



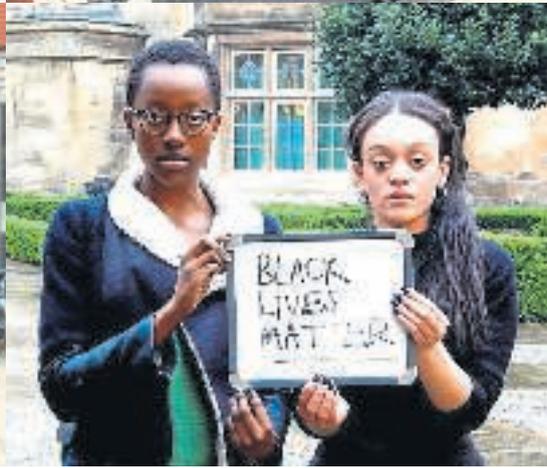
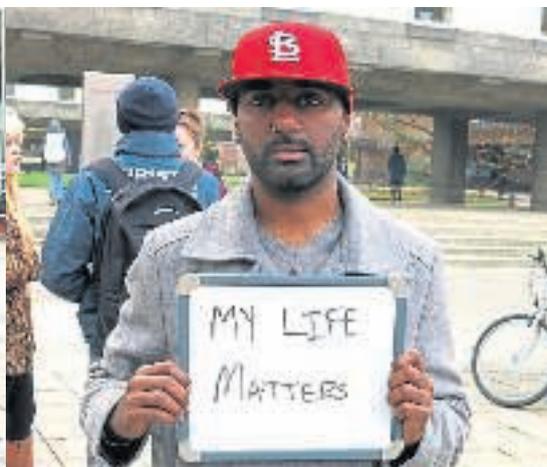
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VARSITY

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RIP Mike Brown: Solidarity protests against the shooting of the unarmed black teenager, Michael Brown, took place in Cambridge this week

Jutting 'fit to stand trial' in murder case

Sarah Sheard
Senior News Editor

A recent graduate of the University of Cambridge has been ruled fit to stand trial for the murder of two women in Hong Kong.

Rurik Jutting, 29, a Peterhouse alumnus and former Secretary for the History Society (CLIO), was remanded for psychiatric reports in early November.

He has been ruled fit to stand trial, however, and reappeared in court in Hong Kong on Monday 24th November.

Jutting spoke only once – responding to a question from the judge with “I do” – and has not entered a plea.

Lawyers for the prosecution requested that a government laboratory be allowed 28 weeks to examine over 200 items of evidence collected from the crime scene.

Judge Bina Chainrai allowed the prosecution's request for a delay, adjourning the case until July 2015. No trial date has been set, and Jutting did not object to the lengthy interval for the processing of evidence.

Jutting, who graduated from Peterhouse with a degree in History in 2008, was arrested after the bodies of two young women were discovered in his 31st floor apartment in the Wan Chai district. The district is a centre for foreign finance workers, as well as representing a major centre for nightlife and the Hong Kong sex industry.

Police discovered the bodies of Sumarti Ningsih, 23, and Seneng Mujiasih, 29, in his apartment. Both women were domestic workers, and are thought by Hong Kong police to have been peripherally employed in sex work.

A neighbour in the building told reporters for the South China Morning Post that he had noticed “a stink in the building like a dead animal”. The second body was severely decomposed, and was found inside a carpet rolled up in a suitcase on the balcony.

Alison Humphreys, the current President of CLIO, said that the society “does not keep any information about its previous committee members and is therefore unable to comment on the matter.”

Animal activists condemn research site

Campaigners outraged by new AstraZeneca site

Sarah Baxter
News Correspondent

Animal rights activists have raised objections to the planned construction of an animal testing laboratory in Cambridge by the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca.

The company, currently based in London and formed from a British-Swedish merger in 1999, has applied to include an animal research lab in the expansion of the Biomedical Campus, but the proposal has proved unpopular with the newly formed group Cambridge Against AstraZeneca Planning (CAP), as well as other environmental and animal rights

movements.

The Cambridge AstraZeneca site, should it go ahead, would become the corporation's headquarters and would be the site for a significant amount of animal testing.

The company claims to use non-animal methods wherever possible, but currently experiments on over a quarter of a million animals each year. The site would be the second animal testing lab in the county, with Huntingdon Life Sciences already established in Cambridgeshire.

AstraZeneca's building is set to have a purpose-designed rodent facility, which would support the company's early-stage cancer research.

On their website the corporation describe animal studies as “a vital part of the research process, required by regulators before they approve a new

medicine to be tested on humans during clinical trials.”

Rachel Mathai, spokeswoman for the CAP campaign, explained the group's reasons for opposing the proposal, saying: “AstraZeneca's cruel, unnecessary experiments should be a thing of the past. Cambridge doesn't need yet another animal testing lab.”

“We do understand that AstraZeneca is big but we hope people will see that they have the legal right to challenge injustice.”

Chloe Hutchings-Hay, a second-year Psychological and Behavioural Sciences student at Gonville and Caius, said of the proposed development: “AstraZeneca should continue looking into alternatives and, when it is absolutely necessary to test on animals, minimize the harm caused to them.”

“Nonetheless it seems that rodent testing at present seems to be integral in the development of safe and effective medicines.”

A spokesperson for the University of Cambridge said that they could not speak for AstraZeneca, but noted: “Good science and good animal welfare go hand in hand.”

“The UK has the most rigorous animal welfare regulations in the world, and Cambridge has always adhered to these regulations and will continue to work to the highest possible standards of animal care.”

Should the AstraZeneca development go ahead it would finish in 2016, and employ 2000 people. The company has moved around 400 staff to the Cambridge site, working in temporary laboratories until the completion of the new facility.

Investigation: Who rules the roost? Varsity exposes the educational bias in Cambridge student leaders (page 4)

Access denied?

This week, Varsity perpetuates our national obsession with class. Access, it seems, does not stop at admission. The full results of our investigation into the backgrounds of the people who set the Cambridge agenda can be found on page four, but one result seems particularly apt for editorial discussion.

At Varsity, 80 per cent of editors in the past three years have been privately educated (compared with just under 40 per cent in the university as a whole). Clearly, access issues are not left behind at matriculation.

Dr Lorna Finlayson argued this week for having state-school only colleges. Such a system would, she said, make the university more representative. It would be a “statement about and against the enduring significance of the state/private distinction and the

pervasively unequal... impoverished form of society to which it belongs.” Finlayson’s argument is controversial, but it has sparked an important discussion: how can we make Cambridge more accessible to people of all backgrounds? And, as Varsity’s survey shows, how can we make institutions within Cambridge more accessible as well?

Anyone who has attended any lecture on social theory in Cambridge will be familiar with the idea that gender is a class. Well, it seems, more than educational ‘class’, women are still the most under-represented group in extra-curricular leadership in Cambridge. Again, the reasons for this may be multifarious, but part of it may surely be ascribed to the institutionalised misogyny of ‘swap culture’ at the university.

Not everyone goes on swaps at Cambridge, and not all swaps are sexist. But leaked messages from the Facebook group of one college drinking society reveal in stark terms just how backwards some of our peers still are (see page 10).

It is not news that some Cambridge men are often disrespectful of women; as Tess Davidson argues on page 14, it is an all-too-familiar current in our society. What is surprising, and sad, however, is the awareness of mainstream feminist rhetoric that these men demonstrate. Yet this has not translated into changes in their own behaviour. It is hard to be at Cambridge without at least unconsciously absorbing the revolutionary idea that women are people. Some of the country’s brightest minds have, however, unfortunately succeeded.

EDITORIAL

NEWS

Sexist drinking society

Leaked Facebook messages from a Selwyn drinking society show members rating girls they have slept with (page 10)



INTERVIEW

Baroness Warnock

Elissa Foord talks to the former Mistress of Girton about morality, government and what lies in between (page 12)



COMMENT

Christ in Christmas?

Poppy McClean on why Christmas actively misrepresents the figure of Jesus Christ (page 16)



CULTURE

Theory of Everything

Louis Shankar talks to director James Marhs about his upcoming film about a young Stephen Hawking (page 18)



FASHION

Nighthawk

Taking inspiration from Edward Hopper, master of atmosphere (page 24)



THEATRE

David Mitchell

Comedian David Mitchell tells Alex Cartlidge about laughter, the Footlights and the end of Peep Show (page 26)



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This week: Drinking Societies, Swaps and
the Footlights Panto

EDITOR Amy Hawkins EDITOR@VARSITY.CO.UK **DEPUTY EDITOR** Talia Zybutz DEPUTYEDITOR@VARSITY.CO.UK **BUSINESS MANAGER** Mark Curtis BUSINESS@VARSITY.CO.UK **PRODUCTION & DESIGN EDITORS** Daisy Schofield, Sareeka Linton, Sanjukta Sen, Pheobe Stone, Daniella Brisco-People PRODUCTION@VARSITY.CO.UK **NEWS EDITORS** Sarah Sheard (Senior), Till Schöfer & Richard Nicholl (Deputy) NEWS@VARSITY.CO.UK **NEWS FEATURES & INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR** James Sutton NEWSFEATURES@VARSITY.CO.UK **COMMENT EDITORS** Charlie Chorley & Tom Freeman COMMENT@VARSITY.CO.UK **SCIENCE EDITOR** Harry Taylor SCIENCE@VARSITY.CO.UK **LIFESTYLE EDITOR** Anne O'Neill LIFESTYLE@VARSITY.CO.UK **CULTURE EDITORS** Will Hutton & Ciara Nugent CULTURE@VARSITY.CO.UK **THEATRE EDITOR** Marthe Ogg de Ferrer THEATRE@VARSITY.CO.UK **FASHION EDITOR** David Godwin FASHION@VARSITY.CO.UK **REVIEWS EDITOR** Lily Hollins REVIEWS@VARSITY.CO.UK **SPORT EDITORS** Louis Williams & George Ramsay (Deputy) SPORT@VARSITY.CO.UK **INTERVIEWS EDITOR** Elissa Foord INTERVIEWS@VARSITY.CO.UK **ONLINE EDITOR** James Taylor **VARSITY RADIO** Joe Marshall DIGITAL@VARSITY.CO.UK **CHIEF SUB EDITOR** Alex Izza **Photographers** Jess Franklin & Jonny Rowlands PHOTOS@VARSITY.CO.UK **Illustrators** Daisy Hessenberger & Hannah Taylor ILLUSTRATION@VARSITY.CO.UK **VARSITY BOARD** Dr Michael Franklin (Chairman), Prof. Peter Robinson, Dr Tim Harris, Chris Wright, Michael Derringer, Michael Curtis (VarSoc President), Chloe Stopa-Hunt (The Mays), Amy Hawkins



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Male teachers perceived as paedophiles

Male primary teachers unfairly associated with paedophilia

Christie Morrallee

News Correspondent

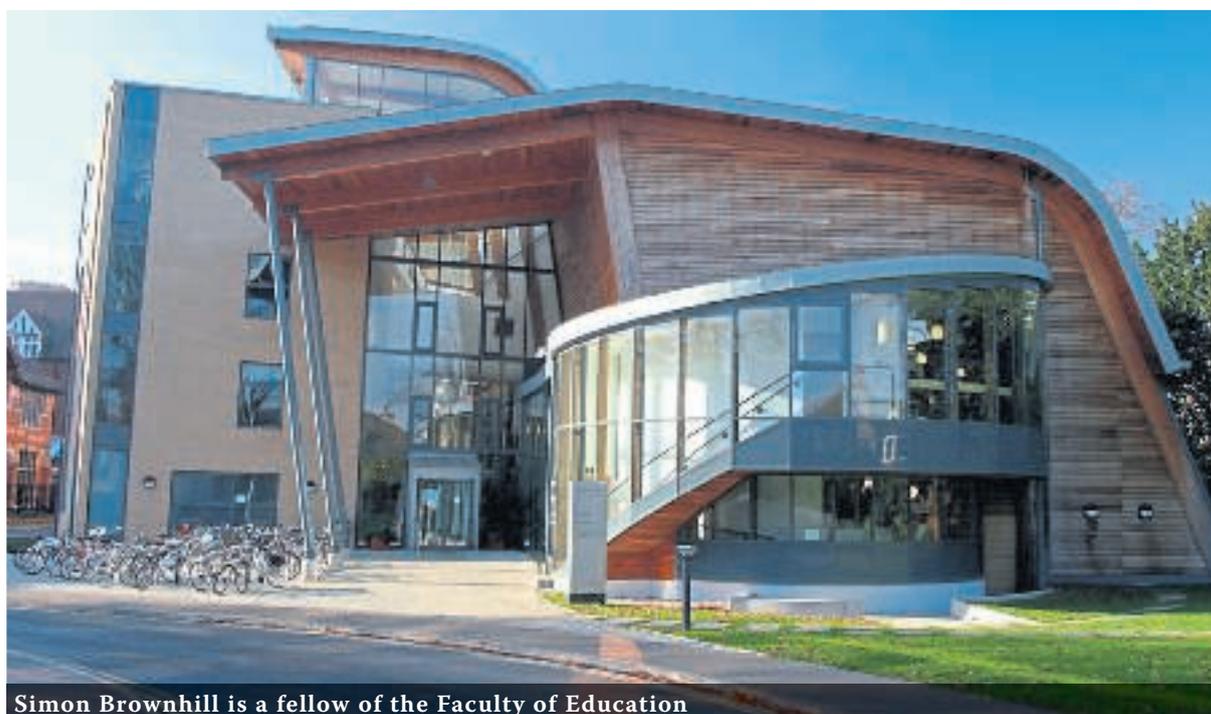
A fellow at the Faculty of Education has claimed that male primary school teachers suffer from pervasive stereotypes of homosexuality and paedophilia.

Simon Brownhill is a qualified teacher and spent several years in the primary education sector before becoming a Senior Teaching Associate at the Faculty of Education.

Speaking at this year's Festival of Ideas, he told the Cambridge News that "there is a worry that if you are a man who works in the early years you may be perceived as homosexual, your sexuality is challenged, or that you are a paedophile and that people think 'what's wrong with you, why do you want to work with children?'"

Dr Brownhill's claims are supported by research at Nottingham Trent and Bedfordshire Universities from 2013 indicating gender stereotypes as well as pervasive suspicion of paedophilia among male primary school teachers.

From both interviews he has performed and from drawing on personal experience, Dr Brownhill also said that the apparent novelty of male primary school teachers (with just one in five



Simon Brownhill is a fellow of the Faculty of Education

being male) can lead to the expectation that they will function as a father figure for male children.

At the age of 22, as a newly qualified teacher, he says he was in no way willing or able to perform a parental role, and this reflects the wider preoccupation with the benefits of boys having a 'male' role model.

In a series of articles, including 'Build me a Role Model', Brownhill has discussed the ambiguity of this concept, suggesting that concentrating

upon universally applicable characteristics of a positive role model and good practice could be more beneficial than the perpetuation of gender stereotypes - through a focus on specifically 'male' role models in primary education.

Furthermore, he says, prioritising male teachers over their female counterparts runs the risk of disadvantaging girls.

Brownhill explains that the issue of emphasising male role models is often simply used to make excuses for wider

education failings.

In education, the gender gap is "real and persistent", and the continued failure of successive governments and education staff to combat this issue illustrates that we are "holding onto the idea that more men will deal with anti-learning issues."

Ultimately, Brownhill says that there is "no research that says men are better at teaching than women" and in reality, "it's not about gender, it's about whether they're a good teacher."

The School Workforce Census, undertaken annually by the Department for Education, indicates that as of November 2013 8.7 per cent of teaching staff in state-funded primary schools were men. The equivalent figure in secondary schools was 29.3 per



YOU MAY BE PERCEIVED AS HOMOSEXUAL, YOUR SEXUALITY IS CHALLENGED

cent.

In a 2013 report, the Daily Telegraph found that just 21% of graduate students accepted onto training courses for primary education were men, despite the fact that the overall proportion of men working in the early years sector has increased by a fifth over the past five years.

Recently Alex Lundie, the head of Broadmead Primary Academy in Croydon, has called for more male primary school teachers as the school hired its only male teacher in September.

Lundie stated the following in the London Evening Standard: "There don't seem to be very many men who want to go into nursery, reception and Key Stage 1 teaching. It would be great if it would change. I don't think teaching should be a female preserve."

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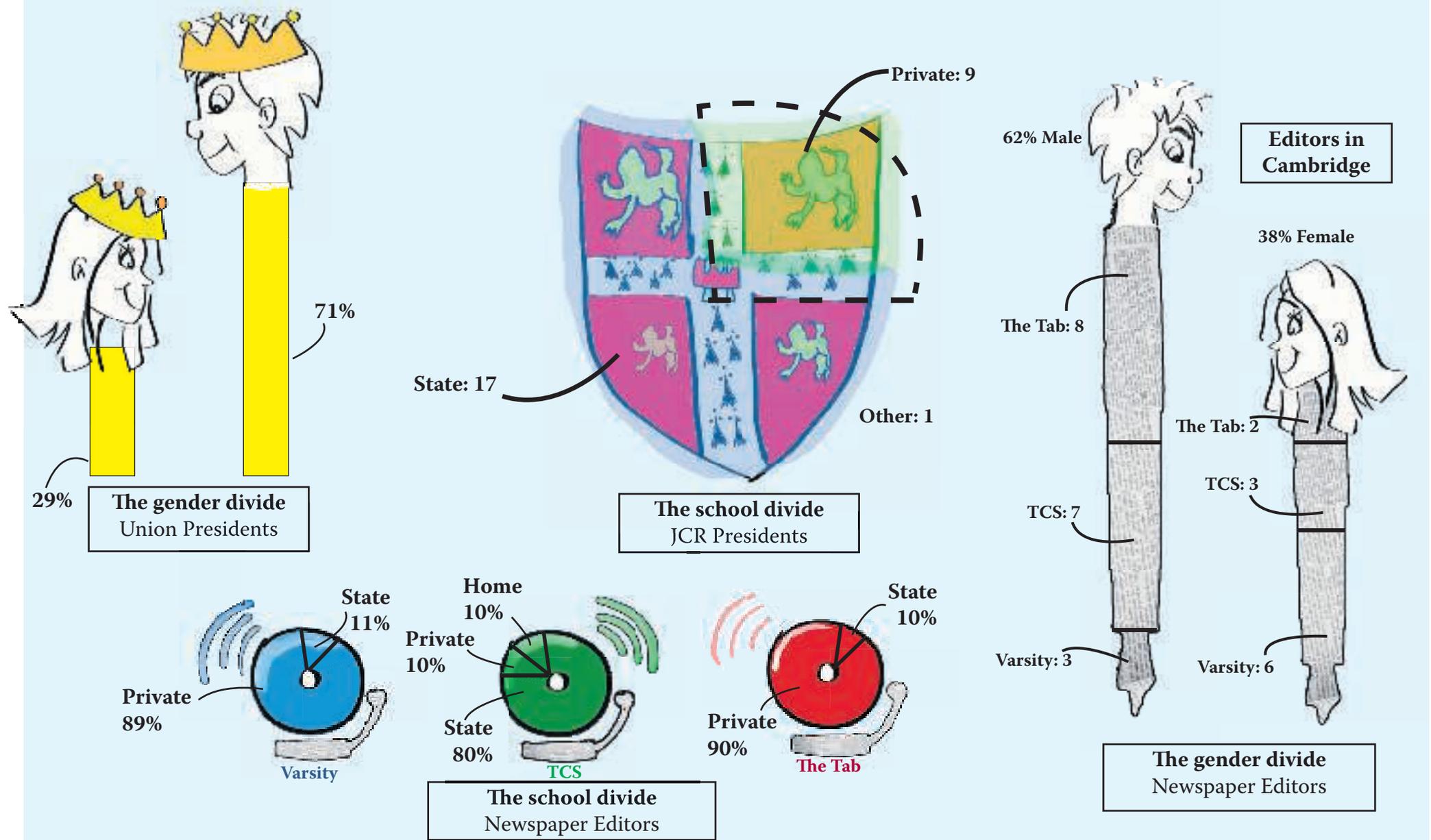


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Who rules the roost?



