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VARSITY



Graduate Gamblers

Hannah Wilkinson speaks to the students that are gambling with their careers

Vulture P18

The Oscars

Helena Pike on why there's more to film than awards



"I'm current public enemy number one": Len McCluskey spoke to Trinity Politics Society about Unite's maligned Labour links (p. 5)

Harassment policies are 'shocking'

Sexual harassment policies in colleges fail to protect students

Hannah Wilkinson

Investigations Editor

Sexual harassment policies of colleges at the University of Cambridge could cause "distress to students", a Varsity investigation has revealed.

There are marked discrepancies in the procedural clarity of policies across the University. Concerns have also been raised over inconsistencies in welfare provision detailed by the policies.

Harassment policies describe what actions an institution will take should one of its members report a case of

sexual harassment or assault.

CUSU Women's Officer Lauren Steele said that the complaints process "is often not oriented around the student's needs and desires but taken into members of the college's hands," and that "the inconsistency across colleges and lack of specified procedures means that cases may not always be handled with these Best Practice Guidelines at play."

A number of college policies suggest that as far as possible cases should be resolved informally.

Emmanuel College's policy states: "Since formal complaint is commonly stressful and burdensome to all parties, it is important to make every effort to achieve resolution informally before resorting to it".

Resolving complaints through mediation is cited as the best option at

Downing, with its policy stating that the college hopes that most cases of harassment can be dealt with by "providing information about the consequences of offensive behaviour," with the aim of "establishing communication between the individuals involved".

Amelia Horgan, a former Women's Officer at King's, is currently helping to draft a revised sexual harassment policy for her college.

She wanted to create a policy sensitive to the psychological trauma caused by encounters between the complainant and the accused.

She said: "We wanted to keep the students separate until the investigation was carried out, which included allowing them to live in separate places if that's what they wanted."

Norah Al-Ani, the Development Officer at Cambridge Rape Crisis

Centre, said that she found the wording of some of the policies "shocking".

The University's Dignity@Study policy, upon which a number of colleges base their own complaints policies, says: "If your complaint is not upheld and is found to be malicious or vexatious, disciplinary action may be taken against you." This wording is widespread in University harassment policies across the country.

"All the emphasis here is on potential victims being accused," Al-Ani said. "It perpetuates the myth that those who experience sexual violence make false allegations."

"In reality the number of false sexual harassment and assault allegations are extremely low."

Maggie Bridge, the Women's Officer at Gonville and Caius, criticised the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

CUSU fish fail to hook students

Jack McConnel

News Correspondent

Only 1 in 5 students say they will vote in the upcoming CUSU elections, and 14 per cent do not even know what CUSU is, a poll conducted by Varsity has found.

The poll of 192 students also suggests that 26 per cent did not know the difference between CUSU and the Cambridge Union Society. One first-year student from Jesus said: "I love CUSU because they got me to meet Russell Brand."

It was revealed earlier this week that no candidates will run for two permanent salaried sabbatical positions of CUSU co-ordinator and welfare & rights officer, while three positions are uncontested. These include the Presidential candidate, Helen Hoogewerf-McComb, as well as the candidates for women's officer and education officer.

Flick Osborn, the current CUSU president, said it was "disappointing" that there are fewer nominations for CUSU-GU sabbatical positions than in previous years: "CUSU have trialled many new methods of engaging with students about elections this year."

The publicity campaign for the elections consisted primarily of a depiction of a goldfish jumping into a larger bowl. Posters of the cartoon were displayed in colleges and on CUSU's website.

Two thirds of students surveyed did not know the name of the current CUSU president, while 90 per cent of students said they were unaware of how CUSU has affected them this year.

However, Osborn argues that "many students have engaged positively with CUSU" this year. She said that CUSU has "consistently worked on issues that students really care about", citing the Living Wage campaign, the campaign on socially responsible investment and the petition against the government's immigration bill signed by a thousand students.

George Thomas, president of the JCR at Peterhouse cites the "decentralised nature of the Cambridge colleges

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Reviews: Lars von Trier's Nymphomaniac Parts 1 & 2 (p. 28)



News

Cambridge Israel Apartheid Week has enflamed the ongoing student debate about the Israel-Palestine situation



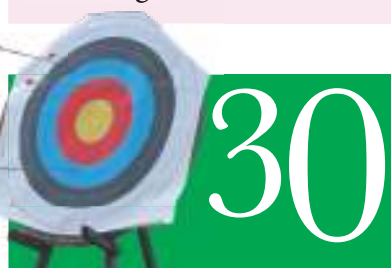
Comment

Harshadha Balasubramanian on making the most of Cambridge student life without the ability to see



Vulture

Not our forte? Jackson Caines laments the less than thriving student music scene in Cambridge



Sport

For the Love of Sport: Matt Worth dusts off his bow and arrow and tries out the medieval sport of archery



Zero tolerance policies

This week's Varsity investigation has uncovered the current inadequacy of college sexual harassment policies across the University. The policies are inconsistent, and many lack clarity regarding the procedure that should be followed. This means the decision to come forward with a complaint is more difficult, particularly considering the emotional state of someone that has been sexually harassed.

The lack of clarity and discrepancies across colleges is perhaps reflective of a wider cultural problem where sexual harassment is often not dealt with directly, and where many are ignorant of the prevalence of sexual harassment. There has been a distinct lack of research into sexual harassment policy in the UK, with a recent NUS report on 'lad culture' noting that research into "violence against women students in the UK is still in its infancy". However, in 2010, 68 per cent of students questioned were found to have

experienced some form of sexual harassment – a stark illustration of the extent of the issue.

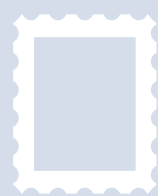
While it is clear that there is a wider problem, there are obvious issues at Cambridge which must be addressed. The lack of transparency about college procedures and some of the language used suggest that there is a university-wide culture where the greater concern is to hush up complaints, rather than seeking to discipline those found guilty of sexual harassment.

The focus on informal resolution in a number of the policies seems to be indicative of this. Emmanuel College's policy, for example, which is taken from the University Student Handbook, states: "Since formal complaint is commonly stressful and burdensome to all parties, it is important to make every effort to achieve resolution informally before resorting to it."

Anecdotal experience suggests that a lack of training and general understanding has been

found to be one of the main obstacles to reaching a satisfactory outcome in these cases. While more formalised welfare training for new college tutors should address this in part, it is not enough.

There needs to be an urgent review of college sexual harassment policies, which differentiates sexual harassment from bullying and racial harassment. A policy concerning sexual harassment should clearly detail each stage of the procedure, and who to go to for advice. In fact, Jesus College already has a policy that does this and there is no reason why other colleges should not follow suit. Examples of what constitutes sexual harassment and what actions should be taken in each instance would be a welcome addition to college policies. There should also be no implications in the language that complaints will not be taken seriously or brushed aside. We need a zero-tolerance policy to sexual harassment that works.



Write to us

letters@varsity.co.uk

WHY WE RECLAIM THE NIGHT FOR WOMEN

In Reclaim the Night we marched to demand justice for survivors of sexual assault, to empower the 95% of women who told More magazine in 2005 that they don't feel safe on the streets at night and to put the issue of female safety, regardless of the time of day, onto a platform of discussion.

The impact it has had in Cambridge was clear, opening speeches from leaders of the feminist society at Anglia Ruskin described how they had been inspired to start up their group by last

year's Reclaim the Night march. People spoke of the empowerment they felt as they walked through the streets

However, this anger was matched by the sense of solidarity throughout the group, a solidarity born of a confidence that those around us were supportive of our desire to speak out and shout about issues too often shut down.

Rhiannon Lloyd-Jones, Girton

I can't help but feel the many comments and commenters who address the 'banning men' and 'women only' aspect of the march only betray their own complete laziness/apathy and (bordering on wilful) ignorance for feminist activism, rather than sharing any real concern for 'feminism'.

When I had these same concerns well before the event, I simply pinged a quick message to someone involved, and she reasonably and kindly pointed out that the some of symbolic power of trying to make it safe for women alone

on the streets at night really only harnessed if it's a group of just women marching. She said of course the campaign were trying to get as many men to help as possible and pointed me to a solidarity march for all men who wanted to help. It was 100% reasonable, and I genuinely felt my assistance in the movement was wanted!

The problem is that it was so simple for me to find out that men weren't at all 'banned', that we could all be involved, that there was potent symbolism at work, that it seems curious to me that the people quoted here cared not even to ask a simple or quick question when something (supposedly dear to their hearts) seemed wrong?

When people hear bad stories about the women's campaign why do they always never ask the campaign members directly? I can only assume it's because people actually don't care enough about the movement to go through the bother of that, and you end up with half baked anecdotes that make all of us (both outside and inside the Women's campaign) look bad.

Eric Hambro, Magdalene

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Nymphomaniac



“I’d rather live in a bin than work in a high-up position in MacDonald’s”
Job snobbery: a pandemic
(p. 14)

Week 7

“BEING HOMELESS AND GOING TO CAMBRIDGE MADE ME FEEL QUITE LIKE A FISH OUT OF WATER”
Poppy Noor on finding a home in Cambridge
(p. 12)

\$6m
Value of new Stephen Hawking professorship
(p. 9)

THE TOP 5 ONLINE

- 1. Interview: Ha-Joon Chang
- 2. Theatre: Grey Matters
- 3. VarsiTV: Arcsoc Cabaret, Voluptuousous
- 4. An open letter on rape culture
- 5. For the love of sport: Karate

News meeting
5pm on Thursday, The Maypole

Comment meeting
5pm on Monday in Varsity offices

We’re looking for photographers and illustrators.
Email editor@varsity.co.uk
for more information

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section of her college's general policy which states that it "will take less seriously comments and suggestions that seem frivolous". She said: "A report of sexual harassment or assault is never 'frivolous'. It shows a real lack of nuanced thought about this issue, and therefore a real lack of any kind of proper provisions for it as and when instances arise."

Jennifer*, who reported an incident of sexual assault involving a tutor at her college, said that she found the words "vexatious or malicious" intimidating. She said: "When you're low and have just been victimised, the fear of saying the wrong thing is so strong; the idea that your words could potentially be scrutinised and that you could be penalised for what you say is always in back of your mind"

She also pointed towards lack of clarity in her college's harassment policy: "I approached a tutor who had to check the college guidelines first as reporting of cases is so rare. When I saw them I was unnerved by the shortness of the policy. It didn't seem very clear."

Policies are often brief, with bullying and harassment dealt with under the same procedural guidelines. Gonville and Caius does not have a sexual harassment policy that is independent of their general complaints procedure,

"I FELT SO SCRUTINISED AND SO VULNERABLE THAT ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS GET OUT OF THERE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE"

and four colleges – Sidney Sussex, Trinity Hall, Fitzwilliam and Girton – do not have a sexual harassment policy individual to their college.

Al-Ani emphasised the importance of standalone policies that deal with sexual harassment and assault. "If it's incorporated into a general policy, it becomes difficult to give it the space to describe what it is, and it shows that the college isn't recognising the experiences of students." She added: "Standalone policies show that the college is taking the issue seriously".

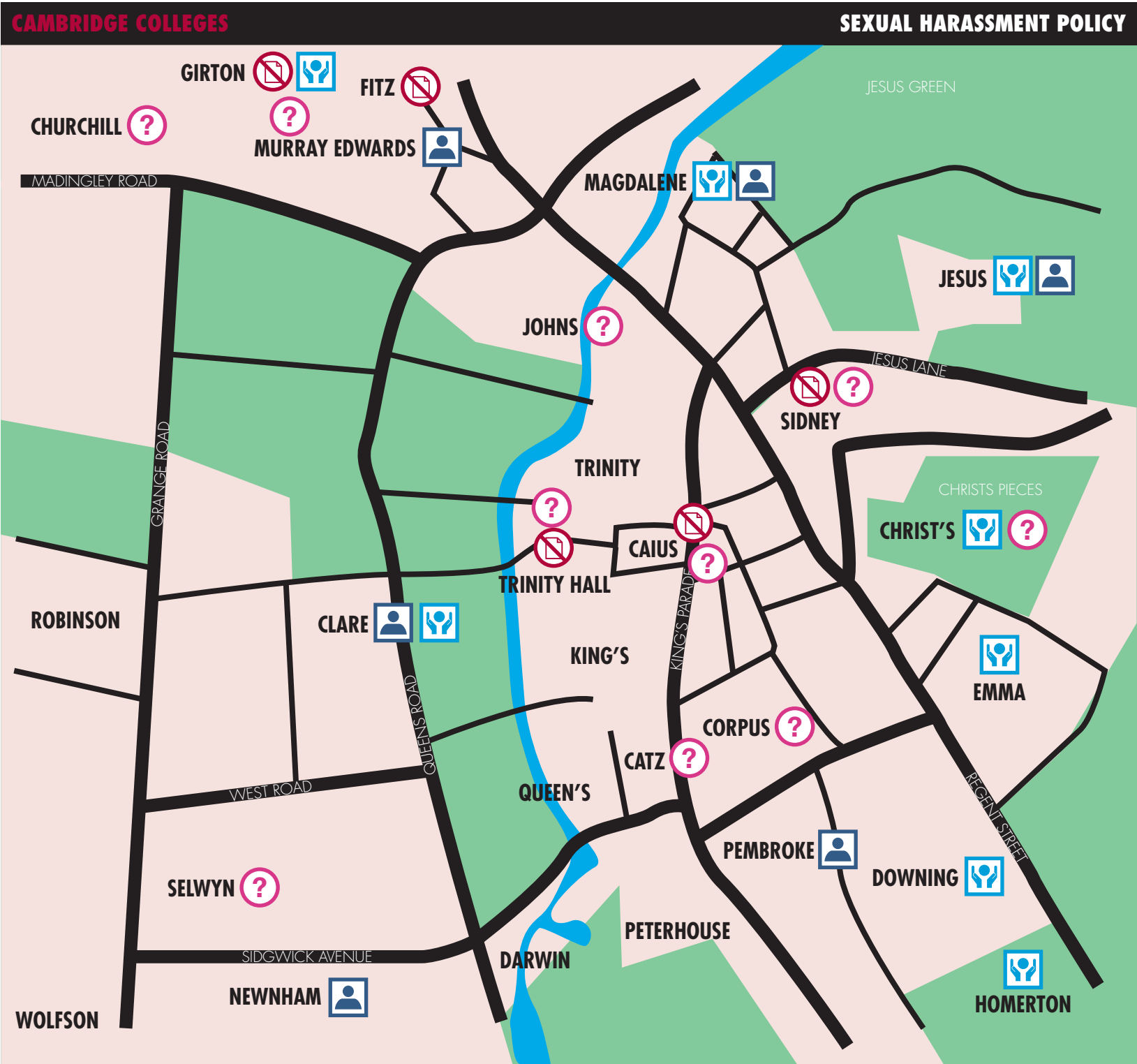
Often students are called before disciplinary bodies for the formal





"A REPORT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR ASSAULT IS NEVER 'FRIVOLOUS'"

complaint to be investigated. Jennifer suggests that this process was unsympathetic to the sensitivity of her case: "I wasn't treated as a vulnerable witness. I felt like I was being closely scrutinised and questioned, and that a lack of sensitivity was shown whilst dealing with that very painful period of my life."

"I felt so scrutinised and so vulnerable that all I wanted to do was get out of there as quickly as possible."

Most colleges detail a comprehensive list of internal and external sources of welfare advice. However, six colleges – Churchill, Corpus, Fitzwilliam, Caius, Queens' and Selwyn – make no clear reference to welfare provision for complainants in their harassment policies. Only Jesus College makes reference to sources of welfare throughout the process, specifying where complainants



 <h3>No specific harassment policy</h3> <p>Trinity Hall's harassment policy was not available online. Instead the college stated its "approach" via an FOI.</p> <p>Fitzwilliam, Sidney Sussex, and Girton refer students to the University's Dignity@Study Policy.</p> <p>Caius devotes one article in its general complaints procedure to detailing the process for sexual harassment.</p>	 <h3>Unclear formal procedure</h3> <p>Girton's sexual harassment procedures simply state: "Any individual who considers that another's behaviour (whosoever that person may be) falls into the category of sexual or racial harassment, may consult their own or any of the Tutors, the College Nurses, or the JCR Welfare or Women's Officer."</p> <p>Most colleges go on to specify the formal process and how it should be initiated.</p>	 <h3>Dedicated harassment officer</h3> <p>Clare Harassment Officer Cathie Clarke says: "I think that the role of Harassment Officer is a useful one in the College even though the occasions on which I am called on are infrequent. Each demands a different approach. The priority is always to find a solution that is in the best interest of the people affected while at the same time maintaining confidentiality and respecting the wishes of complainants."</p>	 <h3>Clear sources of support</h3> <p>Most colleges dedicate an area of their policy document to listing sources of welfare both internal sources, including tutor, chaplain, college nurse, and external sources, such as the University Counselling Service, Linkline, and the Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre.</p> <p>Jesus college details appropriate sources of support which can be accessed by students at each stage of the complaints process.</p>
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can go for support at each stage.

Seven colleges have dedicated Harassment Officers.

Al-Ani says that it is "essential" that students be made aware of sources of welfare support throughout the process. "Otherwise it could have a hugely detrimental impact on someone's self confidence and self belief".

At St Catherine's, Queens', and Pembroke, guidelines ask for students considering making a complaint to collect their sexual harassment policy in person from members of staff. At a number of colleges, students are asked to initiate the complaints procedure themselves by describing their experience in a formal letter, often without any guidelines or template for this letter and with no support.

A spokesperson for the University said: "The Dignity@Study guidance sets out recommended procedures for dealing with complaints of inappropriate behaviour across the University. The guidance, which is intended primarily for students, has been approved and commended to Colleges for adoption by the Senior Tutors' Committee.

As independent legal entities, it is appropriate for Colleges to have their own complaints and review procedures within the context of this guidance. Colleges are always prepared to discuss areas where there appears to be a lack of clarity. This is best done through student representation on appropriate committees for student welfare."

Steele noted that the University is working with the Women's Campaign "in potentially reviewing and creating policy at both University and college levels, introducing training and workshops for staff and students".

For Jennifer, these changes will come too late. "I felt like I was the guinea pig," she says. "It's good that procedures can be fixed after it all comes to light, but for the test cases the system often fails to protect vulnerable students".

**Name changed to protect identity*

Labour funding cuts are coming, says Unite leader

McCluskey says Tories use him as 'baseball bat' against Ed Miliband

Louis Degenhardt

Comment Editor

Unite, the largest union in the UK, will consider slashing donations to Labour by half, general secretary Len McCluskey has suggested. Speaking in Cambridge on Wednesday evening, he acknowledged that the relationship between Unite and Labour needed reform, telling the audience to expect a significant announcement next week.

He pointed to internal Unite polling, which indicates that only 50 per cent of the union's members are Labour voters. Unite currently gives around £3 million per year to Labour.

"FROM TIME TO TIME THE MEDIA NEED AN OGRE – I'M THE CURRENT PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE"

In an interview with Varsity, McCluskey said that the Tories use him "as a kind of baseball bat to hit Ed Miliband over the head with. And we're conscious of that – that means I have to be a bit more careful of what I say and how it can be distorted."

He added that "from time to time the media need an ogre – I'm the cur-



The relationship between Unite and Ed Miliband's Labour party has become fraught

rent public enemy number one."

"[The media will] try to use that to destroy the message of people coming together, resisting and trying to defend the way of life that we've been used to for the past 65 years," he said, "since the end of the war and the creation of the welfare state."

McCluskey also repeated the calls he made on Newsnight this week for Ed Miliband not to join with the Liberal Democrats should they fail to achieve an outright majority in 2015.

Speaking about his predictions for next year's elections, he told Varsity: "I

think Labour will end up as the largest party, and I think they may just fall short of an overall majority." He said that it was up to Ed Miliband to "offer a radical alternative." Nick Clegg, he said, is a "soggy Lib Dem sieve."

McCluskey was in Cambridge to address the Trinity Politics Society, where he launched a new leverage campaign targeting the private healthcare "vultures" he says are preying on the NHS.

He was damning in his criticism of the government's healthcare reforms, saying that Unite will ensure politicians are "accountable" for their

actions, which he argued amount to "robbery in plain sight."

He addressed Cambridge students specifically, urging them to aspire to more than "a big house in the country" and driving a Porsche, acknowledging that he was speaking to "our future generation of leaders."

