tellers but when something goes wrong and he loses his power, Haroun sets off on an adventure to the sea of stories to get it back. The adventure is an epic one told in an absolutely beautiful way. Rushdie’s description of the sea of stories for example is absolutely sublime.

The Forward Book of Poetry 2014

The Forward Book of Poetry of 2014 presents some of the best contemporary poetry published in the British Isles over the last year, including the winners of 2013’s Forward Poetry Prizes. The anthology – the 22nd of its kind – is introduced by Jeanette Winterson. Poets within the volume include Emily Berry, Michael Symmons and Jacob Polley.

The Great Gatsby

The Great Gatsby is one of those books that everyone seems to have on their bookshelves. It has an innate cultural currency in the sense that owning it somehow (at least in the eyes of some) makes you a better person.

But not everyone will have a first edition copy. A hardback edition from Quintessential Rare Books in the USA comes in at £3190,529.04
The Mr Bean of Savile Row

Lottie Franklin looks at an exhibition on fashion’s most likeable man, Paul Smith

The Design Museum in London plays host to a new exhibition: Hello, My Name is Paul Smith. The exhibition showcases the international brand that the Paul Smith label has become, greeting its viewers with a visual exploration of the personal journey for this artist, photographer, designer and entrepreneur.

The exhibition is spread across a range of different rooms presenting Paul Smith’s physical and emotional development. It transports visitors through his first shop in Nottingham in a building that was once a tobacco warehouse. Scarves, shirts, diaries and wallets are all adored with the print. It is even printed onto his famous Minions, featured at the exhibition.

The show closes on the 9th March 2014 so if you’re in London make sure you go and say hello, connect with Paul Smith’s bright, energetic, life-loving way of thinking, or as he said in a recent Culture Show interview, his “Savile row / Mr Bean” way of design.

Celebrated for his expressive prints, Paul Smith has perfected a classic style with consistently modern twists. Button holes of different colours, colourful silk linings or bright socks have continued to charm ongoing, but sophisticated, fashion lovers across the globe, especially those looking for extremely high quality craftsmanship.

His ultra-bright multicoloured stripe was only meant to be used for one collection, initially. After it proved so popular, Smith preserved the design in numerous parts of his collections. Scarves, shirts, diaries and wallets are all adored with the print. It is even printed onto his famous Minions, featured at the exhibition.

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Student tickets are £8.40, more information about the event can be found at www.designtromuseum.org

In Focus

A collection of photographs taken by various professional photographers operating from a studio in Post Office Terrace, Cambridge from the mid 19th to the late 20th Century are to be exhibited in a new show called “Cambridge Revisited”.

The digitally remastered photographs are a result of the work of Peter Lofthouse, the last photographer to occupy the studio before its closure for redevelopment in the mid 1980s. The pictures show the changing face of Cambridge and many of the scenes and buildings (as you might expect with Cambridge’s long history) are instantly recognisable. Some however show considerable alteration and others have disappeared completely.

The exhibition is currently taking place at the third floor of the Central Library in Lion Yard. It will be situated in the area outside the Cambridge Collection and opposite the cafe.
**Plays in a day’s work for the ADC**

Aron Penczu speaks to some of the people involved in The 24hr Plays

What defines literary form? Convention points us to features of the final text: length, metre, rhyme. We like to think that the author’s unique voice is expressed in the final result – weeks of writing strung out on cocaine, in Stephen King’s case, for individual paragraphs. There’s nothing more moving or beautiful than the complexity of an affective object.

If that’s the right way to approach most literature, it’s surely inadequate when it comes to non-literate forms. And given in improv, by definition resistant to iteration, is predicated on our knowledge of its contemporaries. A 24-hour play lies somewhere between improv and ordinary drama. Less form than format, perhaps, it was conceived in 1995 as a one-time-only event which germinated, grew, and now runs annually at the Old Vic.

The concept is simple: produce a 10-minute play in 24 hours. That means about 12 hours of writing and editing, another 12 to learn lines, build sets, and rehearse.

Pressure’s high, and the challenges are self-evident. What’s remarkable, as anyone can see from the set information, is that this limits any form that can be achieved.

They’ll almost build the text with your...they’re part of the experience. But there’s a lot of preparation. To ensure that productions are adhered to, the theme and the teams are only announced as the 24-hour countdown begins, and the cast and crew are in the paradoxical position of preparing for what can’t be prepared for.