Varsity investigates who controls our student organisations, and asks whether their backgrounds matter

A Varsity investigation has revealed surprising patterns in the demographics of students obtaining positions of influence in university life.

Looking at the backgrounds and genders of presidents of the Cambridge Union Society, JCR presidents and editors of the three student newspapers, Varsity found significant disparities between organisations.

To account for movement between schools, particularly at the age of 16, the establishments where students obtained their A-levels (or equivalent qualifications) were taken.

For organisations in which positions change every term, newspapers and the Union, data since and including Michaelmas 2012 was used. For JCRs, whose committees change yearly, we

looked at current presidents.

The dividing line in the findings would seem to be between positions that are elected, and those that are appointed. Privately-educated students dominate the non-elected positions. This is most apparent in the cases of the three student newspapers: Varsity, The Cambridge Student and The Tab. Since Michaelmas 2012, there has only been one state-educated editor-in-chief at Varsity and one at the Tab. TCS is a notable exception to this trend: 80 per cent of editors-in-chief have been from state school backgrounds in the same time period.

Alice Udale-Smith, former editor of Varsity, believes that the issue arises at the application, rather than the selection stage. "I suspect it's because [fewer] state school pupils apply to be

Varsity Editor in the first place," she said, "rather than because of a particular bias amongst the interviewing committee."

Udale-Smith also noted the importance of early involvement: "I think sometimes pupils from private schools come to Cambridge with more of an idea of what extra-curriculars are on offer, so don't find it as daunting to start joining things from the very start of their first year."

Ashley Chhibber, a former TCS editor, wonders "if it might be a reflection of a wider 'culture' [not] just the higher levels, whereby TCS or the Tab attracts 'a certain type of person' (even at the level of writers and readers)."

He also notes that "in comparison to JCRs or the Union, student journalism lacks the sort of wide appeal which engages people from completely different backgrounds and interests," and so it is not surprising that editors tend to be drawn from similar backgrounds.

CUSU's Access Officer, Helena Blair, found the results "striking". "They help highlight how access issues are not left behind upon entry into the university, but need addressing once students are here studying at and experiencing Cambridge too."

Elected positions in Cambridge are more representative of the backgrounds of the wider student body. Of the last seven elected presidents (going back to Michaelmas 2012) of the Cambridge Union Society, three have been from privately-educated backgrounds; a proportion of 43 per cent.

If this is compared to the general admissions statistics for the university over the same period, we see a largely similar distribution. The 2013 admissions cycle saw a split of 61.4 per cent state school students and 38.6 per cent private school students.

Tim Squirrell, the current President of the Cambridge Union Society, said that he was "a little surprised that the state school percentage is that high," because the election process may favour candidates with "well-established social networks in Cambridge that come more easily to those who went to Oxbridge feeder schools."

Similarly, in the case of JCR presidents, who are elected by the undergraduate members of their colleges, state school students dominate. Of the 29 undergraduate colleges, 17 JCRs are currently headed up by presidents who went to state schools (data was not available for two colleges).

There is also a gender disparity amongst the people who influence student life. Of all the positions surveyed, 62 per cent were held by men. In the 2013 admissions cycle, less than half of the intake was male.

At The Tab, there have been only two female editors since Michaelmas 2012, and only three at TCS. Conversely, at Varsity, there have been six female and only three male editors during that same period.

Of the 29 JCRs surveyed, only 11 are currently headed by female presidents: Christ's, Churchill, Clare, Downing, Murray Edwards, Newnham, Queens,

St. Catharine's, Trinity Hall, Wolfson and Lucy Cavendish. Three of those JCRs, Murray Edwards, Newnham and Lucy Cavendish are female-only and so are inevitably led by female students.

"The JCR presidents' (lack of) gender balance, it isn't fantastic," said Danny McGrath, President of Jesus JCR. "[B]ut we are doing a bit better than our esteemed leaders in the Commons, where just 23 per cent of MPs are female," he noted.

At the Cambridge Union Society, only two out of seven of presidents have been women in the past three years. Neither of these women were state educated.

Of the 65 Cambridge students for whom school information was available, only nine of them are both female and went to a state school, a proportion of 14 per cent.

Bethan Kitchen, head of the Women, Class, Access branch of CUSU's Women's Campaign, criticised the fact that the wide range of people from different backgrounds across the university is "not reflected in the statistics of influential positions."

However, she also added that "perhaps in looking at the statistics we should remember that the university was not originally designed for females, and has always disproportionately been host to the privately educated."

Our full results can be found online.

Data compiled by Joe Whitwell, Morwenna Jones and James Sutton.

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Comment



Joe Whitwell

Why do certain demographics still dominate the university?

One of the beautiful things about Cambridge is that once you're in, you're in. Whatever odds you have overcome, they are a fact of your past. They make interesting conversation yes, but they no longer define you. You can do anything you want, in any society, for any newspaper or back in college on your JCR. The world is your oyster. Except that it isn't. If the findings in this week's Varsity investigation are anything to go by, this egalitarian utopia we have entered is not quite as pretty as we once thought it to be.

I thought the same when I arrived – it is very easy to let yourself believe that the subconscious and perhaps – dare I say it – conscious biases that

affect society at large are absent in Cambridge. But when you look at the most influential positions – such as JCR presidents and newspaper editors – a different picture emerges.

The most uncomfortable statistics relate to newspapers. Are you privately educated and male? Head to The Tab. In the past three years, 80 per cent of editors have been men and 90 per cent have been privately educated. Privately educated and female? Varsity is the place for you. But state educated and female? Only three out of 29 newspaper editors since current third years matriculated have fit this bill (all of them at TCS).

What becomes apparent is a self-perpetuating culture of those in positions of influence who appoint their own replacements, choosing people who look a lot like themselves. Where this trend comes from is unknown. Is there a willful desire to select people like ourselves? Possibly. Is it unconscious? Probably. Or, just as worryingly, is there a degree of self-selection in applicants who don't see people like themselves at the top of the tree already? Likely too.

The gender picture at the Union is also unpromising. In the period studied, there have been only two female presidents. When it comes to JCR presidents, there are almost twice as

many male presidents as female, and the statistic is even worse when you remove all-female colleges from the sample. The situation for women is, bluntly put, bleak.

What is going on here? The answer may come from a closer inspection of the demographics at play. It seems that when leadership is democratic, such as with JCRs and the Union, the person we see at the top looks a lot like the larest demographic they represent – most colleges have slightly more male students, some have significantly more. It stands to reason that, if we follow the theory that people elect others like themselves, there will tend to be more male JCR presidents. It would also be interesting to know how many women stand for election at all.

Most colleges have more state-schooled students than any other demographic. It makes sense, therefore, that more JCR presidents will be from such a background – as they are. At the Union again, assuming that the membership is largely representative of wider Cambridge, the educational background corresponds. It seems that whoever you are, when it comes to choosing someone, whether as your leader or your successor, you are likely to pick someone in your own image.

For me, that is a concern. Many of us come to university to meet people from a range of backgrounds and indeed genders. The fact that we cannot see past these attributes when picking the people to wield power in our tiny model of a society shows this may not have happened as much as we like to tell ourselves. Are we putting image above other factors, like character or – God forbid – policy?

One last strand needs investigating: exactly which schools are we talking about? For the state sector, the last place pupils attended before coming to Cambridge was normally either a high performing sixth form college or a grammar school. Very few seem to make it through the comprehensive system, make it to Cambridge and make it to the top. Collapsing all non-private schools into "state" is lazy. It hides a world of differing standards and expectations. We too are lazy when we make decisions on such a simple criterion. The same is true when we look at the private schools assessed. They don't tend to be your run of the mill establishments: A Sutton Trust report published earlier this year about the educational backgrounds of those in positions of authority in British society drew the following conclusion:

"Ten leading independent schools accounted for 12 per cent of the leading people for which schools data was available. These are: Eton College; Winchester College; Charterhouse School; Rugby School; Westminster School..." The list goes on.

The same is true in Cambridge. A majority of those schools highlighted by the Sutton Trust take pride of place on the CVs of the Cambridge great and good. It is a roll-call of established, southern, mostly London-centric public schools.

People from all backgrounds should be able to aim for the top. You cannot criticise a person for doing the best with the cards they have been dealt. What should be of far greater concern, however, is that once the high achievers reach the top – a place from where they have real influence – they replace themselves with people who look an awful lot like them. All three papers are guilty. As an electorate, it isn't ideal either. If the Sutton Trust is to be believed, we, the Oxbridge-educated, are going to be in a great many positions of power in the generations to come. If we close the door on those who don't look anything like us, the social mobility of Britain is going to continue at the pathetic rate at which it currently stands. I think we can do better.

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Concern over 'barking mad' drones

Julian Huppert MP 'concerned' by possible dangers of Amazon testing drones in city

Eleanor Hegarty

News Correspondent

Politicians and local residents have expressed concern after Amazon announced that Cambridge may be a test site for its new drone delivery service.

Amazon has expressed interest in testing its 'Prime Air' project in Cambridge last week, and is planning on expanding its research and development team in Cambridge to make the vision a reality.

The Prime Air project was unveiled in December 2013, with the announcement that Amazon planned to deliver packages weighing up to 2.3kg – in other words 86 per cent of the products of Amazon's inventory – to customers within just half an hour of them placing an order online. The drones would be controlled remotely.

However Julian Huppert, the Liberal Democrat MP for Cambridge, expressed unease over the plans. He said: "I am concerned, however, by the deliveries that will be taking place in the city.

"There is always a risk that someone could be hurt when these trials

take place."

Furthermore Terry Holloway, managing director of Cambridge Aero Club, described the idea as "barking mad". He also pointed out that Amazon may not be permitted to operate the drones, as "from a legislative point of view the Civil Aviation Authority rules, as they currently exist, mean it's just totally unfeasible to even consider doing this."

Indeed, Amazon is not listed as having permission for commercial flying of small drones, according to the Civil Aviation Authority's latest list of approved operators.



THERE IS ALWAYS A RISK THAT SOMEONE COULD BE HURT

The US online retail giant, which bought Cambridge startup Evi Technologies two years ago, sees the city as an ideal place for research and development because it can tap into the wealth of academic and entrepreneurial talent in Silicon Fen.

As pointed out by Nick Bubb, a retail analyst, "Cambridge probably isn't a bad place to trial drones, as it's a relatively dry part of the country and aircraft-free."

A spokesman for Amazon Prime



Prime Air drones could deliver packages in under 30 minutes

Air said: "We have multiple Prime Air development centers, including R&D [research and development] labs in Cambridge. We're always looking to add great talent to the team.

"The Cambridge-based Prime Air positions we have open are a reflection of that."

Students seem nonplussed by the plans, with some dismissing the idea that Prime Air will ever be a reality in

student life.

Clare Historian Christie Morrallie was also doubtful about the plan's feasibility, asking: "although they say there will be a team based in Cambridge, how realistic is it that they will be able to monitor unmanned drones from a relatively large distance and subsequently deal with any failures quickly?"

Fellow History undergraduate Joe

Landman was also sceptical that the plans would have much impact on the student community - if they were to be carried out.

"Prime Air won't be able to work with colleges anyway," he said, "because deliveries have to go to the porters lodge. Amazon will therefore likely restrict the trial to non-college deliveries so it will barely affect students."

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University to invest in cheaper housing

University of Cambridge to invest 'as soon as it can' in more affordable housing

Eleanor Deeley

News Correspondent

The University of Cambridge has pledged to invest in affordable housing in the city and wants to start "as soon as it can."

Professor Jeremy Sanders, pro-vice-chancellor for institutional affairs, made the comment during the inaugural public meeting of the City Deal's executive board.

Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, has said of the overall project that the University eagerly anticipates the partnership.

He said that the University had a desire to "transform our ability to innovate and sustain economic growth while protecting the features that make Greater Cambridge such an attractive place to work, study and live."

The university is working in collaboration with Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridge County Council, and the Greater Cambridge Peterborough Enterprise Partnership to tackle the lack of affordable housing and transport infrastructure in the area.

This is an implementation of the City Deal brokered with the government in

2012, which aims to invest up to £1 billion in Cambridge over the coming decade.

The first government grant of £100 million will be handed to the city in 2016.

Additional funding is expected to come from 'GainShare', a scheme whereby the local area keeps a share of the additional tax income that will be generated as a result of future growth, as well as from direct contributions from private investors such as the university.

Grahame Nix, Chief Executive of the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership, has said that the City Deal is imperative "to continue the Cambridge Phenomenon into the future."

Currently there are over 4000 people on the City Council's housing waiting list, whilst the number of council houses is estimated to have fallen over the past year, now standing at an estimated 7,321.

The proposed deal will enable the acceleration of the delivery of 33,480 houses by 2031, with an additional 1000 specifically designated affordable homes, on sites on the perimeters of existing rural villages.

The move was also backed in parliament last Tuesday. In an exchange in the House of Commons, Julian Huppert, MP for Cambridge, said that the funding that had been granted by the government "would make a huge difference for transport and housing needs."

Nick Clegg, leader of the Liberal



Housing in Cambridge has increased in price by 32.5 per cent since 2007

Democrats and Deputy Prime Minister, responded by saying "it is a good thing that there is now such ambition to build on that City Deal and go further."

The ultimate aim is to continue and enhance the unique economic growth

that the city of Cambridge currently provides.

Cambridge's real estate value has sky-rocketed within the past seven years, with properties now worth 32.5 per cent more than at their 2007 peak. The findings, as published in analysis

by the property firm Hometrack, places Cambridge above London in terms of rising house prices.

London house prices have only increased by 29 per cent in recent years, compared to their pre-financial crisis high.

"I didn't expect the analyst role to be as exciting as it's been, both in terms of the clients and their locations, and the work being done for them."

SHANELLE BLAIR, ANALYST

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Misogynist messages leak from Selwyn

Selwyn Templars rate students they have slept with in Facebook group

Sarah Sheard
Senior News Editor

Messages between members of a Selwyn drinking society have emerged in which they rate female students they have slept with and encourage other members to “get some taste” with references to women. Varsity can exclusively reveal details of sexist conversations held by members on the closed Facebook group of the second year Selwyn drinking society, the Templars. To protect the identities of the female students involved, any identifying information has been removed or changed.

In one exchange, members rate female students based on their sexual experience with them, describing various women as “effervescent”, “cavernous”, “benign”, “sensual”, “kinky”, “heinous” and “naughty”. One member commented saying he was “really upset by this”; “if you want to run a society with bullying and nasty comments then go do it elsewhere,” he wrote, before adding, “to improve on my comment though, I’ll go for Loose [name]”.

A longer message details how two members encountered a “seemingly quite distressed”, “crying” female student wandering around Selwyn whom they “rounded up” in an attempt to

help her into a taxi home. The members then described how they “firmly put her in her somewhat embarrassing place” before advising whoever had brought the student back to college needed to “improve [their] taste”.

In another exchange, members discuss a traffic lights party as a “sexual consent nightmare”. One dismissed the debate by saying that Templars had “a lot more sense, experience and respect” than to interpret a woman wearing green as an “invitation to fuck”, whilst another commented that “it’s not about consent, it’s about intent”.

In addition to this, there was also discussion of a photograph of a female student sat outside with three takeaway trays, which was uploaded by a member. Comments included “she’s a classy girl”, and “did she forget her pants again?”

Responding to the comments, a spokesperson from Selwyn College said: “The College condemns any sexist and inappropriate comments made online. We will investigate this matter, and will take disciplinary action if required.”

On Thursday 27th November, the Dean and Senior Tutor of Selwyn sent an email in relation to the comments to all undergraduates. They noted that “[w]e are very disappointed to find that those participating in this forum think it is even remotely acceptable to express such views” and that “[w]hile we appreciate that this forum was intended for private communication, the reality is that on the internet there is

no such thing as privacy.”

The Templars themselves and the Female Welfare Officer for Selwyn College, Nadia Ayed, did not reply to requests for comment from Varsity.

The revelations are the latest evidence of misogyny within University of Cambridge drinking societies after the Churchill Bulldogs were cautioned for their so-called ‘sinister swap’, in which female freshers were subjected

to a bra-unhooking competition. The Emmanuel Lions were also disbanded earlier this term after an email was leaked to the Tab. The email noted that the list of organized swaps were liable to change as “more may be added subject to demand (i.e. female demand for Emmanuel penis)”, and encouraged members to “get involved, get keen and smash it (/the girls)”.

Homertonians also received an email from the Dean and Senior Tutor, deploring “reports of unacceptably bad behaviour by groups of young men.” The email described this behaviour as “consisting of... boasting and sniggering about sexual encounters, and the

Senior Tutor or the Dean of the college, as “everyone deserves to be treated with respect and consideration.”

