

VARSITY

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Only half back reading week

- » 47 per cent of students either 'undecided', 'don't know' or oppose a reading week
- » Majority unsure whether CDE's overall impact in Cambridge positive or negative



Eleanor Deeley
Senior News Editor

Only half of Cambridge students are in favour of nine-week terms, with a reading week in week five, according to a Varsity survey.

35 per cent of students were against the measure, while a further 12 per cent indicated that they did not know or were undecided.

53 per cent of students voted in support of a change in term length, and 59 per cent "broadly agree" with Cambridge Defend Education's (CDE) #endweek5blues campaign, started at the beginning of this term. The campaign to introduce a reading week has also been backed by a vote in CUSU Council. Speaking at the first Council meeting of Lent term, CUSU President

Helen Hoogewerf McComb argued that a reading week would increase the quality of work submitted and would halt the University from "rewarding the ability to work without sleep".

She told Varsity: "It seems that a majority of students do support the idea of a reading week and that many more might be in favour of the change, should key concerns be addressed. CUSU will be consulting with students to identify these concerns and develop a plan for the introduction of reading weeks, which would address as many of them as possible."

"Expect to hear a lot more from us on this issue over the coming terms."

In response to this move by the representatives of the student body, 54 per cent of those polled agreed with CUSU's decision to back #endweek5blues.

Some, however, have another concern. Second year James Sutton told

53%

Students in favour of introducing a reading week

Varsity: "I find it indicative of the general problem that it is CDE, and not CUSU, who are spearheading the campaign."

#endweek5blues has cited mental health and general student wellbeing as driving factors behind the burgeoning movement. Outgoing Trinity JCR President Thomas Hughes-McClure told Varsity: "A reading week would meaningfully reduce stress without diluting the Cambridge degree. It seems

to me that there are few alternatives which would have a genuine impact in the same way that a proposed reading week would." Trinity College Student Union has officially given its support to the campaign, with many other JCRs and MCRs in the progress of discussing official affiliation.

Despite the weak level of overall support revealed in the survey, planning is underway to develop the movement.

CDE are preparing to launch a petition outlining their proposals to the university, with an accompanying FAQ for all potential signatories. CUSU have agreed to help design and promote the petition. CDE intend to hand it to an official university representative during a rally planned for the end of week 5 this term.

At CDE's open meeting on Monday 26th January, members expressed

concern about the impact of the additional costs for students that proposed changes to term length could entail.

CDE are seeking to ensure that a nine-week term would not result in financial hardship for students through consultation with individual colleges and the university-wide bursary scheme. However, the 281 participants in Varsity's survey revealed a widespread ambivalence over CDE's overall impact; 53 per cent said they were either undecided or didn't know as to whether CDE's impact has been largely positive or negative, and a further 14 per cent thought CDE's impact had been negative.

Only 33 per cent voted positively. This has been reflected in the mixed attitudes regarding proposed protest action.

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A campaign too many?

Whose University? The question has been at the forefront of student debate recently. A Varsity survey, however, reveals a surprising indifference to the issue. Only 53 per cent of students are in favour of a reading week, a campaign launched by CDE, backed by CUSU and with which WU? has expressed solidarity – too many acronyms yet?

The #endweek5blues Facebook page exclaims: “Enough is enough. We’re demanding a reading week.” But with 12 per cent of students undecided or not knowing whether they support the measure, and a further 35 per cent opposing, this ‘demand’ is less overwhelming than such a call to arms implies.

And yet Varsity must come down with the 53 per cent. A reading week is the most logical way to organise academic learning; Manchester, Bristol, UCL and many other top universities use them, in addition to much longer terms – this is not revolutionary.

Why, then, do only a narrow majority of Cambridge students support it?

The rise of organisations like Whose University? seeking to reclaim Cambridge as a space for students and compile student testimonies is not only a reaction to a university that won’t listen: it is a reaction to a student voice that isn’t being articulated. The issues WU? and CDE draw attention to – feeling safe in college spaces, putting student welfare at the forefront of university planning, a reading week – fall exactly within the remit of what a student union should be doing: representing student interests on a university-wide scale.

Instead, the student voice is blurred: #endweek5blues, CDE, CUSU, WU?, TCS. 53 per cent of those surveyed were unsure whether CDE’s impact was positive or negative. In this complicated patchwork of organisations, it’s no wonder that half of students felt they couldn’t rally behind the campaign – who do they rally behind?

As a collegiate university, a Cambridge-wide student union will always have to do more to engage its students. However, this does not mean we should give up. We need a more integrated central union, that works with JCRs (including those that are disaffiliated) and advocates on students’ behalves, something other campaigns are taking on in its absence. What we have instead is a body with both little relevance to students on a collegiate level and that doesn’t represent our collective interests to the university. A body which hasn’t even put the minutes for its reading week open meeting online as this editorial goes to press, despite it being three weeks into term.

A reading week is an important measure, and the work of student campaigns like WU? and CDE is also important. It is unfortunate, however, that these campaigns would be much more likely to gain support and ultimately succeed if they were being led by an engaging, convincing student union. Whose University? It’s certainly not CUSU’s.

EDITORIAL

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Inside CUCA

Sarah Sheards asks whether this age-old breeding ground for modern conservatism has lost its fangs (*page 4*)



INTERVIEW

Norman Finklestein

Dr Finklestein questions whether anti-semitism still exists in Europe, in conversation with Joe Robinson (*page 12*)



COMMENT

On election fever

Millie Brierley scientifically proves that Nick Clegg will spontaneously combust in just 97 days (*page 15*)



CULTURE

The Oscars & diversity

Naomi Eva Obeng questions representation, the Academy and what we can do about it (*page 19*)



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It’s a basic struggle

Lucy Roxburgh says goodbye to M&S and hello to the Sainsbury’s Basics Range, for a whole week (*page 23*)



THEATRE

Show must come out

Richard Skipper explores LGBT+ issues in the Cambridge theatre scene (*page 26*)



Varsity Writers' Meeting

Come along on Monday 2nd February at 6.30pm to the Varsity offices if you're interested in writing for us

Contact editor@varsity.co.uk for more information

CAMFM

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Sunday 6pm

Will Heilpern and Alex Rice on this week's Varsity and more

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Continued from page 1

CDE did not respond to Varsity's requests for comment.

The original motion notes that "the 'End Week Five Blues' initiative seeks to draw attention to the unnecessary pressure [on] Cambridge students by encouraging students to refuse to hand in work during Week 5 Lent term".

McComb told Varsity that "While CUSU is not advocating that students take part in the boycott, we are working to make sure that any student who does take part does not experience undue repercussions as a result of engaging in this peaceful form of protest."

"CUSU will be briefing Senior Tutors on the initiative this week and asking them to communicate with DoSs and supervisors about the likelihood of students not handing in work."

However Sophie Buck, the Female Welfare Officer for Emmanuel College, claimed: "Firstly, this sort of resistance – not handing work in – won't happen," and went on to disparage the very idea: "People need help managing their work, not avoiding it."

This is only one of many scheduled projects to raise awareness of the issue and campaign: banner drops, wearing a blue felt square in order to show solidarity and fly posting have all been suggested.

Increased understanding of the specific methods CDE intends to implement appears crucial if the campaign is to sway the student population further in favour of a reading week.

Second year Amy Leach told Varsity that she had "no idea what CDE really even is", let alone that the #endweek-5blues campaign was started by the group.

CDE, although claiming at the open meeting last Monday that "we are the impact", have not confirmed how they

intend to effect this change.

The campaign has also received significant support from Whose University?.

They told Varsity: "It is indicative of the widespread nature of the problem that a majority have said they are in favour of a reading week."

"When dealing with statistics like this people also need to be aware that the voices of those students who are saying explicitly that they are facing problems need to carry significant weight as the needs of the most vulnerable students should be taken as a priority."

Writing for Varsity, Amy Clark and Martha Perotto-Wills attacked the current high-pressure environment of the eight-week term as a process that "undermines people being able to enjoy education as a stand-alone process".

This is in line with the view of CDE member Joscha that education is in need of "more time for intellectual development and real learning".

Another aspect to the campaign, although targeted primarily at disabled students and those with mental health issues, is the desire to increase student satisfaction of work submitted in supervisions.

It is proposed that a reading week will reduce the infamous 'week five blues', named as such because of the feeling of exhaustion that is said to hit during the middle of term.

Buck summarised the experience of many students during term-time:

"I feel as though term, for me, is like a hurdle race with eight hurdles, and once I've tripped over one (like, if I had a particularly busy week), getting to the finish line really is a struggle as there is no time to catch up."

A University representative did not respond to our requests for comment.

READING WEEK

WHAT DOES CAMBRIDGE THINK?

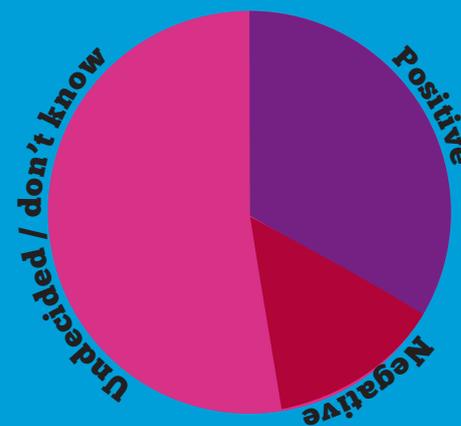
Are you in favour of a reading week?



Should CUSU support the #endweek5blues campaign?



Has CDE's impact been positive or negative?



This data was collected through a Varsity survey with a controlled sample of 281 respondents.



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Has CUCA lost its fangs?

Supposedly the birth place of the modern Conservative party in 1921, Sarah Sheard explores whether CUCA has lost its political gravitas, unlike its polar opposite; the Marxist Discussion Group
With additional reporting by Daniel Hepworth



When the possibility of examining CUCA came up at our start of term meeting, I turned immediately to Facebook – there had been a social advertised for that following weekend. I couldn't remember the exact details, but it definitely had either 'champagne' or 'cava' in the title.

In stereotypical Conservative style, I pencilled the event entitled 'Cava and Cake' into my diary, and a few days later walked, Iron Lady style, into a room full of CUCA members and the aforementioned sparkling wine.

CUCA, otherwise known as the Cambridge University Conservative Association, has enjoyed a long, intriguing and controversial history in Cambridge since 1921.

Its website boasts that it has "nurtured the talents of a great many men and women who have gone on to become leading figures in Conservative politics"; sure enough, CUCA proudly lists 22 former chairmen who were elected to Parliament since 1950, and since the 1970s four have gone on to become MPs.

Alumni like Kenneth Clarke (former Home Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice) and

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Former CUCA Chairmen elected to Parliament since 1950

Andrew Mitchell (star of the 2012 'Plebgate' scandal) help establish CUCA as the birthplace of the modern Conservative party.

In 1992 The Economist famously quipped that "competition to rise to the top of CUCA is good preparation for a political career in the Conservative Party... Ideology counts for nothing. What matters is knowing how to make friends and when to stab them in the back. If you cut your political teeth at CUCA, you are liable to end up sporting a sharp set of fangs."

Yet how far is CUCA still the definitive finishing school for those who are 'young, bright and on the right'? Does CUCA still have its fangs? In an attempt to find out (and risk seriously being barred from returning to my home town of Liverpool), I went along

to their first social.

Within the first ten minutes I had been greeted by the sight of over 20 bottles of vintage cava, heard the phrase "champagne for all", and been invited for a "strawberries and champagne night-time punting party". The 2009 controversy, in which CUCA printed a freshers' guide with the headline "Save Water: Drink Champagne", suddenly sprung to mind.

Cava in hand, I approached a group of chatting friends who turned out to be graduates, now City boys, who had popped back for the event. To them, CUCA was a social opportunity more than anything else.

One of the City boys, dressed down in a t-shirt and jeans, even observed that CUCA could be a "hindrance" to any budding young politicians because of how the media could "dredge up" unsavoury quotes and facts about a former chairman's university life. Perhaps he was thinking of the 2011 controversy, in which outgoing chairman Callum Wood was accused of making homophobic comments after claiming that "those with homosexual tendencies have a very burdensome cross to bear" and describing gay sex as "lustful and unchaste sexual behaviour... without moral justification".

Whilst Callum Wood is far too recent a graduate to fully ascertain his parliamentary potential, it's difficult to see him going far without this particular shadow of his CUCA days hanging over him.

CUCA's position as a social, rather than political, space seemed confirmed by the lack of much else to do. When asked about current campaigns, even the chairman of CUCA, Callum Campbell, admitted that there was some general election campaigning in the works, but that it was at a minimum compared to other societies such as the Cambridge University Labour Club. The reason for this seemed to be a desire to keep CUCA as 'something for everyone', rather than a society active enough to polarise members; instead, CUCA's calendar seems to comprise a schedule of talks by Conservative politicians, the odd trip down to Parliament and social events.

Other people also seemed to be moving in to take full advantage of these social occasions – an economist from the Adam Smith Institute was

hovering around, making polite small talk and fetching drinks for people. One member conceded to me that he thought more than a little recruiting was going on, and the economist certainly seemed to lose interest when he found out I was a Classicist with absolutely no grasp of maths.

Undaunted, I felt some context was needed as to what a political society in Cambridge actually is – or should be – these days, so I sent intrepid reporter Daniel Hepworth off to the Cambridge Marxist Discussion Group,

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"IF YOU CUT YOUR POLITICAL TEETH AT CUCA, YOU ARE LIABLE TO END UP SPORTING A SHARP SET OF FANGS"

whilst I attended CUCA's 'Port and Policy' evening (an apt counter point to CULC's 'pint and policy' nights). This event, I was assured at the social, was definitely more politically-minded – for the serious student Conservative. After all, now only half the title was dedicated to light refreshment.

'Port and Policy' was an uncomfortable affair for three reasons. The first was that I was the only woman in attendance, except for CUCA's loyal events manager Victoria Brown, creating the impression that I had slipped in somewhere that, as a woman, I shouldn't.

Secondly, it was a Saturday and I was wearing jeans, a hoodie and a Sherlock t-shirt; but upon stepping into the Green Room at Caius, I entered a sea of plaid, collared shirts and tweed jackets. Despite the fact that the chairman, Callum Campbell, was also wearing a hoodie, I couldn't help but wonder if this was a self-conscious choice of wardrobe to emulate the Boden-clad Conservative cabinet. More generally, however, I was struck by how sparse numbers were in comparison to the social; just 18 (including myself and a sympathetic socialist, who came along for moral support), as opposed to over 70 for the latter.

The third reason for my discomfort was that the discussion was centred on

reforming the NHS. At this point I will happily pin my liberal colours to the wall and say that, with an NHS pathologist for a father and a medical historian for a mother, the NHS is a sensitive topic for me. To CUCA's credit, it was a lively and active debate, but I couldn't understand the random pulling-of-numbers from the air (apparently 90 per cent of prescriptions are given out for free – despite the official stats on this being 60 per cent), and the constant comparisons to more privatised healthcare in France and Germany. The population's general affection for the NHS as a national institution was something incomprehensible to CUCA, whose inability to understand the majority of the population was, in turn, incomprehensible to me. Phrases like "we'd never pass any of these reforms publicly..." and much swilling of ruby port in accompaniment did not help dispel this out-of-touch image.

In terms of running a political discussion group, however, CUCA has something in common with the Marxists; as Daniel reported, their term card features the quote from Lenin that "without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement". This seemed to sum up the society quite nicely. Their meetings, held at Kings College, consist of an hour dedicated to the speaker on a chosen topic – last week, Marxist economics.

After the main speech, discussion was opened to the floor. Debate was fixed between obvious Marxist supporters and a seemingly lone historian whose interest was purely academic. It was obvious that most in the room were regular attendees and contributors to the meetings, and two of them ended the evening by selling copies of socialist newspapers.

So far, so similar; both CUCA and the Marxists feature discussion-based events, as would probably be expected of a university political society. But the crucial difference is that the Marxists, despite officially acting only as a 'discussion group', seem much more active than CUCA. They have often taken motions forward to CUSU and ran students for CUSU positions – most notably 'Marxist Mo' Paechter who ran for CUSU's NUS delegate last year, proposing free accommodation and scrapping tuition fees for all.

The Marxists are also quick to point

out that they campaigned alongside Cambridge Mexico Solidarity for the release of 43 students and will shortly elect delegates to attend the Marxist Student Federation conference to represent Cambridge. The group is not a unique, single entity, but part of a nationwide group of student Marxists.

Whilst CUCA vainly court new recruits with glitzy drinks events, whose attendance never quite translates into membership, the Marxists are far from a closed group, actively recruiting with success, if their weekly discussions of Marxist literature are any indication.

On the other hand, when I asked when 'Port and Policy' would next be running, I was told possibly next month – if, and only if, there was enough interest.

It would seem that CUCA *has* perhaps lost its political fangs, orientating itself more around a social sphere anchored by expensive drinks events than a significant political goal.

And I don't think I'm alone in this impression; former Conservative MP and gay rights campaigner Matthew

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"A DREADFUL SHOWER, STRUTTING CAREERISTS OF DISTINCTLY MIXED CALIBRE, FOREVER INFIGHTING, NETWORKING AND ELBOWING"

Parris described CUCA in his 2002 autobiography as "a dreadful shower, strutting careerists of distinctly mixed calibre, forever infighting, networking and elbowing their way through a scene which appeared more social than political." Upon leaving their 'Cava and Cake' event, over a week ago now, Parris' quote rang in my ears.

I had enjoyed my first evening with CUCA more than I had ever intended – possibly because, if I hadn't known it to be a CUCA event, I would have considered it only a gathering of sparkling wine enthusiasts.

If they ever do decide to scrap 'Port and Policy', I might even end up a member.