They have plans, however provisory. One director, Ralph Wakefield, intends to work intensively on line-learning, then dispense with the usual warm-ups and focus instead on hot-seat type of improvis, hot-seatting involves asking actors to respond to random questions in character. What is their audience’s minds.” Isolde Penwarden, also directing, admires the minimal set, open to meaning but “not necessarily elaborate in itself.”

This may be a year of particularly minimal sets, in fact, as the teams will have to work within the space available. “We want every part of the show to be as challenging as possible,” explains Jess Wolinski, an executive producer and original concept developer. Her idea was to present the best plays will come “out of the most extreme of circumstances,” and indeed the format is fundamental to a 24-hour play.

Helen Charman, an actor in last year’s 24hrs, has already taken it for granted that although the obvious difficulty is the preparation, the ten-minute constraint is itself a challenge: there’s no room for second thoughts, a lot of stage work is “a whole of a lot, but also surreal.”

One moment he calls him neurotic being attractive, the next he compares that he has no ideas at all, nothing going through, that it is more painful for men.

The medical characters in the play are a group of the intriguingly insubstantial and physically and emotionally touch on Ed and Lisa. The ins and outs of labour are shown with physicality; the audience’s minds.” Isolde Penwarden, also directing, admires the minimal set, open to meaning but “not necessarily elaborate in itself.”

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10 Questions with Isabella Nicholson

Isabella Nicholson is a third year historian at Girton. She has been involved in several Girton Amateur Dramatics Society productions as an actor and director. She joined the Improonauts in May and went to Edinburgh Fringe as part of the cast of This Revolution Will Not Be Improvised.

What’s your dream job?
My dream job is either to become the first British cast member on Saturday Night Live, or become a film director. There’s no harm in dreaming big! A lot of comedy greats have been on SNL, and to be able to follow in their footsteps would be incredible.

What’s the best thing about being part of the Cambridge Improonauts?
The freedom it gives you — that’s what I love the most. You aren’t bound by a script or a certain character, which gives me free reign to unleash all of the crazy characters/personalities/alter egos I wish I could be.

What’s been your most embarrassing moment as part of the Improonauts?
When performing in Edinburgh, I was given an offer to be an evil Geordie mayor. The only phrase I could say in a Geordie accent (without sounding a mixture of Welsh, Irish or Swedish) was ‘Way-aye Pete.’ I started the scene with that oh so helpful phrase, but sadly my accent did not sound anything like that of a Geordie. Thankfully my ineptitude became an on-going gag that night, so not all was lost!

What is the trait you dislike most in others?
I dislike both unwillingness to try new things and also being afraid to look foolish on stage. One of my favourite quotes from Tina Fey’s book Bossypants highlights how comedians, especially women, should not be afraid to look silly: “Amy (Poehler) made it clear that she wasn’t there to be cute. She wasn’t there to play wives and girlfriends in the boys’ scenes. She was there to do what she wanted to do and she did not fucking care if you like it.”

Do you like horror films?
I like the fact that it’s such a diverse genre, and also one of the most well-known and most parodied, especially in film. I also think it’s a great genre for improv, because there are so many sub-genres and archetypes to play with.

How would you describe your sense of humour? What do you think about dark humour?
I’d say I have a very silly sense of humour, centred on impersonations and parodies. I like dark humour because it’s interesting to see how people react to it.

Do you think it is hard for people from other countries to understand British humour?
Generally speaking, yes, sometimes. Having lived in the US briefly as a child, it was interesting how the Americans I knew were very earnest and did not get British humour or sarcasm.

What is the most hilarious thing that has happened to you during your time in Cambridge?
My friends and I accidentally bought not one, but TWO life-size posters of Alan Rickman online while drunk after Formal Hall. I had to keep them in my room for the rest of the term, at the foot of my bed. His constant judging stare pervasively made me more productive while working.

Have you noticed any differences in humour between the sexes?
I haven’t necessarily noticed differences in humour, but I have noticed that women tend to only play female characters in comedy. Improv thankfully allows you to branch out and play what-ever gender you want: women should not be afraid to play male parts.

What sorts of things inspire your improvisations?
Accents and strong characters definitely inspire me. I sometimes feel more self-conscious if I don’t have an accent. Having watched almost every episode of Whose Line is it Anyway?, I admire Colin Mochrie and Ryan Stiles’s vast array of dynamic characters and I try my best to emulate their approach.