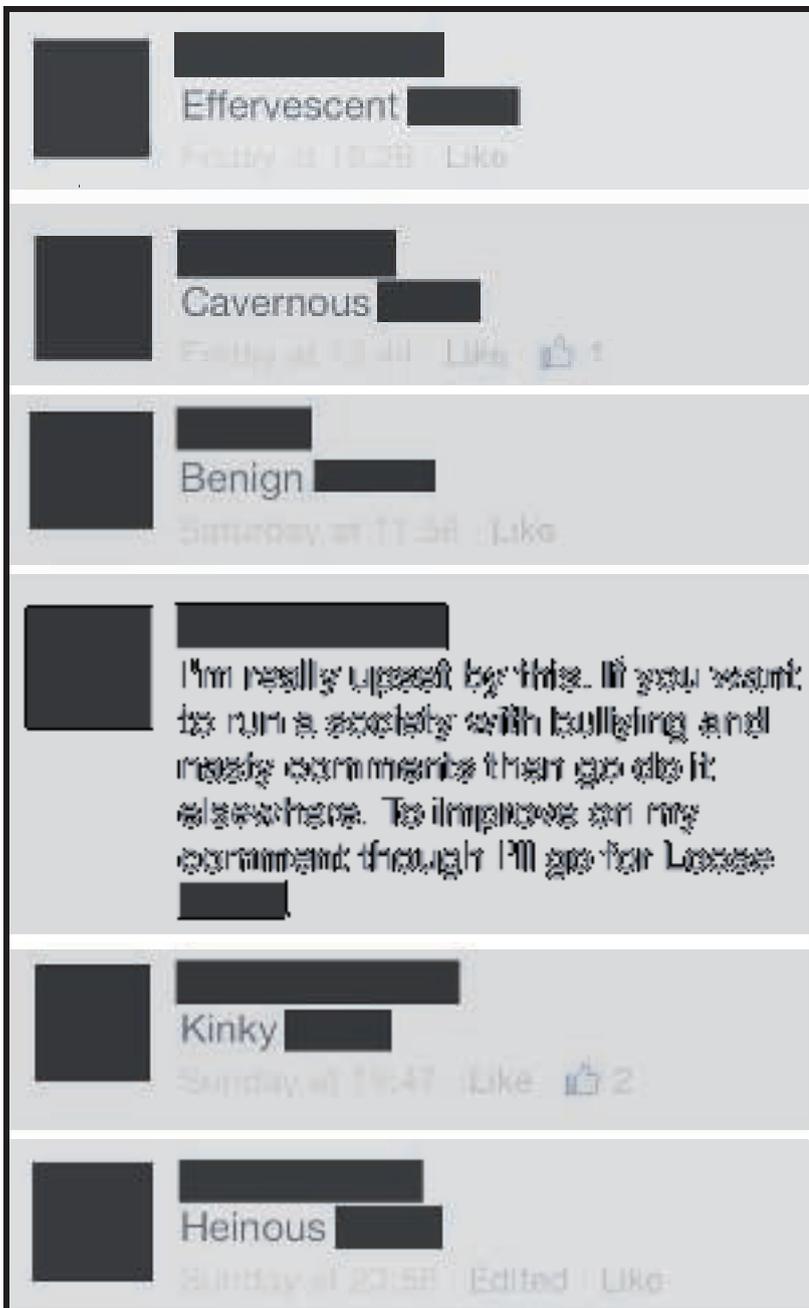
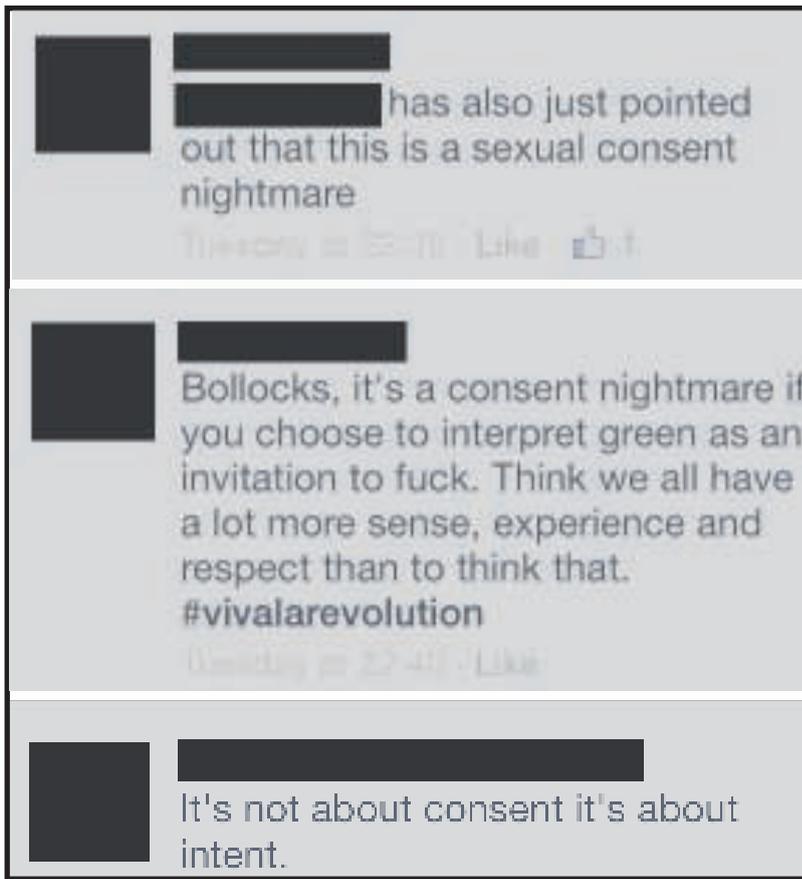
See Tess Davidson on ‘Sex-free swaps: the way forward’ on page 14

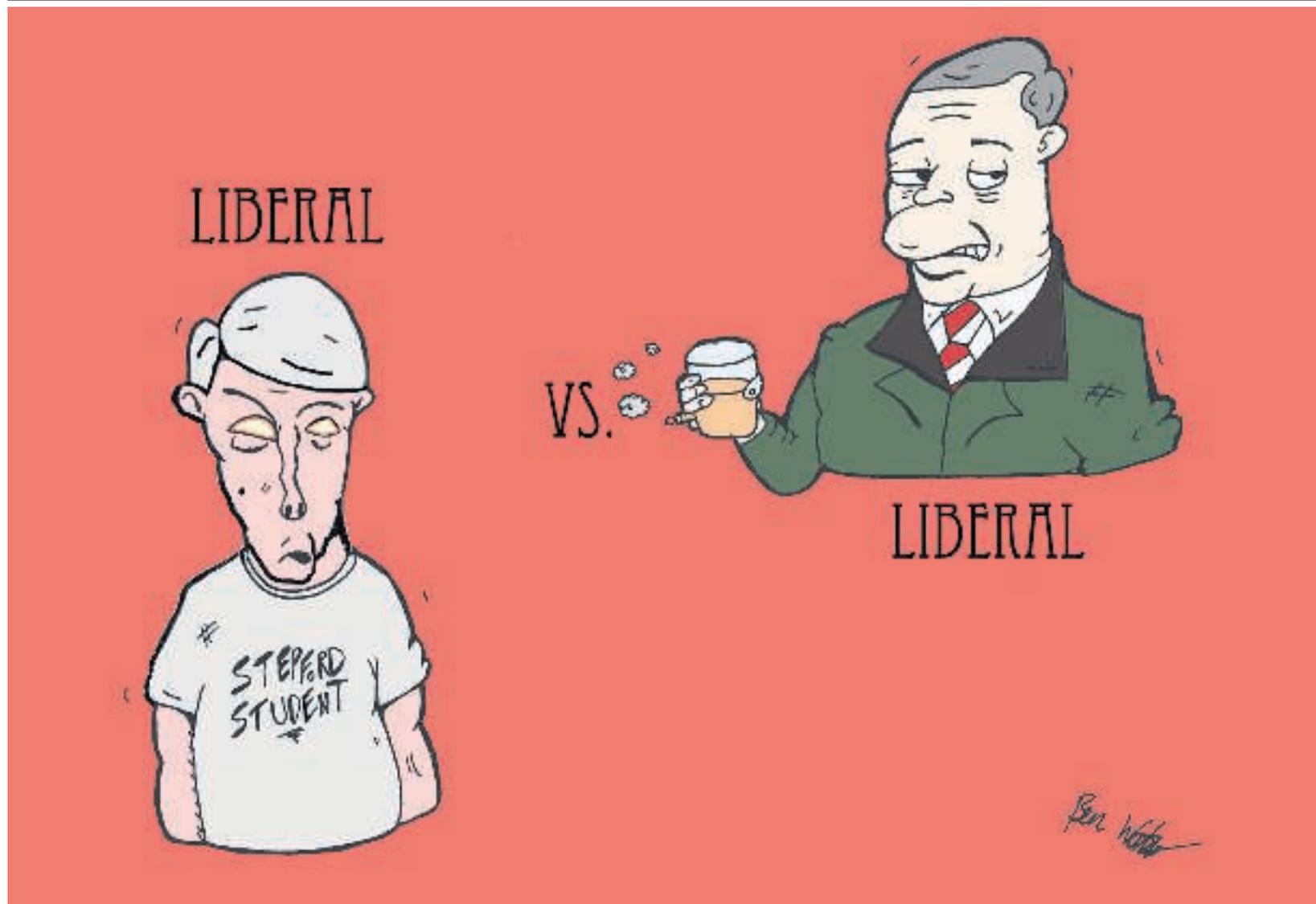
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THE COLLEGE CONDEMNS ANY SEXIST... COMMENTS MADE ONLINE

to a bra-unhooking competition.

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Free speech? Ben Waters takes a satirical look at the recent debate over 'no platforming' in Cambridge and Oxford

NEWS IN

BRIEF



Wetherspoons awarded for its 'exceptional toilets'

The Regal Wetherspoons has been given a national award, in recognition of the quality and standard of its toilets.

The pub, on St Andrews Street, was awarded a platinum star in the Loo of the Year Awards 2014. The honour is only given to venues with "exceptional toilets".

Inspectors made undercover visits to toilets across the UK and judged the facilities based on factors such as décor, cleanliness and accessibility.

Sarah Hemingway, the current manager of The Regal, said: "Staff at the pub work hard to ensure the toilets are in a first-class condition at all times and it is great that this has been recognised by the inspectors."

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The Interview: Baroness Warnock

BRITAIN'S MORAL REFEREE



SURAJ MAKWANA

Baroness Warnock talks to **Elissa Foord** about believing in absolute morality, the government, and how she learnt how to think

Philosopher, House of Lords cross-bencher, headmistress, educationalist, broadcaster, public policy pioneer, 'Britain's chief moral referee' and, closer to home, former Mistress of Girton College, Baroness Warnock, now aged 90, has certainly seen a lot in her time.

Now famous as the government's go-to woman in matters of medical ethics, Warnock's ambitions lay in Philosophy right from the start. "I remember when I was about six asking my older brother what Philosophy was. He said, 'well, it teaches you how to think.' I said, 'but I can think already.' 'But I did know from a very early age that I wanted to do Philosophy."

And so, off to Oxford she went. "It was a terribly exciting time to be in Oxford, because everyone adored being back after the war," she tells me. "And our teachers had been brooding over their thoughts without being able to publish or lecture during the war years, so there were so many ideas. Our lectures were as yet unpublished books." With a nostalgic laugh, she adds: "the austerity that went on was worse than during the war; we were hungrier. But it was just so exciting being so free."

"I feel terribly grateful for having been an undergraduate at such a marvellous time."

It was in this iconoclastic, non-nonsense era of Philosophy, that she met her husband, Sir Geoffrey

Warnock. He was known as "by far the most intelligent undergraduate at Oxford", and later served as Principal of Hertford College, and as Oxford's Vice-Chancellor. With her brother also heading a Cambridge college, as former Master of Corpus Christi, Baroness Warnock belongs to something of an Oxbridge dynasty. Discussing her term as Mistress of Girton, she states that "yes, absolutely" it is time for all-female colleges to admit men. Although at the start of her career such colleges had the benefit of guaranteeing that "there were bound to be at least four women philosophers, when we were very much in a minority", she remarks that the times have changed.

Warnock left Oxford University to take up a post as headmistress at a local girls' high school, although she regarded this move as "a way of letting me off all the awful graduates who perpetually beleaguered me. With undergraduates, you talk to them for an hour, give them an essay, and they go away. But these graduates wouldn't leave me alone". Not many headmistresses have taught themselves the French horn in order to bolster the school's orchestra.

She was, and is, a vehement educationalist. This cause provided her entrée into public life.

Finding her footing on various educational panels, she soon found herself at the helm of high-profile committees dealing with the ethics

of education for disabled children, animal experimentation, and, most famously, embryology. In these capacities she precipitated the most momentous and contentious changes of the era in medical attitudes. She had long joked with her husband that she wanted to wake up and discover she had become famous; waking up after the publication of the Warnock report, which banned experimenta-



THE HOUSE OF LORDS
IS SO DESPISED BY
THIS GOVERNMENT

tion on embryos beyond 14 days old, she did just that.

Rightly, she regards the majority of her contribution to public policy with pride. There's an exception, though; she tells me that the special education reforms that she led have ushered in an "appalling system." The caustic pen of Melanie Phillips savaged her for this change of position, but she laughs this off. To be objectionable to Phillips is a prized distinction for any liberal.

We have certainly been, to a large extent, navigating by Warnock's moral compass for the last thirty years. But

what guides the guide? If she is our 'moral referee', what rulebook does she enforce?

Warnock has emphatically and publicly rejected religion as the basis of morality. She believes that morality became entrenched in religion because of human need to buttress the principles essential to coexistence. Since she sees the aspiration of law as being to reflect morality; to deny religion the status of the origin of morals is to invalidate its claim to sway in government. How, then, does she conceive of morality?

"Humans are political animals; they need to live in a community," she says. "Therefore they develop a kind of morality of how to treat one and other, and how to get over the selfish temptations to which they are all subject." As she elaborates with examples from Sophocles, as well as contemporary philosophical works, I realise that she is no longer participating in an interview; she is giving a supervision. "I think the belief in Human Rights is what has replaced this belief in God-given laws. They encapsulate morality."

"There are standards that are fairly well agreed. When we say somewhere has a poor Human rights record, we all know what is meant. We do agree to a very large extent on broad concepts of justice, and how humans should treat each other, and particularly how they should not. So that does form a kind of common moral

standard." She sees morality not as a relativistic concept, but as an absolute truth.

In the House of Lords, Bishops are regarded with a degree of moral reverence. They conventionally have, in a self-regulating house, the rare privilege of being allowed to speak when they wish, and without interruption. If religion confers no moral expertise, why does Warnock accept such a tradition? "I don't think their faith gives them any particular authority," she tells me, "but I part from them only when they try to derive their moral views from their faiths. But it is just a convention."

She explains the mechanics and the eccentricities of the Lords with the familiarity and affection of an old hand; she has been a member of the upper chamber for nearly three decades now. But does anything still surprise her? "The House of Lords is so despised by this government. It's appalling to me how this government does not take it seriously; if they did, they would not keep appointing so many people to it, because it simply can't function."

"And yet they give us such ill-prepared and poorly thought-through legislation that we'd be in a terrible state without the Lords."

"We do need two houses, but we need the Commons to take us seriously." As she nods conclusively, it is hard to imagine Warnock, at least, ever being taken otherwise.

Underheard at Cambridge

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

King's Christmas address – 'World in the shitter'

Details have been announced for the programme of the famous 'Carols at King's'

The broadcast from King's Chapel, a Christmas favourite in the UK, will this year include a special reading entitled 'World in the Shitter'.

Varsity has obtained an exclusive extract from the special address:

"Ladies and gentleman, this Christmas time, let it never be far from your minds that the world is, as is known, going down the shitter."

"Across the world, plagues of death roam through the jungle and plagues of men roam across the desert. Villages burn and planes fall from the sky."

"The barrels of tanks blacken the land, as the fumes of faraway factories blacken the sky."

"Everywhere, men are born free and live not in chains, but in squalor and despair."

"The water is dirty and the land is dead. Hate and greed are the trade on which we live. Peace and love are the poor man's playthings."

"Freedom is under threat. In countries far away but close at heart, people cry out for nothing more than to

choose for themselves, but their cries fail. By the barrel of a gun. The blunt end of a baton. Or the cold grasp of despair."

"But despair is easy. And we do not do things because they are easy. Nor because they are hard. We do things because we want to."

"And when we come together, in peace and love, fear and hatred, or despair and loathing, we always find a crappy, belated solution. Do not despair because the bar is set so incredibly low. Rejoice that we always do the bare minimum."

Swap goer intends 'not quite rape'

"I want to be clear," announced swap goer James Brundt in his pre-swap press conference, "I am not intending rape."

"What I am intending is to identify the freshers with whom I would most like to have sexual contact."

"I then intend to invite them to a pressurised environment, away from college, where I intend that they will consume extremely large quantities of alcohol in the presence of a significant number of older and more experienced men."

"I then fully intend that the freshers will engage in sexual acts with me

which they would not have engaged in but for the consumption of alcohol in the circumstances which I fully intended to bring about."

"What I am not intending is rape. I am not intending to do sexual acts without consent."

"What I am intending to do is contrive a situation where sexual acts will be done which would not have been done but for a pressurised and intoxicated environment."

"I fully intend the only participants in this event will be my close friends and recent female arrivals to this university whom I find sexually attractive."

"Thank you for the time. I will see you all at the post chunder debrief. Good sharking everyone."

12 Days of Bridgemas

On the twelfth day of Bridgemas, my true love sent to me/

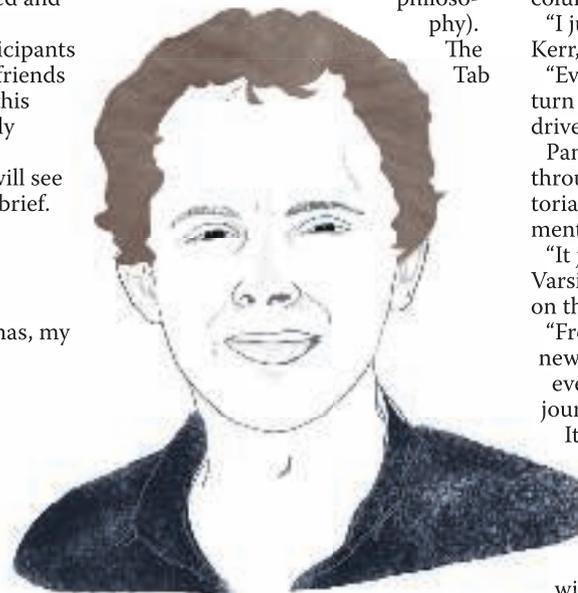
Twelve students singing/
Eleven pints of port/
Ten boaties boating/
Nine lectures lost/
Eight mighty masters/
Seven super Cindies/
Six Sidney students/
Five best friends/
Four fat fellows/
Three giant gyps/

Two porters plump/
And a mathmo in a pear tree

Wanted: Tab Nudist

The Tab nudist was last seen outside the Varsity offices on some date before the 24th November.

The Tab nudist is assumed to be a humanities student (likely philosophy). The Tab



nudist is assumed to come from a carefree college (likely Pembroke).

Reward: One Varsity column for Lent 2015 and Varsity's entire operating budget for 2015 (£5).

Varsity columnist 'actually good'

In a shocking turn of events, a Varsity column was actually worth reading.

"I just couldn't believe it," said Brian Kerr, regular Varsity contributor.

"Every week, I expected it to finally turn into sanctimonious, clichéd drivel, but it just never did."

Panic is reported to be spreading through the Varsity offices, as the editorial staff desperately seek a replacement for the beloved columnist.

"It just won't be the same," said a Varsity insider, who spoke to Varsity on the condition of anonymity.

"Fresh insight in every column. A new way of looking at the world every time. Isn't that what good journalism is?"

It's hard, but we just have to do our best to find a way forward. Everything changes in the end."

It is not yet known whether the columnist, Millie Brierley, will continue to write for Varsity in 2015.

MILLIE BRIERLEY

On politicians and pantomime

When I was younger, I liked to talk. A lot. Every parents' evening, every teacher would say, "Millie is a very enthusiastic child," (in a way that made it clear they were trying very, very hard to be diplomatic) "but she could perhaps do with being a bit quieter". One particularly blunt teacher told my parents I was "bossy".