Election Profile: Daniel Zeichner

Richard Nicholl
Deputy News Editor

It seemed the liberal stars had aligned: I met Daniel Zeichner, Labour's parliamentary candidate for Cambridge, on BBC Democracy Day in the Union bar ("The home of free speech", a blackboard reminds us, "since 1815").

Does fortune favour him? "I leave predictions to the pollsters," he says airily. He's a relaxed, softly-spoken man of 58, a King's alumnus and life-long Cambridge resident.

POLICY BOX

- ✓ Freeze energy bills until 2017
- ✓ Guarantee GP appointment within 48 hours
- ✓ Raise minimum wage to £8/hour
- ✓ Repeal the 'bedroom tax'
- ✓ Introduce a mansion tax

"There's a huge change that's gone on [since 2010]... If Labour doesn't win this seat, then it's actually unlikely that Labour can win the government."

He says that the feeling on the doorstep in 2010 was overwhelmingly "not Conservative", rather than expressing a preference between the other parties.

"Then what happens? They largely plump for the Liberal Democrats, who promptly do a U-turn and back the Conservatives... Under the current voting system, there's absolutely no alternative to voting Labour, because if you don't" —he pauses for dramatic effect—"who knows?"

The mention of the voting system is not an accident. I ask him about constitutional reform and he lights up.

"In the AV referendum, obviously, Cambridge was one of the half-dozen constituencies in the country that supported it... Personally, I've been very involved in House of Lords reform over many years." After much wrangling, "we are now pledged to a democratically elected Senate, as we call it."

It's not the sexiest political issue. "[W]hile I accept that it doesn't necessarily set people's hearts on fire on the doorstep, actually it's part of changing Britain, moving into a 21st-century democracy," he says.

So constitutional reform is what animates him? "No, that's what animates me today. What animates me is social justice; the constitutional change is a way to get to a more just society."

It's about leadership, Zeichner says, and he accuses Julian Huppert of failing to speak for Cambridge. "One of the things [I've done] in Cambridge is



to work far more collaboratively across party lines with [council] leaders in a way that I'm afraid the current incumbent hasn't."

"He basically just has squabbles with them," Zeichner adds, with a hint of contempt.

He accuses his rival of "cynicism" over tuition fees: Huppert voted against the fee increase in this Parliament and tabled an unsuccessful amendment to abolish them entirely.

This doesn't wash, says Zeichner. "It made no difference at all, because he was part of a party that was supporting the government. He knew perfectly well they had the majority and that gave him the free pass to defend it here. It's that kind of cynicism that... turns people off politics."

What's his position on this most emotive of issues?

"I'm not an abolitionist in the full

sense," he says. "In the period when I went to university... it was very unfair that working-class people were paying out their taxes for a small part of the population to get a very good education. I've actually long supported a graduate tax, as has Ed Miliband."

Labour's policy on this still has had no concrete announcement. "We're getting closer to an election now, and there's continuing debate within the front bench about exactly what the offer will be, but I'm very confident that it will be downwards."

Students are not an average electorate, and so I ask Zeichner about another big issue: drugs. "I inhaled, incidentally," he says casually, ignoring my double-take.

"I would just urge a little bit of caution. The drugs scene in a place like Cambridge is different from the drugs scene in some poorer communities.

"Labour has a responsibility not just to university cities, but to the poorer communities too. In those places we've got to be very careful about the message we're sending out."

In summary? "Be careful about the changes you make, because it can lead to unintended consequences."

When Labour were last in government, the Home Secretary Alan Johnson dismissed Professor David Nutt over drugs policy, drawing ire over its attitude to scientific evidence. Zeichner's take on this is subtle. "It's foolish not to look at the evidence, but politicians are elected to make judgments, too, and that's the point."

People are not always neatly rational, he says. "Dealing with people is endlessly fascinating, but you can't just reduce it down to 'evidence'. It's about empathy, it's about communication, it's about understanding."

This is why, he says, he is driven by social justice, as evidenced in his campaigns on the living wage. "Yes, there's evidence, and we use it, but I don't see why a rich university like Cambridge, which raised a billion pounds in a couple of collections, still has almost a thousand people earning below the living wage."

Zeichner is an intelligent man, with genuine interests in streamlining the constitution and in achieving what he views as social justice. However, he faces a formidable, highly visible incumbent in an election that is increasingly certain to come down to the wire. Much will be decided on the basis of Labour's manifesto when it is published — and Julian Huppert's record.



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Cambridge unites at Holocaust Memorial

The 15th annual memorial service chooses the theme 'Keeping the Memory Alive'

Gemma Maitland

News Correspondent

Tuesday 27th January 2015 marked the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Nazi concentration camp in which more than one million people were murdered between 1940 and 1945.

Cambridge's fifteenth Holocaust Memorial Day, held on 25th January at the Corn Exchange, adopted the theme 'Keep the Memory Alive', which Councillor Richard Johnson stated "could not be more important in this troubled world."

Featuring testimony from two genocide survivors, as well as contributions from community groups and students across Cambridge, the event explored the theme through performance theatre, music, song, survivor testimony and the lighting of 70 candles.

Following the recent shootings in France, the event was held under tight security, which included bag searches and a police presence outside the venue.

Lesley Ford, of Keystage Arts and Heritage, was the producer of the Holocaust Memorial Day programme for Cambridge City Council. Ford stressed there had been no direct threat to the event itself.

She confirmed that the precautions were "a response to recent events" globally. However, the main motivation



Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, Holocaust survivor, spoke at the event

was that "We thought a little extra security this year would be a good thing, to put people's minds at rest."

A University of Cambridge student, who asked to remain anonymous, said the widely reported rise in UK anti-Semitism – including the defacing of Holocaust Memorial Day posters in London – had made her "concerned to attend Jewish dinners on Shabbat" recently.

She also expressed that the increased security at the Corn Exchange during the memorial did make her "feel safer".

Opening the event, the Mayor of Cambridge, Councillor Gerri Bird, stressed the importance of recognising that several minority groups were persecuted during the Second World War, with the murder of disabled people holding particular poignancy for the Mayor, herself a person living with disability.

Attendee Bet Alexander, discussing the presence of school children at the event, said: "It is through education that children learn about these things, but they need to be able to relate to it too. A good teacher will help them find ways to do that, and do that they must."

Bird additionally emphasised that Sunday's event was intended to commemorate victims and survivors of all genocides, an aim realised in the testimony given by Kemal Pervanic, an internee of a Bosnian concentration camp in 1992.

Describing how former school friends and teachers became his guards and interrogators following his incarceration for the "crime" of being

a Muslim, Pervanic said he lived in a perpetual "state of terror."

He spoke of constant hunger and the removal of cell inmates for torture or execution.

Referring to the event's theme, Pervanic said, "no memory: no history. Without history we have nothing to learn from, and we need to learn from our past."

Testimony was also given by Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, who survived both Auschwitz-Birkenau and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps.

At Auschwitz, her ability to play the cello – which would later lead to her co-founding, and playing in, the English Chamber Orchestra – was essential to her survival.

As part of the women's camp orchestra, Lasker-Wallfisch escaped execution, but was forced to watch thousands enter the gas chambers.

As the Soviet Army approached, she was among those ordered to undertake a death march to Bergen-Belsen, where "there was no food at all. "People simply perished", she went on.

Lasker-Wallfisch estimates that she was a week away from death, given that "water had also become non-existent", when the British Army liberated the camp on 15th April 1945.

She ended with a plea to those generations that would succeed her own: "Try and rid yourself of prejudices when dealing with people who you think are different. Let us celebrate our differences."

After all, as a pupil from Arbury Primary School succinctly put it, "whatever our differences, we are all human beings."

Thousands of students unable to vote

Changes in the electoral registration system leave thousands without a vote

Bathsheba Wells-Dion

News Correspondent

Almost 2,000 people in Cambridge are no longer registered to vote, including many students.

Last year, voter registration in the UK switched to an individual-based system, where previously, the "head of the household" had registered voters. In Cambridge, this allowed colleges to register students collectively.

Although 87 per cent of voters were transferred to the new register using government records of their permanent address, many students living in rented accommodation or frequently moving residence are no longer on the list. The registration figure for

inhabitants of the student-dominated wards of Cambridge is only 70 per cent.

Chief executive of the City Council, Antoinette Jackson, assures voters that "we are doing a lot of work to register as many people as possible."

Some students have not experienced any problems with the system. Sophie Bell from Selwyn said: "My MP sends letters out to under-21s, there are normally Facebook and TV adverts with links to the website, which is pretty easy to use."

However, CUSU Co-ordinator Gemma Stewart says that more needs to be done, as many students are unaware of the change.

"They do not necessarily realise that they have to register, or if they are registered," she said.

The number of registered voters could make a crucial difference in the upcoming election, as current polling shows a close contest in Cambridge

According to a September Ashcroft poll in the city, Labour leads the Liberal Democrat incumbent, Julian Huppert, by one point.

Concerns have already been raised about the political disengagement of young people, and confusion regarding the registration process may exacerbate the problem.

“

THEY DO NOT NECESSARILY REALISE THAT THEY HAVE TO REGISTER, OR IF THEY ARE REGISTERED”

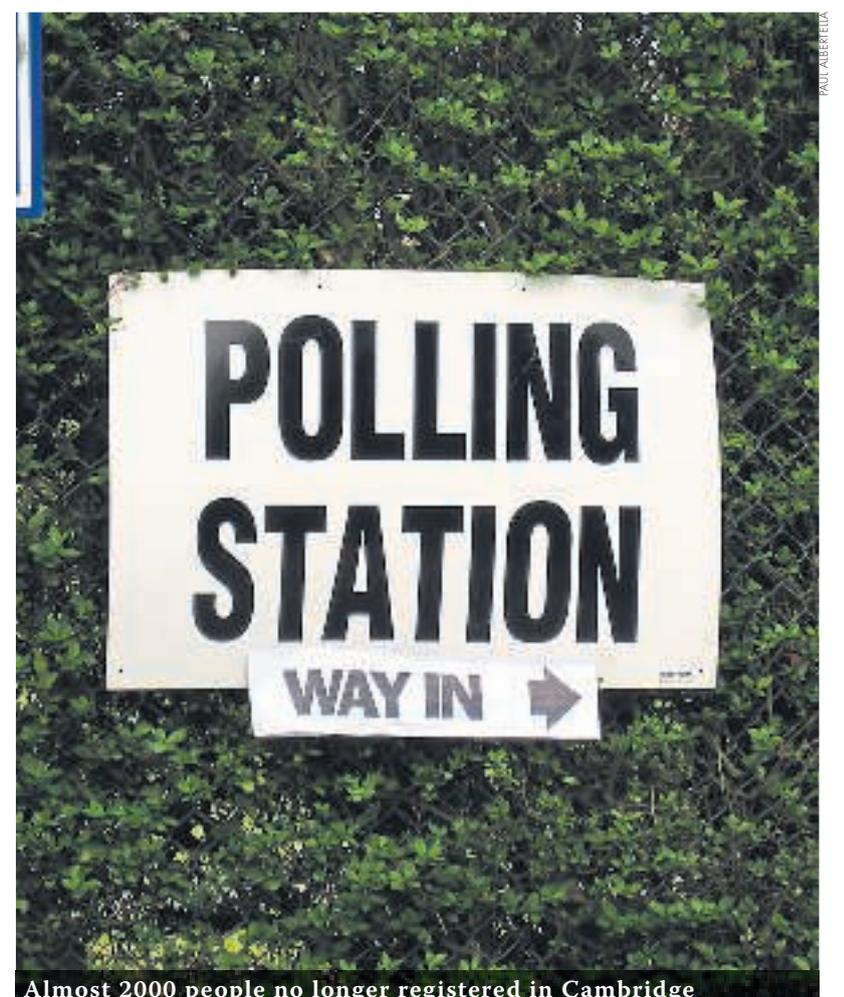
"If we want politics to be relevant to young people, politics has to adapt accordingly," said Roger Smith, Professor of Social Work at Durham University, in an interview at the Wilberforce Society's recent conference on The Lost Generation.

"Young people are communicating in new and different ways... there is a disconnect between conventional political structures."

Smith suggests that politicians need to better communicate with younger constituents in a more accessible language and medium.

Professor Jonathan Tonge of the University of Liverpool has put forward a number of measures that politicians could implement to engage young voters.

"They could have dedicated surgeries



Almost 2000 people no longer registered in Cambridge

for young people, so they could bring their particular problems. The parties themselves could do more to attract young people," he argues.

In order to vote in May 2015, register by 20th April. It can be done online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.

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NEWS IN

BRIEF



'Freezepeachcactus 4 union president'

A recent Facebook page states its plans to elect a "freezepeach cactus" as president of the Cambridge Union. The campaign seeks to satirise the debating society that offers "free speech" for "£110/year". Talking to Varsity, Freezepeach said: "I am the cactus for the job."



Cambridge lives the single life

Figures released by Match.com rank Cambridge and Huntingdon third in the country for the highest proportion of active singles. Speaking to Cambridge News, the Managing Director of match.com, said: "Although big cities have more singles in total... they are not as concentrated as in these smaller hotspots."

Oxford admits 'Cambridge is at least 20 years ahead'

The Economist rates Oxford business potential as decades behind

Federica Lombardi
News Correspondent

The leader of Oxford City Council has been forced to admit that "Cambridge is at least 20 years ahead of Oxford" in its business potential.

Bob Price was reacting to a report in The Economist that claimed Cambridge far outstrips its rival in creating well-paid and high-skilled jobs, stimulating the city's economy and encouraging local business.

The article suggests that, to a certain degree, Oxford's failures are an inevitable consequence of geographic and demographic circumstances. Unlike Cambridge, Oxford is surrounded by four different districts, each run by the Conservative Party, and each filled with what the article defines as "wealthy, powerful residents". This makes changing the status quo an arduous task. 32,000 new houses are planned for completion by 2031, but there has been seemingly unanimous resistance to such a project among wealthier residents. A drastic housing shortage has led to the average Oxford home in 2014 costing 11.3 times the average local earnings. Consequently,

46,000 people are forced to commute into the city.

In comparison, the report praised Cambridge's merits. Led by visionary academics, the university has been successful in combining local government, business and investors through effective mediation.

Decades ago, the university decided to combine its strengths in the sciences into wider regional prosperity, generating what the article calls a "whole ecosystem" of self-stimulating prosperity.

Trinity College, in the 1970s, opened the Cambridge Science Park, and the St John's Innovation Centre was finished in 1987.

As Professor Jeremy K. M. Sanders, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Institutional Affairs, stated, these projects "drive the flourishing local hi-tech economy".

"The University has had a prominent role in generating scientific enterprise in Cambridge and in civic life at least since the 1880s", Sanders continued, "when Horace Darwin (son of Charles) founded Cambridge Scientific Instruments, one of our earliest spin-out companies."

Today, Cambridge continues to follow this strategy. An ongoing project to channel Cambridge's remarkable talents towards local socially desirable projects is the Department of Architecture's installation at the Cambridge Junction, on display from



Trinity opened the Cambridge Science Park in 1970

the 29th January.

As defined by the architects themselves, the structure aims to "bring the community of Cambridge together through the senses of touch, sight and sound."

First year architecture student

Emily Wickham stressed the importance of such a project.

"I think it's fundamental for the University to invest in creative projects in areas of the city that would otherwise easily be neglected," she said.



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University to found primary school

New free school to focus on research, openness and inclusivity

Rose Washbourn
News Correspondent

The University of Cambridge is to open a primary school in September as part of the North West Cambridge Development project. Built on 150 hectares of farmland, it will be the site of 3000 new homes and 2000 postgraduate accommodation spaces. It is the university's largest ever single capital development project.

The University of Cambridge Primary School, a free school established under the Department for Education, is a crucial part of the investment. According to its website, it will not only serve to provide education to 630 children but will be the University Training School, closely linked to the university's Faculty of Education. It will become one of the 180 schools partnered with the faculty that provides a PGCE programme, currently graded 'outstanding' by Ofsted.

An on-site, purpose-built research faculty will explore student learning, teaching and the relationship between the two. A clinical professor will oversee half the research, but local families and other local schools will also play an active role in shaping the investigations.

The research focus of the new school has won praise from some quarters. Second-year Education student Kelly

Bowden of Gonville and Caius said: "Everyone thinks they know about best educational practice because they went to school, but there is so much real academic debate surrounding pedagogy." Despite this strong emphasis on research, the school's headteacher, James Biddulph, told The Guardian that he is confident that it will not become "a guinea pig school for new ideas".

For the past three years, Mr Biddulph has been the headteacher of a Hindu Free School run by the Avanti Schools Trust in Essex. Although the Cambridge school will have no specific religious character or faith ethos, Biddulph plans to apply some of the methods used at his previous school in this new role, including the concept of 'mindfulness'.

Designed by some of the architects

“

“LEARNING SHOULDN'T BE A COMPETITIVE SPORT THAT NOT EVERYONE CAN SUCCEED AT”

behind the London Eye, the building was conceived to embody an open ethos. Every classroom will have an outdoor learning space and there will be no doors, allowing everyone to see each other teaching and learning. The school will be co-educational and mixed ability, with the Admissions



The Faculty of Education is offering a PGCE in partnership with the new primary school

Policy focusing on inclusivity. Biddulph told The Guardian that he believed "learning shouldn't be a competitive sport that not everyone can succeed at".

Professor John Rallison, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education at the University of Cambridge and Chair of

the University of Cambridge Primary School Trust, claims on the school website that "[o]ur ambition over time is to create a school that will be a beacon of excellence having both national and international influence".

The school is due to open in September, after a consultation last

May found local support for it. The main area of contention was its being a free school, rather than a school managed by the local authority. The consultation, however, concludes that "The majority of feedback to the proposal to establish [the school] as a free school has been positive."