Improv from the Crypt will be at the Corpus Playroom 3rd-7th December.

Panto-time? “Yes it is!”; “Oh, no it isn’t.”

Rebecca Rosenberg and Imogen Sebba offer us their views on this popular Christmas tradition

My first brush with a celebrity was at a pantomime a decade ago in Woking, Surrey. I remember the evening well: an over-crowded theatre full of noisy children, weary parents cradling glasses of wine and people crunching savoury snacks.

Then the lights dimmed, the music started, and Danny from HearSay came on stage dressed to the nines in his Oriental Aladdin suit. The musical score comprised pop songs or melodies borrowed from well-known tracks. Everyone danced, everyone cheered and everyone shouted the pantomime refrain “He’s behind you!” What more could you want from a night of Christmas entertainment?

“Pantomime gives us diverse comedy and modern-day fairytales.”

Pantomimes tour England annually to great success. Small local theatres are filled to their capacity with the nation’s favourite celebrities and excited audience members. Particularly at a time when local independent theatres and cinemas are drying out, pantomimes offer a colourful dose of entertainment and an economic boost in local communities.

One of the greatest parts of British pantomime is the fact that everyone across the country can experience a little pantomime magic, with a performance from their favourite all-singing and dancing soap opera character or gritty band member. The Christmas period is guaranteed to be lit up by satirical performances of romance, battles and adventure, not to mention the extravagant costumes and epic stage designs of pirate ships and fairy castles.

Audience participation is a must in pantomime, which is what makes it so universal. Even the grumpiest cynic cannot ignore the battle cry “Oh no it isn’t!” when, everyone, from parents to adults, shouting in response, “Oh yes it is!” Pantomime never disappoints: there is always a bad guy or gal to boo, or a hero or heroine to cheer on. Plus a hefty dose of Chaplin-esque slapstick, topical quips and grand, gargoyle amounts of cross-dressing.

Pantomime gives us diverse comedy and modern-day fairytales. The sequins, sparkle and pop music only enhance the already entertaining shows. Plus, the celebrosions add comedy value and swooning potential. Pantomime obliterates the shrewd mantra of one of this generation’s biggest pop stars, ‘I’m a pretty classy, dance cheesus’, and it works pretty well.

Rebecca Rosenberg

I pass a theatre this Christmas season, or even a theatre advert on a billboard, I can already predict the poster you will see.

There will be a sparkly background in a lurid shade of green/purple/pink, obscured by enormous faces. The obligatory actress who has spent first pay cheque for this job on teeth-whitening, so is smiling as widely as possible to show them off. The lead actor, who might have been in an episode of Casualty last year and has probably modelled for an independent fashion boutique, but is now sprayed orange so as to not to make his co-star feel self-conscious. There’ll also be a man in make-up and a frilly dress, cast in accordance with that timeless rule of comedy: the fatter, the funnier.

And then, in a font looking like a cheaper version of the one used by Disney in the 1990s, the name of that beloved fairy tale that’s being bastardised. Which, of course, starts someone you’re meant to have heard of. Surely pantos’ better than I’m making it out to be? Oh no it isn’t! No one who considers themselves a serious theatre-goer wants to be seen at a pantomime. I got a traditional weeping about 10 years ago, with stellar actors including Harry Hill and Paul Merton, and even those haven’t aged well.

The point is, we don’t want pantos to be any good. It’s much more British to have a tradition whose only purpose is to give us something to complain about, along with grumbling about the government and the weather. In the same way, we remain complacent that our local production spent their entire budget getting CJ from Eggheads to stand on, that ‘teevitch’ is the punchline to 67 different jokes (the rest being poop) and that the feline celebrity of the week isn’t landing a starring role.

What would we do with a brilliant local pantomime? Book tickets with out being able to pretend they were for young children? Let’s face it: quality is not the reason we slog through panto — why pretend?

Imogen Sebba

The ADC/Footlights pantomime The Princess and the Pea will be on at the ADC Theatre until Sat 7th December at 7.45pm.
The Museum of Cambridge was founded in 1936 by a group of citizens who wanted to preserve the ever-changing social, industrial and cultural customs of the town. It is located in a fine timber-framed building, formerly the White Horse Inn, itself an important part of local history and an ideal setting for such a collection. Curators have really engaged with the space, retaining many of the original features such as the bar and fireplace. The floors and surfaces are brimming with curiosities, and objects are rarely put in cases, allowing for much better demonstration of how they would have been used. Downstairs focuses on domestic life; with a range of looking and cleaning tools, the various bug traps are particularly intriguing!