Regarding the potential changes to the financial relationship between Unite and the Labour party, a spokesperson for Unite said yesterday: "The level of our affiliation to the Labour Party and funding will be discussed next week by our executive council."

Cambridge professor slams latest Women in Science report

James Sutton

Deputy News Editor

Dame Athene Donald, professor of experimental physics at Robinson College and a supporter of gender equality movements in academia, has attacked a report produced by the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee for being "fairly weak" in its recommendations.

Speaking to Varsity, she said that the focus of the recent report, which aimed to establish measures for increasing women's role in the academic sciences, was misjudged. She said the recent report "called on higher education institutions collectively to do more. Cambridge doesn't need to be told this because we are already hard at work on the issue and I think so are many other universities."

She said that many of the issues affecting women's involvement in science were outside the control of universities, and that the report failed to acknowledge this.

"Funders may have processes in place that disadvantage women in quite subtle ways. The short term contracts that are the typical lot of early career researchers upon completion of their PhDs was one issue raised. To modify this pattern of employment would need a huge, collective discussion of many bodies, most notably including funders. Personally I believe many of the problems are societally-based. For young girls contemplating STEM subjects it is hard for them to find role models."

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and their respective JCRs” as the main reason for the lack of student engagement with CUSU.

He added: “A lot of the work CUSU does is with JCR committee members rather than students themselves. Absence of engagement from the majority of students should therefore come as no surprise.”

Rachael Anderson, a first-year student at Jesus, said: “I wish CUSU would reach out more at a college level. They’re too distant and no-one’s quite sure what they do.”

“I WISH CUSU WOULD REACH OUT MORE ... THEY’RE TOO DISTANT AND NO-ONE’S QUITE SURE WHAT THEY DO”

The poll also uncovered that scepticism is rife over CUSU’s 2013-14 budget, which forecasts an expenditure of £674,000. 18 per cent of respondents thought that the expenditure was not worth it, and three quarters of students did not think that they knew enough about CUSU to answer “yes” or “no”. Only 7 per cent of respondents thought the money was being well spent.

Max Odenghar, a third-year student at Trinity College, was not surprised at the lack of student interest: “If they [CUSU] spent time telling us what they do rather than just spending money, we’d all have a better idea of

what to think of them.”

Ivan Tchernev, President of King’s College Student Union, is more positive about CUSU, though he is “saddened by the lack of interest in sabbatical positions.”

He said: “Any institution that gives out free condoms to all its students is clearly doing something right.”

“CUSU has an image problem, and one that’s hard to overcome. CUSU has to deal with all of the problems of student apathy, and has none of the local appeal to alleviate it.

“That means that even when they accomplish amazing, excellent things, students just don’t hear about it. The lack of interest in the [sabbatical] positions is symptomatic of that lack of engagement. CUSU is vital, students just don’t realise it.”

Helen Hoogewerf-McComb, the sole presidential candidate, said: “CUSU did a lot to publicise these elections... I honestly wish that CUSU President was contested.

“CUSU needs to be better at engaging all students, but also at empowering and inspiring new student leaders so that they feel like they can stand for sabbatical positions.”

Rob Richardson, who is running uncontested for Education Officer, regretted the lack of nominations, but said that “running uncontested does not really alter anything within the campaign process.”

He believes that “engagement is a two-way affair,” and that “the high proportion of uncontested positions could be purely circumstantial.”

The main campaign hustings will take place at 4pm on Saturday 1 March in the University Centre.

VARSITY POLL

DO STUDENTS CARE ABOUT CUSU?

Are you aware of how CUSU has affected you?

Yes

No

Will you vote in the CUSU elections?

Yes

No

Elections?

Do you know the name of the current CUSU President?

Yes

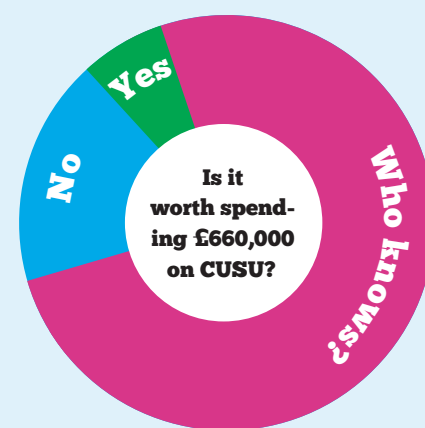
No

26%

Don’t know the difference between



and



Department of Engineering extension to cost £13 million

Helen Amos

News correspondent

Plans for a £13 million extension to the University’s engineering department, which will see a five storey addition to the Baker Building in Fen Causeway, were approved last week.

Planning permission was received to build on a portion of the Royal Cambridge Hotel’s car park. The University stated that the extension will permit the development of research projects, and resolve existing problems caused by a lack of space.

“The extension to the Department of Engineering is aimed at providing more office space, particularly for post-graduate students and post-docs,” said Professor Dame Ann Dowling, head of the Department of Engineering. “The new building will provide office space for about 240 students and post-docs and about 20 academics and research group administrators.”

Students commented that they have not yet heard news from the department about the extension. Lizzie O’Leary, a first-year engineer, said: “£13 million seems huge but the whole department is a little outdated, from a mix of oldish technology to the fact that the buildings themselves aren’t that nice. Having said that, some of the old pieces of equipment that are used really don’t need to be replaced, either because they’ve stopped being made or because they function perfectly well.”

She added: “However, in a fast growing industry like engineering, it’s always important to have the most up-to-date facilities possible so in that respect I can’t see it as a bad thing.”

Tutor training campaign yields results

University will now provide welfare training for all tutors

James Sutton

Deputy News Editor

A centralised welfare training scheme for new college tutors is to be rolled out by the University in the next academic year, it was announced this week. This follows a CUSU campaign that highlighted the pitfalls and discrepancies in the college welfare system. Minutes from the CUSU council meeting show that CUSU’s Welfare and Rights Officer, Helen Hoogewerf-McComb, called this news “a win.”

Under the plans, new tutors will be invited to receive one day of training, overseen by the University Counselling Service. There will be contributions from the Disability Resource Centre, senior tutors, CUSU and the Graduate Union. It is hoped that this will better prepare tutors for dealing with welfare issues such as mental health, and provide a more “joined-up approach” to welfare throughout the University.

Currently, welfare training for tutors is optional and infrequent, and some tutors receive no training whatsoever, despite often being the first point of contact for students facing welfare problems.

A spokesperson for the University explained: “In the light of feedback from participants on previous [tutors’ training] courses, and as part of our ongoing efforts to optimise welfare provision in the collegiate university, it



Hours spent in the library can often cause unhealthy stress levels

was considered that a future expanded training session would be useful.”

In response to the announcement of greater training for tutors, the mental health campaign group, Student Minds Cambridge, announced that they were “delighted” with the plans for tutor training. “[We] are glad to see the University working to improve what could be a fantastic system,” a spokesperson said

However, criticism of the plans is already mounting, as the number of incoming tutors is small and the training will not be mandatory.

Chris Page, a former CUSU-Graduate Union Welfare and Rights Officer and a mental health activist, called this “only a small step”, despite applauding the progress made.

He argued that “we must also not forget that tutor training alone will

not resolve all the welfare problems in Cambridge,” and pointed to the “dire need for reform of intermission and how colleges respond to rape and sexual assault on campus.”

This sentiment was echoed by Hoogewerf-McComb, who said in a statement that “there is more work to be done to ensure that high quality, consistent pastoral support is available in all our college communities.”



DEAD AS A DOJO: Cambridge noodle bar Dojo is joining its feathered namesake in the afterlife. The restaurant, which has been serving students for 15 years, has been notified to leave the premises by the end of June. Pembroke, St Catharine's, Darwin and Queens' colleges have proposed redeveloping the building into graduate accommodation.

COMMENT

STUDENT WELFARE IN CAMBRIDGE

Tutor training is important, but it is only the first step, says Cambridge Speaks Its Mind

It was recently announced that, after years of hard campaigning, CUSU has finally secured tutor training. Details at this point are sketchy, but it would seem that new tutors will receive a one-day training session before the start of the new academic year. The University Counselling Service will be involved in this training.

This is an excellent step. Though our campaign is a relatively new one, we have been observing the pace of change in Cambridge, and it is glacial at best. CUSU should be commended for its efforts.

However, though we are pleased with this latest development, students must not become complacent, or assume that matters will automatically improve. The promised training will only be targeted at new tutors, which means a mere handful of individuals. Our understanding is that the training is not mandatory for existing tutors. It would not be unreasonable to assume many colleges will take the view that their tutors do not need training.

This is not to belittle the efforts of CUSU. It is simply to appreciate that this is merely a small step in the right direction. What is important, however, is that the pressure continues – we need a comprehensive tutor training programme, which lasts longer than one day and covers the vast range of issues which tutors will be faced with when supporting students.

Cambridge Speaks Its Mind is unequivocal in its belief that this is the best strategy for making sure that the saddening, and at times horrific, college responses that students have shared with us will never recur.

“STUDENTS MUST TAKE THE LEAD IN THIS PROCESS OF REFORM, QUESTIONING COLLEGES ABOUT WELFARE”

That being said, tutor training is just one important remedy to the numerous welfare problems at Cambridge. We would urge the student body to call attention to the ongoing problems with intermission, a process which was the focus of such hard campaigning a few years ago.

While the University has accepted that it cannot ban students from living in the city if they take

a break from their studies, we still have countless testimonies of students being pressured or forced to intermit, and then being forgotten, or going unaided in their return to study.

Again, you only need to look at our Facebook page to see evidence of this. It must be reformed: intermitting students are among the most vulnerable in Cambridge, and must be afforded dignity, respect, and all the support they deserve.

Similarly, we cannot help but comment on the frightening amount of testimonies relating to sexual assault in Cambridge. Colleges need to adopt zero tolerance policies to sexual harassment and assault, and do everything in their power to support survivors.

It is simply unacceptable that students who have shared their experiences of rape and assault have had to also endure the indignity of being failed by their colleges.

Students must take the lead in this process of reform, questioning their colleges about welfare support, identifying flaws, and setting out strategies for better provision.

At the same time, we need to support each other: people normalise or dismiss issues far too often. The ideology that “everyone is stressed, get over it,” can force many vulnerable students to feel alone.

In short, the new ‘tutor training’ is a foot in the door, but we as students need to make sure the University and colleges do not simply leave it at that.

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Graduate Gamblers

Facing poor odds on the jobs market, Hannah Wilkinson meets the grads who have turned their gambling habits into careers

The days are getting longer, and the gaps between worried emails from my dissertation supervisor are getting shorter. Exam term cometh. And with it, graduation. And with that, the real world, fraught with unfortunate trappings like 'having a job' and 'earning money'.

Hoping to avoid starving artistically in the hedgerows, I seek help from Ken Cheng. Ken is a stand-up comedian and former Tab Columnist. And since he dropped out of his maths degree at St John's, he's been funding his BNOC lifestyle by playing professional poker.

Ken is mid-way through a game on the website Poker Stars when he lets me into his roomy flat in central Cambridge. As he clicks away, cards and virtual money fly around a virtual table.

AS WE CHAT I NOTICE KEN'S WINNINGS HAVE DROPPED BY \$1,000. HE DOESN'T FLINCH. "ONE DAY I LOST \$100,000", HE EXPLAINS.

Thousands of virtual dollars are won and lost as Ken continues clicking throughout our conversation. He assures me that people gamble with tens, sometimes hundreds of thousands. "I'm not at that stage," he says "It's quite ridiculous". Ken first deposited on Poker Stars while he was still in sixth form, about seven years ago. He and a few friends played poker for fun, then made the transition to online gambling.

"I first deposited about \$100 online. By the time I started uni I'd made a few thousand. Since then it's just been going up. And now it's quite high stakes. "I make easily enough to live on per month. Last month I made about £15,000. I'm in quite a good situation".

As we chat I notice Ken's winnings have dropped by \$1,000. He doesn't flinch. "One day I lost \$100,000", he explains.

Ken describes his year at Cambridge as a "hindrance" to his poker career. "I had to fit poker around my schedule and social stuff, and work, which I didn't do much of". Sitting through lectures, all Ken thought about was poker. "That's one of the main reasons I dropped out, because I was thinking a lot about poker but I didn't get the chance to play it."

"And now this is what you do all day?" I ask. "Not all day. I go out too," he replies. "But this is what I want to be doing in ten years time. There's no job I can imagine myself doing that would come close to this. My passion for this outweighs anything else".

Unsure I could ever drum up such dedication to a website containing so few pictures of cats, I call up Chris Humpleby. In his second year at Cambridge, Chris won £5,000 from an £8.50 stake he placed on a horse race. Since graduating, Chris has managed to turn his passion for racing into a career writing race previews for the Press Association.

Chris isn't in it for the money. "Even if I could never bet on horse racing again I'd watch it just for the sport," he enthuses. "It's so exciting when you link a human to an animal. Racing is as much about understanding human beings as it is a sport: who trains the horse, who rides it, who owns it".

Chris paints vivid pictures of "a constant cycle of making history, drama, heroes and villains". With hyped up horses who might suddenly decide they don't want to race that day, there are infinite variables at play at all times.

I, personally, have never trusted horses. They are difficult to reason with, and have large teeth. But Chris's wholesome betting beginnings, watching racing in his grandad's living room in Carlisle, makes me forget my equine inhibitions.

"On Saturday afternoon when there was the racing on telly he'd get us to pick horses and put on fake bets – just daft things like that," he tells me.

"My grandad was a small stakes punter. He wasn't into reading form or anything. He had favourite jockies and trainers and put bets on them".

At Cambridge, where Chris read History before switching to Education, he also had trouble fitting gambling around his academic work, and even more trouble drumming up interest in the horse racing society.

"It was just me and a couple of lads and we went racing quite a lot. Newmarket offered us free entry and they were going to lay on

buses to get us there, but we could never get enough people interested," he says.

"I think for lots of people at Cambridge gambling is associated with murky working men's clubs. And not many people from Cambridge have been to working men's clubs. Or horse races".

Chris doesn't deny that there is a 'murky' side. Betting, he warns, can consume your life. "It's a very insular world. People who gamble all the time struggle to hold down relationships and friendships, even if they're doing well".

Writing race previews, Chris is on "the right side of the fence" – advising the punters so they can win a few quid against the bookies. But he worries that the decade he hopes to spend in horse racing will one day prevent him from pursuing a career as a teacher: "I've been told people might have a problem with it, morally and ethically".

But for now Ken and Chris seem more than happy to spend their post-Cambridge days with cards, or horses. With thousands of pounds up for grabs, it's nice work if you can bet it.



Hawking professorship gets the go-ahead

Controversial and highly-paid Stephen Hawking professorship confirmed

Zeyang Gao

News Correspondent

On Tuesday, the Stephen W. Hawking professorship of cosmology was established by the Regent House by 746 votes to 606.

The University will now accept a \$6 million donation from the Avery-Tsui Foundation, set up by Hawking's late friend Dennis Avery, to fund the post. The donation allocates \$2 million for the "core endowment for the professorship", while the remaining \$4 million will be used to fund a salary of up to £140,000; double that of other professors.

The approval of the professorship is likely to stir debate, and the close vote suggests that the issue has already divided opinion within the University's governing body. Critics of the donation have argued that the high salary is a threat to meritocracy. Others fear that it will lead to donors increasingly asserting their influence over pay within the university.

Adam Hill, a first year MML student, is concerned about the role: "With the cache of Stephen Hawking's name attached to the professorship, there surely will be no need for this exorbitant salary to attract academics to the role."

Other recent examples of donor



Stephen Hawking's professorship title has been highly controversial

influence include the renaming of New Hall to Murray Edwards College in 2008, following a £30 million donation by alumna Ros Edwards and her husband.

The University issued the following statement: "The University's democratic process, through its self-governing body of academics, the Regent House, has approved the creation of the Stephen W. Hawking Professorship

of Cosmology which, thanks to the generous gift from the Avery-Tsui Foundation, will be duly created on 1 March 2014 as a way of maintaining Professor Hawking's scholarly legacy."

In a statement released by the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics (DAMTP), Professor Hawking said: "When I joined DAMTP in 1962, cosmology was regarded as an area in which wild

speculation was unconstrained by any reliable observations. In those days we didn't even know if the universe had a beginning, or if it had existed forever in a steady state.

"That we know more today is in a major part because of work done in this department. It is therefore fitting that the Avery-Tsui foundation has given a generous donation, to establish a chair in cosmology in the department."



CAMBRIDGE SPY

Rumour has it...

Embarrassment struck for one member of a swap as he already had a picture of the girl next to him printed on a T-shirt, despite never having met her...

Fresher fever has struck for four fellows at one college, who have all been bedded by the same student...

Churchill Spring Ball wasn't the classy affair it claimed to be, with human excrement being found in all sorts of places...

Aprofessedly non-Labour voting student was guilt-tripped into campaigning for the party after coming face-to-face with the local candidate at a meeting...

One fresher's search for spring romance may have started her on a slippery slope. Perhaps love is the hardest drug of them all.

Miss Vx

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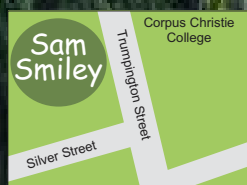
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Literary Critic, Food Critic,
Photographer, Illustrator

VARSITY



NEWS IN BRIEF



College fines revealed

CAMBRIDGE An investigation carried out by The Tab has revealed that from 2011 to 2013, 11 Cambridge colleges fined their students a total of £16,398. The highest-fining college, Emmanuel, was found to have collected a total of £4,140 over this period from library fines and late-paid college bills.

Downing College fined one student £200 after an attempt to steal candles from another college. The student was also compelled to write letters of apology to the Master, Bursar and Head Porter. At Jesus, a student was banned from college premises for a year.



Cambridge trails Oxford on global stage

CAMBRIDGE A QS study has ranked Cambridge below Oxford on the global stage. It looked at 800 universities across the world, evaluating them on their performances in 30 disciplines.

Cambridge was considered the best place in the UK to study 14 subjects, while Oxford came top in 10. The London School of Economics ranked first in three, leaving Edinburgh, Reading and the Institute of Education to excel in one subject each.

Worldwide, however, Oxford overtook it; it was ranked the best place in the world to study English language and literature, modern languages, and politics.



Funding for MPhils to boost research

CAMBRIDGE A pilot scheme organised by colleges, the Isaac Newton Trust and the Cambridge Home and EU Scholarship Scheme (CHESS) has unveiled plans for 70 postgraduate students to receive up to £12,000 each to support their research.

This money will be available to postgraduate students in any subject, as long as they are members of the 19 colleges taking part in the trial. It is hoped that these non-repayable bursaries will cover living costs for postgraduates.

The pilot scheme is set to run for 3 years.

Professor Jon Parry, Director of the Isaac Newton Trust, explained that "the Trust wanted to find a way to support more students in this crucial first year of graduate study" as funding becomes increasingly difficult to find.

We need a new economics, says Ha-Joon Chang

Leading economist worries another financial crash may be on horizon

Louis Degenhardt

Comment Editor

Leading economist and Cambridge academic Ha-Joon Chang has issued a renewed call for a fundamental change in the practice of economics.

Speaking in an interview with Varsity last week, Chang warned that the disparity of knowledge between specialists in the field and the general public has become worryingly large, and suggested that more has to be done to address this.

"IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT SOME KIND OF FINANCIAL CRISIS HITS AND WE ALL GET SUCKED INTO TROUBLE AGAIN"

He dismissed the idea that economists are "workers of some higher truth", and labelled the increasingly inaccessible nature of economics as being "dangerous".

Chang also warned of the likelihood of another financial crisis if things do not change. He denounced the harm done by the financial sector as "scandalous", and suggested that the current growth of the British and American stock markets is a bubble likely

to burst.

He said: "It is quite possible that some kind of financial crisis hits some part of the world economy and we all get sucked into trouble again."

Questioning the possibility of effecting necessary change, Chang said that the prevailing consensus, which sees the financial sector as sacrosanct, has taken such a hold on the British mindset that reform will be difficult to affect.

"[L]et's hope that something happens, because this hold of free market ideology, in this country at least, that the financial sector is paramount and everything has to be sacrificed has such a hold on the British mindset that it's not going to be easy," he told Varsity.

