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Like a Virgin!

Lavinia Puccetti in defence of religious art and The Fitzwilliam Museum's bid for the Mater Dolorosa

Comment P15



Stripping off to stand up to cancer: The UK Undie Run, which raises money for Cancer Research, comes to Cambridge later this month

Union releases Michaelmas 2014 termcard

Till Schöfer
Deputy News Editor

The Cambridge Union has revealed its line-up for Michaelmas 2014 this week.

The list of speakers balances those from the entertainment and sport industries, such as the Irish comedian Ed Byrne, the current manager of the England football team Roy Hodgson, cast members of the reality TV show *Geordie Shore*, with those from academic backgrounds, such as the scientist and theoretician Aubrey de Grey and the economist Peter Nolan.

Topics for this term's ten debates also span a wide range of themes. Union members can look forward to discussions on national and international politics in debates on whether UKIP has been a force for good in British politics and whether Russia is a force for global instability.

Furthermore, the Union seems to be addressing accusations of sexism made against it by the CUSU Women's Campaign since Lent 2014, when the only female speaker was the ballerina Darcey Bussell.

Whilst the Lent and Easter term cards only contained one and two female speakers respectively, the figure has now risen to six in this term's line-up, accounting for roughly 30 per cent of all invited speakers. The women's public speaking workshops from last year will also return for Michaelmas 2014, along with a new 'Women in Science' forum and a gender-based forum.

This year also revives the comedy debate between the Cambridge Footlights and the Oxford Revue on the uses and abuses of Tinder.

'This House believes the Cambridge Union Society is a rip-off', Comment, page 15

£1bn on new university campus

Construction begins on new £1bn university site

Sarah Baxter
News Correspondent

Construction has finally begun on the north-west Cambridge site in the most recent development project for the University of Cambridge.

The 150 hectare triangular area between Huntingdon Road, Madingley Road and the M11 will eventually be developed into a mixed-use site, boasting houses, graduate accommodation and research facilities.

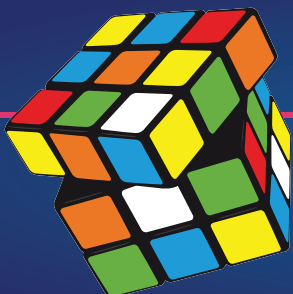
Half of the 3000 houses on the new £1 billion site will be set aside for university staff, in the hope that provision of new housing will help to attract staff and researchers to the university in the future.

Vice Chancellor Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz believes that the scale of this development will provide for much of the accommodation, for both staff and post-graduates, that the university is likely to need over the next 20 years.

A unique feature of this development, however, has proved the source of some concern; unlike other 'out-of-town' sites such as Girton and Homerton, this site will not be based

around a new college. Nick Hillman, director of the Higher Education Policy Institute, has raised concerns about the impact this will have on Cambridge student life: "I do think elements of the 'Cambridge experience' will be missing from the site. One is the traditional college and another is undergraduates, and [they] do add to the greater good of

CONTINUES ON PAGE 5



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Forget Freshers' FOMO

Cambridge students are not always renowned for their sense of fun. It might be hard to believe, but many people don't consider setting up camp in a library, or initiating a 'political thought discussion club', to be the pinnacle of student life. It is with this in mind that many newcomers start Cambridge Freshers' Week. Certainly, many will relish in the unparalleled opportunities for intellectual development that Cambridge offers; with Freshers' 'Week' typically lasting about four days before the first essay is set, these students will not have to wait long before their scholastic cogs will be forcibly turned up a gear.

For others, however, having waited at home for weeks while their friends embarked on different university careers, Cambridge can seem a

rather turgid place. As others flood Facebook with pictures of drunken club nights, fancy dress and literally hundreds of new best friends, it can be easy to imagine that a sad, sweaty, sordid night in Life may be the be all and end of the Cambridge social experience.

Fear Of Missing Out, or 'FOMO', is one of the most pernicious phenomena of the social media age. Varsity plays its part as well – see page 20 to read all about what you missed at the Edinburgh Fringe, a festival to which hundreds of Cambridge thespians decamp every year. Freshers' Week is peak time for FOMO affliction. Don't feel like going on the pub crawl? You'll definitely never make friends. Accidentally miss the freshers' welcome picnic? Say goodbye to any kind of social life for the next three years.

A feeling of FOMO can haunt anyone at anytime,

but is particularly acute when you start university. And it's not just with regard to socialising – the Cambridge Union Society has some of the most aggressive marketing methods known to humankind, and much of this is based on peddling the myth that everyone else in Cambridge is already a member. There are many benefits that come with Union membership, but one of the main reasons that people cough up £185 for a lifetime membership is FOMO.

However, do not be fooled into thinking that Cambridge life revolves around any one hub. The city may be small, but university life is not confined to the Footlights, the Union, the 'clubs' (or even to Varsity...). Sure, you don't want to miss out on any of the exciting opportunities that Cambridge has to offer, but truth be told, it is the students, not the schedules or the societies, who offer these chances.

NEWS

Homophobic Preacher

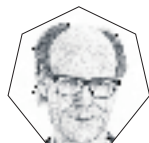
Ex-student takes on local evangelist in documentary on Ugandan gay rights (page 9)



INTERVIEW

Will Gompertz

BBC arts editor talks about what makes good art and how he sets the agenda (page 12)



COMMENT

Is the Union worth it?

Ellie Gould and Union President Tim Squirrell argue for and against the cost of Union membership (page 15)



LIFESTYLE

A cantabrigian abroad

Kiera Summer lands on her feet (just) in her first week of living in Paris (page 23)



FASHION

Fall defiance

Blow away the autumnal grey skies with bright colours and a sunny outlook (page 24)



THEATRE

The art of reviewing

Sarah Grice negotiates the delicate art of being a theatre critic in Cambridge (page 26)



VARSLITY SQUASH!

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CAMFM

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Friday 3pm

This week: Hong Kong protests, consent classes and stalking freshers...

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A BLESSING IN DISGUISE?

James Sutton investigates whether elitism in Cambridge might just be the university's biggest selling point



"Pale, male and stale": how many times has this epithet been used to describe to government cabinets and big business boardrooms alike? According to the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission's latest report, Oxbridge graduates still make up the majority of those seated at these important tables and it would seem that attending one of Britain's two oldest universities is the ticket. However, as the latest freshers arrive, and the Union prepares for a Week One debate questioning whether Oxbridge is a force for good, it is timely to consider whether Cambridge is cursed by the whiff of 'elitism' or blessed by it.

As the *Elitist Britain?* report by the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (SMCPC) reveals, 75 per cent of senior judges, 59 per cent of the cabinet, 50 per cent of diplomats, 47 per cent of newspaper columnists, and 12 per cent of the Sunday Times Rich List attended Oxbridge, whereas just one per cent of the population as a whole is Oxbridge-educated. Whilst this appears to indicate that Oxbridge attendance stands students in good stead, the Chair of the SMCPC the Right Honourable Alan Milburn argues that these figures prove the existence of "A closed shop at the top [which] can all too easily give rise to a 'not for

the likes of me' syndrome." This perceived elitism, and the problems of access which are associated with it, is something which all three major party leaders have spoken out against. From this perspective at least, perceptions of elitism serve to prevent social mobility; resulting in the dominance of the privileged few at the top of British society, particularly given that there is still a strong link between independent school attendance and progression to Oxbridge. On average, 40 per cent of Cambridge students are privately educated, compared with seven per cent of UK school children.

In Cambridge, however, there is still tension as to whether such elitism is an issue to be tackled. A university spokesperson said that such a question "can't be answered because it is premised on an acceptance that 'elitism' exists." Nevertheless, they went on to explain that "Events [including] Challenge Days for pre-GCSE pupils, Summer Schools and subject Master-classes [...] are intended to encourage students to aspire, to provide advice and support as they think about their future options, and to give a realistic picture of Cambridge as a diverse community to which anyone can belong."

However, this is not quite enough to dispel the perception of elitism.

Arthur Hannah, an Education with English and Drama student who receives the National Scholarship Programme's £6000 tuition fee waiver (awarded to those from low-income homes, who have spent more than three months in care,



CAMBRIDGE SCARES MOST PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS FROM LESS PRIVILEGED BACKGROUNDS

have received free school meals, or are a single parent), remains sceptical. He explains that "when I applied to Cambridge it was in spite of, rather than because of, its reputation for a public school, elitist culture." For Arthur at least, it seems that a 'perception' of elitism, whether or not the university accepts its existence, can be a significant turn-off. This is, after all, one of the central problems which target and access campaigns seek to tackle.

Hanna Stephens, a state-educated student at Homerton agrees that there is an impenetrable impression of elitism surrounding the

university: "when I received my offer I wasn't sure whether Cambridge was the right place for me because my perception of Cambridge was of weird traditions, gowns, wine and pretentious conversations."

"I think this is the image that the central colleges I visited on the open day, and students I talked to, tried to project, thinking that this is what prospective students are impressed by". She describes the biggest issue as "a misconception of social elitism for prospective students" but realises that "with Cambridge being immersed in history and associated with typically upper class activities, societies and traditions, this is a curse which the university inevitably carries." The very existence of labels such as 'non-traditional Oxbridge background' – often used to describe students from low-income homes and state schools with little history of getting students into Oxbridge – only goes to prove that this perception of elitism exists and exerts an influence over some prospective students.

However, Hanna, on arriving in the city, realised that her "perception of Cambridge was not the reality" and admits that she was "swayed by the educational opportunity" Cambridge offers. Perhaps this is the line in the sand amongst prospective students – those who push

ahead into the application process are the ones who see Cambridge as an "educational opportunity" with the potential for long-term social mobility, whereas some of those who stop short of applying are instead daunted by Cambridge's elitist atmosphere. Hanna seconds this view, claiming that "whilst... this kind of social mobility may appeal to some, I think this scares most prospective students from less privileged backgrounds". It would seem, therefore, that whilst the potential for social mobility entices some into applying to Cambridge in cases such as Hanna's, this 'elitism' is only a deterrent.

The 'curse' of elitism and the 'blessing' of social mobility clearly cannot be divorced. Whilst on the face of it, the university's access schemes are essentially a major myth-busting operation, it doesn't take a giant leap of imagination to see that these schemes are not intended to, and never will, completely succeed. The perception of elitism which hangs over the university is an inherent part of its prestige; such that graduates' fantasies of top employers' hearts beating just a little faster when reading "Cambridge" on a CV might actually have some grounding in reality. And that's one myth the university certainly doesn't want to bust.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Cambridge by making it a more vibrant place.”

However, this is a worry that Tim Holt, Head of External Communications for the university does not share. He explains that those living in north-west Cambridge will be “affiliated very much to a college” in the same way that those living in Clare’s ‘colony’ accommodation have remained an integrated part of Clare.

Moreover, he believes that the north-west Cambridge development, rather than being isolated from central Cambridge, will in fact be a “natural extension to the city”.

Cycle routes and pathways have been planned to encourage this link between city centre and the site.

The planning process also has included a number of public consultations and the final site will reflect this partnership between the university and the public.

Half of the homes provided will be made available for sale to the public, whilst site amenities such as sports and community centres will be open to all.

The first building to open on the site in September 2015 will be the University of Cambridge Primary School, a co-educational school for children between the ages of four and eleven.

It is hoped that the new University of Cambridge Primary School will have close links with the university’s Faculty of Education and the wider university.

Construction on the site is expected to be completed by early 2017.

The first university buildings should be finished by December 2016.

Consent classes for freshers

Seventeen colleges have signed up for the half hour workshops

Matt Innes

News Correspondent

Seventeen colleges will have compulsory sexual consent workshops for incoming freshers this week. These workshops, taking around 30 minutes in small groups of students during Freshers’ Week, will include space for discussion about what constitutes consent and other linked issues.

This development is a result of the CUSU Women’s Campaign’s efforts to draw attention to the issue of sexual assault in Cambridge. CUSU Women’s Officer Amelia Horgan said that the Campaign aims “to send out a clear message that sexual violence will not be tolerated in our community” and to dispel “the myths and lies about rape and sexual assault.”



SEXUAL VIOLENCE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN OUR COMMUNITY

It also coincides with Cambridgeshire Constabulary’s ‘Get Closer’ campaign,



A Toronto ‘Slut Walk’ protesting against sexual assault

which began this month. The campaign hopes to “make the invisible visible” by drawing greater attention to serious crimes such as sexual harassment and assault.

A survey carried out by Varsity in April 2014 revealed that 46 per cent of over 2,000 respondents had been groped while at Cambridge, with 8.4 per cent of female respondents reporting being victims of attempted sexual assault. 88 per cent of serious sexual assaults went unreported.

Charlie Chorley, former Women’s Officer at Pembroke, agrees that these

workshops will be effective: “the entire notion of consent can be messy, especially when alcohol is involved or the individual is in a long-term relationship, [so] to be in a space where you can discuss and try to iron out issues ... can only be good.”

But some are sceptical of the initiative: Professor Mary Beard, of the Faculty of Classics, has said that although “consciousness raising about sexual consent has to be a good idea, whether consciousness is most effectively raised by a compulsory workshop remains to be seen.”

Moreover, although these workshops are listed as ‘compulsory’ on the Freshers’ Week schedules of participating colleges, with the same weighting as health and safety briefings, no fresher will actually be forced to attend.

The participating colleges are: Emmanuel, Girton, Jesus, Trinity Hall, King’s Churchill, Fitzwilliam, St Catharine’s, Queens’, Newnham, Peterhouse, Murray Edwards, Clare, Pembroke, Gonville and Caius, Magdalene, Robinson, Homerton, St John’s, Christ’s and Corpus Christi.

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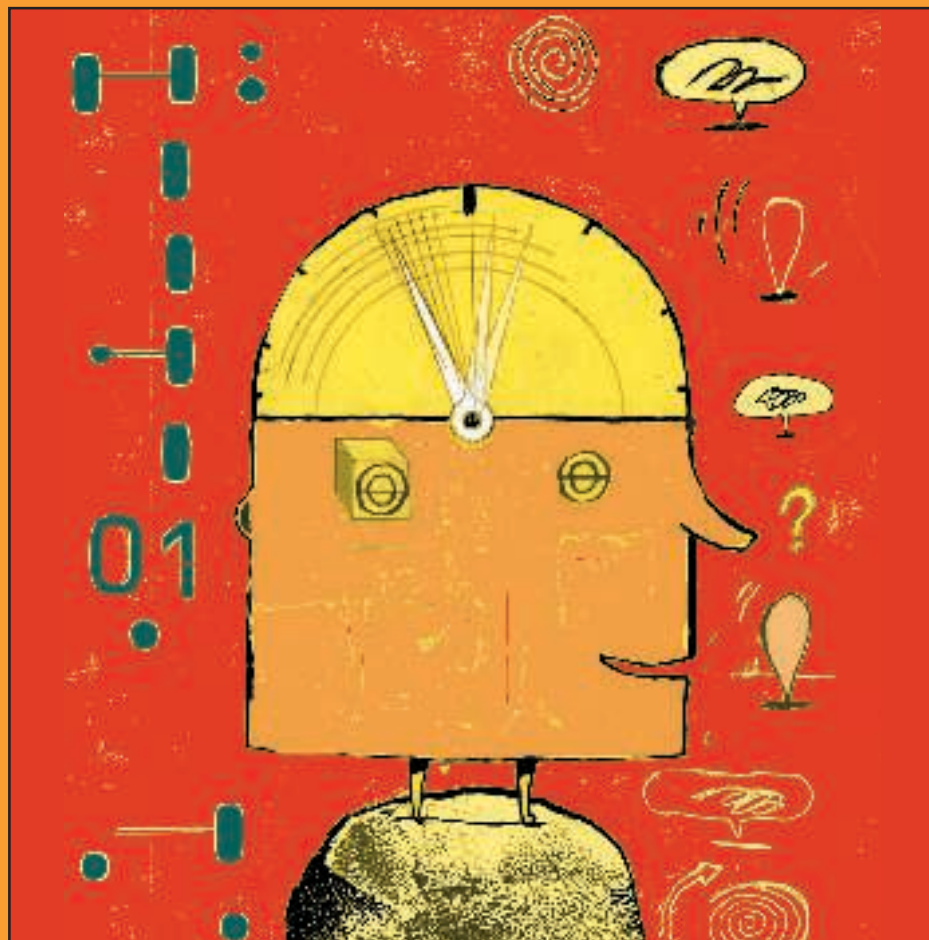
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Cambridge back in top five universities

Cambridge comes 5th in the Times Higher Education World Universities table

Sarah Sheard
Senior News Editor

The University of Cambridge has been ranked fifth in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE) 2014-15.