Upstairs, tucked in the corner of the first room, is the building’s original wig room where people would wash their wigs without the fear of getting powdered around the rest of the house. Just beyond this is the University room, illustrating how “town and gown” have coexisted throughout the centuries. One of the most amazing objects is a painted turtle shell; the turtle was a painted turtle shell; the turtle was a painted turtle shell; the turtle was painted from life in his home village, which the Fitzwilliam Museum of Cambridge is already busy waiting staff to find you a new glass is acceptable, drinking champagne out of a tumbler is not), or determining which bun was mine to butter. The green light was on for affordable monogendered dining. The wine was bounteous and pleasant, impressing me in the importance of learning the correct protocol for drinking port, claret and dessert wine simultaneously.

Most while courses were well-executed, I feel the pudding was too ambitious, being dominated by a misjudged explosion of vanilla sauce. Though on the face of it I’d usually agree the heavier the splash a stem ginger pudding gets the better, as any dessert chef will tell you, there’s only so much fudge you can pack into a sticky toffee pudding before its lases into a somewhat pedestrianable oral experience. Despite having enjoyed a splendid evening, the end I was unfortunately still unable to say for sure what the Adonians are trying to do: a last hurrah to the Adonians eleven time would tell. Unfortunately, it soon became clear that my companion’s sartorial sense was indeed the voice among well-dressed gentlemen folk, making my prophylactic winter wear positively unsuitable. Panicking, I found myself draw a complete blank as to dinner etiquette. Luckily the conviviality of my dining fellows ensured that nothing ill came of my inability to unfold my napkin (it was kindly placed on my lap for me with soft, caring fingers), the loss of my wine glass (sends the already busy waiting staff to find you a new glass is acceptable, drinking champagne out of a tumbler is not), or determining which bun was mine to butter. The green light was on for affordable monogendered dining. The wine was bounteous and pleasant, impressing me in the importance of learning the correct protocol for drinking port, claret and dessert wine simultaneously.

Abdelatif Kechiche’s latest venture is, in many ways, unafraid. It is a film that lingers unapologetically. From the genesis of love at first sight, it tracks the sexual awakening of young schoolgirl Adèle, who breaks away from her pasta-based working class parents to find love within the artisanal lifestyle of an aspiring ferryboat crewwoman. Love comes in the form of blue-haired painter Emma (Lea Seydoux), and is stripped away just as easily as the dye that laces her hair. Incredible performances draw out social tension between the two families, enhancing the juxtaposed social environments of the painting studio and the French classroom, and the changes of the characters throughout their relationship. The film details issues of class, race and sexuality and yet remains unafraid to leave questions unanswered. It comfortably finds contemporary ground; the rally against privatisation and increased fees resonates strongly, as unfortunately do depictions of homophobia. The continuous assault of Kechiche’s camera angles force us into unexpected intimacies. This is a film that thrives off the senses; the camera is unapologetically focused on open mouths, damp eyes and cautious hands. Its intimacy is not flattering; the clumsy open-mouthed eating of Adèle is initially repulsive, but in the end is endearing. The desire for food is paired with sex and Adèle’s appetite for both is played out in unapassing close-ups. Despite the controversy around them, these scenes don’t monopolise the intensity of the film. After we emerged from the cinema, the audience expressed how they had felt more discomfort at the closed-up close-ups of Adèle’s crumpled weeping face than with the displays of explicit sex.

However de-sensitised or assaulted viewers feel by these scenes, it’s hard to dismiss their contested filming process. They descend into gratuitously exposing shots but, although out of place with the subtle emotional lives of its characters, there’s a sense in which these scenes stay true to Kechiche’s intent; their function is to cause upset. The final image of the film is a twist of genius, straying from the conventions of heterosexual union denied unapologetically, smashed by the realism that marks this film in all its intimate uncomfortable beauty.

Thea Harwinton
The new album deviates only slightly from his first, though producer Rick Rubin does on occasion foray into a heavier sound. These attempts generally fall flat, with lead single ‘What Doesn’t Kill You’ pitting Bugg’s nasal vocals against a punk backing, with grating results. 