Results from 'Women in Work' survey

Murray Edwards releases findings about women in workplace

Sarah Baxter
News Correspondent

Dame Barbara Stocking, the President of Murray Edwards College, has published the findings of a study conducted by her college concerning the experience of women in the work-

place. The 'Women today, Women tomorrow' survey had almost 1000 respondents, aged between 20 and 70. Participants were asked about their changing priorities and the challenges that they had faced in the workplace.

The most common problem, as cited by 38 per cent of the women in this group, was difficulties faced in the workplace, with 22 per cent of women responding that their largest challenge was achieving balance between family and work. Speaking about the survey, Stocking said that it has

shown "how varied our women's lives are and how what they value most changes over time. Our respondents say that the most difficult challenge they have faced in their careers is the non-supportive culture of their workplace. Shockingly, this is just as true for women aged 20-29 as for our older aged group".

Of the women who cited an unsupportive workplace as their largest challenge, the reasons most mentioned for this included gender inequality, non-supportive colleagues, under-appreciated work, and the feeling of needing to over-perform because of their gender.

Indeed, their gender seems to be the source of the majority of problems experienced in the workplace and was mentioned by all ages, including 31 per cent of the 20-29 age group.

Yet Sarah Cooper-Lesad, a second year HSPS student, recognised that "legislation preventing gender discrimination is still relatively new, and so we shouldn't expect the culture of the workplace to change overnight, but for this to be a gradual change".

Stocking herself, writing in The Guardian last week, has said that the answer to this problem is a partnership between both men and women.

She writes that in her experience "there are a lot of men who are concerned about this situation too. They may have seen their partner or daughter treated unfairly. There are also many men who would prefer a different work environment, for example where there is more emphasis on collaboration instead of competition. We need these men on [our] side if we are to change cultures".

This echoes a movement in the

current wave of feminism that encourages the inclusivity of men in addressing gender equality. The HeforShe campaign began in September 2014, spearheaded by Emma Watson. In a speech addressing an audience of UN delegates, she extended a "formal invitation" to all men: "gender equality

is your issue too."

There is, however, room for optimism in the survey. 83 per cent of respondents said that they have achieved fulfilment in their career, whilst 89 per cent felt confident in the role they had played in their career and personal life.



Dame Barbara Stocking speaks on challenges faced by women

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Jesus installs female portraits

Three paintings of men replaced with women in dining hall

Till Schoefer

Deputy News Editor

The dining room of Jesus College has undergone major changes over the course of the last week, witnessing the replacement of three portraits of men with a new piece of art that depicts three women.

'You', the piece of art in question, is made up of three separate portraits, representing emotion, seductiveness and intellectualism. These three elements, according to the artist, Agnès Thurnauer, are the fundamental aspects comprising female identity.

The women pictured are from Manet's 'A Bar at the Folies-Bergère', 'The Railway' and the portrait of Victorine Louise Meurent, and will be displayed in the Jesus dining room for the next seven weeks.

The work of art is replacing the portraits of three male alumni of the College, including a 17th century Archbishop of Canterbury.

This installation also carries with it a slightly deeper, non-

aesthetic meaning, as the three 'Manet women' will decorate the dining room, which, apart from a tiny portrait of Mary, Queen of Scots, does not have any women on its walls.

Dr. Rod Mengham, the curator of the project, stated: "Placing the three female portraits in Hall is making quite a big statement about female self-definition in an institution which encourages women to realise their true potential but which – like other colleges – surrounds them with images of male pre-eminence."

Amatey Doku, the Jesus JCR

President, commented on the significance of the new artwork, stating:

"We're delighted that the Works of Art committee has facilitated this art exhibition and it has had a very positive response from many students.

"We are especially pleased with the fact that the portraits of the women are in a place frequented by many students, staff, fellows and visitors to the College for all to see and appreciate"

Jesus College, the new home of 'You', did not admit female students until 1979.



Women have been admitted for 36 years

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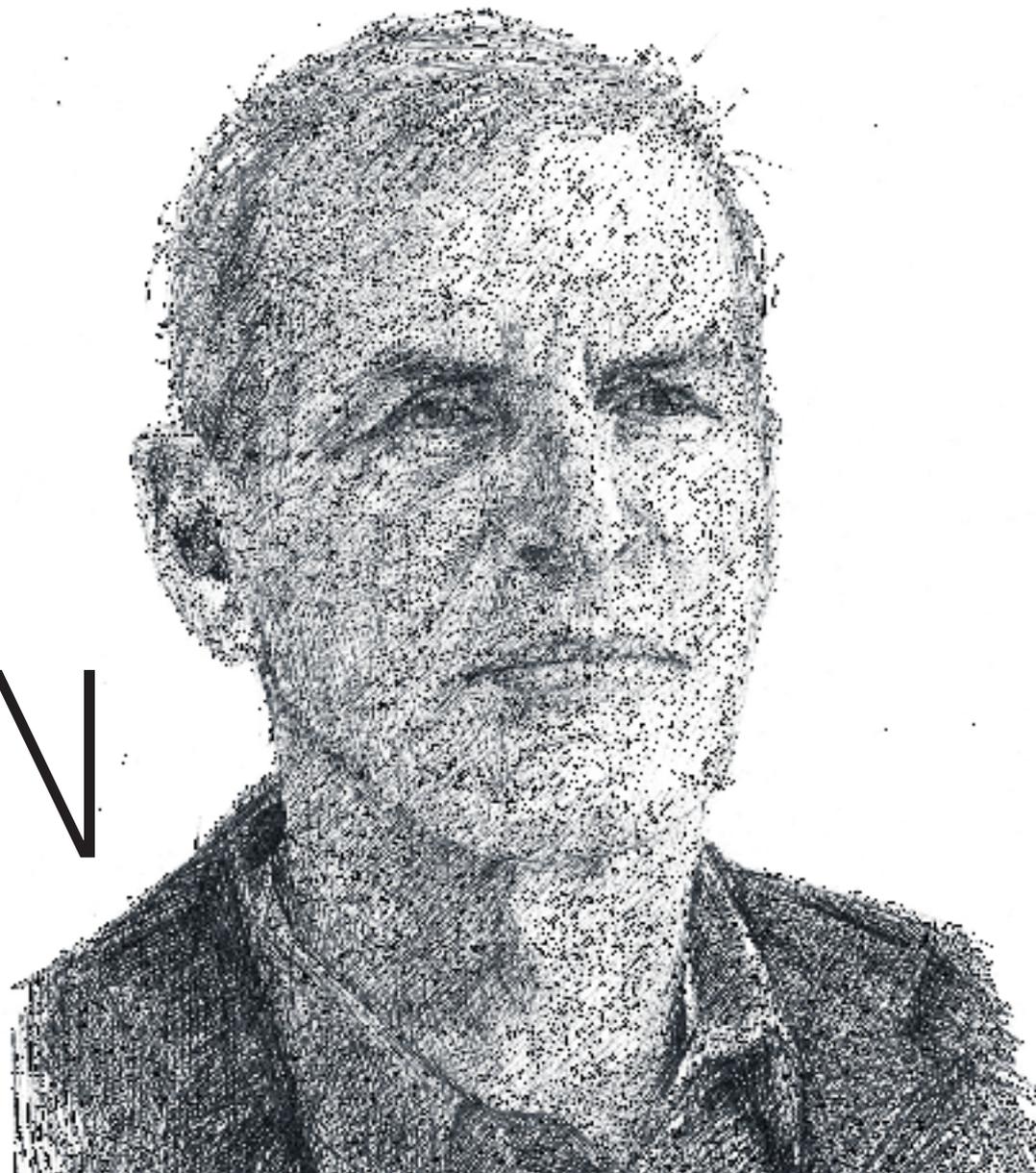
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The Interview: Norman Finklestein

NO ANTI-SEMITISM IN EUROPE?



Dr Finklestein talks to **Joe Robinson** about Israel and anti-semitism, and reveals why he accosts African-Americans on the subway

For over three decades, Norman Finklestein has been a leading scholar of the Israeli-Palestine conflict, unyielding in his criticisms of Israel's human rights record and frequent violations of international law. He is an unfaltering voice for the Palestinian people through their trials and tribulations, and a denouncer of what he characterises as the 'Holocaust industry': the hijacking of tragedy for private gain. His criticism of Israeli policy has seen him branded a raging ideologue, a dangerous radical and, perhaps worst, a self-hating Jew. Having grown up in New York, the son of Holocaust survivors, his unrelenting pursuit of justice, which began during his days as a doctoral student at Princeton University, led him to be ostracised from the American academic community, embroiled in a public feud with US jurist Alan Dershowitz and arrested outside the Israeli Embassy in New York.

In spite of his opposition to the abuse of power, Finklestein condemns the decision to exclude President Putin from the 70th commemoration of the liberation of the Auschwitz by the Red Army. Laughter quickly gave way to scornful incredulity: "Look, there's no love lost between myself and Putin, but he's a head of state. Anybody with the slightest knowledge of history knows that it was the Red Army that defeated the Nazis. It was astonishing

what happened on the Eastern Front. It's just slightly insane not to invite Putin." Finklestein claims that this was "a very nervy thing to do", arguing that the liberation of Auschwitz is a "sacred date for the Russian people". "[T]here'll be a price paid for that", he adds ominously.

Finklestein has long maintained that his approach to the Israeli-Palestine conflict is grounded in international law and thus favours a two-state solution: 1967 borders and what he calls a "just resolution of the refugee question". How does he envisage getting Israel to adhere

“

THE ENTIRE GAZA STRIP HAS BEEN LAID TO WASTE

to international law? He outlines three approaches – diplomacy, armed resistance and mass nonviolent resistance – and argues that the first two had failed. Diplomacy has, according to him, "marked a severe regression in an attempt to settle the conflict": the "rotten fruits" of diplomacy have rendered it an "untenable strategy". The Hamas-proposed alternative of armed resistance has similarly failed – Finklestein points to the fact that there "has been a huge amount of bloodlet-

ting" in the major hostilities between Israel and Gaza, highlighting that 2,200 Palestinians have been killed so far, including over 500 children, and "the entire Gaza Strip laid to waste". He is more optimistic, however, about the prospects for mass nonviolent resistance, which "makes use of the Palestinians' biggest assets and also focuses on Israel's weakest link", with "the chink in Israel's armour" being international law. It is, in his words, "the thing they dread the most".

He is less positive about the prospects for an International Criminal Court investigation into what its chief prosecutor called "the situation in Palestine", stating, "I'm a pessimist on that." He describes how even if the Palestinians managed to jump through the "many procedural hoops", nothing would happen if "the case... [was] brought before the court, there... [was] an indictment and the Israelis were found guilty of having committed war crimes".

Finklestein compares this prospective investigation with the one conducted by the International Court of Justice in 2004 that found the wall built by Israel in the West Bank to be illegal. "Does anybody even know what happened?" he asks. He argues that in the same way the ICJ verdict faded into obscurity, any ICC verdict would do the same.

The most important thing he learnt from Noam Chomsky, whom he has considered a close friend and men-

tor, is the importance of combining "moral indignation with the most exigent intellectual standards". Chomsky showed him how to reach people "you want to convince, you want to persuade. You're not doing it to impress – it's not about ego. It's serious – it's about human suffering."

So what does he think about the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe today? His response is decisive: "There's no significant or serious anti-Semitism anywhere in Europe. This is complete nonsense." While he says he is "perfectly cognisant" of what he characterises as "social stigmas" held against Jews – that they are "greedy, money-hungry, pushy" – he asserts that other social stigmas are far more powerful. "Do you know much you're set back in our society if you're ugly? Do you know how many doors just being good-looking opens up? You bare with the stigmas – it's called life!"

When he called the Charlie Hebdo cartoons "sadism, not satire", Finklestein turned heads. What does he mean by this? He begins his explanation with reference to the values his parents instilled in him. "I think back to what my parents would say. Prof. Chomsky exerted a huge intellectual force on me, but the moral core came from my parents. When people are down and out, when they're suffering, what would they say about somebody who starts mocking their most deeply held beliefs?" Having established that Muslims are "demonised and vilified",

he questions the cartoonists' motivations. "They seriously think that those cartoons are going to make Muslims reconsider their convictions? The only point of the cartoon I can possibly see is to mock. Not 'mock' to get people to think, but mock to degrade, demean, humiliate and insult people. I don't see any virtue in that."

We end on a less serious note: Finklestein's love of a certain 1980s popstar. "I think I'm past my Whitney Houston phase!" he explains. "There was something about her life and death that touched me. How could somebody with so much money, talent, and who touched so many people, how could she have died alone, in a bathtub overdose? It seemed wrong. There was something so tragic. It perplexed me to the point that I would go up to African-Americans arbitrarily on the subway and ask them, 'what do you think happened there?'"

Despite being an eminent scholar, Finklestein lacks a tenured academic position commensurate with his expertise and experience. He continues to write, though "out of anger, because there are so many lies and I try to set the record straight". He bemoans the fact that his books "have not had the kind of impact" he wish they had. In his words, "the sorts of people who like what I have to say, they're not readers". But as long as conflict rages on in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the issues he writes about will never lose salience.

Comment



Martha Saunders

Cambridge is far from an 'academically rigorous' paradise

It's OK to criticise Cambridge

Since coming to Cambridge, I've been overwhelmed with the sense that I should be grateful to be here. Whether it's complaining about the drinking society, whose misogynistic and abusive comments reduced me to tears, or suggesting three essays a week is unreasonable, I feel obliged to couple it with an apologetic reference to my eternal gratitude. The problem with this sentiment is that it's disproportionately directed towards me as a state school girl on a bursary and other students who face various oppressions or come from lower down on the sociopolitical spectrum. There's a feeling that we should be thankful that this esteemed institution has deemed us worthy of walking its hallowed halls. Through this, we not only entrench and legitimise elitism, but neglect the reality that we are here through our own merit, and our right to have a say. In much of the student press' willful vilification of student campaigns, our sense of misplaced gratitude is weaponised and used to silence experiences of mistreatment and, perhaps more importantly, whitewash Cambridge's highly problematic history.

Firstly, anyone citing Cambridge's history as being grounded in "the ideal of an academically rigorous university" desperately needs to pick up a history book. Far from promoting

"academic rigour", Cambridge spent most of its long life as a glorified finishing school for the wealthy elite. Scholars were eligible for a fellowship without a degree. Exams were as hard as those at most of the good schools in the country, showing no academic development was expected. Yet a fifth of undergraduates still failed them. At many colleges, students were given degrees without even having to sit exams, including King's, whose Scholars were drawn exclusively from Eton. Whilst Eton was initially set up as a charitable institution, justifying this relationship, the admissions privileges and Amicabilis Concordia collaboration continued well into Eton's ascent into an indisputable bastion of institutionalised educational inequality. Even today, the Provost at King's is automatically appointed in an advisory role to Eton's governing body.

As for pluralism and inclusivity, Cambridge has regularly had to be dragged into the next century kicking and screaming. Women couldn't be full members of the University until 1948, with protests at prior attempts including maiming and decapitating female effigies before throwing them into Girton (at the time, it was a college established for female students – it's distance was allegedly deliberate, part of an effort to prevent male students feeling

'intimidated' by the early female pioneers.) Whilst this could again be attributed to the attitude of the ages, the first batch of 'male' colleges to permit women to enter did so only in 1972 – and Magdelene only followed suit 25 years ago, in a change which prompted students and fellows alike to march through the streets with a coffin, fly the flag at half mast, and don black armbands in mourning at the 'death' of their college.

More recent history laughs in the face of the idea of Cambridge peddling pluralism and defending free speech – unless we ignore the utterly crucial role that protest plays in free, democratic expression. After the Garden House Riots of 1970, a protest against the Greek military government which disrupted a dinner Cambridge were hosting to promote tourism to Greece, jailed protestor Rod Caird described how "an attempt was made... to withhold my degree on the grounds that I had 'brought the University into disrepute.'" An even more controversial case was that of Owen Holland, a student in 2012. Owen read out a poem during a speech by the visiting Education Minister. An entirely peaceful, legitimate, and powerful protest within the legal remit of freedom of expression – the university issued Holland with a suspension for seven terms in an action which Thomas Glave, a

visiting fellow, called "an ugly lesson in repression."

Cambridge was not built for me, and it was not built for many of us. It was built as a finishing school for the leaders of an empire which enslaved and tortured some students' ancestors, a state which deemed the gender of others inferior and incapable, a Church which viewed their sexualities morally abhorrent. That time may be over but its scars and oppressions remain, often too recent or too personal for the emotional detachment and reasoned debate constantly demanded of us.

Campaigns, safe space meetings and protests are, and always have been, the weapons of the less privileged, the tools of change and revolution; glamourising formal debate and devil's advocacy over it is an exercise in intellectual elitism. Until Cambridge learns to accept the voices of campaign groups, protestors and activists, it cannot call itself a true defender of free expression or pluralism. The fact is that if you feel the need to be venomous towards groups which clearly mean a lot to people and are not doing any active harm, then they're not the problem; you are. You are achieving nothing but more pain, hatred and bitterness. Leave them be. Just by existing, they're doing more good than you could ever realise.



Eleanor Hegarty

The university's reputation depends on courses losing their Anglo-centric focus

We can't keep studying Britain

"International students do not feel welcome in Britain". This was The Guardian's dramatic headline for an article revealing the sustained decline in international applications to British universities over the past five years. While theatrical, this was not the only anxious article on the topic. Newspapers ranging from The Huffington Post to the Times of India have expressed fears about the decline in British universities' appeal to international students.

These fears are justified. A 2014 National Union of Students survey showed that more than 50 per cent of current international students in the UK feel unwelcome, and 19 per cent would not recommend the UK as a study destination. These statistics were released against a backdrop of significant and continuing drop-offs from important sending countries such as India and Pakistan (from 2011 to 2012, there were 38 per cent and 62 per cent declines, respectively). Following several coalition reforms made to the immigration system, the UK higher education sector as a whole has experienced two consecutive years of falling overseas entrants in 2011–12 and 2012–13.