Cambridge rose by two places since last year in the THE rankings. Any pride will be bittersweet and short-lived, however, as Cambridge lost out to its main rival, the University of Oxford. Despite losing its two-year streak at second place, Oxford were victorious by only slipping one place to third.

Familiar American institutions comprised the top ten, with the California Institute of Technology taking first place, followed by Harvard University. Stanford University came in behind Oxford at fourth place, with Massachusetts Institute of Technology succeeding Cambridge in sixth.

The UK “continues to punch above its weight in the global rankings”, said the editor of the THE World University rankings, Phil Baty. The UK had more top 200 universities than any other country except the US, with which it remains in close competition. In the recent QS World University Rankings, British institutions made up half of the top ten alongside American universities.

Imperial College London continued



Imperial College London: a competitor with Oxbridge?

to impress after it defeated Oxford in the recent QS World University Rankings by sharing second place with Cambridge. This year saw its first breakthrough into the THE top ten, as it was ranked joint ninth with Yale University.

Imperial’s continued success lends further weight to the ‘Impbridge’ theory, a term coined by the Independent

to describe the correlation between Imperial’s rise up and Oxford’s slide down the two other most influential and widely observed university rankings: the QS World University Rankings and the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU). It seems possible that the pattern established in the QS and ARWU rankings could be repeated in the THE tables.

Self-described as the “most sophisticated, balanced and widely respected academic rankings on the planet,” the THE World University Rankings were first published in 2004, in association with the company Thomson Reuters.

In the 2013-14 rankings, Cambridge achieved third and fifth place in the QS and ARWU rankings, respectively, making it the highest placed British university in both tables.

The top 200 universities represent the top 1 per cent of the world’s higher education institutions. Universities are assessed based on thirteen ‘indicators’ such as the quality of teaching, research, and citations in academic journals.

Some critics maintain, however, that the latter ‘indicator’ undermines non-English speaking institutions, as citations and publications in non-English languages are uncommon.

Its methodology, in the view of

critics, is also heavily biased towards science-focused universities. This is similar to criticism of the QS and ARWU rankings as not giving enough weight to humanities and arts.

Ross Williams, of the Melbourne Institute, stated that THE’s procedures would favour more focused “science-based institutions with relatively few undergraduates” at the expense of institutions with more comprehensive programmes and undergraduates.

Phil Baty, editor of the THE World University Rankings, claimed the rankings do not privilege any one style or nationality of university; “Of course, excellent universities come in many different shapes and sizes, there is certainly no single model of excellence, and the THE World University Rankings are carefully designed to capture excellence in teaching and research against a university’s own mission and its own unique profile.”

Cambridge Ghost Club examines ‘goblin’ claims

Sarah Sheard
Senior News Editor

The Cambridge Ghost Club is investigating the claims of an American mystic who has apparently photographed a goblin in his hair.

John Sutton runs Transformation Talk Radio for a mystic organization known as ‘Psychic World’ and is their “resident Psychic-Clairvoyant”. He has also published a series of his collected writings on mysticism.

Sutton sent in a photograph of his hair to the ancient Cambridge University society in an attempt to confirm the presence of a small goblin in it.

He claims that the image shows what he “believe[s] to be an elf or fairy materialised” in his hair.

After having his claims dismissed by “scientific sceptical experts” and photographic experts, Sutton contacted the historic Cambridge Ghost Club.

The club’s chief investigating officer, Derek Green, who is based in London, is currently examining the submission with the club committee.

The Ghost Club began unofficially in 1885 when fellows at Trinity College began discussing ghosts and other psychic phenomena, and was formally launched in 1862 in London. Practical investigations of spiritualist

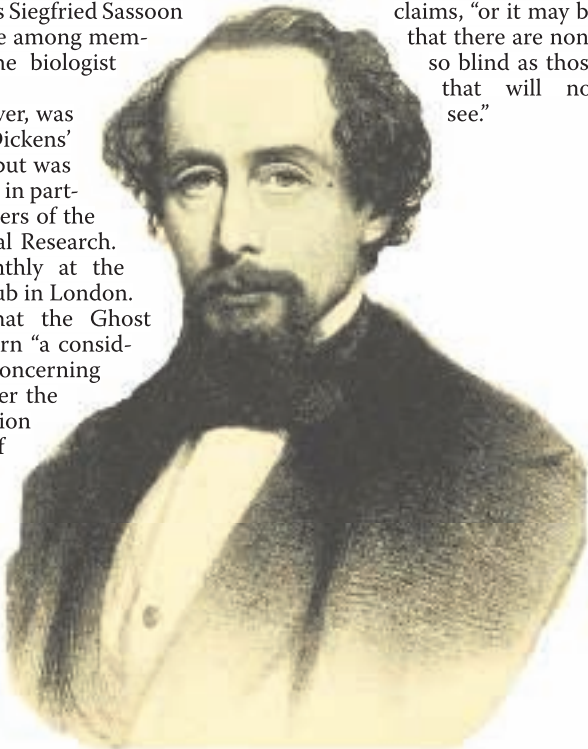
phenomena comprised the group’s main activity, with discussions of ‘ghostly’ and supernatural subjects also featuring.

Early members included Charles Dickens, alongside Cambridge academics. The Ghost Club’s website also claims that the poets Siegfried Sassoon and W.B. Yeats were among members, as well as the biologist Julian Huxley.

The group, however, was dissolved upon Dickens’ death in the 1870s but was re-launched in 1882 in partnership with members of the Society for Psychical Research. It still meets monthly at the Victory Services Club in London.

Sutton hopes that the Ghost Club will soon return “a considered response” concerning his goblin claim after the proper examination and evaluation of the photographic ‘evidence’.

He emphatically states that there has been no tampering with the file, although he admits his twenty years of experience of photographing



WELCOME TO THE TOP FIVE

1. CALTECH

2. HARVARD

3. OXFORD

4. STANFORD

5. CAMBRIDGE

Academics condemn attacks on Gaza

Cambridge scholars have signed a petition condemning Israel’s recent actions in Gaza

Till Schöfer
Deputy News Editor

A group of Cambridge researchers and scholars has released a statement criticizing the behaviour of the Israeli government and deploring the living conditions of the Gazan population after the most recent outbreak of conflict in the area.

The academics who have signed the online petition believe that they have a responsibility and prerogative to speak out on the contentious issue of Israeli-Palestinian tensions “as practitioners of our various subjects, as academics, or just as human beings.”

According to their statement, the latest escalation of the region’s conflict represents the most recent development in a long history of illegal Israeli occupation that spans over several decades.

Furthermore, the proponents of the statement refute the notion that they are singling out Israel, but rather that Israel has singled itself out via its claims of moral impeccability, its celebrated status of democracy, the extensive support it receives from the US and other nations and its politics of memory; for example, manipulating the Holocaust into an instrument to discredit Palestinian struggles.

As a means of deflecting such an “abuse of memory” the document points to a recent petition signed by 40 Holocaust survivors and 287 of their descendants, lamenting Israel’s treatment of Palestine.

The list of supporters of the pledge includes academics from 20 different university faculties, from Philosophy to Physics to Geography, and from “a range of political, religious and cultural backgrounds”.

Acknowledging the diversity of their cohort, the group of professors and intellectuals has underlined the different forms of criticism present under the umbrella of the statement.

Those of the academics specialising in law condemn the breach of in-

“
IT IS ALL THE MORE
IMPORTANT TO SPEAK OUT
NOW THAT THE LATEST
SPATE OF BOMBING HAS
COME TO AN END

ternational law committed by Israel via its illegal occupation of Gaza (per UN definition) and the West Bank. The lack of a military presence in the occupied territory does not itself preclude the legal status of occupation,



A scene from Gaza during the most recent conflict with Israel

according to the declaration. Philosophers and political scientists, on the other hand, disapprove of the moral hypocrisy of Israeli apolo-gism and the discrediting of criticism against Israel.

Historians, however, have taken to viewing the recent events in a much longer trajectory of colonial occu-pation, which can be traced back to

1948. The main aim of the academic cohort is to announce its support for the Palestinian resistance and to call for an immediate lifting of the blockade of Gaza. In addition to this, the Cambridge scholars are calling for peaceful co-existence between Israelis and Palestinians.

Their statement reads: “We believe

that it is all the more important to speak out now that the latest spate of bombing has come to an end, in order that the plight of the Palestinian people is not simply allowed to slip from the public consciousness.”

The statement is also to act as a protest against the victimisation of students and lecturers worldwide who have criticised the conflict.



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Vice-Chancellor: “the price of greatness is responsibility”

Sir Leszek Borysiewicz: responsibility to solve global crises

Till Schöfer and Sarah Sheard

This year's Vice-Chancellor's annual address took place on October 1st in Senate House. Throughout he stressed the responsibility which the University of Cambridge and its academics have towards the national and international common good, summarizing that “our responsibilities lie deep and wide.”

Professor Borysiewicz stressed the need for close involvement with the developing world, referring to Cambridge's various commitments to the academic mentoring of African researchers. The Cambridge in Africa programme, which involves more than 100 academics and staff, as well as the Africa Partnership for Research Excellence and the Alborada Cambridge-Africa Research Fund, were examples cited by Sir Leszek.

The Cambridge Vice-Chancellor also underlined the steps taken this year to fulfil the University's obligation to primary and secondary education. Under Sir Leszek the University of Cambridge was awarded funding for a University of Cambridge Primary School in Northwest Cambridge and for a University Technical College. The importance of programmes like HE+, which fosters the academic

skills of regional schoolchildren, was also highlighted.

Quoting the 2014 Cambridge prospectus, Sir Leszek made it clear that successful applicants to the university would not be chosen on any grounds except academic ability. In the words of the Vice-Chancellor: “the education we offer is truly accessible to all with the academic ability and potential to succeed here. There is no ‘right background’... no right school to have attended, no hidden test of social and economic circumstances.”



[PHILANTHROPY IS THE] CORNERSTONE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

The Vice-Chancellor also outlined Cambridge's ambitious capital programme, which involves the construction of new facilities for the Cambridge Conservation Initiative, the Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology Department, and the Maxwell Centre as well as developments at Addenbrooke's Campus.

The need for financial investment to carry out such projects was also emphasised. Sir Leszek admitted that with the financial pressures



Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz wants Cambridge to help developing countries

of the economic downturn, the University cannot simply depend on government or institutional funding and instead has to turn to philanthropy. He described philanthropic partnerships as the “cornerstone of the University of Cambridge”.

Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz was installed as the 345th Vice-Chancellor on 1 October 2010. Prior

to his installation as Vice-Chancellor, Sir Leszek was the Principal of the Faculty of Medicine and later the Deputy Rector of Imperial College London, before becoming the Chief Executive of the UK's Medical Research Council in 2007.

As Vice-Chancellor, Sir Leszek is the principal academic and administrative officer of the university and

is responsible for securing the university's finances and carrying out ceremonial and civic duties.

He is also the main representative of the university within the UK and overseas. Recently Sir Leszek travelled to India for the sixth time as part of his ongoing campaign to forge closer ties between Indian and Cambridge-based academics.

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Local preacher accused of homophobia

Former student takes on Cambridge- based evangelical

Sarah Sheard
Senior News Editor

A former Cambridge student is hoping to raise enough money to fund a documentary into the activity of a Cambridge-based evangelical involved with anti-homosexuality laws in Uganda.

Daniel Law studied at King's College and now works with the NGO Sexual Minorities Uganda. He aims to raise £800 through Kickstarter and Indiegogo for a documentary revealing how Paul Shinnners stands accused of hate crimes in Uganda as the head of the UK registered charity Passion for Souls Ministries. Shinnners runs a café-bookshop for his charity in St Neots, Cambridgeshire.

In 2012 he was quoted in a Ugandan newspaper as speaking in favour of the Anti-Homosexuality Act, which originally included the death penalty as punishment for homosexuality and was known as the 'Kill the Gays' bill.

Although Shinnners has denied this, Law claims to have found a video of Shinnners vocally supporting the bill at a Christian event. "There is no other nation the world over that has such a plan and through this, Uganda is going to be blessed," Shinnners apparently says in the video.

The Anti-Homosexuality Act was



As many celebrate gay pride, homosexuality remains illegal in over 70 countries

passed in December 2013 but was nullified earlier this year as not enough MPs were present at its first passing. The original punishment of the death penalty was replaced with a prison sentence, but the Act still imposed a life sentence and required parents, teachers and landlords to report any known homosexuals or face prison.

The Passion for Souls Ministries says on its website that it is "TOTALLY INCLUSIVE, FREE and available to EVERYONE irrespective of race, creed, religion gender or SEXUALITY". It is supported by the UK Charity Commission, despite Law's claims that money raised for the charity is used for the proliferation of homophobic

propaganda, which violates commission regulations about the "charitable" aspect of an organization. Law hopes his documentary will be able to provoke the UK Charity Commission into stripping Shinnners' organizations of their charitable status.

"I have...had extensive contact with the Charity Commission regarding

UK CHARITY COMMISSION
RULES

An organization must have:

1. "[O]nly charitable purposes which must be for the public benefit"

2. Yearly reports on "how you have carried out your charity's purpose for the public benefit"

the actions of Paul Shinnners, the head of a UK registered charity in Cambridgeshire," he said. "I want to show how there is a major issue with the way they investigate complaints against charities."

Law also aims to show how an "influx of western evangelicals" has led to a "steadily increasing atmosphere of homophobia" in an effort to raise awareness of the continuing anti-gay agenda in Uganda.

His efforts come as the Ugandan parliament decide whether to re-table the Anti-Homosexuality Act. The MP who originally proposed the bill in 2009, David Bahati MP, has already begun the process to get the bill re-considered and re-enacted in parliament.

A group of over 250 MPs have also signed a petition to have the bill re-enacted, alongside petitions from Ugandan pastors.

Paul Shinnners did not respond to a request for comment.

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NEWS IN

BRIEF



£6m conference boom for Cambridge

This past summer the University of Cambridge has enjoyed an all-time record level of demand for conferences at colleges worth £6 million to the University.

Conference Cambridge has revealed a 30 per cent increase in the number of enquiries into venues during July and August, compared to the same period in 2013.



Cambridge marches on cancer

Cambridge will participate in the March On Cancer event organised by Stand Up to Cancer. On 11th October at 7.30pm, there will be a sponsored night-time walk, starting at Queen's Green and looping back to Queen's College. Registration costs £5 per person, with all money raised going to Cancer Research UK.



Paupers' funerals on the rise in Cambridge

Despite Cambridge's recent economic success, paupers' funerals are on the rise, costing the city council over £27,000 in the past year.

In 2010/11 only six paupers' funerals were funded by the council, whilst in 2012/13 this number rose to nine.

