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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.



THE FROST CREEPS IN: A photograph taken from a student's bedroom window at Downing College captures the sunrise on a frosty morning in Cambridge.

A fossil-free University

CUSU has called on the University to back up its commitment to reducing its carbon footprint by making tangible changes to its future investment practices

Sarah Regan
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

The Cambridge University Students' Union is to put pressure on the University to withdraw its investments in fossil fuels.

In a unanimous CUSU Council vote held this month, CUSU decided that the University should expand its pledge to reduce its carbon footprint beyond the framework of the Cambridge Climate Change Charter, signed in 2007.

The Charter declares an intention to improve energy efficiency, but Suyin Chalmin-Pui, Co-chair of CUSU Ethical Affairs, pointed out at a CUSU meeting that it does not commit signatories to take action on investment practices.

The new motion will encourage the University to pursue low-carbon assets and divest from companies whose main

business is the extraction and/or production of fossil fuels.

The action follows a *Varsity* investigation which revealed widespread investment by colleges in companies which many allege engage in ethically dubious practices.

Cambridge colleges hold significant stakes in a number of petrochemical and coal giants, including BP, Exxon Mobil, Lukoil, Royal Dutch Shell and BHP Billiton.

Varsity also uncovered that the University's gas supplier, as of July 2011, is Gazprom, a secretive Russian gas company that has repeatedly been accused of corruption and causing severe environmental damage.

"The University should be actively reassessing its links to Gazprom so that the entirety of its supply chain better reflects the University's mission and core values", said Chalmin-Pui.

A spokesperson for the University

responded: "We are working hard to tackle the challenge of the University's carbon emissions."

A decision to set ethical parameters on investment practices would not be without precedent. Peterhouse already excludes tobacco shares from its discretionary portfolio.

But only last month, the President of Harvard University, Professor Drew Gilpin Faust, dismissed a large student campaign on the same issue. Citing the importance of remaining apolitical and of maintaining the investment returns which Harvard is financially reliant on, Faust claimed that she would instead seek "more nuanced" ways to pursue sustainable and responsible investments.

CUSU does not believe that Cambridge should remain apolitical. The University has the largest endowment of any educational institution in Europe, valued at just under £5 billion.

Chalmin-Pui believes that this positions the University to "make a social and political statement".

CUSU Education Officer Jia Hui Lee pointed out that "students' tuition fees are locked up in university endowments, providing greater reason for investments to reflect the ethical values of the student body".

The Council called on students to express support for its campaign by signing a petition hosted on the CUSU website.

Leading a discussion group on climate change action at St John's College this week (see page 4), Professor Doug Crawford-Brown, Director of the Cambridge Centre for Climate Change Mitigation Research, advocated stronger student involvement in the University's financial decisions.

"It's their right to assert their opinions. They're paying £9000 in tuition fees, they can say, 'I'm a stakeholder.'"

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

The real Cambridge spies

What do you think of when you hear 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 red cardboard boxes to represent students being crushed 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 inevitable 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?



Write to us

letters@varsity.co.uk

A RESPONSE TO THE LAUNCHING OF THE VARSITY DISABILITY SPORTS CAMPAIGN

It was with interest that I read the article calling for more disability sport around Cambridge. The article was right to highlight that to create a meaningful Paralympic legacy we need to get more of the basics right. The Paralympics helped greatly in shaping disability in a positive light, but it has struggled to create genuine cut-through. The Paralympic legacy isn't failing, as many have claimed, but it needs more practical applications.

At Cambridge, progress has already been made. The City council has helped established a successful Goalball team, featuring the university's very own Sarah Leiter. Selwyn College has taken steps to make the boat club accessible to a blind fresher. These are all steps in the right direction, but there is still a long way to go.

It is right for clubs to be as accessible as possible by making necessary provisions for disabled people, for example accessible gyms. As Leiter also points out, able-bodied people are very welcome to take part in disabled sports such as Goalball. However, it is not always as straightforward. No matter

the mindset of the players or coaches, someone with cerebral palsy will not be the next rugby blue! Disability sport also works best when you find natural competitors – not always possible, even with the university's 500 disabled student population.

But from personal experience, it doesn't mean you should give up. During my time at Cambridge, I had some success and also learnt a few lessons. Ski trips are a common feature of college life and are a good way of socializing outside college term time, as well learning to ski a bit. It is something wanted to do. I was fortunate that my tutor was chairman of Disability Snowsport UK and was able to get the ball rolling by putting me in contact with the right people. The biggest challenge was financial (as it is in most cases), but I was also fortunate that some friends were willing to put on a comedy night to raise the additional funds for the specialist equipment and private tutor.

As consequence, it helped make an important college event accessible to all. Out of this process, the Enabling Fund was established and designed to help disabled students meet the extra needs of extra-circular activity. However, funding is always in short supply and can be a lengthy process. I found this out when trying to help organize adapted rowing at the boat club with a fellow student. Despite encouragement from the boat club, it proved too complex to organize, especially in the middle of a hectic Cambridge term.

So what have I learnt? All parties need to push harder for greater inclusion in sport, weather that involves existing teams or creating new ones. Funding needs to be made clearer and more

accessible. University sports bursaries should be made available to everyone and should recognize that disabled applicants may require more money for their specific needs.

There also needs to be greater awareness of disability sport around Cambridge. This needs to involve an all-encompassing approach, but Varsity's campaign for disability sport should be supported by a high-profile event. I suggest a boat race (original I know!) in the next five years. If not a single race, then it could be a regatta to decide the best team. It would certainly get people talking...

*Mike Albadeff
Queens' College, 2009*

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-dlywinks Club (CUtwC) is also home to the current British Singles Student Champion: Francis Wragg.

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

P.s. We beat Oxford on their home turf 106-6 in May's Varsity Match. A winking recordling...

Francis Wragg

Want to get involved with Varsity next term?

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

Varsity is looking for photographers!

Whether you are a photojournalist, or want to shoot streetstyle, we want to hear from you...

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

EDITOR Alice Udale-Smith *EDITOR@VARSITY.CO.UK* **DEPUTY EDITOR** Emily Chan *DEPUTYEDITOR@VARSITY.CO.UK* **BUSINESS MANAGER** Michael Derringer *BUSINESS@VARSITY.CO.UK* **PRODUCTION AND DESIGN EDITOR** Mike Curtis *PRODUCTION@VARSITY.CO.UK* **NEWS EDITOR** Amy Hawkins (Senior), Christina Sweeney Baird & Martha Elwell (Junior) *NEWS@VARSITY.CO.UK* **COMMENT EDITOR** Hannah Wilkinson, Louis Degenhardt (Deputy) *COMMENT@VARSITY.CO.UK* **SCIENCE EDITOR** Nathan Smith *SCIENCE@VARSITY.CO.UK* **SPORTS EDITOR** Roxana Antohi, Matt Worth (Deputy) *SPORT@VARSITY.CO.UK* **MAGAZINE EDITOR** Sabina Dewfield *MAGAZINE@VARSITY.CO.UK* **LIFESTYLE** Helena Pike *LIFESTYLE@VARSITY.CO.UK* **CULTURE** David Godwin, Bethan Kitchen *CULTURE@VARSITY.CO.UK* **THEATRE** Hannah Piercy, Wen Li Toh *THEATRE@VARSITY.CO.UK* **FASHION** Lottie Franklin, Dahaba Ali Hussen *FASHION@VARSITY.CO.UK* **REVIEWS** Jilly Luke *REVIEWS@VARSITY.CO.UK* **INTERNATIONAL EDITOR** Emily Handley *INTERNATIONAL@VARSITY.CO.UK* **CHIEF SUB EDITOR** Edd Bankes **ONLINE SUB EDITOR** Frankie Cherry and **SENIOR SUB-EDITORS** Jess Baker, Josie Parkinson and Raphael Gray *SUBEDITOR@VARSITY.CO.UK* **HEADS OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Tom Porteous and Daisy Schofield *PHOTO@VARSITY.CO.UK* **Chief Illustrator** June Tong *ILLUSTRATION@VARSITY.CO.UK* **VarsiTV Controller** Farah Ghouri and Georgie Phillips (Deputy) *VARSI@VARSITY.CO.UK* **LOCAL ADVERTISING MANAGERS** Alice Taylor and Sophie Rutherford *LOCAL@VARSITY.CO.UK* **Varsity Board** Dr Michael Franklin (Chairman), Prof. Peter Robinson, Dr Tim Harris, Chris Wright, Michael Derringer, Aliya Ram (VarSoc President), Chloe Stopa-Hunt (The Mays), Nicola Love (BlueSci), Alice Udale-Smith & Emily Chan



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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 outmoded 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 school affiliated to the University of London or to 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 a London hospital is very



Students will no longer be able to transfer to London for their clinical training

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’ “disappointment 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 Assadullah, 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

“It was always ridiculous that Cambridge medical school couldn’t accommodate all the students from pre-clinical”

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 shuffled 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.

Varsity commits to eliminating transphobia in journalism

This week *Varsity* signed a statement re-committing ourselves to fair reporting of trans* issues, along with *TCS*. Here is our pledge going forward:

Transphobia remains a deeply troubling issue in our society, unjustly limiting the lives and happiness of many people. The media often plays a key role in perpetuating this hate and misunderstanding, dominating the public's discourse about transgender identities.

We are saddened that, despite the advances in understanding and acceptance in society, a large portion of trans* representation in the media continues to be negative and focused around sensationalist stereotypes.

We believe that this state of affairs, which has led to 51 per cent of trans* people feeling that their representation in the media had a negative effect on their emotional wellbeing, is deplorable and should have no place in our society.

We believe that the misinformation and falsehoods about trans* people currently being spread by the media goes against the fundamental principles of journalism and is an issue that needs addressing. We accept that we have not always been blameless in this matter, but in the future wish to commit to the following practices: 1. Fair and accurate reporting of stories involving transgender people. 2. Not sensationalising transgender identities. 3. Not publishing transphobic slurs. 4. Allowing the transgender community to comment upon the issues that affect them. 5. To work with the trans* community and CUSU LGBT+ to achieve these things.

Sarah Gibson, the current CUSU LGBT+ representative said: "CUSU LGBT+ is delighted that our student newspapers are taking a stand against transphobia... We hope that the next generation of journalists will see this behaviour as completely unacceptable and that they will help create a culture of understanding and respect for all within our press."

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 seminar on climate change 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, un-

"Cambridge does a wealth of research into climate change which has helped benefit policy decisions around the world"

dergraduates 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



The University spends £2 million a year on reducing carbon emissions

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, in addition to large-scale public education on the causes and impacts of climate change.

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 Matthew 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 big oil. The UK's Investment Management Association counts 94 ethically managed funds, most of them run on the 'do no harm' principle.

The CUSU's Sustainable and Responsible Investment Society Coalition advocates Cambridge join these funds in divesting from certain industries on the basis that the University should be a role model in society, acting responsibly and helping create a safe 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 cede ownership of 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 that dialogue remains between companies and those pressing for reform.

Under this system, Cambridge and its colleges would invest primarily in those energy companies with the best records. Greenopedia 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,

Conocco 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 £1bn 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 not to 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.



SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH: The popular documentary-maker will come to Cambridge on Monday to open an exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum featuring the work of his friend John Craxton, who died in 2009. Here Attenborough discusses the exhibition with Ian Collins, who has been assisting with the show. Craxton's work covers both the post-war period of Britain as well as his later life in Crete.

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 *Varsity* 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 with a majority of just 54.93 per cent of students voting in favour of CUSU.

Prior to the vote Selwyn hosted a 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 current CUSU sabbatical team

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 potentially 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.

Following the surprise victory of

the 'joke' Oxford University Student Union presidential candidate Louis Trup, there have been renewed calls for a restructuring of both Oxford and Cambridge Student Unions in order to end the apathy students feel towards the institutions.

In the last CUSU election one of the presidential candidates, George Bangham, ran on a platform of changing CUSU from an outsider's perspective and won the highest number of

first choice votes but ultimately lost to Flick Osborn.

Another point of contention in debates regarding disaffiliation is that every student remains a member of CUSU individually; even when a college disaffiliates the students themselves are still able to access the services that CUSU provides. Those in favour of disaffiliation argue that this strengthens the case for disaffiliating, as individual students are not affected directly.

The CUSU executive and those in favour of affiliation argue that it is both unethical to take advantage of services that you are not paying for, and that the services CUSU would be able to provide would be drastically affected by the budget cuts caused by disaffiliations.

The apathy towards CUSU has been well documented this term. It has been widely reported that 80 per cent of votes have gone uncast in the CUSU Council, 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".

News from the Dark Blues

Ben Crome
THE OXFORD STUDENT

Oxford University's student union, OUSU, often voted among the worst in the country, made international headlines for quite possibly the first time in its existence. So-called "joke candidate" Louis Trup stormed to victory in the organisation's presidential elections after masterminding the greatest political campaign since Boris Johnson presented himself as a vaguely suitable Mayor of London.

Trup had been ridiculed for submitting in a "personifesto" in crayon which featured extravagant policies such as abolishing mid-term's notorious Fifth week, thereby eradicating the common malaise known as Fifth Week Blues.

Yet, in an article for *The Oxford Student* last week, Trup outlined his credentials for OUSU presidency, deriding Jane Cahill, the candidate he resoundingly thumped into second place, for her proposal to establish a petting zoo to counter welfare problems. Trup, who has volunteered with a mental health charity since the age of 14 and is a general all-round nice guy, decried the idea as ridiculous.

One of his challenges as OUSU President will be to stamp out behaviour such as that of Somerville College's History Society, which advertised a talk from an expert on militant Islam as "explosive" and accompanied its publicity email with images of bombs. Controv.

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”

UNIVERSITY NEWS

In a letter to CUSU, the Cambridgeshire 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 also added: “I understand that there are mechanisms in place already for students to raise issues and concerns such as this through the Constabulary's university liaison officer, as well as being able to engage regularly through its student social media accounts, such as the student blog and Facebook page.”

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

“It is crucial that students have an opportunity to ask questions and hold the Cambridge Constabulary to account.”

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.

“We are also shocked and appalled that at a meeting of the Home Affairs Select Committee, Sir Bright linked this surveillance of students with prevention of violent attacks, saying ‘One dreads to think that something could happen in Cambridge like it did in Woolwich.’

“CUSU supports its members' democratic right to protest and consistently keeps the police informed of such peaceful action. We are hopeful that Sir Bright will reconsider his response to our invitation.”

Academic staff from the University have also written an open letter to the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, expressing their concern over the attempts to spy on students. The letter sent to the Vice-Chancellor last week labelled the police tactics as “highly invasive practices”, and called on Sir Leszek to “make it clear that the University is in no way involved in supporting such practices.”

A spokesperson for the University stated: “The Vice-Chancellor also notes the concerns of the letter's signatories that the right to peaceful protest and political and social campaigning be preserved and protected. He has already made these points to the police.”



Sir Graham Bright, the Cambridgeshire Police Commissioner

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



Trupp performed an original song at hustings across Oxford

Jack May
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

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 baffled 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 monorail to enable faster transit to some of 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 only a hundred or so appear for the University-wide OUSU Council meetings – an issue that is relevant for Cambridge students as the disaffiliation question makes its way through many college JCRs this year.

OUSU and CUSU are notoriously two of the least popular student unions in the country, and many of Trupp's supporters are hoping that his victory will re-energise the central student unions of collegiate universities.

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 we need to engage people.”

As his manifesto says in blue crayon, “THE MOB HAS SPOKEN”.



Cambridge Spy Rumour has it...

Porters at Peterhouse were giving regular warnings to students last Saturday to avoid the Deer Park. We wonder what the deer could have been up to?

We hear that in one college's JCR elections this year, a certain welfare candidate was beaten by RON in a not-so-surprising turn of events. Apparently that's what happens when your chat-up lines border on the illegal side.

Students at Robinson have been complaining about the college's abysmal internet speed. Something about not being able to relieve the built up tension of the Week 5 blues was mentioned.