These developments are significant because international students are

highly important, both to UK higher education and the country more widely. Not only does their presence internationalise the academic environment, but they also contribute more than £7 billion to the economy. The higher education sector as a whole sources around one-eighth

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THE HISTORY FACULTY REMAINS AS GEOGRAPHICALLY LIMITED AS EVER

of its income from international students' tuition fees. Stagnating or fluctuating demand from students overseas can therefore leave institutions vulnerable or affect their ability to plan strategically in the long-term.

Universities are quick to condemn the government's policies for this sharp decline. The government's decision to classify international students as migrants in the statistical calculations of net migration – meaning that they are now subject to Conservative attempts to cut it – has

clearly not done much to improve British universities' image. But policy and economics are only one aspect of the issue. Reports have shown that once international students arrive in their destination country, their top concern is dealing with cultural difficulties. Perhaps universities should not be so focused on influencing legislation, but rather on adding variety to their own courses. For example, Cambridge prides itself on being diverse, boasting that 10 per cent of its undergraduates are non-European, representing 65 different nations. But this says little about how international the university's mindset and approach to teaching really is.

As a historian, I was truly shocked to see how geographically limited the course is. The only non-British options available are European, Empires or North American papers. It is worth pointing out that the University of York offers courses including Reform, Revolution and Nation Building in Latin America 1750-1900, as well as Africa and the World since the 1950s.

Of course I recognise that Cambridge is not a typical British university. Part of its appeal lies in its reputation for upholding age-old traditions and providing a

quintessentially British teaching style. The 'Harry Potter' factor of old dining halls and flowing gowns is undeniably appealing to prospective students. However, as appealing as hall dinners and ancient chapels may be, students also want some form of assurance that their university education will help them secure a job. A purely Anglo-centric education will not take a student very far in the increasingly competitive international job market. British universities must learn to adapt to an increasingly international global climate.

In 1965, Cambridge's History Faculty was divided over a proposal to include more African, American and Asian history and introduce more social history. Sir Geoffrey Elton, who later became Cambridge's Regius Professor of Modern History, opposed these reforms. Elton came under fire for these views and was heavily criticised for being an old-fashioned bigot who refused to adapt to the changing world. Yet half a century later, the History Faculty remains as geographically limited as ever. Cambridge is ahead of the game in terms of political, gender and even dietary developments – now it's time to bring modernity to its course content.



The Ismist

Allan Hennessy

I'd like to let you into a secret. Before coming to Cambridge, I was dumped by my ex. "Long distance just won't work, Allan, it won't." I was distraught. WAS – I'm over you. But I did something quite human and awful. I told all my friends (and myself) for months that it was a mutual decision.

You, drinking society rejects, are also lying to yourselves.

But, frankly, 90 per cent of the hatred that drinking societies receive comes from what I like to call 'drinking society rejects'. People who aren't in them and who would JUMP FOR JOY if they were given an offer to go out with one. I'm literally talking clearing the pole vault world record without a pole.

Essentially, drinking society rejects, you are hiding your disappointment and rage under the guise of moral objection. You are pretending that the reason you hate them has nothing to do with the fact that you're not going out with them, but that it's because they are abhorrent, reprehensible forces of evil.

(In parenthesis, you do realise that by slandering them you are minimising the chances of getting an invite, right?)

So, why am I telling you off for this? Firstly, you're lying to yourself, which is always bad, as I have come to learn. Secondly, and more importantly, you are exacerbating – wait, here it comes again – the reality-perception dichotomy. We have already seen the detrimental effects this dichotomy has on politics, sexuality and race – the consequences are equally troubling here.

The perception is that drinking societies is where it's at – they're the 'cool kids', part of the higher echelons of society. In reality, that's not the case. You are to blame for this perception as much as they are. Granted, there are people in drinking societies who do think that they've hit the social jackpot now that they're in them, but that's more a reflection of how pathetic they are than on how inherently 'cool' drinking societies are.

You, however, think that you are being marginalised by the cool kids. You victimise yourselves. Then, to make up for it, you put a brave face on and tell everyone that you can't stand them because they're elitist, sexist, racist, homophobic cults. That's just defamation.

There are awful people wherever you look – from the water polo team to the Union, from the jazz bands to the Vixens. Yes, the grass is always greener on somebody else's yard, but that does not excuse your defamatory behaviour.

Before telling others how to mend their moral compass, you might like to consider that making sweeping statements about an entire class of people is dangerously immoral in itself. You've read the history books, you know that. Allegedly.



Could meninism have a point?



Rob Stockton

Feminism shouldn't ignore the lessons of meninism

The internet has a fraught relationship with feminism. Hatred is rife.

On one side of a deep divide are a vicious, self-assured, pseudo-intellectual TERF rad-fem collective, who mostly inhabit the darker corners of tumblr. On the other sit moronic, loud, frat boy 4chan dwellers, who are taking to twitter to right the perceived wrongs done to them by a movement that they believe wants not equality, but the subjugation of all men.

It began, as many things don't, on feminism.com. Male feminists had been sharing legitimate thoughts on female structural oppression in society, writing how they "are all opposed to all forms of misogynist behaviour and sexist attitudes; we support all women". Lovely.

Then, swooping in with all the verbal grace and dexterous wit of a bag filled with cement, came the meninists on twitter. Out, seemingly, to openly mock those who would address the structural inequalities of society and have it be a nicer place for everyone, a group hijacked the meninism hashtag, and flooded twitter with a range of hilarious 'jokes' for everyone to 'enjoy'. Although deeply unfunny, casually misogynistic, and unfathomably stupid on every conceivable level, could these aforementioned meninists have unintentionally made a cogent point? Were they raising an important issue to feminists?

Are they right in resenting and parodying the way activists self-fashion their movements on social media in addressing inequality? To risk conceding a tiny piece of ground to the sort of dangerous idiot that came

out with this – yes, they might have a little point, but it's a point that's made self-reflexively, and entirely without any actual thinking done on their part. Let me explain.

The internet fosters hate exceptionally quickly. Strong, vocal, like-minded communities emerge rapidly, and, most importantly, these communities are rarely, if ever, exposed to opposite opinions if they don't want to be. Debate is, for some, at a bare minimum. Tight-knit groups on social media platforms are permitted to huddle in their insular communities, exposing each other to similar ideas constantly, and hearing little to no criticism unless they actively seek it out – which a notable few fail to do. The result is a positive-feedback loop as unassailably vast and imposing as Saturn's ring. Views become gradually more and more radical – no dissenting voices means everyone is right, all the time, with little regard to what is actually being said.

Moreover those dissenting voices can be caricatured, straw men can be constructed at random, stupid becomes orthodox, heterodox becomes stupid.

Monocultures develop; people who express themselves the same, like the same stuff, and have the same opinions see the world as their enemy and, if motivated enough, do something about it.

Of course these groups are always small – I think of the awful Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminists, of Men's Rights Activists and now (probably as an offshoot of the MRA) Meninists. Meninists are the perfect example of a community monoculture leaking out onto a wider platform

– and rightly being condemned for it. But, quite apart from being a gaggle of people who clearly (and perhaps intentionally) misunderstand feminism, they illustrate an important wider point.

It's imperative that feminism, and indeed all social justice movements, don't fall into the trap of becoming monocultures. They cannot exclude outsiders for the (unfounded) fear they are stupid, they cannot permit unquestioning acceptance of ridiculous dogma coming from inside the movement, they ought to keep in check pseudo-intellectualism and rhetorical tricks and make points clearly and concisely.

People inside activist movements have to be self-aware, and self-effacing – aware of how they sound to others, and aware that their movement cannot be just about them, not if it wants to find success in the world beyond their room.

Of course meninism has to go. Feminism is not, and will never be, about men. Men are implicated, sure, and things will undoubtedly improve for most men if feminism is successful. But feminism is about a woman's struggle for emancipation and equality, not anything else. The sooner this is acknowledged, the sooner we can achieve change.

Yet feminism can learn from the stupidity of meninism, even if only through looking at the way it emerged as an idea. To seek out debate, to find out what your opponent is actually saying is, more than likely, worth your time, even if only to make them look a bit stupid. Don't let the movement become a caricature, don't set up straw men, don't sit in an ivory tower.



Chris Rowe

We can't sideline the immigration debate any longer

We need to talk about immigration

It used to be the case that anti-immigration obsessives accused the establishment, defined by its predilection for political correctness, of suppressing debate surrounding the taboo subject of immigration. Well, the cat is out of the bag and the issue is set to define the election. Cui bono?

The meteoric rise of UKIP has shattered the politics to which we had become accustomed. A recent poll conducted by the Guardian/ICM revealed that support for the three largest parties has reached a record low, rendering the prospect of another coalition all but certain. Much of this support has been appropriated by UKIP – although now polling lower than 11 per cent. Politicians can no longer run away from immigration, a matter now only second to the NHS in terms of importance in the eyes of the public. A survey conducted by British Future has found that 32 per cent of those polled think politicians are not paying sufficient attention to the issue.

The Tories, most worried by the UKIP challenge, have adopted a hard line for the sake of appearing tough, leading to ill-informed and non-sensical proposals with potentially devastating economic and social implications. Theresa May is the most culpable. Not only fighting the election of 2015, but also positioning herself to assume power in the post-Cameron era as leader of her party, she has done a great disservice to the conduct of political debate in this country. Her proposals to boot

graduates out of the country at the end of their degrees marked a short-sighted attempt to satiate the anti-immigration thirst of the electorate as well as of the right wing of her party, with little regard for the social and economic consequences.

Crushing one of our most successful export industries, with Britain possessing a 15 per cent share of a growing global market of students paying exorbitant sums to study



THE CAT IS OUT OF THE BAG AND THE ISSUE IS SET TO DEFINE THE ELECTION

abroad, would be foolish enough. Worse still, in a country which has failed to address the skills deficit of its own workforce, it would be unduly charitable and economically illogical to aid other countries in this endeavour by forcibly returning graduates whom we have trained. In 2012-13, 43 per cent of postgraduates who enrolled in UK engineering and technology were non-EU students. The very graduates whom we so desperately need and whom May would deport after their graduation day.

Thankfully it is her proposals, rather than the swelling cohort of successful foreign graduates, that have recently been shown the door.

May has been rebutted, but there is a greater risk still – that the intellectual laziness which currently characterises the debate on immigration will imperil our recent escape from the asphyxiating atmosphere of political correctness which has defined recent years. If Nigel Farage is driving the debate on immigration and other politicians are merely following (remember Clegg and *those* debates), of course we are going to wish to return to our relative bliss of feigned ignorance.

This is not an option. Failing to discuss the issue will only fuel further resentment. But how should the debate be framed? What can the Tories and Labour do to shelve UKIP's rhetoric and flirt with its policy suggestions? Two things must happen: firstly, as a country, we must be honest with ourselves. Without the inward flow of migrants, we would neither have had the boom of the noughties nor our current resurgence in economic growth. We must counter the innate assumption of many opposed to immigration that Britain stands best when on its own two native feet, a view which is entirely incongruent with the reality of the increasingly globalised world in which we live.

However, the problems attendant upon unrestricted immigration should not be ignored. More than half of the increase of the UK population between 1991 and 2012 was due to net immigration. According to estimates, the cumulative net inflow of post-2012 migrants will account

for 43 per cent of total population growth until 2037, by which time the UK's population could reach 75 million people. The potentially devastating implications of this on the quality of our public services and housing provision should not require elucidation. We need to question whether the principle of the freedom of movement of people, a key tenet of the European Union project, is compatible with maintaining our current standard of living and welfare provision in this country.

The economic crisis of the Eurozone and unbalanced migratory flows within the EU are indicative of the same flaw which defines the European project – any attempt to impose uniform policies and principles across the EU is at odds with the heterogeneity of its members, resulting in gross imbalances. As a net recipient of EU migrants, we must settle the question of whether we can afford the current open door policy of immigration to Europe before the prospective Tory referendum on the EU in 2017. We may decide that we can – but coming to this conclusion after a healthy debate can only be a good thing. Politicians must step up to the mark, eschew party interests and discuss immigration in a reasonable and well-informed manner.

Should they fail to do so, I fear we will all crawl back into our caverns of political correctness lest we be mistaken for subscribing to the mantra of UKIP, and the salient issue of immigration will again be kicked into the long grass.

Millie Brierley

On election fever: why your vote is crucial



Tuesday 27th January marked 100 days until the general election. That's 100 days left of catty party-political tweets. 100 days left of fretting over chairs – whether they'll be empty and who will occupy them. And 100 days left of Nick Clegg. Seriously. I've done the calculations. It turns out there is a 98 per cent chance that he will simply self-combust after 7th May, never to be seen again, slipping sorrowfully through the cracks of history to settle into oblivion, with comfy slippers and a cigar.

And the most interesting thing is that absolutely no one will notice. He will make the most impressive Irish exit ever. Social-phobes the world over will be green with envy. Or else, they would be, if they – or anyone else – had spotted he was missing. It will be truly laudable, if not also utterly piteous.

But anyway, enough of Clegg (this is 97 days away from being very literally true). This year's is set to be a truly fascinating general election, the kind requiring snacks. (I'm putting in an advance order for 65 million rounds of popcorn, and some nachos. You can all pay me back later.)

In fact, it is possibly also party-worthy. (No, silly! Not the kind of party leafletting our politicians will engage in oh-so diligently for the next 97 days, but the kind of party where everyone dances to the Macarena and someone overdoes it on the sausage rolls).

It really is a tough one to call, this time round. Obviously, there is a legion of elves somewhere

(possibly the bowels of Whitehall – or else, Boris Johnson's hair), painstakingly embroidering monograms into tartan slippers for the Lib Dems. But, apart from that, it's virtually impossible to say which way the votes will go.

Not that They would tell you that, of course. ('They' being the ones with the pearly-white smiles on all the billboards and bus stops, talking incessantly about immigration and the EU. Not to be confused with the other ones with the pearly-white smiles on all the billboards and bus stops in contention for this year's Oscars.)

No, if you listen to Them, you'll hear that, actually, this year's general election is very straightforward. The Conservatives are going to capitalise on the demise of the pesky Lib Dems and finally gain a Commons majority. Labour is going to rise again to snatch power back from the Tories. UKIP is going to take parliament by storm (a storm, incidentally, possibly caused by Stephen Fry's recent nuptials – I am awaiting confirmation on this). And the Greens are going to at least double their number of MPs. At least.

With all kinds of claims being flung about in all directions (rather like monkeys throwing their faeces), politics can all too easily seem alienating. Like a foreign-language film without the ill-fitting dubbing. Or the French attitude towards queuing. It is easy to forget that politics is actually, by its very nature, about people. Not just people in power. Not just people who were

members of the Bullingdon Club. Not just people who know what 'prorogation' means (thank you, Wikipedia).

No, politics is about all people. Or, at least, it needs to be. Politicking may be something odious which other people do, but politics has to be something that you do. If you live in this country, then the politics of this country are about you. And that's why you have to vote. No wriggle room: just vote.

If you know exactly who you want in charge of the UK for the next five years after this May, that is what your vote is for. If you look at the current parliament, and don't see yourself reflected, that is what your vote is for. If you care about your life here – and others' – that is what your vote is for.

If you genuinely believe that there is not a single policy or piece of legislation which could ever stir you into anything but utter indifference, then you have my permission not to vote. But I would also recommend checking your pulse. I'm concerned for you.

As General Election Fever (the medical reason for Nick Clegg's imminent disappearance) reaches its peak over the next 100 days, we mustn't let ourselves forget that this whole thing is actually about people. And, as people (presumably), we have to take part, or we lose by default.

There are now 97 days to go. That's 97 days to register to vote. 97 days to decide which people you want representing you, another person.



Courtney Landers

A new stigma around depression is replacing the old

Mental health: a new stigma

One of the biggest conversations in mental health right now is about stigma: what it is, what it means for treatment, and, most of all, how to remove it, so that people can talk about and seek help for mental illness.

There is still a lot of work to be done to reduce and remove stigma surrounding what are seen as 'more serious' mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

However, excellent progress has been made for depression and anxiety. Although there are many more people to convince, an increasingly large number of people now accept and understand that depression and anxiety are as legitimate and serious as physical illness.

Our problem now is that a new stigma has replaced the old. In my experience, this is particularly the case for depression. Instead of questioning whether depression is real, some of us now question whether particular individuals really are depressed.

I've seen this attitude take two forms.

The first occurs in otherwise supportive family and friends, who may ask: "But are you sure you're depressed?" In response to my diagnosis, my own mother said: "I don't think you have depression; you couldn't have gotten so far in life if you did" (meaning excelling academically and coming to Cambridge).

We have been so successful in establishing depression as a serious illness with serious symptoms that it is frightening in the same way serious physical illnesses are. Our loved ones don't want depression for us; they don't want us to suffer.

They also don't want to think that they've missed the signs, that we've been struggling alone, and that if we've achieved things in spite of being sick, that we've done so by overcoming an adversity without their help. This is especially true for families – such as mine – with long histories of depression and anxiety.

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THERE ARE INDIVIDUALS WHO THINK OR ARE TOLD THEY ARE MENTALLY ILL WHEN THEY AREN'T

Doubt in the form of hope is fairly harmless though; for many of us our loved ones want us to be well and will give us their support.

What truly concerns me is doubt stemming from our awareness of the cult of happiness; the phenomenon where people expect to be happy all the time because society and pop-culture have told them they can be and should be. This kind of doubt can lead to a dismissal of diagnoses of depression (and anxiety) as a form of hysteria or attention-seeking enabled by the marketing behaviours of 'Big Pharma'.

In part, we have contributed to this new stigma by educating society that happiness isn't a question of feeling great all the time and that we all experience ups and downs. Those still caught up in the 'happiness trap' are

thus now often seen as naive and uninformed, feeding even more into the idea that – like Mrs Bennet with her fluttering nerves – they are simply hysterical and seeking attention.