Bugg also attempts to deliver longer, more complex songs that demonstrate songwriting maturity. These often feel bloated and contrived next to tracks such as the punchy skiffling opener ‘There’s A Beast And We All Feed It’. An exception is ‘Simple Pleasures’, which makes for an enjoyable romp presumably engineered as an epic anthem to close a festival set.

Lyrically, Bugg retains his penchant for depicting scenes of council estate life, drawn from his own past experiences. Yet ‘Mess Me Up Kids’ lacks the wit of the previous album’s ‘Trouble Town’. It fails to paint a convincing picture of inner city characters drawn into drug dealing and prostitution, as Alex Turner did so successfully with ‘When The Sun Goes Down’.

In the quieter moments of the album Bugg’s talent starts to shine through. ‘Me and You’ shows his tender side in a country ballad, while ‘Pine Trees’strips him back to guitar and vocals in an emotionally bare song.

The album closes with ‘Storm Paves Away’, a wishful tune that segues through various facets of Americana, blending a blues chord progression with Nashville vocals. Yes, it may be derivative, and Jake Bugg may not be the saviour of guitar music, but something about his music creates an irresistible charm.

Eddie Gould
Getting ready for Twickenham

**What are the winning chances of the Cambridge Rugby Blues at the Varsity Match?**

Richard Stockwell  
**RUGBY CORRESPONDENT**

The 132nd Varsity Match will kick off on 12th December. Blues-level sport at Oxford is all about the Big One against the Other Place and Cambridge will be hoping to win their second victory over Oxford, leaving the Dark Blues trailing on fifty-six.

Cambridge has had mixed results so far this season. Light Blue Captain William Briggs explains that his fixture list has been “replete with quality opposition,” made up of “tremendous teams with different styles and strengths.”

That said, Cambridge has stood the test of professional oppositionreasonably well. On three occasions, the Blues were only overwhelmed by the size of their opponents rather than their skill. Though Cambridge was squarely beat- en by Bristol, a free try was a flatter- ing to Northampton Saints who, with strong performance kept Cambridge within one score of Saracens until the dying minutes.

Oxford has fared similarly in the run-up to the Varsity Match. They lost by respectable margins to the professional opposition of the Newport Gwent Dragons and Worcester Warriors, and, more recently by only a small margin to Saracens.

Briggs notes the difficulty of drawing any conclusions from the two sides respective seasons since they played against different opposition.

However, Cambridge’s final fixture before the Varsity Match will be against Sydney University on Monday. Oxford beat the Australians 34-24 earlier this week and it will be interesting to see how scores compare.

When it comes to the Varsity Match itself, while Cambridge has the most wins overall, it is Oxford which has won the last three meetings. Oxford will again be captained by John Carter, who will make history as the first man to captain Oxford in three successive Varsity games.

The Cambridge squad does not feature many returning Blues this year but Briggs does not view this as a concern. The mix of nerves and excitement is the same for all the players.

In any case, big-game experience matters little since “few people involved in the Varsity Match have enough for it to count.” What is needed is “the right temperament to handle the pressure.”

Cambridge felt the pressure in last year’s fixture when they fell to a 26-19 defeat despite leading by ten points at half-time. Briggs does that Cambridge switched off, something no player would do in “a game that’s the pinnacle of years of hard graft.” He puts the reversal down to the fact that Cambridge was a different person.

When it comes to the Varsity Match itself, “while Cambridge may have the most wins overall, it is Oxford who have won the last three meetings.”

“The best thing is getting out of the Oxford bench ‘brought a dynamism to the second half that we weren’t expecting.’ He admits that “it rattled us and we lost our momentum.”

The Varsity Match is understandable nerve-affair and tends to be significantly lower-scoring than other games in the season. Goal kicking can end up making the difference, and Briggs recognises that “having a kicker like Don is a fantastic bonus.”

Don Stevens’ kicking success rate has improved throughout the season, and he kicked eleven points from eleven against London Scottish.

Though Stevens’ reliability is reassuring, Briggs is wary of going into the match with a strategy to kick points at every opportunity, insisting that “we will adapt to the opposition on the day.”

The squad puts a tremendous amount into preparing for the Varsity Match. CURUC alludes to their rigorous training schedule when describing themselves on their website as “a wholly amateur student rugby club aiming to offer a rugby environment that is as professional as possible.”