Think that Gardies at the very least is free from the stresses of work? Think again. One student's night got very awkward when she ran into her drunk and disorderly DoS at the counter.

Miss Vx



FITZWILLIAM: It's a white out! Feeling despondent about the lack of snow in Cambridge this term? A new exhibition featuring the work of potter, and Cambridge graduate, Edmund de Waal opens on Friday 29th November. The exhibition is staged in four interconnected ground-floor galleries of the Museum and include two large-scale interventions, called *a thousand hours* and *yourself*.

Huppert pushes for student vote

Liberal Democrat MP has spoken of concerns about changes to student voter registration

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.

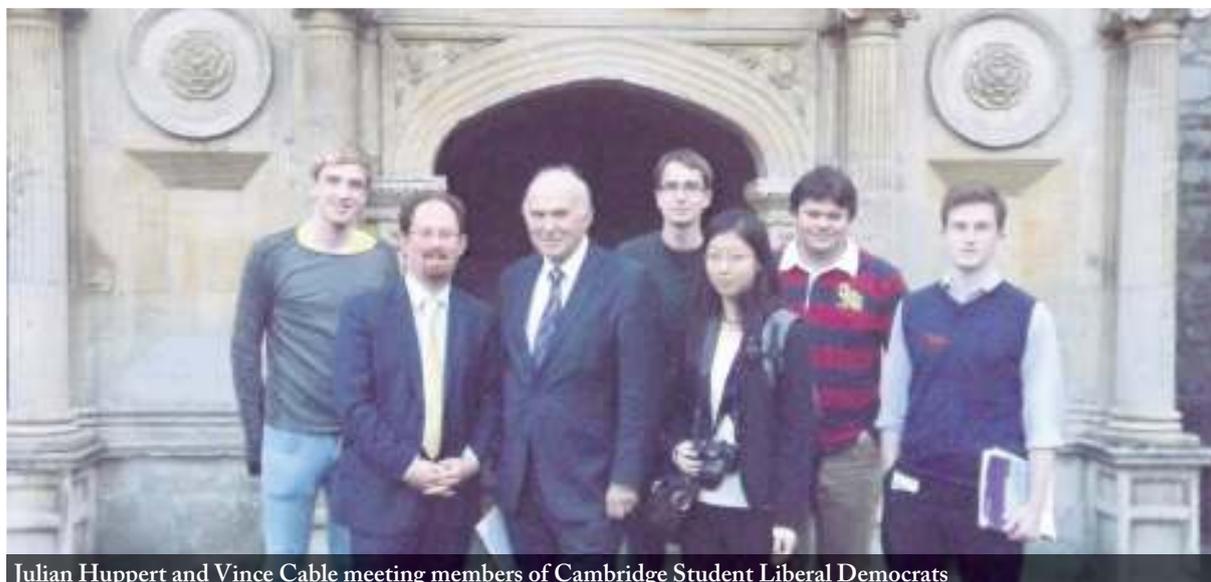
The current system registers students to vote on arrival at university; in the case of Cambridge through their colleges. The government has proposed

"It's important that as many students as possible vote in Cambridge in 2015 so we can remove the Lib Dems from office"

the introduction of an individual registration system whereby students will have to register themselves independently.

Speaking to *Varsity*, Huppert outlined his concerns: "[S]tudents 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



Julian Huppert and Vince Cable meeting members of Cambridge Student Liberal Democrats

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."

"Students are a special case, moving every year, and there is a risk they will end up not going on the register"

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 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.

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*

"How dare you take the word liberal! Liberal's the best word in politics"

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'm almost 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 following the evidence wherever 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



Norman Baker: Liberal Democrat MP and "independent minded" man

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.

Baker argues that his party got a "better deal in the coalition agreement than the Tories," and believes seventy-five per cent of the coalition's work to be positive.

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 competent, a "strong character". But he reveals that although they have a reasonable 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 tribal than the Tories...I don'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 stamp" on government, in contrast to the Tories, who he claims are "becoming the nasty party once again" in the eyes of the public. On Nick Boles' 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: he points out that the myth that a Liberal Democrat vote is a wasted one has been dispelled.

"I don't 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. Given the poor attendance, though, it seems that, in Cambridge at least, his party have got their work cut out to convince the electorate of their right to remain, or even, in fact, of the right to have their case heard.

analysis

Could you get your foot in the door?

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

So what do the Cambridge Student Liberal Democrats 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 jubilant 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 Party 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 undergrad - I campaigned heavily in the 1997 election, 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, CUCA'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 can 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 CUCA and CULC its current executive committee is comprised exclusively of Cambridge University members. That may not bode well for the future.



COST OF LIFE MEMBERSHIP

£2

Cambridge University Labour Club

£5

Cambridge Student Liberal Democrats

£10

Cambridge University Conservative Association

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 Élysées, 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



Protestors in Paris campaign for tighter gun control with banners and signs

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.

TIMELINE

15 November
Suspect threatens staff at offices of BFMTV, a French television network, with a gun



18 November
First shooting at *Libération* news-paper. Photography assistant injured.

Second shooting at Société Générale bank around two hours later. No-one is injured.

Police believe suspect hijacked a car, ordering the driver to take him to the Champs-Élysées



20 November
Suspect is arrested. Police say DNA samples from Dekhar matches those from the crime scenes

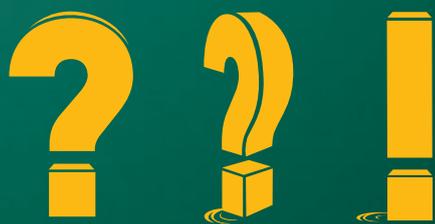


The Mays #22

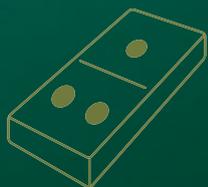
Applications are open to edit the 2014 Mays Anthology, the collection of the best student writing and artwork from Cambridge and Oxford.

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.



Grow Further.



WANTED: PROBLEM SOLVERS

The mutilated chessboard

Suppose you have a chessboard with two opposite corners removed, and 31 dominoes which each cover exactly two squares of the board. How should you arrange the dominoes so that the board is completely covered?

If you want to know the answer or find out more about working at BCG, then visit puzzle.bcglondon.com

BCG

THE BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP

The 'college burglar' is caught again

CAMBRIDGE Michael Janes – nicknamed "The College Burglar" by police detectives – was handed a fifty week jail sentence.

Janes was identified in CCTV footage in St Edmund's, St Catharine's and Churchill Colleges. He is reported to have stolen hundreds of pounds from these colleges between 13 and 16 of November.

He also gained access to student accommodation on Tennis Court Road and tried to extract money from a parking meter on Park Street on 15 November. He tried to enter the bar at Caius College the same day, but was not successful.

James Bond in Cambridge

CAMBRIDGE Pierce Brosnan, the Irish actor most famous for his role in the Bond films, was spotted in Cambridge last week.

Brosnan is shooting for a new film entitled "How To Make Love Like An Englishman", directed by Tom Vaughan, whose other works include the University Challenge feature film "Starter for 10".

In this latest project, Brosnan plays a "Byronic" University of Cambridge professor, who is forced to re-evaluate his life when his girlfriend, played by Jessica Alba, falls pregnant with his baby. The actor was seen around Clare College, where it is believed much of the exterior footage for the film will be shot.

One first year Clare student, Morven Macaulay, tweeted: "Pierce Brosnan was at Clare Bridge. Ohmylord why am I not dressed yet. #artstudentproblems".

Oxford drinking society condemned for misogyny

CAMBRIDGE An Oxford University drinking society, The Black Cygnets, at St Hugh's College Oxford, caused controversy with a planned 'Fox Hunt' event.

The event was to involve male students, or 'Huntsmen', dressed in red jackets chasing the women 'Foxes' dressed in short skirts and fox ears. Invitations were only sent to the female first year students the society deemed attractive.

The college's principal, Dame Elish Angiolini, said on Friday: "We are utterly appalled that any member of our community would consider belonging to, or participating in, this repugnant, sexist and secretive group."

Second CDE protest student debt privatisation

CAMBRIDGE Cambridge Defend Education staged a creative demonstration at the Sidgwick Site last week in another protest against higher education spending cuts and privatisation in the sector.

The group was participating in a national day of action against the privatisation of student loans, with 25 universities across the country taking part.

The protesters played a game called 'Stuck in the Debt' and staged a 'die-in' to demonstrate the "crushing" effects of debt on students.

The protest followed the revelations that police in Cambridge have attempted to spy on student political groups such as CDE, news which was met with outrage from many Cambridge academics.

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 with a result such as a first, 2:1, 2:2 or a third, there are plans to replace this with a grade point aver-

"An advantage of introducing GPA is the possibility of better comparison with international academic attainment"

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 would offer a more accurate record of students' achievements.

The proposal for this new system has received support from Universities Minister David Willetts, after Oxford Brookes became the first UK university to introduce it alongside the existing classification for honours degrees earlier this year.



British university students are currently judged on end of year exams

Students have routinely criticised the current degree grading method, which has existed for 200 years after being introduced by the University of Oxford, for being unfair and vague. For instance, a 2:1 only differentiates between candidates 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.

Graduate recruiters have accused the current system of being a "crude" method of selecting the most suitable candidate for employment after graduation, as each class of degree can cover a wide range of attainments. Conversely, the GPA would permit employers to see whether a student's achievements fall at the lower or higher end of a particular grade boundary, as well as listing their

extra-curricular achievements as further information that could potentially lead employers to favour one candidate over an otherwise equally well-qualified competitor.

A further argument in favour of introducing GPA is the possibility for a better comparison with international academic attainment, as it is already used in Canada, the USA and many Asian countries. Concerns have also been raised that employers outside of the UK do not recognise the honours degree system at all.

Amid continued accusations of grade inflation in British universities, Bob Burgess, who is the chair of the GPA Pilot National Advisory Board, is enthusiastic about the scope offered by the grading system. He believes that

it "would give students more incentive to keep working to influence their final marks, and enable universities to look hard at their practices of teaching, learning and assessment."

However those defending the current system have pointed out that by judging students on final-year performance, it allows them more scope in experiment more in their first few years of university life.

"In the first year, students are finding their feet and often only get into their stride in the second year," said Professor Raftery, Pro Vice-Chancellor for student experience at Oxford Brookes University.

However he added: "The established classification scheme is very good at measuring 'exit velocity' - the achievement of a student in their final year - but we will also run GPA, where everything counts, alongside it."

Hannah Laidley, a third-year medical student at Peterhouse College, told *Varsity*: "I think that it is true that the current grade groups don't tell you a lot about the individual marks, but I don't think that this is a bad thing. People of similar abilities may get marks that differ by 10 per cent in an exam based on what questions they have prepared in the past or how much sleep they got the night before their exam."

"[GPA] allows people to focus on not just achieving well academically, but gaining relevant experience to differentiate themselves from the many other people who got a 2:1, for example."

The University of Cambridge did not respond to a request for comment, however Cambridge is not among the universities that are considering introducing GPA in the near future.

Cambridge students launch website to energise campaigning

Natalia Molina
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Dissatisfied with the influence of current student-run political campaigns, two Cambridge students have launched The Bridge, a new kind of online business which seeks action and results in the political sphere. In a similar style to sites like change.org, The Bridge plans to accept petitions made by registered voters with the aim of achieving direct contact with politicians.

Founded by Eric Hambro from Magdalene and Raza Habib from Emmanuel, the website was launched in light of "the profusion of online campaigning", that has taken place in the past few years and received minimal response by MPs.

The self-proclaimed goal of the business initiative is to change the way campaigners interact with politicians: by linking the student initiated campaigns with the relevant campaigners in Westminster who can then refer the campaigns on to politicians.

The business model of buildthebridge.org.uk is similar to that of other websites such as change.org which also seeks to bring small petitions into the spotlight.

The website change.org places weight on the power of a story and

how inspiring a movement is: the focus is on how much snowballing power it will have. Current petitions range from those of mothers reaching out to protect the innocence of their children (Petition to: "Put age-ratings on music videos whether sold in shops or viewed online") to anti-sexist campaigns (Petition to: "STOP making SEXIST kinder eggs!").

In contrast to such emotion-based petitions, the accent in The Bridge is on ideas which wish to become a movement, issues where the petitioners are willing to back their projects, both figuratively and financially. The Bridge requires petitioners to be registered voters and be willing to donate a minimum of £1.00 to their cause: their donations allow them access to the minutes of the meeting with the MP, according to their website. With The Bridge, a desire to implicate the petitioner in the petition process is evident.

The co-founders of The Bridge want to propel small petitioners into the political scene and allow their voice to be heard by paying for the website to campaign on their behalf.

"At the moment it's only large organisations or focused pressure groups that actively approach politicians, we'd like to open that power to as many people as possible," said Bridge co-founder



'The Bridge' aims to help co-ordinate direct action

Raza Habib on the subject of the as-yet limited influence of online petitions in the political sector.

With petitions, interest is quickly lost; as the individual loses the belief that he can make a difference, he loses the ability to make a difference. Fellow co-founder Eric Hambro gave the following example: "At a time when celebrities like Russell Brand are advocating that people don't vote and people have become disenfranchised by broken promises, it is more important than ever to have a platform that gets

more people involved in the democratic process", referencing Russell Brand's statement in his piece for the *New Statesman*, that he doesn't vote as "there is nothing to vote for".

Second-year Magdalene Student, Will Thong said: "Better connection between those in power and those who care but are outside of the political system can only be a good thing. I do wonder though how likely this is to actually work in practice. It might just be far too idealistic and the kind of thing only students care for."

Council crackdown on housing

Charities work alongside the council to address homelessness in Cambridge

Chloe Clifford-Astbury
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 a home 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

"A number of student-led initiatives are attempting to alleviate the hardship of homelessness"

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. Last year 229 people were found sleeping rough in Cambridge. This constitutes a significant increase



Hundreds of people sleep rough in Cambridge every night

from 183 individuals, the number 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. The developers stated that their project will "deliver much needed affordable housing in Cambridge."

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 students 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 a £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.

"[T]he 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."

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 £15 billion from the sales of public assets to boost investment.

There have been two sales of student debt to private companies in the past but this will be the largest yet.

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

The government is selling the loans for £160 million despite their worth 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 having these loans on the public books 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

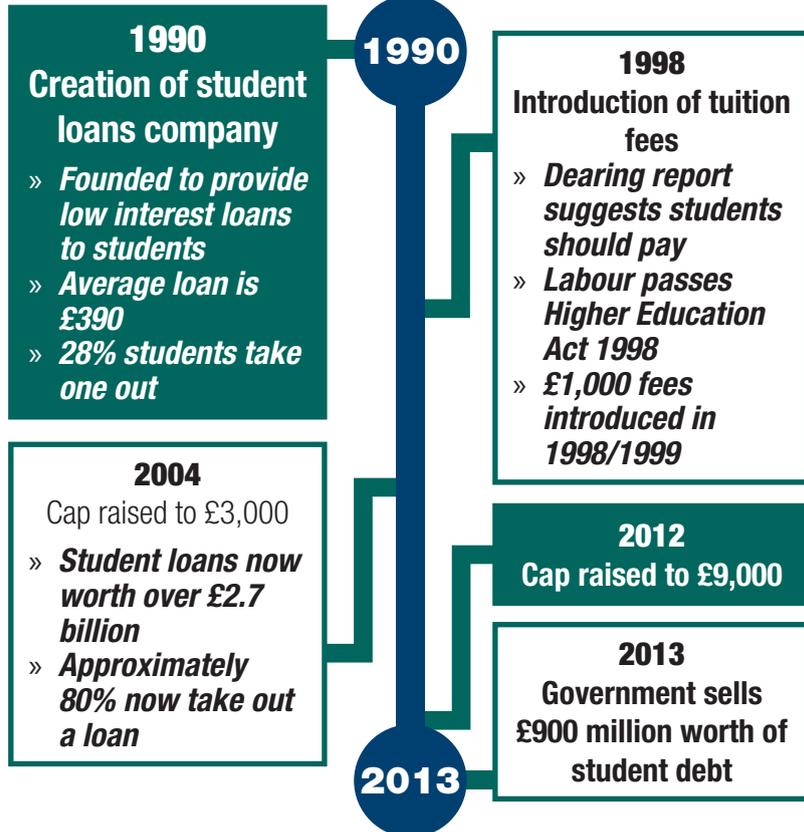
doesn't make economic sense."

