

# VARSITY

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## Ed Balls comes to Cambridge

**Andrew Connell**

News Correspondent

Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer Ed Balls visited the university yesterday as part of Labour's campaign in the run up to May's general election.

The event, organised by the Cambridge University Labour Club (CULC), took place in St John's, and students were given the opportunity to question Balls on Labour's policies and plans ahead of the launch of their full manifesto in April.

Balls was twenty minutes late, possibly waiting for the stack of Domino's pizzas that he brought with him and proceeded to pass round to the students, which led to him asking for more time before answering a question because his mouth was full.

The questions started tamely, but soon began to challenge the Shadow Chancellor. Speaking directly to Varsity, Balls was reluctant to be drawn into the ongoing fallout from the leaked HSBC files, which have revealed substantial donations from holders of Swiss bank accounts to the Conservative and Labour parties.

He argued that Labour was working "in a world where that's the system" and so tried to "minimise our disadvantage", hence the acceptance of large personal donations and loans from wealthy individuals as "that's the only way to access funds at the moment other than from individual donations".

These comments come after Labour leader Ed Miliband called David Cameron a "dodgy Prime Minister" for failing to answer questions on allegations of tax avoidance during Prime Minister's Questions on Wednesday, which allegedly implicated top Tory donors, but also included Labour Party donor and former Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords, Lord Paul.

In light of the ongoing controversy, Balls conceded that large individual

contributions are "far from" an "ideal way of funding political parties," and instead advocated a "move towards a completely different model of party funding" with "a really quite low cap on individual donations".

These suggestions for a cap on individual donations come as the Financial Times this week revealed that such donations to the Labour Party have slumped to less than half of previous levels. The party received only £8.7m from private donors thus far in the course of this parliament, compared to £20.7m in the same period in the last parliament.



### BALLS' LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ON LABOUR'S STANCE DREW LAUGHTER FROM THE CULC AUDIENCE

Balls contrasted Labour's position with Conservative spending on the upcoming election. He claimed the Tories are predicted to outspend Labour by "seven or eight to one".

The Shadow Chancellor also criticised the government on the issue of representation, claiming that the current Cabinet was "much less representative of the real world" than 20 years ago, and criticising both the Tories and the Lib Dems for not doing enough to promote women in Parliament.

Balls was also pressed by the Mayor of Cambridge, Cllr Gerri Bird (Lab), on the current government's cuts to student disability allowances. After first confessing that he was "not sure if [he] know the details of this particular student thing," the Labour parliamentary candidate for Cambridge, Daniel Zeichner, stepped forward and claimed the party "want to look at it

and see what [they] can do", a response that Balls repeated almost verbatim.

Balls' lack of knowledge on Labour's stance drew laughter from the CULC audience, but he grew in confidence on the issue, and finished by saying that he wants "every young person to have a chance to succeed" and "have the same chance as any other student going to university", before criticising the government for cutting funding for disabled students.

The student-centric question-and-answer session promptly moved onto a key electoral issue for this demographic: higher education fees. When pressed, Balls refused to offer any new announcement as to how Labour will fund this policy area, despite criticism from Universities UK that Labour's plans would amount to a £10 billion funding gap (see page 7).

Balls reassured the audience that Labour were working hard on finding ways to improve what he called a "pretty flawed" system, but did not disclose when Labour would be announcing its full proposals.

"Not today, not today, but we are going to be talking about it before the election, I promise you."

The Shadow Chancellor hinted at his personal preference for a graduate tax model of higher education funding rather than a fees-loan system, a possibility that has already been repeatedly floated by senior party figures, including Shadow Minister from Universities Liam Byrne. Labour leader Ed Miliband has also repeatedly suggested higher education policy could be changed in this direction.

Hinting that the current £9,000 fee would be changed because "I want to change it", Balls referenced the claim that almost half of current university students will not repay their fees during their working lives, thus concluding that the system "isn't working for students or for the taxpayer".

With additional reporting from Eleanor Deeley and Tom Freeman.