He also added that it was particularly important that "younger generations [are] beginning to question these things" and hopes that this will lead to something changing.

For Chang, economics is inherently political, and he sees it as imperative that this is acknowledged and embraced, instead of the "rather outdated", "nineteenth century" idea that economics is a science.

"That's the huge achievement on the part of the professional economists, because you have basically persuaded the people that this is so difficult that you cannot even have an opinion about it," he said.

"We've got this profession wrong; a lot of professional economists think what they do is too difficult for ordinary people. You'd be surprised how often these people are stupid enough to say things...like 'you wouldn't understand what I do even if I explained it to you.' If you cannot explain it to other people, you have the problem."



Ha-Joon Chang calls for 'common sense' in economics

Chang worries that modern society has carved out an essential part of our life that is "totally insulated from common sense, totally insulated from democratic pressure, totally insulated from the deliberative process."

In his calls for reform, Chang emphasised the importance of youth, and

praised the work of the Cambridge Society for Economic Pluralism.

He was also positive in his assessment of the likelihood of reform, arguing that "cracks" are appearing, and that once the assumption of rationality is rejected, "the whole thing might unravel".

Marking boycott would put graduations at risk

Lecturers threaten to boycott marking exams next term in pay dispute

Richard Nicholl

News Correspondent

The pay dispute between the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) and an association of British higher education institutions shows no sign of abating as students face a marking strike by lecturers from the end of April. This has raising fears that some graduations could be at risk.

The ongoing and highly visible industrial action over a one per cent pay rise for university staff has reached heights described by Sally Hunt, General Secretary of UCU, as "the ultimate sanction".

In contrast to similar action in 2006, universities are likely to impose salary deductions on striking staff, escalating already-high tensions.

The Cambridge branch of UCU will be participating in the marking boycott if no deal is reached before the deadline. UCU members form part of the staff of most university faculties, and the impacts of the strike action in the past year or so has been felt across most disciplines.

However, unions taking part in previous walkout action, including Unite and UNISON, will not be taking part in the marking boycott



Will queuing be worth the wait for this year's finalists?

Speaking to Varsity, Ronald Haynes, the president of Cambridge UCU, said: "Most of the staff who keep our universities running are having their pay cut. Their pay has fallen by 13 per cent in real terms since 2009 and now staff are angry because their employers have been refusing to offer any more than 1 per cent for the year."

Haynes added that it would be very difficult at this stage to know exactly what the impact would be on

Cambridge students, emphasising that the effects would depend upon the University's response. Regardless of the outcomes here, however, he noted that due to the national character of the dispute "it may well affect the availability of results from external markers and examiners".

Previous strikes have received support from CUSU as well as Cambridge Defend Education. Tom Wilson, a member of the Executive of the

Cambridge Universities Labour Club, said: "No one likes it when their course is disrupted, but we must remember that the people who were the driving force behind our fee increases are the same who are now driving down pay of ordinary staff."

"IT MAY WELL AFFECT THE AVAILABILITY OF RESULTS FROM EXTERNAL MARKERS AND EXAMINERS"

"Unified and successful strike action undertaken by students and staff will benefit students too; in the future, sympathetic ears among the staff could mean the difference between achieving what is in the interest of students, and being ignored entirely."

A University spokesman said: "This is a national dispute and the University is represented through the new Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education (JNCHES) framework, supported by UCEA [the Universities and Colleges Employers Association] on behalf of university members."

"In such circumstances it would be inappropriate for the university to comment at this stage. We are monitoring the situation and awaiting further information to be released by the trade unions or by UCEA".



TAKING TO THE STREETS: An estimated 135 Cambridge women took part in a Reclaim the Night protest against sexual violence last week. Lauren Steele, CUSU Women's Officer, told the crowd: "Sexual violence has to stop...We demand to use public space without fear".

Israel Apartheid Week causes controversy

Week-long awareness campaign branded a 'smear' by student

Helen Amos

News Correspondent

Cambridge's Israel Apartheid Week (IAW), an awareness campaign launched on Monday by the Cambridge University Palestine Society, has reignited the ongoing student debate about the Israel-Palestine issue.

Yacoub Kureh, a post-graduate student at Emmanuel and one of the organisers of IAW, said that he hoped that the campaign would educate students about "decades of institutionalised racism, occupation, discrimination, ethnic cleansing [and] diaspora," and about "the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions [BDS] campaign and other nonviolent grassroots movements that aim to dismantle this policy of injustice."

However, Eylon Aslan-Levy, an MPhil student at Girton and blogger for the Times of Israel, has blasted the campaign. "IAW is a nasty smear campaign designed to demonise the Jewish state. It seeks to use an emotive label to obliterate all nuances and deliberately distort the facts," he said.

In response to Aslan-Levy's criticisms, Kureh said: "It's in fact ironic to hear Aslan-Levy accuse IAW of using emotive labels. When he says 'demonise the Jewish state' what he really wants you to hear is 'demonise the Jewish.' We are not trying to obliterate nuance nor distort facts – Israel's policies are apartheid, by definition."

Joel Fenster, a third-year student at Selwyn who campaigns for a two-state



A still from Roadmap to Apartheid, which was screened on Tuesday

solution in the Israel-Palestine region, expressed concerns that IAW is not "in the spirit of constructive dialogue" and said that the use of the word apartheid "does not reflect the complexity of the situation and is misleading".

"Sadly, IAW is focused on pushing a one-sided narrative, which makes it harder for those of us working on creating real dialogue."

However, Paul Rubenstein, a fourth-year computational biology student at Emmanuel, has defended IAW. "There [has been] no hint of anti-semitism, nor [a] dismissal of the concerns of Israelis living in the region today," he said of one of the week's events.

He argues that rather than attacking Israel, IAW is "a call to end policies and practices that have made lives miserable for decades."

The IAW talks and exhibitions aim to "raise awareness of Israel as an apartheid state." Events included a screening of the 2012 documentary Roadmap to Apartheid and a panel discussion entitled: "Separate But Not Equal: Palestinian Refugees' Right of Return".

The status of the Israel-Palestine debate in Cambridge was highlighted last year when Professor Stephen Hawking withdrew from Israel's Presidential Conference at the request of pro-Palestinian activists, in a move that was interpreted as support for BDS.

Respect MP George Galloway last year notoriously walked out on a debate at the Oxford Union after learning that his opponent, Aslan-Levy, then an undergraduate, was an Israeli citizen. "I don't recognise Israel and I don't

debate with Israelis," said Galloway.

Cambridge University Jewish Society does not take a political stance on the issue. "The Society provides social, cultural and educational events for Jewish and non-Jewish students alike and is proud to welcome all students no matter what their religious or political beliefs may be," said President Hilary Davidson.

IAW was established in Toronto in 2005 and has evolved into an annual series of lectures and rallies in 55 countries. Its mission statement says: "IAW has played an important role in raising awareness and disseminating information about Zionism, the Palestinian liberation struggle and its similarities with the indigenous sovereignty struggle in North America and the South African anti-apartheid movement."

NEWS IN BRIEF



Big Bang Theory 'friend equation' for academics

CAMBRIDGE Researchers at the university's Department of Genetics have developed an algorithm for matchmaking academics at conferences. The algorithm has been likened to Sheldon Cooper's 'friend equation' from the American sitcom The Big Bang Theory.

Dr Rafael Carazo-Salas realised that academics are fed up with speed-dating style events at conferences which result in "like sticking with like".

He developed the algorithm to "enable new links to be made" between researchers, trialling it successfully on 40 volunteers.



Cambridge academic wins prize for reducing animals in research

CAMBRIDGE Dr. Meritxell Huch has been awarded a prize from the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in research.

Dr. Huch has developed a method which can be used to grow fully-functional liver tissue from adult mouse stem cells. Thanks to this method, cells from a single mouse could be used to create enough tissue to test 1000 drug compounds, a process which would have previously required 50,000 mice.

Biologists have attempted to grow liver cells for some time, but until now no laboratory had successfully done so.

Dr. Huch is also testing the method on human cells. It is possible that this will allow a patient's own tissue to be grown and used if they require a transplant.



Stag attack victim feels "lucky to be alive"

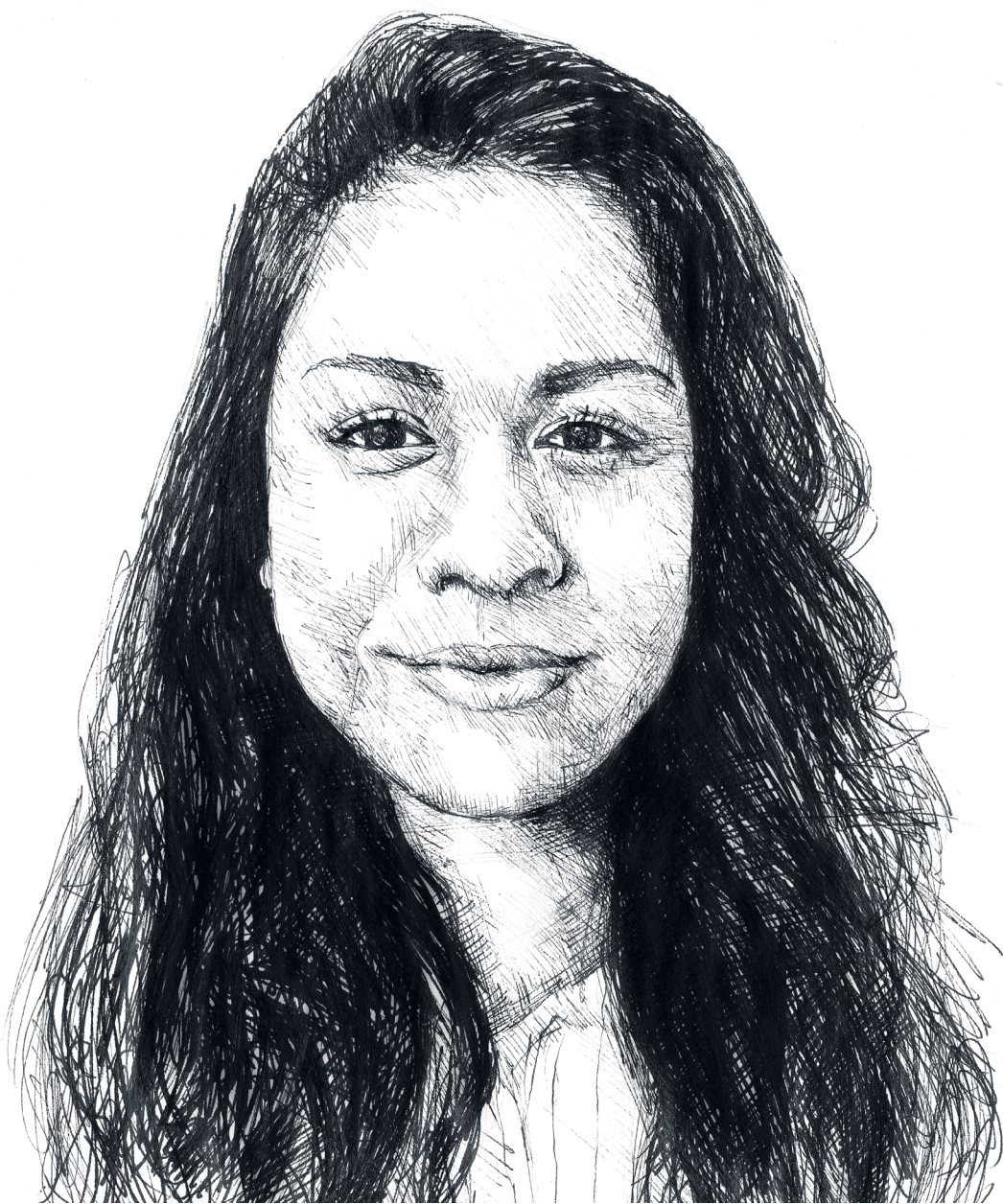
CAMBRIDGE Dr. Kate Stone, a former researcher at the university's Institute for Manufacturing, has said she feels "lucky to be alive" after she was gored in the throat by a stag in Scotland over the New Year.

She is recovering at her sister's home in Dundee, but aims to return to Cambridge to run her high-tech printing firm. She has spoken about her feelings about her injuries: "I'm told it stopped just a few millimetres from my spinal cord. I'm also told that if it had been slightly to the left of the right I would have bled to death at the scene."

She called the realisation that her injuries were life-threatening "strange", and added that she had envisaged dying in a car crash, but now feels that "a stag accident is much more my style."

The Interview: Poppy Noor

THE BENEFITS OF BENEFITS



Amy Hawkins talks to Poppy Noor about teenage homelessness, Trinity College, and thinking differently about the welfare state

“People always talk about people from state schools that go to Cambridge, but, being homeless and going to Cambridge made me feel quite like a fish out of water.” Indeed.

On paper, Poppy Noor’s story is extraordinary. With a difficult family background, her domestic situation eventually escalated to the stage where it was no longer safe for her to stay at home. At the age of 16, Noor was on the streets.

“I’m keen not to make it a sob story,” she tells me in our email exchange before our interview. And in fact, looking at her now, there doesn’t seem much to sob about. Despite her precarious home situation, Noor managed to get a place to read PPS at Trinity College, matriculating in 2009.

She is part of the six per cent of young people in care who make it to university. She now works in local government in London, but has recently been thrown into the spotlight, and has appeared on Channel 4 News flooring the Conservative MP Nigel Mills in a debate about benefits. Noor was invited onto the show after she wrote a column for the Guardian in which she blasts the government’s planned cuts to benefits for the under-25s, benefits that Poppy depended on during her sixth form years.

“I was just annoyed,” Noor says, “I was listening to [people on the radio] argue about Benefits Street and the like, and I just felt really angry that this was the level of debate,

[about] whether or not people had Sky boxes. I just thought that it was so stupid that that was what people were talking about instead of how much [welfare] costs, or how many people are on benefits, or what their ultimate plan is.”

“I feel like there needs to be a concrete definition of where we’re going, because that’s when you get an idea of what people actually believe in.

“If people think that we’re going towards having no welfare state, they’d probably feel differently about cuts than if they think we’re just trying to make work pay or if we’re just trying to help people get jobs, or whatever.”

Noor also sees a problem in apathy of the young people, largely thanks to a feeling of powerlessness: “People in my position don’t really end up interested in politics very often, and I don’t think they often end up having the tools to be able to argue their case, I feel like they’re often ignored.”

Certainly, Noor is not one to be ignored, not to accept powerlessness. This is not the first time she has spoken out on behalf of her often seemingly voiceless generation. While at Cambridge, she vigorously lobbied – much to her tutor’s concern about her studies – for the government to change their policy on youth homelessness. As it stood, if, while being housed by the council you moved out of your borough, for example to go to university, you would be made homeless again.

This is just one of the many deterrents that

Noor and her friends from the hostels she spent her final teenage years in faced when it came to applying to university. Low expectations are part of the problem, she says, arguing that the government should be “celebrating and supporting and encouraging people from hostels who get into university or want to go to university.”

“IF YOU’RE LUCKY YOU’LL GET A JOB AT SAINSBURY’S, AND IF YOU’RE NOT LUCKY YOU’LL GET HIV”

Council workers, although there to help, aren’t always particularly encouraging. “I just think the assumption is always there, that if you’re lucky you’ll get a job at Sainsbury’s, and if you’re not lucky you’ll get HIV, so someone better tell you to use a condom.”

By this measure, Noor was more than lucky. However, to attribute her success to mere luck would belittle her tangible hard work, and the help she received along the way. She realises that she is an exceptional case, and that Cambridge made the difference. “Even for me, it was a big decision to go to university,” she admits, “because you’re giving up all of your security when you come back, and it’s really scary, the idea of not

having somewhere to go when you come back.

“I mean, in the end, after I went to visit Trinity, I just thought I’d be really stupid if I decided not to go, but I don’t know if I would’ve gone if I’d got in somewhere else.”

She worries that the rarity of cases like hers means that there is a lack of pressure to improve the support available. A rebuttal she often faced while lobbying was, she tells me, “Oh, well you know there aren’t really people in your situation, it’s a rare situation.”

Suffice to say life at Cambridge hardly amounts to a typical student experience, but government and university grants made sure that Noor was able to at least enjoy largely the same lifestyle as her peers.

As well as accommodating her in the holidays, Trinity ensured that the smaller aspects of student life were covered as well. She suggests that the college was “so nervous that I would ever feel left out because of money, that if anything probably went the opposite way,” and notes that her tutors would pay for dental appointments, prescriptions – “they paid for me to do everything” Noor adds that if she were at another university, she probably wouldn’t have been able to do lots of the things other students did.

Now, free from a critical dependency on government support, Noor is able to express a more philosophical attitude to benefits. In particular, she is wary of the rhetoric that dominates public debate: “I think that a lot of the time, people talk about the benefits trap,

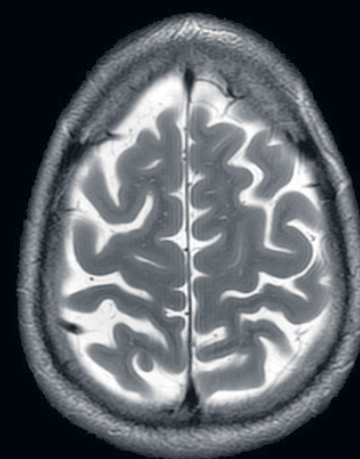
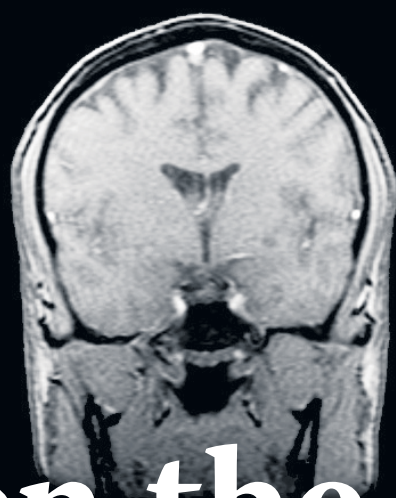
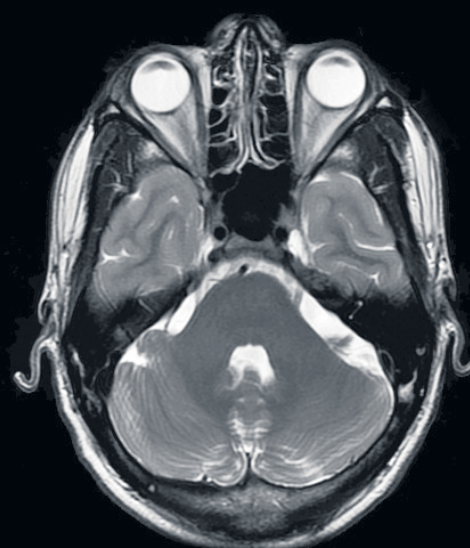
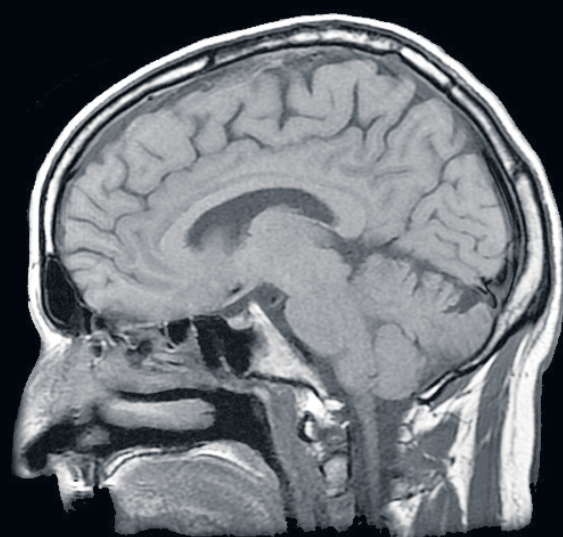
which is a real thing, and is a really important thing.

“But people seem to think that the fact that we have... a system of benefits that traps people means that we should cut benefits. Which is not true. We have a system of benefits that traps people because jobs don’t pay enough, because we subsidise businesses by not paying enough, rents are massively high, there’s inflation and wages aren’t going up.

She continues: “I’m not sure whether I believe in [the idea] that getting rid of the thing that means that you have something to live on when you’re unwell, or out of work, or you’ve lost your job, is a way to deal with the fact that people don’t have money to live.”