These funerals are, in the words of the parliamentary candidate for Labour, Daniel Zeichner, "particularly tragic".

Cancer cure in St John's hedges?

Sarah Sheard

Senior News Editor

Yew hedges at St John's College are now being used to help scientists in the ongoing fight to beat cancer.

The discarded yew needles from the sixty-year old hedges are sent off to European pharmaceutical companies, where the poisonous alkaloids in the waste are developed into leukaemia-fighting drugs.

While the yew's toxicity has the potential to be deadly at high doses, research conducted in the 1990s by scientists from Leicester University and the University of Manchester has found that a particular compound within could prevent cancerous cells from growing and dividing.

The compound, 10-Deacetylbaecatin III, is at its highest concentration in the new growth of yew needles that are clipped annually in the St John's gardens and all over the country.

A yearly trimming of the hedges also stimulates the production of the cancer-fighting compound in larger quantities.

Two chemotherapy drugs, docetaxel and paclitaxel, are developed using yew tree extract. These drugs are mostly used in the treatment of breast and ovarian cancer.

Fresh yew needles are still a very important part of the manufacturing process for these life-saving drugs, although the necessary compounds can now also be created semi-synthetically in order to supplement the supply of plants.

Adam Magee, the head gardener at St John's College, said that he was very happy to be joining the fight against cancer through the use of St John's hedges.

He said: "This year, we have collected



Head gardener Adam Magee



Yew needles from St John's hedges are being used to make two chemotherapy drugs

over 365kg of usable yew clippings which will go to fight cancer. The cuttings would otherwise go to waste, so I'm glad that St John's can help out with this very worthwhile cause."

Matthew Cookes, of the company Friendship Estates, which collects the yew clippings from St John's, was equally cheerful.

"We collect yew clippings from

several gardens in Cambridge and all around the country and dry them to preserve and stabilise the leaves," Cookes said.

Friendship Estates is currently based in Doncaster and has been in the business of collecting yew from universities, gardens and stately homes since 1992, all of which are used as raw materials in the pharmaceutical industry.

"They are...sent to a company in Europe who isolate and extract the active compound. This is then supplied to the medical industry to make drugs to fight cancer".

"Demand for the treatment has increased in recent years, so we are very happy to have a partnership with St John's College to help supply the raw materials we need".

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The Interview: Will Gompertz

WHAT IS 'ART'?



SURAJ MAKWANA

Will Gompertz talks to **Elissa Foord** about his journey from leaving school “just below the bottom rung” to being BBC Arts Editor

Is it art? It's a question that has provoked, inspired and haunted the arts world of the past century. And, as I pass him a photograph of the Cambridge University Library, it's a question that furrows the brow of the BBC Arts Editor.

Now one of the best known faces in arts journalism, the arts weren't always the clear path for Will Gompertz. Leaving school at 16, he had “no plan; the plan was not to be at school”. His first series of jobs placed him “just below the bottom rung of the ladder”. But the turning point was a job as a stagehand at Sadler's Wells. “That's when I got interested in the power of art. You could see what it did to people...What drew me in was that the people involved with arts were really interesting.”

And so he founded a publishing house. He founded a global arts magazine. He found himself a director at Tate. “Not to lose my job, that was my attitude starting there.” “I was the only non-academic. It's the type of place where even the cloakroom attendants have a Double First in Fine Art. So I was quite ignorant.” But that was no bad thing – the opposite, in fact. “I represented the audience; I wasn't a total specialist so I had some empathy with them.”

Tate placed him at the heart of the contemporary art world. He was

responsible for Tate Online, the UK's most popular art website, and Tate Etc., its most circulated art magazine. Surely, then, here is someone who can answer the questions at the back of the minds of many of modern art's audience. The ‘is it art?’ question. The ‘why is my bed a bed, when Tracey Emin's is ‘art’?’ question.

The crux of the matter is, of course, our conception of art. “Duchamp would say, ‘because the artist selected it, that's what makes it art.’ And also context...if you take a urinal and put it in an art gallery, and it ceases to be a urinal, then maybe it is art.”

So is all ‘art’ art? It's not that simple. “When you put it in an art gallery its purpose is to be art; the artist is asking that it be considered as art. That's the limit to which they can go. It's up to us to decide whether it is or not, and whether it's any good or not...for me, art is something that has no purpose beyond itself; it has no function other than being art. But design has a function, and therefore your relationship with it is completely different.” “In a way, art in the twenty-first century is a way of looking at the world.”

As for the U.L.? “No, it's not art. It's architecture, it has a function.” He guesses the architect, Gilbert Scott, straight away. “It's got a gothic presence, he's a brutalist modernist.” “It is what it is; it's got its own beauty. I'd get rid of the pediment, but otherwise I'd

learn to love it. I tell you what, if that became a major place for raves, nobody would feel intimidated.”

Public interest in modern art has exploded. “I think it's a fact to say that in no period of history has society been so interested in the art of its time as it is today.” But Gompertz's task at the BBC is subtler than simply pushing



THE ESTABLISHMENT
NEEDS TO STOP BEING
SO CONTROLLING, AND
PEOPLE NEED TO REBEL
AGAINST IT

arts up the agenda. “The truth of the matter is that most often the purpose of that arts story on the TV News is a bit of light, in all the shade. It's knowing your role. We're either ‘and finally...’ or at the top of the program, because somebody famous is dead. I think the arts have a really important role because actually the truth of life is that people are very wonderful, and doing very wonderful things, and that's not really represented much within the

rest of the News agenda.”

Gompertz's journalism is distinctive for its accessibility, in a time when art has gone through change that some have found alienating. As the importance of aesthetic beauty in art has shifted, and as scholarship has become couched in ‘-isms’, it has become all too easy for the non-expert observer to tell themselves ‘I don't know art, so I can't ‘get’ what I'm looking at’. But in Gompertz's view such a self-disqualifying viewer disqualifies over-zealously: art is universal. “Even somebody with no education whatsoever, like somebody in a tribal outfit in the Amazon, or a kid at the West End who's had barely any education, they still have an artistic impulse.” “It's part of being human.”

I ask if arts coverage can really be compatible with the BBC's commitment to impartiality. Can he extract his taste? Should he? “I think the impartiality thing's incredibly important in areas like economics and politics. In the arts, it's less important. People do have a feeling of ‘come on, mate, you've seen it, what's your view?’ If I say, ‘well on the one hand...’ I don't think anyone's going to be very impressed at that.” “If you're asked a direct question, it's legitimate to give a direct answer.”

Broadly speaking, arts in the UK are enjoying a golden era. “I think that's a reflection of what's happening to the country, we're becoming far

more sensitive to aesthetics. People have much greater curiosity, and are interested in things in different ways; each person puts their own lens on the world. We're living in a more intellectual society than we were.” “I think now we're a more secular country, art galleries have a very specific place in our culture. We believe that they are places where you can say things that you wouldn't otherwise say.”

Yet there is room for improvement. In fact, there is need of it. Institutions like Tate dictate our tastes. Their small number of directors determine who ‘makes it’. Their sway is immense. “It's a bit stuck,” says Gompertz, “and it's become a bit too institutionalised. The whole thing's become quite predictable...I think someone like Banksy is a really, really, important artist; he operates completely outside the system. The establishment needs to stop being so controlling, and people need to rebel against it. The stuff that comes through the Turner Prize and the galleries all feels quite samey.”

The answer, as Gompertz sees it, is “either artists coming out of the establishment and operating in different fields, or people being artists outside of the establishment, or people from different fields becoming artists.” He adds that this is happening, and will increasingly happen. And that's exciting. As Gompertz predicts, “something radical is going to happen.”

Underheard at Cambridge

Resident news hound Peter Lloyd-Williams sniffs out the tales no other rag will publish



2014 Freshers Dangerously Keen, Says Report

2014's freshers are dangerously keen, reports the influential Cambridge Centre for the Study of Youth.

"All indicators of fresher keenness are off the charts," said Professor Brendan Burshell, head of the centre. "The local nightlife has been preparing since August. Cindies has made an emergency purchase of 500 litres of Jaeger for freshers' week alone."

Research commissioned for Varsity has confirmed that freshers are more 'pumped' and 'buzzing' than ever before.

Hannah Robertson, formerly of Tiffin Girls' School, confirmed that she was looking forward to an absolutely mental freshers'.

"I can't wait to get absolutely destroyed at pre-drinks on the first Tuesday of Michaelmas," she told us.

"I'm not going to remember getting to Cindies, but once I get there, I'm going to throw up everywhere and have to be carried back by people I met on the weekend," she said before heading into Bargain Booze.

At the time of writing, Hannah also told us that she was considering a "confusing-but-in-a-good-way" relationship with her college father.

Robin Browning, now of Corpus Christi, told us he was looking forward to turning up to lectures "still absolutely steaming."

"I just can't wait to be in lectures, with a world

famous professor before me, and still be totally obliterated," Robin told Varsity.

"Can you imagine? Surrounded by strangers. 9a.m. The smell of cheap wine on my breath. Trying not to throw up. That's the Cambridge dream."

Professor Burshell urges that, though freshers' may be magical, the overall goal is not to remember any of it.

"In the end, it's not the memories we share that make us who we are, but the ones we forget together."

Rowing. Not Even Once.

With the start of the new academic year approaching, the Cambridge University Student Union (CUSU) is relaunching its 'Rowing. Not Even Once' campaign.

CUSU President, Helen Hoogewerf McComb, began this year's campaign last Saturday at a fundraiser for recovering rowers.

"Cambridge students need to be aware of the dangers of rowing," Hoogewerf McComb said to the assembled fundraisers.

"Students need to know how they can be pressured to take up rowing, even by people they thought were friends. Students, especially freshers, need to know that it's okay to say no."

"Rowing can do terrible things to people, and they don't even realising they're changing. It's not normal to get up 5a.m. as a student, but,

for rowers, it is. It's not normal to tell everyone how shattered you are after a 5km erg, but, for rowers, it is."

"The saddest thing is that there is just no support for rowers who realise they have a problem and want to quit. That's what this campaign is all about."

Varsity contacted CUCBC for a response, but no representative was available for comment, due to "prior rowing commitments".

A vigil for change is planned to take place outside the Cambridge University Boathouse this Sunday.

A CUSU helpline is being set up in the coming weeks.

King's College Abolishes Self

In an unexpected development, the Provost of King's College, Michael Proctor, has announced the immediate dissolution of the centuries-old college.

In an emergency press conference, Professor Proctor said the move had been made necessary by the collapse in support from the students of King's College.

"Following the decision of the King's College Student Union to declare the 1441 decision a mistake, the Fellowship no longer has the confidence of its College. Therefore, the College cannot continue."

Ivan Tchernev, president of the KCSU,

welcomed the decision: "King's students realised that, by attending King's, they were personally benefiting from centuries of preferential treatment. We are recognising and combating our own privilege."

The Vice Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, Leszek Borysiewicz, reacted to the decision of the college by saying it was "disappointing, but things have been heading in this direction for a long time."

King's has a long history of experimental access projects. In 1979, the college briefly refused to admit anyone. The college considered the move the best way to equalise admission demographics.

The decision was only reversed in 1984, when the Fellowship realised the consequences of its decision. Observers at the time, however, stressed the noticeable improvement in the atmosphere at the college.

The surviving members of the 1979 Fellowship have largely endorsed the decision of their successors.

A bidding war is now expected between Trinity and John's to determine who will take ownership of the King's Chapel. The remainder of the college will be taken over by the cows. No college has yet to object to the move.

MILLIE BRIERLEY

On dirty underwear, Nectar cards and navigating adulthood in Cambridge

Being a kid is great. You have a whole raft of people dedicated to protecting you and keeping you safe. Your only job is to have fun and learn new things, meaning the most mundane of objects becomes the most amazing toy anybody has ever played with. You just can't imagine wanting anything more than that big stick you found in the park the other day.

Needless to say, this period of bliss doesn't last long: soon enough, clouds stop being dragons and castles, and instead become ominous indicators of rain. Snow no longer brings snowmen, snowball fights and wellington boots, but traffic, cancellations and delays. You eat Skittles without checking the colour first (and, who knows, maybe you even eat the green ones). Growing up tends to mean leaving your inner child behind – that part of you that wants to eat pudding before main course, or throw caution to the wind (and presumably to hay fever) by launching yourself down a grassy hillside in summer.

This is the unfortunate reality that the freshers of 2014 – just like every year group that has gone before them – must come to terms with in October. It will, of course, be easier for some than others. The transition into almost-adulthood is likely to be a lot smoother for those whom society tends to label 'old beyond their years'. Personally, I have always felt that there were more entertaining activities out there than hanging out behind Sainsbury's car park in the famous British drizzle for hours on end. I've also always been keen to know what 'APR' means. That said, I'm still not entirely sure what it means.

The rest of this year's freshers – the ones who might

consider rolling recklessly down a deer-faeces-strewn grassy slope as 'fun' (I imagine this kind of person might exist, but have no personal experience to back up this hypothesis) – might find this funny old world of student loans, grocery shopping and Nectar cards a little harder to stomach at first. But they're also probably more likely to let loose and have fun.

So, speaking as a seasoned second-year, let me address you freshers directly and suggest some titbits of advice, which are guaranteed to be based on absolutely no kind of authority and to be resolutely ignored by everyone who reads them. But humour me.

1. If you think APRs might be your thing, remember that they are incredibly boring, and nowhere near as thrilling as APA (it's a referencing reference – you'll learn soon enough). Also remember that this whole university thing is exciting, and that sacred time in-between essays, supervisions and cathartic sobbing is YOURS. Never again will you live in an environment with so many opportunities, so make the most of it! Unless, of course, you somehow manage to wind up in residence at Disneyland somewhere along the line, in which case, feel free to

ignore this advice – who cares about rowing or amateur operatics when The Happiest Place on Earth awaits you?

2. Conversely, if the idea of caring about Nectar points brings you out in a cold sweat, the main things for you to remember are, number one, to eat; number two, that Sainsbury's stays open till eleven Monday to Saturday; and, number three, that DOMINO'S DELIVERS (but let's be honest: if you didn't know that by now, there's little hope for you). If you can master these three highly-related concepts (upshot: EAT, DAMMIT!), anything else like work and sleep will really just be a bonus.

3. Finally – and this one goes for everyone (whether yours is an inner infant or an inner geriatric) – treat your bedder as if they were a member of minor royalty. Think Peter Phillips, the Duchess of Kent – Princess Eugenie, at a push. This woman will be the reason your parents are so impressed by the clean surfaces, tidy floor and general lack of vomit in your room when you Skype them – so treat them as such. I'm talking more than one 'hello' per term, holiday gifts worth at least a fiver and foot-long epistles of appreciation. You would also do well to remember that your bedder sees your rubbish, probably the odd pair of dirty pants and certainly whatever lurks underneath your bed. Think of your tokens of undying gratitude, therefore, as payment for their silence on such delicate matters.



Comment



Jeremy Wikeley

Cambridge's unique origins should not mask its similarities with other university experiences

Debunking the Cambridge Experience

Too often, explanations of what makes Cambridge different from other universities amount to little more than rationalisations of a wasted youth because, in many ways, Cambridge is the upper-class boarding school from hell. Why would any self-respecting young person put themselves through three years at this stuffy, neurotic, elitist institution?

This is an unfair caricature of a place for which I have a great deal of affection, but when you consider that the ratios of work-done to grades-got to fun-had are much better elsewhere, the question is a valid one. There is no single right answer - but there are plenty of wrong ones.