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."



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 two 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 and lung transplantation. As well as this smoking costs the NHS and society billions of pounds each year," said Dr Keith McNeil, 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 Jez George 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 providing the Light Blues team with coaching following the exit of Che Wilson as their manager due to studying commitments.

Speaking to Cambridge News, George 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."

George hopes that the collaboration will 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 Higgs boson was announced at CERN last year, and earned Professor Peter Higgs of Edinburgh the Nobel Prize for Physics.



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

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.

It is no understatement to say that Frederick Sanger brought biology into the modern analytical age.

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.

“Being a Quaker he was a conscientious objector during the Second World War”

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.

Being 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.”



The Sanger Institute in Cambridge is named after the scientist

Evolution laid out in a beaker

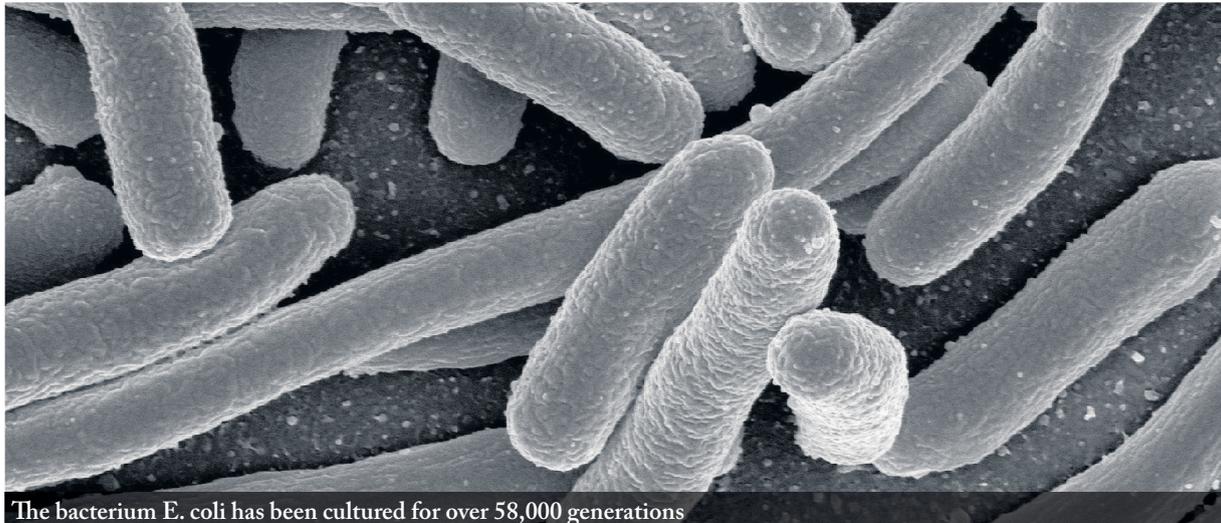
Katherine Armstrong
SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT

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, was 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



The bacterium *E. coli* has been cultured for over 58,000 generations

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 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. 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?

Are microbes allies in our war against cancer?

James Forsythe
SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT

Cancer is the current terror of medicine, which has grown in infamy as the likes of cholera and smallpox have been counteracted by sanitation and vaccination. Cancer is a complex range of diseases that requires different approaches for therapy when compared to many of the infamous infectious diseases that were just as prevalent in the past. We may be getting some unexpected help in cancer treatments from bacteria, even though MRSA and countless others 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 organisms that can 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 effect of the microbiota on cancer therapy. The presence of the gut microbiota was found to boost the effects of three antitumor

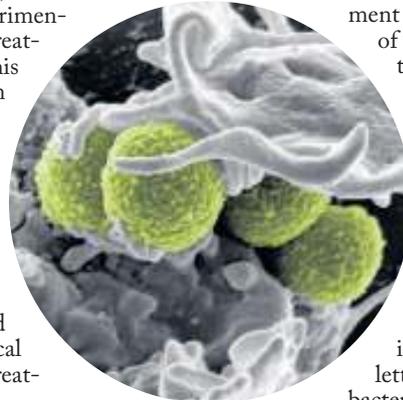
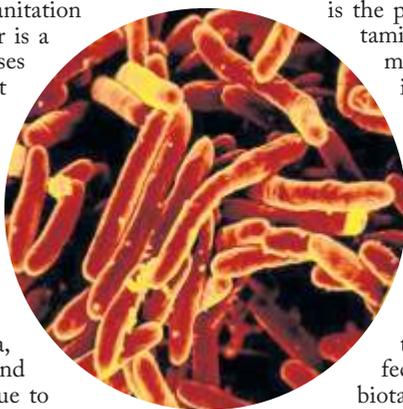
regimens in mice, whilst its absence had a detrimental effect on the treatment. Whilst this result may seem removed from cancer treatment because lacking microbiota would cause many other problems (like a lack of vitamin K), this could influence clinical practice in the treatment of cancer.

It is currently common for cancer patients to be treated with antibiotics in response to their weakened immune systems. While antibiotics will stop harmful pathogens, they will also harm the microbiota, potentially causing adverse effects not previously considered in cancer therapy. This was

illustrated with another experiment in which treatment of tumors in mice faltered when they had frequent antibiotic treatment.

The microbiota may also have an effect on chemotherapy. The CTX chemotherapy 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 led to an increase of T-cells from 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.



In defence of... Stem Cells

Kris Moore

The stem cell controversy may seem like a stale topic to some: the debate had its heyday in the years of the second Bush administration, reaching a heated climax in 2006 when the zygote-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 cells have 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 can imagine why some people hear the words "embryo research" and picture cackling biologists creating Frankenbabies and designer earlobes. In reality, stem cell research is much less gruesome, and a lot more useful.

Extracting stem cells from embryos is not an unethical process. The embryos used are just four or five days old - essentially created by squirting semen onto a petri dish with some human egg cells on it, as in IVF treatment, a scientific technique which is considerably less contentious. Indeed, ES cells are often taken from excess IVF embryos that would otherwise have been discarded. The extraction process destroys the embryo, but at this stage it consists of a rough mass of less than a hundred cells and is unrecognisable as human, and more akin to a cauliflower. It is about the width of a human hair, and certainly lacks any structure needed for pain, thought, or even movement.

Some believe that terminating embryos is inherently immoral because life begins at fertilisation, making such an act equivalent to murder. I sometimes wonder if these people know that, even in healthy human females, three-quarters of all fertilised eggs are spontaneously miscarried and fail to survive to birth. As many as half do not even implant into the mother's

uterus. If your ethical system counts the destruction of any fertilised egg as murder, the majority of women on the planet would have to be put behind bars.

In fact, it is not the morality of stem cell research that needs defending, but its ability to live up to the scientific hype. When ES cells were first isolated in 1998, they were hailed as the Next Big Thing in biology, as scientists promised stem cell-derived hearts in a decade. In the intervening fifteen years, they've realised that making organs is actually rather a tricky business - it's only since August that scientists have been able to grow a small mat of heart muscle tissue capable of beating in sync.

An entire heart is still many years down the line, but stem cell therapy has nonetheless demonstrated its promise in simpler procedures. They were used as early as 2003 to allow a Korean woman to walk after 19 years, and in 2005 to restore the sight of forty people with defective corneas. More recently, in 2012 the first study involving human embryonic stem cells published results showing that its two vision-impaired participants demonstrated improvement after stem cell treatment.

There is nothing unethical about using embryonic stem cells. It is far more wrong, in my opinion, to block research with such demonstrable medical potential.



Fact
OR
Fiction?

Olivia Remes

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* details the life of eccentric scientist, Victor Frankenstein, who discovers the secret of generating life, ultimately leading to the creation of a creature he soon rejects as a grotesque monster. The novel had a significant influence across literature, epitomising the genre of horror fiction. However, reading it brings to mind an inevitable question - is Frankenstein's monster be scientifically plausible?

Vladimir Demikhov was a pioneering surgeon in the Soviet Union and is considered by many scientists to be the father of heart and lung transplantation. He made significant contributions to organ transplant and coronary surgery, performing organ transplants in dogs and studying their reaction after various organs were introduced or removed. His most unusual experiment involved head transplantation, whereby the head and upper body of a puppy was grafted onto the neck of a mongrel.

Dr. Robert J. White, an American neurosurgeon, became inspired by his work and began performing head transplants on rhesus monkeys. His experiments were generally unsuccessful; the monkeys would die a few days later due to immunorejection. His ultimate desire was to perform similar transplants on living humans.

Could Demikhov and White be considered modern-day Frankensteins? Perhaps. But without Demikhov and the other Victor Frankensteins around the world with their unbridled thirst for knowledge, the field of transplantation may not have recorded the same progress that it did.



Comment

Is student journalism a bum out?

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 all”. And yes, there are rare occasions when an investigation first imagined at a dreary November news meeting (which only two people turned up for anyway) leads to the University sitting up and taking note. Or, at the very least, makes me incredibly unpopular with Senior Bursars everywhere.

But these occasions are few and far between. Much more common is the churning out of more of the same: yet another four star review for the ADC main-show, the mysterious disappearance of another one of Pembroke’s cats and yet more self-generated, publicity-driven scandal over a few bare bottoms (although personally I found the loss of Millie poignant and sorrowful). Entertaining though these stories may be, they hardly live up to the grandiose vision of investigative journalism so often conjured up by student hacks defending their work.

Generally speaking, student journalism is neither glamorous nor earth-shattering, and certainly doesn’t make good dinner-time conversation (as my friends often wearily feel the need to remind me). During my term as editor I have spent far more time trying to balance photos, wrestle with the correct use of apostrophes and acting as head cheerleader for the rest of the team than I have devoted to anything that would remotely seem to count as proper ‘journalism’. Slaving over the paper edition at 3am in the *Varsity* office for the second night in a row (for the third time in as many weeks), I’m not at all ashamed to admit I wondered why I bother.

The answer is of course that however

tired and lofty the arguments get, student journalism is necessary for the same reason national journalism is necessary: to hold the society around us to account. This does not just take the form of time consuming investigations into investment in fossil fuels, but in the seemingly little things such as speaking up for students facing crippling room rents.

Student journalism provides a megaphone for the issues that students care about and the fact that students are looking out for each other helps maintain some level of accountability in Cambridge. Yet if this were the sole aim of student journalism I could just as well join a student charity, political party or the JCR, and not worry about continually stalking *The Tab’s* website to see if they got their review up before we did. So what is it that makes student journalism stand out from the other ways we could spend our precious free time? It is because student journalism is so much more than just championing these worthy issues and student causes.

Student journalism also exists to facilitate debate, whether the discussion is about the University’s lack of an ethical investment policy or the ongoing dilemma of Fez vs. Cindies. We have the ability to cover the issues that

affect our day-to-day lives, whether we do so to provoke discussion or simply entertain ourselves.

There can be as much joy and journalistic skill in covering the debate about the Union’s sponsorship as

“Journalism is not glamorous and doesn’t make good dinner-time conversation (as my friends often wearily feel the need to remind me)”

there can be in a truly comprehensive analysis of One Direction’s new album. Both are just as much a part of student culture as each other, and are both valuable in their own way.

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 nosy.

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 nosy 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 dislike of CUSU anymore, yet for all its faults, student journalism can never be criticised for its lack of interest or participation in student life. I’d 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, where's my monorail?

With faltering faith in student politics, are crayon 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 MCRs 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 NHS; 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 such political issues. This isn't just a 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 MCRs 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 with the student body through your JCR, MCR, faculty and autonomous campaign representatives, CUSU relies 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 has got extra funding from the University to provide support for societies; it's improving the tutorial system to ensure equality of provision across the colleges; it's campaigning for a student hub building in the city centre; it funds the autonomous campaigns which are crucial for under-represented groups.

Don't give up on the students' union; don't remove your voice from having a say. Add your voices to change CUSU for the better – don't just assume that someone else will do it for you.



Nathan Akehurst
OUSU CANDIDATE

To say that Louis Trup's victory spells 'the end of student politics' is somewhat overly millenarian, 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 homogenous 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 OUSU but do perceive it to be dominated by wannabe career politicians.

I was a candidate in this year's election, but had I not been, I'd have voted Trup. Every year in OUSU 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 student 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 are those in the Trup camp that agree with such a message and those that militantly reject it. But regardless, his win sparks a debate that has been bubbling under – should we have a central student union, and if so, what should it do? What do words like '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 disenchanted with the machine-like nature of student politics and certainly do attribute the perception of irrelevance in part to the failure 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 unusual election promise of a monorail around Oxford.

He represents 'something new', in his own words. Time will tell what that something is, and how the bureaucracies of student politics will react to it.

Simons Says

JOSH SIMONS

Very few students at Cambridge live and breathe student politics. I've yet to attend a protest with more than a couple of hundred haggardly students, a good chunk of whom are often not quite sure what they are shouting about. They are always a marked contrast to the 2010 Tuition Fees Protests, where 50,000 others and I wandered round London for an afternoon, demanding a reversal of the tuition fee rise.

I don't actually believe in a reversal of the tuition fee rise. I think the economic arguments in favor of raising tuition fees are much stronger than the 'we all have a right to a free University education' mantra. I was there for a different reason. That summer I had read *Hitch-22*, Christopher Hitchens's memoir. In it, he describes afternoons spent standing on soapboxes in Oxford, and how membership of the International Socialists quintupled over his time there. I was skeptical and cynical but also young, excited and occasionally angry. I was bored of seeing how many swigs of neat Vodka I could neck before throwing up on the street corner and heading to some house party. So I went to protest.

I have no doubt that most people who went on that protest understood the issue better by the end of the day. I also suspect that everyone there learnt something about forming groups in civil society with a political aim. That's an important part of what politics is about.

It's also what CUSU is about. So why does no one turn up? It's either because there is nothing anybody cares about enough to bother or because people don't feel a body like CUSU is a good platform to vent frustrations. Here's my attempt at an explanation. The things that rile me are not things you or I confront every day, which makes it very difficult to get people to care about it. Getting people to care about where their College invests their money, or who donates to them, is not easy. The economics are complicated and things quickly become quite nebulous.

The recent reaction to rent rises was rapid and condemning. People cared about it, in part, because it palpably affected them. Investments, homelessness, trade barriers, wars and poverty are not things virtually all of us regularly, if ever, come into contact with. Nor is it obvious that taking an hour out of our day to vote in CUSU's chamber is likely to make any difference to any of those problems or the people involved. The chain that links what you do to a mining worker in the Congo isn't easy to grasp, but that doesn't mean it's not there, operating and affecting what you and they do every day.

That's why I think your time is spent very wisely reading about and trying to understand this chain, not at CUSU's chamber, then explaining it to anyone who will listen.

The art of doing nothing at all



Jennie King

It is a myth universally acknowledged that an undergrad in possession of free time must be in want of a Third. Proverb dictates that time is precious, time is money, time is short. Culture has rebranded time as our enemy, and drawn us together in eternal, fruitless combat. For some, this can be an incentive, placing them in an adrenaline-fuelled, existential race against the clock, but for most it fails to empower and serves only to paralyse, driving them into the mire of doubted choices and remorse.

This is never truer than in Cambridge, where the short 8-week term intensifies activity and makes time-guilt a normal experience. There is 'so much to do' that we mythicise our moments, and what should be a realm of possibility becomes little more than a 2-month ticking prison.