Balls poses with Labour candidate Zeichner in John's yesterday

ANDREW CONNELL

# A love letter to Cambridge

Dearest Cambridge,

This Valentine's day, everybody seems to be in love with you. Just last week, ex-Presidents from one of your most venerable institutions – the world's oldest continuously running debating society – clambered into its iconic chamber to celebrate 200 years of talking to you; 'This House isn't what it used to be', they posed. But what did it used to be? All-male, black-tie, led by those gentlemen who graced us with their presence once more last Saturday evening. Why didn't Ken Clarke admit women to the Union during his presidency? He already had a girlfriend.

Indeed, I venture that in this calculated punch-line, Ken Clarke was referring to you, Cambridge: that torrid love-affair, those star-crossed moments, those three years fleeting by, doomed to end from the off. You shut your gates and forlorn alumni can but reminisce. You leave your mark, Cambridge, but I fear you are being loved wrong.

They love you in black tie. They love you though your hallowed halls were once closed to half of those who now inhabit them. They love you in the past.

One of the innumerable quirks of life in your midst, however, is a collective memory that lasts only three years, with the insular communities your colleges create accentuating the phenomenon.

We hark back to the golden days of a Cambridge-cum-Brideshead Revisited, yet can't remember the biggest news stories of 2009 – CUSU ents were cancelled. In their first few weeks, students are just as likely to hear about how Prince Charles and his bodyguard attended lectures together as they are CUSU's new policies. Even in this edition we have interviewed alumni Quentin Blake and BBC Sports Editor Dan Roan – great men walked these hallowed halls, you know.

But we should not try walk with them. To love you

properly, we must love you in the present. This is a jealous love. Students ask Whose University? and demand your full attention. They want you to love them now, fiercely, caring for their welfare and hearing their demands.

They may not always be plausible – the course of true love never did run smooth – but they point in the right direction. If, this Valentine's day, you love your university, then love it in the present. By constantly looking back to a halcyon Cambridge past, we forget that these experiences are not our own, and risk losing the chance to make some.

Our short collective memory gives us unprecedented access to fresh perspectives. Paying attention to them instead of trying to stand on the shoulders of (often sexist) giants would do this University good.

Cambridge, it is time you broke up with Ken Clarke. There are plenty more fish in the sea.

EDITORIAL

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## Varsity Writers' Meeting

Come along on Monday 16th February at 6.30pm to the Varsity offices if you're interested in writing for us

### Letters to the Editor [editor@varsity.co.uk](mailto:editor@varsity.co.uk)

Dear Editor,

Your report of the bi-centenary of the Union could have included more meaningful criticism than the one observation offered. It was a *tour de force* of organisation and Alex Forzani, the President and all concerned deserve credit for that. At the dinner beforehand, the toast of the Union was proposed by Vince Cable in a speech containing several misrecollections, including that he was President in the Easter term in the year following the Easter term when Ken Clarke was president. In fact he was defeated to be President that time by the undersigned, the majority being 250 to 100. Vince had to wait a further year for election. He also told political jokes that had nothing to do with Cambridge or the Union. While most of the speeches at the debate were amusing, and that from Peter Bazelgate a masterpiece, the choice of speakers was far too heavily weighted in favour of alumni from the 1960s and the early 1970s. Only two of the eight were later alumni. It was also rather provincial that there was no speaker from outside England; to have had as a speaker, for example, Mani Aiyer, a former minister in the Indian government, or Ian Binnie of the Supreme Court of Canada, both of whom had travelled great distances to be present, would have borne witness to the cosmopolitan history of the Union. As it was, Aiyer was ignored when he held up his hand to contribute to the debate when contributions from the floor were invited. As an [sic] occasion, it was less memorable than the 150 anniversary celebration in 1965.

Yours sincerely,  
Charles Lysaght  
President of the Oxford and Cambridge Society of Ireland

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# Election Profile: Rupert Read

**Richard Nicholl**  
Deputy News Editor

When I sat down to interview Rupert Read at the Anchor, I had been expecting his rather haggard expression. It's been a difficult few weeks for him, fighting for his political life amid allegations of transphobia and ableism on Twitter. What I wasn't expecting were the two Green minders that were flanking him as I walked in.

A tight leash? I ask him for his narrative, and he sighs. "It wouldn't be a lie to say it's been the toughest time I've had in my political life," he says.

The day I spoke to him, he had published a piece on the Independent's website, apologising for his comments after talking to trans activists.