A particularly pernicious one is the illusory idea of 'The Cambridge Experience'. What makes Cambridge different is that it is normal university life on steroids. The kick you'll get from it, and the powers it gives you, more than make up for all the hard-work and hard-arsed company. Maybe there is something in this. But when people talk about 'The Cambridge Experience' they mean more than just 'University: The Next Level' - they mean a whole other plane of existence, typified by the belief that there is something ineffably unique, ineffably

special, about our lives here.

Most of us are guilty of this at some point - the Damascene conversion cycling back from the library, or on the way back from a club, when you realise that Cambridge is really, you know, special. And we're all entitled to a little 'Moment of Wonder' every now and then. But life throws these up wherever you are: something, like nothing, happens anywhere. And this idea that Cambridge is ineffably, inexplicably different masks those aspects of the institution that really are strange - and explicable.

This is an old story, but it bears repeating. Cambridge is still largely defined by its close historical relationship with the first two estates: the Church and the nobility. Rather than ponder over the fruitless questions of why you chose this place or what it is you think you're doing here, it is worth getting to grips with the extent to which your 'Cambridge Experience' is now determined by these peculiar cultures.

For instance, some of the stresses and strains of studying here can be explained by Cambridge's ecclesiastical origins. The modern fellow evolved (slowly) from the medieval monk. Although students aren't expected to

take (holy) orders, the clerical roots still show. Some of them are good. There is probably something religious about the commitment to intellectual inquiry: God, the truth, what's the difference. This commitment is eased by the vestiges of monasticism: communal life and hard drink. But there are some monkish habits that we would be better off without. There is no evidence that the stupid amounts of work students are expected to get through within an 8 week term and the unrepresentative manner in which grades are dished out do anything other than foster the sort of asceticism and masochism that can make people very unhappy.

And, like it or not, the nobility is still here: Cambridge functions as a finishing school for the moneyed classes. Oddly enough, this has its advantages. Communities cannot survive on fine principles alone. The doggish loyalty that Cambridge encourages in its alumni translates into the sort of support, fiscal and otherwise, that allows the university to set its priorities in ways that other similar institutions cannot. Money aside, rituals and traditions create the sort of healthy sense of identity that can serve as a relatively nontoxic psychological

crutch. Relatively nontoxic. The bad press garnered by the upper classes using a place of learning as a crèche does not need reiterating here. There is a curious tension between the university's ambitions for access and its dependency on the goodwill of the wealthy. The gentry may even be to blame for the absurd amount of resources which we devote to rowing: rich people seem to like expensive sports.

It is this constant buffeting between the rather incongruous demands of the priesthood and the peerage that creates 'The Cambridge Experience' and marks Cambridge out as different from most other universities, although we should be careful about exaggerating the differences.

These tensions are echoed right across the university system: they just ring louder in these courts. There are benefits to all this. There is plenty of gold in these hills, and much else besides. But equally, there is no need to get starry-eyed about our idiosyncrasies or to suppose that, because this is Cambridge, the ups are any more likely to compensate for the inevitable downs than they are in any other time or place. Something, like nothing, happens anywhere.



Cambridge Defend Education

It is up to students to demand fairer access to education, and a more democratic university experience

Education is not for sale, make it free

This will be the first year in which all current undergraduates - with a few exceptions - pay fees of £9,000 per year, three times as much as those who graduated in the summer. Likewise, very few witnesses to the 2010 student movement, formed in response to tripling fees, are still students. This rapid turnover is natural in student activism, but has the additional effect of making the movement itself and the principles behind it seem irrelevant and outdated. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth: the past year has seen a resurgence in campus organisation, from traditional activist bases such as Sussex to relative newcomers like Edinburgh. Across the country, students have taken up the call for free education, and have joined their lecturers on picket lines and university staff in living wage disputes. In response, we have seen draconian academic suspensions, illegal arrests, and beatings at the hands of police and private security. These attacks have barely dented the movement: normal students have continuously faced down management, cops, and politicians. In the process, a new generation of students has begun to articulate an alternative.

We must not allow the current state of affairs to become accepted as the norm. Resistance has never been more necessary. Since the initial imposition of tuition fees, successive

governments have continued to push the marketisation of higher education; tripling fees twice, cutting and attacking allowances for poorer and disabled students, privatising student debt and drastically reducing research council funding. There is now discussion of removing the tuition fee cap altogether. We know where this narrative ends; in the US, student debt has increased by \$760 billion to over \$1 trillion as the second-largest source of American household debt, and young people are regularly denied access to the guaranteed loans they need to fund their education. As universities look to profit-driven private interests to make up the shortfall and prices skyrocket, those already disadvantaged by systematic injustice are more and more likely to be completely priced out of higher education. But this system is not without alternatives. Let us not forget that tuition fees were only introduced in 1998, and were capped at £1,000 per year a mere decade ago. Higher education is free of charge in many European countries, such as Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and indeed Scotland. Public free education is possible, and a reasonable demand, adopted by the National Union of Students in May 2014.

Current fee policies are part of a wider attempt to commercialise higher education. Subjects deemed economically 'useless' are under threat; 40 per cent of language departments

in England are facing closure. Such moves undermine the idea of the university as a public, independent institution, and a space for free thought and exploration. Students are not the only ones affected by this trend. The marketisation drive has brought cuts and outsourcing to the university workplace, and lecturers are underpaid whilst management receive significant pay rises. Last academic year, the Vice Chancellor's pay increased by six times that of lecturers. This profit drive also squeezes support staff, leaving many without enough money to support themselves. Pressure from student campaigns has made significant headway here, with certain colleges and the university itself committing to the Living Wage in the past year. The university belongs to the people who live and work in it, and should be governed by them.

Thus free education is more than an education free of charge; it is a call for a democratic, emancipative, egalitarian university. We need to build a sustained campaign to put this vision back on the agenda, and this autumn we will take these demands to the streets of London. A coalition of students have called a national demonstration for 19th November, arguing for 'no fees, no cuts, no debt'. In full support of these demands, Cambridge Defend Education will be coordinating transport from Cambridge to the demonstration,

as well as planning actions around the 'week of resistance' called by the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts in the days running up to the 19th.

Last year, speaking in the Cambridge Union, the then-Universities Minister David Willetts argued that "students resemble consumers." It's time to challenge this discourse - education is not something you consume. It's not something you purchase, use, and then discard. We must not fall into the trap of thinking of ourselves as consumers, individuals who can only express themselves by spending money and have no voice, no part in the democratic process. Students must instead be understood as citizens, political members of a community. Let us have a new conversation and think again about what we want the university to be. And let's raise our voices and take to the streets this autumn.

Cambridge Defend Education meets every Monday of term time, 8pm at the Graduate Union.

Have any views on this week's comment pieces? Tweet us @VarsityUK, or write in to letters@varsity.co.uk

This House believes the Cambridge Union Society is a rip-off

Freshers are the biggest pool of potential new recruits, and revenue, for any Cambridge society, so it is not surprising that societies do everything they can to attract new members. These societies are also acutely aware of the particular psychological state of the archetypal fresher: nervous, keen to fit in and anxious to make sure they don't miss out on something everyone else is doing.

For the Cambridge Union Society, however, the task is hindered by the £185 'life membership' fee, a very hard sell to a new student with a

college bill and deposit to pay.

The Union, therefore, resorts to aggressive marketing strategies to succeed in funding itself through memberships. Freshers' Facebook groups have barely been created before a Union rep is on the case with a marketing post, trying to present their society as an unmissable part of that most enticing and illusory of things, the 'typical' Cambridge experience.

There are lines that must be drawn, however, between clever marketing and exaggeration of the truth. Whilst the Union is undoubtedly an esteemed institution that attracts some very impressive speakers, the way it presents itself to freshers is often misleading. To my mind, there are four major issues with their marketing strategy.

Firstly, their numbers appear to be somewhat exaggerated. The Union claims that 70 per cent of undergraduates are members, which I would question. Even if it were true, it is a far less useful figure than the percentage of undergraduates who attend Union events several times a term, a figure I would estimate to be far lower. Third year Union member Izhan Khan admits that "I got the feeling that most people ended up joining, which is why I ended up doing so."

Secondly, much of their marketing seems to focus on the importance and reputation of their Fresher's Ball, "the BIGGEST and ONLY fresher's ball in Cambridge – an exclusive black tie event, attended by most fresher's [sic] who join in October." The tautology here is evident – if it is the only ball then of course it is the

biggest – but neither of these superlatives means that it's good. Reviews from last year ("It was worse than a college bop," according to the Tab) do very little to justify shelling out £185. More importantly, the syntax of this sentence seems deliberately misleading: "most freshers who join in October" suggests that most freshers who join the University go to the ball, rather than most freshers who join the Union. Pumping cash out of new students by preying on their fear of missing out is not fair.

The Union also overstates its importance to social life, something they know all too well is very much on the fresher radar. "Enjoy Cambridge's biggest social hub..." they claim. "As a member of the Union you have access to the cheapest central student bar." They fail to mention that the vast majority of Cambridge undergraduates would view their own college bars as their biggest social hub, not the Union. College bars are usually cheaper, too.

Most importantly, however, the Union sells itself on its high-profile speakers, knowing that they are its biggest draw for new members. Its marketing video features

Stephen Fry, Dame Judi Dench and Sir Ian McKellen, but fails to mention that its small capacity means only a very small percentage of members can actually attend, and only if they queue for several hours.

The committee must be aware that the vast majority of Union members do not get good value from their £185. It would be impossible for everyone to do so given the Union's capacity, which is perhaps why there is no option to pay termly: people would realise they weren't getting enough out of it and stop paying. "If you use it to its full potential it's probably very good value for money, but most people don't," says Pembroke student and Union member Angus Hopkinson.

What's more, bullying nervous

freshers into coughing up this sort of cash only scares those from poorer backgrounds that Cambridge might be too expensive for them. Although the Union does provide discounted rates to those in receipt of a full Maintenance Grant, those from the 'squeezed middle' are forced to find the cash (in their overdrafts, probably), or be made feel that they are missing out.

Freshers: societies need you and your cash more than you need them. Some people get great value from their Union membership, but many more do not. Don't be fooled into joining just in case everyone else does: wait until you get here, give it a try, then decide for yourself whether the Union will be worth it for you.



AYE: Ellie Gould

I've been involved in the Union since the beginning of my second year. For me, it has been one of the most rewarding and memorable experiences I've had during my time at Cambridge. Michaelmas is an exciting time for The Union, because a new intake of freshers brings in new faces - people with new ideas, interests and skills who come along to events, frequent the Union bar or help to make the Union work.



NAY: Tim Squirrell

However, every year during this period there are a few people – a fairly vocal minority – who try to discourage all who will listen from joining the Union. Sometimes this is for political reasons: they don't agree with a particular invitation we've made, or think the whole place is stuffy and elitist and representative of the very worst of Cambridge snobbery. More commonly, they're people who feel they haven't got value for money from their Union membership, and they don't think you will either.

It's impossible for me to respond to the arguments over the page without sounding incredibly biased. It's likely that this will come across as a scrap between a plucky underdog journalist and a big, faceless bully-boy institution trying to quash any murmuring of dissent.

Instead of putting across the Official Union Line on whether or not membership is worth the money, then, let me give you my own thoughts on it.

I joined before term even started in my first year, and I went along to the first event I could. It was a debate involving the Cambridge Footlights and the cast of Made in Chelsea. I queued around the block, and then got turned away along with around 300 other people because the entire building was filled to capacity (around 800 people). It was obviously a disappointment, but I went back two days later for a debate about the riots, which had faded from the streets though

not yet from the papers. The debate was great, the atmosphere was brilliant and afterwards I had a brief argument with Peter Hitchens because I thought I was really clever (I wasn't) and then got drunk and went to Life with my friends.

Even before I ended up on the committee, I really enjoyed what the Union had to offer. The debates were relevant and engaging, and the prospect of making a point from the floor both excited and terrified me. I think it took me a good dozen debates before I stopped shaking at the thought of standing up in front of 400 people and telling a world-leading expert that they were talking total balls.

I started competitive debating in my second year, and reaped the benefits. It was time consuming, but as I improved I found that my ability to reason and argue in my essays was improving as well – although I now find it difficult to go a whole conversation without using the word 'problematic' and sounding like a total tool. The Union is one of the only debating societies in the country that can subsidise its

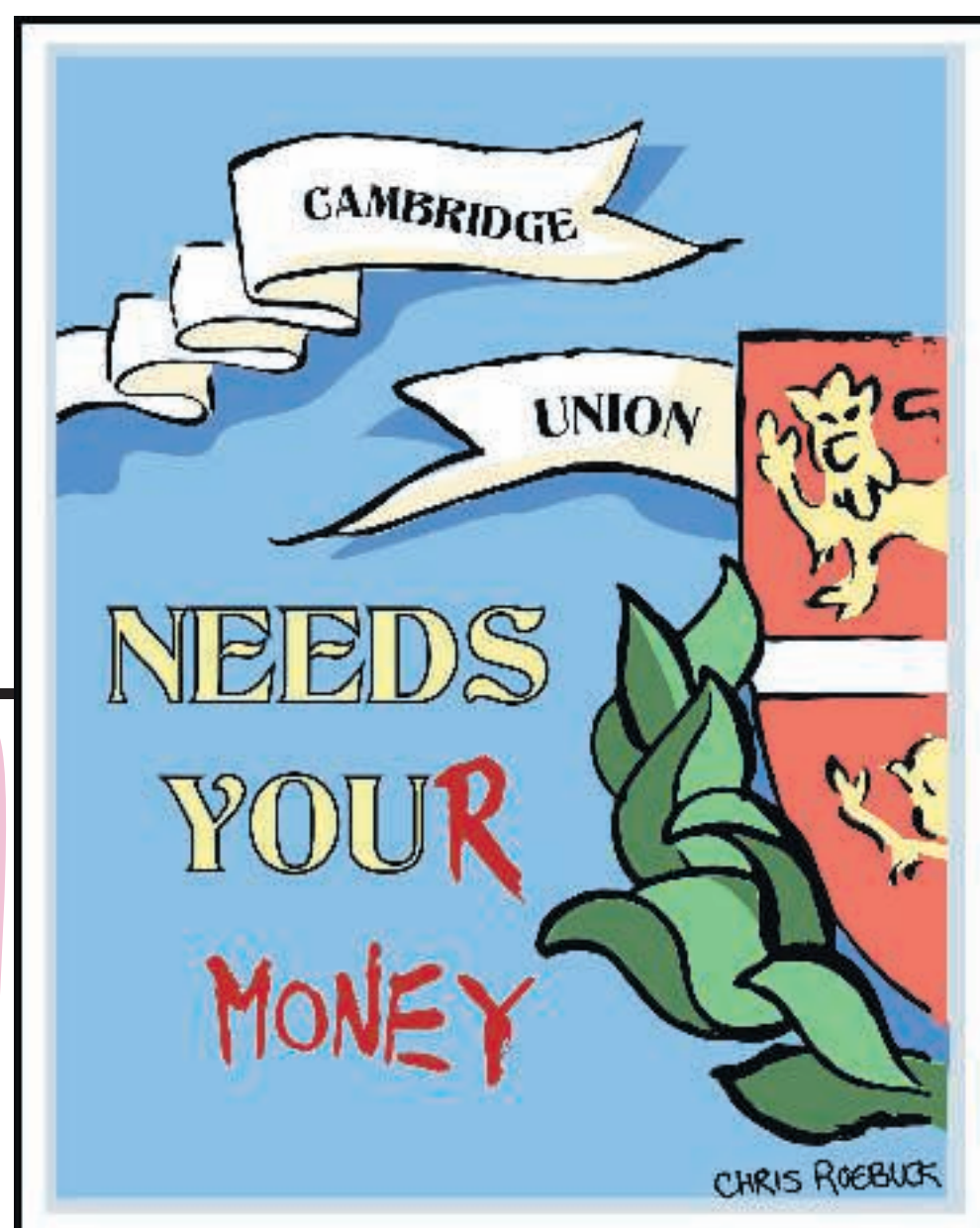
competitive debaters, so even if you are going to competitions every weekend, it won't break the bank. It's also not just the world-class speakers who get sent to competitions: we make a point of selecting people who contribute the most to the society by helping out in various ways. The more you put in, the more you get out of it.