Most of us can see the importance

of breaks, if only because of the consoling (and highly fashionable) notion of a 'work-life balance', but how we spend those delicious minutes/hours/days is another matter entirely. We have developed a hierarchy of free-time activities that is both complex and arbitrary in equal measures. According to this index, taking a night off to go clubbing is acceptable, because it constitutes group socializing with a discernible end goal; similarly, watching a TED talk or writing a letter or learning an obscure African dialect would qualify as relaxation in its most productive form. On the other hand, an afternoon spent learning B*Witched lyrics, reading BuzzFeed articles entitled 'The 35 funniest reactions to this chair', or lying in the foetal position watching re-runs of *Boy Meets Girl/The West Wing/Recess* would constitute a brazen and shameful waste of time.

What qualifies some 'extra-curriculars' as valid, some as sinful procrastination? What makes 'going for a run' a savvy, Cambridge-approved use of 30 minutes, while compiling a photo-collage of Putin pulling stupid faces is an hour (weekend) irredeemably squandered? The underlying issue is one of self-improvement: where we perceive ourselves to be growing as individuals, mentally or physically, we award a gold star; when we're seen to indulge

emotional whims or physical urges, we get a demerit. Wednesday at Cindies only escapes condemnation because it's validated by a special pact which gives otherwise impulsive or frivolous activities an aura of worth. This social contract is inevitably played out the morning after, when revellers exchange words of faux-regret and go through the rigmarole of competitive self-deprecation. Exclamations such as 'I have SO much work, really shouldn't have gone' or 'Can't believe I was that drunk,

"An undergrad in possession of free time must be in want of a Third"

I'm such a disaster' reveal the Jedi mind game that can only be won with six 'I'm-going-to-Fail Marys'.

When a friend decided to take a day off from revision – and submerge himself for 24 hours in the jacuzzi of mindless drivel – I was shocked by the reaction that followed. A fragrant mixture of horror and bemusement, served with a healthy dollop of self-righteous interrogation. Comments such as 'wow, do you have time for that?' and 'what a great idea, I wish I could afford to do

the same' were dressed up as supportive asides, but the subtext was clear: take as many days off as you like, but I won't be joining you, because I intend to succeed. Faced with the silent judgement of his peers, that day off was swiftly reviewed, shortened to a sad footnote at the end of an exhausting week.

Maybe Einstein was right, and we should see time for what it really is: relative. This has nothing to do with laziness or apathy, nor does it endorse an unbridled hedonism devoid of time management. Of course we should stay interested – a desire to grow and diversify and self-improve is arguably one of our greatest assets – but if we only embark on tasks with a known end point we deny ourselves the joy of the inane, the light and shade of living. You may not 'learn' anything tangible or profound from a how-to Twerking video, but don't be fooled by the misconception that unproductive equals unworthy. Learning to be comfortable in your own company, learning to let go, learning to silence your internal monologue for a few moments every day; these are invaluable human skills that shouldn't be the sole preserve of Buddhists and Zen Masters. It's about time we revelled in the silly, meaningless nonsense, without the emotional backlash. It's about time we got down-right foolish.

Protest! What is it good for?



Alice Taylor

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. This was the land of the loud. But still he was left to roam. And subsequently point a shotgun at his girlfriend. Allegedly. If a protest on such a scale as this cannot incite rapid, meaningful action, then what hope do student protests have? What's the point? Can student protests ever make a difference?

This term has been one of unrest in the student community. The proposed

sale of the student loan book catalysed a 'National Day of Action' on the 20th November, as twenty-five campuses across the country played host to the protests of students "shocked at the extent of the government's betrayal." More locally, there have been calls for the University to condemn the actions of Cambridgeshire Police for spying on students. The government seems to think that students can be sidelined in some areas and yet prioritised as a threat in others.

Although pockets of the student community have been galvanised into action, no real change has occurred. But for me, causing an immediate change in legislation is not what student protest is about. Even if they are viewed by some as merely 'token resistance', they are still an expression of political thought, something that should be encouraged in a society in which apathy appears to be on the rise. The student protests of 2010 didn't reduce fees but they did call politicians to account for capitulating on their beliefs and promises. Protests,

student led or otherwise, are prompts for conversation. They get people talking about real problems in our society and can often reveal major flaws in our current system of governance. Politicians and the public are compelled to reflect upon and justify their decisions and beliefs.

Students, particularly students in Cambridge, are either very busy or very lazy. There seems to be no middle ground. So when they take time out of their day to stand in the persistent drizzle outside Senate House, there must be a valid reason for them doing so. After all, that play they are directing is waiting, that overdue essay beckons and Breaking Bad will not watch itself. They are being taught to be critical about our world. To challenge the norm. They are the next generation of business leaders, politicians, civil servants and teachers. Taking a literal stand against issues concerning students – ranging from loans to job opportunities and now privacy – is a clear message that we do not agree with the decisions of a government that was

elected to represent the views of the people, protect their interests and aid the vulnerable.

With that said, standing in a public space as a form of political expression is hardly a new phenomenon, and student protests are not completely pointless. Bulgaria has now witnessed over 160 days of protests led by students. Last week they were joined by the largest trade union in the country as they took action against low wages and unemployment. Their efforts have even garnered the attention of the British media.

But other platforms for protest, such as Twitter and online petitions, are in my view just as effective. Possibly even more so, because they make up for what student protests often lack in terms of feet on the ground. Social media can be used to amass huge amounts of support in a very short space of time. You can protest in your pyjamas. All it takes is a retweet or filling in a couple of boxes and you're done. The government even has its own website for e-petitions so you can speak di-

rectly to our elected politicians. No need to don a sensible coat, fashion a sign out of an Amazon box and storm the Bastille.

But there is another form of resistance that, rather sadly, many do not participate in. It's well within your right to protest, whether it be online or in the streets, but please don't forget your right to vote. Elections are powerful things. You only have to look at the recent discussions in colleges about women's officers to see that. Protests get people talking. Nothing may be changed, but at least grievances are aired, and when we get the chance to take to the ballot boxes we'll keep them in mind.

We are British. Complaining isn't really our thing. So the fact that we are standing up and saying something is great. We're getting there, slowly but surely. There 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.

The good, the bad, and the jelly



Olivia Bernhardt-Brogan

I feel exceedingly intimidated stepping onto the tincture-strewn floor that is feminist debate in Cambridge today. This is not due to the complex nature of feminist issues, although that does of course raise a few challenges, but rather because of the hostility and anger which now surrounds them. Nevertheless, the perception of the CUSU Women's Campaign amongst students raises important questions which need to be addressed. Barefoot, I will attempt to wander through.

With a new wave of feminism breaking across some of the most important social and political topics

of the moment, the Women's Campaign should be more popular than it has been for a long time. Despite this, when questioning some undergraduates for their thoughts on it, I was presented with a catalogue of looks of either total indifference or outright disdain.

More alarmingly, the majority of people had no idea what the Campaign is. This is an important problem which the Campaign fails to recognise. On the one hand, not enough people know about it, and on the other, those who do know about it simply don't care.

Although very much a feminist, I feel incredibly conflicted when it comes to the Women's Campaign in Cambridge. I am only too ready to herald it as a super-power of Good through which we can fight forces of Evil and secure gender equality. In reality, I am often left dispirited and isolated by it.

For example, CUSU's calls to ban the competition formerly known as 'Rear of the Year', as well as last year's petition which stopped jelly wrestling at the Wyverns' Garden Party, raised valid questions about how we use and

perceive women's bodies. However, by restricting choice these initiatives only serve as another form of oppression, often crossing the dangerous border that divides radicalism from reaction.

The strict and aggressive attitude regularly taken by the Women's Campaign not only gives activists bad publicity but also misrepresents most women's views. The prohibition of jelly wrestling, for instance, inspired such a backlash that a counter-petition raised over a thousand signatures. Whilst we need radical groups to spearhead change, this won't come unless we bring the bulk of people behind us.

As Jess Franklin from Corpus Christi says: "I think that they need to be more aware of the ease with which they can alienate people, especially boys, and that when they have sense-of-humour failures it sets them back by confirming many people's preconceptions that feminists are inaccessible and serious."

This brings me to the exclusion of men from the Women's Campaign. It is indeed important for women's campaigns to be run by women, but this must not involve an 'us and them' attitude towards the opposite sex when

what we are ultimately striving for is gender equality. Banning men from attending the CUSU campaign's weekly meetings surely creates a monologue where there should be a dialogue.

On the Campaign's Facebook page, in a side list of posting rules, it is written: "0. [So important it is before point one.] THIS IS A WOMEN'S SPACE. Respect women's experience, respect women's lived experience, respect women's voices. Men are welcome to read and to listen, but if you decide to engage please keep your male privilege in check."

Male privilege is an important problem to be raising, but is it perhaps not more important to declare that "Sexism, racism, ageism, homophobia," etc. are not tolerated. And that's not to mention the distasteful capitals. The misogyny that often crops up in the language of CUSU is certainly not encouraging meaningful conversation between the sexes, without which we can't progress.

This is not to say that the Women's Campaign is not a positive influence in Cambridge. The work they have done, especially in terms of raising awareness about the myths and problems

that surround rape, has been extremely useful. The 'I need feminism because...' campaign – in which people on the streets of Cambridge were asked to complete that sentence on a whiteboard and have their photo taken with it – was hugely successful, and the album of collected pictures was shared over a third of a million times on Facebook.

It would also be wrong to blame the unpopularity of the Women's Campaign entirely on the Campaign itself. A huge portion of the hate it receives is a reflection of the extent of sexism in society, or at least the extent of ignorance of feminism, and in fact demonstrates why we still need a Women's Campaign.

After the jelly wrestling debacle an article was published in *The Telegraph* calling women from feminist groups "a bunch of screechy activists with unshaven armpits." This stereotyping of feminists as physically disgusting seems all too frequent and easy. It is therefore vital that the Women's Campaign begins to counteract arguments that swiftly dismiss them as extremist nutters, rather than simply playing into them.

Sidgwick Says
What was the highlight of your term?

ALFIE
ECONOMICS

The nights I'll never remember with the friends I'll never forget

Listening to real music, like Avicii's new single

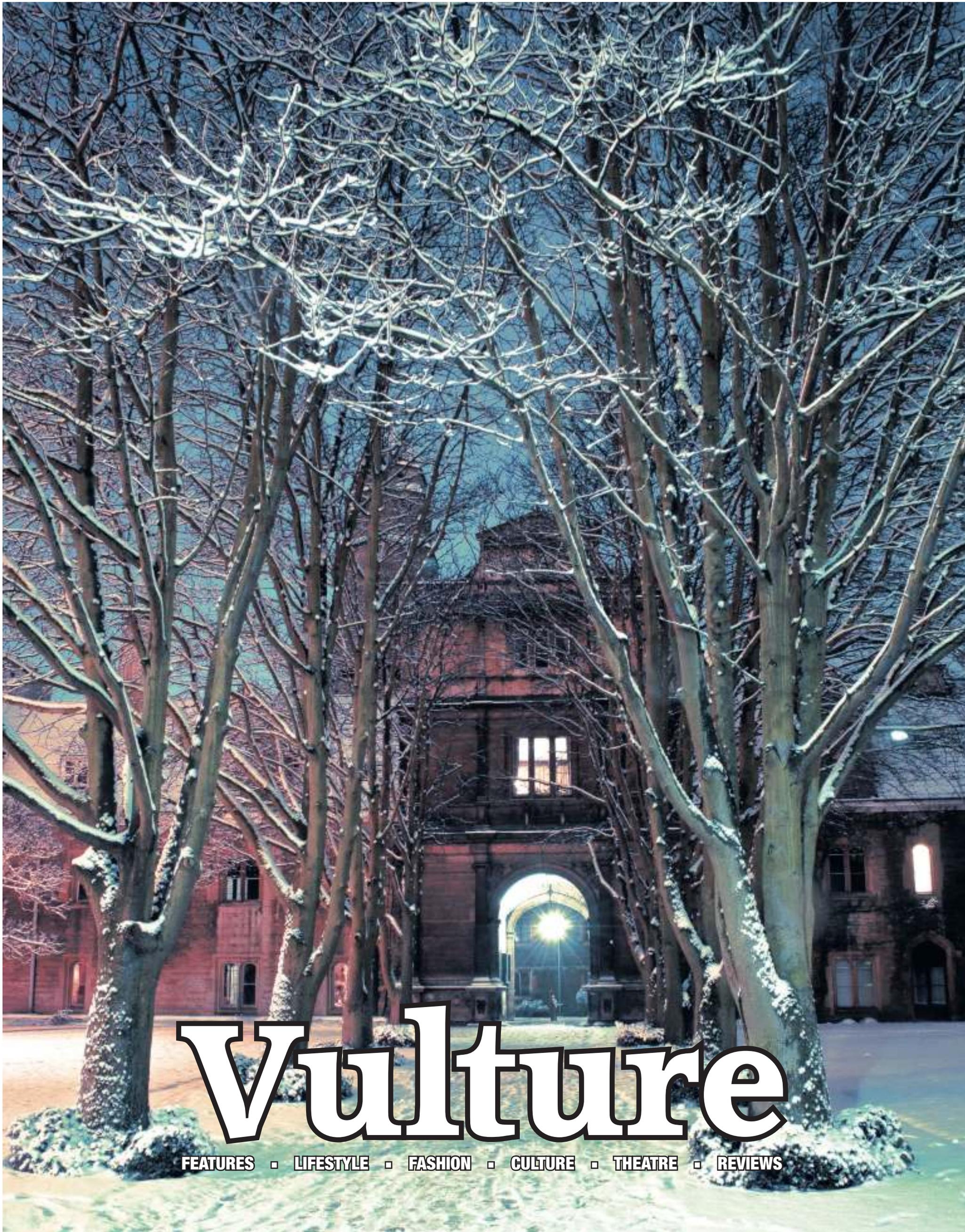
LEWIS
ANTHROPOLOGY

Being invited to Tom Spooner's birthday party

SHYAM
ECONOMICS

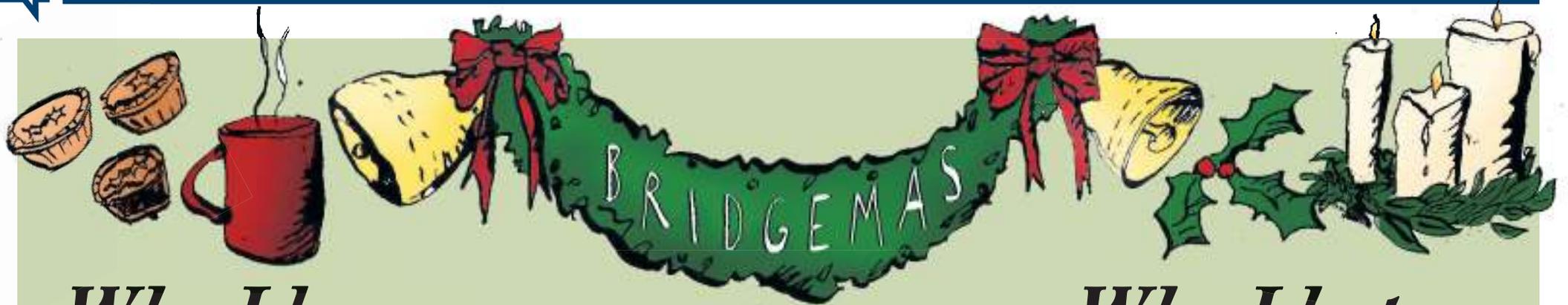
Getting drunk, smoking weed, going out, not caring who sees

JAKE
ENGLISH



vulture

FEATURES ■ LIFESTYLE ■ FASHION ■ CULTURE ■ THEATRE ■ REVIEWS



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 city doesn'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

Why I hate...