However, with regards to the increasingly successful Cambridge Living Wage campaign, with King’s College becoming the latest college to commit to paying the living wage to all its staff, Noor is wary of overly simplifying the matter. “I feel like it’s not an isolated thing,” she tells me. “What’s the point in paying two pounds extra an hour in a climate where people can’t afford to rent a place? I don’t think that colleges paying the living wage is going to deal with the fact that we’ve massively subsidised businesses in our fucking welfare budget.”

Poppy Noor is a remarkable character, to say the least. While she was once a homeless sixteen-year-old fish out of water, she is now making waves out in the real world. However, do not forget that she is a triumph of the welfare state: dismantle it at your peril.



Sex on the Brain

Varsity Science talks to the team examining whether size matters

Robert Cronshaw & Amy Hawkins

Science Correspondents

New research has found that there are a number of differences between the brains of men and women, both in terms of size and composition.

Amber Ruigrok, lead researcher, along with John Suckling and Simon Baron-Cohen, professors from Cam-

bridge's Department of Psychiatry, collated data from 126 studies, encompassing many thousands of brains.

One notable finding was that although men on average have a larger brain volume than women, by a margin of up to 13 per cent, they do not tend to perform better than women in intelligence tests.

"It is important to note that we only investigated sex differences in brain structure," said Ruigrok, a PhD candidate. "Integrating across different levels will be an important goal for future research."

"[Amber] makes it clear that this is purely at the structural level, and that from this we cannot infer anything about function, cognition or behaviour," said Professor Baron-Cohen, a renowned autism expert and author of the controversial book *The Essential Difference*.

The analysis also found that men tend to have a larger and denser hippocampus, the part of the brain that is damaged in people who suffer from depression. Studies have shown that while women are twice as likely to be diagnosed with the illness than men, prevalence is in fact equally likely between the sexes.

The overlap between sex and brain differences "known to be implicated in psychiatric conditions", can no longer be ignored, Ruigrok tells me. Future research should "test whether sex differences in brain structure underlie skewed sex ratios of neurological and psychiatric conditions."

"It is very important to examine males and females independently to investigate if the same brain areas are implicated in the same psychiatric conditions for each sex, or if this differs dependent on sex."

In other words, although there is a

correlation in this study between differences in the size of brain regions and specific neurological and psychiatric conditions associated with those con-

"THE OVERLAP BETWEEN SEX AND BRAIN DIFFERENCES CAN NO LONGER BE IGNORED"

ditions, this evidence is not sufficient to draw any kind of conclusion.

However, it does provide a useful signpost for future research, potentially through investigating sex-specific developmental processes in the brain and whether these differences are related to skewed sex ratios of mental health problems.

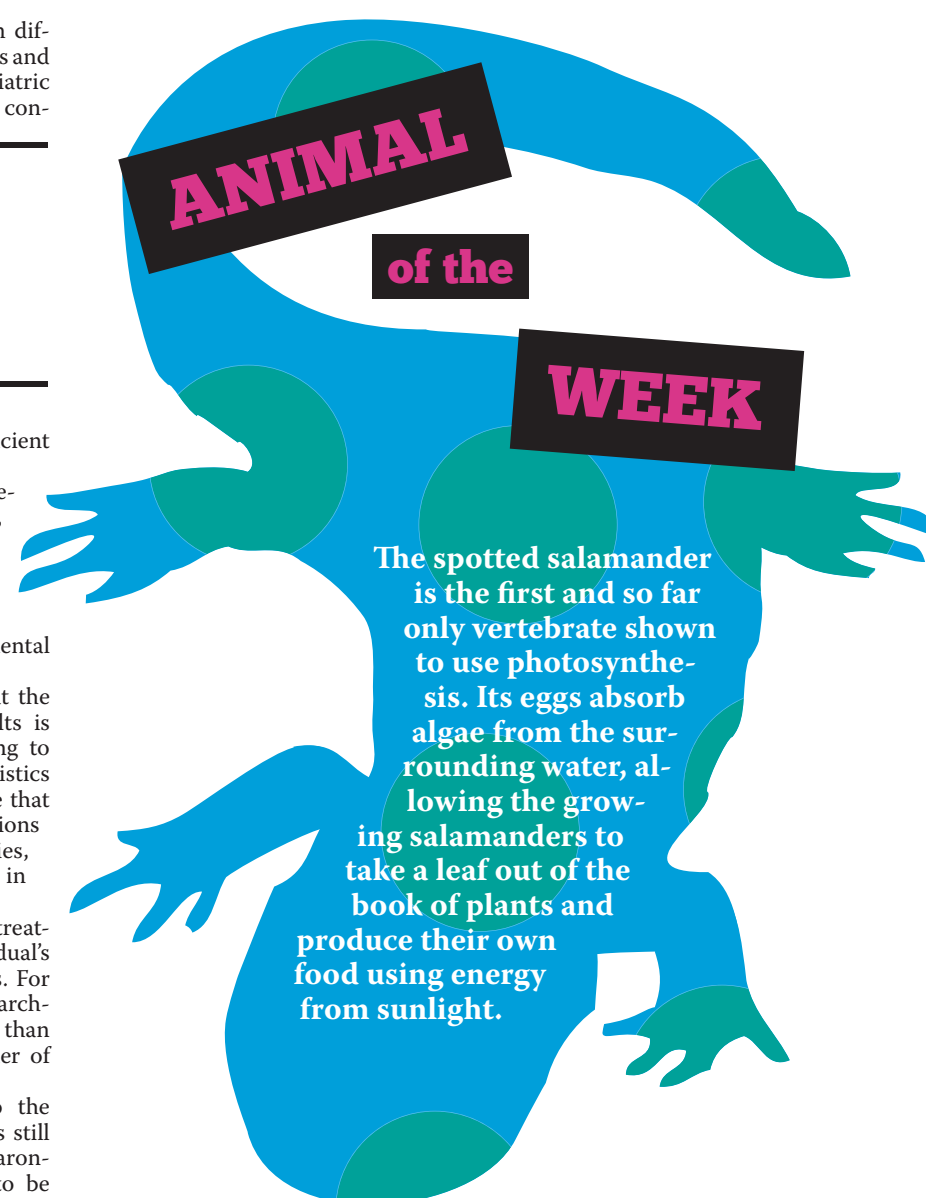
It has already been shown that the manifestation of autism in adults is sex-dependent, with men tending to display more autistic characteristics than women. It is highly possible that other neuro-psychological conditions have sex dependent pathologies, with different changes occurring in the male and female brain.

If so, it may be that future treatments are tailored to an individual's sex to allow for these differences. For this to happen neuroscience researchers will have to be more mindful than ever before of the sex and gender of their research subjects.

However more research into the affect of sex on brain function is still needed. According to Professor Baron-Cohen, "Such influences need to be teased out, one by one."

TOP 5 SCIENCE STORIES

1. **Cannabis** could be **deadly** even when not mixed with other drugs, scientists claim.
2. Researchers have found that a previously unidentified **female mummy** was killed in a South American ritual sacrifice.
3. French researchers have found that brain blood-flow is key to remembering **dreams**.
4. Harvard scientists have produced a new method for **3D printing** of biological **tissue**.
5. Cambridge scientists have discovered the secrets of stick insects' **sticky feet**.



Comment



Harshadha
Balasubramanian

Arriving at Cambridge with a visual impairment presents challenges, but throws up opportunities as well.

Sight loss needn't mean defeat

Thanks to clumsy wording – ‘blindness’, ‘visual impairment’ – when we hear of sight loss we think by default in terms of deficiency, a person manqué, drastically different from fellow humans who are apparently whole.

Such terminology obscures the fact that sight loss can also be an excellent opportunity for the individual and their surroundings to undergo some positive changes. As one who fully satisfies all of the above conditions, a few weeks living and studying in Cambridge was enough for me to acknowledge this truth.

On an individual level, sight loss may threaten to confine you in social and intellectual darkness, but can also fling the doors open to fresh light. Problem-solving skills, wild imagination, and confidence can actually be built on the loss of sight. But how?

Think of your first Michaelmas term! After having spent hours listening to a screen-reading software monotonously announcing the glory of each event and society, you eventually admit you can't attend most of them. They are located in vague corners of Cambridge you have not yet ventured to, and you can feel them mockingly glaring out of a Google Map you cannot read.

It is often possible, as I do, to drag reluctant friends along, to desperately

try to learn your own way between lectures, essay deadlines, and rowing outings, or, indeed, to gently coerce an organiser to walk there and back with you. Finding the first and last options rather uncomfortable, and the second occasionally unfeasible, I decided instead to organise my own events and assist in starting up non-profit endeavours, gladly helping myself to some leadership and event management skills at the same time. Sight loss does not have to mean defeat.

Similarly, the detrimental impact of sight loss can often result in the sharpening and growing appreciation of other senses, especially as you dodge between Cambridge's spellbound tourists and its equally stubborn and obstructive trees on Sidgwick Avenue. Doing all of this and still arriving at 9am lectures is bound to boost any individual's confidence.

Sight loss has also proven an opportunity to come upon original interpretations in academia. As a student of Social Anthropology, it's perhaps only normal, albeit impractical, that I watch ethnographic film. The absence of vision here has enabled me to grasp that understanding the “other” in Social Anthropology can frequently shed light on one's own cultural reality, specifically the fact that we all have vastly contrasting ways of perceiving the world, even while

sharing common nationalities, values, and interests. Developing these ideas to further and more powerful insights comes easily with a wild imagination, especially that stretched from years of addressing questions from the brain that the eyes cannot answer.

The paralympic sport Goalball demonstrates the creativity of people affected by sight loss, determined not to be inhibited by prevailing cultural attitudes. It consists of blindfolded players aiming to score goals with a ball that contains bells for sound recognition. This venture has put Cambridge on the Goalball map; two of the city's players currently compete on the British team and are potential Rio 2016 paralympians.

My dedication to rowing encouraged Selwyn College Boat Club to go out of their way to make me feel at home in a boat. From simple things like attaching a straw to blades for tactile marking, to planning in numerous individual training sessions, to providing focused technical coaching, they have taken the leap, paving the way towards more accessible rowing at Cambridge.

Sight loss awakes us to the fact that our built environments only suit certain needs and not others, of which those resulting from sight loss are only a small proportion. Most government policies seek to understand how to

best tackle the medical consequences or economic problems experienced by those with a visual impairment, often without considering the importance of reforming attitudes towards such disabilities and appreciating the innumerable contributions of those affected.

In Cambridge, I witness such small changes occurring as those going about their daily routine on a busy bridge pause to make way or move obstacles as I approach. They consciously recognise the difficulties of the environment, and take responsibility to rebuild it for others. Such considerations improve all pedestrian journeys, regardless of sight loss.

They also make other people aware that their surroundings are not in any sense finished or complete; they don't have to stay exactly as they are, and can be remade to the benefit of all through the smallest of actions and considerations.

We must continue to search beyond the negativity generated by the rhetoric of “lacking” to become more aware of the abundance of brilliant opportunities ignited by sight loss, of which this article is indeed one. Undoubtedly, there is still much that the individual and our surroundings have to undertake, but my experiences suggest that both can gain as much as they lose from visual impairment.



Harriet Cartledge

Get-a-Job disease is sweeping the country, and we're all struggling to fight it.

Job snobbery: a new pandemic

News just in: a terrifying new epidemic is spreading through Cambridge and other universities across the country. The situation is progressing at such alarming speed that reports suggest that the threat is in fact close to being upgraded to pandemic status.

It seems that many intelligent Cambridge students have been infected by the dreaded ‘ergophilis digestivum’ virus, commonly known as ‘Get-A-Job’ disease. The disease seems to infect those in their final year of study in particular – something about the gaping void of an unplanned future seems to make these students, for some unknown reason, especially susceptible to the virus.

This horrifying parasite compels its human hosts to accept jobs at firms that their parents haven't heard of or in sectors that are a bit ‘iffy’, leaving them hideously disfigured by alleviated student loans and friends from outside the Oxbridge bubble.

We spoke to three Cambridge students who reflect the majority of views across the university. Many of their friends have been stricken by the illness, going to work at sewage companies and lesser-known accountancy firms.

“I'd rather live in a bin and

scavenge from abandoned Gardies boxes than work in a high-up management position at McDonald's,” said one interviewee. “At least that way I could live with some dignity.”

“I want a job where I can use my Master's degree in Classics,” said another, “and I'm not willing to compromise simply because I can get all the benefits of a high-profile company at a lesser-known firm, even if it does have more potential for long term growth and promotion prospects.”

100 percent of our interviewees complain of general feeling of hopelessness about the future, and rumours of a graduate position at Aldi with a £40,000 starting salary have only fuelled complaints that there are no good jobs any more. Current advice is for students to put off graduation at all costs, and instead to discover a never-before-manifest love for Management Studies. Ill-advised postgraduate programmes and trips to Africa to ‘find oneself’ also exhibit similar levels of efficacy.

And those who accept places in professions that are beneath them often find themselves paying for their decision in other ways too. One recent graduate, who wishes to remain unnamed, has said that she feels alienated since accepting a

competitively-paid position at a lowly energy company: “When my friends talk about how they aren't earning any money, I feel left out. A lot of the time, I think it would be better to be massively in debt and chase a big-name company than to earn a living at a decent if less prestigious firm.”

Lizzie Brown added: “It seems if you don't work at a Goldman Sachs or a McKinsey type firm, then you really are missing out on...something. I feel really ashamed to be earning an honest living at a solid company that provides many with valuable services and resources.”

Despite its devastating effects, some are saying that the contagious spread of ‘ergophilis digestivum’ may be a good thing, forcing those who refuse to work to enter the jobs market, which has famously been doing great the past few years.

“My kids are lazy and do nothing all day except watch Take Me Out – a good dose of ergophilis would be just what they need,” said mum-of-two Barbara, as she attempted to spatula her daughter off the sofa. “I just don't understand: they've never had to work for anything their entire lives so why would they expect to not have to work for things now?”

However, recent polls suggest

that one of the main reasons young people go to university was ‘to make myself attractive to prospective employers’, closely followed by ‘to get away from my annoying younger brother’, and ‘to feel dead brainy’.

Combined with the expanding cost of higher education, it seems that seeing university as a path to more highly-skilled jobs is the key to why young graduates have been holding out for some kind of return on their investment: usually in the form of a job that they couldn't have got had they left school after completing Pokémon Sapphire.

Nevertheless, the financial crisis, the rising levels of tuition debts and the subsequent need to pay them off can only account for so much.

“Too many whingers, that's the problem. Not the ‘economy’, whatever hocus-pocus that is,” said one high-level government official who graduated in a jobs boom and rolled into a law firm with a Third.

“If you won't get a minimum-wage job cleaning up coffee-flavour baby-sick in Nero's just because you feel that, as a graduate who's spent a great deal on their education, you should be working in a graduate job, then you are a job snob – no two ways about it.”

Have
any views
on this week's
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—AND WHY DO YOU BELIEVE YOU DESERVE THIS POSITION?
—WELL . . . I'M A TALKING BEAR FOR GOD'S SAKE



The great Teach First debate



Morwenna Jones

FOR

No other graduate scheme in The Times' top 100 is criticised quite like Teach First. Currently the top graduate recruiter in the UK, it seems like a mere vehicle for Russell Group graduates wanting a shortcut into an easy career.

Of all the assumptions, the saying 'Teach First, then get a better job,' gets thrown around the most. But those who use it miss the point. In a recent interview, James Westhead, Teach First's Director of External Relations, said that "schools need high-quality teachers in order to succeed and that's what Teach First is all about." This is evident in BBC3's Tough Young Teachers, a series that follows six

new Teach First recruits. The show is firsthand evidence that the graduates-turned-teachers don't need more than two years to make a positive impact – they need a few weeks. Teach First may not encourage a long career in teaching but it encourages something far more important: a career that can make a difference.

In reality, the difference that Teach First teachers make may not necessarily occur in the teaching profession. Indeed, the second part of the saying, 'then get a better job,' is heavily ironic as 70 per cent of recruits go on to have careers in education. Accordingly, to complain about Teach First being used as a stepladder for power-hungry graduates is to complain about Teach First putting the brains of those power-hungry graduates, all of whom

have achieved at least a 2:1 in their degrees, to good use in changing the education system. Few would disagree with the long-term benefits the programme offers.

So students who five years ago would have walked into Deloitte, PwC or the Civil Service are now changing the face of education. What's in it for the graduates who essentially sacrifice just under half their potential salary in order to work the same hours, with far less material compensation?

In the first place, there's the intrinsic reward derived from teaching and the satisfaction of making a difference to the lives of struggling students. But even more so, what other graduate scheme is going to give you complete authority? Where else are you going to have total responsibility for your

results? Who can give you the chance to make a difference after only six weeks of training? When it comes to leadership opportunities and the chance to work for a scheme that is still rapidly expanding and has huge potential, no other graduate scheme can match Teach First.

People have different reasons for going into Teach First. For some, it's a means of entering their dream career without having to spend more time in education getting a PGCE. For others, it's a way to give something back. For others still, it's the company that trained the teacher who helped them pass their GCSEs. Teach First offers everybody something, and to condemn it is to condemn the most powerful instrument for educational change we've seen this century.

AGAINST

We probably all had an inspirational teacher at school who encouraged us to aim for A*s and to apply to Cambridge. This breed of life-changing teachers is what Teach First is trying to cultivate in targeting people who succeeded academically at school and beyond. Indeed, fewer than one in five Teach First graduates didn't go to a Russell Group institution.

However, more than half of these graduates leave the teaching profession within five years: a much larger proportion than those who joined teaching via other routes. So why can't Teach First keep these graduates teaching?

For many, the programme is more of a 'gap year job' rather than the first step in a teaching career. The programme lasts two years, after which a large number of the teachers move on to other professions. For them, Teach First is a chance to give something back to those in need. The recent BBC3 series Tough Young Teachers featured a number of graduates from privileged, privately-educated backgrounds who stated that they wanted to help those less fortunate than them.

A commendable ambition this may be, but being a teacher as a charitable pit-stop before another career is likely to do more damage than good. Most teachers will have had to study for the year-long Postgraduate Certificate of Education, the professional equivalent of the Graduate Diploma of Law,

which lets non-law graduates practise law, while the Teach First graduates get a paltry six weeks' training. This means that the Teach First teachers are unlikely to be outstanding teachers in their first two years, even if they have the potential to be if they pursued a career as a teacher.

Moreover, this lack of preparation makes the job of the Teach First graduate incredibly challenging. Unrealistic workloads, all-nighters and a diet of caffeine may be familiar to Cantabs, but at least as students we don't have to put up with mouthy teens, nor are we responsible for the education of hundreds of students.

Despite six weeks' holiday in summer, term time is a veritable nightmare for any teacher, and especially an inexperienced, under-qualified

graduate teacher. In Tough Young Teachers, Science teacher Claudenia actually fell asleep during one of her classes as she had been up all night planning lessons.

Admittedly, this kind of pressure and stress is to be found in other graduate jobs, but they tend to be a lot better remunerated: even Gove's new pay scheme won't see a new teacher on a salary anything like a peer's pay package in the City. And it is this kind of financial comparison that really makes Teach First unworkable. Even graduate civil servants, with the benefit of swanky Whitehall offices and no boisterous kids, earn more than graduate teachers.

More should be done to get the best people into teaching, but not in the form of Teach First.



Will Amor

Voices from the Syrian front

A View from the Bridge

Alice Udale-Smith

Congratulations, you've made it to the end of Lent! Except, of course, in the calendar sense, in which case Lent doesn't start for another week. But it's not just students who will be celebrating the Easter break: one taxi driver has complained to Cambridge News that he has been having increasing problems with drunk ARU students throwing up in his cab, refusing to pay and even threatening to beat him up – leading him to contact the police.

Bad behaviour isn't just confined to the young. This week a Cambridgeshire county councillor and his wife pleaded guilty to £25,000 worth of benefit fraud, after lying about where they lived to claim income support. The councillor was suspended from UKIP following the charges last month. He must have realised then that things were really going badly if his party considered him more offensive than Godfrey Bloom.

In breaking news elsewhere, it was revealed that being self-deprecating in order to get people to like you actually works. This week Russia poked fun at its own technical problems in the Olympic opening ceremony by recreating the now infamous failure of the fifth Olympic ring to light up, this time with people. The rest of the world reacted with surprise, mostly because until then we'd all assumed Russians lacked a sense of humour, before immediately deciding that Russia perhaps wasn't so bad after all (as long as we all conveniently forgot the whole LGBT+ issue and massive corruption).