For years, I was told I was too eager to contribute, answered questions too quickly and had to learn to "give the other children more of a chance". (Incidentally, I may have taken this advice a little too seriously: since starting university, every supervision report has told me I need to contribute more. Or just contribute, full stop.)

Having had a childhood of learning the hard way the intricacies of polite interaction, it is, naturally, a source of great consternation to me that our politicians – our Great Leaders – have clearly not had the pleasure of the same. For one thing, it makes me wonder: what other foundational childhood principles have they not learnt? Do they not know that *i* comes before *e*, *except* after *c*? Were they never told not to pull faces in case the wind changed? Heavens above – do they swim after eating? It's a worrying thought.

Watching Prime Minister's Questions, I realise I must surely have some kind of deep-seated, subconscious self-loathing, because why else would I watch it? It is like rubbernecking on a three-car pile-up on the A14 for a whole 30 minutes. I could walk into a reception class loaded with tickets to Disneyland and the response would be more measured, more considered, than the debacle which takes place in the House of Commons every Wednesday lunchtime.

Witnessing a chamber full of grown adults jeering, heckling and shouting over each other makes me shudder. Every time I turn to BBC Parliament, I have to remind myself that what I am watching is not, in fact, the riot scene in *Mean Girls* ('on Wednesdays, we ask questions!').

Of course, being the drama llama I am, part of me does love the theatre of PMQs. I particularly enjoy John Bercow's witty and acerbic put-downs. Sitting on his Speaker's throne (potentially not the official name), all dressed up in his robes, he looks so gleeful, and never more so than when telling an Honourable Member to be so kind and shut up. This is the man who once told Tom Blenkinsop MP to "take a pill if necessary" and "take up yoga". I like to imagine that our Speaker keeps a notebook in his bedside cabinet for whenever cutting inspiration strikes.

The flipside to all this, however, is that John Bercow has need for so many caustic swipes because, when in chamber, our MPs become largely indistinguishable from apes at the zoo. And that is the image we are projecting onto the international stage: you can trust Britain with climate change/ the fight against terrorism/Ebola because we can shout louder, and we have no respect for basic discourse etiquette. We're mavericks, y'all!

But, of course, it's not just what

the rest of the world thinks of our way of doing things that we need to worry about – Prime Minister's Questions is doing no good for the image of British politics within Britain either. The chorus of hooting and hissing (not to mention the sideshow of gesturing and gesticulating) must be incredibly daunting as a new politician – particularly if you do not conform to the (largely true) stereotype of the old, white male. How can we expect to inspire fresh, exciting people to go into politics when its public face is so infantile – and, more importantly, inaccessible? As I see it, Prime Minister's Questions, in its current format, is the single most off-putting thing in British politics right now. With an election turnout of fractionally over 34 per cent in the UK European elections earlier this year, we need to be doing everything in our power to engage the clearly disenfranchised electorate, but, for every viral initiative, and every national campaign, PMQs sets the cause back a good ten steps.

A key element of this country's democratic system has devolved into utter farce. Wednesday lunchtimes have become akin to pantomimes, and the true aims of politics – the real issues at hand – have been drowned out by calls of 'he's behind you!' It is totally uninspiring for the general population, and it encourages the wrong kind of people into standing: those in search of a good debate, rather than people who actually care about the issues being debated. In the words of *Mean Girls*: not grool.



Comment



Tess Davidson

Cambridge's attitudes towards drinking societies glamourise predatory behaviour

Sex-free swaps: the way forward

Sexual desire. It is an inherent aspect of human nature, an accepted norm within our culture. Yet if both sexes were to succumb to this carnal instinct, what sort of society would we exist in? A society without the laws of consent? Mutual respect? Equality? Within this university lies an entrenched sexual disrespect for all genders, spurred on by the contentious nature of tradition and peer pressure.

There is little point disputing the notoriety of the drinking culture and associated sexual nature of certain societies within the University of Cambridge. It is a theme which has been touched upon both on a national and college level, an infamous undertone within the student culture.

I had the good fortune of knowing people studying at Cambridge before I began my studies. With them, I had many discussions in which I picked their brains over what the 'real' Cambridge was like. I had illusions of grandeur. Atmospheric, gothic 'sets', a stage on which we could run about wearing flowing gowns, discussing our true interests with a zeal previously denied to us by the social constraints of being a teenager. What I did not envisage was the predatory nature of 'swaps'. The intimidating culture of drinking societies. The blurred ambiguity of the definition of consent. As my friends recounted their humiliating memories

of swaps and initiations, what became increasingly and worryingly apparent was the fact that these events were an accepted norm within student life at Cambridge. As I watched them recount their tales, their eyes gleamed with a ghoulish pleasure, basking in my shocked and inaudible response. It was almost as if they had become immune to it. They no longer could see it for what it truly was.

As a student, I now see how vividly this culture captures students' imagination. There is an element of excitement, a fear of the unknown. One by one, my peers are taken over by this desire. There is no harm in the concept; indeed, meeting new people is a key element in anyone's university experience. Yet it is the associated attitudes of these 'traditions' that foster a dangerous environment for all genders.

The femininity and masculinity of students is being commodified by the nature of these societies and swaps. There is an insinuation attached to the 'invitations', that if you want to attend, you are basically forfeiting any control. The sexual implications are inherent within the history of swap culture. In many respects, when one overhears discussions about such occasions, you could be forgiven for thinking they were talking about animals. There is a demeaning of dignity, a dismantling of identity. Suddenly, students are

no longer people but instead, sexual objects.

I've tried to be open-minded, avoiding the ever-increasing cynicism encroaching upon me. Yet it is difficult to remain emotionally detached when you read that students, younger or older than me, are suddenly dehumanising what it means to be an independent being.

Now at this point, I'm sure many will dismiss this as a mere rant, a feminist, man-hating tirade against people who just want to have a little bit of 'fun' and enjoy being 'young'. Yet, I am not just saying that swaps and drinking societies damage female morale, they are equally as detrimental to males, in a number of respects. A terrible culture exists in which male students feel the compulsion to act within the confines of the increasingly popular 'lad' culture, trying to prove their worth. What better way to demonstrate your masculinity than to drink yourself into a stupor? To go on a swap and find as many girls as possible? It is perceived as a definition of your masculinity. Because this is what it essentially comes down to. Students feeling the compulsion to conform to the traditional attitudes towards gender and sex.

Swaps, in their current form, are a conformist and anachronistic concept. There is potential to have a positive

experience from such an event, yet there is a constant obstacle stopping us from achieving this, and that is presupposition. The assumption that we all secretly know what a swap stands for.

And it's dangerous. Giving into a more animalistic side of ourselves and intoxicating our bodies to the point of no return has both immediate and long-term effects. Can anyone honestly say that they would feel safe in such an environment, where the increasing flow of alcohol slowly destroys any control one may retain? The backward nature of drinking societies encourages a disrespect for both our own bodies and those of our fellow students. There is a fine line between having a good time and potentially wreaking havoc on chaotic levels.

Yet we have the power to fix this. It is about breaking away from the shackles of tradition. You are not inferior for being reluctant to partake in drinking initiations, to feel uncomfortable with the archaic nature of swaps. It is exactly this hesitation that we all secretly harbour, that needs to be brought out into the open. Swaps can be updated. Drinking societies can be taken out of the dark ages. Fun can still be had, if we are just willing to acknowledge the mistaken attitudes of this culture and bring a more progressive mindset to pre-conceived ideas of gender and sexuality.



Isabel Adomakoh-Young

Why are we so afraid to discuss the inevitable?

We are all going to die – let's talk

In his Advice on Dying, the Dalai Lama says: "If you are not aware of death, you will fail to take advantage of this special human life that you have already attained." Studying tragedy this term has put me smack in the middle of death and dying, at least in a literary sense, but an essay on mourning this week made me realise how rarely we (Brits, Westerners, students, whoever) actually discuss the reality of it.

The closest we get is bereavement, and even that can be hard to give time to during term; if you're here, you're supposedly capable of just getting on with it, and we often don't want to foist real-life problems on already-stressed friends.

Until recently, I hadn't thought about my own demise beyond "be safe" and "I hope that dark hedge doesn't have a murderer in it". I'd had pets that had died, and I'd lost family members and grieved and struggled on.

But what would happen if I died? I was encouraged to write a will before I went travelling; sitting at my computer, working out the details of who should get what and, mind-bogglingly, what I should leave for my parents to allocate, I faced up to the harsh reality for the first time: we all die. It's the one experience (barring birth, which we can't remember) that every single human will definitely have,

and we never talk about it! Ageing? Sure. Hopes and fears? Yep. Even the fear of dying, up to a point. But the real experience of it, what we've seen of death, what we thought? We shy away, or put it off.

In a way, it's the final taboo. Even in the 70s, Columbia Records begged punk visionary David Hackney to change his band's name to something more palatable than Death: he didn't, and the band flopped. I wonder too whether death has been edged out of our cultural vision because it's basically anathema to capitalism – as the ADC main show reminded us not two weeks ago, you can't take it with you.

The myopic world-view we're fed is that you, the consumer, are all that matters, which has its foundations in the all-consuming present. There's a reason that ascetics give away all their possessions and aim for a higher truth, and part of that reason is reconciliation with the fact of death.

We're also being distanced from the repulsive realities. Despite grim cultural fascination with TV violence and online beheadings, death in language is couched in euphemisms like 'passing on' and 'going to sleep'. It's medicalised to the point that we're always at least a step removed. It's easy to forget that until recently, deaths happened in homes, and almost everyone had spent time with a dead

person. Tragedy deals with relatives in ancient Greece who are outraged not to be allowed to wash and prepare their beloved's corpse. We must be one of the first generations, even in the West, where an adult might not ever have seen a dead person, or ever even have lost someone.

I wonder if a lot of us think we know what we want, and expect from our own deaths. We perhaps think that we want to avoid hospices, or that we would or wouldn't want life support. What more is there to think about? Age UK research suggests that the most preferred place to die is at home in the UK; but only 18 per cent of over-65s die at home.

What else might happen, and how can we prepare for it? There never seems to be a right time to think about it. (On the bus? In the library? At funerals? Surely not.) It doesn't help either that imagining your own funeral, lavish with flowers and weeping, is an old comic stereotype of extreme narcissism. Daily life is not too conducive to facing the void.

With this in mind, a guy called Jon Underwood has created the 'Death Cafe'. It's based on Swiss sociologist Bernard Crettaz's 'Café Mortel', which presented a chance to discuss all things grave. It's now an international collective that establishes spaces where people can talk about death over tea and cake – and anyone that's

happy to follow the few ground rules is welcome to set one up, too.

A Death Café needn't be morbid or dark, nor is it bereavement counselling or a psychopath convention – that we assume this is part of the problem. It is simply an open environment, with no agenda other than to explore the issue and hopefully reduce our fears about it.

Switzerland's Dr Peter Gasser gave 12 terminally ill people controlled dosages of LSD, finding a 20 per cent improvement in "end-of-life anxiety". This isn't a course of treatment I would recommend, but it's interesting to consider that our fear may be more social conditioning than natural instinct.

I wonder if Cambridge could use a Death Café. The University is one of the most inward-looking and short-sighted environments I've ever been in – ironically, given its aeon-spanning history and hive of intellectuals. A career at the end of your degree is a stretch of the imagination.

It's easy to forget the big questions, and that lack of perspective, I think, contributes to the intensity of the stress here; we forget that missing a deadline isn't actually the end of the world. Death is the great equalizer, one of life's only unavoidable elements and it isn't going anywhere, so it's about time we faced up to it. It might actually do us some good.

This House believes gap years are a waste of time

“The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page.” These words were ubiquitous during my gap year. Whether superimposed over hyper-filtered Instagrams of turquoise South Pacific oceans or the skyline of a distant metropolis, one by one people from the Cotswold town where I grew up jetted off, accompanied by this self-important fanfare, off to unlock another chapter.

Back at home, in the inner city supermarket where I worked, my 20 year old co-worker came in one day beaming and excited. He'd just got his first passport. We spent the shift



AYE: Martha Saunders

dering where his first trip abroad would be. It was going to be next weekend, a spontaneous getaway. Next weekend he came in sour faced. The trip would be postponed until the weekend after. Then the weekend after that. Summer came, and every weekend he became a little quieter. At the end of the summer he went to the carnival in Leeds. It was his first time going anywhere outside our small town except for his birthplace, an hour or so north.

This is not unusual. He is one of Britain's 1 in 5 people who have never been abroad and 1 in 10 children who have never set foot on a British beach. Despite the fact that this divide is almost entirely based on financial class – with more people unemployed, balancing multiple jobs, claiming benefits to top up insubstantial incomes – we consider their perspective limited, their backgrounds cultureless. But does travel really teach us that much, or is this part of a desperate and pervasive effort to intellectualize what is arguably the final stigma-free hedonism of the 21st-century privileged?

This dichotomy is never more apparent than in gap years. One by one we are packed off to Thailand and Australia and Ecuador and India. There's no problem with this per se – travelling is fun, especially as a treat after the hard slog of A Levels. The difficulty is not that people are choosing to travel, but the self-justifying rhetoric surrounding it. In a society strangely obsessed with denying privilege, people seem to find it insufficient to admit they're doing something because they want to. Instead the experience

of travel becomes sheathed in an almost mystical quality, dressed up as an incomparable life experience, a learning curve which cannot be accessed by staying in your birthplace. This results in a strange form of snobbery that unfairly demeans the choices of the huge amount of people who simply can't afford to “experience life.”

What do we learn from a gap year travelling that is so impossible to learn here? From the number of Facebook friends who've done it, a top result seems to be “understanding other cultures.” We live in one of the most diverse countries in Europe, arguably in the world. Walking down one of my local streets is like a gap year travel itinerary in itself in language, culture and cuisine; restaurants and minimarts from Poland, Turkey, Jamaica, Pakistan, Thailand, Nigeria, Romania, Hungary, India, Russia, China, not to mention the beautiful spiral minarets and domes of the mosques which fill the streets at call to prayer with their hauntingly beautiful song. For centuries, people have been carving their own little slices into our cities to fill with their culture, cuisine, and customs. People who are widely disapproved of, feared, distrusted, mocked and ignored by the very demographic who place such a great deal of value

upon flying hundreds of miles to “discover” their cultures. We want a voyeuristic glimpse into a way of life we still view as exotic in countries we think are beautiful. If we wanted to discover culture, we wouldn't need a £2k flight – we'd need to spare a few minutes to chat with our neighbours and an evening a week at a language class at the local community centre.

As for learning life skills, this is even more of a mystery to me. I spent the first month of my gap year inter-railing. Here is what I learned – people in Bosnia and Herzegovina laugh at you if you use large notes. How to say “This is not my baby, I do not know this woman!” in Polish. An extensive assessment of the discrepancy in kebab quality between Kreuzberg and Istanbul. Auschwitz hurt and made my legs feel heavy and the momentousness of the bridge in Sarajevo where Franz Ferdinand was shot was sobering. But they didn't teach me anything.

What I did learn in my gap year was how to balance two jobs, budget, learn independently and deal with problematic co-workers and managers. Those are life skills. Being able to carve a didgeridoo is not.

This all comes from a problematic perception of what it is to be cultured. Being cultured is nebulous, but associated consistently with things that are exclusive and based on circumstantial fortune rather than personal choices; a good education, skills such as languages, the money to travel. Our perception of culture is rooted in an almost colonial mentality of the white savior. Our perception of the cultured is rooted in a classist assumption of expendable wealth. Go travelling by all means; it's fun. But when discussing it, try not to think of your own somewhat inaccessible experiences as evidence that you're independent, go-getting, open-minded. Instead, think “God, how lucky I am.”



In my three years at Cambridge, I've clashed with my DoS about many things, from T.S Eliot to Matthew Arnold, but there are two things on which we are both in agreement. The first is that coffee should always be drunk black and strong enough to kill a horse and that it's totally okay to think significantly less of someone for taking milk, let alone sugar. The second is that, regardless of what you study, what your background is or what you intend to do, taking a gap year is a very, very good idea.

I didn't take a gap year. I applied to university the year before the fees increased to £9,000, so I faced a



NAY: Morwenna Jones

choice. I could miss out on a year that, heaven forbid, I'd spend actually enjoying myself and relaxing after slaving away on GCSEs and A-levels for four years. Or, I could keep my part-time summer job, save up enough money and go ‘travelling’ (or more likely do a ski season) and come back, most probably penniless and pay three times more for university.

I chose the former. It was one of the worst decisions I've ever made. To an even greater degree than most people, I spent most of my first year at Cambridge striking an awkward balance between making a complete tit of myself and dealing with my own immaturity. After a sheltered upbringing, I floundered in a world where, for the first time in my life, I was on my own. I'd never had to structure my own timetable before, I'd never been in an environment in which I was allowed to go out until 3am before working at 9am the next day, and I'd never had to look after myself. Lost in this strange world, the mental health problems I'd fought for two years worsened, and at the start of Lent term in my second year I intermitted.

My intermission year certainly wasn't the gap year I'd dreamt of, not least because of the circumstances that forced me into it. But, once I got back on my feet, got a job in a coffee shop and started to grow up, I began to learn the same lessons most ‘gappies’ learn during their years out. I met people who hadn't been given the advantages I'd had, people who'd decided that university life wasn't for them and people who didn't give a damn that I'd dropped out of Cambridge, and were only concerned about me not ruining

their morning latte. Then, I went and spent a month working in the French Alps, blissfully ignorant of reading lists, lecture notes and supervision schedules. I learnt new things and I remembered old things that had got lost in my brain amidst a sea of notes on everything from GCSE photosynthesis to Julian of Norwich. More importantly, however, this was an environment where making a mistake didn't impact on my time at university, or my degree at the end of it.

Admittedly, not everyone needs to take a year out to acquire the basic skills of being an adult or to recall how to have a good time. Most people manage just fine during their first year. But it still seems ridiculous that, in a world where those of us born in 1993 are going to have to wait until 2061 to retire with a state pension, we are so keen to race through the arbitrary hoops of the new modern rites of passage; finishing school, starting university, graduating and getting a ‘grown up’ job, without considering what we really want.