As well as the intensity of their training in the immediate term, every rugby player runs the risk of long term costs to their health. While Briggs says he has the physique for the game, his “main health concern re- lating to rugby would be the points my joints will pay later in life from the collisions they’ve been a part of.” He, however, “happy to pay that price” due to his love of the sport.

Leading Cambridge to victory in the Varsity Match would surely be the highlight of his sporting career.

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**For the Love of Sport**

**Roxana Antohi COXING**

As a Cambridge student, admitting that you’ve failed at something is like volunteering to have one of your teeth extracted just for kicks. But the first step to rehabilitation is acceptance so here we go: my name is Roxana and I used to row.

I had an early interest in sport, being good at a sport, it’s enough for me. And then I started to get into it. If that’s as close as I’ll ever get to being good at a sport, it’s enough for me.

I have now finally come to terms with my failed rowing career. /That’s the fact that it allows me to understand my temperament to handle the pressure/.

But I have one teeny-tiny charge of the crew and motivates me never in the best crews. Had I been the coach, I wouldn’t have let myself down. While adrenaline definitely didn’t lack in my boat, I gradually got better. But I have one teeny-tiny charge of the crew and motivates me never in the best crews. Had I been the coach, I wouldn’t have let myself down.

As for Ann Summers to look at leather is incredible – I even (almost) went there, I said it. In my first two years at Cambridge I rowed for my college and absolutely sucked at it. I used to be one of those Ripley’s Believe It is Not rowers, one that never initiated or even joined in boating banter. Not because I didn’t love it, but because whenever we got to the unavoidable erg scores conversation I had to run away: mine were about ten points worse than everyone else’s.

It comes to no surprise that I was never the best creator when I was the coach, I wouldn’t have let myself down anywhere near a boat. But at the end of the day I decided to make my life as well as everyone else’s easier and quit once and for all. But I couldn’t escape myself off completely, so I took on coaching instead.

Now, for those of you who don’t know, a cox is the person sitting at the front of a boat and is in charge of the crew and motivates them during races. All fairly straightforward. But I have one teeny-tiny thing that makes things slightly more complicated. I’m dyspraxic, which means that my hand-eye coordin- ation is about as good as miley Cyrus singing. So in my first outing I managed to almost kill the people in my boat by crashing them into other boats, trees, bushes, banks, dogs, people. you name it. It was within reach, we probably hit it.

But adrenaline definitely didn’t lack in my boat, I gained a few better. That’s when coaching became a different experience. Here I was telling the rowers what to do and shouting at them mercilessly if they did something wrong, which is pretty much every woman’s dream. The view was incredible – I even (almost) went to Ann Summers to look at leather when I first became a cox.

What made things even better was the first race. When the whistle went off I became a different person. I could remember the awful pain from the races I had rode in. I knew exactly what these guys were going through, and how much they wanted to stop rowing and get away from it. So I went crazy. I started screaming like never before, telling them it didn’t hurt enough, making them squeeze every bit of power from their aching legs. If got to the point that it bit my cheek and started bleeding, splattering blood everywhere without noticing.

I went to a game where free stu- dents may enter Cambridge’s first appearance at Twickenham. Going to a game where free students may enter Cambridge’s first appearance at Twickenham. Going to a game where free students may enter Cambridge’s first appearance at Twickenham. Going to a game where free students may enter Cambridge’s first appearance at Twickenham. Going to a game where free students may enter Cambridge’s first appearance at Twickenham. Going to a game where free students may enter Cambridge’s first appearance at Twickenham. Going to a game where free students may enter Cambridge’s first appearance at Twickenham.
Cambridge University Ski and Snowboard Club

If you feel that watching skiing is not enough, join the Cambridge University Ski and Snowboard Club. Their highly-attended weekly training sessions at the Milton Keynes Snow Centre cater to both racers and freestylers. So whilst Cambridge may not be an international snow sport capital, winter sports aficionados still have their place here. Join now in time to hone those skills for the Varsity trip, or else continue improving once you've come back from Tignes. Contact President JP Espinosa (jpe32) for more information.

Curling

Those of you who are already using zimmer frames to get to lectures and have mental age scores of seventy from Facebook quizzes may well get a kick from watching the curling event. We recommend a nice cup of chamomile tea and an electric blanket while viewing the qualifying rounds.