The stigma of happiness hysteria is dangerous. It increases our risk of neglecting people who are actually ill and in need of support. I'm going to risk sticking my foot in my mouth and suggest that there are individuals, trapped in a kind of hysteria by our society and culture, who think or are told they are mentally ill when they aren't.

Thing is, these individuals are in no less need of our help. If someone feels so unpleasant they suspect or are told they are depressed, they are just as deserving of care and support as someone whose emotions have flatlined and who is experiencing extreme fatigue. While the latter may need antidepressants and other physical or chemical therapies, the former can be assisted with talking therapies.

Cognitive behavioural therapy, interpersonal therapy and the like are designed to help people deal with things that are upsetting them and learn strategies for being present and mindful.

They're about learning new approaches to our thoughts and experiences; learning how to cope with and flourish within the ups and downs of life. Someone feeling pain because they're not as happy as pop culture led them to believe they should be would benefit from these therapies just as much as someone trapped in a cycle of negative thinking about themselves due to trauma, personal

or family history, or brain chemistry.

If talking therapies are applied properly and successfully – and they very often are – both individuals will feel better, both will learn resilience tactics for when life inevitably confronts them with tough times, and both will be able to spread the strategies and mindsets they have learned to other people.

Dismiss someone as 'not really depressed' and we not only deprive them of the chance to learn and grow, we stifle the spread of resilience and mindfulness throughout society.

Mental Health: The Statistics

- 1 in 4 British adults experiences a mental health problem at some point in their lives
- Over 450 million people globally are thought to have a mental health problem
- Between 8 and 12 per cent of the UK population suffer depression in any one year



Vulture

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What's On: Week 3

Exhibitions

If you haven't had a chance to get down to Beauty and Revolution, Kettle's Yard's current exhibition on the art and poetry of renowned Scottish artist Ian Hamilton-Finlay, then head to curator Professor Stephen Bahn's talk, The Cambridge Connections (Tues 3rd Feb, 7pm, Kettle's Yard) which will shed some light on the artist's peculiar relationship with our fair city. Poetry-lovers are also encouraged to hit the Speakeasy (Sun 1st Feb, 8pm, ADC bar). Featuring both established spoken-word poets and an open poetry slam, this is a great opportunity to test the spoken-word waters in an informal environment.

Another chance to have your eyes/ears opened comes in the form of The Mendeleev Debate: This House Believes Space Exploration is Worth the Cost (Thurs 5th Feb, 7.30pm, The Cambridge Union). Welcoming speakers from both NASA and the UK Space Agency alongside journalists and heads of charities, it will certainly get interesting.

If you just can't choose between Poetry and Space then you have very much lucked out with new exhibition Graphic Constellations: Visual Poetry and the Properties of Space (Until Sat 21st Feb, 10am-4.30pm, Ruskin Gallery), which will demonstrate the dynamic interplay between text and image, and between poetry and graphic design.

Drama

Following the success of The 24 Hour Plays, CUMTS presents The 24 Hour Musical! (Sat 31st Feb, 11pm, ADC), in which teams will have 24 hours to write, learn and perform a show-stopping musical number. Hilarity and high notes are sure to ensue. If you've not had enough musical joy then there's The Witches of Eastwick (Tues 3rd-Sat 7th Jan, 7.45pm, ADC). CUMTS have promised to take a "fresh look at the material" of this darkly funny show, focusing on the empowerment of its female leads. For some drama without songs, try Henry V (Weds 4th-Sat 7th Feb, 7.45 pm with matinees on Thurs and Sat, Cambridge Arts Theatre) – both Shakespeare's most-loved historical play and a nice departure from the normal student theatres, it should be one of the highlights of the term. Also recommended is 'one-man tragi-comedy' Awkward Conversations with Animals I've F*cked (Tues 3rd-Sat 7th Feb, 9.30pm, Corpus Playroom).

Comedy

Continuing the current string of one-off comedy shows is Kenneth Watton's Bedtime Chat-Show (Monday 2nd Feb, 9.30 pm, Corpus Playroom). It features a wealth of promising characters beyond the titular fictional host, two of whom are listed as 'Bear (a)' and 'Bear (b)', which is quite enticing. Meta-entertainment is also the theme of S.C.O.F.F.: The Comeback Tour (Weds 4th-Sat 7th Feb, 11pm, ADC) which promises big laughs and, being this term's 'Footlights Presents' show, a big audience. For professional comedy, try Flaws (Sat 31st Jan, 8pm, Cambridge Corn Exchange) the new tour show from Varsity Interviewee – and critically acclaimed comedian – Mark Watson.

Idols of a Lonely English Student

Noa Lessof Gendler tells us about her literary icons from Satan to Aslan and plenty inbetween

I'll have a go at doing this justice, although it's just impossible for me to mention all of the literary characters I love, let alone properly explain why each is significant. The ones that I have included though deserve thrones in the Literary Hall of Greatness, where readers who love them will meet them and be best friends with them, which is, naturally, my biggest dream ever. Here are the heroes I'd like to shake hands with. And hug. I'll start with someone acceptable for an English student, which is what I am, although you'd never have guessed.

Satan from Milton's epic Paradise Lost is the character we hate to love. The idea of him caught my attention when I was reading His Dark Materials by Philip Pullman (more on this obsession soon). Years later I read Paradise Lost itself and fell in love. I think Satan is probably just about the sexiest antihero ever – rebelling against God? That is supremely cool. Plus his dark internal torment, his magnificent impassioned speeches, his seductive persuasiveness... I think the argument that Milton intended Satan to be the hero of the poem is stupid, as the whole point of Satan is that he is alluring but he's still really, really evil – that's half the fun. He's the ultimate bad boy.

The supposed ally of the fallen angel is Lyra Belaqua from His Dark Materials. I spent my time between ages eight and 15 just longing to be friends with this girl. She's the heroine I wanted to be: brave, clever, funny and charismatic – I'm still working on these. She also travels between worlds, can read the truth about anything, tells spectacular stories, and is utterly independent, running wild as she grows up and going on an epic adventure. I think I was also envious of her having a daemon (Google it), probably because I didn't have any pets and thought one that could change shape would be nice.

There were two other girls I wished I was friends with. The first was Lucy Pevensie from The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. She was loyal, kind, determined, and Aslan's no. 1 gal. I've got to give a shout out to the lion himself here – yes, I know he's Jesus, but you don't have to be into God to think he's completely brilliant. The other character from the Chronicles of Narnia character that deserves a mention here is Edmund. Talk about a turnaround: no one else could go so genuinely from spiteful Witch accomplice to lovable supporting brother and hero in so few pages. The other girl who was a sort of imaginary friend is Titty from Swallows and Amazons. Despite her unfortunate name and unfortunate attitudes to the indigenous people of anywhere that isn't England, she's got the sort of tough attitude that we all wish we had. She completely aces everything: capturing the Amazon, finding the treasure, rugby tackling Captain Flint. What a boss.

I know I've just done a whole bunch of children's books, but this is the last one, I promise. The Wind in the Willows is just about one of my favourite books ever, and my favourite character is the Rat. He gets the best line – "there is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats" – and he muses and writes poetry. No disrespect meant at all to the Mole, the Badger or the Toad, though. All four of them deserve medals, but I feel a special affection for good old Ratty just because he's so charming, mild, and hilarious.

Puck from A Midsummer Night's Dream is next on my list (here the struggling English student attempts to redeem herself). He's obviously a beautifully crafted character, the instigator of an excellent plot and a fairy to boot; but I am also of the opinion that he says the most perfect passage in Shakespeare. I know I'm not a scholar or anything, but his closing monologue is just exquisite: "If we shadows have offended, / Think but this and all is mended..." He's not just talking about the fairies in the story. He's talking about the actors, and reminding the audience that it's make-believe and transient. While we're showing off with Shakespeare, I also nominate Beatrice from Much Ado about Nothing. She's just the funniest.

The last character who sits in my Hall of Greatness is Antoinette Cosway from Wide Sargasso Sea. Once she's married to an Englishman for her dowry and shipped away

from her home in Jamaica, she's known as Bertha Mason, appearing as the archetypal 'mad woman in the attic' in Jane Eyre. Jean Rhys' 1966 novel gives her a voice, and it's moving and passionate, transforming her from a ghost into a woman who lets us explore important gender issues and society's attitudes towards mental health. Others who've been knocked off the list are Odysseus, Cassandra from I Capture the Castle, Dr Iannis from Captain Corelli's Mandolin, and Úrsula Iguarán from One Hundred Years of Solitude.

I won't go into detail because I have a word limit (and an English degree, that unfortunately neglects many of these self-evident classics), but if you've read the books then they speak for themselves. If you haven't read the books, I really can't recommend them more. Last but not least, Dumbledore. Enough said.





-THE OSCARS-



What's the Opposite of Diversity?

Naomi Eva Obeng questions representation, the Academy and what we can do about it

Did you hear that? The hushed whispers and clacking of keys? The nominations list has been read. Preparations for Hollywood's showcase have begun. Of course it's not just Hollywood, there's a foreign language category too!

It has not escaped the attention of major newspapers that this year's Oscar nominees are the least diverse bunch of creatives to have been printed onto its hallowed envelopes in years.

Moments before the nominees were revealed it had seemed completely impossible for the British actor David Oyelowo not to get a nod for his portrayal of Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. in *Selma*. He was in all the papers' pre-Oscar predictions and Brad Pitt even gave a master-class on how to pronounce his name – something Lupita Nyong'o took upon herself before her best supporting actress win last year. It turns out that David Oyelowo isn't Oscar-worthy after all. Apparently. Well, if members of the public cannot predict who will and who won't receive a shiny statue at a televised ceremony in California next month, then what on earth is the point of it all?

I'll take the liberty of breaking down the highly uniform nominees for you, don't blame me if you get bored: all nominees for direction, cinematography, writing and visual effects are male (that's 25 men, 0 women), all nominated best pictures have a male protagonist (by the way, *Selma* is a town in Alabama, not a woman), all best leading and supporting actors and actresses are white (that's 20 talented Caucasians), the animated feature makers are all male and there is one man nominated for costume design (good on you Mark Bridges).

When all this transpired, debate was raging in publications, glances firing and mugs of coffee no doubt being poured from heavily subsidised percolators. "Is it because there isn't enough diversity in films?" (there isn't), "Is it because there is a gender bias in film production?" (there is) "Is it because of who is voting?" (yes)... I wonder if Neil Patrick Harris is going to sing. (I hope so!).

That's just it. There is a whole host of reasons that does not stop at the Academy. It starts with society and the sunny money-making industry that only values the voices of a particular group of people. Diversity is natural, the opposite of diversity takes quite some prejudiced effort to achieve. Is it really surprising that a corporate industry built on

stories about western post-colonial male existence, via jazz hands and computer generated explosions, has managed to produce nominations for actors that do not include a single person of colour? Or that out of the 428 nominees for best direction since the ceremony's inception in 1927 there have only been 2 women? Is it surprising that the Academy voters – a group so overwhelmingly white, over 60 and male that it's as if institutionalised inequality actually exists – caused this outcome?

With all the excitement and the promise of Neil Patrick Harris as host, it's easy to forget that the Oscars are not about what the public want, they are about which films a group of 1,000+ men chose to see in the cinema last year (or to pretend to have seen, as it transpired was the case for many Academy members voting for last year's best picture *Twelve Years A Slave*).

It is unsurprising that the reaction has been a wearied – "Once again the people represented



on screen will be the same subset of people deserving enough to be there". Unluckily for the ceremony, many have already made up their minds that the winners are part of a nominee pool that should not have existed. So does it really matter in the end? At least the Oscars never pretended to represent society. Let people lose trust in the Academy's ability to be unbiased in rewarding outstanding pieces of art. Let people lose interest.

However, the Academy fails to realise the importance of representation in cinema. Let us watch, make and support the films that matter to us. Perhaps this year the Hermès shroud will be lifted on the dazzling night of celebrity, and we'll finally see the room full of artists in their most expensive clothes being handed bits of metal and bits in goodie bags by ordinance of a privileged few.

Of course I loved *The Grand Budapest Hotel* and of course I will go on continuing to love it if it doesn't win an Oscar. We have a choice as to whose stories we watch, and Hollywood, try as it might, should not dictate whose voices and expertly

lit faces are important. The Oscars are just Hollywood. So we can count on them to be no more than what Hollywood does best – an expensive, if vacuous, show that may include Neil Patrick Harris doing a song and dance. It's all about glamour and pomp in the end. Isn't it?

What's On (cont.)



Music

There are plenty of unusual nights out to be had this weekend, starting with *Do You Even Swing!?* (Fri 30th Feb, 10pm-3am, The Fountain Inn). Aside from a great name, this event promises 3 floors of "good music and good people". Entry is a very reasonable £3, with a discount if you show up in fancy dress with a 1920s/30s or, enigmatically, 'gypsy' theme.

Saturday night is a great time to visit The Junction for Boomslang presents: *Toddla T Takeover* (Sat 31st Jan, 10pm-6am, The Cambridge Junction). It's more than worth the pricey ticket and inevitable cab ride back. If you'd prefer to stay closer to home then the Trinity Hall June Event Launch is a safe bet; *ONE NATION UNDER GROOVE* (Sun 1st Feb, 10pm-3am, Fez Club) offers a rare Cambridge chance for some Funk, Soul and Rare Groove 'n' Motown.

The more classically inclined will enjoy pianist John Plowright (Thurs 5th Feb, 8pm, Kettle's Yard) performing pieces by Bach, Brahms, Schuman and Liszt; or the lunchtime concert by CUMS Concerto Competition finalists (Tues 3rd Feb, 1.10 pm, West Road Concert Hall).

Film

Ahead of the release of *Selma*, *The Interview* and, of course, *Shaun The Sheep The Movie*, this is a relatively quiet week for new cinema releases. Use the down-time to catch up on the fantastic *Theory of Everything*, *Birdman* and *A Most Violent Year*. Alternatively, check out spy-comedy *Kingsman: The Secret Service* (released Thurs 29th Jan). Directed by Matthew Vaughn, the man who brought you *Kickass*, the trailer suggests an enjoyable romp with a star-studded cast and some pretty limited female roles. Also featuring guns and intrigue is Paul Thomas Anderson's *Inherent Vice* (released Fri 30th Jan). This adaptation of Thomas Phynchon's detective novel of the same name is set at the tail-end of the 60s and is described as "Part surf noir, part psychedelic romp".





FICKE: MADAMBRIGHTSIDE

Happily Ever After

Jonathan Shamir on our cultural marriage to monogamy

Western Civilisation is built upon a Christian edifice, and although religious belief has declined, our society is still profoundly tied to that system of ethics. With the drive towards greater liberalisation eroding so many religious dogmas that do not fit with modern society, most evident in the normalisation of homosexuality and widening acceptance of abortion, we must ask: why is there still a cultural obsession around monogamy?

Even if our animal instincts pull us towards polygamy, our developed psyches opt for monogamy: we cannot underestimate its psychological significance. This boils down to a simple psychological maxim which struck me in Dostoyevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*: the more something is available, the less it is valued; this

rule applies to everything, from economics to the psychology of monogamy. Ivan proclaims that Christ's love would not suffice, as it is directed towards everyone. The exclusivity of having one person, who you love and who loves you back, is a far more comforting and special love than Christ could ever provide. If your partner was emotionally and psychologically invested in someone else, would that not detract from your relationship?

But you don't have to go back to Dostoyevsky's Russia to see this. Just look at Spike Jonze's film *Her* from last year. The same questions are asked as we watch Theodore, the film's protagonist, fall in love with an operating system with artificial intelligence. Joaquin Phoenix's character is

distraught when he finds out that 'Samantha' is 'involved' with over 8,000 other people like himself. 'Samantha' argues that this does not change the intrinsic nature of her relationship with Theodore, and while this may be true, whether it is a man in love with a computer or a struggling Christian, the rival sources of investment and trust would destabilise even the most emotionally aloof.

Religion did not always condemn polygamy. In fact, two of the three forefathers of the three main monotheistic religions all had multiple wives – Abraham had Sarah and Hagar and Jacob not only had two wives, Leah and Rachel, but also had children by their handmaidens Bilhah and Zilpah. In spite of this, polygamy was never really part of Christianity and was eventually weeded out of Judaism, also having declined under Islamic law (Muslim men are allowed to practice polygyny with up to four women but polyandry is not permitted). One of the reasons given by Rabbi Gershon, the man who altered the Jewish perspective on polygamy, is that polygyny was a source of jealousy and conflict between wives. It seems there is a consensus between your modern man, married to an operating system with artificial intelligence, and a Rabbi around 1000 years ago. The psyche of human beings hasn't changed so much after all.

The situation is different today, but we should not mistake it for contradicting our cultural obsession with monogamy. The sexual revolution which occurred in Britain over the past half a century has revolutionised the traditional male-female relationship. There is more sexual promiscuity, marriage is no longer required for sexual relations and sexual relations are not limited to heterosexuals. However, although people may be sexually polygamous, this is distinct from being both physically and emotionally polygamous – it is rare to find someone who is dating two people at once with both partners aware of it. Sexual polygamy only presses the point further; our ability to move on from sexual monogamy highlights our inability to move on from emotional monogamy.

The Office for National Statistics published in December 2012 that an estimated 42 per cent of marriages in England and Wales end in divorce. When considering these statistics – alongside the debauchery of British youth and the technological revelation that is Tinder – it is clear that attitudes have changed. Yet this only serves to accentuate the remarkable survival of monogamy: the fact is that if people are getting divorced, they are also still getting married, and sexual promiscuity in no way indicates that people are have stopped being interested in dreams of monogamy, especially in the long-term.