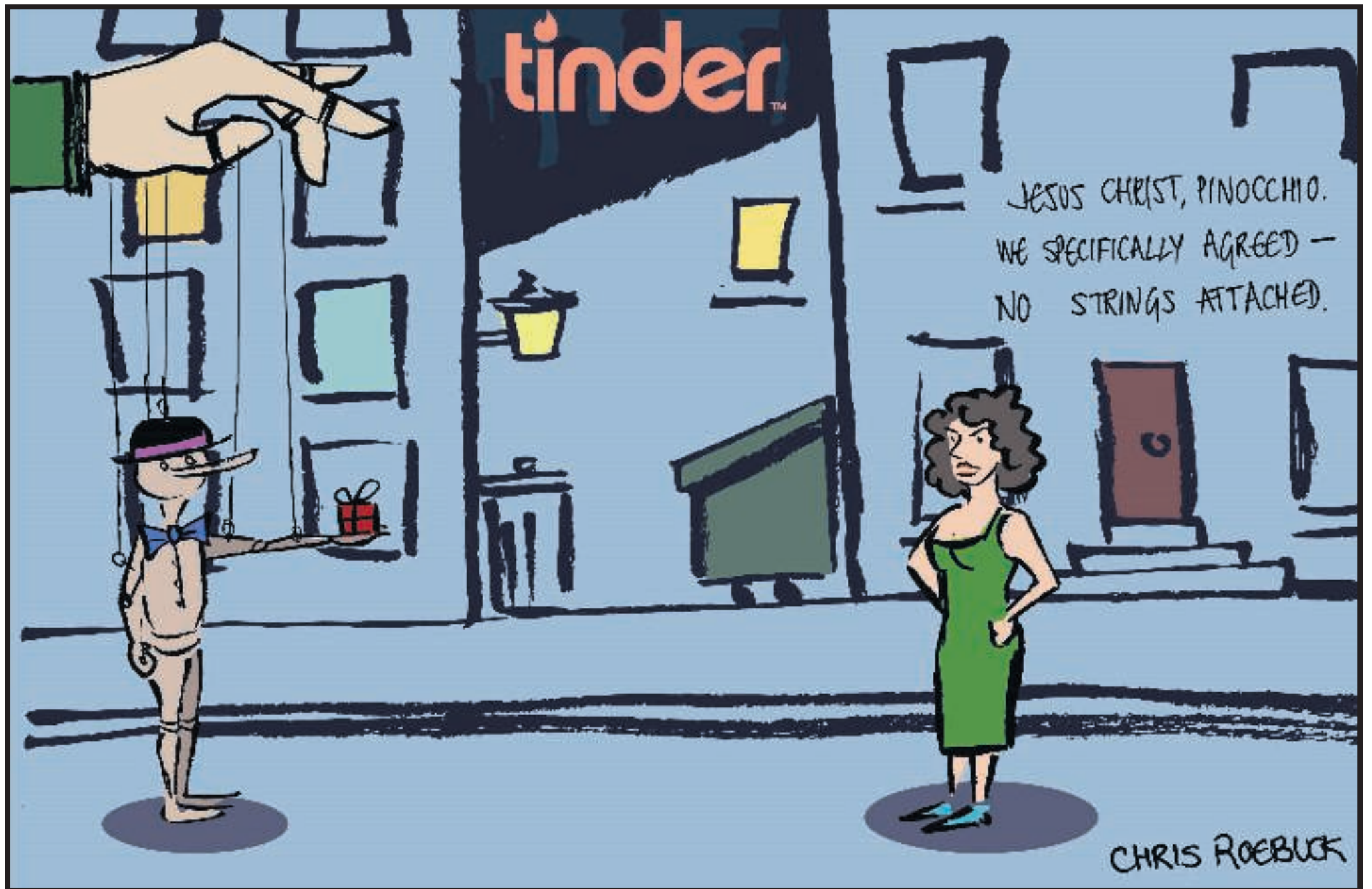
I think that's probably a fair assessment of Union membership in general. It is totally what you make of it. You could purchase membership and let your card gather dust. Or you could get to listen to some of the most influential people in the world and ask them questions yourself. You could deliver a witty putdown to an evasive MP in a crowded chamber. You could travel around the country – and indeed

the continent – for a pit-tance, meeting fantastic people and learning to argue with the best. You could participate in the biggest society in Cambridge, and be a part of something totally unique.

You don't have to take my word for it. For the first two weeks of term every event at the Union is open to all, free of charge. We'll be having three debates, some brilliant speakers and a multitude of other events, all of which you are welcome to attend. We also have better drinks deals than any other bar in Cambridge – and debate-themed cocktails. Everyone loves a debate-themed cocktail.

Tim Squirrell is the current President of the Cambridge Union Society.





Tinderella: modern dating is a fairy tale



Matthew
McConkey

Is it still possible to find Prince (or Princess) Charming in the world of mobile dating?

My experience of Tinder is as follows: *Swipe left, swipe left, swipe left, swipe left. Ooh! He likes Kate Bush/James Joyce/The 'Gatsby should have put a ring on it' Facebook page. I bet we're soul mates. It's only a matter of time before we elope to Gibraltar and open up a book shop-cum-restaurant in a cave overlooking the sea. And in the evenings we'll swim naked in the faintly glimmering waters before retiring for a night of quiet, forceful love-making.*

Or something similar. Of course, this impression is mediated by the all-important portfolio of Tinder profile pictures. But profile picture etiquette is now a saturated field of enquiry, and I would like to delve instead into something a little more unclear but nevertheless still important: the Shared Interest.

The most immediate problem with the Shared Interest is that nobody has 'liked' anything since 2009. So we are all effectively judging potential partners based on our 16-year-old selves. You find bizarre interests – like Ant & Dec fan-fiction or roller blading – which would be utterly off-putting if you didn't take a moment to exercise a little reason. And on the other side of the scale are the completely ubiquitous entries: Lady Gaga, Florence and the Machine, FACEBOOK ITSELF – the kind of entries which, if your prospective match did not share them, may lead you to think he might be some sort of

criminally insane social recluse.

There comes a point in all this anachronistic judgement when the penny drops – these interests are shared. I too represent myself in a mixture of blasé and ridiculous interests which no longer reflect my character, and which in fact actively embarrass me. Unlike the hallowed profile picture, the shrine of self-curation around which our entire cyber-personae are constructed, the Shared Interest is left sadly at the bottom of the page to cause pain, embarrassment, and the occasional feeling of deep obsession.

But that occasional feeling of obsession is important, too. Regardless of whether this person actually likes the thing they 'like', the Shared Interest contains the idea of the possibility of a connection. When coupled with the profile picture where he's wearing the perfect chunky knit or just the right shaved side to tousled top ratio (I make no apologies for my taste in men), that interest gives you something to latch on to. And the important combination of looks and interests explains the origins of Tinder's name: like the first time you see someone walking across the college court, or wearing an ironic but still wildly attractive bop costume, Tinder gives you just enough information to create a fantasy.

The Shared Interest doesn't necessarily have to be capitalised, or

referring to Tinder. Let's say you're having a college family night, and your father/mother/sister/brother has caught your attention. Ignoring deep, tragic feelings of incestuous guilt, you strike up a conversation that goes a bit like this:

Son: I've never had anything stronger than a WKD but I really don't think this is getting me drunk.

Mum: That's funny, I thought the same thing when I was travelling in Nepal and my host family gave me some of the local brew to try.

Son: OH MY GOD YOU'VE BEEN TO NEPAL NAMASTE.

Mum: OH MY GOD NO WAY DID YOU FIND YOURSELF IN THE MISTY GLADES?

The conversation continues until Oedipal travesty occurs. In the sobering light of day the magic has died. From now on you sit at different brunch tables.

There are a couple of different ways to think about this: either, good for you! You shamelessly exploited a niche mutual interest to earn some freshers' week infamy. Or, sorry pet, you foolishly believed that this was indicative of a deep spiritual connection. Give your heart time to heal.

The question at the root of this is: how does an interest actually reflect someone's character? For my part, I'd say there is a vague correlation: someone who likes Kate Bush and James Joyce is more likely to be interesting, eccentric and endearingly

geekish. But that's only because I (somewhat wilfully) choose to associate those people with those characteristics. Someone who likes Kate Bush and James Joyce could easily also be irritating, arrogant and exhausting – and of course they could possess characteristics which I do not associate with my two favourite people. So the Shared Interest, if it is attractive, is a lie that we gladly accept – an unreality upon which we can build the greater unreality of the 'obsessive infatuation' kind.

All of this could come across as a needless continuation of the 'don't judge a book by its cover' argument. But the reality of the situation is that most communication now takes place across platforms that force us to do just that. So instead of crying into our tea-cosies and praying for the authenticity revival, we should continue Tinderling with aplomb – and cynicism. Those six photographs, the 100-word bio and the Shared Interests represent just one of the ways that people in 2014 can represent themselves. And representation is exactly what you're dealing with when you get to know someone in any circumstances. So walk into the light of perfectly filtered selfies; go boldly towards lightly intellectual South American fiction; and stay away from men draped over heavily anaesthetised tigers.

And if you like Kate Bush or James Joyce, message me.



Vulture

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Freshers' Guide: Culture in Cambridge

Varsity tells you everything you need to know about Cambridge culture – giving you no excuse to spend your free time lying on your friends' floors eating toast

Fine Arts

Cambridge has been blessed with the reputation and cold hard cash necessary to acquire some of the most wide-ranging collections in the UK.

Your first port of call might as well be The Fitzwilliam Museum, often called "the finest small museum in Europe". You're bound to find something that impresses you here, be it an ancient greek mosaic, medieval manuscript or impressionist painting.

Also worth a look is Kettle's Yard. Just up 'the hill' past Magdelene Bridge, it plays host to a slightly more modern selection of exhibitions. The current offering – including digital works and films by duo Guthrie & Pope, early 20th century engravings by Gwen Raverat and paintings and sculpture from Syrian artist Issam Kourbaj – is exemplary of the gallery's commitment to diversity.

The colleges are of course a valuable resource in the search for art in Cambridge. Worth special mention is Murray Edwards, where art and feminism meet in the largest collection of art by women in Europe. For a more traditional trip, head to Trinity, where you can have lunch under the glowering stare of Henry VIII.

The Cambridge theatre scene is so lively that it's actually quite frightening sometimes. Comedy and drama are both well covered by student theatre, with an output unrivalled by other universities. Many colleges have very active drama societies that are worth following, but the main hubs of student theatre are undeniably the ADC and Corpus Playroom with four shows a week between them. These are professionally run theatres and their student productions are (generally) of a very high quality. Ticket prices are fairly cheap for students, although some bigger-budget ADC main shows can get a bit pricey. You'll be inundated with shiny flyers from Week One and programmes for both theatres are on the ADC website so there's no excuse for making it to Christmas without a visit.

If you tire of vaguely recognising every second character from the English Faculty Library, try the Cambridge Arts Theatre (just round the corner from the Corpus Playroom). They stage a wide variety of professional touring productions with this month's highlights including *Hay Fever*, *The Full Monty* and *1984*. A little more expensive, but a often a chance to see something truly outstanding.

Theatre

Some people say that the DJ at Cindies is legally obligated to change track every 30 seconds because they don't own the rights to any of the music they play. While that makes literally no sense, the musical offering at the average Cambridge club-night is undeniably depressing and we recommend you get your musical fulfilment elsewhere.

For a low-commitment evening, many college bars, such as Clare cellars, regularly host live bands, but for any acts that might be considered famous, The Cambridge Corn Exchange is your best bet. This term Johnny Marr, The Kooks and Basement Jaxx all grace us with their presence. If you're not a fame-obsessed, mainstream LOSER, try the Junction, which is like the Corn Exchange only artier and with the odd, highly recommended, club-night thrown in. It's worth the pilgrimage to the distant plains past the train station. A similar vibe is offered by the The Fountain Inn on Regent Street. This bar/club features a more exciting selection of DJs than the central clubs as well as the occasional live act and student-run events.

Music

Film

Film buffs aren't nearly as well served as theatre fans but the Cambridge Arts Picture House goes far to fill the void. Located conveniently and weirdly above Spoons, they screen a selection that goes well beyond hollywood blockbusters – with foreign, indie and classic films all common fixtures – and they also host regular Q&A screenings with directors like Ken Loach and Michael Haneke.

Such variety in a small cinema means runs can be irritatingly short. Ticket prices depend on the day but it's well worth getting a £10 student membership, which immediately pays for itself with two free tickets and some exciting drinks deals – this isn't a plug, it's just logic.

Many colleges also have their own film societies, which screen a variety of (often questionable) films, depending on the students' whims that week. Good or bad, they're generally free, so are an easy way to get your film fix.

If your film of choice isn't showing here you'll have to go to the multiplexes at the Grafton centre or Cambridge Leisure Park, which are, let's be honest, a real trek.

Like a Virgin!

In defence of religious art and the Mater Dolorosa



'Why should I like a Virgin?' the viewer may wonder, while observing the sixteenth century wooden bust of the Mater Dolorosa, (Virgin of Sorrows) by Spanish sculptor Pedro de Mena, which is currently on display at the Fitzwilliam Museum's Spanish & Flemish Gallery. The image of a crying Virgin, with ruptured, glass-like, chestnut-amber eyes and porcelain skin, raises questions of why a piece of seventeenth-century religious art would be relevant to a contemporary viewer and even why the sculpture should be acquired by the Fitzwilliam Museum.

Religious art seems to generate mixed feelings among the museum's visitors. The genre seems to call for certain seriousness, almost for a devotional reverence in the way the piece is looked at and thought of. Some may find it distant, a type of art for Bible connoisseurs, one rooted in a bygone era and representing conservative values. This is why genuine public appreciation of religious art is dying, even though

exhibitions featuring fifteenth and sixteenth-century Italian Masters are always crowded.

Yet, there is much more to religious art than religion; there is also playfulness, dramatic evocation of human feelings, stage-like settings, eroticism, myths and storytelling. Fourteenth and fifteenth-century viewers were more appreciative of this playfulness and imagination than we are. For example, the stained glass windows of King's Chapel follow a typological scheme: Old and New Testament scenes are juxtaposed, in a game of association.

In the window of the Annunciation, the archangel speaks: "Ave Maria, gratia plena" while the overhanging stained glass depicts Eve. For the contemporary audience, the implicit playful anagram juxtaposing the two was clear: backwards, 'Eva' reads 'Ave'.

Another work on show at the Fitzwilliam features a similarly subtle, playful element. Annibale

Carracci's *The Magdalene in the Wilderness* shows the saint crying, looking upwards in an aesthetic pose – yet her breast is exposed revealing erotic undertones. The painting alludes to Magdalene's life as recounted in the Golden Legend, where the lives of the saints are enriched by numerous comic incidents.

De Mena's *Mater Dolorosa* also features a disguised element of playfulness. Tim Knox, Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum explains, "The thing about this bust is that it is not one of those lugubrious virgins with rolling eyes that one associates with Spanish religious art. Here instead is a strikingly simple, and arrestingly intense, portrait of a beautiful young woman – an Andalusian peasant girl perhaps?"