"Every cloud has a silver lining; at least this one does," he tells me. "The meetings, for example, that I've had in the last few days with Green trans people: very enlightening, and wouldn't have happened otherwise."

The Green Party has hitherto been heavily reliant on the votes of young activists. The backlash was so severe that Natalie Bennett, the leader of the Green Party in England and Wales, apologised for his comments soon after the news broke. Could the scandal have damaged the Cambridge campaign?

"I think that some people got very understandably upset by what they were hearing." But, he adds, "people are mostly talking about other things."

"So we'll see. I mean, the only thing I can take responsibility for really is what I've done and what we've done. I think in difficult circumstances, the Green Party's pulled well together."

Read's background is academic: he is a Reader in Philosophy at the University of East Anglia. Many of the quotations about which activists were the most vitriolic were taken from a number of long-form pieces posted to the Talking Philosophy blog. Is that background a problem in the age of social media?

"Yeah, possibly. The way it should be, it seems to me, is that philosophy should be the basis of politics... it can go wrong, especially when people look at things in a superficial way and quote things out of context." He calls the original Independent and Pink News articles about his comments (which have since been updated) "utterly misleading."

"It was appalling journalism... it's



RICHARD NICHOLL

clear that the reasons why people thought that I was a transphobe, they just don't hold up.

"It was quite a distressing experience, in that way, to be so badly misunderstood. But I also take responsibility for the fact that probably it's difficult to go from philosophy to politics sometimes, and it probably wasn't... very sensible... at all to get into an argument on Twitter about it."

Was there any partisan motivation behind the attacks? "I can't speak to that, I don't know," he says carefully.

"It's possible that some people in other parties are jealous of how good [Green LGBT policies] are, and if so they're always welcome to join the Green surge." Or steal the policies? "We welcome recycling of our policies," he says, smiling wryly.

It is on those policies that the election will be decided. Read is the national transport spokesman: I ask him about this, given the recent speculation about the future of public transport in Cambridge.

Immediately he perks up, and refers me to the Transport Green Book for Cambridge, a detailed, 33-page policy document he co-authored.

"It's the linchpin of our election

campaign... it's a fundamental issue for Britain and for the modern world, but it's an issue that opinion polls consistently show... concerns people in Cambridge far more than any other issue and much more than it concerns people in ostensibly similar places."

He reels off a list of plans at both the local and national level: improving cycling facilities, re-regulating buses, re-nationalising the railway network and reopening old train lines. Then the most radical proposal: "It's time for Cambridge to get serious about looking at something like a congestion charge."

The problem is, of course, putting this into practice. Although Cambridge was a comparatively good result for the Greens nationally at the last election (7.6 per cent), it still pales in comparison to the other parties. How feasible is it that he'll be elected?

"Right now we've got a long way to go," he says. "We're hoping that the Green surge nationally is going to continue, that our polling numbers [and] membership numbers are going to carry on going up. What we're saying to people is: 'Come on, now's the time to vote for what you believe in.'"

"Tactical voting is so over," he adds. "People voted tactically at the last election and all it got them was David Cameron in Downing Street. If people vote for what they believe in, in Cambridge, then we can win. We can win... There's an unprecedented possibility here." However, he says, even if he does lose, "I'm very hopeful that we will have done something positive to the politics of Cambridge and of this country and that we will be building for the longer term... Part of what you do in politics, and you never know how successful it's going to be, is you change the agenda, you change people's sense of what's possible."

Is the increased attention for the Greens a worry? Some of their policies have earned derision over recent weeks.

"Well, look, UKIP don't have any policies. We have policies. When you have policies, that's something for people to shoot at." Read is optimistic, though: he cites the Votes for Policies website, where at time of writing the Green Party leads by a significant margin in terms of policy approval among

half a million respondents.

Even on policies like the basic income, over which Natalie Bennett recently clashed with Andrew Neil on the BBC's Sunday Politics programme, Read is sanguine. "It's not the kind of policy we'd be bringing in on May 8th.

"The thing that we'd be pushing for in the short term is the living wage, make the minimum wage into a living wage, and try to, if you will, raise Labour's game on that."

However, the Greens' record in government has been tested by the precedent in Brighton, where the Green administration on the council has clashed with the Green MP, Caroline Lucas, over cuts brought in to local services. This raises Read's hackles.