Most people enjoy their flirtation with lasciviousness, but never as anything more than that. People still believe in monogamy – whether it's marriage or an alternative manifestation of mutual commitment, their ultimate goal is still the same: 'one love'. We only have to look only as far as the political ruckus surrounding same-sex marriage to understand this; civil partnerships already existed, but there is something about marriage aside from the religious aspect that

makes it an important symbol of our social devotion to monogamy. If it were no longer important to society, the political debate would have been far less intense.

The evidence is most prominent in our cultural artefacts. One only needs to scroll down the UK Top 40 to see that even supposedly irreverent pop stars are obsessed with the idea of monogamous love, with Clean Bandit's 'Real Love' and Phillip George's 'Wish You Were Mine'. Your more polygamous rappers are being outstripped by the Ed Sheerans of the world who promise "And, darling, I will be loving you 'til we're 70." And you can always guarantee that there will be a saccharine romantic comedy at the cinema. It's the same recycled and formulaic love story over and over, and yet people will still cough up the cash to see the latest adaptation of a Nicholas Sparks novel. Even on the rare occasion when romantic cinema eludes you, almost all other genres perpetuate the monogamous ideal; four out of five of this year's BAFTA nominations for 'Best Film' contain this theme, be it teenage heartbreak in *Boyhood* or the romantic antics of a bellboy and a pastry chef in *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. Even if it is peripheral, it is always there.

Reflecting back on my own childhood, it is easy to see how my generation's perceptions have been moulded. *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Lady and the Tramp* – Disney alone could be identified as the root of my own ideas on monogamy, and they certainly aren't changing. The internet generation will have a more diverse cultural exposure than 90s kids, but even if their attention span is shortening to a YouTube-appropriate length, Disney's new shorts are here to ensure the next generation's dedication to the ideal of monogamy with *Paperman* and *The Blue Umbrella*. Yes, even *Umbrellas* can love one another, and more importantly, resist the urge to make sweet umbrella love to more than one parasol. Even movies like *Frozen*, lauded for their empowerment of women, have at their foundations the trope of romantic monogamy. The altered gender balance and the refreshing focus on sisterly love aside, a Disney film is just incomplete without a monogamous, heterosexual romance, as fulfilled by *Anna and Kristoff*.

This all amounts to something of an obsession, and in spite of the embedded roots of monogamy in our society, it remains a difficult phenomenon to explain. Is culture and media responding to our demands? Or is it our cultural landscape that shapes our perceptions and sustains this obsession? It is difficult to tell what came first, but it is obvious that the two are sustaining each other. Monogamy is now deeply entrenched in our society and a cycle has been established. The fact is we are constantly buying into the nonpareil of monogamy, and cultural production responds to this obsession, making our society's love for monogamy a rival to some of the greatest romances out there.

With Valentine's Day just two weeks away, forget Cindies and that one night stand and find someone special. There is no point in fighting it: monogamy is here to stay.

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Building Blocks



The complacency of beauty

Claire Huxley

Love it or loathe it, Cambridge is pretty. There are undoubtedly far uglier places to spend your formative years. For all Cambridge lacks in nightlife, well-lit pathways or reasonably-priced breakfasts, it more than makes up for in winding cobbled streets and oak panelled walls. Let Oxford keep its dreaming spires; we're overflowing with our own. But with such beautiful buildings at every turn, is it possible that we have become complacent? Does impressive architecture bestow a prestige that allows us to rest on our laurels? The university must think so, for what else could explain monstrosities like the UL or Sidgwick site's much maligned Raised Faculty Building? Perhaps the powers that be are worried that too many arches and vaulted ceilings will cause a severe case of smugness. The only cure: a heavy dose of concrete breeze blocks.

However if the university is afraid of the power of beautiful architecture's to rot our minds, they needn't worry. If anything, arched doorways and sun-dappled cloisters seem to have quite the opposite effect; could there be more than academics behind Trinity's five year domination of the Tompkins Table and unmatched number of Nobel Laureates? It's a tempting conclusion, but one which falls apart on scrutiny – Churchill ranks as the sixth best college academically, while St John's languishes seventeenth.

Yet, regardless of whether architecture specifically influences academics, it certainly plays a large role in what makes our experience here so special. Any jaded third-year who forgets the magic of a candle-lit hall need only take a glance at the awed faces of their college children to be reminded of how it felt to go to formal for the first time. Even at our most stressed, frustrated or cynical, the utter beauty of Cambridge has a habit of sneaking up on us; be it sunlight glittering on the river, or the trees on the Backs turning from emerald to gold, there's always a new sight to take refuge in. There's a reason why our Instagram feeds swell up in exam term. In the midst of a week five meltdown, breath-taking views feel like our university's last saving grace, the unshakeable element that makes the whole thing worth the struggle.

For many of us, Cambridge's beauty is inspiring, a constant reminder of what makes it unique, and of the hard work that it takes to achieve (and keep) a place here. Rest on our laurels? You're far more likely to find us resting on a window seat in the library.

Architecture and Access

Christina Farley

My school was made of asbestos. Its most interesting feature was the relative ease with which you could stick a foot through an outside wall, resulting in immediate evacuation and no lessons in that classroom for several days. Also notable were the orange stalactites blooming on the ceiling of the science block.

All this was a far cry from the strange, ageless beauty of Cambridge architecture, the first thing that hooked me in and in many ways a key reason I applied. There are various moments that stand out: A punting tour just after GCSEs, when the astonishing virginia-creeper-covered back of New Court convinced me that I liked St John's best. A corner of what I now know to be the Old Music Room, the red curtain, panelled ceiling, heraldic carvings, glimpsed through a Tudor window from the street, when I desperately wanted to be inside. I could think of nothing better than to study the History of Art and Architecture while surrounded by the buildings that appeared in my books.

We often hear in the media about the lawns of Cambridge and Oxford, condemned with that hackneyed adjective, 'manicured'. According to these writers, our buildings ooze stuffiness, fossilised in architectural splendour: colleges where only the rich and privileged could possibly feel at home. Their similarity with England's best public schools no doubt lends weight to this misconception. Poor state-school students must feel hopelessly out of place in these surroundings, we are repeatedly told: how could they feel otherwise, coming from an environment so far removed from it?

We should be wary of this attitude, which confuses attractive buildings with barriers to social mobility. The implication is that state-school students, not surrounded by beauty from birth, must be intimidated by it. But why shouldn't students who are not from these (minority) backgrounds love it too? To focus on the buildings is to ignore the bigger issue: a private education is often (but not always) quite simply better than a state one, and can provide the resources that give its recipients the confidence to succeed whatever environment they find themselves in. Of course, the same goes for family background: parents who take an interest in their child's education make it easier for them to succeed as adults. These are the real reasons for inequality in career destinations and university admissions, not the buildings. There is also media hyperbole to contend with. Psychologically, the effect of the architecture surely pales in comparison to the effect of the many hysterical articles about 'toffs', channelled comfortably from cloistered schools through the dreaming spires of Oxbridge and into the halls of Westminster, or other stereotypical career destinations. If state-school students do feel uncomfortable looking up at King's College Chapel, or peering through the gates of Sidney Sussex, or seeing St John's Chapel Tower looming on the horizon, is it because of the architecture? Or is it because that's what they are told they should feel?

The idea that great architecture must frighten those who aren't lucky enough to be acclimatised to it before they arrive is patronising and problematic. I did not like the fact that my school was made of asbestos. I did not like the ugliness of the white and blue metal. The fact that it was freezing in winter was not compensated for by gorgeous, if ill-fitting, Gothic windows. I wanted to escape. It was Cambridge's stunning surroundings – coupled in my mind with the excellence of the education and the promise of friends on my wavelength – that made me want to come here. The buildings of my school did shape me, but they taught me to long for something lovelier. The beauty of Cambridge drew me here. It is not the preserve of the rich.

It's a Basic Struggle

Lucy Roxburgh says goodbye to M&S and hello to the Sainsbury's Basics Range, for a whole week

Tesco Everyday Value. ASDA Smartprice. Even the infamous Waitrose 'Essentials' (including such key products as scented ironing water and limoncello mousse). Every supermarket has its own budget range uniquely branded with its own distinct font.

For the typical Cambridge student, the Sainsbury's Basics range is by far the most recognisable of these, in no small part thanks to the offensive shade of orange it's decked in. It is a colour scheme I'm going to need to learn to love, as for one whole week I have embarked on a quest to live on a diet of only Sainsbury's Basics. Yes, you read correctly – such a challenge may have never been attempted before. Who knows if I'll turn orange, or even if I'll survive – so read on (spoiler alert: I do both).

My neighbour is horrified – having grown up in a strictly Marks and Spencer's household, which occasionally stretches itself to the luxuries of Waitrose, this presents an entirely new world for her. In a slightly quivering voice she asks me whether I'm sure that I know what I'm getting myself into. I am sure – with Sainsbury's so much cheaper, more accessible and ultimately just not that different, I am determined to win her round, so on Monday I set out shopping.

Many of the products are already familiar to me – the custard creams, English muffins (70p, an identical packet of just Sainsbury's ones are 90p) and bananas slip easily into my basket. My Percy Pigs habit is replaced with some slightly soggy looking Midget Gems for 50p, the only sweets available in the range, but oh well.

The Basics slogans are there to keep me entertained – from the ironic and surprisingly self-aware "creamy and cheesy" cream cheese (who knew dairy could be so meta?) to the apologetic "light and lovely, just a little less chocolatey" chocolate mousse – the marketing team behind the Basics Range are clearly willing not to take their products too seriously, and kudos for that. There are even gentle attempts at puns, "simple recipe for a lot less dough" reads the packaging on one loaf of bread. And so the shopping continues – my eyes ignoring anything with non-orange packaging or a price more than a few pounds until my basket is full.

At first, I can honestly tell you that I didn't notice any difference. I toast a crumpet for breakfast (covered in butter), and a packet of Basics crisps fill my 4pm hunger dip (can you go that wrong with crisps?) There is definitely something kind of tragic about the white and orange crisp packet, but there's also something kind of tragic about how quick I am to assume something needs to be branded in familiar garish colours to be tasty. Everything is tragic really.

A picnic style lunch of a Scotch egg with a clementine, mini apple pie and black-currant squash gives the atmosphere of a primary school trip. But school trips are fun. For dinner, it is time to actually have some hot food. I feel I should give one of the basics ready meals a go, but my lack of an oven drastically diminishes my choices to four types of mash-topped pies or multiple mystery lasagnes. Hmph.

Instead I turn to my unnecessarily large jar of tomato sauce, shrink wrapped cheddar and mysteriously labelled "pasta shapes" (which turns out simply to be penne... why not just say penne?) to whip up a student classic.

It doesn't taste any the worse for being made up of only Basics products – the only difference so far has been price. Day one – still alive and not yet orange.

For day two I take it up a step and put on my baking mitts. I make rocky road using dark and white chocolate, butter and dried fruit, all sourced from the Basics range, naturally. Admittedly, it lacked the satisfying squidginess that a generous dollop of Tate and Lyle golden syrup in the mixture normally provides. Nevertheless, it proves to be pretty addictive and its presence in my mini fridge next to my desk makes concentrating on essay writing even more of a challenge than usual.

It even goes down well with M&S friend (although I don't think she entirely realised that it was made from Basics-only ingredients). I had bought the Basics feta, always one of my staples for an easy couscous lunch (so Cambridge), but realise that the Basics range doesn't stretch that far. Instead, I make a simple meatball soup using the pre-chopped mixed vegetables, tinned (well, boxed actually) tomatoes and minced beef.

I have definitely found that sticking to fresh foods, or at least foods with minimal extra processing, is the way to go when shopping on a budget range. The differences in taste is normally negligible, and you actually know what you're putting in your digestive system. Meat and eggs, however, are the one area that I find it worth spending that little bit more.

As the week goes on I am beginning to miss my branded staples – Philadelphia for bagels, proper Heinz ketchup, Kellogg's Crunchy Nut instead of dusty "More flakes than fruit" Basics fruit and fibre cereal. I notice the peculiar omissions of the range, despite its surprising size of over 500 products: Basics tonic water to accompany the "no fancy packaging, just gin" only comes in diet, there are 22 types of Sainsbury's breaded chicken but none are Basics and the fruit and veg included in the collection is sporadic.

The slogan on the Basics cat litter really sums up the range: "does the job". You are never going to be able to knock up Michelin star meals purely from this range and it is unlikely to blow your taste buds out of this world. By the end of the week I have found new favourites (hello Basics chocolate mousse, six for 40p) and definitely saved money (albeit earning far fewer Nectar points). Even M&S friend seems sort of convinced.

Despite my new appreciation for shopping on a Basics budget, I have to admit that I am definitely looking forward to escaping its confines and returning to the culinary gratification that can only really be found by those instantly recognisable branded products. When it comes to my stomach, I am afraid to admit that the multinational corporations have won.

On returning from a gin-fuelled Sunday Life night out, I find the Basics tortilla chips and jaffa cakes waiting for me to make the perfect 3am snack and give me the energy I'll need overnight to nurture my body back to good health for the morning. And with the smell of tortilla chips on my breath, my week living the orange high life has come to an end.



Hits

- Tortilla chips
- Mozarella balls (only 50p!)
- Chocolate digestives
- Most things sweet – English muffins are a particular favourite
- Fruit and vegetables, which are much cheaper with zero taste difference



Misses

- Mysterious meats – to be avoided at all costs
- Ready meals – here, Taste the Difference means what it says
- Coffee (that tastes like acid)
- The relentless orange



DOWN THE PATH



Obscured in the light, jewelled tones among the bleak: all found down the path...



*Photography | Julianna Pars ; Model | Catherine Tennyson & Maria Tennyson ; Clothes | Models' own
Direction, Styling, Setting, Hair & Make-up | Livs Galvin*

THE SHOW MUST COME OUT

Richard Skipper explores LGBT+ issues in the Cambridge theatre scene

The concept of theatre as a 'gay' space is nothing new. For a long time, there has been a sense of moral panic about the bohemianism of the theatre industry as a breeding ground for the odd and anti-social. Even now, in LGBT+ movements, theatre of all kinds is seen as one of the integral cultural mediums of the grand queer tradition.

Part of this is likely down to a self-reinforcing attitude: if theatre is seen as a queer-friendly space, then it is only natural that queer people should gravitate towards it. Theatre is also one of the most easily accessible forms of story-telling, not necessarily demanding the high budgets and technical expertise that mediums like film-making can require. Marginalised groups can capitalise on these advantages, bringing their story directly to a waiting audience. However, it is never that simple. Recent articles about racial diversity demonstrate the need for greater awareness of the kind of stories student theatre chooses to tell, and who it includes in them. Is Cambridge theatre doing enough to be the LGBT+ space it is believed to be?

From my own personal experience, Cambridge theatre is, for the most part, a very accepting environment. There have been a couple of choice comments about how I should "pretend to be straight" in order to be a better actor, but these are certainly in the minority, never from a director, and are not indicative of the wider picture. The number of plays concerned with LGBT+ experiences since I have arrived is truly heartening.

Off the top of my head, I can name the recent productions of *The Laramie Project* and *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as last year's *Tory Boyz* and *Her Naked Skin*. It suggests good things that I feel like there are more productions that I have left off this list, for fear of offending the people who put in ridiculous amounts of commitment to bring them to stage.

There are gaps in representation here though. The 'L' and 'G' components, and sometimes even the 'B' section, are being covered. But it's that 'T' part that eludes so many people, along with the other letters lurking behind that plus sign, which are pretty much non-existent.

Part of this is likely down to a lack of confidence in directors and producers in making and casting plays about groups they don't play a part in, and part of it is the lack of scripts made for these issues in the first place. But I promise you: as long as you are respectful and do your research, there is nothing difficult about making a play about transgendered characters, or asexual characters, or intersex characters, or non-binary characters.

It's always difficult to decide where the responsibility of representation lies in an entirely

voluntary system of theatre production, but it is never difficult to think a little harder about what sort of people you want to be seen on stage.

This doesn't mean that all theatre involving LGBT+ people must concern itself solely with the fact that queer people exist, and a diversity in representation would be beneficial. Pieces of theatre about the specific issues and lives of LGBT+ people are always important and are nothing to be sniffed at, but I think it is okay now to try to move beyond creating queer characters just to be counted. It's difficult to think of queer plays in theatre where someone doesn't die. LGBT+ violence is extremely real and extremely frightening and that, in addition to the high suicide rates, should never be forgotten or wiped away for the sake of pretending that equality has been reached. I don't reject the plays that have come before, like *The Laramie Project*, that depict tragically common scenarios of violence and cruelty, and I'm glad they're still being put on. I do want, however, more plays about queer people living happy lives despite these issues, and queer characters who do live in accepting societies that are not our own.

There's an entirely different article to be written about LGBT+ people and comedy, but to have them appear in sketches or farces without it necessarily leading to gay or trans-panic jokes would be nice. In addition, just because a play was written before the 1970s, this doesn't mean there isn't room for reinterpretation, as many Shakespeare productions in the past have shown. LGBT+ people have, of course, existed for a very long time, even if they weren't written about. John Dryden may not have known about transgendered people, but he also didn't know germs existed.

Not all queer theatre needs to be about sex, as some either choose or do not want to have sex. Not all queer theatre has to be about white, young, conventionally attractive men. Not all, or rather no, queer theatre can capture the extreme diversity of such a broad component of society, and nor should every play feel forced to add in characters for the sake of characterising the unquantifiable amounts of queer people across time and space. Queer theatre has its roots in telling real and crucial stories about violence and discrimination, but it has potential to do much more.

I don't mean to stand over theatre as some great liberal guardian of enforced LGBT+ representation, demanding a queer character in every production I see – that is to completely miss the point. Besides, there is nothing immoral about writing about straight, cisgendered people, mythical as they may be to me. Nor do I mean to refute that theatre is more progressive than many other forms of media, although

student theatre is one of the few things I feel like I can affect with an article and without a parade. Cambridge already does so much to promote queer people in theatre, but I don't feel like it is too much to ask for more when many other places refuse to even consider the notion.