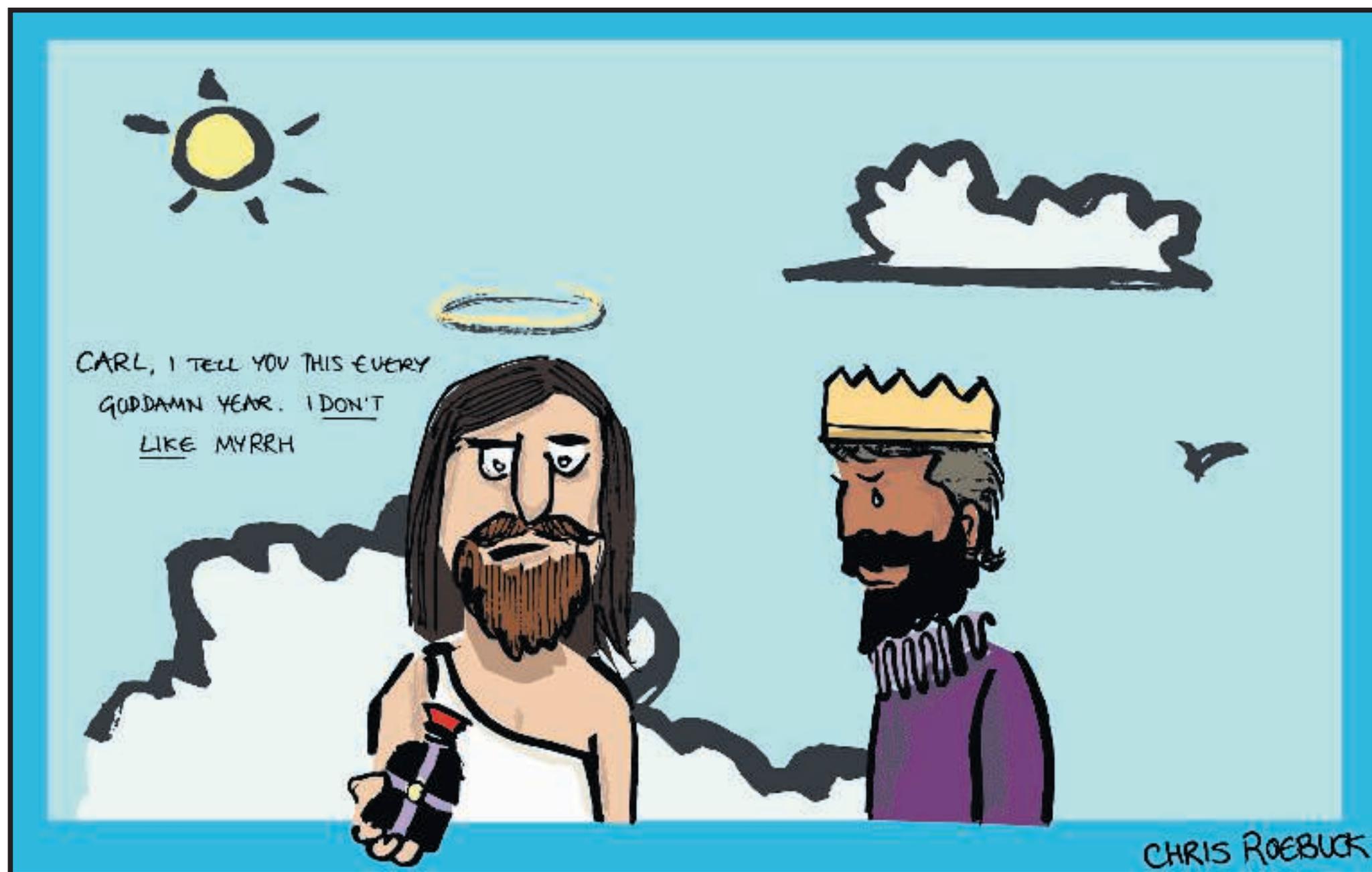
Some of us can very fortunately go from GCSEs to A-level and through the years of our degree, safe in the knowledge that, during the lengthy holidays, we can afford to go travelling, see the world, or secure our dream internship thanks to the wonderful system of nepotism.

Some of us work hard, know how to use a calculator, perform well at interview and earn a place on a prestigious internship scheme. Some of us can't do either of those things (after all, not everybody wants to be a management consultant) and will spend the whole summer desperately slaving away in some part-time job in the hope that, at the end of it, they might have enough to pay for half an inter-railing ticket. And this is where a gap year comes in. Unless they're lucky enough to secure a bursary or a place on one of the university's highly competitive subsidised travel schemes, the holidays simply aren't long enough for some students to save enough money to go save orang-utans in Indonesia. They're simply not long enough for some students to save up to climb Kilimanjaro and they're simply not long enough for some students to save enough to fund themselves for the duration of the scarcely-paid city internship they've always dreamed of. A year, on the other hand, is.

But what if you couldn't care less about orang-utans? What if you already know what you want to do and

you can't wait to take one step closer to the future you've always dreamed of? What if you're worried that over the course of a year your fragile brain will forget all those precious gems of information it so eagerly acquired? At the end of last term, my DoS and I mulled this issue over in his cosy office where he first interviewed me in 2010. Now on a sabbatical, the academic equivalent of a gap year (only he's writing a book, not saving orang-utans), he told me that if he met an applicant who'd spent, or who intended to spend, a year exploring their chosen path of academia, whether by reading voraciously or working in their chosen field, he'd offer them a place instinctively.

A gap year is a twelve-month opportunity to do what you really want to do and what you need to do. You can travel, you can work, you can save, you can grow, you can learn or you can simply do whatever you enjoy most. Given that opportunity, it seems obvious that the seventeen year olds asked to make a choice shouldn't be saying ‘Gap Yah’, they should be saying, ‘Gap hell yeah!’



Where is the Christ in Christmas?



Poppy McClean

The Christmas tale we've come to know gives an entirely misleading picture of Christ

With the bells of Bridgemas already tinkling on the crisp November air, it seems the ideal time for me to shed a few friends by opening up the can of worms that is, what I like to call, Scroogicity.

In basic terms, I have a problem with Christmas.

Strangely, I don't have a problem with the season's mass-scale, tinsel-strewn commercialisation; if it takes a few weepy Christmas adverts about lovelorn penguins for us to invest in our nearest and dearest for just one day a year, then I'll be sprinting frantically around John Lewis on Christmas Eve with everyone else.

I don't even have a problem with the frankly ludicrous optimism Christmas encourages, and the consequent disappointment when we inevitably realise that no, we do still find second-cousin Arnold mind-numbingly dull, and a few shiny baubles won't quell the family's ongoing primal feuds. I don't mind having to feign exuberance at every Christmas tune, having to choke down putrid Brussels sprouts, or – even worse – having to listen to people make endless jokes about how horrible Brussels sprouts are.

Weirdly enough, I have a problem with Christmas because I'm a Christian.

Now everyone knows that the

festival we call Christmas is about as far from its ostensibly religious roots as *Fifty Shades of Grey* is from the GCSE reading list. This in itself isn't a problem: for any one group sharing the same faith to insist that on one day a year everyone pretended to agree with them just for the sake of tradition would be ludicrous, not to mention unhelpful to their cause. We all accept that, while Christmas presents a wonderful reminder to Christians about the incarnation, for the majority of people the carol services, nativity plays and advent calendars are simply the cosy vestiges of tradition, the outer clothing of a religion lent to wrap a season of forced cultural merriment.

But even a festival generally so far removed from any real religious feeling can't help but say something about the belief system from which it takes its name and imagery. And I would argue that, as far as the hint of Christianity which people do get from Christmas is concerned, we are all being seriously deceived. And whatever your beliefs, or lack thereof, no-one likes being deceived, especially about something as significant as faith.

So what species of 'Christ' do we see in Christmas? Well, he's a baby who only really turns up once the main drama is over (see Mr & Mrs Joseph's battle with last-minute booking) and then sits around,

not crying (apparently a big deal) while various strangers come and give him exotic stocking fillers, until all sing a rousing song about friendship as the curtains fall and one of the shepherds throws up his chocolate Santa.

The Christ of Christmas, then, is sweet, quiet and apparently quite a present connoisseur. The Christianity of Christmas naturally therefore seems similar: a familiar, comforting blanket of tradition which brings people together with good, old-fashioned stories and values. In most churches, seasonal services are naturally traditional, too, sinking us ever deeper into the cosy bubble-bath of 'Christmasianity'. It would be quite fair for someone to draw the conclusion that this, in basic terms, reflects Christian belief.

Such a conclusion would be deeply wrong. The Jesus that Christians follow is not like this – indeed, he is quite strikingly the opposite.

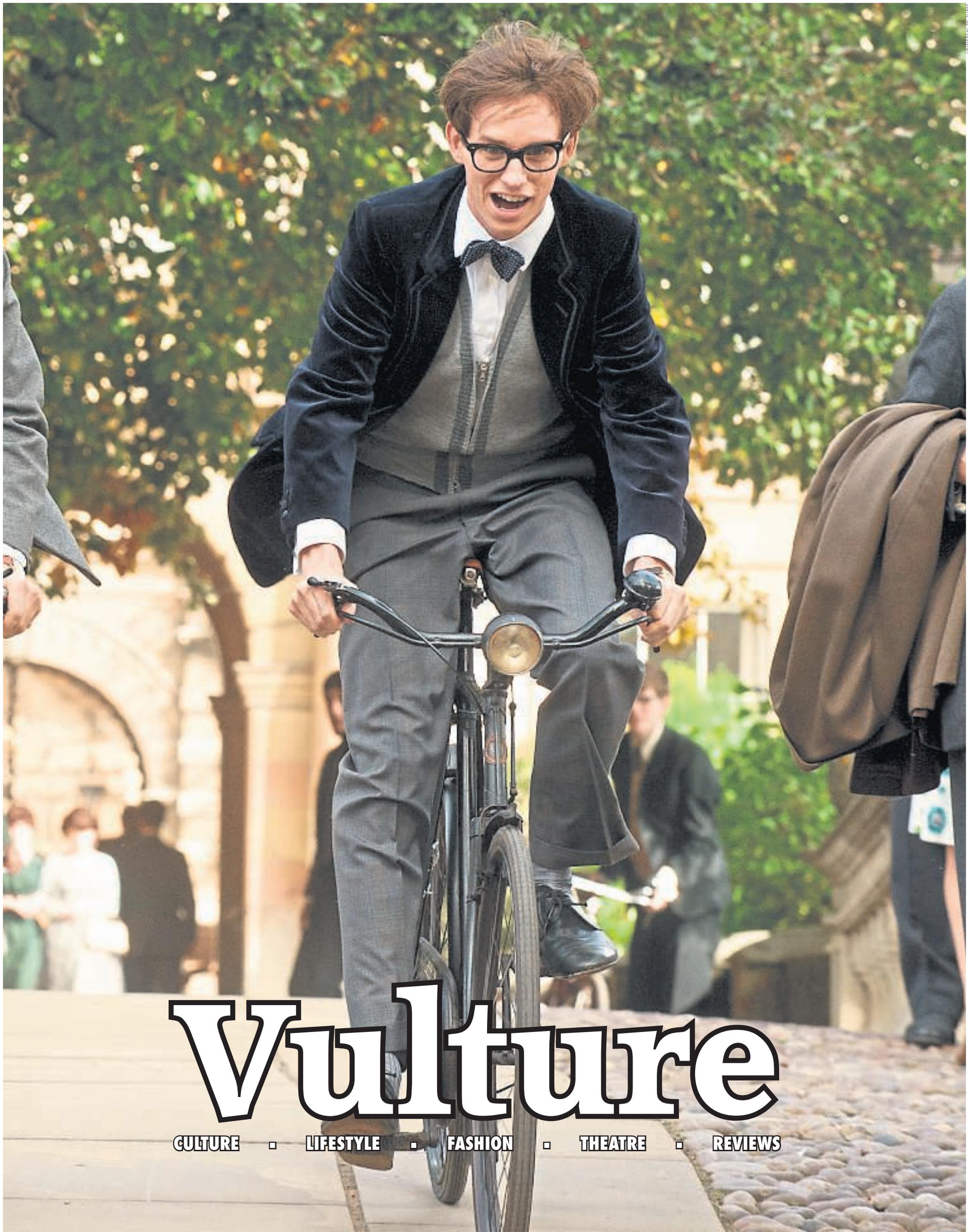
From accounts we have of his life, from believers and nonbelievers alike, we know that he is not, and never claims to be, a cosy, comforting, nativity-play saviour. He was deeply controversial, denouncing many of the religious celebrities of his day, turning brother against brother by his radical teachings. When he spoke, the same words drew cheers and death

threats. Where he walked, women collapsed at his feet and authorities tracked him with murder in their hearts. He ate with the people society loved and the people it marginalised, he washed people's feet like a servant and said he was God incarnate, he brought dead men to life and was slaughtered on a hillside like a criminal.

To many he was the promised Messiah of Jewish heritage, to others he posed a threat to that very tradition. He taught a way of life that sometimes seemed mad and full of risks, but equally promised that he will never leave us to follow it alone, and that he loves us powerfully and passionately, to the point of death and beyond. This is a figure who divides opinion. He invited people either to adore him or despise him. The one thing you cannot do, then or now, is write him off as inconsequential.

I'm certainly not trying to encourage people to give themselves over to this way of living. Faith is clearly something people should come to carefully, thoughtfully – it is a pretty monumental decision, after all. All I'm trying to do is get across just how misleading the cosy Christmas 'Christ' is, so that this decision can be made on the right evidence.

So enjoy all the fun, all the hype and all the warmth of Christmas – just don't look for Christ there.



Vulture

CULTURE ■ LIFESTYLE ■ FASHION ■ THEATRE ■ REVIEWS

THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING

Louis Shankar talks to director James Marsh about his upcoming film of a young Stephen Hawking's life in Cambridge

The Theory of Everything, the new biopic of Stephen Hawking, has been hugely anticipated across the UK and even more so here in Cambridge, where its story takes place. It was released in America at the start of November, after a September world premiere at the Toronto Film Festival, and it has so far received almost universal praise, especially for Eddie Redmayne. Unfortunately, British cinema-goers will have to wait until New Year's Day for their chance to see it.

James Marsh, the film's director, is best known for his Academy Award-winning documentary *Man on Wire*. He describes that as a "turning point" in his career. In fact, *Man on Wire* led directly to *The Theory of Everything*; a producer and screenwriter on the 2008 documentary sent James the script, seeing "similarities in the emotional world of both stories." The honesty of the script and the story it told intrigued James from the off. "It had real emotional complexity and I didn't really know how to do it at first – which is true of all the projects I take on. You go on a journey with the material and it is necessary to start out blind and ignorant." Reassuringly, Professor Hawking gave his tacit approval to the script at the start of the development, and was supportive of the project, meeting with Eddie Redmayne during his preparation.

This support, James says, was much

appreciated; "[Hawking] offered us the use of his signature 'electronic voice' to use in the film – which replaced the one we had created via our sound team. It made a big difference to the final act of the film and I was very grateful."

Although based on the memoir of Stephen's ex-wife Jane, *Travelling to Infinity: My Life with Stephen*, the film's script, from Anthony McCarten, covers a specific period of time. It focuses on the relationship between the couple, with Felicity Jones portraying Jane. According to James, this was a good way to go; "Making the film about a relationship – as opposed to telescoped biography of a life – made for a more interesting structure and gave another, more unusual perspective onto the career and the science."

For this reason the film avoids a focus on the Professor's scientific endeavours: "[it] isn't actually a biography of Professor Hawking or the story of his career. It is a portrait of his first marriage." However, some physics inevitably crept in, in spite of the complexity of Professor Hawking's research. There's only so much familiarising a non-physicist can do with his work though, warns James. "Professor Hawking is a theoretical physicist and mathematics at its most daunting is the language used to describe and explore his ideas. That is completely beyond me and indeed the purview of the film." While he insists that "a movie isn't really the best medium to discuss abstractions of mathematics," James cites Darren Aronofsky's *Pi* as "the only film that I have seen that has managed to broach [this]... Interestingly, the character in that film goes completely mad because of it – and thus the film ends up being about madness created by mathematics." He did, however, read Hawking's seminal work, *A Brief History of Time* – "accessible and playful and very helpful" – and hopes that if he was able to comprehend a concept, the audience will similarly understand without his having to labour them. "I always liked the story of Isaac Newton and the apple and Archimedes jumping into his bath – so I took those anecdotes to heart as I tried to represent some of Professor Hawking's ideas."

Much of the filming took place on-site in Cambridge, utilising various colleges and their grounds, which students will recognise in the film. There's even a May Ball scene, for which three identical fireworks displays had to be put on. A slightly reluctant Oxonian, James found being from a similar university world made working alongside some of the people involved in the film easier. "The fact that I was at least Oxbridge seemed to make me a bit more acceptable, despite my scruffy appearance and uncouth tendencies." A comparison between the two institutions seemed inescapable: "it was interesting to spend some time around the university in Cambridge – it felt quite a bit smaller than Oxford – and purer, too. Its antiquity is more concentrated and it all felt very soothing."

Parallels are being made between *The Theory of Everything* and Morten Tyldum's *The Imitation Game*, released in the UK earlier this month and featuring Benedict Cumberbatch. The film follows the life of Alan Turing, another celebrated Cantab, as he works on breaking the Nazi's Enigma code during the Second World War. However, James is wary of too close a comparison. "Both films have strong biographical

elements [but] no two lives are the same. And in this case, the differences between the two characters seem much more pronounced than any similarities." *The Imitation Game* was also shown at Toronto, having premiered a few weeks previously, and is similarly tipped for the awards season but James is not worried about overlap: "I can see why reviewers might make the connection but I think the films will be distinct enough not to get in each other's way."

The Theory of Everything has met with acclaim so far, including a standing ovation at its premiere. Despite this celebration of his work, James says that "the best part of showing a film for the first time in public is that you can then let it go. You can have no further influence on its life or reception." Although award nominations are constantly whispered – it's difficult to read anything about Eddie Redmayne at the moment without the word 'Oscar' being mentioned – James seems a little hesitant to dwell on such things right now. "This kind of speculation is not a burden the film needs at this stage... The actors in the film are truly astonishing and they deserve any praise they get."

It has even been reported that Stephen Hawking himself was moved to tears at the premiere. Having already been "very gracious" in his support for the film, his positive response seems like the final piece of a successful puzzle; "From what I understand, he has 'liked' *The Theory of Everything* on his Facebook page."



CHRISTMAS COME EARLY

Let's not be so cynical about the annual heart-tugging campaigns, says Rosie Best

The tradition of Christmas advertising is a long-standing one. Since the Victorian era, department stores have been draping their windows in festive displays, printing posters to advertise this year's new ideal Christmas gift and eventually, making the now infamous Christmas television advertisement. One of the first commercial products to appear on television was 'Coca-Cola' and, subsequently, the 'Coca Cola' Christmas advertisement came to be seen as the quintessential holiday commercial. However, in recent years other brands, stores and labels have joined in the flurried release of Christmas commercials and each year the commencement of the Christmas season brings with it a new level of excitement in the world of advertising; the success of last year's campaign is simply the previous chapter in a brand's advertising story. The growth of Christmas advertising throughout history has been a phenomenal one and now, more than ever, these vignettes try to endorse the season of good will through promoting the joy of giving rather than receiving. The yearly release of such advertisements has prompted numerous objections on the grounds of everything from release date to propriety, yet there are far more reasons to be grateful for this tradition than there are for complaint.

This year's round of Christmas commercials have already hit our screens with the highly anticipated John Lewis advert, starring Monty the Penguin, which premiered on 6th November – over a month and a half before Christmas Day itself. Every year, this early Christmas delivery sparks debates as to whether the consumer-giants of the UK have begun their Christmas campaign too soon. Yet it seems for viewers, the broadcasting of Christmas advertisements has become more than a simple marketing campaign. It has become a spectacle. An anticipated milestone in the countdown to Christmas. For those of us who cling to the approach of Christmas like a lifeline, these short films are a comforting reassurance that the holidays are not as far away as they might seem.