I would like to propose that, purely for research purposes, we all start making each essay worse than the previous one in order to see whether this makes our supervisors like us more. Just please don't tell your DoS I told you to.

Finally, I feel I must apologise to you all. Last issue I mentioned that I was expecting Big Things from this year's CUSU candidates: if Oxford could have a President who promised a monorail, surely we could come up with something weirder? Personally I would vote for anybody who offered to permanently freeze the Cam, simultaneously freeing the University of boats and providing us with a Luge track to entertain ourselves post-Winter Olympics.

Sadly however, I've been once again disappointed by this year's student elections. Of the six CUSU sabbatical positions, one is contested, three have one candidate and two nobody could even be bothered to stand for. The one silver lining is that this announcement has made the election so boring that even the student newspapers will be tired of it come Monday. So at least on voting day you'll be spared the distress of having to articulate quite how much you don't care.



Chris Hitchcock

The Syrian conflict has now dominated headlines for over three years. Here, a year-abroad student reflects on the surprising views of refugees who have escaped to neighbouring Jordan.

Despite being on my year abroad in Jordan, I know only a handful of Jordanians. This is largely because, through a series of choices, half-coincidences, and lucky chances, I have ended up ensconcing myself in the Syrian community here in the city of Amman – a community made up, for the most part, of refugees (officially registered or otherwise) fleeing the awful humanitarian situation in their country.

I've made a lot of friends here, had a lot of fun, and acquired plenty of anecdotes completely unrelated to the ongoing revolution, but inevitably discussion often turns to politics, and what Syrians have to say about the crisis is often not what you'd expect.

It would be silly to claim that the people I've spoken to here are universally representative: they're almost all active or semi-active members of the opposition, with well-formed political views and a strong desire to talk about them and to ask their own questions of me. I obviously can't present every single story or opinion I've heard – but I'd like to try and bring out some of the common threads that have emerged in conversation.

People regularly stress that there is no sectarian element to the conflict in Syria, or rather, there are no underlying sectarian tensions. Often people elaborate on this by explaining that while sectarian elements have come to the fore – and that the Alawites in particular, the religious group President Assad's family are from, have attached themselves solidly to the regime – these problems were not present before the revolution.

A friend of mine has told me many times about close Alawite friends of his from home, many of whom were active in the opposition before the revolution. He also regularly mentions Christian friends of his family. Even those people who are quick to describe the Alawite faith and Shi'i Islam as 'not real religions' (in contrast to Christianity, Judaism and Sunni Islam) tend to stress that this is nevertheless none of their business. Any sectarianism now present is attributed, generally, to the regime's tactic of 'divide and conquer'.

People were and remain generally supportive of Western intervention, although they tend to emphasise the difference between a 'new colonialism' and a humanitarian intervention. People have asked me exasperatedly why the British parliament voted against intervening in Syria, with their own conclusions generally being either callousness or stupidity.

It's also striking that individuals often are very curious to know (and, if necessary, discredit) the Western view of the conflict, and also of Islam and Arabs in general. I still haven't come up with a pithy answer for "What is your opinion of Muslims?" despite having been asked over fifty times, and I have no idea how I am supposed to respond to "What are the main flaws of the Arabs, in your opinion?" More generally, people are usually convinced that Western media is exaggeratedly pro-Israel and anti-Arab.

People in general are perhaps understandably given to mistrusting the media; several Syrians who follow Western newspapers have angrily

denounced the BBC or Fox News for its lies or misreporting on a given incident. At the same time, there is a powerful rumour-mill. Friends of mine (who work with many other Syrians) heard from their friends there that there was soon to be an election announced – the election never materialised.

Also surprising is that attitudes towards Islamist groups are mixed and ambiguous. Although people usually leap to condemn al-Qaeda, it doesn't necessarily follow that their politics will be anti-Islamist. My friend regularly argues for the restoration of the Caliphate (an Islamic state) in our conversations, while also referring to the common tropes of liberal democracy – the nation-state, fair and free elections, and so on.

These ideas, for many, are in no way contradictory. As for the al-Nusra Front (a branch of al-Qaeda), most people I have spoken to – including some whose political orientations you could definitely describe as Islamist – resent the idea that the Front wants to assert its own idea of Islam. One of my friends asked me, rhetorically, "Do they know better than me what Islam is?"

These are, of course, just some of the many issues and points of dispute surrounding the Syrian revolution, a conflict which remains both complicated and obfuscated by a lack of clear data and the preference of media for a compelling, cohesive narrative. We must not allow these narratives to drown out the voices of individual Syrians, who are, after all, those who hold the highest stake in the future of their country.

Stating the Bloom-ing obvious



James Mottram

The CUCA Chairman defends his decision to invite the controversial Godfrey Bloom to speak.

There has been some comment on my decision to invite Godfrey Bloom, the previously UKIP MEP, as a speaker at a Cambridge University Conservative Association event earlier this term. Several of these negative remarks have sought to criticise the Association for welcoming a speaker they described as "sexist, homophobic, and xenophobic." Yet during the course of the evening I, and those I have spoken to who were actually in attendance, found Mr Bloom to be none of these things.

It's perhaps unsurprising that such charges would be levelled at a man who has been demonised in the media for certain turns of phrase, but as most of the public appreciated at the time, terms such as 'Bongo-Bongo land' and a joke in which he referred to his own supporters as 'sluts' indicate not retrograde views but rather an irreverent sense of humour, something rare among the bland majority of contemporary politicians. This judgement was certainly confirmed for those of us who had the pleasure of meeting him.

But more important than the fact that Mr Bloom proved the aspersions on his character to be false, was the fact that he was willing to engage and be challenged. After his talk Mr Bloom took many questions from the audience and was happy to give full and honest answers to all of them.

These included questions on

immigration and gay marriage, in response to which he indicated his concerns on both topics arose not from bigotry but in the former case from economic arguments, and in the case of gay marriage a fear of inadequate protection for religious dissenters against European courts. After the event was finished he was also happy to carry on discussion and debate with many members in the bar.

Even had Mr Bloom proved to be the villain he has been slandered as

"I WOULD CERTAINLY REPEAT MY INVITATION TO MR BLOOM"

by the national media, this willingness to engage would, to my mind, confirm the wisdom of my decision to invite him.

CUCA is not a branch of the Conservative Party; our Committee is not responsible for 'endorsing' any person by inviting them. Our responsibility is solely to our members, to provide them with the opportunity to hear, meet and preferably interact with interesting speakers.

We fulfil that duty best by inviting speakers who will do something more than simply trot out a party line that can be heard every evening on

Newsnight. Along with Mr Bloom this term we have hosted Members of Parliament Jacob Rees-Mogg and Chloe Smith, both fascinating speakers with perspectives that cannot in anyway be described as dull. In the past we have welcomed Norman Tebbit, Nigel Farage, and Roger Scruton, along with many other speakers who have challenged the views and preconceptions of our members and engaged them in dialogue.

Mr Bloom certainly fit the model of a speaker we always aspire to invite: not only this eagerness to fully engage, but also an entertaining manner of speaking, views which may not get adequate exposure in usual media coverage of politics, and a reputation that will draw a high attendance not only from our members but from students at large.

CUCA is at its best when we fulfil our aspiration to provide our members with the opportunities to develop and challenge their beliefs, to explore new ideas and encounter the most capable or infamous figures of right-wing politics. University is a time for broadening one's mind and seeking out new experiences and perspectives, and university politics should be no different.

Were I in a position to make the same decision again I would certainly repeat my invitation to Mr Bloom, if anything more confidently with the benefit of hindsight.



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THE ART OF THE AWARD

Come this Sunday, much of the world – or at least all of its film critics – will watch with bated breath as a series of small gold men are doled out among film's best and brightest, in honour of the industry's 86th annual Academy Awards. But as we mark another occasion of executives and official rigmarole, to what extend should we think of this as merely an arbitrary recognition of the gradual progression of the cinematic mainstream?

Increasingly, it seems that the (in) famous Oscars are little more than a glorified ceremony of self-congratulation for cinema's most commanding, rewarding the well-funded efforts of a few well-placed individuals to mass market apparently radical, remarkably conventional re-workings of the

American Dream.

The whole nature of the awards, televised since 1953, and now with increasing emphasis placed on the performances and set pieces that intersperse the actual announcements, contribute to an understanding of the event as just that – an event, a celebration. A retrospective of the year in 35mm, if you will, but hardly an occasion to hold up real artistic experimentation, or herald the eventual realisation of cinema's potential as a tool for cultural reflection and revolution.

Nowadays, some people seem more preoccupied with the colour schemes that are being traipsed down the red carpet than the actual content of what is being applauded, just another off shoot of the Academy Award's slow metamorphosis into a gargantuan, grotesque marketing campaign.

In the wake of the box office bulldozer that was *American Hustle*, much attention has been given to the tactics of the one-man conglomerate that is Harvey Weinstein, co-founder of Miramax and co-chairman of the Weinstein Company. He is a man who has, in just over two decades in the industry, racked up something near an astounding 300 nominations, in the process garnering himself a reputation as the definitive, and most dastardly player in the great Oscar game.

Such is Weinstein's commitment to the campaign, that last year found him recruiting Obama's former public relations officer and campaign manager to handle *Silver Linings Playbook*'s part in the contest. He was also once quoted quipping, "What can I say? If you're Billy the Kid and people around you die of natural causes, everyone

thinks you shot them?" – a remarkably jovial response to the allegations of his involvement in a smear campaign against *Slumdog Millionaire*.

Ethics aside, all of this embodies everything that is exactly unbearable about the Oscars and their symbolism of corporate-funded attempts to steam roll their competitors into submission. That people are discussing terms of games and strategy should surely be evidence enough of the futility of a set of awards that appear to be up for sale, if Weinstein's budgets are anything to go by.

It's not just the economic element of the Oscars that render them arbitrary, but the extent to which they sometimes seem preoccupied with the worthiness of what's in the race. This year particularly, discussion of deservedness abounds. If these were awards based

on art alone, should the fact that Leonardo DiCaprio has been nominated three, four, five times without success be of any relevance?

And why is Matthew McConaughey's weight loss such a source of overawed fascination? Amy Poehler provided the most insightful – if unrelated to this debate – final word on the matter when she pointed out that this was exactly what every woman ever put in front of a camera had been asked to do.

But it does nonetheless raise an interesting debate about the relevance of an actor's commitment to the production – and the industry as a whole – to an award that should surely be primarily about performance alone?

This is before you even get caught up in the Academy's preoccupation with both conservatism, an uneasiness that might well damage the chances of Steve McQueen and company, and self-congratulation, which paid off well last year for Silver Linings Playbook and its charming, if hardly ground-breaking portrait of mental health.

All of this is wading dangerously deeper into the murky waters of the merits of awarding art altogether. Obviously recognition is crucial, especially in today's cut-throat economy, where the prestige that accompanies a prize can make or break a box office run. In the same vein, the value of awards, particularly in cinema, as an otherwise unprecedented showcase

through which they can speak to, and be seen by, a much larger audience should never be downplayed, or arguably discouraged. The Oscars, and all of their other institutional counterparts, play a vital role in providing a platform for lesser-known, equally evocative and important cinema.

“Going to the cinema should not be a passive experience, existing solely within the cinematic walls”

However, the very categories that many of these offer up remain bland and generic in the face of the sheer variety and scope of today's cinematic spectrum. How can we ever even pretend to qualify what is best or better?

This article is presuming that cinema, or at least cinema as “good art”, does not have the standardised measures that are needed to rank and rate their relative performance.

My frustrations with a series of institutions that insist on the head-to-head confrontations and comparisons that these measures necessitate – an ele-

ment of the whole awards season that is underlined again and again by the accompanying commentary, littered throughout with reference to the ‘race’ and its ‘contenders’ – are more apparent than ever before with the diversity of this year's nominees.

Any cinema-goer who has seen both Chiwetel Ejiofor's painfully dignified performance in Steve McQueen's 12 Years a Slave and DiCaprio's despotic turn as Jordan Belfort in The Wolf of Wall Street, will realise the impossibility of ever finding common ground on which to assess the two. In fact, it would be hard to find a more polarised, but nonetheless equally enrapturing pair – and therein lays the essential problem of awarding art.

Film is powerful, or at least it can be, and while Michael Bay's ever expanding repertoire might not lend itself to deeper artistic evaluation, film relies on debate and discussion. A good film – an Oscar worthy film, if you will – should provoke argument among its audience. Going to the cinema, much like reading a great novel or wandering through an extraordinary exhibition, should not be a passive experience, existing solely within the confines of its cinematic walls and lasting an average of 120 minutes.

As small, freestanding snap shots of social commentary and cultural portraits, cinema has the potential to open up a conversation with its viewers. Whether it be about the moral-

ity of our deeply entrenched capitalist mantras (The Wolf of Wall Street), or the collapse of historic tendencies to mute or romanticise the African American experience (12 Years a Slave), or even the ethics behind the faceless, soulless drugs companies that control our health (Dallas Buyers Club), film should say something and it should encourage its audience to say something back.

The winner-loser dichotomy and competitive, market-driven rhetoric that is fuelled by award season blunts all of this, transforming the cinematic experience into a series of statistics and tick box achievements.

Ultimately, it seems to me that cinema can be more thorough and fairer in its recognition through reviews, rather than reducing it to the possession of a single, quite small statuette, which may or may not be the product (among other things) of an exceptional spin doctor. Just as you cannot condense the power of performances or cultural impact of a piece of drama into sculpted metal, neither can you measure merit – and we should stop trying.

When Weinstein looks to his unprecedented achievements in facts and figures, he may well feel, and rightly so, that he has won the Academy Awards hoopla, but surely there's more to cinema than just jumping through hoops?

Helena Pike

WATERSPRITE

Cambridge's international film festival is just around the corner. Varsity talks to Marianne Styger, director of this year's event



CHRIS WILLAMSON

Q: What do you think of the Cambridge film scene?

A: It's increasing, definitely. What's really reassuring is that the more people we speak to about Watersprite, the more people then want to go and make a film.

But it is difficult when the ADC has such popularity in Cambridge, and that's how people see entertainment in Cambridge. It's definitely the more prevalent art form.

Q: Any advice for students in Cambridge who want to get involved with film?

A: Well join the committee...It's a really great way to learn about filmmaking in Cambridge, in the sense that there are several different facets and forms you can get involved with, be it the awards side or the events side.

Q: What has been your favorite Watersprite moment?

A: In my first year we had Bill Nighy speak, so as a very intimidated fresher that was very funny.

Q: What would you say is the purpose of the festival?

A: We want to help nurture the next generation of student filmmakers. While you think filmmaking is becoming more accessible, it's actually becoming more opaque in a way.

Q: Are there any events that you're specifically looking forward to?

A: Yeah, I am actually really intrigued – we have a talk called Journey into Film Design and it traces the art department side of filmmaking. I think that's a really fascinating way of looking at it, because so much of film has become technical now, but there still is this tradition and it's still a form of art and a very creative process, so I'm really looking forward to that one.

FESTIVAL

PICKS

DIRECTING

Border patrol (Germany)

The plans of two border cops are thwarted when they find a suicide victim in the woods.

FICTION

A Hard World (Iceland)

A struggling young boy is instructed by a stranger on how to stand up for himself.

ACTING

Seagulls (Belgium)

Two young actors struggle to exist together outside of their fictional lives.

ANIMATION

Wedding Cake (Germany)

A couple made of marzipan come to life and attempt to create a perfect marriage out of icing.

SCREENPLAY

More Than Two Hours (Italy)

A boy and a girl wander the streets at night, looking for a hospital.



Jackson Caines asks why the music scene in Cambridge isn't all it should be

When it comes to the geography of British popular music, Cambridge isn't the first town to spring to mind. Certain northern cities are inseparably linked to their musical heritage, from Liverpool and the Beatles to Manchester and the Smiths. London, meanwhile, has produced too many great bands to list. But Cambridge? The town's links to Pink Floyd might be celebrated on the refurbished walls of The Anchor, but the truth is that while Syd Barrett and Roger Waters grew up here, the band met at art school in London. Fast-forward to 2014 and Jesus College alumni Clean Bandit have just topped the charts with *Rather Be* – but personally I'd prefer to let the dust settle before we elevate Clean Bandit's brand of classical-electronic fusion to the status of greatness.

The dearth of notable Cambridge bands starts to make sense when you size up its current music scene. My friends studying at Manchester, Leeds and Bristol tell me that the live music scenes there are vibrant ones. Not only do plenty of students form bands but the variety of genres is huge, and there are numerous serious music venues to play.

Not so at Cambridge. Any student who frequents the occasional live music nights held at The Fountain can tell you that there are a handful of bands that play every time. Among these are Lorelai, Dirty Blonde, Laurie Lewis and The Fat Cats, Wuthering Wuthering and my own band Venus Envy. I like to think that we are invited back so often because our set goes down well, but whatever the truth in this, I know it's also partly due to the fact that event organisers at Cambridge don't exactly have the luxury of choice when it comes to finding acts. Form a band in

Cambridge and it's not hard to join this privileged musical coterie – demand simply outstrips supply.

Why, in a town bursting with musical talent, is this the case? Why is the music scene not characterised by the same richness, variety and high standards that our student drama is world famous for? Perhaps the answer lies in Cambridge's size. It is the large cities, after all, that spawn the majority of household names. A smaller town equals fewer venues and fewer live music opportunities.

Sophie Grant, singer in soul-pop sextet Lorelai, sees Cambridge's size as a mixed blessing: "There tends to be only one event on a night so it's easy to get a good crowd, but then obviously there's much less variety in what's being put out there. People like Cambridge Creatives are doing a great job at publicising new and interesting Cambridge artists, but more could definitely be done to provide more and varied opportunities for musicians."

Size matters, then, but as we all know it's not everything. I suspect there are other obstacles to a thriving music scene that are more specific to Cambridge – the difficulty of time management, for one. Great bands don't magically become great; all the innate talent in the world is no replacement for regular rehearsals, the countless hours essential for familiarising yourself with your fellow band members' styles and 'finding your sound'. For students at some universities this indulgence is feasible, at Cambridge, it's problematic at best, academic suicide at worst.

In Venus Envy we're all committed to the band and in theory would love to rehearse three or four times a week. But the reality of workloads (our bassist is a NatSci), not

to mention the limited availability of the Churchill rehearsal room, means we're lucky if we manage two. No one in Cambridge is immune to the time problem: it extends from the musicians themselves to event organisers. "I think student-organised gigs can be a bit limited simply because people have a lot on their plates," says Ruby Zajac, of folk trio Daughters of Delamere. "There definitely is a music scene for singer/songwriters and folk musicians, which is my thing – you just have to think outside the college bar box."

"I think the music scene's pretty good," says Guy Clark, guitarist of Dirty Blonde. "Institutions like Clare Ents and the new Maypole Folk Nights are really good for giving live acts a chance."

"WHEN STUDENT GIGS ARE ORGANISED, THE QUALITY OF THE SET-UP OFTEN LEAVES MUCH TO BE DESIRED."

However the fact remains that when student gigs are organised, the quality of the set-up often leaves much to be desired. Drummers are asked to bring not just sticks but snare drums and cymbals; feeble PA systems leave singers drowned out; guitarists have to lug their amps around, and this means bands have to rely on taxis; playing music quickly becomes a pricey pastime.

College rehearsal rooms, too, are rarely designed with bands in mind. Some have a drum kit, fewer have amps, and fewer still have a PA. This isn't a problem for

string quartets and close harmony groups, but if you're in a band it can feel like Cambridge is conspiring against you.

There is a certain type of gig, of course, which promises a much more professional experience. This brings us to a distinctive quirk of the Cambridge music scene: May balls. May Week provides the exceptional few days of the Cambridge calendar during which live music enjoys some prominence. Ball guests have come to expect a set menu of contrasting styles: the chart hits medley band, the reggae group, the acoustic-guitar crooner etc. These musicians tend to have one thing in common: they play covers. Covers can be counted on to go down well in any setting, which is why they are encouraged. In other words: tuxedoed, inebriated ball guests want something they can sing along to. The side-effect of this policy is a certain reluctance among both musicians and organisers to take risks. And I'd argue that, fun as May balls may be, the wider Cambridge music scene is poorer for it.