Even if every play in Cambridge for an entire year only wrote exclusively about queer people, I would probably still ask for more, because any sort of queerness in theatre has been sanitised and hidden away for so long. The length of some of these paragraphs is proof enough that we have only scratched the surface when

it comes to displaying the history of a demographic that has been censored and erased for hundreds of years. There are other groups who are represented even less, from non-white racial groups to disabled people, but their concerns and demands for representation are not mutually exclusive to LGBT+ people.

It is difficult to express quite how much representation matters to those who have grown up with their sexuality and gender identity validated as acceptable and normal by the media, but Cambridge theatre should fully embrace its reputation as a queer-friendly space. The more of those there are, the better.

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JOHANNES HIORT

FRESHER DIRECTION

First year Will Bishop talks us through his directorial debut



Honestly, I had mixed feelings when I got the gig of directing at the Corpus Playroom this term. Calling something a 'Week 3' show made it sound like I had less than a month in which to create it, which, considering that the last show I directed had a rehearsal period of five months, did not quite feel like enough time.

I hid myself in a dark room and quietly screamed in panic. After I emerged, I accepted the challenge and got on with it.

A little background to this: I did not direct any of the fresher's plays, but I had a director's itch, so I pitched a play, fully expecting them to turn me down.

I was pleasantly surprised when they gave me the Corpus Playroom, which in my mind is a really exciting space.

My knowledge of the Cambridge theatre machine was lacking. I knew a few of the cogs; how to run auditions, who I needed on the production team, but what of funding? What of the technical side to the process? What about publicity? I knew nothing.

It was at this point that I reminded myself that the first step to being a good director is to pretend you know what you're doing, and the second step is to ask other people when you have no idea what you're doing.

I've been very fortunate in this. The more theatre you go to, the more shows you do, the more friends you make in this scene, and everyone is willing to throw in their five cents because, in essence, we are all working towards the same thing: creating the most vibrant and thriving student theatre in the whole of the UK. I was just the latest fresher willing to contribute.

I quickly ran through everyone I'd met in the ADC clubroom or in rehearsal rooms, to ask them a thousand questions about the shows they'd been in, directed, produced or just liked. I applied to a funding body, the Pembroke Players (who have been really lovely and helpful to me),

and then set about casting people for the show.

I am very proud of the cast I assembled. I had some incredible people audition, and everyone who came through the door gave it their all, which was an honour to witness. I was surprised by the amount of second and third years who auditioned. Coming from secondary school, it's very easy as a fresher to believe that you are in some way the equivalent of a naïve little Year 7, but in fact, we are all equal when it comes to what we do in our spare time. The second and third years I've cast are talented, committed, and have put their faith in me and my ability to create a play that doesn't suck. Directing them has not been intimidating, but enjoyable. I'm always itching to get back into the rehearsal rooms and spend more time with the artists I both relate to and look up to.

The play is called *Racing Demon* by David Hare, and is about a group of vicars living in inner-city London, facing a brave new world that spells God with a small "g". Whilst one vicar struggles to marry his socialist sensibilities with the rituals of his Church, another struggles to keep his gay lover hidden from view. A young vicar casts off his atheist girlfriend, for fear of offending his boss, and another vicar drinks herself silly trying to figure out why everyone seems so miserable.

The play resonated with me as a political story that examines how the Church of England is both a religious body and a British institution, steeped in traditions of the past whilst also struggling to accept what it is to live in the modern world. Cambridge has had its fair share of ridiculous traditions, and so the play has a particular relevance here. I couldn't resist pitching it.

This whole process has been terrifying, exciting, and a huge amount of fun. The trust that Cambridge theatre has in its freshers is mind-boggling, and humbling. I'm proud of what we've achieved in this past month.

Turns out you can actually get a lot done in three weeks.



Overlooked: The Slade Lectures

India Rose Matharu-Daley

Deep in a green jungle of cedar, mahogany and sapodilla trees, in the heart of Chiapas, Mexico, the majestic Temple of Inscriptions bestrides the ancient Mayan city of Palenque. The temple is a gem of Mesoamerican architecture, a pyramidal structure with nine levels symbolising Xibalba, the Mayan underworld.

Its hieroglyphic inscriptions recount the remarkable life of the man who built it, K'inich Janaab' Pakal, the polymath ruler of Palenque, who died in 683AD. Pakal's tomb was only discovered in 1952: after climbing the steep pyramid face and entering the temple precinct, Mexican archaeologist Alberto Ruz Lhuillier broke the seal around an unassuming limestone slab. Behind was a hidden staircase leading into the building's core. Another slab revealed a further flight of steps descending to the crypt. The sarcophagus in its musty interior showed Pakal falling into Xibalba, 'the place of fear', through the jaws of a giant serpent. Pakal's corpse wears a jade mask and bead necklaces, and holds a jade cube and sphere, the meaning of which eludes us.

There is a great deal of mystery surrounding the ancient Maya, a pre-Columbian people whose civilisation flourished in parts of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador around 4th-16th centuries CE. New discoveries, however, are creating constant excitement in the field. Professor Mary Miller has come from the Americas to share them with Cambridge. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and Dean of Yale College until 2014, Miller holds this year's Slade Professorship of Fine Art. The chair was founded by the art collector Felix Slade (1788-1868). The visiting Slade Professor, an international leader in his or her field, is elected every year. Miller's predecessors include artist, art critic and member of the Bloomsbury Group Roger Fry; Sir Ernst Gombrich, author of the seminal primer *The Story of Art* (1950); and Anthony Blunt, director of the Courtauld Institute, Surveyor of the King's Pictures and Soviet spy of the notorious Cambridge Five. In short, the Slade Professors are the titans of art history.

Holders of the Professorship give eight lectures and four seminars for students. Miller's rich offering is "A Thing Of Wonder: The Hand-held Object Of The Ancient Maya," which she will unravel each Monday at 5pm in Mill Lane Lecture Room 3. She promises titillation, revulsion and whacky New Age theories. Erich von Däniken believes the Temple was the work of an ancient extraterrestrial. Now is your chance to ask the eminent Professor Miller if she agrees.

The Slade Lectures are held every Monday until 9th March.

Björk – Vulnicura



As well as misspelling several track titles, the low-quality leak which prompted Vulnicura's surprise release rather poetically tagged the album's genre as 'Other'. While this only superficially covers Björk's extreme brand of pop, this album truly is a departure from previous form, and marks a return to the contours of her legendary albums in the late 90s.

Björk's album artwork usually gives a feel for the music it accompanies – in 2011, Biophilia presented her as a sci-fi Gaia. By contrast, Vulnicura features her hovering, doll-like, in a leather catsuit with what looks midway between a vagina and a gaping wound in her chest. The album's tone matches the image with unerring accuracy; despite its otherworldly exterior, it is profoundly human. Björk has ripped open her chest and candidly revealed what lies inside it.

Vulnicura's subject matter is by far her most brutal yet – recording the breakdown of her long relationship with artist Matthew Barney. Its most powerful moments read like sections of tortured conversation: the lyrics, sung with desperation and venom, repeatedly speak of "we" and "us." 'History of Touches' presents this sharply: "Every single fuck / We had together / Is in a wondrous timelapse". This is her most visceral material in years, and it is no surprise that she's expressed terror at the prospect of performing it live.



The album's sound also carries an element of threat. 'History of Touches' clatters with icy stutters reminiscent of post-internet electronic experimenters such as Oneohtrix Point Never and Holly Herndon. The ten-minute 'Black Lake' lurches from strings to industrial, metallic techno. 'Lionsong' develops into a supple, double-time pop ballad which wouldn't feel out of place on Radiohead's *In Rainbows*.

Significant credit is due to Alejandro Ghersi, alias Arca, who is fresh from producing the sound behind FKA twigs's meteoric rise in 2014. The brand of androgynous, off-kilter dance music in his solo album, *Xen*, is a major point of reference here, mirroring Björk's own powerful and knotted voice. Co-produced by Björk and Arca, the tracks integrate Björk's complex, strained string arrangements with tightly woven synth parts. The sound is vibrant and spacious, but unsettled. It fits the tortuous lyrics with astonishing grace.

In the past, Björk has been guilty of indulging in high concept. Vulnicura is a return to her core appeal – a combination of emotional directness and a pure, focused sound. By 'Mouth Mantra', the penultimate track, she makes use of the scale that she has abused in her past missteps. Here, the thunderous basslines and screeching vocoder choirs serve to magnify the voice at the centre of the music. That voice has rediscovered its medium, and it can be welcomed back as a truly vital one.

Michael Davin

Hot Numbers



The website gave it away before I'd even set off. Minimalist and streamlined with little hand-drawn graphics, it screamed 'pretentious void' with just the words "Our Coffee", "Gigs and Events", and "Blog."

Already I could tell that this wasn't your run-of-the-mill independent café, peddling middling-to-average filter coffee and ciabatta paninis (although these were to be found on the depressingly unimaginative menu in the bowels of the website).

This was a café with an image – one that seeks to attract the lonely brogue-wearing, fold-up bike-riding thirty-something singles of CB1.

That was the other problem. It was *so far away*. Felix and I set off early: I'd been rowing and he had to sweep in college, because at Corpus we get punished for laughing after 10pm, so we decided that a nice breakfast might cheer us up after our cold outdoor mornings.

We had planned to enjoy the stroll down Mill Road (perhaps a slightly unrealistic ambition) but soon realised we should have worn hiking boots and brought bottled water with us.

Just in case you were still thinking about going there: seriously, don't bother. I'd been right about the lonely hipster vibe. The café was full of bearded men and women in duffel coats, all sitting at MacBook Airls and sporting giant headphones.

They all sat alone, sipping black coffee. A few were slowly spooning down porridge. The décor was predictable: naked lightbulbs hanging low over the stripped wooden tables, benches instead of chairs, bare brick walls highlighted in colours an interior decorator would call 'teal'

and 'eggshell'. Felix was impressed by the charcoal drawings of mysterious-looking nobodies on the walls.

There was a piano in the corner and soft jazz music in the background (which no one could hear because they all had headphones on). It fulfilled the requirements of 'independent, subversive coffee house' by blatantly trying so very hard.

Nevertheless, the barista was cheerful. She smiled so enthusiastically as she took my order that I felt slightly overwhelmed – it was fairly early in the morning, after all.

Instead of a till she used an iPad. I wanted to kill the person who invented an app for that.

Felix had vanilla chai tea and a smoked salmon and cream cheese bagel; I had a chai latte and porridge with cinnamon, honey and prunes. It all came to just over £12, which really wasn't worth it.

The drinks were bland and smelt a bit weird, Felix complained that the bagel was slightly scorched from the toaster and his cream cheese was runny. My porridge was just boring porridge, with some decoration out of a squeeze bottle. I'd also forgotten why I dislike prunes. I remember now.

Perhaps going early in the morning when I was particularly hungry slightly marred my experience.

If I were to go there for tea and cake on a different day when I was in a great mood, its affected image and mediocre content might not have bothered me that much.

But, then again, I'd have to be careful to avoid their almost daily 'gigs and events.'

Watching lonely people biting their nails and drawing or watching a work-in-progress play about self-doubt probably wouldn't inspire a much more positive review.

Noa Lessof Gendler



MEGGIE FAIRCLOUGH



Foxcatcher



Ominous strains of a cello? Check. Piano melody bearing more than a passing resemblance to Schindler's List? Check.

Brace yourself for the deeply chilling psychological drama that is *Foxcatcher*. Based on a true story, the film follows the brothers Mark and Dave Schultz (Channing Tatum and Mark Ruffalo), Olympic gold-winning wrestlers, as they are recruited by John du Pont (Steve Carell).

A wealthy recluse who is bent on creating the greatest US wrestling team the world has ever seen, du Pont believes wrestling for one's country to be *dulce et decorum est*.

While Dave is able to enjoy a family life outside of wrestling, Mark spends his nights alone with instant noodles after awkwardly addressing schools, and longs for enduring success, seemingly possible with du Pont's help.

Most of the film takes place on du Pont's estate, which creates a claustrophobic atmosphere reminiscent of *The Shining's* Overlook Hotel.

I must admit I thought the shadows of *Anchorman*, *The Office* and *21 Jump Street* would loom too close for me to be able to take Carell and Tatum seriously – both, however, have created characters that far exceed their comic roles and contribute to a scorching but quietly horrifying film.

In *du Pont*, Carrell has created a disturbingly believable creature. The subtle oddities, like strange vocal inflection or a top lip that curls a little too far, keep the audience on edge.

But Carell's real achievement is to slowly change the audience's perception of du Pont from a lonely, unsettling chemical fortune heir with an unusual passion to a paranoid psychopath with zero empathy.

By the film's denouement, Carell is truly a revolting presence on screen whom the audience loathes. The effect is compounded by du Pont's relationship with his mother (even in talented company, Vanessa Redgrave shines), which alternates between a petulant middle aged man throwing his multi-million dollar toys out of the pram to a distinctly Freudian complex. Du Pont literally adopts a submissive position in the ring when his mother is watching.



ANNAPURNA PICTURES; IRENE STORY; MEDIA RIGHTS CAPITAL

We are constantly reminded of the inability of men to communicate emotionally with one another; Mark seems not only unwilling but physically unable to confide in Dave, despite the iron bond between the brothers.

“

NO HORROR FILM CAN PRODUCE MONSTERS AS UNSETTLING AS THOSE PRODUCED IN PURSUIT OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

Both seem deeply frustrated by this lack of articulation, and instead attempt to use the ring as a mouthpiece to express their feelings and fears.

Yet, far from portraying wrestling as a physical art form or an ancient masculine rite of passage, the film's imagery is constant in its portrayal

of Dave as an animal, an 'ape', as du Pont eventually comes to describe him.

Tatum's nostrils flare as he grunts, and the wrestling movements reduce the human form to the shuffles of a gorilla, hunched over and menacing; tellingly, du Pont summons him as one would a dog.

There is a sense of regression in the ring, and it is to the cinematographer's credit that wrestling seems not an olympic sport of speed and skill but, as Redgrave puts it, a 'low' sport, which strips competitors of language and humanity.

Homoeroticism is perhaps an inevitable theme here; hordes of men greased up and wearing lycra, with very little screen time given to women, means that one particular scene with Tatum in boxers definitely suggests a relationship beyond the platonic with du Pont (this has been fiercely denied by the real Mark).

Every drip of sweat and squeak of gym shoe on floorboard is magnified, and prolonged shots of wrestling 'holds' build an intensity that is almost uncomfortably sexual

at points.

Yet to simply categorise the male relationships as a combination of infantile in their emotions and closeted in their sexuality would be to do the film a disservice: it is the lack of any sort of father figure for all three leads that points to the real heart of the film.

The father of the brothers isn't around, and the search for a male role model creates psychological tensions and desires.

Mark is clearly desperate to give his filial affection to anyone who shows him the least bit of kindness, while du Pont sees his role of coach as inclusive of a broad range of capacities, namely father, brother, leader and teammate.

The tragedy of the finale stems from a complex series of rejections which are simultaneously professional, sexual and familial, with undertones of Oedipus and Falstaff.

Foxcatcher leaves the viewer profoundly shaken and reminds us that no horror film can produce monsters as unsettling as those produced in pursuit of the American Dream.

Kit Fowler

Music in the Fitzwilliam



If you haven't heard of the Sunday lunchtime 'Music in the Fitzwilliam' concert series, you probably aren't alone. I certainly hadn't until last week, so when I slipped into Gallery 3 on Sunday afternoon, I didn't really know what to expect. However, something about the atmosphere there delighted me instantly, even before I heard any music. Sitting among a horde of 16th-18th century portraits was just magical, not to mention the gorgeous plasterwork on the ceiling. Although the gallery is large enough, the gathering itself felt intimate and cosy.

The two pieces performed on Sunday were Mozart's Quintet for Piano and Winds in E-flat major, K. 452, and Poulenc's Sextet for Piano and Winds, Op. 100, played by Erik Azzopardi and the Reigate Wind Quartet. Formed in 2010, their ensemble has since grown in size and focuses on exploring the standard wind repertoire. The players gave a short introduction to each piece, so you needn't worry if, like me, you aren't familiar with the music.

The two pieces complemented each other very nicely. The Mozart Quintet was very upbeat and almost reassuring. A special shout-out to Annie Morris, whose performance on the clarinet was gently unassuming, but which I felt supported the whole piece. However, I particularly loved the Poulenc, a February 2014 performance of which Azzopardi has

called the highlight of his collaboration with the Reigate Wind Ensemble. Where the Mozart had been confident and cheery, the Poulenc was agitated and slightly uneasy, building throughout with a sense of urgency and alarm. There was no sense of safety: once you thought you knew where the piece was going, it suddenly changed direction, a delicious contrast to the Mozart which was more familiar, and invoked a greater sense of complacency in its audience.

These concerts take place every week, at the same time (13:15-14:00) – which means that you don't have to get up too early, and have the option of using them as a welcome afternoon respite from work. It's definitely worth having a look at the Fitzwilliam website, whose event page details every concert until April, to see if anything interests you, because there is a good deal of variety.

Next week's concert is a performance by members of the Britten Sinfonia Academy, with works ranging from the Baroque to the 20th century. While the event is free, it is still ticketed, so if there's something you particularly want to see, you should try and arrive a bit early. I cannot recommend this series highly enough. Perhaps for some, a 45 minute concert in Cambridge's favourite museum isn't quite 'escaping the bubble', but for me, it was a glorious escape from the outside world.