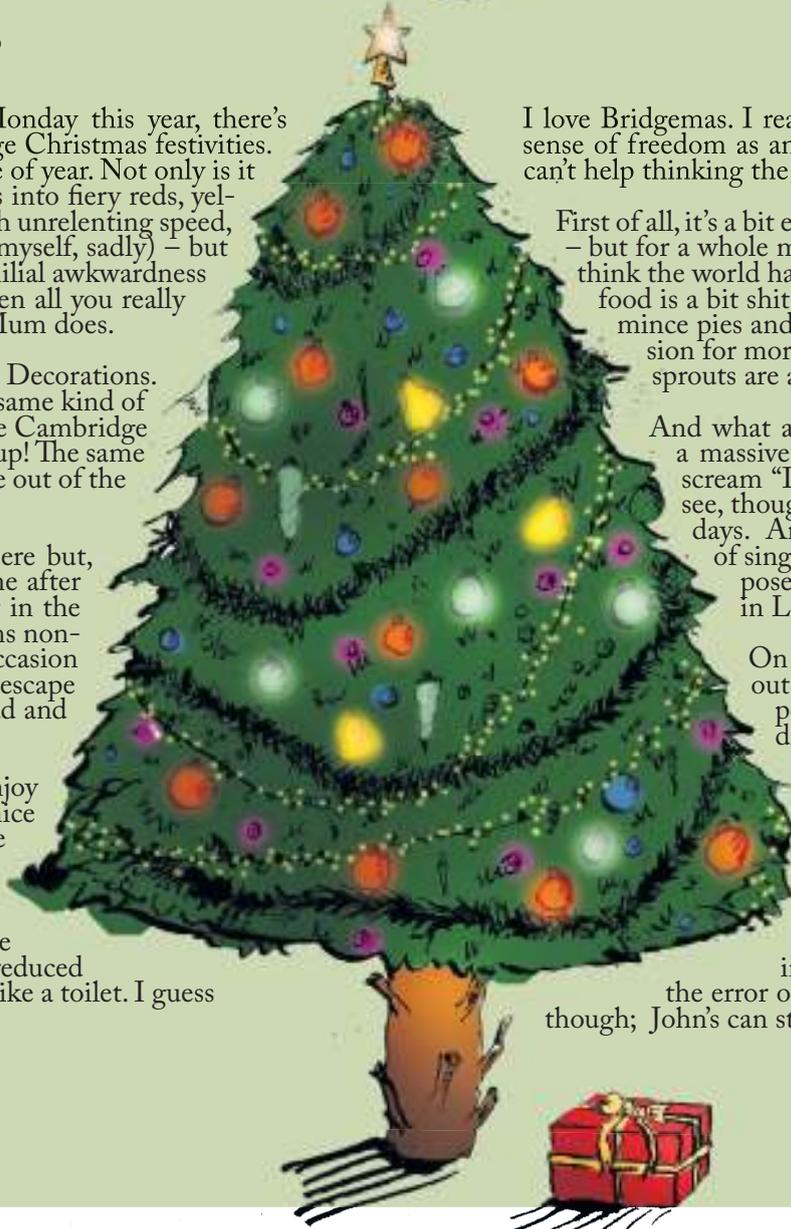
I love Bridgemas. I really do. The lights, the friends, and the increasing sense of freedom as another term at Cambridge comes to an end. Yet I can't help thinking the concept is fundamentally flawed.

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



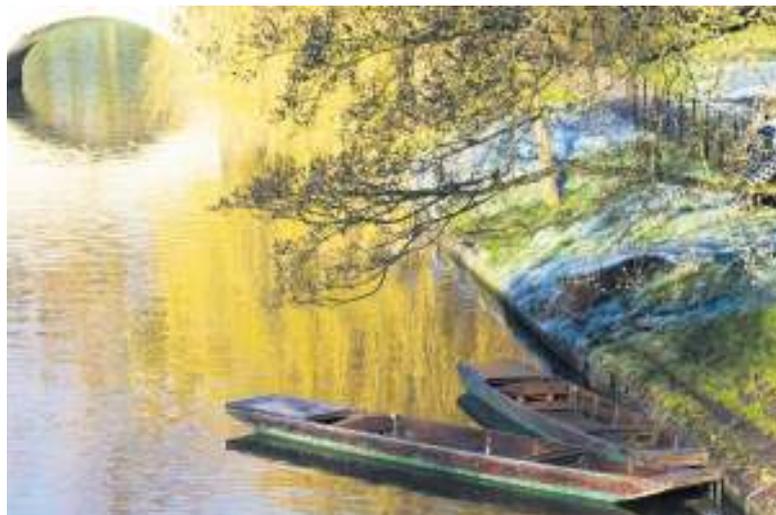
Matins

And only now can the sun replace
the darkness and regain things one lost
paradise at a time, including
the moment when some kind of silence
breaks on a lap of fruitless birdsong
and a snapping rivulet of frost.

- Harry Cochrane

It's one a.m., and lights are going out
With ordered flicker, like words I want to say;
Doors locked against the drunken, ageing day,
Certain warm feelings tucked up in bed with doubt.
The bells chime softly in to scatter out my thoughts
Like birds at dusk, who flee to separate nests,
But when the dawn comes calling for its guests
They sing in unison: alarms and news reports.
Their voices cold against my silent cheek,
Their wings a harsh fumble against the sleeping wind,
Phrases that their roosting feet had firmly pinned
Once more in disorder: a gale, a paper streak
Outshone by on-off lights and dozy morning sun;
My dreams turned out of bed before they had begun.

- Rinna Keefe



We wish you a merry ubiquitous-mas

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

Anyone 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 whether any of the following traditionally festive words would appear: perhaps 'J' 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 nightwear, 'H' for handbags, hampers and home spas. Doesn't that just sum up the most wonderful time of the year?

This isn't going to be yet another middle-aged rant at the commercialisation of Christmas, or a Scrooge-like grumble about how early the council put up the twinkling fairy lights. I'm no Grouch: I

love Christmas. I love the community feel, the festive light and colour, being with my family, food, fireplaces. It isn't Christmas, per se, that I've got it in 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 evensong now and then.

Those who go to mass at Easter and Christmas; watch *Carols from King's* on the telly; but struggle reciting 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 Obvious quote from a former Miss America deigned 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 respectable 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: fighting 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 recently, 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 remember a few years ago being 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 stammer 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 clarified, "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, heathen-converting history.

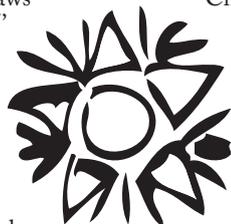
Obviously Christmas is much more meaningful to those who are actually celebrating the birth of Jesus. It's a powerful and resonating message of love, forgiveness, patience, compassion –

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 companies to sell products – the classic 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 pyjamas 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.



PICK A TEAM SPORT & COMMIT TO IT
If the only person you've agreed to exercise with is you, chances are you'll pull out at the last minute. It's too cold, it's too wet, I'll go tomorrow. Sound familiar? Well, the benefit of joining a team sport is that there are other people counting on you to show up. And if you don't train regularly, you won't perform as well when it comes to competitions. Two compelling reasons to get out of bed!

HOST EVENTS IN YOUR OWN HOME
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 decent cheese. Fondue night anyone? Promise the largest slice of camembert to whoever shows up in a beret with a baguette under their arm. The following week, try your hand at Mexican cooking. Whip up some quesadillas and guacamole and you'll have a fiesta in no time. Play taco roulette by adding a deadly amount of chilli to one taco and seeing which unfortunate diner spends the rest of the evening in the bathroom, then watch your worries drift away with the rising steam. If this sounds too hard, get your laptop, and host a *Downton Abbey* marathon from the comfort of your carpet.

BRING THE OUTSIDE INDOORS
Feel like a picnic but put off by the rain? Bring the party indoors. Spread a rug on the carpet, invite all your friends over for scones, and pass around the Pimms like it's nobody's business. You can't control the weather outside, but the atmosphere inside is yours to create. If scones don't satisfy, throw in some unusual sandwiches like apple, cheddar and bacon, grilled cheese sandwiches or French toast with poached pears, salted caramel and mint.

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, BuzzFeed), you're wrapped up in your duvet, and your sorrows are drowning in a second mug of hot cocoa. What's not to love? Well, my friends, one thing: the terrifying possibility that there may be little to distinguish you from a soft gooeey marshmallow – pale (from lack of sunlight), round (from excessive eating) and devoid of personality (from failure to maintain social interaction).

Marshmallows are not as sexy as their chocolate counterparts. Romance with other forms of candy is precluded by plastic packaging. It's a lonely life indeed. So how does one avoid this fate? How do we survive the next few months without turning into pale blobs of unhappiness? Here are a few ideas.

INVEST IN DECENT OUTERWEAR
When you're getting ready for a big night out, nothing kills the mood faster than hearing the rain lash at your window pane and the wind howling to get in. Forget those sexy black heels – you need rubber soles tonight. By the time you've finished puddle-proofing your outfit, you'll look more like a giant rubber duckie than a social butterfly. But before you resign yourself to a life of bathtubs and soap suds, hear me out. If you head to the shops and invest in a decent raincoat and decent leather boots, you'll be able to brave the weather without compromising on your outfit. Raincoats, no matter how daggy, can always be discarded at the front door, allowing you to emerge, safe, dry and happy, like a butterfly leaving its cocoon.

INDULGE IN FOOD YOU NEVER EAT IN SUMMER
Have you ever seen bikini-clad girls eating risotto on the beach? Neither have I. There's a reason why winter food is confined to the colder months. The mercury drops so low that only carbs can save you now. Nothing feels better than bursting through the front door in a whirl of scarf, raincoat and damp hair, and digging into a steaming bowl of risotto. Sure, your glasses fog up, and the pot is hard to clean afterwards. But it tastes so damn good. Enjoy the feeling while it lasts, and eat as much soup, pasta and rice as your stomach will allow. Experiment a little – throw sun-dried tomatoes, bacon and artichoke hearts into angel hair pasta, sprinkle with parsley and drizzle with lemon. Or enjoy a lighter spaghetti with strawberries and balsamic vinegar rather than boring old pork mince. Don't be afraid of new flavour combinations. Housemates make the best guinea pigs.

Motivation for the Winter Marshmallow

HUMANS of CAMBRIDGE

Andreana Panayi shows us Cambridge, one story at a time



*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
SELWYN



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
DOWNING

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



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

Work to live, don't live to work.

Phanos Anastasiou
HUGHES HALL



Our flapper fascination

Saskia Walker
LIFESTYLE CONTRIBUTOR

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Jay Gatsby*, the embodiment of the 1920s American Dream, asserts with absolute confidence: "Can't repeat the past? Why of course you can!" He is not to be swayed. Gatsby's ultimate dream – a plethora of multi-coloured shirts, the flash car, all utterly meaningless in his eyes – is to have Daisy; or at least the version of Daisy he remembers. He makes no allowance for the years which have passed, let alone her very real husband and daughter.

Unlike the ever-idealistic Gatsby, it seems rather obvious – to us and to the baffled Nick Carraway – that you simply can't. Nonetheless, with regards to music, films, television and novels, we do appear to be giving it a fair go.

We are desperate to evoke and, in Gatsby's vein, repeat the past; the latest instance being the Girton Spring Ball the theme of which is to be 'Les Années Folles': a resurrection of 1920s Paris in all its splendour. In this notion of glamour and spectacle, lies the crux of our superficial fascination. To many of those who've read Fitzgerald (or at least seen Baz Lurhmann's reworking: an unashamedly simplified adaptation, but with a kaleidoscopic palette to rival the most outrageous May Balls) the '20s look like one hell of a party.

Be it France or America, the era is remembered as one of excess; bright lights and wild nights. The reality is rather more complex. Glitter and charm hid a thousand flaws including prohibition and post-war rehabilitation. But the 1920s were a time of unprecedented liberation; the First World War was over, business was booming and society was shifting.

Leaving the nuits folles of Paris for a moment, a very different version of the British '20s attracts our attention.



Will we see the bright lights of Baz Lurhmann's *The Great Gatsby* at the Girton Spring Ball?

I can't possibly be the only one amused and devastated by the events unfolding in the extensive grounds of *Downton Abbey*. While a far cry from Gatsby's nights of revelry, the goings-on at *Downton* are astonishing in their own right. In Britain too, society was mod-

"In a '20s suit, the gentleman are dapper and all know how to dance."

ernising. While the situations were very different, certain similarities do emerge between *Downton*, *Gatsby* and innumerable other programmes, novels, or 1920s revivals.

Feminism also did rather well out of the 1920s. Suddenly, women in Britain and the United States (although not in France until 1944) had the right to vote,

while the American activist Margaret Sanger was spreading wild ideas about birth control and sex for fun. Women were freer than ever – embodied by the classic '20s flapper dresses.

The 1920s are so entirely en vogue: the popularity of drop-waist dresses, beads and sequins makes the entire style utterly unavoidable. With the proliferation of flapper hair and head bands, we're all giving a vague nod to Joan Crawford, Gloria Swanson and other inimitable 1920s screen sirens.

As for the boys, Leo DiCaprio doesn't look half bad as Jay; in a '20s suit, the gentlemen are dapper and all know how to dance (although somewhat differently from the average display in *Cindies*).

The sense of spectacle extends to the entertainment as well – an endless stream of jazz, orchestras, and whirl-you-round-'til-you're-dizzy dances. With Charlie Chaplin and the first 'talkies' on screen too, the '20s seem the

most ridiculous fun.

It was a golden age, of hope, chaos, splendour and lavish debauchery and it continues to capture the imagination today. In the current climate of problems at home, issues abroad, and a million little things to complain about (even, dare I say it, in Cambridge), the Roaring Twenties have come to represent an ideal of letting loose and feeling free. You can do anything you want to do and be anyone in the world you want to be. Who wouldn't be entranced?

Our fascination with the 1920s stems, quite simply, from that overriding buzz. The ecstatic hope that anything or everything is possible. Change is in the air, making Girton's theme all the more tempting, and propelling little remnants of a bygone yet longed-for era back into the present. Like the tragic *Gatsby*, we too are unable to repeat the past, but its hold upon us endures and we cannot help but be swept up in and captured by 'Les Années Folles'.



How (not) to love Bridgemas

EMILY DEAN

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas... except it's not. It's November. The decorations may have gone up around college and in town, but the wider population of Cambridge remains unaffected: to outsiders, it is still a damp, and dreary November. But the **Bridgemas** spirit kicked in with the dawning of week 6, when Christmas formal were being booked, *Cindies* started playing Mariah Carey, and you began toying with the idea of a voyage to Poundland to bulk buy tinsel.

So here are some steps you can take to make sure that, by the time you go home, you are feeling as Christmassy as possible – if only to annoy your parents.

The Advent Calendar: The actual date of Bridgemas is hotly debated. Some (wrong people) feel that the 25th November is the right date – but just arbitrarily moving exactly a month back doesn't account for the finer points of Bridgemas life. Some choose to start their advent calendar 24 days before Christmas formal, which makes sense, and some 24 days from the end of term. Whatever day you designate as Bridgemas, nothing feels Christmassier than remembering you can legitimately eat chocolate before your 9am.

Christmas Formal: Who doesn't love a Christmas dinner? Especially one not quite as good as your mum's, with compulsory sprouts and not enough pigs in blankets. Don't get me wrong; I always have a sprout. One. Out of Christmas duty. But there's something joyful about having a proper Christmas dinner with friends, when you haven't had to make it yourself (burning the roast potatoes in the process). And the glorious sight of the waiting staff reluctantly decked out in tinsel scarves really adds to the festive atmosphere. All things said, the excitement of wine, pulling crackers, and pretending to like turkey really does get the Christmas spirit flowing.

Secret Santa: The anticipation, the suspense, the disappointment... Secret Santa encompasses practically every emotion you will experience over Christmas in a few minutes of merriment. With a floor/staircase/select group who you can trust to get good presents, it can be a great way of getting keen. Maybe go all out – get a tree to put the presents under, and knock back one too many glasses of wine before you start. If you stick to the rules of simple present buying, you won't go far wrong; do they drink? If so, alcohol. If not, food. Then no one can be disappointed when everyone gets wine/chocolate/socks and you end up with a hand-painted toothbrush holder.

Ignore the Scrooge-like nature among non-Cantabs in the face of such anachronistic festive fun, get your tinsel on, your tree up and blast out the Band Aid; term is nearly over, and Bridgemas is here.