When I first saw the sculpture I could not resist thinking that it had a certain ceramic-doll likeness. Dolls are hugged by children and evoke a feeling of tenderness and intimacy. De Mena's *Mater Dolorosa* recalls one of those doll-like Spanish processional sculptures of Virgins, dressed in real clothes, such as the seventeenth century *Virgen de la Esperanza de Macarena* in Seville. De Mena's sculpture also aims at life-likeness with gently furrowed brows, natural flesh tones, glass eyes, teardrops and eyelashes made from human hair. It is an evocative sculpture, one that reenacts the drama of losing a son, performed by an infant-looking mother.

If one thinks 'playfully', De Mena's sculpture should still elicit our atten-

tion, as modern viewers, without being remote: it moves between the mimetic, crystallising the concept of art as rival to life, and the artifice (thanks to its mannequin-like aesthetic). Reminiscent of an Andalusian girl, De Mena's *Mater Dolorosa* combines dignity and playfulness, seriousness and extroverted grace. The Fitzwilliam Museum ran a campaign throughout the summer to purchase the piece (including £30,000 from the Art Fund and £10,000 from The Henry Moore Foundation) and are set to announce whether it was successful next week.

The Fitzwilliam Museum's appeal for acquisition gives a feeling to our Freshers of how vibrant and committed the Cambridge art scene is. Critical minds cannot exist without creativity and Cambridge is a place where students can nurture this creativity both intellectually and artistically. If you have something of the painter, the poet or the musician within you, express it by joining the Cambridge Creatives, submitting to *Notes Magazine*, or, of course, visiting a museum.

Kettle's Yard, the home of Helen and Jim Ede (curator at the Tate Gallery in London in the 1920s and 30s), features one of Britain's most distinctive twentieth century collections, including Winifred Nicholson and David Jones, as well as sculptures by Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Constantin Brancusi and Henry Moore. It is a gallery, but a home too, where the colours and forms of displayed artworks are complemented by those of homely objects such as glasses and vases with flowers.

Take a break from your essay: paint, write a poem, discover hidden artworks within your college rooms or wander the halls of the Museum of Archeology and Anthropology. Cambridge is as a voyage of intellectual and creative discovery, so if you haven't lost your Cambridge arts virginity yet, then why not let the *Mater Delorosa* be the one.

Lavinia Puccetti



First time at the Fringe

It's 11.30pm on a Wednesday and I, like those around me, am crouched on the floor of a multi-storey car-park, desperately attempting to concentrate on what Romeo is telling us. Romeo is a soldier and he is here to protect me from the zombies. I keep telling myself that this is an immersive theatre experience — the zombies are actors wearing contact lenses and make-up and our 'mission' is to escape them — no one is going to harm me. My heart rate has not yet received this logic memo, and I'm so tense that parts of my brain are starting to question why on earth I thought a zombie experience, or indeed the Edinburgh Fringe Festival at all, was a good idea.

My time at the Fringe was not at all what I expected. I had previously encountered the festival in the form of what I defensively assumed were belittling conversational put-downs. Just as you finish your anecdote of seeing a brilliant comedian's most recent not-yet-on-DVD tour, someone responds with "Oh yes, I saw that at Edinburgh. Last year". Conversation moves on and you are left deflated and silently cursing the moron who ruined your only chance at being cutting edge. Perhaps subconsciously this has been my preconception of arts festivals in general — pretentious, and only for the show-offs.

Show-offs exist in every area of life and there are always those who will abuse a cultural experience in an attempt to outshine others who are unaware of a niche — and frankly expensive — arts festival. But the Fringe itself is vastly different from this presentation, mostly due to the constant and confusing bombardment of weirdness. This is permitted because there is actually no 'norm' at Edinburgh — anything and everything goes. There are over 2000 events at the festival



(plays, comedy, live music, poetry, burlesque, and everything in between), which means two things. Firstly, there is no way you are going to see a large proportion of what's on offer, and secondly neither is anyone else. That means that no one is an expert (not even the Guardian) and that's rare in any artistic environment. It's quite a nice change.

That's why during the Fringe, the Royal Mile is filled with people shamelessly attempting to grab your attention long enough for them to offer you a flyer to their show. Actors are dressed in costume as everything from Victorian gentlewomen to arty modern students, medieval monks, and World War I soldiers. There's singing, dancing, statue-imitating, chanting, posters, and pithy catchphrases as you walk by. On one particularly bizarre day the coincidental placing of two shows' promoters meant I was asked "Would you like to see a show about women just released from prison?" followed immediately by "Would you like

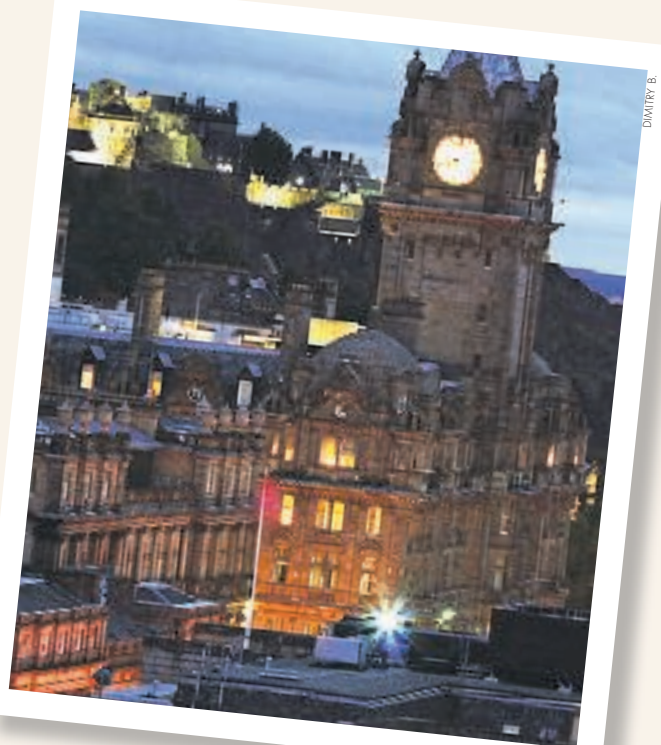


to see a show about five women chained together?" Before I had time to ask the latter cast member if their show was a prequel to the one I'd just been offered, someone else jumped into view and offered me "A comedy about social anxiety, existential crises guaranteed!"

Every event you attend has the potential to surprise. I am not entirely sure what I was expecting when I attended a show called Dracula. A steampunk, rock-pop, Emo musical was certainly not it. Two audience members behind me were equally surprised — they had expected a musical and were audibly horrified when Dracula started biting people and drinking their blood. So, perhaps not all surprises are good ones. Comedy duo Guilt and Shame provided the audience with pink hairnets and paper crowns which my friends and I forgot we were wearing on leaving the auditorium until we bumped into someone we knew in the bar (much to their amusement). Cheap onstage tickets to James III (new writing now transferred to the National Theatre in London) meant I got to be part of a Scottish Parliament, albeit a fictional one, while Choose Your Own Documentary equipped the audience with multiple-choice handsets for decision-making moments, meaning each show took a different route towards multiple endings.

So, back to Romeo. Unfortunately he didn't make it. Half way through The Generation of Z he went to turn the power back on and never returned. However, thanks to my newly discovered apocalypse instincts, I realised I didn't particularly care as long as the zombies (creepy actors) didn't get me. I would like to think that as we all sprinted back through the multi-storey in the grand finale, I had some deep thoughts about how my preconceptions of arts festivals had changed and how creative and surprising they really can be. But to be honest, I was far too busy trying to outrun other audience members and zombies and having a ridiculous amount of fun.

Hazel Lawrence



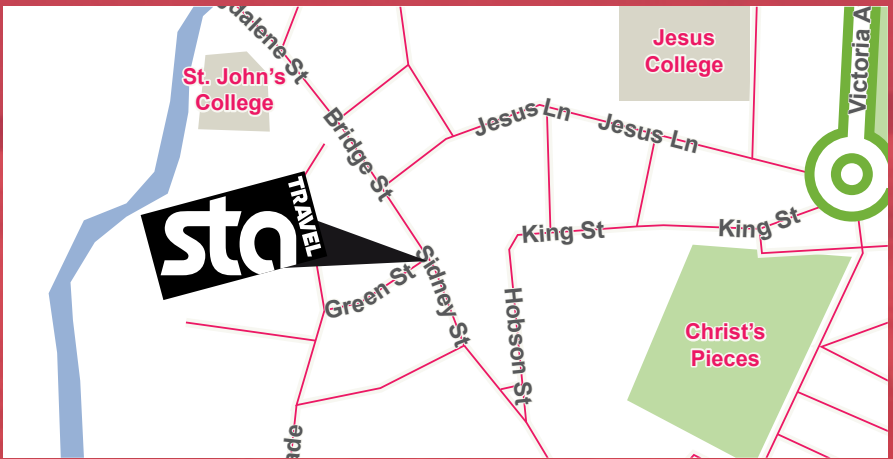


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Restaurant Review: New Kids on the Block

Katie Cornish showcases her top three new arrivals to the Cambridge restaurant scene



Open since May, **The Garden Kitchen** is the sister restaurant to the Garden Café in the Botanic Gardens. It boasts one of the best breakfast buffets I have come across in Cambridge (think home-made sausage rolls and asparagus wrapped in Parma ham) as well as a wide-ranging and healthy lunch buffet, and a selection of indulgent cakes. Although primarily aimed at those grabbing something to take away, there are a limited number of seats inside if you want to sit and have a coffee. Located on Mill Road, the Garden Kitchen may not be as well-known as the town-centre cafés, but it's a spot worth visiting.

SmokeWorks opened its doors to meat-loving members of the public in July. This informal American-style diner, with an extensive Bourbon and whisky list, is not your typical Cambridge restaurant. Located on Free School Lane, it is the newest member of the Cambs Cuisine group (which run the ever-popular Chop Houses), and lives up to the same high standards. SmokeWorks' popularity is undoubtedly due to their simple, well-cooked dishes. 'Slow Cooked. Fast' is the restaurant's tag line, and this fits their ethos perfectly. From 14-hour smoked beef on toast to smoked and pulled pork, all of these tasty dishes are served within minutes of ordering. I wouldn't recommend this place to anyone looking for a quiet, formal dinner (or to vegetarians!), but the relaxed atmosphere and buzz of conversation makes it a refreshing addition to the Cambridge food scene, serving unpretentious food at reasonable prices. The Meaty BBQ Beans would be my personal recommendation.

The Urban Shed is like no other café in Cambridge. I had the pleasure of paying a visit during its opening week in February, and have been back several times since. Entering the café is like stepping back in time. With its striking, retro furniture, which includes orange bucket seats and reclaimed wooden spools as tables, you almost forget about the food. However, sweet treats like the black-forest brownie are excellent, and there is a wide selection of sandwiches, coffees and breakfast items available.



Spoons

Anne O'Neill brings you the best of Cambridge cafes in her weekly column.

This week: Costa Coffee

"I have measured out my life with coffee spoons" – T.S. Eliot could have been talking about the typical Cambridge student when he wrote about poor J. Alfred Prufrock. I don't go to a café for a caffeine hit – I can get that in my own kitchen – but rather to connect with the real world. Cambridge students talk about the 'Cambridge bubble' and devise ways to escape it during term. For me, one of those ways is reading a book with a bucket-sized mug of tea before me and the soothing buzz of conversation in the background.

Corporate chain-haters reading this will roll their eyes at my choice of venue, but there is a lot to be said for a reliably tasty tea or coffee. However, not only is Cambridge's Costa Coffee housed within the confines of the 1920s-built Montagu House, a Grade II listed building, but its picturesque location on the corner of Sussex and Sidney Street makes this coffeehouse very special to me.

A much-coveted seat by the window affords you a view of quaint Sussex Street with its paved streets and classically-inspired colonnades. The

large windows are perfect for people-watching and these particular windows, shaded by the café's distinctive awning, have the curious quality of seeming to protect the gazer from the view of those passing by outside. Located just metres from Sainsbury's, this Costa is also in the ideal spot for the requisite guilt-free, post-grocery shopping pick-me-up (unless you live at Sidney Sussex – then you're just lazy).

If window seats aren't your cup of tea (see what I did there?), or all the seats upstairs are taken, there is also a spacious area downstairs. Although lacking in the light and airiness of the ground-floor, the basement seating area is ideal for any cash-strapped student who needs to set up camp for a few hours without paying for hourly coffee refills. Staff are friendly without being overbearing, and will generally leave you alone once you're not taking up a valuable seat during rush-hours.

Next time you're weighed down with essay deadlines, grab a seat by the window and eavesdrop on real life for a while, even if it's just for the time it takes to drain your mug.

A Cantabrigian Abroad

In her first column, MML student Kiera Summer shares her experiences of studying in Paris

My arrival in Paris passes with few glitches. I lollop onto the train with my comedic quantity of luggage; the kind that makes people stare at you hesitantly, as if they'd like to come over to point out that the things you are carrying are heavy and multiple, and that you might want to put them down soon, in case you hadn't realised.

The Eurostar is suitably drab, and gives me a body odour complex until I realise it is the entire chair and train, rather than my body, that smells.

My hostel is next to the bridal shop

'Hellamarriage', which is run by a guy who doesn't laugh too hard when I ask for a cork-screw after accidentally buying good wine, or when I then prove unable to use it.

The following day, my folder of documents checked and rechecked (and rechecked again), I feel as prêt as the fast-food chain to show the student housing office a thing or two.

But the fiendish paperwork is set to test me, as it is wont to do. In France, suspicion seems to be the order of the day,

with organisations refusing to believe you are legitimate until you provide multiple forms of ID, as well as photocopies of everything you have ever signed. I may be over-intellectualising, but there is something distinctly existential about this. Sartre may have had a point.

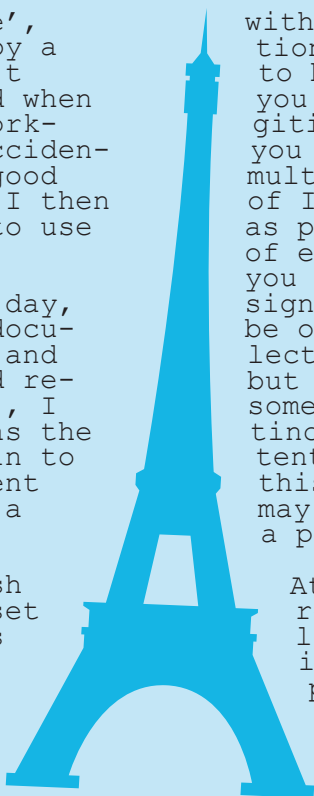
At the bureau, the lady exhibits surprising creativity in saying no: 'Desolé

mais c'est obligatoire' (I'm sorry, but it is obligatory) and 'il faut le faire pour éviter d'avoir des problèmes' (you must do it unless you want to have problems). I want to scream the lyrics of 'Killing In The Name Of', quote Orwell's 1984, and hide under the table until this fascist state has been overthrown - but I'm not sure my French would hold out that long.

Protest stymied, I finally get my keys, despite being one document short of completing my sacred 'dossier', and am ordered to return within the week to produce it.

Out on bail, I proceed to the accommodation office for half an hour of interrogation. I agree with everything they say, and bite my tongue when they mention difficulties with rowdy English girls and express the hope that I will be better behaved.

I don't tell them that I like loud house music or binge drinking. As I leave, the bomb they have dropped on my bureaucracy-addled head begins to explode: fuck, they just said I would be SHARING!



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Photography and Styling | David Godwin, Model| Isabel Adomakoh-Young , Makeup and Clothes | Isabel's own.