Emer O'Hanlon

Kettle's Yard Concerts



The Kettle's Yard concert series is another one of those little known cultural gems that crop up in Cambridge. Set in the main atrium of art collector Jim Ede's former house, the performance of chamber music here feels more like an informal gathering of music enthusiasts than a ticketed concert in a university-owned museum. The series is far from amateur, however. Scanning down the season programme reveals an impressive array of big names, including Young Musician of the Year winners Lucy Landymore (2010) and Laura van der Heijden (2012), and the star operatic tenor Mark Padmore. It's also heartening to see that the venue is keen not to fall into the trap of endlessly programming the classics, dedicating seven of the 16 concerts to new music, ranging from turntables and dancers to Frank Zappa percussion. The Nash Ensemble, arguably the best chamber ensemble in the country, was no exception to the high calibre of art that Kettle's Yard promotes.

The group opted for a 20th and 21st century set, with Stravinsky's Three Pieces for String Quartet, followed by the premiere of a Richard Causton piece, and ending with Shostakovich's Piano Quintet. The first movement of the Stravinsky, Danse, thrust us immediately into the world of 1910s Paris. From the opening drone played over the bridge of the viola, to the final synchronisation of the folk-like melodic cellos, the quartet generated an intensely savage sound.

The middle movement, Eccentrique, was inspired by the clown Little Tich, and required an almost transient level of self-awareness on the part of the players, rapidly switching between nostalgic lyricism and comedic glissandi. The

highlight, however, was the final movement, Cantique, a meditative piece whose ethereal block chords evoke a similar pagan mystery to that found in sections of the Rite of Spring. Causton's Night Piece, performed by Tim Horton, displayed a postmodern composer's attempt to pay homage to the past. The past in question is Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, from which Causton borrows the clarinet's melody line, coating it "in harmony and blurred resonance beneath a layer of dissonant bell-like sonorities".

Towards the end, this modern 'veil' is lifted, and the clarinet melody emerges in its original harmonisation. As well as being sonically beautiful, the piece makes a deeper statement about how we experience art, distorting it with modern preconceptions and ultimately making us unable to experience it as it was first conceived.

The opening minor triad of the Shostakovich Piano Quintet brought us firmly back to the midst of the 20th century and WWII. The Prelude exhibited the Nash Ensemble's remarkable ability as soloists, with cellist Bjorg Lewis offering moments of impassioned lament before being swept into the inevitable dissonant crisis typical of Shostakovich. In total contrast, the Fugue's dispassionate counterpoint was brought out by a hauntingly dead sound in the violins. The next movement, a Scherzo, showed a return to the savagery which the group had proved capable of in the Stravinsky, filling the packed atrium with chugging chords and virtuosic piano runs. The final Intermezzo and Allegretto are written in a more naïve, neoclassical mode, perhaps in an attempt to reclaim the lost innocence of a war-torn Europe so clearly evoked by the previous movements.

Though short, this was a very enjoyable, well performed concert in brilliant surroundings. If you haven't been – go.

Jonny Verv



Alastair Cook finally gets the axe

Reflecting on England's decision to finally sack Alastair Cook as ODI Captain

Rory Sale

Sport Correspondent

When Alastair Cook was finally sacked on 19th December from the England One Day captaincy, there was relief amongst all of us wanting England to succeed at the World Cup. It had been a long time coming.

This does not stop it being something of a surprise. Ever since Kevin Pietersen's sacking, The ECB made a decision to stand by Cook through thick and thin. He was the man to take England forward into a new era after the calamitous Ashes campaign. This persistence and consistency in selection eventually paid off in the summer with three back-to-back test victories to win the series against a disheartened India. In the one-day format however, England have been nothing short of stubborn.

It has long been clear that Cook, with an average of 27 at a strike rate of 71 in 2014, is not good enough to warrant a space in the one-day side. These numbers recall Mike Atherton's description of him as a "donkey" and a "plodder". Even more frustrating for England fans was the fact that Alex Hales, recently ranked the best T20



It's been a long time coming

batsman in the world, was being kept outside the team by the tedious Cook. It is not often that we produce a man who can smash it out the park with consummate ease, so when one comes along, get him in and quick. Pietersen, a man with less tact than Nigel Farage, is very often mistaken; however in tweeting "Dear Alastair, if you care

about England's chances this winter, please resign," he had a point.

So why have England taken such a long time to accept their mistake, cut their losses and drop Cook? It seems to be a product of the rational conservatism of English cricket developed during Andy Flower's tenure. The steady selection policy did often work, with

players picked for the long run and not simply on temporary form. However, if the man leading the side should not be in it, you have to be bold. This is especially true in the one-day format. Take David Warner. He had not played a single first class game before Australia got him in the T20 and one-day side. They saw his ability to dominate bowling

attacks and made the bold decision to give him a go, now he is one of the world's leading players in all three formats. England should have done the same with Hales.

However, now Morgan only has a few warmup games in which he can prepare for the World Cup. Expectations would be higher if he had had control of the team through the summer and the tour to Sri Lanka. It is not all doom and gloom though. If the selectors go with Hales and Ali at the top, this coupled with the hitting of Morgan and Butler has the makings of a decent batting line-up. The bowling still remains slightly suspect, but if those batsmen fire, they can certainly win us games, especially if the dangerous Morgan can find a much-needed return to form.

Finally, it must be said that despite all my criticisms of Cook as a one-day player, he remains entirely the right man for the Test job. His dismissal from the white ball set up should not in any way endanger this. One only has to look at his record to see that he is about to stroll past Graeme Gooch as England's highest ever test run-scorer, and already has the most test hundreds (25) of any English player. In fact, relieving him of the one-day duties might be exactly what he needs to return to his run-accumulating best. The World Cup offers him a timely break after what can only have been an extremely testing year in which he has handled himself with immense dignity. Come the Ashes this summer, he might well be glad that he got sacked.

Coventry's Calling?

Wasps Rugby Club are discovering a new lease of life away from London

George Ramsay

Sport Correspondent

On October 7th last year, Wasps RFC were confirmed as the main shareholders of the Ricoh Arena in Coventry, and the following week they had announced that they would play their first game at the new stadium on December 21st 2014. By November, Wasps completed the purchase of the complex to become its outright owners, completely reshaping the club's geography in the process. Having played their home games at Adams Park in High Wycombe since 2002, Wasps have long-showed intentions to move to a larger, more permanent stadium, and the move away from the capital was foreshadowed last summer when the club dropped the 'London' tag from their name.

Moving your home stadium 80 miles up the M40 may seem dangerous; the news was greeted with mixed reviews and understandable upset was voiced by the club's London fan-base. But on paper it seems to make sense: Wasps were only part shareholders of Adams Park alongside Wycombe Wanderers Football Club. They were also competing against Harlequins, Saracens and London Irish, all well-established Premiership clubs with grounds nearby. In moving to the Ricoh, Wasps can tap into a pocket of the West Midlands and Birmingham

which no top-tier rugby team has yet to exploit, as well as upgrading to a capacity of 32,609 seats (compared with Adam's Park's 10,284). The Ricoh Arena is at the centre of a large complex, including a leisure centre, a hotel and a casino with ample parking also available, while their High Wycombe home was buried at the back of an industrial estate.

Add to this the fact that Wasps were hours away from bankruptcy in 2011 and were only saved by the backing of businessmen Derek Richardson and David Thorne. The move to the Ricoh offers Wasps a financial platform that part-ownership of Adams Park simply couldn't provide.

The on-field situation also seems much brighter for the club. Four years ago, Wasps found themselves hampered with financial insecurity while also sitting on the cusp of relegation. They have since secured a plethora of high-profile players, the most notable including the re-signing of current club captain James Haskell, Welsh international Bradley Davies and the sizeable frame of Fijian Number 8 Nathan Hughes, who



has already bagged six Premiership tries this season. Experienced fly-half Andy Goode is proving a reliable presence with the boot, while the likes of Christian Wade, Tom Varndell and Elliot Daly – established members of Wasps' back line – offer an exciting blend of pace and flair to the proceedings.

Their first performance at the Ricoh also gave reasons for cheer: with a slender two-point lead at half time, Wasps scored four second half tries to defeat London Irish 48-16. What's more, Wasps secured a record for the highest attendance in a Premiership fixture at a club's regular home ground (others having been set at Twickenham and Wembley). A similar margin of victory was recorded against Sale Sharks, who succumbed to a 41-16 defeat with scrum-half Joe Simpson bagging two tries and lifting Wasps into play-off contention.

However controversial the decision to up-sticks to Coventry may have seemed at first, it is now clear the move has sparked new life into the club, and the players are certainly helping the cause having strung together a fine set of recent results.

So the future looks bright for Wasps. With one of the richest and most successful pedigrees of all English rugby clubs, the men in black and gold could find history repeating itself in the coming seasons.

Being a Python

A term of playing American Football in Cambridge

James Digby

Sport Correspondent

I came to back to Cambridge this year determined to play a university sport; it didn't matter which one. As it turns out, I am far too short for basketball, not quite European enough for volleyball, and I really can't ice skate. Nor am I ever going to be desperate enough to resort to korfbal.

American Football stood out as a sport which, despite being a little niche, had a serious team structure, training schedule, and played in a big BUCS league. It also had a cool logo, and the guys I met from the team were friendly. The Cambridge Pythons! The dream.

Training is fun; American football is fun. It is a cracking sport – fast, exhausting, and featuring the biggest hits in sport (come at me, ruggers fans!). And the feeling of running out on a field in full pads and helmet is nothing short of awesome.

Play is similar to rugby, but with armour, and everyone hitting everyone at the same time.

Plus there is the added American bravado – whooping, hollering, big chants, everything to lend our wind-swept, hastily-converted football pitches the ambiance of a US college super stadium filled with bands, cheerleaders and thousands of fans.

The highlight of my rookie season

so far was definitely the Varsity match against the 'other place'.

We played Oxford at Grange Road with hundreds of our friends watching, commentary on CamFM and even a live stream online!

And we thrashed them (sort of – but we did win).

It was better than playing Canterbury, who called it off at half-time after a drubbing. We don't talk about the Oxford Brookes match...

If you're fit, keen, and looking for something a bit different, get involved!



THE FEELING OF RUNNING OUT ON A FIELD IN FULL PADS AND HELMET IS NOTHING SHORT OF AWESOME

Male or female (no gender discrimination here), a spritely wide-receiver or a lineman built like a brick-house, there is a position for you.

American football is the fastest growing sport in the UK, so jump on it.

We train hard, play big matches, meet to watch games and swap; we're a team. It doesn't matter if you've never even watched the sport before – most of the team hadn't!

Plus my profile picture, in pads with a Cambridge jersey on, got 110 likes. Just sayin'.

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Coventry's Calling?

The right move for Wasps

Alastair Cook finally fired

Rory Sale reflects on why it took so long



Sport

Asia Cup 2015

A 'dummy's guide' to the Asia Cup, hosted by Australia this month

Niranjana Ranjakunalan
Sport Correspondent

Spectacular. Otherworldly. Brilliant. These are some of the words that have been used to describe Tim Cahill's absolute stunner against China. The overhead kick showed technique, positional awareness, and above all, audacity, something that sets the gifted apart from the Heskeys. This contender for "goal of the tournament" shows that Cahill still hasn't lost it. It looks set to make it into one of those YouTube goal compilations with the annoyingly catchy Basshunter tune playing in the background. Besides the former Everton star, other big names to have graced this year's Cup are Japan's Keisuke Honda and South Korea's talismanic striker Son Heung-Min.

Established players aside, this Asian Cup has also seen its fair share of emerging talent, like Australia's Massimo Luongo. A relative unknown just six months ago and a benchwarmer at the World Cup, Luongo's surprise selection against Kuwait received some criticism. But the youngster responded emphatically with a solid performance



ASIAN FOOTBALL IS HEADING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

against Oman in the group stages. Besides silencing his critics, Luongo has perhaps left Tottenham Hotspur wondering if they sold off Australia's "golden boy" a little too soon.

Another player to look out for in the future is Japan's Yoshinori Muto. Still a student, Muto has managed to juggle his studies with leading the line for Japan. While he has had a relatively quiet Asian Cup, with just one assist, his assured performance against Iraq showed the glimpses of a star. Sharp, pacy and good on the ball, Muto's greatest asset is his age. Coming off the back of an impressive debut season for FC Tokyo, Muto can only get better.

But football is not just about personalities. Goals, comebacks and upsets are what fans crave and the Asian Cup has consistently delivered. Amongst the higher scoring games of the tournament were Jordan's 5-1 win against a hapless Palestinian team, while Australia left its fans delighted after putting four past Kuwait and Oman. China, who recently exited the cup after a quarter-final defeat to Australia, will be better remembered for their

inspired comeback against Uzbekistan in the tournament's group stages.

Everybody loves the story of an underdog, and the biggest upset of the Asian Cup thus far has been Japan's exit at the hands of a resilient and tenacious United Arab Emirates team. Despite dominating possession, the Japanese were creating few chances, and were unusually profligate when they did. The UAE, meanwhile, were happy to sit back, soak in the pressure and stick to their defensive game plan. What was strikingly clear, however, was that the Emiratis simply wanted the win more than the Japanese, who unfortunately will not be lifting the trophy for a record fifth time.

Iraq's thrilling 3-3 draw with Iran has arguably been the game of the tournament thus far. It had goals, drama, controversial refereeing decisions, and most importantly, heart. Referee Ben Williams' questionable decision to send Mehrdad Pooladi off left Iran deeply frustrated and they saw their lead evaporate with Iraq pulling level in the second half. With the score tied at 1-1, the game went into extra time where it well and truly sparked into life. Iraq took the lead twice only to have Iran equalize each time, the latter's numerical disadvantage on the pitch more than made up for by their strength in character. It was not meant to be for Iran, however, as they lost 7-6 to Iraq in a dramatic penalty shootout.

Every tournament has that moment, which takes it out of the footballing sphere and propels it into the public consciousness, either because it was really heartwarming or because it was fascinatingly and inexplicably amusing; the famous Paul the Octopus is a perfect example. The 2015 Asian Cup's 'moment of the tournament' falls very much into the latter category. A penalty was awarded to Saudi Arabia in their game against China. Ignoring the coaching staff's pre-match penalty advice, Chinese goalkeeper Wang Dalei opted to go with the advice of 12 year old "ballboy-slash-budding-goalscorer" Stephan White. Stephan picked left, Wang Dalei went for it and, amazingly, the Saudi Arabians were thwarted. The tournament's unlikely lucky charm is now a bit of a cult hero in China.

Usually maligned and ignored by the footballing community, this year's Asian Cup has been different from previous editions, receiving more widespread recognition. Maybe it is because of the novelty factor, with Australia hosting the tournament for the first time, or perhaps Asian teams are playing better football than they have previously. While Asian football is probably a few years away from reaching the giddy heights of the 2002 World Cup, where South Korea stunned nations like Italy, Spain and Portugal en route to a fourth placed finish, the Asian Cup has shown that Asian football is heading in the right direction.



The R Costings Abbey stadium was packed with students and regulars alike for the FA Cup tie

Cambridging the gap

Can the Manchester United FA Cup tie spur more students to head down to the Abbey?

Peter Rutzler
Sport Editor

Things are on the up for Cambridge United. Having spent the last ten years in the doldrums, fighting off financial liquidation and battling it out in the non-league spectrum of football, they made it back to the professional league system last season. And then Manchester United came knocking.

For a club like Cambridge United, once treading the banks of a financial quagmire, to now receive a financial windfall of the kind seen not only through the game last week, with live television coverage and in front of a full-to-bursting R Costings Abbey stadium, and to be able to do it all again in two weeks' time in Manchester, has been something of a miracle. A 'Utopia', as Jez George, the club's Chief Executive, described it.

Last week's performance by the League Two side was extraordinary. Their organisation, resilience and sheer determination completely dwarfed any of the technical flair and prowess that their multi-million pound megastar opponents attempted to offer in return. They came to the Abbey and were thwarted. It was the stuff of dreams for the U's faithful.

But the most important statistic of

all was the attendance at the Abbey. Full to the brim with 8,000 regulars and university students alike, all urging their local side on. In fact, it could easily have been possible to fill the ground three, or maybe four, times over.

The game undoubtedly captured the city's imagination. You only had to walk through the centre of town to see scarf sellers flaunting their match day goods. This game was unmissable, and, for at least one day, everyone in Cambridge was a U's supporter.

And this can only be a good thing. It has always been difficult for Cambridge United to entice the student population to make the trip to the Abbey and stand in the Newmarket Road terrace. Students are busy. The ground is on the outskirts. The standard of football has not been high enough.

But these excuses may just have been supplanted with the events of the last couple of weeks. It's not hard to find someone from the university who was on the terraces last Friday.

Juan Luis Bradley, from Fitzwilliam College, is just one example, describing his experience as "a memory to be cherished for a very long time indeed."

Students flocked in great numbers to get tickets. And they were served up a treat by the home side.

The real task for Cambridge United is to sustain this sudden upsurge in interest. Working with the university to pull curious football fans away from their desks and spend their pennies on pies and bacon butties must be a priority.

Indeed, the U's have made attempts to engage more with the university.

This is evident from the support and training they currently give to our football Blues side. Danny Kerrigan, the club's Community Trust Manager and former Cambridge Blue, told me how they have started to firm up links with the University.

"The relationship was really cemented with the University football team at the start of last season. Cambridge United committed to coaching the team, and Jez [George] managed Blues games throughout the season.

"I also met Jez through his involvement with CUAFC, and was offered the job of Community Trust Manager. At least part of the reason why I was hired was to provide a stronger link with the University.

"This season we gave free season tickets to all college captains, to try to encourage them to attend more regularly. We have also provided further discounts for college teams who have come as a group." Things are clearly moving in the right direction. But more can still be done. What is clear, however, is that this FA Cup tie has given Cambridge United the opportunity to tap into the student market like never before.

You only have to see the way the student media interest in the side has rocketed Cambridge United will desperately be hoping that they have done enough to get Cambridge students to become regulars at the Abbey during term time.

But especially in the wake of their Manchester United heroics, the Amber Army could not have secured a better opportunity to gain more recruits.