Alongside the protests regarding the early release of holiday adverts, rings the resounding chorus of 'it's just an advert'. Whilst it is true that one of their purposes is to encourage viewers to shop at a certain store or buy a certain product, is it truly credible that hundreds of people have been reduced to sobbing because of how they have been completely and utterly persuaded to shop at John Lewis? The advertisement surely taps into something deeper.

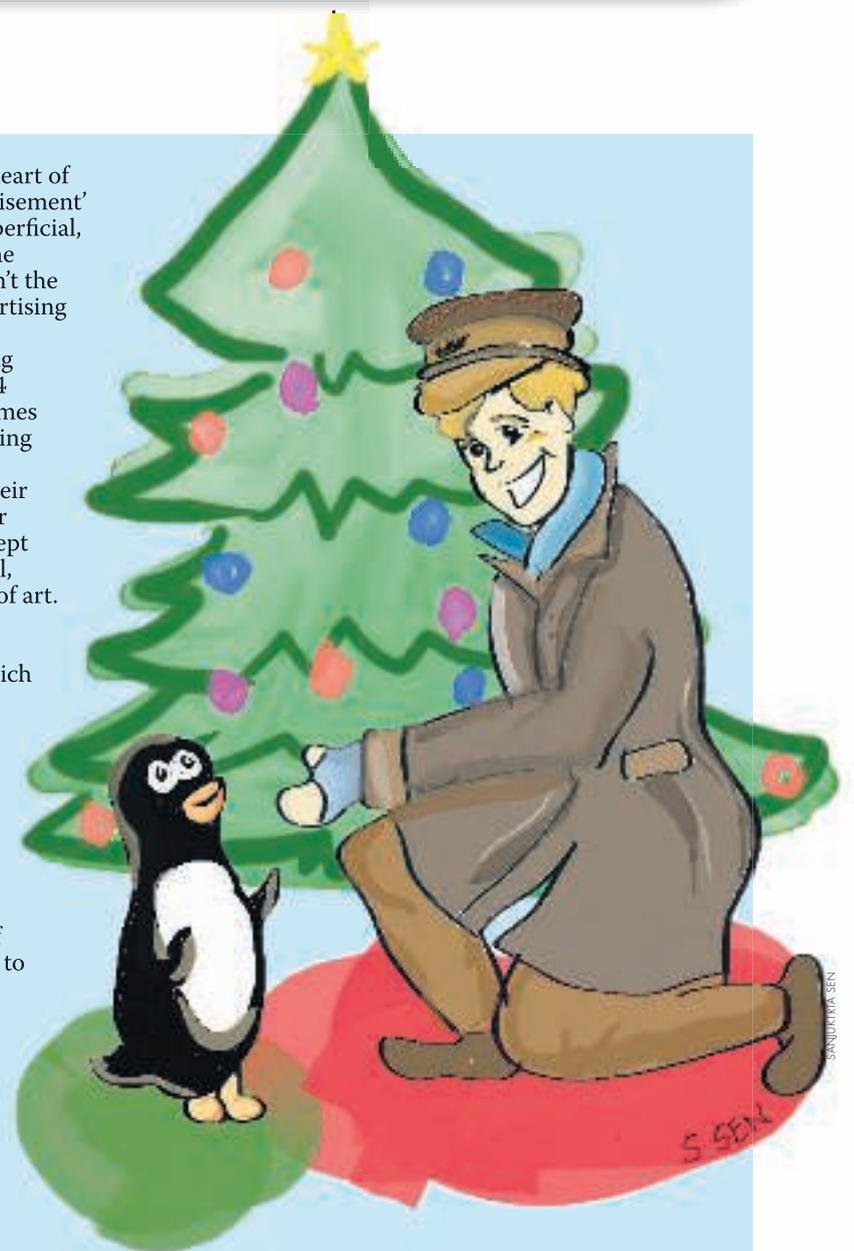
In recent years, the attempts to persuade an audience to shop at a specific store have been reduced to a secondary or even tertiary purpose in Christmas marketing campaigns. The primary focus has now become the storytelling involved in an advert and how this works to captivate an audience, communicating

the message that giving and sharing is at the heart of the Christmas season. Today, the term 'advertisement' has come to be associated with something superficial, even boring – a nuisance which crops up in the middle of your favourite TV show – but doesn't the overwhelming public reaction to holiday advertising prove that this all changes at Christmas time? According to the viral video chart of marketing technology company Unruly, John Lewis' 2014 Christmas ad has been shared over 700,000 times via social media since its release at the beginning of November. Surely this is proof that these advertisements have the capacity to engage their viewers in something more than a bid for their money. Perhaps it is time that we came to accept such adverts for what they really are – a skilful, creative piece of media, perhaps even a piece of art.

This year there has been a controversy surrounding Sainsbury's Christmas advert, which is set in the trenches of the Western Front during World War One. The Christmas Day truce has been called; two soldiers emerge from the trenches, play football and exchange gifts; the British soldier giving away his single bar of Sainsbury's chocolate. Whilst some have viewed this advert with disapproval – claiming its use of war to promote a brand is disrespectful, the contrary can also be argued. In their use of setting, Sainsbury's cleverly calls our attention to the memory of those troops who fought in the trenches with sensitivity and dignity, made yet more poignant by the recent tributes following the centenary of the First World War. Sainsbury's, working together with the Royal British Legion to produce this advertisement, has also promised to donate all profits from the advert's £1 chocolate bar to the charity, truly living up to its own tag line – "Christmas is for Sharing".

It is this statement that has, perhaps, led to the advert being voted more popular than the John Lewis commercial in a poll by the Guardian. Whilst the use of a war-time setting in an advertisement has been questioned, consider how many films have used the same setting, that of a natural disaster or the concept of terminal illness as a basis for their plots and yet remained relatively unquestioned. In the case of the Sainsbury's Christmas advertisement, a spectator can at least rest assured that some of the profits achieved through the commercial itself will be donated to a worthwhile cause.

Even as I write this article, I find myself asking – what happened to the simple joy of Christmas? When did our culture become so overly-analytical and morally-smug that we begin to critique something as simple as a



Christmas television advert? Today, in reality, any media-based form of expression can provoke a negative reaction. Perhaps sometimes, and most especially at Christmas time, we need to try a little harder to look for the positive rather than search profusely for some detail which can be moulded into a problem.

So much of Christmas is about childhood. It's about prioritising that spontaneous joy that we thought adulthood had left behind. It's about appreciating what we have and sharing with those we love. For me, the Christmas advertisement endorses all of these things. It has become yet another part of our contemporary Christmas culture – a part that should be embraced along with the anticipation, excitement and skilful story-telling.

VIRTUAL VATICAN

Is the democratisation of art doing more harm than good?

Isabelle Kent

In our great age of increasing equality and mobility, where museums are free and travel is easy, prestigious art can finally be appreciated by everyone – rather than the small, wealthy elite who can afford to buy it. But in celebrating this, many people have wished to ignore the fact that such modern mass-tourism to shrines of cultural significance, like the Sistine Chapel or the Valley of the Kings, quite literally destroys the art within. The debate surrounding the democratisation of art is constantly in the press, yet we are forgetting art's mortality. It cracks, breaks and flakes away; a process sped up a-hundred-fold by the presence of crowds. We have art at our fingertips, accessible through the click of a button. Yet this plethora of digital reproductions makes us crave authenticity all the more. Record-breaking numbers are cramming into museums, and the art world simply cannot take it.

The democratisation of the arts through film has had a massive boom in the past few years. National Theatre Live and Royal Opera House Live have gripped audiences across the country, and now it is the turn of museums. Describing itself as 'the cinematic event of the year', Vatican Museums 3D is a way to get up close and personal with one of the western world's greatest collections – all from the comfort of a movie theatre. Directed by Marco Pianigiani, it is 70 minutes of epic panning shots, interspersed with 'artistic' dramatisations of men blowing marble dust into the air to signify the carving of a sculptor. Presenter, and director of the Vatican, Antonio Paolucci, periodically interjects with a piece of predictable drivel, as repeated shots of Caravaggio's Entombment of Christ slides across the screen. It is a gimmicky commercialist masterpiece, but might this also be the answer to the problems of preservation?

It is an open secret that the Vatican's collection, most significantly the Sistine Chapel, is falling apart. In the 1980s

a catastrophic restoration project was conducted on Michelangelo's ceiling. Using an aggressive solvent, AB57, the restorers stripped away the waxy coating, created by over 500 years of candle use.

But in the process they removed the top layer of the painting, which Michelangelo applied both to seal the fresco and to add illusionistic effects. Some of the AB57 also seeped into the plaster and has slowly been eroding the fresco from the inside, causing white patches to appear on the surface. This barbaric project simultaneously destroyed the original work and exposed it to the disruption of the 20,000 tourists that are herded through the chapel each day. It is no wonder that small fragments of the fresco are breaking away from the wall to fall pathetically on the visitors below.

Naturally the Holy See has not confessed to this ill-advised sin against art but the gravity of the situation is starting to be felt within the Vatican. Only last month a statement was released about the installation of state-of-the-art air conditioning systems in the chapel to funnel out the air pollution brought by the ever-increasing influx of visitors. But this is not enough. If the tourist stream is not quelled, it may be too little too late. In this respect, Vatican Museums 3D could be seen as the first step to the reduction of tourists, who will no longer have to actually visit the Vatican, and therefore preserve its dying collection. After all, you get a better view of the Sistine Chapel ceiling on the silver screen than by craning your neck amongst the seething mass on the chapel floor. This view, however, is fundamentally flawed.

Firstly we must consider the birth of the VIP (very important painting). It is undeniable that the dissemination and democratisation of art through modern media has turned paintings into

celebrities. People travel across the globe to see the Creation of Adam, not because they don't know what it looks like, but so they can become a member of some cultural elite by being able to say they've experienced it "in the flesh". The gimmick of replacing the actors' names on the movie poster with "Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael and Caravaggio" attests to this celebrity-like status. It turns the film into a marketing strategy, rather than an alternative to visiting, as more people than ever will want to say they have seen 'the greatest art collection in history' in person.

Secondly, people will not just accept virtual reality as a substitute. The human obsession with what is tangible has declined with the use of digital media, but it is debatable whether art appreciation will ever be entirely converted to a virtual universe. State of the art 3D graphics cannot replicate the physical experience of walking through the Papal palace or standing in front of Raphael's School of Athens, just as Kenneth Clark's BBC documentary Civilisation could not do it 50 years ago. The glorifying panoramas of the Sistine Chapel shown in the trailer will unfortunately not satisfy people. Instead it will act as bait, luring tourists with the promise of sensory cultural experience – even if this sensory experience actually ends up being an elbow in the ribs in the midst of eager tourists, a child screaming and possibly a flake of fallen plaster to the head.

The Vatican Museum 3D will not lessen the flood of tourists, it will not save the Sistine Chapel, it will probably not even make that much money in the box-office. It will do nothing to preserve the art it glorifies. But at least we will have pretty moving pictures to remember what the greatest art collection in history once looked like.

3D *The Vatican Museum* is in cinemas now.

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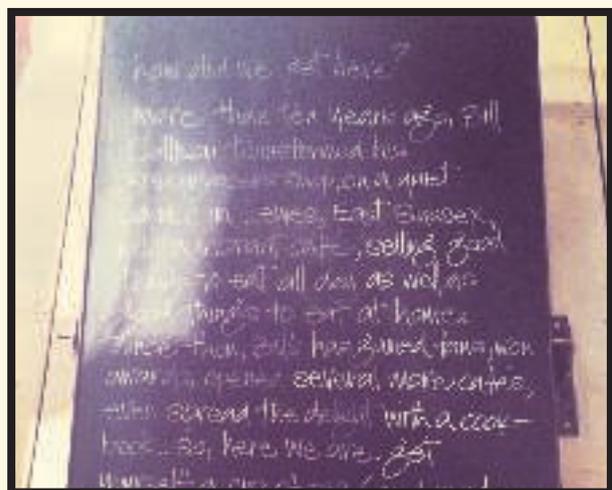
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Bill's



9am: It should be a lazy Sunday morning with everyone still in bed, but Bill's is already half full, the room humming quietly. 'I'm the King of the Jungle' dances out of the restaurant speakers. The demographic is far from wild, however: a mix of couples, ladies gossiping over lattes and families. No sign of any student-types yet. Probably because it's 9am on a Sunday. My waiter, a charming man called Cameron, brings me a huge pot of tea, brewed with Bill's own tea bags. A quaint touch.



9.30am: I look up from my table; there's a sudden increase in noise and people. An entire family (from grandparents to grandchildren) tumble in. The young daughter orders the most popular Bill's breakfast, a full fry-up. Bit of a waste if you ask me; the plate is nearly half her size. A couple opposite me sit in grim silence until their eggs Benedict arrive, when they both perk up noticeably. The woman puts an entire poached egg in her mouth. That was something.



1pm: Full fry-ups arrive at tables and return to the kitchen as empty plates. The queue is out the door. The staff haven't taken a break between the breakfast, brunch and lunch sittings.

2pm: Lunchtimes are noticeably quieter than brunch - the atmosphere is more sedate, probably because everyone is so full. Tables start to clear, but at half-past two, there's still a queue of at least ten people waiting to be seated. A waiter finishes his shift and has lunch accompanied by his girlfriend, a dose of PDA and ice-cream. They catch me looking at them at least twice. Embarrassed, I take a quick loo break, which lets me catch a glimpse of the kitchen - all hurry and bacon.



3pm: Robin and Connie join me for afternoon tea on the sofas. "I really love this vibe... It's old and very worn but everything's comfy", Robin observes - the homeliness of Bill's is definitely a big selling point. I order "chicken in a jar" as an afternoon snack. The portion of rich, festive chicken liver pâté is very generous, served with sourdough toast and Bill's own chutney. Connie inhales a Bill's green smoothie. Bill's keeps up with the latest health trends (and fads), following the rise of restaurants like Raw Press Co. - there's something for everyone, from the hungover to the healthy.

4pm: The atmosphere is less frantic. Waiters amble rather than trot, but David is still on his feet. As his shift ends, we chat about his work. 'Bill', he tells me, is a great boss, but weekend shifts are tough. Cameron whippers his guess of yesterday's turnover to me - over £60,000. Impressive to say the least. Later, I can't quite believe that people are still queuing past four o'clock. What are they here for? Lunch? Tea? Salvation?

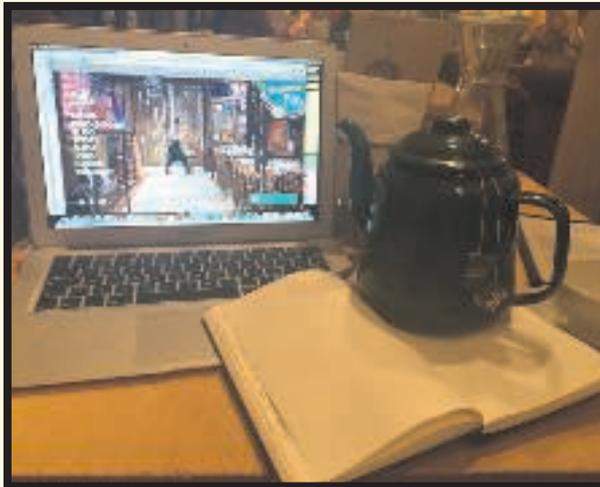
Despite the ever-present queue at Bill's during the daytime, the only people who and children spoiled, while students can eat the simple but delicious meals they of Bill's still has a very independent and homely feel to it. It's not hard to see why

Saskia Barnard goes from breakfast to bedtime at Bill's

Inspired by Lisa Markwell's 24 hour stint in London's Duck & Waffle, "the restaurant that never sleeps", I decided to test this at Bill's. I spent a day at everyone's favourite brunch venue observing the people, staff and food. Throughout my 12 hour vigil, I'll take you through my experiences of a day in the life of one of Cambridge's busiest restaurants, a place which gets even less sleep than the average Cambridge student.



10am: The manager, Rocci, pushes back some sliding doors to reveal large tables, one of which is promptly filled by a party of prams and parents. The Bill's pancakes appear to be a popular choice among toddlers, whose mums are busy squishing blueberries into their unreceptive mouths. To my left, a child is whining for "hat choglit" - translation: 'hot chocolate'.



10.30am: I'm moved from my table in the corner to the sofas. I'm told there are "about 30 people" queuing at the door - unbelievable how long people will queue for eggs. The sofas are a great place to do some unproductive work, tucked in a (relatively) quiet corner under the stairs, surrounded by shelves of dusty classics. A great place for people watching. A table of three teenage girls spend more time snapping pictures of their food for Instagram that they do eating it. If your brunch isn't filtered, did it really happen at all?



11am: There's a lot of scrambled egg and knitwear around. I'm joined by my friend Hattie who orders a cappuccino, and we become yet another pair of friends catching up in Bill's.

11.30am: Inspired by the couple who perked up when their eggs Benedict arrived, I order the same. My brunch arrives and it's superb. Roasted pumpkin seeds on eggs Benedict is a novelty, and even better on Bill's homemade sourdough bread. The hollandaise - often a mayonnaise-y disappointment - is also just right, creamy but tangy.



6pm: Darkness descends; the candles are lit for an intimate glow. Sinatra croons 'Mac the Knife' while friends have relaxed suppers of Bill's burgers, which my new waiter tells me is the most popular dish. The room is filled with chatter and pockets of laughter.

7pm: The same waiter gives me a sympathetic smile as I order my third glass of house rosé. A Cambridge fellow and his wife discuss his lectures. There's much talk of "applauding students", "very alarming" and the substantial nature of their cod fish finger sandwiches. The life of academic excellence.



8pm: I'm joined for supper by Steph and India. I have the butternut squash mac 'n' cheese - very creamy and real comfort food - with buttery broccoli as a side. And yet more house rosé.

10pm: India falling asleep over her food (yes, really) prompts some sniggers from the table of middle-aged double-daters behind us. It's our cue to leave. After spending twelve hours here, I'm ready to exit and taste fresh air once more.

feel rushed there are the staff. It's the sort of place that makes mums feel trendy miss from home. And despite being a rapidly-growing chain, the Cambridge branch it's so popular. I might even queue for their eggs Benedict next time.

NIGHTHAWKS



Edward Hopper is one of the greatest artists of our time. In this shoot, we set out to use Hopper's body of work (especially his paintings Nighthawks, Automat and New York Movie) as a source of inspiration for the most ambitious fashion shoot we have ever worked on together. Further images can be found online.