Lucy's Cookbook



After a term of being committed to cooking well, you've reached breaking point – as has the sink, from all the 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 800 watts, accompanied (obviously) by none other than the good old Sainsbury's ready meal.

In order to have enough stomach space to properly assess the full scope of what's on offer, I had to gather together a group of dedicated Downingites, since dubbed the *Famished Five*, to use as my willing guinea pigs for this ready meal taste test.

It was at this point that fellow linguist extraordinaire Emily Heslop had the brainwave of a table, with marks out of 10 in the categories of tastiness, sauciness (yes, that's what I said), value for money and health. What follows are the results of our cultural (if not quite culinary) adventure.

Lucy Roch

HEALTHY

Smoked haddock, pea and spinach risotto, 7/10

We started with the healthy option, a risotto from Sainsbury's My Goodness range. We ate. We discussed. We judged. It was creamy, if a little lacking in seasoning, but also filling, and lived up to its healthy name with some chunks of fish and peas to be spotted amongst the rice. The risotto did well, stumbling slightly in the value for money category at £3 a pop (or 2 for £5, which is better).

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 "enjoyable but not memorable" (Alex Cook, engineer) and came out equal to the risotto. The chicken and bacon pasta bake from the same range received similar marks, however, at £2 each (as part of a 3 for £6 deal on any Classic Italian or stickered meal) they are pretty good value.

INDIAN

Chicken tikka massala, £1.80, 7.5/10

From Italy'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 accordingly, 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 75p and easily 'grilled' in a toaster.

ASIAN

Singapore noodles, 6/10

Ever onwards to Singapore and its fabulous noodles. Or not so fabulous, as it turned out, being labelled "highly dubious" by architect Will Haynes. Having given them a good stir, they looked much more edible, and we set to with gusto. However, my guinea pigs were not impressed. As Chris Corley, engineer, so aptly put it: "I'd be reaching for the soy sauce".

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 noodles and curry are not as good value.



BRITISH

Shepherd's pie, 8/10

World weary and travel worn, we returned home to the humble shepherd's pie, and were pleasantly surprised. It was tasty, with good mash on top and lots of sauce not too staggeringly full of saturated fat, and at £2 was pretty good value too. In fact, it ticked all the boxes, and came out top.



A Christmas Party

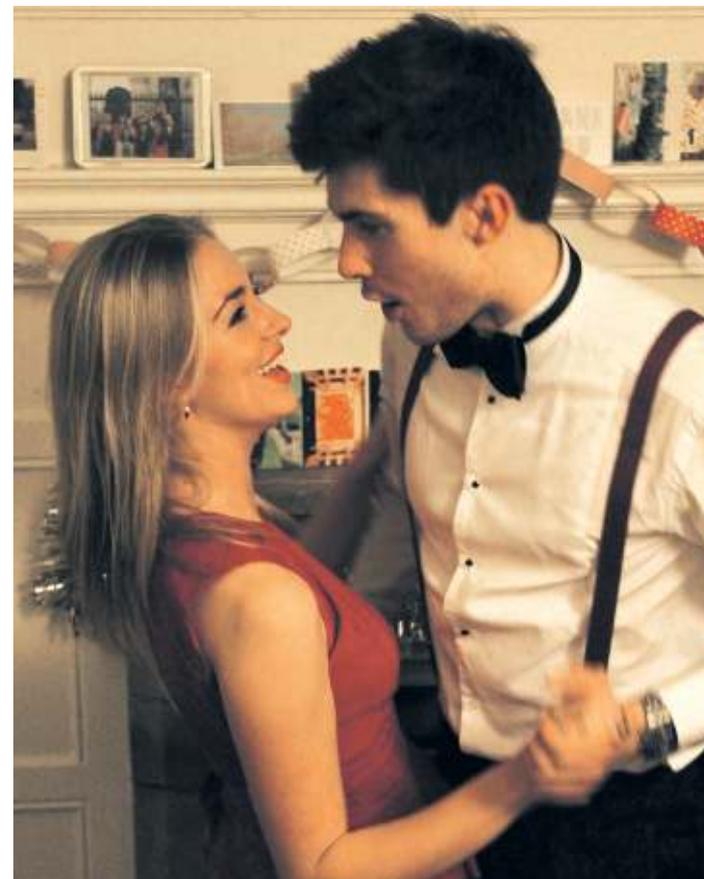
SHOOT DIARIES FESTIVE FASHION

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







Michaelmas Musings FINN BREWER

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 all too 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 freshers, 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 flit 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 astounds everyone lucky enough to have a ticket.

There are weekly concerts of consistently high standard, such as King's Evensong, while The Junction has hosted AlunaGeorge and other great bands and there have been a slew 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 *The 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 fantastical forms.

I can't say that I understood what it meant, or that I saw everything 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 sensual engagement with it. And that, I think, is what good art does: it makes us see the world differently.

We need to have an 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 art of passing notes

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

The concept of a magazine is a good one. A magazine is not for everyone; it is for those who want to read its particular niche. A magazine is a specialist in one area, be it bodybuilding, trains or fashion. By reading a magazine, an individual can become a specialist in a certain area and in doing so develop their sense of individuality. A magazine allows anyone to become part of a sub-culture, to define themselves against the rush of mainstream entertainment and information.

You can decide what you want to read, but you can also decide what you want to write. There is a magazine suitable for every kind of creative outlet you can imagine. As editors of *Notes* magazine, we provide an alternative to journalism

"A magazine allows anyone to become part of a sub-culture"

and feminist writing, and create a home for all those interested in other thought-provoking things, be it poetry, art, essay writing or anything else that is genuinely creative and engaging.

Publishing a magazine in these times is, however, not as simple as it once was. The magazine industry is undergoing an irreversible shift from print to internet. Most magazines now have a more profitable online business than print business and this trend is set to become even more pronounced in the next few years, as devices such as

iPads and Kindles become ever more popular.

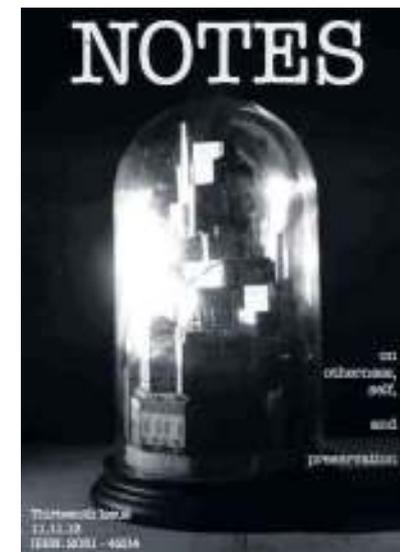
However, while the online market for magazines is booming, the traditional print version will not die out. In fact, I predict that it will become even more treasured as our nostalgia for real things takes hold. It is for this reason that, at *Notes*, we choose to print paper copies for every issue as well as publish articles on our website.

The online magazine, such as our website, has several fundamental differences to the traditional printed periodical. Most importantly, it is published on a rolling basis, updated daily, a stream of information, in the same vein as the Facebook newsfeed. On a magazine's website, articles and artworks are published as individual items, each judged by their own merit, unrelated to any other work in the publication.

In a monthly or bi-weekly magazine, the editors have time to collate and compile work. We can envision the magazine as a whole, rather than as a series of fragments, so as to create a coherent and distinct vision for each issue. Without a theme, the magazine becomes a collection of information – with a theme the magazine becomes a proposition.

The works selected for each printed issue come alive when placed together in the paper booklet. However, the internet provides a place to show works that would not be so easy to publish in print. Colour photos and artworks, for example, can be uploaded for zero cost, and our range of artwork can also extend to video.

Next term, we want to maintain this



balance between print and online, with our first annual book in colour coming out in January.

A new series of videos of our contributors reading their poetry will also appear online, where poets can communicate their work in ways that are impossible in written form, adding pitch, pace, rhythm and tone.

Nowadays, the idea of seeing videos or photos of ourselves on the internet is no longer unusual. We are used to being able to interact with such published work online. The democratic nature of the internet means that everyone can speak and be heard (or write and be read), as everyone is anonymous and equal.

This internet environment is created in a microcosm at the events that

Notes hosts with the launch of each issue. We make a space – for two hours in the Munby room in King's – for readers and contributors to listen to each other's works and discuss them in an open, relaxed and democratic environment. These events have helped foster a *Notes* community that we hope will grow stronger with every issue.

The magazine has led us from printed periodical, to internet newsfeed and back again. This time the interactive community created on the internet has led us to develop a similar community around the printed periodical, turning it from an abstract source of a sub-culture into an actual environment in which everyone is valued equally and everyone is united by their common interest.



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 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 £190,529.04

GIFTS



Make your hot drinks more literary.



Have a 'whale' of a time with this!



This map is better than a sat nav!



Hide the fact you use technology...

A Day Trip - Part Two

We rejoin *Varsity's* gonzo correspondent, **Jacob Waits**, as he flees the menacing guardians of a local heritage site, abandoning his luckless photographer, Young, in his haste to find safe ground

We made it, and slammed the door, but the car appeared not to share our urgency and valuable seconds were wasted as Adamson attempted to coax, berate and kick the engine out of its torpor. As he did so, I saw Young, the photographer, barrel past the advancing guards, leaving them in a cloud of choking dust, a delaying tactic that may well have saved our lives. Clearly the girl was of greater value to our party than I had initially realised.

"What the hell are you doing?" She exploded, leaping into the car.

"Did you get the shots?" roared Adamson, still frantically hammering at the engine.

"What are you –"

"Did you get them?!" he repeated, with an almost insane rage, as the engine finally sputtered into life.

"Yes but –"

"Then we are getting the fuck out of here!" he cried, and with admirable resolve, plunged his foot down and flung us out madly onto the road, away from that sinister place.

Our next destination was the more idyllic of two lagoons on the island, an ideal spot for tourists to go and baste themselves in salt, without the highly disruptive motion of the sea itself. Our route took us through a number of mountain passes and along gravel tracks (barely worthy of the description) which Adamson blazed down at a less-than-cautious speed. Fortunately, we appeared to be the only motorised life on the island. Only once did we encounter anything to check our speed. Of many bizarre and terrifying incidents that occurred that day, this was perhaps the most surreal.

Local authorities on the island clearly had a taste for dramatic spectacle, for many of the precarious bends on those mountain tracks were devoid of anything so tasteless as a hard shoulder – such an imposition would

irrevocably mar the view. This had the added effect of granting a certain privilege to those adventurous souls who did not wish to slowly fade away behind a round-edged desk. They had the privilege of ending their existences more dramatically by hurtling off a delightfully scenic cliff into the rocky sea hundreds of feet below.

While not apparently eager for death, Adamson certainly paid it little heed judging by his driving. As we rounded one of those mortal corners we found our path blocked by oncoming traffic. An ancient man was sat astride a quad-bike, long black robe and longer grey beard flapping in the head wind. Behind him, he towed an open trailer populated by two impassive mules. Adamson veered madly to avoid this bizarre obstacle and brought us to a halt inches from picturesque doom. Behind us, the man continued on, vanishing round the bend without so much as blinking.

We knew there was a monastery on the island, but this monk – for he could have been nothing else – was many miles from home. Where he was headed with his bemused cargo I shall never know, but the thought that would stick with me was that snapshot of a head-on collision between the 21st century and a much, much older way of life. The wizened but powerful man, had spent his life in the service of an abstract concept that had long since grown unfashionable. Beneath him was a modern mode of transport and behind him, a medieval one. Indeed a head-on-collision with the 21st century – personified in this case by the intoxicated contents of a Ford Fiesta – very nearly occurred literally. However, rather than alter his

course in the slightest in fear of our far superior horsepower and structural integrity, he had ploughed on, safe in the knowledge that his nerves, grounded in hundreds of years of monolithic devotion and tradition were far more likely to hold than ours – the fickle, impatient children of a world in a constant hurry to change.



The

rest of our journey passed without comparable incident, and soon we were pulling off the road onto the narrow strip of scrub that separated tarmac from saltwater. The water was a deep and radiant blue, and even such a devoted sceptic as myself was forced to consider the beauty of the place. Ultimately, all humanity's artistic

endeavour finds itself outshone by geology. A random motion of magma and water impelled by heat and pressure had created a masterpiece that no tortured narcissistic 'genius' could hope to match.

My reverie was broken when Adamson ran past me semi-naked, lolloping towards the water like some great shaggy hound, and plunged into the glassy depths. Not to be outdone, I too advanced, and it was not until I was far out of my depth and paddling furiously that I reconsidered the wisdom of this move. I had neglected to finish my last cigarette and the hot end was nearing my face with alarming speed. Unfortunately, both my hands were in the first instance wet and would ruin the cigarette, and in the second, fully occupied keeping me afloat.

After a moment of indecision, I resolved to advance, paddling and puffing away like some poor seal to whom a sadistic trainer has taught terrible and dangerous habits. When I could bear the heat no longer, I mustered all my facial might, and spat the cigarette as far as I could.

It flipped through the baking air, and landed some feet distant with a hiss and a gentle series of ripples.

Suddenly Adamson cried out, and thrashed spasmodically.

"Jesus, what's wrong with you?" I cried

"What the fuck is that?" He asked, frantically, raising his left leg as if offering it to me.

"Its your leg, man. You've been

walking on it since you were a boy!" I replied. I was confused and alarmed that our driver's – until now agreeable – relationship with his chemical intake had taken such a distressing turn.

"Don't fuck about, what's that?!" He pointed towards his calf at what looked to be a scab of some kind.

"I don't know, a mole, a scab, both things upon which it is rarely considered acceptable to invite comment!"

"It's not a fucking scab – it's biting me and it fucking hurts."

I looked closer, and saw the tiny lump was indeed not merely a blemish but a tiny invertebrate of some kind. A chilling thought occurred; what if the lake was full of these bloodsucking parasites? We were doomed for sure.

"Get it off!" he screamed and I obliged, pulling the thing off Adamson's leg – with more of a struggle than I would have thought necessary – and hurling it away. I grabbed him by the shoulders.

"We have to get out of here," I insisted; "we have disrupted the calm of this body of water and now it has turned on us. We are no longer welcome here."

In wordless agreement he turned with me and the two of us splashed insanely towards the shore, floundering in our panic like maddened gibbons. Young had only just managed to change into her bikini in the demure safety of the car and was walking down to the shore when she saw her two companions surging towards her in a flailing mass of surf and limbs and terror. Wisely, though still confused, she checked her step and looked out at us with an enquiring gaze.

But as ever, there was no time to explain the subtleties of the situation to such a determined optimist and we piled into the car, revved, and fled, clambering onto the road out from that bloodthirsty lake, and onwards to hopefully more welcoming environs.

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 – a cubicle which only measured three metres squared – to his first showroom in a Parisian hotel. You visit his office emporium of eclectic findings and creations, embodying his magpie personality that has influenced his novel shops. None of these shops are the same, whether they are in Covent Garden or Fifth Avenue, New York.

A room of psychedelic moving images and spaces exhibits the visual interiority



Paul Smith himself features at the exhibition

of his artistic mind which mirrors his creative visions. The display presents far more than just a fashion brand, but the personal archive of a bold, classic, ingenious and honest fashion icon.

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 outgoing, 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 adorned with the print. It is even printed onto his famous Mini, featured at the exhibition.

The show closes on the 9th March 2014 so if you're in London go in 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.

Student tickets are £8.40, more information about the event can be found at www.designmuseum.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 Lofts, 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 on the third floor of the Central Library in Lion Yard. It will be situated in the area outside the Cambridgeshire Collection and opposite the café.



Playground

CHARLOTTE TAYLOR

The National Theatre, a by-word for theatrical excellence, celebrated its 50th anniversary earlier this month to commemorate what it has done best for the past half century: produce and import quality products no matter how uncommercial they sound, and use new methods such as physical theatre to illuminate the themes of the play, creating a production that can serve as a reflection of our times.

The National Theatre has a far greater responsibility than any other theatre company in Britain: being our national theatre, it has to walk the line between providing a high quality service, and catering to the public's wants and desires.