Think you'd like to be a theatre critic?

Sarah Grice talks us through the art of reviewing in Cambridge

Theatre critic Kenneth Tynan wryly commented, "A critic is a man who knows the way but can't drive the car." His self-deprecating analogy sheds light on some of the issues surrounding the symbiotic relationship between theatre and theatre reviews. A line will inevitably emerge between the people who make art (those that drive the car) and the people that critique it (those that don't); in other words the thespians and the journalists. Obviously, these are not distinct categories – many reviewers have practical experience and many practitioners have written about theatre. The most astute critics tend to be the playwrights themselves.

However there is a tendency to dismiss criticism as a creative art form. In Steven Frears' film *High Fidelity* (2000), John Cusack's lonely, cynical music snob who owns a Chicago record store is rather disparagingly called 'a critic, a professional appreciator' by his on and off girlfriend. The implication of both above quotes being something along the lines of 'those who can, do; those who can't, teach.' Reviewing is a craft comparable to acting, producing or directing; each of these roles requires a specific skill set that people can choose to hone during their time at university. True, it doesn't require six weeks of rehearsal, admin and sleepless nights; this article in no way intends to diminish the creative efforts that go into the production of shows. If critics didn't love and appreciate theatre, they probably wouldn't be there. However, like all journalism, a review is an original composition in its own right; a piece of writing that is carefully constructed to stimulate debate and conversation.

It is just as important to encourage reviewing as it is to encourage theatre making in order

to create a productive working dialogue between practitioners and journalists.

Being a theatre reviewer in Cambridge is not exactly the same as being William Hazlitt, George Bernard Shaw or even Lyn Gardner. You go to the ADC or Corpus Playhouse or wherever the play might be on. You pick up your free ticket and watch the show. You probably have a couple of drinks in the bar afterwards. You get home on slightly the wrong side of sober. You have roughly 500 words with which to write a decent piece of prose that fulfils the criteria before 10am the next morning. There are many ways to go about writing a review but here are a few useful starting points for writing about student theatre.

Firstly, you have to consider who you are writing for. A fundamental role of a review is to enable theatre-goers to make an informed decision about which shows to spend their money on. Since shows can cost upwards of £10 for a main-show now, this element is vital. Here is where the difference between a 'review' and slightly looser term 'criticism' comes into play. There are many types of theatre criticism and reviewing is just one of them. It is limited in that you do not have free reign to write an academic thesis on the work; instead you have a word count, a star rating and a duty to inform a potential audience. The key here is balancing your creativity and an objective approach. Draw out detail, informed commentary on the production at hand but do not hesitate to give it your honest opinion, and your own turn of phrase. For example, if reviewing a production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, please resist waxing lyrical about the obscure canon of Tennessee Williams or attempting to become an amateur biographer of Marlon Brando in

the space of 500 words. While this might be entertaining for you and would make an interesting read if the Varsity review section was the Guardian theatre blog, it is not particularly useful to the cast or potential audience members.

The second main readership of a review will be the cast and crew of the show. A reviewer has a platform to provide them with some important feedback. Always be honest: you are under no obligation to pretend a show was good. The actors (probably) will not hunt you down. However if you did not like something, you must say why. A bad review is like a bad essay: one which makes assertions without backing them up. Think about the people that spent weeks making the show and how their efforts have contributed to the overall effect; pay attention to the direction, set, props, lighting, sound, publicity, etc. Try not to backseat direct as you write; focus on what was there as opposed to what was absent in your opinion. Dismantling a show that you did not like is usually a much easier (and more entertaining) writing exercise; however it can be very difficult to write well about a successful show. Remember that your praise will certainly be read and very much appreciated, so if you do experience that transcendental night at the theatre, do give it the elusive five stars.

In terms of style, less is often more. While it is important for critics to develop a voice, do bear in mind that a review is not an academic essay to be read by a world expert. If you've just seen a really great Brecht play and want to talk about its effects, it is not always necessary to go on about the *Verfremdungseffekt*. Technical jargon can be as alienating as European theatrical devices. Save that for the dissertation. Explain what is happening on stage and how it works without sounding like you swallowed a

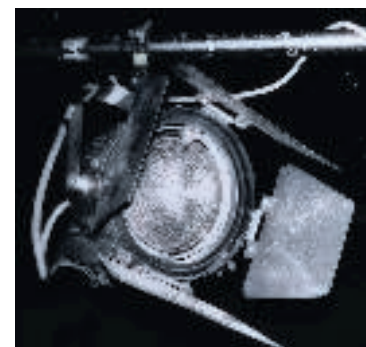
drama textbook. By all means suit the word to the action: if writing about a comedy then a few quips could make for a good read, but make sure your own writing isn't trying too hard to upstage the show.

Finally, when you are doing your write up, it is essential to have an awareness of genre, form and context. Obviously we can't all be experts on avant-garde postmodern Icelandic puppetry, but if you are at all uncertain of information then at the very least Wikipedia the play. I was reviewing at the Edinburgh Fringe, and came across a review of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* that opened with the grand statement:

"Christopher Marlowe's limping attempt at a history play is a challenge to perform - the long dragging plot features plenty of sex, death, madness, incest and lycanthropy (yes, lycanthropy, why not?)"

All well and good, except that Marlowe didn't write the play, it's not a history, and "long, dragging plot" doesn't quite add up with the following list which outlines pretty much all the ingredients of a cracking Jacobean tragedy.

So, why would someone choose to be a reviewer? Free tickets are a major draw. But for anyone who loves writing, literature and drama it is an opportunity to flex your creative, analytic and journalistic muscles. It encourages a critical eye for detail; when I review a show I look for important quotes and moments which really capture the spirit of the piece. It can be such a pleasure to write about a production that has really moved you in some way. Charles Spencer (recently retired from the Telegraph), summed up the obligations of a theatre critic: "Arrive sober, stay awake, stay to the end and don't take a bribe unless it is big enough to allow you to retire in comfort for the rest of your life."



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CAM FM'S DRAMATIC VENTURE


Alfred Cumming talks to the pair behind Cambridge Shortlegs Presents


Cambridge Radio takes a new direction this Michaelmas with the introduction of its first radio drama, 'Cambridge Shortlegs Presents...'. Startled by the lack of radio drama last year, the show's producers, Alex Cartlidge and Marthe de Ferrer, decided to start the project, consisting of 11 new radio plays over the following two months. The pair plan to bring new writers, directors and actors to a medium that has been relatively unexplored in Cambridge. The series' producers cite their inspiration as coming from 'the classics', naming shows such as 'The Mercury Theatre on the Air' and 'Suspense' as some of their biggest influences. Each week, a new writer, director and cast shall take hold of the airwaves for an hour with a brand new play, with the eclectic shows ranging from black comedy to religious drama.


Many Cam FM alumni have gone on to have great careers in the fields of radio and theatre, including playwright Peter Rumney (Arts Council England Best Play Award 2002), Anne Morrison (Director of the BBC Academy) and Jane Ellison (Commissioning Editor for General Factual Programmes at BBC Radio 4), whilst notable Cambridge graduates such as John Cleese, David Mitchell and Sir Derek Jacobi have gone on to work on hugely popular and successful radio shows. Cambridge Shortlegs Presents... hopes to explore a whole new side of Cambridge theatre. For both Cartlidge and de Ferrer, this is their first foray into the world of radio. "I was really shocked and confused by the absence of radio drama last year in Cambridge", says Cartlidge, whilst de Ferrer is passionate about "the


unique dynamics that this platform establishes for creating drama." Kicking off this will be Guy Clark's 'Window Seats' as well his adaptation of O. Henry's short story 'The Ransom of the Red Chief'. Future shows in the series include Ed Eustace's dark comedy 'Territory' and Sarah Grice's adaptation of Georg Büchner's 'Woyzeck', with the run ending on December 7 with Millie Brierley's religious drama 'Creed'. "I am nervous as it is such a huge project," says de Ferrer, "we had over 40 applications, but I am also delighted to be working with such a talented team." The pair were restrained on the subject of the series' future next term, but with a run going all the way into December, it seems that Michaelmas alone will be enough to give 'Shortlegs Presents...' the opportunity to shake up Cambridge drama.


What's Trending?


- 


Anthony: A Sketch Show @CorpusPlayroom (Oct 6, 21.30)
Eclectic, absurd, and rather silly - journey through the garbled minds of five semi-fresh Cambridge Comedians.
- 

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee @ADCtheatre (Oct 15, 23.00)
Follow six nerdy American school kids as they compete in: The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee. A partially improvised musical comedy.
- 

Oedipus and Antigone @ADCtheatre (Oct 21, 19.45)
The terrible fate of Oedipus, Antigone and their family unfolds in an evocative new production based on Sophocles' masterpiece.
- 

Sophiatown @ADC (Oct 28, 19.45)
In 1950's west-central Johannesburg, artists, activists and illegal bars make up the freehold township of Sophiatown, the beating heart of culture in apartheid South Africa.
- 

Rope @CorpusPlayroom (Oct 28, 19.00)
A tense psychodrama for Halloween. 1929: two well-bred Oxford students who kill a fellow undergraduate just for kicks.
- 

The Laramie Project @CorpusPlayroom (Nov 4, 19.00)
In October 1998 Matthew Shepard was kidnapped, severely beaten and left to die, The Laramie Project, is a chronicle of the life of the town in the year after the murder.
- 

After Miss Julie @CorpusPlayroom (Nov 4, 21.30)
"My mother – almost on her deathbed – no, on her deathbed, made me swear that I'd never be a slave to any man."

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WHAT WE'RE
LISTENING
TO

Petros Fessas

ANOTHER GO ROUND
BEAT CONNECTION

If you can still bear to listen to anything remotely summery, try out this addictive single from this Seattle trio's second album, due to be released early next year. Fusing tabla and sitar with breezy dance rock tones, it will certainly please ears with Passion Pit or Bombay Bicycle Club leanings. And although it is thematically centred around a bad romance, it can certainly describe certain love-hate sentiments towards the start of a new Cambridge year.

CORONUS, THE
TERMINATOR
FLYING LOTUS

In only two minutes and forty seconds, the third teaser from Flying Lotus' upcoming fifth effort 'You're Dead!' slowly builds and sweeps you up in a seemingly tranquil atmosphere, aided by a mesmerizing jazz-funk production and a gospel-infused angelic choir. In an album inspired by the process of dying and the afterlife, 'Coronus' may be too brief to serve as a proper single but one can imagine it as a strikingly soulful culmination of the theme, soundtracking a moment of transcendence. It certainly acts to maintain and strengthen the anticipation for the record's October 6th release.

VIOLENCE
ANDY STOTT

There couldn't be a more fitting title for the Manchester-based techno producer's return after 2012's breakthrough piece 'Luxury Problems'. This spacious and minimalistic track starts off with a hauntingly quiet two minutes, dominated by vocalist Alison Skidmore's smoky presence, only to then rapidly descend into a sinister progression of crushing metallic beats. The second half of the song repeats this pattern to create a nightmarish painting of scenes in dark alleyways.



THE EQUALIZER



If we've learned one thing from Taken, it's that serious, soft-spoken thespians are the only thing protecting innocent American girls from the claws of those devious Eastern Europeans. If you're a fan of this kind of movie, rejoice! Liam Neeson might be busy walking among tombstones, but Denzel Washington is available to fulfil your need for righteous violence.

The Equalizer is an adaption of the 80s TV series of the same name and stars Washington as Robert McCall, a quiet man with a mysterious past in US intelligence. Between

his day job at the Home Mart and his nights reading in a 24-hour diner, he appears to be running out the clock on his life in as routine a manner as possible. When he sees the brutal treatment of a young working girl (Chloë Grace Moretz) at the hands of Russian gangsters, he decides to utilise his formidable ass-kicking skills in the service of the downtrodden. As the situation escalates, McCall finds himself playing cat-and-mouse with corrupt cops, local mobsters and ruthless international hit men.

This film is directed by Antoine Fuqua, master of humourless, gritty action films like Shooter and Olympus Has Fallen. Compared to his previous work, he is coasting here. The Equalizer is utterly

mediocre. McCall displays the same standard improvisational fighting skills that we've seen done better in the Bourne films or even Sherlock Holmes. His character's backstory is bereft of any originality (you can guess how the history with the ex-wife plays out), and for the bulk of the film he seems nigh-invulnerable, emotionally and physically. The bad-dies are even less imaginative, comprising entirely of the usual group of mob stereotypes distinguished only by their macabre tattoos and funky facial hair.

All that said, Denzel Washington is a fine actor who brings both gravitas and serious action chops to the role. He could do this kind of film in his sleep, so it's a testament to him that

he makes such a generic story more compelling than you'd expect. Chloë Grace Moretz is also good – albeit in a small part. She's absent from most of the film once the violence starts, and her continued presence could have made the story less predictable. The film walks a fine line, being viscerally satisfying (watching horrible people get a horrible comeuppance at the hands of our hyper-competent protagonist) without becoming as gratuitously sadistic as Taken or the Deathwish series.

Only see The Equalizer if you have a real hankering for vigilante films but you've run out of good ones on Netflix. If you're looking for something great, try something else.

Ollie Bartlett

ALT-J

THIS IS ALL YOURS



"We feel like different people" drummer Thom Green said in an interview this July. How could they not? Their debut An Awesome Wave has gone Platinum in the UK and won them the 2012 Mercury Prize. As I witnessed first-hand in their packed concert on 24th September, this has earned them a large exalting fan-base. But not all members were prepared for this swift life change: bassist Gwil Sainsbury amicably left the group early in the wsecond album's recording.

One approaches This is All Yours aware of the band's 'sophomore problem', the weighing expectation to live up to the 'scatterbrain' experimentation that earned them the 'new Radiohead' tag. However, despite still being a band making carefully crafted alt-pop, in this album they seem to be serving a less exciting version of their debut's sounds, without expanding. Apart from the odd Miley Cyrus vocal sample, there is nothing that grabs attention as much as 'Breezeblocks' or 'Fitzpleasure'.

Sure, their approach works perfectly on the two songs that solidify the record, 'Hunger of the Pine' and

'Every Other Freckle'. Elsewhere, they do best when they let go of their usual tricks: baptized by the band as their most 'non-Alt-J' song for being (irresistibly) straightforward, 'Left Hand Free' may serve as an insight into how the band would rather not be identified.

With this in mind, the show delivered more than I expected. The band delivered a dynamic set to a reverent crowd. Although mainly comprised of their Wave hits, the show gave life to cuts from the album that may not initially stand out, such 'Nara', which was a highlight.

Overall, This is All Yours is a solid listen. However, its interesting brainstorms of arrangements might work less often and they might be costing the record its coherence. While not adding to the Alt-J momentum, it is likely to please the trio's fan-base but without pointing to any new directions.

Petros Fessas

THE KOOKS
LISTEN

Like a multicoloured butterfly exploding in slow motion, The Kooks' fourth album Listen is messy but not too messy. The erratic, screechy sentimentality of 'Around Town' opens the album, which is the brainchild of front man Luke Pritchard's creative coupling with hip-hop producer Inflo. Gospel singers ooze out 'Oh Yeah'

as a trumpet toots; there is a gaudy, jazzy keyboard solo, with syncopated hand claps and percussion crashing in later. Once the wave breaks it is clear that the clean-cut indie boys have moved away from their late-Britpop origins, but may have found themselves

lost at sea in a storm of sound.

Pritchard refers to Listen as a "world music album", but this is a world of 'ethnic' rugs and 'oriental' drugs rammed into a London

pad. This is seaside pop with fun-fair flourishes and a dance-orientated sound edging towards R&B, with retro instruments and ska thrown into the mix. Pritchard's address to the father who died when he was young in the piano ballad 'See Me Now' makes for a song that shouldn't be average, but is.