Direction: David Godwin / Words: David Godwin / Models: Lucy Tibble, Ruth Jenkins

Photos: Barney Couch / Makeup: Olivia Galvin

Clothes from Jigsaw (Trinity Street 01223 312955)

With thanks to Cambridge Systems Associates, ArtSpace57, Cambridge Brew House, Downing College Conferences and Megan Lea



IN INTERVIEW: DAVID MITCHELL

“Pessimism and petulance”

Alex Cartlidge talks to a Footlights favourite



A lot has changed for David Mitchell in the last six years. In 2008 he began to write his weekly column for *The Observer* (his career having already been established as a *Varsity* columnist in 1995). He was a 34-year-old single comedian still performing in *Peep Show* and *That Mitchell and Webb Look*. Now, in 2014, he is not only married to Victoria Coren, but the latter show has finished with the former set to end next year. His new book, *Thinking About It Only Makes It Worse*, collects together newspaper columns dating as far back as February 2009. Whilst a lot may have changed for Mitchell over that period, he sees 2008 as marking the dawn of a “new world era” (unrelated to his newspaper column), an era of “pessimism and petulance” which he tells me that we still find ourselves in:

“This is the post-credit crunch era – the great recession era. I think certainly for Britain we were going through a period of relative optimism and seeming economic prosperity from the mid-1990s until 2008” he reflects. “In 2007 the first rumblings of the credit crunch started, and in 2008 we really realised we were in an economic disaster.” Mitchell speculates that there is a link between the credit crunch and the current surge in political radicalism: “I think it’s indirectly changed our mood, and I think the country feels sort of psychologically different as a result of that. A lot of the anger and recrimination – and people lashing out and voting for UKIP on the one hand, and listening to Russell Brand on the other – comes from this slight petulance”. He still harbours hopes of moving “into a more optimistic time”, but isn’t sure about our chances of escaping these “judgemental times” any time soon. This pessimism transfers into his vision of the future of the newspaper too: “One of the things that’s keeping me going is that newspapers may cease to exist in their current form quite shortly,” he says, “so I’m inclined to enjoy the fact that I’ve got a newspaper column in this potential last year of the newspaper, rather than spinning out early to discover there’s no industry to go back to in a few years time.”

Just as I begin to doubt if this is the comedian David Mitchell on the phone, the conversation returns to comedy when I ask how he felt revisiting pieces he’d written as long ago as February

2009: “What was very weird was that there were some of them that I’d completely forgotten. It’s very odd to read 1000 words that you definitely wrote yourself of which you have no memory,” he tells me. He compares it to “seeing footage of yourself drunk, getting undressed and dancing on a table. It’s like you’ve lived a secret life which you weren’t aware of.” Safe in the knowledge that this entire interview isn’t going to be a bleak overview of the last six years, I move onto much more familiar ground, and the Cambridge Footlights.

“I’ve seen several Footlights shows since I left... They’ve almost all got something in them that’s



IT’S VERY NICE TO HEAR IT TALKED ABOUT AS AN EXCITING ERA AND TIME FOR FOOTLIGHTS, BECAUSE WE FELT LOST

interesting, and they’ve almost all got something in them that should be cut – and that’s absolutely true of the ones I was involved in.” The Footlights is a society with a history far longer than Mitchell’s: “I like to think of it carrying on,” he says, “It’s got a good tradition... every so often I try to catch a Footlights show, and I hope it’s an institution that knows that most people who have gone from it to be successful wish it well.”

President of the society from 1995-1996, Mitchell presided over a retrospectively classic era of the Footlights, which also involved Robert Webb, Richard Ayoade, Matt Holness and John Oliver. I ask, therefore, whether there was ever a point at the time when they could have predicted this success? “We were all hoping we would, but it’s odd because at the time the Footlights was as washed up as it’d ever been. It felt like we were looking back to the era of Stephen Fry, Hugh Laurie and Emma Thompson, thinking that it could never be like that again. And that was an amazing era! But we were very

frightened that we were barking up the wrong tree and deluding ourselves.”

Whilst Mitchell is a familiar, British Comedy Award-winning face to British television viewers, Ayoade is now a BAFTA-nominated film director and John Oliver has his own HBO satirical late-night talk show in the US. Yet, despite all of these accomplishments, Mitchell is humble, hopeful that their successes will encourage current student comedians: “It’s very nice to hear it talked about as an exciting era and time for Footlights, because we felt lost, just like hopeful children.”

“It’s worked out for us, and I’m very grateful for the era I was part of – I hope it would be heartening for the people in Footlights now that think ‘I wonder if this will work out?’ to know that was exactly how Rob and I, and Richard, Matt and John felt the best part of twenty years ago.”

In typical mood-cutting fashion, I unwittingly put a stop to our nostalgic remembrance of Mitchell’s Footlights years by reminding him that *Peep Show* will finish next year: “I’ll be very sad to leave it behind, but I think it’s the right time for it to stop. Rob and I are getting middle-aged now, and the situation is not about middle aged men.” Whilst he confesses that he will “shed a tear when we leave the flat for the last time,” he is also taking the time to reminisce about the astonishing success of the show: “I’m very grateful that we’re in a position to know in advance when it’s stopping, so we can savour it, and enjoy the fact we made a successful show for much longer than we ever expected to.” *Peep Show* has run for over a decade now, much longer than many of the sitcoms that Mitchell grew up with. “I’m very proud of that,” he emphasises.

So whilst there is an equal level of pride and melancholy about the passing of *Peep Show*, there are no signs of Mitchell taking time off. He explains to me that he is developing a new sitcom with Robert Webb and Simon Blackwell, a “brilliant” writer for such projects as *The Thick of It*, *Veep* and *Four Lions*, but that it won’t see the light of the day until “the year after next at the earliest”. He admits his interest in partaking in some theatre work in the near future, inspired by Robert Webb’s recent roles in the West End

productions of *Jeeves and Wooster* and *Neville’s Island*, but otherwise it seems like he’s very happy to continue with what he is doing, and enjoying now: the radio sketch series *That Mitchell and Webb Sound*, and the panel shows *Would I Lie To You?* and *The Unbelievable Truth*.

As the interview begins to wind to a close, I approach the recent controversy surrounding the comedian Andrew Lawrence’s comments regarding “women-posing-as-comedians” and the lack of right-wing comics. After I explain these furore, and after Mitchell confesses to not knowing much about the topic other than that Lawrence seems to have angered a lot of comedians, he seems quite baffled: “Well comedians do tend to be left-wing but they’re not putting it on. They’re sincere. It’s very difficult to be funny when you’re being insincere. I’m not going to change my personal politics to create better balance in a panel show [any more] than I’m going to change my personal gender. We are who we are as people, and it’s up to the producers to book a panel show and then it’s up to us to turn up and be as funny as we can.” What is equally wrong about Lawrence’s point, Mitchell argues, is that “The BBC would love to address that very issue of political imbalance that he’s talking about because they’re very sensitive to those accusations. You’d be much more likely to get on the BBC by pretending to be more right wing than you are than by pretending to be more left-wing.”

After taking the unmissable opportunity to invite Mitchell to this year’s Footlights pantomime – which he confesses to loving “more than any other Footlights show simply because it’s the most fun to do” – I close the interview by returning to how it began, asking for a prediction for the future. How will the comedy scene deal with increasingly specific censorship rules? Whilst he acknowledges “there’s certainly more scrutiny on what’s broadcast after *Sachsgate*”, he is refreshingly optimistic about the future of TV and radio comedy: “I think it’s slightly relaxing, which is a good thing. Yes, I think it’s made the comedy environment slightly less appealing,” he concedes, “but not massively so. All I’ve ever wanted to do is make people laugh, so I wasn’t going to give up on it just because it’s slightly harder to get the word fuck onto BBC 2.”

PULLING THE TRIGGER

Social media, television and journalism all contain trigger warnings. Why not theatre?

Marthe de Ferrer



Trigger warnings were not something I was overtly aware of until I became familiar with the Cuntry Living group on Facebook (Oxford's feminist magazine), where I saw scores of posts alerting readers to discussions about rape, suicide, abuse, and other upsetting topics. This seemed to me an inherently sensible idea. As well as a sign of respect for those who have been through traumatic experiences, trigger warnings give people the opportunity to avoid certain material that may prompt a trauma to resurface. These warnings can be found across social media, in articles, and before some television programmes. But why do we not see them as frequently in theatre?

In Lent term last year I directed *5 Kinds of Silence* at the Corpus Playroom, a production which centred around physical, psychological, and sexual abuse within a family. It was a very stylised piece, substituting physical theatre in place of more visceral depictions of the violence. As a result we came away with a piece which I am proud to have been a part of, and which handled difficult material carefully, but I still regret not following my gut instinct and placing a warning on the door for the audience. It wasn't something I had seen done before, and I rationalised that the promotional material, as well as the leaflets handed out on the door, were very clear about the show's content.

A few weeks later, a spectacular production of

Philip Ridley's *Mercury Fur* was staged at the same venue. For this, there were clear signs upon entrance about the nature of the show, and the same was done the following term at Clare Actors' production of *Her Naked Skin*. Yet these are the only two shows I have come across in my year and a term in Cambridge which have decided to place warnings. This definitely does not represent the number of shows I have seen in Cambridge that contain content which could be classified as 'triggering'.

Of course what constitutes 'triggering' is a tricky area, and it is incredibly difficult to even begin to set parameters for this. I have seen warnings on social media for: domestic violence, suicide, eating disorders, rape, assault, depression, and more — but I honestly believe that it would be impossible to create an exhaustive list. Everyone has had such varied experiences, an individual could be triggered by something that seems apparently trivial to those around them. I have seen a number of writers arguing for and against trigger warnings, with some articles claiming that they can actually cause more harm than good. The debate is far too complex to address fully here, but simply from a dramatic perspective I believe that more productions need to be using them.

When it comes to theatre there is a level of inescapability, which is often overlooked. A book can be put down, a television programme

turned off, a website closed — but when it comes to plays, things are far more difficult. Of course a person can physically leave the auditorium, but this is not necessarily an ideal situation for a number of reasons.

Firstly there is the issue of pure logistics, particularly places like the Corpus Playroom, where for half the audience to leave they must cross the stage. If you happen to be sitting adjacent to the venue's door then fine, but for people placed in the centre of rows or in inconvenient locations, it can be impossible to leave without causing a great deal of disturbance. Which leads on to the second idea: that drama is a shared experience. I tend to see productions with friends, so if I leave a performance there will undoubtedly be questions — some of which I may not really want to address. But finally, and most importantly, the immediacy and intimacy of live theatre cannot be forgotten; seeing something which you find triggering played out in front of you can be utterly traumatic, it is a very different experience to watching something on a screen.

Drama does, however, have an added level of difficulty when it comes to placing warnings, as often the excitement and joy of the experience is in the unexpected surprises and twists in the plot. We could certainly place a warning up about suicide for a production of *Romeo and Juliet*, and I highly doubt the audience will feel a major plot point has been spoiled, but for less

well-known plays, or pieces of new writing, the use of content and trigger warnings could pose a problem. While this complicates matters, it is not worth forcing an audience member to endure something they find traumatic and triggering, for the sake of keeping a plot twist quiet.

This is not an attack on the Cambridge theatre scene, nor theatre in general, but more about opening up a debate. This summer, I directed a production of *The Penelopiad* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival that contained an unpleasant rape scene. The scene was handled sensitively, and my actors were incredible, but when I asked the venue if we could place a warning by the entrance, they informed me it "wasn't their policy" to do so.

Theatres have a legal responsibility to warn audiences about nudity, open flames, strobe lighting, haze effects, mock firearms, gunshots — but not depictions of abuse, suicide, self-harm or any other potentially triggering material. I'm not necessarily saying there should be a legal obligation to do so for this, largely because it would be impossible to compose an exhaustive list, but directors and producers need to consider carefully the idea of placing warnings before shows. I doubt any venue in Cambridge would disapprove of the use of trigger warnings outside a production. Even if just one person is prevented from being forced to relive a traumatic experience, that, surely, is worth it.

WHAT WE'RE LISTENING TO



Petros Fessas

PICTURE YOU THE AMAZING

Give this track the ten minutes it asks for and it will take you where it wants. It is probably not true that for a band to choose to break the five minute mark there has to be a lot to say. Hardly so: during 'Picture You', the mood hardly changes. Its psych-pop guitars create a rainy air that gains weight as the lead singer Christoffer Gunrup's voice swells up, in an atmosphere reminiscent of Tame Impala's less sunny side. It denies the listener the cathartic chorus it builds to, instead serving as a post-rock jam session that creates an emotional story in two parts.

SWITCH LANES TKAY MAIDZA

An obvious comparison to Azealia Banks is not uncalled for as Tkay Maidza releases her latest promotional single – before her debut EP comes out later this month. It is playful and infectious, much like '212' that first introduced us to Banks: Tkay's rap flows seamlessly and balances out the unconventional electronics of the song. The production is owed to Paces, who does a great job channeling sounds that we can probably associate most closely with the likes of SBTRKT, albeit sounding a bit more garage.

YOU'RE ALWAYS GOOD OOFJ

The best part about songs described as 'cinematic' without soundtracking any movie is that each listener associates something different to them: this one definitely could lend itself to the big screen, seeing as Jenno Bjørnkjær is known from his work on Lars Von Trier's *Melancholia*. This track forces the imagination on a visual journey. The result is a class-A dream-pop track that is built around contradictions; the menacing strings thrown against occasional glimpses of sunlight are accompanied by a self-falsifying mantra of "You're always good" that is eerily unconvincing.

THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING



The *Theory of Everything* is a classic love-conquers-all story with an intellectual spin. Based on the memoirs of Stephen Hawking's first wife, the plot follows the development of his and Jane Hawking's start at Cambridge University.

The power of the movie as a love story lies in the romantic appeal of Eddie Redmayne and Felicity Jones. As the characters begin to fall in love, so do you: with either, or both of them.

The camerawork is notable for its beautification properties. Every shot exudes elegance and charm. There is a suggestion of the vintage in its use

of filters, and a suggestion of the idealistic in its tendency towards visual perfection.

The atmosphere of the May Ball scene is infused with the magical hues of a fairytale. The action is set against a background of Cambridge at its best; the favorite postcard-image of King's College Chapel and Clare College figuring often and prominently in the distance. At times the movie feels a bit like an advertisement for Cambridge.

There are multiple shots of the town: all of them flattering, some of them incongruent to the needs of the storyline. The

cameraman is brazenly using the town and University to seduce the audience.

Exiting the cinema, I didn't feel much enlightened about what precisely it was that Hawking had accomplished academically in his lifetime. The movie does not purport to be a detailed summary of his career as a physicist.

Rather, it openly presents itself as a love story; and succeeds greatly in being a very wholesome and extremely touching one.

There are certain moments of light-hearted humor. At times, the movie tends towards tasteful romantic

comedy; yet its emotionalist riptide always carries it away, again.

Redmayne is magnificent. It is when Hawking's illness has progressed, and Redmayne is limited to expressing himself with eyes and nearly imperceptible movements of lips and brows, that the sublimity of his acting skill is thrown into stark relief.

The *Theory of Everything* is superbly, and very consciously, inspirational. Extremely and overly sentimental at times, it purposefully tugs at your tear ducts almost from its very beginning.

Certain scenes are more subtle than others in pursuing their aim of moving the audience. Yet even the blatantly maudlin ones are satisfying and emotionally filling.

The audience comes away with the comfortable feeling of having received its dose of poignancy for the week.

Sophia Gatzionis



THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY PART I



There is some kind of disease going around Hollywood. Its got Harry Potter and the *Deathly Hallows*. Its got *The Hobbit*. And now its claimed the final instalment of the *Hunger Games* trilogy.

This is an illness that sees directors more concerned with sucking every last dreg of cash out of the box-office

cow, than they are with creating a genuinely well-paced movie that feels like it at least has enough plot, dialogue, and action to keep audiences engaged for the entirety of its running time. Directors are instead splitting their adaptations into as many parts as possible all in the name of profit.

Of course, this is hopelessly naïve. But after sitting through 123 minutes of Jenifer Lawrence's face in close up I feel that I am entitled to dream of the film that could have been.

Die-hard fans of the movie won't be disappointed, and the film had some great moments: Julianne Moore is superb as President Coin, bringing just the right mix of sympathy and

calculated ruthlessness to leave you guessing about the real nature of her revolution.

Elizabeth Banks steals the show as Effie who, stripped of the trappings of the Capitol, appears soft, wounded and yet still resiliently herself. She, along with Prim's cat, also provides some much-needed comedic relief in the film.

These moments are lost in a sea of slow close-ups, poignant looks and long, panning shots all set to an intense soundtrack that tries to trick the audience into thinking that something is happening, and that we care about it.

We get to see J-Law's oh-my-goodness-I'm-in-utter-shock-and-disbelief

face at least 1,000 times.

However, it's not all the film's fault. *Mockingjay* is, admittedly, a much slower book than the others in the trilogy, and much of it takes place in an underground bunker which, let's face it, isn't that cinematically pleasing.

It's also a book that focuses on the inaction of its central heroine, and it's hard to make a revolution film centered on inaction.

The good news? With the return of everyone's favourite pastry chef the film really picks up in the last twenty minutes, and its been set up perfectly for an absolutely show-stopping grand finale next year.

Jessica Barnfield

THE NORTH POLE CAMBRIDGE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

This week, the North Pole has come to Cambridge. Well, supposedly, anyway. What has actually happened is that Parker's Piece has been hosting a Christmas-themed fun fair replete with ice-rink and ludicrously expensive games, including favourites like hook-a-duck and darts. For those of you already disappointed with the over-commercialisation of Christmas, this is perhaps one to miss. If, however, you're looking for a break from work to revel in the expensive wonders of an English Christmas fair, you won't be disappointed.

A daytime visit proved slightly lacking, with the empty stands and Christmas music giving off a slightly eerie, horror-movie feel. I can't say I was tempted to take a ride on the giant inflatable penguins floating in what looked like an absolutely freezing cold paddling pool, and after spending £8 trying to win a giant teddy bear I was slightly disappointed to leave

with only a tiny Minion toy that the stall owner gave me out of sympathy more than anything else.

However, this disappointment was extremely short-lived as we took our turn on the ice-rink. Suddenly, the lack of crowds seemed like a massive bonus since we were sharing the rink with only a handful of other people. Whilst a great playlist of music ranging from Michael Bublé to the Jackson 5 played overhead, we could skate around at our own pace with lots of help from the friendly marshals. Having only ever experienced ice-skating at big London rinks like Somerset House, I was used to finding it an incredibly stressful hour of trying to avoid the semi-professionals who insist on spinning in circles around you, whilst also dodging the first-timers falling flat on their faces right in front of you. Despite lacking some of the Christmassy feel of the bigger



rinks, this was a much more better overall experience, particularly if you need some time to get used to the ice before speeding off in circles round the rink.

In addition, the rink is surrounded by classic wooden huts serving a wide array of alcoholic and warm drinks, mulled wine included, so I can imagine this would be a great place to head with a big group of friends for an evening towards the end of term. The food market sells loads of tasty-looking and locally-sourced meals, and there's a snow-themed Helter Skelter for those who are daring enough. As Christmas gets nearer, however, the crowds will most definitely grow bigger, so I'd recommend heading over to Parker's Piece closer to Bridgmas than actual Christmas in order to make the most of this little slice of holiday cheer.