In order to do this, the theatre embodies the belief that people understand and respond to quality, not just performances staged purely to entertain.

The National Theatre has consistently advocated originality, and has since become the benchmark against which all other British theatre, including our own theatre scene in Cambridge must measure up.

Here in Cambridge, Michaelmas term has produced its usual show of quality. It has seen an acclaimed production of *The History Boys*, as well as the *The Bacchae*, a tragedy by Euripides which was updated to serve as a reflection of our times.

Even if the latter production did feel like a somewhat contrived modernisation, the innovative spirit is to be applauded. In future, I hope to see more shows which place a greater emphasis on illuminating the script rather than modernising it simply for the sake of it.

Jez Butterworth's epic play *Jerusalem* also took to the ADC stage to reflect the condition of Britain amidst the erosion of rural ways of life – and to great success.

Perhaps more experimentally, *Shoot Coward!* took three Latin American plays that had not even been shown in Britain before and staged them in the Corpus Playroom – a move as daring as any done at the National Theatre.

It is this willingness to try something novel, and produce it with creativity and finesse, which I hope to see more of in the Cambridge theatre scene.

In spite of its initial resistance to the National Theatre, British theatre has been well served by it, given its willingness to adapt and look abroad for inspiration, as well as accept the literary shifts and attitudes in Britain.

The Cambridge theatre scene has perhaps emulated the National Theatre's ideals in its willingness to experiment with unknown plays from other cultures, aided in part by its diverse student body and its large international student intake.

Nevertheless, the student productions of the day might continue to better themselves by examining whether the staging of their productions are mere aesthetic, or add meaning to their texts.

All 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 conditions of production – weeks of writing strung out on cocaine, in Stephen King's case, for instance – are irrelevant to the meaning or quality of an aesthetic object.

If that's the right way to approach most literature, it's surely inadequate when it comes to many performing arts. And greatness in improv, by definition resistant to iteration, is predicated on our knowledge of its extemporaneity.

A 24-hour play lies somewhere between improv and ordinary drama. Less form than format, perhaps, it was conceived in Manhattan 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 who saw last year's winning *Information* can attest to, is the quality of the material that emerges.

"It's exciting and terrifying at the same time," says Shounok Chatterjee, a first-year Law student who will write one of the five plays. There is purity to something whittled down to 10 minutes: he's drawn to the "honesty in the form". And he thinks the unique format will make for a good relationship with the audience.

They'll "almost build the text with

you...they're part of the experience." But it's difficult to say more. To ensure that stipulations 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

superpower would you have?' for example, or 'When do you go to bed?' He believes that depth of characterisation will be crucial to a successful piece.

Others are thinking about the visual aspect. Shounok's main purpose is to leave "one really enduring image in the



prepared for.

They have plans, however provisional. One director, Raph Wakefield, intends to work intensively on line-learning, then dispense with the usual warm-ups and focus instead on hot-seating. A type of improv, hot-seating involves asking actors to respond to random questions in character: 'What

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 without funding. "We want every part of the show to be as challenging as possible," explains Jess

Wolinski, an executive producer and organiser of the event. She's certain the best plays will come "out of the most extreme of circumstances," and indeed the idea of productive limitation is fundamental to a 24-hour play.

Helen Charman, an actor in last year's production, comments that although the obvious difficulty is the preparation, the ten-minute constraint is itself a challenge: there's no room for superfluity. The experience as a whole is "a lot of fun, but also surreal."

Hours of caffeine-fuelled mania puts performers under unusual strain. It's understandable that one of Isolde's priorities is "creating a space in which people feel excited." She envisions an "incredibly collaborative atmosphere", and, though it's important for a director to have faith in her writer, she says later that some improv and ad-libbing are probably unavoidable. "It's about playing with it."

The time limit lends itself to comedy, but the cast and crew have a broader vision as well. Shounok, for example, is searching for balance between "a human relationship that is identifiable and intellectual challenge", taking his cue from Tom Stoppard, who grounds his "deep philosophical meditations in poignant human characteristics."

Jess Wolinski claims the event will showcase "the very best talent Cambridge has to offer." I believe her. It should be a brilliant night. We judge it conditionally.

The 24hr Plays will be on at the ADC Theatre on Monday 2nd December, at 11pm

CAOS

SOUTH PACIFIC

Upon entering the auditorium at the Cambridge Arts Theatre, it was instantly clear that Cambridge Operatic Society's take on *South Pacific* was an amateur production. It's funny how little details give the game away – in this instance it was a creased backdrop. However, that is no reason to pass up on the opportunity to see the Rogers and Hammerstein classic.

The set – strangely not mentioned in the programme – makes particularly clever use of the space available and is successful in helping both the actors and audience transport themselves to the wartime South Pacific island on which this love story is set. Perhaps the director (Chris Cuming) has overlooked some of the potential of this steeply raked stage as he demonstrates a marked fondness for positioning characters towards the front when singing. The result of this is that the production occasionally has the feel of a concert performance rather than an all-immersing musical world.

Characters interacted well with each other and there were many convincing and moving scenes. In particular, Nellie (Emma Vieceli) and Emile's (David Gower) performances in the famous duet 'Some Enchanted Evening' conveyed a wonderful tension both within and between the characters who are desperate to share, and yet also deny, their love for one another.

The vocal performances were, almost across the board, strong, although there did seem to be a common difficulty with some of the lower lines in the

score. More than a couple of the actors clasped their stomachs in the hope that it might help push out those lower notes. The score requires a considerable range from almost every member of the cast, so it is perhaps no surprise that, with so many untrained singers on stage, there were some unorthodox techniques being put to use.

It almost goes without saying that two stars of the show were the men who wrote it back in 1949. Many of the songs are now musical theatre classics – and well worth the ticket price on their own – and audience members hummed their way through the interval with renditions of 'There Is Nothin' Like A Dame', 'I'm in Love With A Wonderful Guy' and 'I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair'. The second act suggests why this show is still as popular as it was over 60 years ago; Joseph's (Gavin Jarvis) final number 'You've Got To Be Carefully Taught' expresses how hatred and prejudices are learned and the message of the song is as relevant now as it ever was.

Whilst the show lacks momentum in places, Cuming's cast and crew do justice to the impressive collection of first-rate show-tunes and convey the moral of the tale convincingly. And to the anonymous designer of the set, you deserve a mention in the programme.

Daniel Edward

CORPUS PLAYROOM

BIRTHDAY

Birthday nonchalantly throws the audience into the thick of the play where a couple is waiting in a hospital ward to have a baby. An ordinary (if exciting) enough scenario, one might think: but in this case, it is the man who is pregnant. What ensues is a humorous look at gender role reversal but also a poignant view of the relationship between a married couple who have been deeply affected by pregnancy, both as individuals and as a couple.

Gabriel Cagan plays Ed, the pregnant husband in a manner which captures the role of the emotional pregnant 'woman'. The emotions, fears, hormones, and complaints that he is not hormonal, are played with spooky accuracy. However, Cagan does not descend into a full-blown camp performance and certainly does not become a caricature of the

'crazy, emotional woman'. His performance, and indeed

the character in the play, could have been offensive but instead remains neutral, blending elements of femininity and masculinity. One moment he is upset that his wife calls him neurotic because "it's sexist", the

next he complains that his wife has no idea what he is going through, that it is more painful for men.

The medical characters in the play are both frighteningly incompetent and physically and emotionally tough on Ed and Lisa. The ins and outs of labour are shown with physicality; the audience is not spared the gory details, not to mention the pain and discomfort of Ed. The nurse is a no-nonsense Northerner who systematically forgets details about Ed's labour, which is both worrying and darkly humorous. In contrast, the registrar is played with a sunny, and even saccharine, disposition. However her over-enthusiasm contrasts hilariously with the fears and frustration of the couple. Despite the humour, the play touches on some deep-seated anxieties about pregnancy and hospitals, particularly those relating to NHS institutions, such as hospital infections and a lack of doctors.

The play also touches on emotional and difficult subjects, such as the effect of pregnancy on the couple and their relationship, particularly the idea that they must try to return to the young couple they once were. The idea of post-natal depression affecting both members of the couple, regardless of who was pregnant, is a poignant moment in the play, highlighting serious gender disparities.

The only drawback of the play is the ending, which seems overly simplistic and clichéd, given the subtle and clever grappling with gender stereotypes throughout the rest of the play. There are subtle and subversive performances throughout, but unfortunately this makes the ending all the more disappointing.

Rebecca Rosenberg

10 Questions with Isabella Nicholson

Varsity speaks to Isabella, one of the Cambridge Impronauts, ahead of *Improv from the Crypt*



"I like dark humour because it's interesting to see how people react to it. Some people can't take a joke very well!"

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 Impronauts 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 Impronauts?

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 Impronauts?

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 Pet.' 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-running 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 stupid 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 him in my room for the rest of the term, at the foot of my bed. His constant judging stare perversely 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 whatever 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 overcrowded 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 *Hear'say* 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 pantomimic 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 dying out, pantomimes offer a colourful dose of



The cast of the ADC Footlights pantomime *The Princess and the Pea*.

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 girl-band member. The Christmas period is guaranteed to be lit up by satisfying 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 children to parents to aloof teenagers, shouts 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 egregious 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 celebrities add comedy value and swooning potential. Pantomime obeys the shrewd mantra of one of this generation's biggest pop stars, Psy – "dress classy, dance cheesy", and it works pretty well.

Rebecca Rosenberg

If you 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 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, stars someone

you're meant to have heard of.

Surely panto's 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. ITV got a tradition going 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 panto 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 want to complain that our local production spent their entire budget getting CJ from *Eggheads* to stardom, that 'twerking' is the punchline to 67 different jokes (the rest being about poo) and that the feline celebrity of the week just landed a starring role.

What would we do with a brilliant local pantomime? Book tickets without 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



MAD ABOUT MUSEUMS

AT THE MUSEUM OF CAMBRIDGE

LUCY MEEKLEY

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 beautiful 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 cooking and cleaning utensils, the various bug traps are particularly grizzly!

Upstairs, tucked in the corner of the first room, is the building's original wig room where people could powder their wigs without fear of getting powder 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 made into soup for a Clare College dinner. This room illustrates the discrepancy between the simple, honest ways of the townspeople and the decadence of the university.

The 'Fens and Folklore' room contains an impressive collection of ice skates and, oddly, animal bones and children's shoes. The latter were put into the walls of houses to protect the inhabitants against evil. Next door, the 'Arts and Artisans' room houses a wonderful display of local crafts, such as hat and lace making, which were extremely intricate and difficult to do by hand.

In the 'Childhood' room, alongside old prams and a quite disturbing baby runner, is a case containing all of the objects a teacher would have used in the 1800s. There are remarkably few items: an ink jug, a couple of books, a cane. The teacher's box, containing four trays of vegetable and mineral samples, is quite sophisticated in contrast.

The museum works very hard to engage children with the exhibitions. Alongside activities such as dressing up (yes, I tried on the hats when no one was looking) there is a lovely room on the third floor filled with toys and books for them to use, as well as cases of toys from as early as the 19th century on display.

For me, The Museum of Cambridge embodies everything a museum should be about. It is original, informative and a little bit whimsical. The open approach to its exhibits means you are not just an observer, but an active participant in the experience. It has something to excite everyone, and you will go away with a new appreciation of the culture and history which has shaped Cambridge.



event



ADONIANS SOCIETY

PETERHOUSE COLLEGE



Endless claret. The best food in Cambridge. The wonderful moment when the lights go out. Fellow diners old enough to have fagged for your grandfather at Eton. Myths abound, but to my surprise, the Adonians is a charming mixture of all these things (except for the food), marked by a particularly self-conscious awkwardness.

Before even heading towards the rather too liberal champagne pouring, layering up for the November night, my friend rang in a panic to tell me a button on the bottom of his shirt had fallen off, leaving what might be best described as easy access. An open invitation? Only time would tell.

Unfortunately, it soon became clear that my companion's sartorial sense was indeed the vogue among well-dressed gentlemen folk, making my prophylactic winter wear positively anti-social. 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 (sending 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 affable monogendered dining.

The wine was bounteous and plentiful, impressing in me the importance of learning the correct protocol for drinking port, claret and dessert wine simultaneously.

While most 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 lapses into a somewhat regrettable oral experience.

Despite having enjoyed a splendid evening, by the end I was unfortunately still unable to say for sure what the Adonians are trying to do: a last hurrah to a better time, Cindies with better wine, or post-modern satirical meta-theatre about modern gender relations?

Alas I'm still in the dark.

The writer did not wish to be named

film



BLUE IS THE WARMEST COLOUR

DIR. ABDELLATIF KECHICHE



Abdellatif 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 artisan shell-fish eating bourgeois. 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



LUKE OTTORIC

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 Adele is initially repulsive, but in the end is endearing. The desire for food is paired with sex and Adele's appetite for both is played out in unsparing close-ups.

Despite the controversy around them, the sex scenes don't monopolise the intensity of the film. After we emerged from the cinema my friend expressed how they had felt more discomfort at the prolonged close-ups of Adele'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, with a conventional fairytale heterosexual union denied unapologetically, smashed by the realism that marks this film in all its intimate uncomfortable beauty.

Thea Harwin

fine art



STANLEY SPENCER

FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM



It is a strange feeling to look at studies for paintings that were never realised: Michelangelo's 'Slaves'; Tatlin's 'Tower' – works in progress, preparations, fresh tinder never lit which we have come to know as the work itself. These things are synecdoches, standing for unfinished wholes just out of imaginative reach. When these works are ubiquitous, it's not problematic – but seeing a new study for the first time, for a work that will never exist, can we read it as a finished product in itself? Is it an artifact or an artwork? The divisions are blurred.

Yet three of the five new Stanley Spencers acquired by the Fitzwilliam Museum as part of the Acceptance-In-Lieu scheme are just this: studies, oil sketches and explorations. The rougher the sketches come, the more insight they offer into the mind of the artist. Somehow his exploratory marks have a greater aura about them, a more direct connection with the man himself, than his finished products.

The loosest of these sketches is a particularly appropriate acquisition for a Cambridge museum. A study on paper, it shows a bustling construction yard – part of a scheme depicting the building of the Tower of Babel – and was intended to adorn the University Library's walls (the commission fell through). Hod carriers (apparently painted from life in his home village, Cookham) pass masons working on classical columns; in the background a gothic arch is chiseled and adorned. One can only imagine the architectural identikit his finished tower might have resembled.

Spencer's subject matter is an

evocative blend of patriotic and pastoral Englishness, biblical tales, Great War recollection and dry-witted self-examination. Apart from this self-examination, which the Fitzwilliam already showcases in some of Spencer's self portraits and nude double portraits, the other flavours are encapsulated in these new acquisitions. 'Scrubbing Clothes' finds comforting domesticity on the battlefield, while 'Making a Red Cross' sees soldiers, while making a recognition signal for an aircraft, accidentally assemble a George Cross in some corner of a foreign field. Two of the pictures, though, are finished articles. 'Making Columns for The Tower of Babel' takes a vignette from the

main sketch and renders it as an isolated episode. The most touching of the set, though, is 'John Donne Arriving in Heaven': flatly and honestly painted, it foreshadows the work Spencer was to do setting Christ's ministry in England's green and pleasant land.

Where else would Donne be arriving than Widbrook Common? The soft light is English and autumnal.

As a group, these paintings are quiet and understated. The Early Modern room hardly registers their arrival (a refreshing contrast to the much trumpeted Poussin acquisition). Yet not only are they worthy of looking at: they add to the museum's already-considerable selection of Spencer's work, making here a terrific place to get to know an underrated modern master.

Robert Hawkins



music



JAKE BUGG

SHANGRI LA



When the young Jake Bugg shot to fame he was heralded by many as a breath of fresh air in a world of manufactured pop and *X-Factor* stardom. With guitar-based acts occupying a dwindling proportion of commercially successful music, Bugg claimed it was his mission to “get people picking up guitars again.” Yet most of his songs are co-written with hired songwriters.