My interest in bands shouldn't, of course, obscure other dimensions of Cambridge music. The classical scene is thriving. Most colleges have a chapel choir, and there are plenty of elite orchestras and chamber groups. In many ways the classical scene is as busy and productive a universe as the ADC. And while jazz cannot quite claim the same prestige, there are a handful of excellent big bands.

When it comes to rock and pop, though, Cambridge will never become a hub for live music unless we make a concerted effort to challenge the status quo. This means fewer nights at Cindies and more at The Fountain. But no one ever started a revolution in Cambridge with that battle cry, did they?

INTO THE WILD



Jilly Luke talks to Cambridge literary phenomenon Rob Macfarlane about the language of nature, and the nature of language

Harshly lit by the bluing hard sun that February hoards for itself, college gardens in winter both promise delights to come and hold beauty at hand. Emmanuel College's garden holds for me a russet-branched birch tree, a paddling of ducks, and nature writer and English fellow Robert Macfarlane, who wants to introduce me to trees.

The crown of Emmanuel is its Japanese Plane Tree which roots again and again wherever it throws its branches down. The tree has been there for hundreds of years, watching the station and the college, wintering its leaves down on heads and buses and bikes. We walk in and around it for a while, feeling our smallness.

Retiring inside, Macfarlane describes his love of wild places as going back as long as he can remember, to his childhood "in deep England at the end of a country lane in Nottinghamshire" and holidays spent on Scottish mountainsides.

Wildness is a difficult term, uncertain of its place in a "post-natural world". Macfarlane says he began his book *The Wild Places* with a "blithe ignorant definition" of the wild as "a place absolutely beyond human influence, which is untenable in the British context and almost disposed of in a global context". However, he says, "if you

dismiss with the deeply troublesome idea that the wild is some pure zone or realm then it becomes much more interesting."

While attracted initially to "very remote and high places", Macfarlane has increasingly been interested in the idea of the wild as a complicated and difficult place: "I recently spent three or four days under Paris in the catacombs there working out what a city is like from the inside and underside out and up".

Recourse to nature has long been held as a tonic for trauma. Might it be – whisper it – that most "culturally contraband" of words 'spiritual'? Macfarlane says he finds himself reaching for a "semi-sacred language" to describe the gift and good of landscape: "I am interested in the very private processes of consolation and grace and happiness and beauty and encounters with wonder that go on throughout the country on a personal moment by moment basis."

David Cameron is a man well aware of the consolatory abilities of landscape. Macfarlane charges him with "encouraging a cosy, cupcakeified, Hunter-wellied vision of the rural landscape, with which the brutalities of austerity politics can usefully be softened and foliaged." He suggests that "it serves as a kind of green ketamine in

the water, a means of encouraging us all to Keep Calm and Carry On."

Macfarlane is gently but firmly indignant at this posturing, noting that former environment secretary Caroline Spelman "tried to sell off the forests" while "Owen 'Badgers Moved My Goalposts' Paterson" has proposed an "offsetting scheme for ancient woodland which is earmarked for destruction, as if a 400-year-old oak forest is a fungible asset."

Macfarlane's books, which are made up of the lightest of lyrics, the most heady of myths and warmest of histories all at once, do not come to him easily: "I re-write obsessively. Each sentence will be re-written fifty or sixty times and my books take me five years."

"Light is a non-verbal medium and scent and air and atmosphere and all the things that make up what we call landscape," he explains. "Cliché is always prowling at the perimeter because so many people write about landscape and landscape has attracted this layer of cliché which clings to it and is hard to get through."

Macfarlane takes great pleasure in the layered density of place names and a sense of knowing your own landscape: "Language is a way of bringing us into careful intimacy with places." He is

an appreciator of the small beauty of colloquial words and names. In Sussex, a "smeuse" is the small hole left in a hedge where an animal has moved through it repeatedly and thawing is given the "compressed poetry" of "ungive" – "that still stops me short."

The acknowledgements at the back of his latest book *The Old Ways* include a healthy list of musicians – "I'm a total Johnny Flynn fangirl." The fruitful conversation with other artists into which Macfarlane's work can be brought is emblemised by the writer's real life walk along Holloway Road with folk musician Frank Turner, talking about "the strange way that a city street can possess the same layered density as a deep Dorset lane."

These close artistic ties include a friendship with the sculptor Steve Dilworth, who made Macfarlane a sculpture of "a dead starling encased in dolerite with bronze legs and a vial of ink gagging its beak open." He pauses: "I haven't subjected it to intense interpretation."

Macfarlane was the chair of the 2013 Man Booker Prize jury, a job which allowed him to "read a year's dreams and visions of writers from around the Anglophone world." But how to even begin to judge a book? He laughs and with up-turned palms says: "You read it."

A Closer Look: Bonington

Gabrielle Watts takes a closer look at what's on display in the Fitzwilliam

'Boccadasse, Genoa, with Monte Fasce in the background' is a long title for a painting that is beautiful in its simplicity. Depicting both coast and town, with mountains swallowed by rolling clouds in the background, and gold skeins over the shallows which dominate the foreground, it is easy to see why Bonington acquired so great a reputation for his landscapes.

It is also easy to understand the placing of the piece: tucked in a corner just outside the Impressionists gallery, since it is here as in his other works that the artist quite clearly

anticipates the later mastery of his neighbours across the channel.

The painting, oil on board, makes good use of the softness that that medium allows. Light is used brilliantly here: the sandbank on which seagulls perch is left gleaming. Next to the sea, sun-baked houses, both cream and muted beige, play nicely in a contrast of texture with the water.

The palette of the painting is aesthetically pleasing: gold, blue and white recall the idylls of summer, and it is no great leap to find romanticism in Bonington's work. In the background, the

mountains master a quiet drama – their monumental forms echo that of the towering clouds, and as their foothills fall down into the sea, so their shadows become the darker blue of deep water.

This is an ideal painting for inviting meditation – in the masterful reflections edged into the shallows, in the brief humanising touch of a woman in the foreground. It is the landscape's dreamlike atmosphere that makes it enchanting, somehow recalling Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, both Hushabye Mountain and Lullaby Bay.



THE LENT DELUSION

As exams loom closer, bitter black coffee pervades the air and an icy draft whistles through the windows, the prospect of pre-Easter abstinence looms ever closer. Our flesh seems sufficiently flagellated by each morning's battle to awaken our corpse-like frames. So why do we still give things up for Lent, voluntarily furthering this hardship? Why do even the most secular of us jump at the chance to renounce our afternoon Snickers for forty days and nights?

Lent is a kind of second-chance for the New Year's resolutions we threw out with the leftover sprouts. A year is a jolly long time; a month without indulgence seems more achievable. With the most common resolution being to lose weight, popular choices for Lenten abstinence – chocolate, alcohol, junk food – offer another shot at bodily perfection. Spring sunshine on our shoulders, we have greater hope than our fatter and more hung-over January counterparts that a bikini body is just around the corner.

During the Middle Ages, Lenten fasting involved purgation of the sinful flesh: 'Shrove Tuesday' originates with being 'shriven' through Catholic confession. There remains a delicious sense of self-sacrifice in indulging this Miltonian 'purification by trial'. We can draw parallels between our

beer-free bops and our ancestors' weeks of near-starvation. Except we are still warm, healthy and allowed to eat lasagne. Ironically, even a late medieval faster was mimicking the hardship of former generations. Pope Gregory I ordered that believers abstain from "flesh meat, and from all things that come from flesh, as milk, cheese, and eggs". But the rules relaxed to allow not only fish, but also (bizarrely) puffins and beaver tail. For centuries we've been enjoying the benefits of self-imposed suffering while minimising our actual denial as much as possible.

There remains an undercurrent of piety in Lenten abstinence. Friends might tut at the prospect of the 5/2 diet, but tell them it's for Lent and see the approval pour in. We demand alcohol-free wine, super-foods and sympathy for a hardship that is, essentially, self-inflicted. We masquerade as Mother Teresa while striving for Cara Delevingne. The promise of celestial reward still lingers in every Kit Kat we forego; and even the most irreverent can dress up their vanity as moral fervour.

And, of course, we cut things out to convince ourselves we don't need them. Like a raging drug addict insisting it's a 'lifestyle choice', somehow turning down a Burger King

seems a noble gesture against being defined by consumerism, pretending we can give it all up whenever we want. The adolescent idealist beaten down by years of cynicism is allowed to emerge once more, whispering that all this 'stuff' isn't that great anyway.

As students reel off their lists of forbidden goodies: sugar, carbohydrates, foods containing the letter 'e', it seems many of us don't even expect to succeed. Lent is a time of possibility; the icy puddles reflect the selves we could be if we didn't spend so much time chugging Sainsbury's Basics wine. We purge ourselves of alcohol and chocolate to mirror an internal cleansing, yet another chance for reinvention. But this self-discipline can verge on procrastination. If we can just keep our sticky fingers from the biscuit tin, it feels more acceptable to hand in a mediocre essay or stay in watching 4oD instead of rallying for the living wage.

In the twenty-first century, Lent means passivity, not activity; abstaining rather than initiating. We can do nothing, and still manage to retain our demeanour of gleeful smugness. Lent is a time to surprise ourselves, or to wearily recognise we are exactly as we thought.

Sarah Howden



True Star Cocktail

Ingredients:
Ice
Shot of gin
Dash of caster sugar
Squirt of lemon juice
Sparkling white wine

Instructions:
1. Put your ice, gin, sugar and lemon juice into a jam jar. Give it a good shake.
2. Strain into a glass (discarding the ice) and top with your wine.
3. Stir it like the star you are.
4. Adorn with a thin slice of lemon and treat your companions to a rousing acceptance speech as they thank you profusely for their drinks.

Gigi Perry

The Oscars

Roll out the red carpet, get out the gold men! The Oscars have arrived. Embrace the glitz and glamour as a prelude to May Week. Admittedly, the cobbled streets of Cambridge won't play host to Leo or Judi but we can nevertheless celebrate the 86th Academy Awards, Cambridge-style.

For flicks with kicks, check out the student membership deal at the Arts Picturehouse. For just £10, they offer a huge variety of benefits and discounts.

Or throw an Oscar-themed bash. Decor: red and gold. Drink: Gigi's True Star Cocktail. Outcome: simply fabulous, darling.

Blockbuster Taste

Who says popcorn is only for eating?

To recreate the taste of the movies, try this salted caramel popcorn flavoured vodka, available from Sainsbury's.

Oddka do a whole range of fantastic flavours (from Fresh Cut Grass to Electricity) but this one's a winner when it comes to celebrating the Oscars.

Enjoy straight or drop a shot (or two) into a mug before topping with hot chocolate. For the hot chocolate, melt chunks of bitter dark chocolate into steaming milk.





By Shrove, you've got it!

Ingredients

2 cups plain flour, pinch of salt, 2 eggs, 2.5 cups milk, knob of unsalted butter.

Instructions

1. Sieve the flour into a big bowl and add the salt. Add both eggs and gradually beat into the flour to incorporate them. You're looking to eliminate bumps or lumps. Add one cup of milk and beat. Add the rest of the milk and stir into the mixture before leaving the batter to chill in the fridge.
2. When you're ready to eat, heat a frying pan and drop in some butter. Swirl around before spooning in enough batter to thinly coat the base of your pan. Cook until the bottom is golden before flipping. If you're confident, the no-utensil flip is darned impressive. If you're

unsure then incorporate a sneaky spatula into the move.

3. With both sides golden and bespeckled, slide the beauty onto a plate. Either serve the pancakes as they are ready (these are best devoured hot) or you can cover them with a cloth to keep warm.

To top it off

For something simple and spectacular, enjoy your cake with a squeeze of fresh lemon juice and a scattering of sugar. There is, however, much comfort and pleasure to be gleaned from different toppings. An easy deviation from the traditional is to substitute the lemon juice for orange and caster sugar for brown. A gloriously decadent alternative is to serve with whipped cream, melted dark chocolate and berries. My personal favourite is lemon curd, thick cream and crushed meringues.

3 OF THE BEST MEN'S SWEATERS

1. Jemporium Vintage, Grafton Centre
Check out this independent vintage shop to nab yourself a bargain. With Cosby-style sweaters as well as more conservative pieces, this is the place for one-off gems.

2. Dogfish Men, Trinity Street
If you're after a simple yet casual knit to bridge the seasonal gap, here's your place. With staple sweaters from Barbour, Carhartt and Folk Clothing you'll be spoilt for choice.

3. Giulio, King Street
You don't have to be male or in looking for a sweater to fall in love with this store. Stand out from the crowd with their orange crocodile knit jumper. For a more day-to-day piece, their Acne range is sure to hit the spot.

Tales from Tinder

RICH: "It's pretty addictive. I know a girl from Magdalene with over a thousand matches"

JESS: "My friend met an England rugby player through Tinder - Marland Yarde - and went on a couple of dates with him. They had sushi on their second date"

AMY: "My friend went on a tinder date with a guy who 'worked in music' at the Junction. She queued for an hour by herself before he turned up because he 'doesn't do queues' and it turned out he in fact worked in McDonalds"

JUDITH: "I'm hideously generous with my Tinder likes"

Best Chat

SAM: "Hey babes. What has seventy two teeth and holds back the Incredible Hulk? My zipper"

JOSH: "I bet your name is Jacob. You're a real cracker"

WILL: "You are one hot slice of berry pie"

"Voulez vous coucher avec moi ce soir?". This isn't just a Labelle lyric, but also the opening line of a recent Tinder encounter. At least it made more of an attempt at class than, "Sit on my William?", though it lacked the wit of another charmer's "You're saucier than a direct hit from the Heinz factory".

Tinder: the smartphone dating app that blends profile matches and texting. Or, as urban dictionary puts it, "The McDonalds for sex". It gathers basic information from your Facebook profile to match you with like-minded people. Compatibility is based on geographical location and mutual friends and interests. For the uninitiated: you see their photograph, then swipe right to like or

left to disregard. It's all anonymous until someone you 'like', likes you back. Thumb's the word. And then you chat. And the rest, as they say, is history?

According to Tinder, it is. The app claims to generate more than six million matches a day, and says there have been fifty resulting marriage proposals. Such is its popularity that a new condition has been diagnosed: Tinderitis. The localised pain is, apparently, a harmful side effect of incessant swiping. It has even widened our vocabulary, seeing the invention

of novel terms such as 'tindericide', 'tinderoni' and 'tindernoia', among others.

Many students need a helping hand on the dating front, yet on-line options seem more reserved for those in their thirties. Hello, Tinder! Little time investment is required, ditto personal information and it can be passed off as a bit of fun. It gives us the confidence we might have lacked in reality. It has encouraged a dating revival.

It is well-suited to our time-deprived lives. Five minutes of bored

procrastination in the library? What better way to pass the time than checking out the locals? And most of them, you already know. Countless Cambridge hook-ups happen thanks to Tinder. That guy you met on a swap? Check. The girl you spotted in the UL? Ditto. Pre-Tinder, you had to hope to somehow bump into them in Fez, or embrace the bold Facebook add. Now, there is an alternative. All without the fear of rejection: because Tinder appears to suggest suitors at random, if that girl hasn't liked you back, it might just be

because she hasn't come across your profile...

Is there any validity in judging others solely by their appearance? This is, indeed, part of Tinder's charm. We constantly judge people on appearance, and Tinder rewards this. Judgement is the name of the game.

It appeals to our ego, tapping into what we all want to know: who, of those we find attractive, is attracted to us. Matching with the guy you've been checking out is instantly gratifying, and adds to the addictive nature of the app, fuelling a craving for approval. And all without emotional investment. As a generation with a craving for immediacy and a reliance on smartphones, it seems fitting to surrender even this aspect of our lives to our hand-held device.

Love me Tinder

Gigi Perry on Tinder charm and chastity

Fallen Decadence





*Styling by Jacob Mallinson Bird. Make-up by Olivia Galvin and Jacob Mallinson Bird. Photographed by Barney Couch.
Models: Ruth Jenkins, Sarah-Jane Ewart and Marina McKennel
Clothes: Sian Hoffman, The Model Traitor, Christian Louboutin, Hermes, Versace and models' own.*



Another Line

What can we learn from the reception of *The Other Line*?

ARON PENCZU

1. Reviews vary. Of the four which *The Other Line* received, two gave it five stars (Varsity and the Tab); one four (CTR); and one six points out of ten (TCS). They varied in length (from 396 to 612 words), in formality, in quality, and in subject matter.

2. Reviews converge. Each touched on plot. Each admired the acting; three singled out Mary Galloway ('Mads') for praise. All four reviewers were women. Each mentioned the feminist angle.

3. Reviews diverge. The feminist angle was a source of disagreement. An extended debate in the Tab comments about female-written ADC shows does little to illuminate Sophie Williams's claim that *The Other Line* is "important historically and politically." Hannah Greenstreet is probably closer to the truth in admitting that "the play itself is not an excoriating interrogation of gender relations. But why should it be?" Why indeed? Marketing aside, it seems incidental that it has no real male parts.

4. Reviews converge and diverge at the same time. You might call this the paradiastole effect: the rhetorical term for making virtue of a vice. (A coward is cautious, a simpleton sincere.) Sophie Williams and Becky Rosenberg thought the play-world's "restrictive reproductive policy" was subtle and believable; Hannah Greenstreet labelled it gratuitous, and Sian Avery felt the "play struggles to focus on any one subject". They comment on precisely the same thing – the tangible distance between emotion and politics in *The Other Line*, its refusal to adopt a decisive position on the policy – to conclude opposite things.

(I'm kind of with the naysayers on this one: I don't quite see what the play is targeting. It keeps mentioning China: are 'thresholds' and 'implants' analogous to the much-maligned One Child Policy? Or are they aimed more generally, at policies that restrict control over one's own body – abortion laws, for example? It's not impossible that the system was both well-introduced – that is, piecemeal; avoiding clunky exposition – and implausible.)

5. *The Other Line* was good. If Sophie Williams's exuberance feels exaggerated ("I couldn't help but admire everything they have done here"), it is also understandable. So much in the play was splendidly done that it's frightening it was done by people my age.

6. *The Other Line* wasn't perfect. You assume you don't adjust your standards *too* much for student writing, but it's probably no coincidence that only the severest review didn't mention its writers, Ellen Robertson and Hellie Cranney. They are indisputably brilliant. But elements of the play – cringe-making comedy revolving around the handling of a homosexual relationship, for example – may have been less happily received from a known playwright.

7. Reviews matter. Fallible, certainly; but useful catalysts for critical thought and debate all the same.



The Duchess of Malfi

T. S. Eliot famously said that Jacobean dramatist John Webster was much possessed with death, and saw "the skull beneath the skin" in every act on stage. In none of Webster's plays can the skull be seen so clearly leering through the drawn, waxen flesh as in *The Duchess of Malfi*.

Death pervades this tale of love, corruption, and the violent domination of women. In an attempt to secure her own happiness, the Duchess of Malfi, played by Charlotte Quinney, marries against the wishes of her tyrannical brothers – Ferdinand and the Cardinal – to the lowly Antonio. This starts a chain of events which result in tragedy and the merciless shedding of innocent blood.

Isabelle Kettle, the production's director, acknowledges that the more sensational aspects of the Duchess's plight may be the ones which draw people in. She herself laughingly quips that she thinks "sex and violence are really interesting". It is the characterisation which has helped the play endure, however, and this was what attracted her to directing it, in particular the role of the Duchess – a rare example of a woman at the centre of a Jacobean tragedy. Quinney notes that what Webster seems to be doing for the first time is portraying a woman who "isn't

all about chastity". She is a strong woman, and one "whose desire is given value within the play". There is also interest for the actors in the role reversal between Antonio and the Duchess: "She has the power, she comes onto him". This production stages Antonio as the "wife-figure" to the Duchess. It is these ideas of gender, sex, and power that Quinney says she would sell the play on.

What immediately becomes clear of the cast and crew is the delight they take in their characters and Webster's idiosyncratic dialogue for each. "They're real", says Quinney, and as a result Kettle is determined to put the emphasis on the characters in this reading of the play. "It's not trying to get across any message", she asserts, and her aim is for the audience to "find the truth in it through the actors and through the relationships". As much as the characters strive to find their own individuality and meaning in an oppressive and masculine world, so must the audience in the course of the play.