From the personal to the political, 'It Was London' is a mammoth, staggering anthem analysing the London riots. The lightweight voices of the band repeat "Can you believe this is London?", yet it seems like we can and they can't. The climax comes in the opening soulful notes of 'Down', a far but welcome cry from Luke's usual nasal vocals. With a vibrancy unrivalled by the other tracks, the new direction of 'Down' is startling but exciting and it comes too late in the album. The other tracks are hazy dreams: falsetto vocals swerve into electro-pop zones in 'Dreams', with 'Sweet Emotion' falling back into describing the ecstasy of love, as has been done better before.

In 2006 Pritchard was quoted as saying: "I think rock and roll is just getting started" and at times it seems like The Kooks are just getting started. This is both a criticism and a compliment indicating that Listen is perhaps too much, too late.

Sky Holmes

M

Okay, James Bond is probably the most sexist movie franchise in the history of anything. Ever. Now that the wonderful Dame Judi has been replaced by the equally superb, but definitively masculine, Ralph Fiennes, future films may struggle to present a woman that is anything more than a sexy spy or damsel in distress. But whilst she was with us, M was a fabulous example of the powerful and level-headed matriarch.

Marge Gunderson

Pregnant, middle-aged, make-up free, wielding a gun: has there ever been a better female character than Marge Gunderson? Fargo's chief of police never actually talks to another named female, but she does approach a serial killer solo. She's the only sane character in a movie full of men who are psychopathic, pathetic or just plain selfish (props to Jerry Lundegaard, who is all three at once). Strong and competent, with an empathetic and maternal nature, Marge shows that female police chiefs don't always have to be hard, and that mothers don't always have to be soft.

Mathilda

Leon: The Professional only has one real female character: Mathilda. Played by a young Natalie Portman, she gloriously captures the complexity of a teenage girl who still sleeps with her teddy but has just started smoking cigarettes and trying to seduce her neighbours. Vengeful yet vulnerable, her tempestuous performance steals the show and she completely holds her own alongside older and more experienced actors Gary Oldman and Jean Reno.

Feminist films?

Failing the Bechdel Test

The Bechdel test has become a barometer for measuring the feminist credentials of movies. Whilst I wouldn't knock the value of the criteria, there are still some great leading-ladies that fail to make the grade.

Jessica Barnfield

Mulan

Like Eowyn, Mulan is a fearless female warrior who goes undercover in order to protect those she loves. Sure, Mulan as a film has songs that manage to be sexist on multiple levels ('I'll Make A Man Out Of You'), but it still has a pretty strong message for young girls. And for Disney circa 1998 it was damn near revolutionary.

Eowyn

In Lord of The Rings, the fellowship itself may be a bit of a boys club, but who can deny the ethereal command of Cate Blanchet as Galadriel? She easily surpasses any other character in power, beauty and knowledge – and yes, Gandalf, that includes you. However, the stand-out favourite has to be Eowyn, who not only chops the head off the Witch-King's fell beast but thunders "I am no man!" whilst she does it. Pretty cheesy, but pretty badass nonetheless.



BESTIVAL



British festivals can largely be divided into two camps: those that are about the music, and those that are about much more. The line-up of this year's Bestival, which ranged from disco legends Chic, to the electronic magic of SBTRKT, to the surreal gymnastics of The Cuban Brothers, would suggest that it was the former. Do not be deceived.

This was Rob da Bank's eleventh festival, and the excitement on the Desert Island Disco themed Robin Hill was palpable. As well as having its best acts yet, the added extras and the attention to detail made the weekend magical. Hardly a taste was left uncatered for: the reggae stage was consistently popular, the food on offer represented every corner of the world and an intoxicating forest dotted with hammocks, theatre and spoken-word poetry provided hazy wanderers with an ambient repose from aching hangovers.

As well as established mainstream stars such as Laura Mvula, and, heroes of 2005, The Kooks, Bestival provided a platform for more original and unusual talent. Take, for example, the genius that is Kate Tempest. Tempest is by no means a newcomer to the spoken-word poetry scene – since Bestival she has been nominated for a Mercury prize and named by the Poetry Book Society as one of the Next Generation poets. Her threefold appearance at Bestival, however, is testament to the variety and passion that the

festival's organisers put into their line-up.

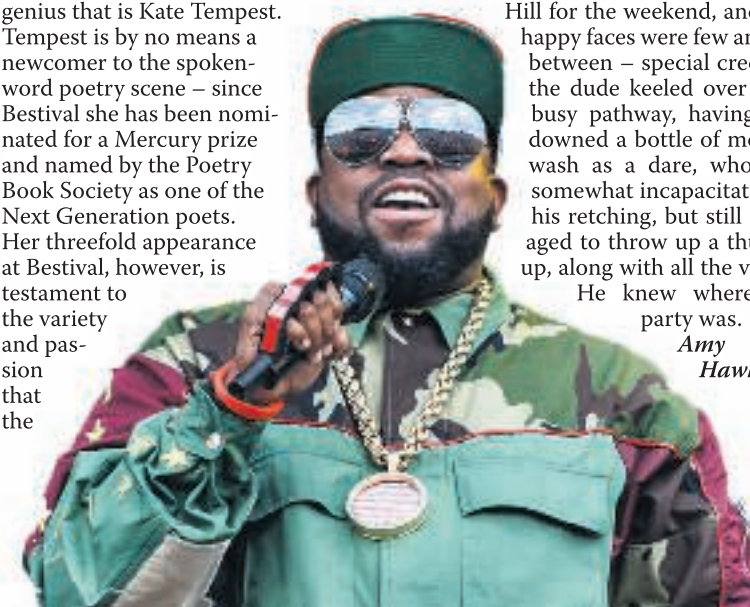
Inclusivity is another special characteristic of Bestival. A host of family-friendly activities, such as Rob da Bank's DJ master classes and face painting in the forest carried on alongside the pounding heavy metal of Skindred without either seeming to infringe on the other. As well as dozens of children dashing through the fields, I met one middle-aged woman who had come last year with her 16-year-old son, but this year left him at home so that she could have more fun.

A few, perhaps unforeseeable, errors were minor jars on an otherwise joyous weekend; Busta Rhymes didn't seem to know what he wanted when he cancelled his main stage performance at a day's notice. Even more sudden was Craig Charles' set inexplicably ending an hour early on the last night, leaving desperate festivalgoers with nowhere to direct the last vestiges of their borrowed energy at 2am on Monday morning. Annie Mac's DJ set, on the magnificent Port stage – a life-sized ship presiding over a sea of sequins and flares – was uncharacteristically dull.

These flaws, however, were no reflection on the festival as a whole. Over 50,000 people descended on Robin Hill for the weekend, and unhappy faces were few and far between – special credit to the dude keeled over on a busy pathway, having just downed a bottle of mouthwash as a dare, who was somewhat incapacitated by his retching, but still managed to throw up a thumbs up, along with all the vomit.

He knew where the party was.

Amy Hawkins



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How Premier is your college?

How does the Cambridge Premier League compare to the real deal? Dan Hanna investigates

All the greatest leagues in the world have one thing in common: soul. After all, huge sponsorship deals, beautiful venues, massive fan bases and the world's best players can only get you so far. Never has such soul been displayed as it was last season when the minnows of Trinity Hall triumphed over all in what is now widely considered amongst my family to be one of the greatest seasons in their history.

MANCHESTER CITY

TIT HALL

Following a brief domination of the football scene, Fitz's golden generation have moved on and their fortunes have taken a turn for the worse. Were last season's disappointments a simple dip in form or the beginning of an indefinite decline? Will a lack of pre-season preparation prove significant as they go on to face sides who inevitably will have done the same? And will Fitz ever again qualify for Europe?

MANCHESTER UTD

FITZ

Despite a disappointing performance last year – a seventh place finish was their lowest ranking in recent memory – the 2011/12 champions are my favourites for the title this year. Having faced an injury-plagued and controversial campaign last time round, they'll have no excuses this year if they continue to under-perform. Unless they get more injuries of course...

CHELSEA

DOWNING

Cambridge football's near-men. A heart-breaking second place finish in the league and a semi-final defeat in last season's Cuppers competition will no doubt have left a less than pleasant taste in the mouths of the few college members who care about, or at least are aware of, their football team's progress.

Expect to see them return invigorated. Not unlike everyone else.

ARSENAL

CAIUS

Something of an enigma, Pembroke make their highly anticipated (by someone presumably) return to the top flight. Following an unbeaten 2013-14 season in the league, and a close-run Cuppers final defeat, they will no doubt be hoping to steal victory from Trinity Hall.

Oh, and they also put seven past Tit Hall in the cup – big things, I tell you.

LEICESTER

PEMBROKE

Well-organised, pragmatic and undeniably ugly. But that's enough about their captain. Masters of mediocrity, Selwyn have consistently found themselves mid-table in the Premier Division.

On a related, but ultimately irrelevant note, having been placed 13th on the Tompkins table and the 16th wealthiest college, Selwyn really is unbelievably average.

STOKE CITY

SELWYN

With the highest finishing thirds side last season, if anyone has been investing heavily in grassroots football – which no one has – it's been Jesus. And although the college's top side didn't quite perform in the league, Cuppers victory (a second for the college) will no doubt raise hopes for the coming season.

Also, they have beautiful pitches.

SOUTHAMPTON

JESUS

They're rubbish and everyone hates them.

QPR

JOHN'S

Sport



Just a number: getting old in professional sport

Hannah Roland
Sport Correspondent

Scanning the headlines in the wake of the women's 5000m at the Commonwealth Games, it is easy not to understand exactly which piece of information the news wished to highlight: that Jo Pavey was the bronze medal winner, or that she was 40 and a mother of two.

A few weeks later she trumped her achievement in Glasgow by winning a gold medal in the 10,000m at the European Championships, beating competitors sixteen years her junior and becoming the competition's oldest ever gold medal winner.

In doing so, Pavey pushed the bounds of a professional athlete's lifestyle. She is coached by her husband, who barks out trackside instructions with the couple's newborn baby strapped to his chest.

Should age and family life really be a restriction in professional sport? Or can the two go hand-in-hand?

Consider instead, for example, that Pavey was an equestrian competitor, in which the average age is over 40. Suddenly her apparent seniority would not be such a media focus. Can sport be grouped into 'younger' and 'older' categorisations, with athletics and football in the former, and golf and equestrian in the latter?

More broadly, however, is the fact that all sports have their exceptions: Ryan Giggs, Martina Navratilova and Steve Redgrave to name but a few. Such figures, despite being anomalies in their field, are doing their best to fight against a bias towards youth in sport.

But this is a hard battle to fight. Age will always be a categoriser of identity – both in sport and in everyday life – whether it be the age-group for which one competes, or the cataloguing of results and records. Just as it would seem inconceivable to remove gender categories from sport, age will always act as a fundamental grouping device in competitive sport.

Having said this, age does not need to be a limit to participation or success. In the 2012 Olympics, there were 187 athletes over 40, including a 71-year-old in the dressage and a 52-year-old rower. However, there is a salient trend towards age being used negatively, to define, and often limit, expectations. While it is imperative that age remains a level of classification, it is important that it does not restrict opportunities and prospects.

Just as Jeff Klein argued in his article for The New York Times, age in sport really is "just a number" and should by no means be disconnected from the notion of success. "If people become obsessed with what they can't do as they age," Klein concludes, "well then they won't do it".

Here's hoping that for the likes of Jo Pavey, mother of two and running superstar, advancing age continues to breed sporting success.



Team captains Oli Lawrence (Cambridge) and Lizzy Hamilton (Oxford) at Newmarket Racecourse

Varsity rivalry gallops ahead

The inaugural horse race will be the first and fastest Varsity of the year

Evie Hampson
Sport Correspondent

Cambridge sport had just about seen everything: clubs ranging from the traditional school sports, to modern games from across the pond, to the weird and wacky historic games of the UK's public schools. 2014, however, cranks things up a gear.

Taking place alongside some of the biggest flat races in the British Flat Racing Season, the inaugural Varsity Horserace will see ten student jockeys cover a mile in under two minutes at the Rowley Mile Racecourse in the historic headquarters of British Racing, Newmarket.

Champions Weekend combines two of British Racing's greatest flat season events: Dubai Future Champions' Day in Newmarket on Friday 17th October, followed by British Champions' Day at Ascot on Saturday 18th. Over the course of the weekend there will be £4.5 million up for grabs, spread across the 14 different races. The Varsity Horserace has not reached that level of sponsorship just yet; the jockeys will simply be riding for glory against 'The Dark Side'.

Six top class races will precede the Varsity Horserace on Dubai Future Champions Day. Some of the highest-rated two-year-old horses in the world will go head to head over the hallowed Newmarket turf in the Dewhurst Stakes, a race established in 1875 and known for kick-starting the career of many a young horse. Recent superstars include 'Frankel' who won the 2000 Guineas in 2011.

Generally, horses often begin their career as young as two years old, competing within their age group. Past this age and they're in the real world – three-year-olds race against all ages and sizes. As they work their way up the ladder, horses run in 'handicapped' races where the handicap or rating of each horse determines how much weight they have to carry. The best-rated horse will have to carry more weight than the one with the lowest handicap.

After that you get listed races and then group races, with Group One being the best and containing the five 'Classics'. You can't get better than the Classics, which include the 1,000 Guineas; 2,000 Guineas; Epsom Oaks; Epsom Derby; and the St. Leger Stakes. So, it seems that three-year-old Frankel did quite well against the big boys (and girls) in 2011 to win by such a margin.

In terms of the racing elite, the Varsity Horserace doesn't quite reach those dizzy heights – not yet at least. It is being run as a charity race, with each team choosing a charity to support and finding a team sponsor. The ten riders

will all ride with the same weight – despite one being over six foot and some significantly less. Some will therefore have to carry 'dead weight' in the form of a lead saddlecloth under their saddle – a rare case in racing of smaller not being better!

Since initially publicising applications to students in Cambridge and Oxford, the final five riders have been through an initial assessment; rigorous skills and fitness training, and final



IT'S NOT THE HORSE THAT PEOPLE WILL BE LOOKING AT. PROFESSIONAL JOCKEYS ARE ALL AT PEAK FITNESS WITH EXPERIENCE UNDER THEIR HELMETS.

qualifying fitness assessments before being allowed to enter the race.

The relative size of the average jockey to their mount gives the deception that they are merely a lightweight passenger, with the fitness and talent of the horse dictating its success on the racecourse. Kate Walters, one of the five Cambridge Light Blues, has found the training sessions at the British

Racing School evidence to the contrary, "I didn't realise quite how fit you had to be when I signed up but it's just so important. The fitter you are the better your technique, the better your balance and the easier it is. But it's not about just letting the horse run as fast as it can from the off, we'll have to regulate the pace; holding them back at the start and really pushing them on to cross the finish line – that'll be the really painful bit."

Michael Tebbut from the British Racing School has been coaching the Cambridge jockeys and says that "for once in racing it's not the horse that people will be looking at. Professional jockeys are all at peak fitness with experience under their helmets – they're there to show what the horse can do. The uni guys are new to the game. It'll be a combination of the jockey's fitness and technique that determines who crosses the line first – and that all comes down to training."

Newmarket is offering all students and university staff free entry to the day – which includes the post-racing events and parties – to experience one of racing's biggest events of the year. Those travelling from Cambridge and Oxford will also be entitled to a £10 'Back your Blue' deal organising their travel to and from the racecourse, a race card with all race day information and a drinks voucher.

Tickets available at the Freshers' Fair and online at www.buytickets.at/varsityhorserace2014