He’s also keen to stress that he grew up in the Clifton area of Nottingham,

allowing him to write gritty vignettes of council estate life. Now many of the media outlets that hyped his eponymous debut are poking fun, as he sports Prada shoes and hobnobs with supermodels. So has Jake lost his way?

Petty discussions of ‘authenticity’ aside, *Shangri La* delivers twelve morsels of well-crafted indie rock. Fans of the first album will be treated to more fingerpicked folk, interspersed with bursts of energetic rock n’ roll. At times it feels like the hyperbolic comparisons to Donovan carry a grain of truth. At other points, he unfortunately slips into unadventurous Gallagher-esque drudgery.



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 song writing maturity. These often feel bloated and contrived next to tracks such as the punchy skiffle 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 ‘Messed 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 Passes Away’, a wistful 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 exudes an irresistible charm.

Tom Ronan

music



ONE DIRECTION

MIDNIGHT MEMORIES



A review of a One Direction album needs to be accompanied by a bit of context. After all, most 13-year-old girls would give it a five star rating before they’d even finished listening to the first song.

I’m not a 13-year-old girl, but I have to confess that at some point during the summer, I somehow became a closet ‘Directioner’. I realised this after receiving several texts asking why my Spotify profile showed that I’d been listening to One Direction for the past hour. After that fiasco, I found myself

quite regularly using private listening mode in order to hide my secret addiction. This whole situation culminated in an ‘ironic’ (read ‘completely serious’) viewing of their film, *This Is Us*, in September.

The question you’re probably asking at this point is “WHY?” A few months ago, I’d have asked the same thing. I generally dislike manufactured pop, and it’s pretty much universally agreed that artists with proper integrity write all their own songs and play their own instruments. Not to mention that any 1D purchase inevitably puts more cash into Simon Cowell’s grubby little hands.

But one thing is hard to ignore; that, though their success may be manufactured and image-driven, they’re still making great pop music. And we need pop music sometimes.

With this new album, they’ve not really attempted to move away from their squeaky-clean sound, but some sort of weird post-punk One Direction album would be so wrong. The first

two tracks, their latest singles ‘Best Song Ever’ and ‘Story Of My Life’, really show off their feel-good pop vibe. I challenge you to find a more uplifting getting-ready-to-go-out song than ‘Best Song Ever’ after a dull day of essay-writing. Some of the tracks even have an (almost) meaningful feel, such as ‘Half A Heart’.

It’s to their credit that the boys have had more creative input into this particular album, with Louis and Liam apparently writing most of the tracks themselves.

I think their main issue is simply repetitiveness – they’ve cracked their sound and

they’re keeping it, but perhaps keeping it too consistently. Some tentative rock influences do dart in now and then, notably in ‘Little Black Dress’, but you can’t listen to the album the whole way through without getting bored of the sound.

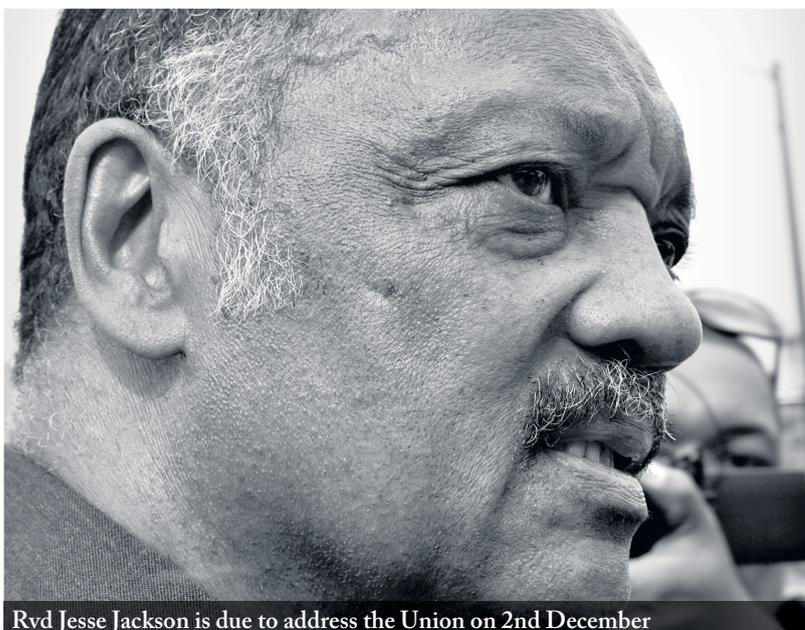
However, each perfectly formed little nugget of pop makes its way into your head just in the way you’d expect from a 1D album, and I hope they keep making them like this.

Even if I will still be listening in secret.

Ellie Gould



Reviews & Listings



Rvd Jesse Jackson is due to address the Union on 2nd December

Event

DIRTY WARS +
PANEL DISCUSSION

The film investigates US military involvement in the Middle East and the increasingly dark and disquieting world of covert operations. The screening will be followed by a discussion with the producers.

8.15pm, 1st December
Cambridge Picturehouse,
St Andrew’s Street

Talk

RVD JESSE JACKSON

The legendary American Civil Rights activist, recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom and Baptist minister addresses the Cambridge Union Society. Truly a once in a lifetime opportunity.

7.30pm, 2nd December
Cambridge Union Society,
West Road

Music

STORNOWAY

Some would say mellow, others would say they make Coldplay look like Nicki Minaj.

7.00pm, 1st December
Cambridge Junction,
Clifton Street

Theatre

THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

A family-friendly Dickens adaptation to get you into the festive spirit.

7.45pm, 10th–14th December
ADC,
Park Street

Album

CHILDISH GAMBINO

Donald Glover’s notoriously saucy alter-ego releases his second studio album. Expect big things.

6th December
On Glassnote Records, Universal

Comedy

THREE WHITE GUYS 2

A round-up of some of the hottest names in Cambridge comedy. Go so you can say you saw them first.

7.30pm, 3rd December
ADC,
Park Street



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.

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 or Not rowers, one that never initiated or even joined in boatie 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 times worse than everyone else's.

It comes to no surprise that I was never in the best crews. Had I been the coach, I wouldn't have let myself anywhere near a boat. But at the end of last year, I finally decided to make my life as well as everyone else's easier and quit once and for all. But I couldn't quite cut myself off completely, so I took on coxing instead.

Now, for those of you who don't know, a cox is the person sitting at the front of a boat who steers, 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 coordination is about as good as Miley Cyrus' singing. So in my first outing I managed to almost kill the eight people in my boat by crashing them into other boats, trees, bushes, banks, dogs, swans, you name it. If it was within reach, we probably hit it.

While adrenaline definitely didn't lack in my boat, I gradually got better. That's when coxing became a different experience. Here I was telling eight men what to do and shouting at them mercilessly if they did something wrong, which is pretty much every woman's dream. The power was incredible – I even (almost) went to Ann Summers to look at leather whips.

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 rowed 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 bodies. It got so intense that I bit my cheek and started bleeding, splurting blood everywhere without noticing. They responded like I never knew they could, and in the end we won the race.

I have now finally come to terms with my failed rowing career. The fact that it allows me to understand my crew as their cox and use that for their benefit has helped me accept it. If that's as close as I'll ever get to being good at a sport, it's enough for me.

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 Oxbridge is all about the Big One against the Other Place and Cambridge will be hoping to win their sixty-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 "teams with different styles and strengths."

That said, Cambridge has stood the test of professional opposition reasonably well. On three occasions, the Blues were only overwhelmed by the size of their opponents rather than their skill. Though Cambridge was squarely beaten by Bristol, a five try loss was flattering to Northampton Saints while a 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, most impressively, lost by only seven points to Russia earlier this month.

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 denies 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

"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 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 understandably a nervous 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 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. CURUFC 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 naturally has the physique for the game, his "main health concern relating to rugby would be the price my joints will pay later in life from the collisions they've been a part of." He is, 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.

There's more to football than Blues

Cambridge United, the local football team, also finds followers amongst students

Matt Worth & Rob Colemeadow
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENTS

Cambridge United currently stand four points clear at the top of the Conference Premier Division. They have the best home record of any club in England's top five divisions, having won all ten of their games this season. On average, around 2,700 fans attend their matches at the Abbey Stadium.

However, the size of the club's student following is difficult to gauge. It's certainly rare to hear student fans talk of going to Cambridge games. Pricing could have something to do with this. £10 will buy a concessionary seat in the Abbey Stadium's north terrace. That's a lot of money for many students, and may deter some from attending.

Other Conference teams offer student tickets for as little as £5. Alternatively, £10 will see you into Newcastle's St. James' Park to watch some of the best teams in England. Another factor may be the stadium's location on Newmarket Road, a long way from the centre of University life. The distance is perhaps greater in the mind than on the ground

– it's a twenty minute walk from Parker's Piece.



On the other hand, figures suggest students may be attending, contrary to expectations. Early



Surprisingly for some, Cambridge students attend the matches of the local team in order to escape the university bubble

October in Cambridge marks the start of the new academic year and therefore a large increase in the population of the city. Surely then, attendances at United matches should subsequently increase?

Home attendances prior to the game against Hereford United on 5th October averaged around 2,900; from the next game onwards, around 3,400. The rise may not entirely be due to a student influx, but there seems to be some correlation, and what's clear is that even a couple of hundred student fans per game could be financially significant to the club. The capacity of the Abbey Stadium is 9,617, meaning United usually sell around one third of available tickets. There is plenty of room for student support.

We tracked down a few students who regularly attend Cambridge games. They were very enthusiastic about the experience of following the local team, with the contrast to University life

providing an important attraction. Ben Jones, an undergraduate at Wolfson College, says: "The best thing about the Abbey is the atmosphere and getting amongst the locals. Cambridge students are often so focused on work that things can get a bit sterile. Most people who watch Cambridge United are from a similar background to mine; it's a nice reminder that there is a world outside of university terms."

Andy Gales, also at Wolfson, agrees: "The best thing is getting out of the student bubble for 90 minutes." Andy, a Manchester United fan, started following Cambridge in his first year, after going to a game where free student entry was offered. Cambridge offer something different from the glitz of the Premiership. Andy says: "I don't see a conflict between supporting Manchester United and Cambridge – the only competition they could meet in is the FA cup."

The standard of football on offer can be of a high quality. Many teams promoted from the Conference go on to do well in League Two, and Cambridge's recent home wins against Aldershot and Woking saw some explosive attacking football and neat passing, not just from the home team. Both Ben and Andy tip Cambridge's Kwesi Appiah, on loan from Crystal Palace, as a player to watch, praising his mobility and commitment.

Our interviewees agree, however, that United's student following is low key. Both think that only a small group of students regularly attend games. The club seems to be aware of this, and with thousands of places going spare at each game, is offering a special student price of £6 for the FA Cup tie against Bury on Tuesday 3rd December. It looks like a great opportunity for students to sample local football for the first time.

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 Bode 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.

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.

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 1885. 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.

Winter is coming

by Jaason Geerts and JP Espinosa

Located in a prime region for winter sports and hosting some of the country's most able skiing students, Cambridge certainly lives up to its reputation as a world-leading snow sports university. With Castle Hill providing a superb location for international championships, nearby ski training and guaranteed snow all year round, skiing at Cambridge beats rowing every day.

Sarcasm aside, skiing and snowboarding are some of the most popular pastimes of Oxbridge students. Come 2014, they, along with the rest of the world, will be turning their attention to Sochi, Russia, where the Winter Olympics will be taking place. Events will run from the 7th to 23rd of February in a range of disciplines including ice hockey, bobsled and the most extreme event of all, curling.

If all of this sounds beyond exciting to you, then why not give it a go in Cambridge as well? Join the University Ski and Snowboard Club or the Ice Hockey Club for some local winter sports action.

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Sport

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



SPORTSCENE

Cuppers win for Christ's

CROSS-COUNTRY The Hare and Hounds battled the cold on the Cuppers cross country course in what was the final opportunity for the runners to display their form before the Varsity team selection. In the men's race, over a 10.5 km course, Alex Short claimed the victory, with a time of 32:28. In the women's race the 6km course was completed by the incredible Lucy Gossage in 22minutes and 30 seconds. As for Cuppers, a hefty turnout of runners in the men's race helped Christ's to seal the victory. In the women's, three solid runs from Holly Page, Chloe Beckett and Emma Elston made Homerton victorious – emphasising and adding to the Homerton ladies' already sizeable lead in the College League series.

Fantastic victory for Blues

FOOTBALL On November 20th, the Football Blues faced Hartpury, the league champions for three years running. Cambridge started strong, with Sherif scoring in the second minute. This was followed by another goal from James May, which caused the opposition to put pressure on the Light Blues. Hartpury managed to score one goal before the halfway whistle. Coming into the second half, Childs scored another goal, which made the visitors react by adding two more to their tally. Forde made sure that the victory was Cambridge's with a splendid goal over the goalkeeper's head. The final score was 4-3 for the Light Blues.

Weekend loss for Golfers

GOLF Last week the Cambridge golfers visited St George's Hill Golf Club. The crisp but dry morning saw St George's Hill taking a comfortable 4-1 lead. The afternoon play looked much better for Cambridge. Playing only 9-hole fourball better ball matches due to the late time in the year, and able to correct some mistakes from the morning, the Blues won the afternoon session 3.5 - 1.5. Unfortunately, this was not enough to win the overall match. Final score: CUGC 4.5 - St. George's Hill 5.5.

Southampton hold it tight

ICE HOCKEY The Light Blues met Southampton on the Peterborough ice rink. It took only 5 minutes for Cambridge's Eric Kroshus to score the first goal. This awakened Southampton, who scored the next three goals. Cambridge evened the tally as the first period came to a close. In the second frame, Julien Gagnon put Cambridge ahead three minutes in. Kroshus completed his hat-trick and Geerts put the Blues ahead 6 - 5 with one second to go in the second period. Southampton jumped to a third period lead 7 - 6. With 5 minutes to play, Eric Kroshus tied the game. Final score, Cambridge Light Blues 7, Southampton Spitfires 7.

Find more match reports online at www.varsity.co.uk/sport



The CUWBC rowers have been amongst the sportswomen who have benefited from the positive changes in the perception of women in sport at Cambridge

Cambridge leads women in sport

Olivia FitzGerald looks at how Cambridge sport changes outdated perceptions

In a country in which female athletes 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 have to convey a sense of frustration and gloom when writing an article about women in sport.

To start with, I picked up three national newspapers in my college bar and skimmed through the sports section, just as a one-off survey. There were no articles about women in sport and not a single photo of a female athlete.

However, I was pleasantly surprised when I looked into the situation in Cambridge. This year's great success story is certainly sponsor Newton's decision to provide the female boat club (CUWBC) with funding equal to that given to the men by BNY Mellon. The increase in funding has allowed the women's squad to employ three full-time coaches and alleviate the stress caused by members having to contribute towards their travel and kit, which can lead to costs of more than £1,000 per year.

This not only allows athletes to concentrate on their training, but also makes the sport more accessible to those who

might not otherwise have considered rowing due to financial hindrances.

In recognition of the increased respect and awareness gathering around the Women's Boat Race, the 2015 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 appears 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 accomplishment, and as university sportswomen, we carry that. As for myself, my experience as a sportswoman at Cambridge has been a very positive one."

However, things are not perfect. A disparity in funding in other sports is an issue that places limits on Cambridge sportswomen. Unequal funding also sends out a negative message, suggesting that their efforts and achievements

are not as valued by the university. Walters adds "I know girls who refuse to wear their sports kit to lectures, even if they are going straight to practice, for fear that academics and less-sporty peers will judge them." This is not just a university issue, but is symptomatic of a cultural perception that strong, athletic

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

women are unattractive.

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 Dobinson. 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 certain sports as 'men's sports' or 'women's sports', and offer a casual, fun environment in which women can participate without being intimidated by either male teammates or the sport itself.

Mixed sport can be played at a competitive 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 change its image."

The progress that has been made for women in sport at Cambridge is something in which the university can take pride. Such progress is surely recognition 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 opportunities, the world outside the bubble can observe and follow suit.