The actors hope to induce the same emotional intensity that they experienced in rehearsing this play. Quinney admits freely that she felt overwhelmed by *The Duchess of Malfi* at times. Kettle has sought to rack up the emotional turmoil, and "there will be a strong sense as the play goes through – and everything collapses and unravels

– likewise the set is going to do the same." Sound will also play an important role in the production, descending into a mix of broken chords and jarring sharps to match the scenery. They create a sense of a "whole world being deconstructed" as the tragedy tightens its grip on the characters.

This production is set against a backdrop of Italian Fascism in 1933. Kettle states that when she was reading the play the idea of Fascism illuminated her understanding of it: it seemed to be a natural fit. Says James Bloor, who plays Ferdinand, "What is contained in fascism, which focuses this play", is its ideological nucleus: "one, strength; two, control; and three, order. And purity comes out of order, and control of women comes out of strength and order".

The cast and crew express some dissatisfaction with updates of plays which add aesthetic effects but contribute little to meaning. Bloor remarks that a traditional "costume drama" feels too much like a story and produces something that feels distant. That is the very antithesis of Quinney's *Duchess*, and I hope they will succeed in creating the forceful, realistic and nuanced production they hope to.

Charlotte Taylor
The Duchess of Malfi runs at the ADC from
Tuesday 25 February to Saturday 1 March.

Les Parents Terribles



Eloise Davies reports on an unconventional interview with the team behind Les Parents Terribles...

There's a charming simplicity in George Kan's reason for directing Cocteau's *Les Parents Terribles*: "It's just a good play". This is no groundbreaking project, looking to push the boundaries of theatre. What it does look guaranteed to provide, however, is a highly entertaining evening out.

Written during an eight day opium binge, the play is an unusual mix of parts. Even Kan finds its intentions somewhat confusing; "Some scenes it's like farce, and then suddenly there's some strange sincerity about love. Part truth, part melodrama, part comedy, part not – it's just the right zone for me. He thinks he's written a kitchen sink drama, but it's Cocteau's kitchen, so it's on opium and bears no relation to reality."

The cast seem well-suited to represent this world of endearing chaos, although they assure me that they have not tried rehearsing on opium themselves. Our interview is filled with relaxed laughing and joking, sporadic interruption from the door alarm, a monologue about gloves and a discussion of what the directors would do if the actors mutinied and started a spontaneous sword-fight on stage (put on a blackout, if you were wondering).

For all that, this is a play with a dark side. You just "end up enjoying the characters' tragedy because it's so twisted", explains

Olivia Morgan, Assistant Director, "It's a hard play to work with. I would be a bad farce if you played it too comically – you have to try and get the truth of the characters."

Particularly striking are the incestual undercurrents: Georges (Raph Wakefield) is married to Yvonne (Yasmin Freeman), but unhappy because his wife's excessive love for their son Michel (Jamie Armitage) leaves him feeling excluded. Yvonne's sister, Léo (Ella Konzon), also lives with them. She has always loved Georges, but had to accept that he married her sister instead. To further complicate things, Michel is in love with Madeleine (Kay Dent), who just happens to also be his father's mistress. As Freeman puts it, "It's like Cocteau took the character list and then scribbled all over it – that's the relationship."

I have to ask one irresistible question. Given the incest in the play, do they feel they've become particularly – um – close as a cast?

"In some ways!" laughs Konzon, "There is a certain degree of intimacy..."

"Though I hope that nothing quite like that happens to any of us in real life!" says Morgan.

Incest is not the only theme that has brought the play critical opprobrium in the past. Dominic Cavendish once said that the role of Yvonne "flirts with misogynist caricature". The cast, however, are unanimous in

disagreement.

"She's a very interesting character – so uncommonly textured," responds Freeman, "There are definite moments of sympathy for her, when you see how she's been driven to her incestuous, weird, unbalanced nature. She's not a submissive character."

"The family revolves round her craziness. There'd be a huge void without her," continues Morgan.

"The men in the play are the ones who are being messed around – the women have the upper hand – especially Léo. And Madeleine's got a lot of power over both Georges and Michel" Konzon adds.

How does Kay Dent, playing Madeleine, deal with that level of admiration? "Oh, I'm used to it – it's great," she jokes.

Freeman can see something of the point Cavendish is making, though. "I suppose you could read Yvonne as creating the problems, by making Georges so impotent as the head of the household, and she has a very hysterical nature. But then Léo is such a contrast, so there's a very mixed dynamic, and no stereotypes."

"Yes, I'd say I've worked with many characters like Georges before, he's normal," agrees Morgan, "But the female characters are very different. I've never worked with a Léo or Yvonne before. Every character had a really distinctive voice, and we've spent most of the rehearsal time on that. We had to be

very careful to make sure they were the right people at the auditions. Léo's definitely the hardest. Ella's got very hard things to convey, but she's also a character that can't be very facially expressive and Ella had to get out of her eyebrow raising tendencies. It's all about watching her eyes for expression."

Konzon has been rehearsing with a cigarette to try and create this facially relaxed performance. It's been very successful, although unfortunately the Corpus Playroom rules don't allow smoking during a show.

Kan is disappointed. "The play's not really related to time and place, but it has got that air of culture, opera and smoky flamboyance."

The intimate Corpus set does have its advantages though, and Morgan hopes this will create the claustrophobia of the family flat for the audience: "The play's so dependent on the relationships. The atmosphere changes with every character that enters and exits. It's all about who's in the next room..."

Dramatic tension even manages to seep into our interview. "You haven't given away the ending have you?" asks Kan of the cast.

They had not, did not, and would not. So it seems the only way to discover the secret is to go buy a ticket.

Les Parents Terribles runs at 7pm from March 4 to March 8 at the Corpus Playroom.

Pornography

ADC Theatre, 26th Feb to 1st March, 11pm
Reviewed by Alice Corr



When you choose to stage a play called *Pornography*, you know you are courting controversy. The Clare Actors took up the challenge with their unnerving and at times underwhelming production of Simon Stephens's insight into our national psyche during the week of the 2005 London bombings.

The complex and abstract play is a brave undertaking for director Maddie Skipsey, whose admirable interpretation is critical to the play's success. Stephens's instructions are that *Pornography* can have any number of actors, and that its scenes can be performed in any order. What we get is a cast of seven who, through monologues and ensemble pieces, relate the ostensibly unconnected stories of eight people in London over the days surrounding 7/7.

The voyeurism implicit in *Pornography* is captured effectively throughout. All of the characters engage in some form of forbidden activity, whether a schoolboy stalking his teacher (Harry Gower), siblings entering into an incestuous relationship (Laura Waldren and Lilly Lindon), or setting off to commit a terrorist attack. Audiovisual material is used well, reinforcing the pornographic treatment of modern living: contemporary news reports are screened at the back of the stage, styling terrorism for our consumption.

The production's most triumphant scene is its ensemble portrayal of the bomber en route to destruction. The



acting is powerful and engaging; the way the cast conveys the physical space of a bus, train or tube trip is utterly compelling, and the bomber's thrill as he heads towards the euphoric act of terror is tangible. The play succeeds in making us ultimately complicit in the devastation, revealing to us our own destructive tendencies.

Outside the ensemble scenes, however, the acting is weaker. The cast's portrayal of relationships and emotions all too often lacks authenticity. The pace drags at times, and, while the humour provides light relief, its otherwise effective delivery was let

down by what appeared to be the odd on-stage giggle.

While we never escape the sense of unease that pervades the play, it is not always for the right reasons and the lack of emotional engagement is disappointing. The production is at its most successful when we are drawn into the humanity of its characters, and Laura Waldren as the troubled, incestuous sister deserves particular mention in this regard. However, it never feels controversial, provocative or poignant, which, for a play entitled *Pornography*, can leave the audience feeling rather short-changed.

What's Trending?



Roughts @Rebekah-Miron Clayton (★★★★)

"the whole production team is to be applauded for successfully tackling such a strange and challenging pair of Beckett's pieces."



On Her Majesty's Business @ChloeCliffordAstbury (★★★)

"Often humorous (...) many roared with laughter (...) far from unpleasant."



Footlights Smoker @LilyLindon (★★★★)

"A number of themes recurred in sketches throughout the evening"



Grey Matters @SiobhanFlesher (★★★★)

"the most accessible portrayal of mental illness I have ever encountered"



Don Giovanni @ImogenSebba (★★★★)

"the cast (...) and orchestra below were bursting with talent"



Murder in a Cathedral @KenzaBryan (★★★★★)

"truly masterful, relying only on the strength of its acting and the ethereal setting"



Science! The Musical @JamesTaylor (★★★★)

"a light-hearted tale (...) packed with charmingly bad puns and amusingly ill-fitting rhymes"



Things I've learnt from awards season

Fiona Stainer

The Oscars this Sunday mark the end of awards season: sad news for statuette engravers, excellent news for my productivity levels.

The amount of times in the last few months that my friends and I could be found hidden in the library scrolling through red carpet photos and poring over dresses, when we should have been poring over journal articles, are too numerous to bear thinking about. It hasn't been a complete waste of time, though.* Here are some things I've learnt:

How to combine work with my addiction to live feeds. Twitter is bad enough, but awards season is a different ball game entirely. The good news is I've got pretty good at pretending to read articles while stealthily refreshing a tab on my phone every three minutes for news of further wins.

I should never designate the morning after an awards ceremony for important work because I will invariably end up flicking between fashion blogs and YouTube as I deconstruct every wardrobe decision and watch every single acceptance speech and press room video available.

I must accept that I will never be as classy as Lupita Nyong'o. I can't decide if her best look was the bright blue SAG awards dress or the emerald green Dior gown she sported at the BAFTAs. I just know that I really need to borrow one of them for May Week.

Critics love to moralise. It's all 'Everyone must watch 12 Years a Slave for its stark portrayal of slavery', and 'No one should watch The Wolf of Wall Street unless they support exploiting the poor and degrading women'. Yes, everyone should watch 12 Years a Slave, but everyone should watch The Wolf of Wall Street as well. Why? Because they're both brilliant films. I'd like to think that I have enough of a moral compass myself to acknowledge that the behaviour exhibited by DiCaprio et al is probably not the epitome of moral conduct.

This Jennifer Lawrence infatuation is getting out of hand. It's not like I don't love her. I'll be the first to admit that I've spent slightly too long watching her photobombing Sarah Jessica Parker, revelled perhaps a little too much in my 'Awards Season J-Law' result on BuzzFeed's 'Which Jennifer Lawrence are you?' quiz, and would cite the microwave incident in American Hustle as one of my favourite cinema moments of the season. But truthfully, that Golden Globe probably belonged to Lupita. Ditto the BAFTA.

So hurry along Oscars, and allow me to bring this prolonged period of procrastination to a close. Oh, and please keep your speeches brief and your dresses unremarkable – I've got an essay to write on Monday.

*Okay. It probably has.

House of Cards, Season 2

Netflix



If you haven't watched Season One of House of Cards, my advice is to do so, now! Binges of the show are so addictive (Netflix releases all the episodes on the same day) that once you've watched the opening episode, you can look forward to a productivity-free weekend as you become captivated by Spacey's North Carolina accent. The way he pronounces 'Majority whip', 'where', or any word with 'wh' in it is worth a Netflix subscription alone.

Season Two begins where Season One left off. Francis Underwood (Spacey) has been told he's to be Vice President of the United States. Zoe Barnes, journalist and Underwood's former extramarital interest is, with her colleague Janine Skorsky and her boyfriend Lucas Goodwin, trying to uncover how Underwood got the position. Claire, Francis' wife, remains stuck in a bitter court battle. Douglas Stamper (Underwood's right hand man) is working to keep his boss safe and Raymond Tusk, the nuclear magnate and power hungry advisor to the President remains a pain in Underwood's Peachoid.

Season Two's opening lacks the humour of Season One. There are fewer dramatic asides from



NETFLIX

Underwood which sends a very clear message: Underwood is, for now, in control of who, how and why he speaks to people. That's not to say there isn't humour - Underwood now smokes an e-cigarette and delivers the line "Addiction without the consequences" with a confidence that will probably be appropriated in future advert campaigns - but what's on the line for each character in this season is more important.

Netflix's model of releasing the episodes all at once is something I applaud. I hope it continues for many more shows in the future. Although Game of Thrones continues to rake in the awards and the viewership ratings, it is also a show that fails to be formally progressive. It is the most pirated show on the planet and this, surely, must be down to the fact that they sporadically release episodes at different times in different places.

House of Cards' supreme greatness lies both in its narrative and the progressiveness of its format. I'm looking forward to watching the rest of Season Two and the third

season when it finally comes out (reportedly in 2015).

David Godwin

From Root to Tip: Botanical Art

Fitzwilliam Museum, until 11th May



Located in the Shiba Gallery at the Fitzwilliam Museum, this exhibition is the perfect choice to usher in the spring. A selection of watercolours by both professional and amateur British artists, it draws on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Though one may not expect the sort of drama that can be found in the neighbouring John Craxton exhibition, this small space is full of unexpected stories.

Among the artists whose work is exhibited is Mary Moser (1744-1819), the first woman in Britain to pursue a professional career as a flower painter and one of the Royal Academy's two female founding members. A painting of hers that stands out is from a series in which the season of a bouquet is matched to the corresponding zodiac on the vase in which it was painted.

While Moser and others were clearly painting flowers for their own sake, others are more functional. On one end of this spectrum are the mixed flowers painted by Franz Andreas Bauer (1758-1840). These flowers border a whimsical note written from Sir



THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM

Joseph Banks to Princess Elizabeth, daughter of George III. Among its most delightful details are the Banksia flowers as a visual pun below Banks' name. At the other end, Georg Ehret's paintings are diagrammatic, carefully deconstructed and labelled. Next to the splendour of roses, weeds add welcome diversity. Among these is an illustration of Cat's Ear by Paxton Chadwick, commissioned by Penguin books.

Finally, there are some that represent remarkable flowers in themselves: one such specimen is the Hibiscus Splendens drawn by W Green. The plant, notoriously difficult to bring to bloom, had flowered under the care of W H Osborn in Birmingham the previous year.

An attractive plant native to Eastern Australia, Hibiscus Splendens and other newly accessible varieties of flower contributed to the popularity of botanical drawing in this period. The exhibition finishes on the 11th of May and is the perfect remedy to the stresses of weeks 7 and 8, and a gentle segue into the new season.

Gabrielle Watts

EVENT

Watersprite

The Cambridge International Student Film Festival featuring talks from Rob Brydon and Richard Curtis - and it's all free!

7th-9th March
John's Divinity School
www.watersprite.org.uk



WATERSPRITE

Nymphomaniac

Lars von Trier



If, as Alfred Hitchcock says, "The length of a film should be directly related to the endurance of the human bladder," it would seem Lars Von Trier has got it all wrong. Though the Picturehouse were particularly cruel in screening the two parts of his Nymphomaniac back-to-back (albeit with a brief, merciful interval), each

part tips the scales at just over two hours. You would think that this, coupled with the often brutal viscerality of the film, would make it unwatchable. Yet Von Trier's particular skill is not to overlay the drama, which is spread sufficiently evenly so as neither to bore, nor to overwhelm his audience.

Given Stacy Martin's insistence in the post-screening Q&A that she and Charlotte Gainsbourg never explicitly discussed the protagonist whose role they share, the consistency of the characterisation of Joe across the two parts is impressive. Martin's

CONCERT

Hiroaki Takenouchi

Kettle's Yard will host internationally renowned pianist Hiroaki Takenouchi as part of the 2014 New Music Series.

12.15pm, 2nd March
Kettle's Yard, Cambridge

EXHIBITION

The Moving Word

A celebration of the manuscripts held by the University Library and colleges in Cambridge.

Until 17th April
University Library





MAGNOPIA PICTURES

Only Lovers Left Alive

Jim Jarmusch

★★★★★

Over the past few years, literature, television and cinema have been littered with various depictions of vampires, werewolves and supernatural creatures. From tween favourite *Twilight* to the more recently televised *Dracula*, the genre never ceases to be a goldmine of entertainment and inspiration. *Only Lovers Left Alive* is alternative cinema stalwart Jim Jarmusch's first foray into the vampiric.

Jarmusch's last venture was the narratively complex *The Limits of Control*, but here he turns to comedy. The wry humour and deadpan quips from the protagonist work well with Jarmusch's languorous and slow plot style, not to mention his studied, intellectualised dialogue. In one scene, Kit (John Hurt) casually drops into a conversation with his vampire friend Eve (Tilda Swinton) that he wrote *Hamlet*, later gesturing to a picture of Shakespeare that he is an "illiterate philistine." It is also revealed that Kit is in fact Christopher Marlowe.

The academic tone does not feel contrived or irritating. It is more a tongue-in-cheek humour, like the names of the main couple, Adam (Tom Hiddleston) and Eve. All past culture and art is turned on its head during the film. Artists are revealed to be frauds, such as when Adam mentions that he gave one of his pieces to Schubert, and Byron is described as a terrible bore.

Adam is portrayed as the ultimate romantic hero. With raggedy hair, a pallid complexion and an effortlessly cool demeanour, he is the reflective, poetic and tortured 'artiste'. The only person keeping him alive is Eve, his soul mate, who is more balanced and satisfied with life.

Jarmusch films in two contrasting locations, Detroit and Tangiers. Both are shabby and worn-down cities.

They are the perfect locations for the artistically-inclined characters, both cities being subject to social change and upheaval.

Despite the vampires' bohemian lives, they face looming threats, such as the arrival of Eve's bratish and volatile sister Ava, and contaminated blood from the 'zombies' – humans. However, the vampires continue living through reinvention and nomadic lifestyles.

In addition to the existential musings and intellectualism, music features heavily in the film. Adam is a musician, desperately clinging onto to his reclusion and relative unknown. The overall soundtrack blends a mix of haunting guitars and traditional Maghreb music.

Visually and aurally evocative, Jarmusch's film creates a searching and melancholic tableau of life and romanticism.

Rebecca Rosenberg



RPC

CUMS Chorus

West Road Concert Hall

★★★★★

In their rendition of three renowned Baroque Psalm-settings, Cambridge University Music Society delighted the ear with an energetic and rhythmically tight performance that imbued these works with something new. It being my first visit to West Road Concert Hall, I was thoroughly impressed with the venue's acoustics. Despite a less than optimal seat in the first half, the music came in mighty waves, filling every corner of the hall.

The performance began with Bach's Cantata no. 196, *Der Herr denket an uns*. The first chorus was brought glowingly to life with gusto, the conductor Ralph Woodward skilfully bringing out the full contrapuntal depth in Bach's notes. The first aria, performed by soprano Rachel Ambrose Evans, delivered complex passages of heavy ornamentation with effortless lyrical simplicity. A tenor and bass duet followed which, while perhaps slightly lacking in dynamic variation, was tight in execution. Rameau's setting of Psalm 84 *Quam dilecta tabernacula* opened with light, gentle passages of lilting communication between strings and

flute. Although the mezzo-soprano passages delivered by Helen Charlston occasionally felt strained, the soloist performances were mostly highly polished. The chorus exhibited a masterful handling of Rameau's counterpoint, attentively and sensitively voicing each and every layer. Poor pitching in the upper strings took away from the harmonic brilliance now and then; however, this was a small glitch amid otherwise highly competent playing.

The night ended with Handel's *Dixit Dominus*, which was well-placed in the programme, allowing the concert to finish with a work in which all soloists came into their own - Camilla Seale's contributions were particularly outstanding.

Overall, CUMS gave a supreme performance, introducing new warmth and vivacious colour to these celebrated psalm-settings of the High Baroque. A sense of Woodward's love for the works was conveyed by his sensitive yet strong conducting, an emotion which was reciprocated by the performers, enriching the great music.

James Taylor



DAVID BALZER

visible confidence and sexual candour demonstrate a maturity that belies her inexperience. Gainsbourg, who plays the older Joe, grates as the self-pitying narrator of Volume I, though by Volume II is showing off her characteristic ease in even this most demanding of roles - one which verges on psychosis. Smaller roles, however, are more of a mixed bag: on the upside, we have Jamie Bell shining as a sunken-eyed sadomasochist; on the downside, we have Shia LaBeouf's hopelessly inscrutable accent.