Alpine Ski Racing

Alpine ski racing has traditionally been the main event at the Winter Olympics. Once again, favourites like Miller, Lindsey Vonn and Marcel Hirscher will be competing across five disciplines. Downhill, the fastest and most exhilarating discipline, will be the most exciting watch, with racers hitting speeds of 120 miles plus per hour, flying off 60 metre jumps and carving down icy slopes. Look out for Mikaela Shiffrin in the women’s slalom, Ted Ligety in the men’s giant slalom and the Italians Christof Innerhofer and Dominik Paris in the downhill.

Skiing Slopestyle

For the first time in history, Olympic skiing will now include slopestyle. For the last decade there has been growing participation and interest in this trick-jumping discipline. Slopestyle is now one of the highlights of the winter sport calendar, and with Simon Dumont, famous for boosting huge airs in the X Games superpipe, and Jon Olsson, famous for wowing the big air crowd, among others set to compete, the Sochi slopestyle event is sure to provide extreme entertainment.

Ice Hockey

Ice hockey is the fastest-paced and arguably the hardest hitting collision sport in the world. Professionals are allowed to compete at the Olympics, which adds considerable attraction to the hockey event, combining national pride with pro-league favourites. The 2014 Winter Games in Sochi will be seen by the majority of ice hockey fans as a time of reckoning. The major powerhouses of this sport – Canada, the US, Sweden and Russia – equally want and expect to win, and nothing short of a gold medal will be satisfactory.

Cambridge Ice Hockey Club

If you are impressed by the speed, pace and physicality of ice hockey then give the University club a go. There is a long-standing Cambridge connection to the game, since the Oxford-Cambridge rivalry is the longest one in the ice hockey world, dating back to 1883. The Cambridge team are the current Varsity champions, having demolished the Dark Blue opposition last year. They train in Peterborough and are still looking for players with previous experience. Contact Captain Jaason Geerts (jmg201) for more information.

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Cambridge leads women in sport

Olivia FitzGerald looks at how Cambridge sport changes outdated perceptions

I n a country in which female ath-
letes receive 0.5 per cent of total
sponsorship and form only 5 per
cent of sports media coverage, I should
be forgiven for initially thinking that I
might not otherwise have considered
towing due to financial hindrances.
In recognition of the increased re-
spect and awareness gathering around
the Women’s Boat Race, the 2013 event
will be staged over the same course and
on the same day as the men’s race. This
shows just how far women’s sport has
come; eighty years ago, a Selwyn rowing
captain addressed a letter to CUWBC
saying “I personally do not approve
of women rowing at all. It is a ghastly
sight, an anatomical impossibility and
physiologically dangerous.”
Thankfully, this type of opinion ap-
pears to belong in the past, something
supported by the comments of Erin
Walters, this year’s Ospreys president:
“I’d say that sportswomen at Cambridge
are, for the most part, respected. We
are a university that values accomplish-
ment, and as university sportswomen, we
carry that.”

Gradually, this perception is being
worn down and Cambridge women are
playing a role. On Monday, the Ospreys
held their termly speakers dinner with
guests such as GB hockey player Hannah
Macleod and ‘Women Sport Trust’ trustee
Kate Dohinson. Dinners such as this allow
sportswomen to meet each other, appreciate
their achievements, and be inspired to push
themselves to the next level.
Mixed university and college teams
have also played a significant role in
bridging the gap between men and
women on the sports field. These teams
help to break down perceptions of cer-
tain sports as ‘men’s sports’ or ‘women’s
sports’, and offer a casual, fun environ-
ment in which women can participate
without being intimidated by either
male teammates or the sport itself.
Mixed sport can be played at a com-
petitive level, as demonstrated by mixed
university teams such as badminton or
lacrosse. Last year’s mixed lacrosse vice-
captain, Fiona Latham, told Varsity about
the growing importance of mixed
lacrosse: “It became a half-blue sport
last year, and the popularity of mixed
sports and Varsity or league successes
help to break down perceptions of cer-
tain sports.”
The progress that has been made for
women in sport at Cambridge is some-
thing in which the university can take
pride. Such progress is surely recogni-
tion of the fact that good sport is good
sport, and doesn’t have a gender.
Let’s hope that as Cambridge moves
forward in providing equal sporting op-
portunities, the world outside the bub-
ble can observe and follow suit.

“We are a university that
values accomplishment,
and as university
sportswomen, we carry
that.”

Sport

FOR THE LOVE OF SPORT
Roxana Antohi has swapped a previous
sports love for a rebound term - coxing.
See what she has to say about it on page 30.