Lily Hollins

THE TOP FIVE FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILMS

If you're getting a little tired of *Amélie* but still need your foreign language film fix, here's a few suggestions to fill the gap:

El Laberinto Del Fauno (Guillermo del Toro)

I could not fault this creepy and dramatic film set during the Spanish civil war. We follow Ofelia, a young girl who uses magical escapism to interpret the horrors of the changing world around her. Watching is like stepping back through time into a childhood where there are fairies at the bottom of the garden, and monsters under the bed.

Cléo de 5 à 7 (Agnes Varda)

Varda is probably the most underrated director of the French New Wave. In *Cléo from 5 to 7*, we watch in real time as Parisian songstress Cléo struggles to come to terms with her cancer diagnosis, and begins to reject the closeted and constructed nature of her existence. Corinne Marchand is beautiful to watch as she navigates Varda's photographically constructed Paris. (If you enjoy this, give *Sans toit ni loi* a watch too!)

Habla Con Ella (Pedro Almodóvar)

This is the perfect film to see Almodóvar do what only he can. Combining humour and heart, we track the lives of two men as they visit their comatose loved ones. In a series of flashbacks we see Benigno and Marco's stories unfold and intertwine, the bold direction pays homage to a range of cinematic styles, including the bygone era of silent cinema, and we are left with a wonderfully fateful ending. Benigno is one of Almodóvar's most interesting male characters, being a perfect cocktail of sweetness and psychopathy.

M (Fritz Lang)

Do not watch this film alone. Peter Lorre plays the terrifying, bug-eyed antagonist: a child murderer on the run. The audience can only watch with mounting horror as he commits his crimes and is slowly hunted down by the townspeople. The almost silent tracking shots of potential victims are haunting, as is the murderer's telltale whistle...

Jeux d'enfants (Yann Samuël)

Enter the surreal world of Sophie and Julien, who meet as children and embark on a game of truth or dare that gets wilder and darker as the years go by. Whimsical and undeniably French, with characters floating through cut-out clouds and luridly bright colours reminiscent of *Amélie*, the film's dual ending is poignant yet endlessly frustrating.

Jessica Barnfield

BOOKS TO READ IN 2015

By Lily Hollins

The Offering – Grace McCleen – Sceptre Books
– 22nd January – £13.99

This novel follows the story of a young girl called Madeleine who suffers a trauma on her fourteenth birthday, a trauma so distressing that she is put into a mental hospital and years later is left unable to recall what happened. She begins working with a psychiatrist to unlock the memories of what happened that day, but delving into her past proves to be a dangerous path. This book is beautifully written, managing to evoke the consequences of Madeleine's misplaced youthful innocence within a depiction of the natural world that surrounds her.



Deliciously Ella – Ella Woodward – Yellow Kite
– 22nd January – £13.60

There are loads of healthy eating books on the shelves these days, but *Deliciously Ella* promises to be a healthy cookbook with a bit of a twist. Ella Woodward has become a famous blogger since discovering the power of food in helping to alleviate the symptoms of Postural Tachycardia Syndrome, which she was diagnosed with in 2011. Her recipes focus on the ways food can strengthen and energise your body, as opposed to the traditional dieting mantra of starvation and deprivation. If you're looking to make healthy eating your New Year's resolution, the recipes in this book are a far more positive way to embrace both a healthy body and mind.

The Chimes – Anna Smaill – Sceptre Books
– February 2015 – £14.99

If you're looking for a book with a bit of a difference, then pick up a copy of *The Chimes* when it comes out early next year. The novel is set in a world in which music constantly accompanies the lives of the citizens, removing their ability to form new memories.

Written words are forbidden, so the past remains a mystery. A young boy named Simon is on a journey to the capital to find out the truth, hoping he can reveal what led to this state of being. This is Anna Smaill's debut novel and it weaves an enchanting and mesmerising tale.

Before I Go – Colleen Oakley – Gallery Books
– 6th January – £13.83

This heart-wrenching novel tells the story of a twenty-seven-year-old woman who, having been cleared of breast cancer once before, has to cope with the devastating news that it has returned and is terminal.

Given only a few months to live, Daisy Richmond makes it her priority to find a new wife for her husband. She can't cope with the thought of leaving him alone but, as the story progresses, the idea of him being with someone else becomes equally hard to bear. Fans of *P.S. – I Love You* will enjoy this thought-provoking, sad and bittersweet novel.

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Why the NFL should come to London

American football is more than 'rugby for fat guys'

Zack Case

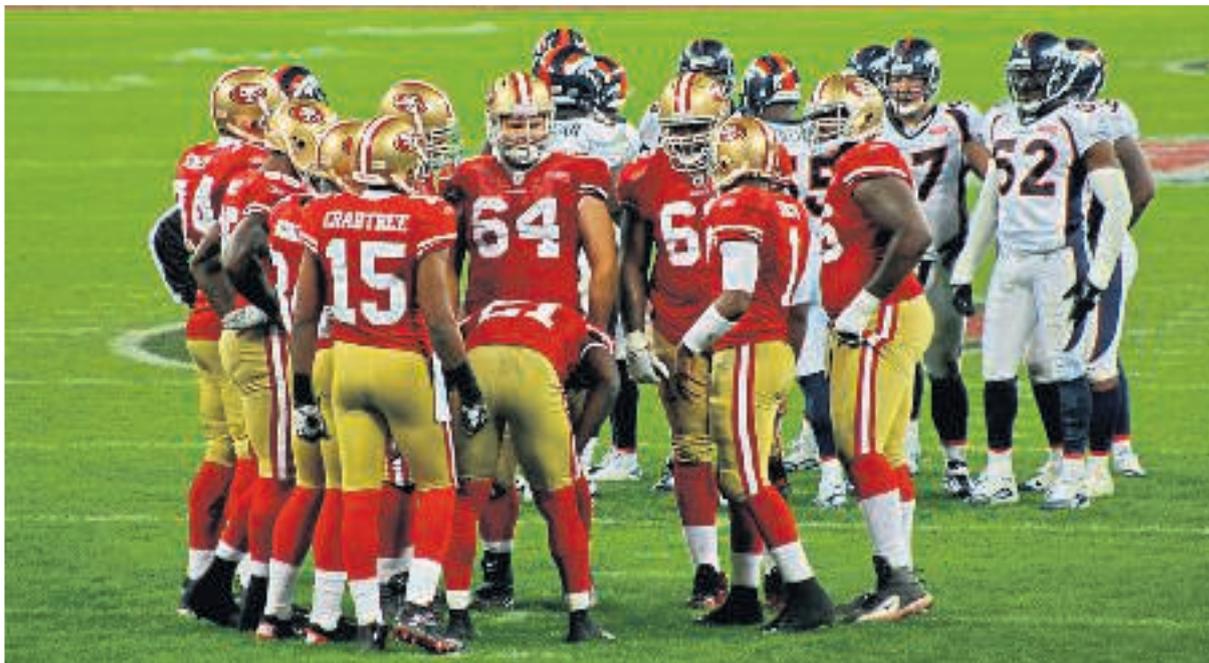
Sport Correspondent

I know that they call it 'football' even though the game involves very little kicking. I know that two men thumping each other in full padding and helmets seems soft compared to rugby. I know that I could watch two English football matches in the time taken to watch one American game, even though it is only composed of 15 minute quarters. Yet the prospect of an NFL team coming to London on a permanent basis still excites me.

The NFL has it all: hard hits and nifty technique, collective teamwork and individual brilliance, acute strategy and unpredictable action. One friend described the game as being "like chess with really athletic, really big guys." It may not seem immediately obvious, but it's hard to argue that any sport is more tactical than (American) football. And what other sport can boast its final to be 'The Greatest Show on Earth'?

There are also a few myths that should be dispelled. Football is not just a bunch of fat guys doggy-piling on each other. The truth is that these 'fat guys' are in fact supreme athletic specimens.

Let's take our own Lawrence Okoye, a former British Olympic discus



These guys are definitely stronger than you

thrower, who now plays for the San Francisco 49ers (he's actually only on their practice squad, which demonstrates how supremely talented the other 'fat guys' are). While he's an absolute monster at 6ft 5in and 304lb, he can cover 40 metres in 4.78 seconds and jump 36 inches high in the vertical jump. And he doesn't even make the squad.

The second myth stems from a comparison to rugby: that having only one role in a team (for example the kicker exclusively kicks, or the players on offence don't play defence and

vice versa) means that players are less talented overall. Wrong. Such specialisation means that the players in those positions are better at what they do. As Plato says, experts are better than non-experts. In football, therefore, the quality of each aspect of the game is higher; a kicker may not know how to tackle, but he sure can kick!

It is not simply out of a romantic love for the game (and my own desire for season tickets) that I believe in having a permanent franchise in London. The sporting culture of this country would be enriched for having our own NFL

team. It's not as if rugby 'competes' with soccer (I use this Americanism purely to avoid confusion, forgive me) for fans. Rugby fans are rugby fans, and the same goes for soccer. The same can be said about an NFL team coming to London – it wouldn't steal fans away from other sports, nor indeed other NFL teams in America. As Alistair Gempf of the Cambridge University Pythons says: "Whenever a franchise has relocated in the US, the place they've moved to will have fans of another team there and that's not been a problem." I myself am a die-hard

Arsenal supporter as well as a passionate New York Giants fan. There is not a finite amount of sporting enthusiasm in this world.

And those who say there is no 'room' for another sport only have to look at the attendance figures for the International Series at Wembley from 2007. One game out of ten has not sold out, with an average attendance easily above 80,000. This year they added two more games in London than they had when the International Series started. The popularity of the sport is rising in the UK and a permanent franchise would stimulate the rest of the sporting world. Added onto the fact that, according to a recent study by Deloitte, a London NFL franchise could be worth £100 million a year to the UK economy. Who can say no to that?

If anything, it makes sense for certain NFL teams to move out. As a sports fan, there is nothing worse than seeing empty seats. So for a team like the Jacksonville Jaguars or St Louis Rams, which frankly never fill to anywhere near capacity, a move to London makes sense. There is already a European Football League, but the best players only want the NFL. Nobody cares about the London Olympians. The NFL is like Real Madrid and the EFL is like... maybe Cambridge United – and that's being generous. The London Rams on the other hand: now that has a ring to it.

The logistics of bringing NFL to London may be complicated, but in principal it is undoubtedly a good idea. The time has come for 'America's Game' to let some British in.

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Sport



NFL in London

Zack Case argues in favour



Blues runners prepare for their upcoming Varsity cross-country

Cross-Country Varsity

Analysing our chances of beating Oxford this year

Su-Min Lee

Sports Correspondent

In light of the upcoming men's and women's Varsity Blues' cross-country match, here is a look into Light Blue line-up:

Women's Blues Team (racing at 2pm, winning team is the side with the lower cumulative positions of their first five finishers – five to score)

Alison Greggor (King's): A former Varsity champion (2012) and racing in the Blues' match for the third time, Greggor ran an impressive 2:52 marathon in early November while a third place finish at the cross-country match against the RAF and Eastern counties shows she'll be looking to place highly.

Katy Hedgethorpe (Murray Edwards): Women's captain Hedgethorpe is in the midst of an incredible positive streak. In the run up to her first Blues' match she's placed third at Cuppers and eighth at the Met League, arguably the most competitive cross-country league in England.

Sarah Lovewell (Trinity): Another Blues' match debutante, last season Lovell earned a half-blue for her performances in the Blues' 1500m race at Varsity Track and Field. Despite placing 11th in the Met League, it is clear that the endurance training will put her in good stead for an often unpredictably paced Varsity match.

Elizabeth Mooney (Newnham): One of only two in this year's squad to have previously raced in a Varsity match, Mooney will be looking to improve on last year's sixth place finish. Having finished third at the Met League, won Cuppers and placed second at the RAF match, Mooney is in the form of her life.

Tas Pope (Trinity Hall): Fresher

Pope has certainly made an impact on the Cambridge cross-country scene, finishing 58th at the Inter Counties' Championships last season. This season's highlights include fifth at Cuppers, 13th at the Met League and sixth in the RAF match – her consistency making her one to watch at Varsity.

Emily Shearer (Gonville and Caius): Another fresher, Shearer arrived at Cambridge from Cornell with an impressive track history including a 4:23 1500m and a 9:11 3000m. Despite an injury hampering her initial preparations for Varsity, her fourth place at Cuppers ensured no question marks about her form.

Katherine Turner (Magdalene): After a season that included a tenth place finish at the junior women's race at the English National Championships, a fifth place finish at BUCS track and field over 1500m, and a 4:24 1500m season's best, Turner will be hoping to add a cross-country Blue to her track and field Blues. Despite not racing this term, her previous successes show that she can take on anyone over the mud.

Men's Blues Team (racing at 2:45pm – six to score)

Josh Carr (Sidney Sussex): Having raced in the second's team for his first two years, this is Carr's first Varsity cross-country Blues. Carr's season took him to a 3:51 1500m, which earned him his track and field Blue, while his fourth place finish at Cuppers secured his selection in this year's race.

Philip Crout (St Catharine's): Second year Blues' cross-country debutante, Crout was one place in front of Carr at Cuppers and his finish at 23rd at the Met League demonstrated his conversion of track speed (8:22 for 3000m) to the cross-country. In addition, Crout was part of a bronze medal winning team at the English National cross-country relay championships.

Kelvin Gomez (Homerton): Gomez's cross-country career has taken him to the World Cross Country Champion-

ships and this year he featured in the European Athletics Championships on the track in the 1500m; the Loughborough graduate has brought his form with him with a 19th place finish at the Met League.

Lewis Lloyd (Pembroke): Captain Lloyd, the defending Varsity Champion, will be racing in Varsity for the third time. Like Gomez, Lloyd has been to the World Cross Country Championships and has a good track record of racing well in the big races. Having eased his way round to a sixth place finish at Cuppers, Lloyd is very much on an upwards trajectory.

Alex Milne (Homerton): An Imperial graduate, Milne has added to a class squad with quality of his own. Winning Cuppers and a 15th place finish at the Met League illustrated good form that justified the excitement preceding his arrival at Cambridge – a 30:57 10000m and a 2:25 marathon only tell part of the story of a year Milne will hope to cap off with a good Varsity run.

Richard Ollington (Pembroke): Having raced in the fourths' match last year, Ollington's improvement over the past few months has shown that he is capable of anything. His Varsity history displays his versatility, having run against Oxford in the 3000m steeplechase and the 110m hurdles. A unique athlete, Ollington finished seventh at Cuppers to seal his Blues' selection.

Patrick Roddy (Robinson): One of three former Blues' Varsity runners, and one of two to have raced last year, a fifth place finish at Cuppers brings Roddy to his second Blues' match. Last year he beat four Oxford runners to secure his Blue – could he make it even more?

Alex Short (Robinson): Missing last year's Blues' Varsity match due to the predicament of racing at the European Cross Country Championships, Short will definitely have a significant impact on this year's race. A tenth place finish at the Met League suggests he could better his fifth place finish in 2012.

Time for ACN

Looking forward to the African Cup of Nations

Shreyas Gopal

Sport Correspondent

As a dour Yorkshireman, while most of you are quite rightly and understandably getting excited for Christmas and the festive period, I am already looking past the holiday season and into the new year – specifically to 'blue Monday', the third Monday of January.

According to research, this is supposed to be the single most depressing day of the year "due to a combination of post-Christmas blues, cold dark nights and the arrival of unpaid credit card bills."

But never fear, you *can* conquer blue Monday, for the greatest show on Earth will have started by the time 19th January rolls around. And no, I'm not talking about Wrestlemania. I'm talking about the football tournament that is the African Cup of Nations – or Coupe d'Afrique des Nations (CAN) for all you savvy MML students. This year it commences in sport renowned Equatorial Guinea.

We'll get into the almighty farce surrounding the host country shortly, but on another quick Equatorial Guinea-related sidenote, for those among you claiming to be sports fans who aren't aware of Eric 'the eel' Moussambani, take five minutes out of your day to search for him on Youtube, and enjoy true Olympic spirit/hilarity.

The next edition of CAN was scheduled to take place in Morocco, but when they were unable to confirm their ability to host it due to the dreadful ongoing Ebola virus epidemic, the Moroccan team were promptly expelled from the tournament, as their right as host to automatically participate in the tournament had gone.

Fair enough, you might say, although the Moroccan team may understandably feel aggrieved, as their record of having qualified for nine out of the previous 10 tournaments would suggest their team, including the likes of the skilful Taarabt, Belhanda and Boussoufa, would have comfortably qualified anyway.

But here's my gripe – the new hosts, Equatorial Guinea, are now able to

play in the tournament, despite having themselves been expelled during the qualification phase for fielding an ineligible player.

Surely the creation of some sort of play-off match between Morocco and the new hosts, (perhaps with Eric Moussambani as special guest referee, perhaps not) would have been a fairer decision.

Now, we all know some of the actions of football's governing bodies are often a bit puzzling and more than often downright suspicious. FIFA recently investigated FIFA and came to the surprising conclusion that FIFA were in fact not corrupt – good job lads.

However, we can often forgive these actions due to the superb tournaments these governing bodies have a part in organising; and CAN (or should it be La CAN...) is no different, in its own unique way.

The unpredictability is on a par with the aforementioned Wrestlemania, with none other than the defending champions Nigeria failing to qualify for the upcoming tournament.

And the last winner before Nigeria? Zambia. Yes, Zambia. A team whose most recognisable player can't break into the (admittedly excellent) Southampton team. Emmanuel Mayuka beat the formidable Ivory Coast team, containing premier league superstars Yaya Touré and Didier Drogba, in a dramatic penalty shoot-out, and poignantly dedicated their win to the members of the national team who died in 1993.

Whether it's the Togo team bus being attacked, Marc Vivien-Foé's tragic death playing for Cameroon, or fatal riots at Egyptian league games, African football unfortunately never seems to be too far away from tragedy.

But at a time when Band Aid 30 is coming under criticism for neglecting all that is positive about the African continent, let's celebrate the African Cup of Nations for what it is: a full stuffing of passionate, skilful and athletic football, undoubtedly with a generous side portion of hilarious tackles, dives and goalkeeper howlers to put a smile on anyone's face, regardless of any kind of post-Christmas blues.

Happy Christmas and a Merry New Year.

Ski race guide

How to get involved in the Varsity Ski race

Louis Williams

Sport Editor

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas on the slopes of Tignes this year, as the delicate snow drifts down onto the wide expanses in the Espace Killy.

Many of you will eagerly have booked onto the infamous Varsity ski trip and are looking forward to not just the Skiing, but to the inevitably heavy nights out on cheap French booze as well.

Those of you who've never been before will have heard of the tales of drunken revelry and stupidity from previous years, yet many of you will not be as aware of the big Varsity match on the slopes this week, overshadowed by the match at Twickenham a week on Thursday.

The Cambridge University Ski & Snowsports Club takes on the devilish racers from the 'other place' on the Tuesday. The teams will be selected by time trials on the Monday morning and are open to anyone. They consist of two timed runs through the same slalom course. Everyone is encouraged to get involved.