Rivkah Brown

While nudity, sex and violence pervade the film, the humour and humanity prevail. Joe (Charlotte Gainsbourg), has been beaten up and is taken in by Seligman (Stellan Skarsgard). Their one-room conversation drives the narrative, framing Joe's recollections under chapter headings inspired by objects in the room. The flitting back from Joe's stories to the room to show Seligman's reactions provides the comedy. The audience sees his bewildered expressions; his geeky digressions inspired by the stories are delightfully

innocent and contrast with Joe's expectation of judgement.

Nymphomaniac is a narratively and thematically dense film, it as much a story about life as it is about sex. The overarching importance of nature and Joe's search for her 'soul tree' underline the crux of the film, the desire to become settled with oneself. However, as with any Von Trier film, there is no satisfying or resolved ending. Von Trier has instead highlighted and problematised the link between marginalisation and female desire.

Rebecca Rosenberg

THEATRE

Translations

English Touring Theatre return with the story of a clash of two worlds, which threatens the heart of the community as they struggle to interpret each other.

Tue 11 - Sat 15 Mar
Cambridge Arts Theatre

EXHIBITION

Notes

Showcasing the very best works of art published in Notes over the past 2 years alongside new works from practicing artists.

28th February
Judith E. Wilson Studio, English Faculty

THEATRE

Western Society

Returning after last year's *We Are Gob Squad And So Are You*, Cambridge Junction welcome back international innovators Gob Squad with brand new show *Western Society*.

1st March
Cambridge Junction

ALBUM

G I R L

Certified superstar Pharrell Williams follows up his *Blurred Lines* success with a paen to all the "helpless romantics" out there

3rd March
Columbia Records



For the love of
SPORT

Matt Worth
ARCHERY

King Harold taking an arrow in the eye. Peasant militiamen getting in some sneaky practice in the forest to please the King. Robin Hood. Men in tights. I'll admit that my understanding of archery could probably have used some updating prior to this weekend.

Nonetheless, there was something about the sport that drew me in. The quiet intensity of this ancient art, the solitary focus of the archer as he hones his craft, drawing ever closer to the perfect score... all this seemed consistent with, but also a refreshing break from, the scholarly lifestyle I like to think I lead. So it was that I found myself at the University Sports Centre on Sunday morning for my first ever taste of the sport.

A brave friend had offered to show me the ropes. I arrived to find him fully strapped up and armed to the teeth, looking ready to accompany John Rambo deep into enemy territory. Assuming the enemy is the Sheriff of Nottingham. Anyway. He (my pal, not the Sheriff of Nottingham) explained archery to me as a mixture of muscle memory, intense concentration, and health and safety. The latter is critical, as the silent power of a speeding arrow could easily be lethal if you got in the way. The basics: never step forward of the firing line unless given the all clear, and never have an arrow in your bow except at the line.

The rules are pretty simple. The classic target of black, blue, red and yellow concentric rings sits down range, and the closer to the centre you strike, the more you score. I set myself the target of landing three successive arrows - the full contents of my quiver, or rather my belt loop - on the square piece of paper that contains the actual target. This soon proved to have been rather under-selling myself, because archery is a sport of narrow margins. It becomes relatively easy to get somewhere near the target, but very hard consistently to find the centre. The wonky sight on my bow (so said my knowledgeable friend) didn't help me, but nor did my wayward newbie's technique. The draw and release are highly technical, requiring a precise honing and memory of repeated muscle action. It's a sport that rewards dedicated practice.

Perhaps the best thing about the sport for the beginner is its innate quietness. The lack of noise is what I most remember; in sharp contrast to gun shooting, there is virtually none. The senior Blues archers to my right fire off shot after shot from their hi-tech bows with an almost sinister silence. More so than in other individual sports, you feel yourself competing against yourself and against the target, rather than against others. It's curiously both an intense and a relaxing sport, and a wonderful antidote to a stressful week.

Let's stand up for the FA Cup

The Cup still has something to offer all teams - great or small

Charlie Moore

Sports Perspective

The benefits of the FA Cup to lower league teams have seldom been questioned. Sell-out ties with big clubs often provide fans with season highlights, create much-needed revenue and give players a chance to impress.

Recently, though, the value of the FA Cup to Premier League teams has been questioned. In early January, Aston Villa boss Paul Lambert gave a scathing assessment of the fading status of the FA Cup in modern football. He controversially claimed that most Premier League managers would rather do without the competition: "If they were being honest, they probably would." He argued that the Cup clogs an already hectic schedule and distracts from the more important fight for victory or survival in the Premier League.

Lambert is surely misguided. Of the last 20 Cups, Chelsea have won 5, Manchester United 4, Arsenal 4 and Liverpool 2. Manchester City and Everton also feature on the winners' list. It is clear that the top teams have taken the FA cup seriously.

They continue to do so. Manchester

City's domination of Chelsea in this year's fifth round kept alive Manuel Pellegrini's dream of winning four trophies in his first season. Arsenal's defeat of Liverpool, though, was the fifth-round highlight - a classic high-tempo cup-tie. Both managers made changes to their teams - it is apparently customary to play one's second-choice goalkeeper in the FA Cup - but the big names nonetheless featured. For the Gunners, Mesut Oezil graced the pitch with his poise and balance, while Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's pace gave the

"EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THE TOP TEAMS STILL TAKE THE FA CUP SERIOUSLY"

Liverpool defence a torrid time.

There was no sign that either manager wanted to do away with the FA Cup. Arsene Wenger, after eight years without silverware - a period in which Pep Guardiola retired as a player, became a manager, won 16 trophies with Barcelona, took a year out, returned and won two trophies with Bayern Munich - has understandably become more willing to play his best players in cup competitions. Brendan Rogers, on the other hand, saw one shot at his first



Wenger and Arsenal: renewed interest in the FA Cup?

major piece of silverware disappear.

For weaker clubs, progress in the Cup might be a double edged sword. Birmingham City went down having won the League Cup in 2011, and Wigan won the FA Cup and were relegated in 2013.

In truth, though, it seems unlikely that the mere removal of a few cup games would have transformed Wigan's ability to compete in the entirely different context of a 28-game league campaign. Wigan's defence in particular had been a growing liability for at least two years. In any event, a cup run can have a positive impact on a team.

Look at Sunderland's recent example. Successful cup runs have been instrumental in gelling Gus Poyet's players and providing them with self-belief. At this stage of the season, the games do come thick and fast. But winning them builds momentum and makes for a healthy dressing room.

The FA Cup offers Premier League teams another chance for silverware and can actually help them out of a sticky situation in the League. So long as the Cup remains full of rivalry, drama, upset and delight, most Premier League managers, teams, and fans will rightly continue to take it seriously.

Orienteers take fourth place at BUCS

Zuzana Strakova

Sports Correspondent

Orienteering requires runners to get round a series of points drawn on a map in as short a time as possible. The route in between the control points is for each person to decide. This year's BUCS event took place in Leeds last weekend, with Cambridge finishing in a creditable fourth place.

With Sheffield and Edinburgh the traditional favourites, Cambridge usually fight for third with Oxford and Durham.

The weekend consisted of an individual race on Saturday and a relay on Sunday, with results from both days added up to give an overall winner. For the purposes of scoring between universities, the first three best women/men individual runners, and the best women's and men's relay teams, are counted.

The individual day was held at Ilkley Moor, an area of craggy, open moorland close to Leeds which demands intelligent reading of the contours, plus physical fitness for the hills. 14 runners from the flatlands of Cambridge stepped up. The planners had laid out an extremely tough course, adding fine map-reading and astute choice of route to the skills required.

Cambridge stood in 5th position after the first day, just beaten by Oxford. For the men, Matthew Vokes finished first from CUOC in 12th position, followed by John Ockenden and Mark Salmon in 34th and 36th positions respectively. For the women, Carrie Beadle was in 11th position accompanied by Andrea Stefkova and Jess Mason in 27th and 28th. Overall, CUOC scored 148



Carrie Beadle handing over to Andrea Stefkova

points, 16 points more than Oxford (the lower score wins).

The relay on Sunday proved to be the decisive point for Cambridge. For Durham, in third position but lacking a competitive men's team, it was going to be a question of hanging on. Cambridge focused on clawing back the deficit against Oxford, making a splendid start to the women's relay with Carrie Beadle storming in to finish 1st, handing over to Andrea Stefkova on second leg.

The men's team stayed in touch,

but the considerable strength of their Oxford rivals meant hopes of beating the Dark Blues overall gradually dissipated. Cambridge did however put enough pressure on Durham to take 4th place, a creditable placing out of 25 competing universities.

Boding well for the upcoming Varsity event, however, Cambridge would have beaten Oxford in both the women's category and the men's category had the actual times counted rather than the race positions. The Varsity races take place in Sweden in April.

Cambridge men the stars of duathlon

Beth Campbell and Matt Jones

Sports Correspondents

Sunrise greeted over 70 Oxbridge students as they racked their bikes for the start of Varsity Duathlon, which saw more entrants for the run/bike/run event this year than ever before. Cambridge took the men's Blues title with Oxford winning the other events.

In the Men's opening race, only a brave run from Cambridge's Max Jenkins kept up with Oxford's dominant pack. In the bike leg on the other hand, CUTriC President Matt Jones and fellow Light Blue Petros Giannaros picked off Dark Blue rivals. Jones and Giannaros entered the final run just seconds apart, with Giannaros leading the race. Jenkins then powered past Jones, with a Dark Blue shadow in the shape of James Felce.

The stage was set for a dramatic and even comic finish. Felce first reeled in Jenkins, then Giannaros before opening his lead and gunning back to the start line. Unfortunately for him, the start line was a turn away from the finisher's tunnel. Before Felce could rectify his error, Giannaros had taken first. Felce settled for silver whilst Jenkins came third. Oxford's squad depth saw them clinch the Men's Mob Match title.

The Women's race was a battle for second place. Despite some great cycling from Cambridge and a strong final run from Light Blue Ursula Moore, Oxford took overall victory based on a runaway individual performance from Sophia Saller, who finished more than 8 minutes clear. Oxford then took a narrow 12 second victory in a close fought women's Mob Match.

Look out for women's rugby

Captain Jess Gurney tells Varsity about raising the profile of women's rugby

Richard Stockwell

Rugby correspondent

Jess Gurney, captain of Cambridge University Women's Rugby Team, is an experienced player herself, but the vast majority of her 40 regular squad members were complete beginners on arriving in Cambridge. Nonetheless, participation and enjoyment are certainly on the rise: "There are so many girls that come to Uni having never played before and leave saying they don't know how they ever lived without it."

Despite the initial inexperience of many players, women's rugby is as much a lifestyle choice as any other university-level sport. With two matches per week, in addition to train-

"IF WE WANT TO QUALIFY FOR OUR BLUE, WE HAVE TO ACHIEVE CONSISTENTLY"

ing, weights sessions and individual fitness, most of the women have only one day of rest per week.

The team compete in two league competitions: British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) and Rugby Football Union for Women. They have



The women's squad celebrate their win over Chichester

had a promising season so far, winning 13 of 16 matches, reaching second place in both leagues. League competition gives the season a different dynamic to the men's season, which is centred on the Varsity Match in December. For the men, "the season is all about Varsity," whereas for the women, Varsity "is just another match that we should be just as hungry to win as the rest."

Moreover, Women's Rugby is a conditional full blue sport. This means that in addition to participating in the Varsity match, the team must win their BUCS division or reach the quarter-finals of the Cup. Every match counts: "If we want to qualify for our blue we must achieve consistently."

The women's relationship with the men "is a work in progress" after a merger at the start of this season. The men's club has been accommodating so far, but "equality is the end goal and

there is an awful lot to be done before we reach that."

The profile of the Women's Varsity Match is a key target. Rowing will set an example from next year, when the women's Boat Race will take place over the same course and on the same day as the Men's. For rugby, "the current aim is for the women to play at Twickenham by 2017."

This year's Varsity Match is away on Saturday 8th March. Cambridge have lost the last two women's Varsity matches, but it is difficult to determine the favourite this year. Cambridge have won 7 of 8 games in BUCS, while their opponents – playing in the league above – have lost 7 of 10. The women's team are running a supporters' bus for the Varsity Match, which will depart Grange Road at 8.30am: "we hope to have plenty of supporters to help us on the way to a victory!"

Ice hockey blues beat Cardiff

Cambridge get the better of Redhawks for the second time

Jaason Geerts

Sports correspondent

The men's Light Blue ice hockey team journeyed to Wales on Saturday night to beat the Cardiff Redhawks 24-6. This was the second game against the Redhawks within two weeks, Cambridge having won the first exchange 22-4.

Cambridge opened, as British Universities Ice Hockey Association (BUIHA) leading scorer Eric Kroshus rounded the goaltender to score. However Cardiff fired right back with a hard shot from the high slot that found the back of the net. The Light Blues stepped up the offense, with Kroshus, Julien Gagnon, and Kyle Oskvig netting six unanswered goals between them to end the first period 7-1.

Redhawks, a solid side who have tied Warwick and held the mighty London Dragons to a narrow margin this season, did not deflate but came out for the second period firing. Their leading scorer was left alone up front, and beat the Cambridge goaltender in the first minute of the second period. However, Kroshus banked a cheeky goal from behind the net off the goalie before Cambridge and Cardiff exchanged goals, increasing the ledger to 9-3. Sloppy defence enabled the Redhawks to pot two more goals in a lively second period, but Cambridge maintained enough pressure to keep the margin out of reach. Winger David

Brassard joined in on the scoring along with another from Gagnon whose stickhandling mesmerised the Cardiff defense. Period two wound to a close with Cambridge up 12-5.

In the third period, the men in Light Blue tightened up their defence despite penalty trouble, and simply wore down the valiant Redhawks. Excellent play by Cambridge goaltender Mike Kang kept Cardiff to just one goal in the period, while the Light Blues' snipers added freely to the lead, with Kroshus (4), Gagnon (3), Brassard, Ben McDonald, Oscar Wilsby, and captain Jaason Geerts all getting on the scoresheet.

Despite the late landslide of goals that hit them, Cardiff played hard until the final whistle, especially their

"DESPITE SOME SLOPPY DEFENDING, CAMBRIDGE PRESSURED THROUGHOUT"

goaltenders who together faced over 75 shots. As always, they proved gentlemen on and off the ice. Excellent performances on the Cambridge side were had by Player of the Match Julien Gagnon with seven goals and five assists, Eric Kroshus with 12 goals and four assists, Dave Brassard with two goals, four assists, and one save, and goaltender Mike Kang.

Cambridge now face the London Dragons in Peterborough on Saturday, March 1. This will be the last match before the Varsity tussle on 8th March.

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Sport



Hard target

Matt Worth tries out the silent but deadly sport of archery



Cambridge's Julien Gagnon (r) finds the goal in the Blues' away win over Cardiff Redhawks

SPORT IN BRIEF



Lent Bumps So Far

Lent Bumps kicked off on the Cam on Tuesday with four divisions of men's rowing and three divisions of women's. The competition is effectively a ladder contest, in which College crews chase down and "bump" the boats ahead of them with the aim of leapfrogging them in the ladder.

The story of the first two days of men's competition was Caius' top two boats losing their leadership of divisions one and two respectively, to Downing and Magdalene respectively. Men's division Three saw five-place climbs from Darwin II and St. Cat's II, who each achieved the coveted "overbump".

The women's races have so far been quieter, with Downing and Trinity maintaining their hold on the top two places in division one. Star performers of the opening stages were Clare, who gained three places in division one.



Rugby Roundup

Cambridge women's rugby union side have enjoyed a hugely successful week. On Saturday the free-scoring Light Blues defeated Sussex 68-0 in the BUCS trophy Cup. Bryony Coombs, Sian McGuinness, Helen Lambert, Steph Leddington, Jess Gurney, Antonia Robbins, Tia Knight and Katie Westlake all crossed for tries.

Almost immediately, on Wednesday, the team faced their next Cup challenge against Chichester. A 22-9 victory saw the women move through to the semi-finals of the competition.

Also on Wednesday night, the men's Light Blues lost a lively game 27-38 to invitational side Spoon's Anti-Assassins, in what has become an annual fixture. Cambridge enjoyed plenty of competitive possession and exerted pressure, matching Spoon's at 7-7 and 12-12 before mistakes and bad luck allowed their opponents to open up a lead later in the second half.

Finally, rugby Cuppers offered some midweek action on Tuesday, with traditional powerhouses of the college game, St. John's, beating Robinson 52-10 while Downing saw off Jesus 30-12.

Pythons too much for Canterbury

American footballers seal hold on playoff spot with 44-6 home win

Jaason Geerts

American Football Correspondent

The Cambridge Pythons played their last home game of the season earlier this week against the Canterbury Chargers, taking a 44-6 victory to solidify their hold on a playoff berth. Pythons now stand second in the conference with a 6-1 record.

Cambridge's strong defense, led by defensive captain Tom Carr, started the game in fine form, forcing Canterbury to go three-and-out on their first drive. With Canterbury resuming possession quickly after a Cambridge fumble, an interception from Pythons defenseman Guy Peters returned the ball 21 yards and introduced Cambridge's offense to the field. Matching the defense's explosive start, Pythons' first offensive drive featured a dozen runs, led chiefly by Alex SJ who burst through for the game's first score. Quarterback Joe Yarwood connected with Carr for the two point conversion. Cambridge closed the first quarter 8-0 ahead.

Cambridge's power running has been the heart of their offensive strength this season, and in the first play of the

second frame, running-back Joe Moore showed why he has been an MVP five times this season as he darted into the endzone for a 13-yard score. The two point attempt was no good, leaving Cambridge ahead 14-0. A quick return of possession to Pythons saw another running drive, which Yarwood himself closed out with a touchdown from just 1 yard. Moore's catch on the conversion racked up two more points for the Pythons: 22-0. A defensive interlude followed for the Light Blues. After going four-and-out and suffering a sack by Cambridge's rugby convert Sam Alderson, the Chargers switched to a jumbo package, adding more size to their backfield for what would be their last drive of the first half.

Cambridge continued to show defensive meanness, however, with Tom Reynolds shutting down three consecutive Canterbury attacks and cornerback Hao Yusei batting the fourth play's pass out of the air. There was time left at the end of the second quarter for Yarwood to switch to his passing game with spectacular effect. The quarterback threw passes to Carr for 17 yards and Moore for a 29 yard touchdown. James Stratford caught the two-point conversion, giving Pythons a 30-0 lead as the half came to a close.

Early in the third quarter, Pythons Tom Reynolds and Brendan Loftus teamed up to cause a safety in

the Canterbury endzone for 32-0. Otherwise, the early part of the third was an inconclusive phase of play, during which Pythons managed a fumble on the Canterbury 1-yard line. The Chargers were then able to claw back six points with their best attack of the afternoon. A run-pass combination followed by a 26-yard completion for

"CAMBRIDGE ONCE AGAIN MADE THE MOST OF THEIR POWER RUNNING GAME"

a touchdown finally put the men of Kent on the scoreboard. Their conversion failed, leaving the ledger at 32-6 Cambridge. Thereafter the Cambridge offense continued to misfire with a combination of penalties and incomplete passes, and a punt away ended a somewhat disappointing third quarter for the Pythons.

Nine back-to-back runs early in the fourth quarter pushed Canterbury further onto their heels, before Yarwood sailed a pass over the Chargers' defense into the hands of Canadian wide receiver Jaason Geerts for a touchdown. The conversion was no good – a relative Cambridge weakness this season

– leaving the score at 38-6. By this point in the game, Carr had established himself as the nemesis of the Chargers' quarterback, picking him off again and returning the ball 28 yards. Cambridge quarterback Aki Mulay took the reins and saw immediate results thanks to a lightning fast run by Joe Moore to the 1 yard line, and a massive push by SJ to muscle the ball over for a touchdown. The Pythons were once more out of luck on the two point try and found themselves leading 44-6. There was time for cornerback Jack Stafford to add an interception of his own, shutting down any last-winded Charger comeback hopes. As Canterbury surprisingly elected to take to the air again, Peters snatched another ball out of the sky for a noteworthy return as time expired without further score.

Alex SJ was named Offensive MVP with 23 carries, more than 100 yards run, and two touchdowns. Special Teams MVP was Guy Peters and Defensive MVP was Pete Campbell. Joe Moore with 15 carries for 128 yards and a touchdown, Tom Carr with 69 yards on the ground and two interceptions, and Joe Yarwood with a touchdown and three passing touchdowns also had outstanding games. Pythons now close out the regular seasons against Buckinghamshire New University on 2nd March, before taking on the playoffs.