"A really important thing to remember about [Brighton] is that it's a minority administration... [the Greens] wanted to increase council tax to stop services being cut. Labour and the Tories stopped that from happening.

"It's an absolute outrage and a scandal that Labour then turns around and says"—and here, he waves his hands around and puts on a high-pitched, mocking voice—"Ooh, you're cutting services."

I press him on this: is discipline an inherent problem for the Greens? "The Green Party does things in a somewhat different way to other parties, and this can sometimes cause problems," he admits.

"The key difference is that we don't whip. We rely on people to work together out of solidarity and in good conscience. In my experience as a former councillor that works incredibly well, but it can sometimes go wrong."

Cambridge is likely to be a close-run seat. "What this all boils down to is that if our vote continues to increase, if the Green surge in membership, in activism, in money, in the polls goes on... it could become possible to win Cambridge on a historically low percentage of the vote. The winner in this seat might have as little as 28, 27, 26, maybe even 25 per cent of the vote."

"Now is that going to happen? Who the hell knows... [but] to make it possible that that could happen, start voting for what you believe in... A hell of a lot of people in Cambridge want to vote Green. Do it."

Rupert Read faces an uphill battle in the wake of the last few weeks, and he is starting from a position of electoral disadvantage.

Perhaps he's right, though: the Greens have never done this well in the national polls, and if anywhere is a good shot for the Green Party, it's Cambridge. The only people who will make the decision are the students and residents of Cambridge – and we won't know their decision until election day. Only Cambridge knows, and Cambridge isn't yet saying.

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## POLICY BOX

- ✓ Opposition to austerity
- ✓ Raise the minimum wage to the level of a living wage
- ✓ Expand housing stock
- ✓ Scrap tuition fees
- ✓ Ban fracking
- ✓ Scrap HS2
- ✓ Stop building nuclear power stations
- ✓ Renationalise railways
- ✓ Introduce a 20mph residential speed limit
- ✓ End animal testing
- ✓ Introduce a citizens' income

# Searching for salvation

Sarah Sheard explores the Christian Union's mission week, 'The Search', to see why saving Cantabrigians' souls is at the heart of their organisation

Without wishing to undermine my journalistic integrity, there is little I will not do if there is even a slim opportunity for free food. And so the idea of investigating attitudes towards religious conversion in Cambridge was, indeed, the Holy Grail of investigation topics; after obtaining so many free doughnuts outside Cindie's courtesy of the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union (CICCU), for this heathen, food seemed to play a large role in the matter.

I doubt that I am alone in being intrigued by the mysterious people with doughnuts and water outside Cindie's, and that's probably by design. CICCU's website immediately emphasises their dedication to evangelism, describing themselves as "a bunch of Cambridge students who are convinced it is worth telling the whole of the rest of Cambridge about who Jesus is".

Yet often I think these momentary encounters go unnoticed, for the most part. It is much easier to accept a free doughnut on a cold night out without accepting the complex social, political and emotional baggage of religious doctrine that goes with it. And the very idea of students giving up their precious time and energy to "spread the good news" seems even more extraordinary in Cambridge, where free time is like gold dust and converting university students to a Christian lifestyle seems like an impossible task. So I set out to try and understand how and why conversion is at the centre of CICCU's existence.

My first foray into CICCU was attending one of their weekly 'Friday Lunchtime Talks' (FLT) held in St Andrew's the Great church near Christ's. CICCU's website describes these talks as "an opportunity to engage with the issues and objections that people in the university have with Christianity". The talk I attended seemed surprisingly secular, namely, "Is justice really the foundation of English law?"

The talk started in a promisingly objective way, asking whether there was one concept of "justice" and then exploring how different ideas of justice can clash in the implementation of law. Then, suddenly, the lecturer claimed there was only one true justice, which naturally, apparently, presupposed a higher moral being, and that was God. I suppose I shouldn't have found the sudden introduction of God into the talk so jarring, particularly at a talk run by CICCU, but the thread of the argument was still lost on me.

After the talk, doughnuts were brought around, and the socialising began in earnest. I was sat next to a tall, smiley girl who had immediately turned to me to rave about the talk. Her utter enthusiasm for the most basic aspects of Cambridge small talk (name, college, subject) really struck me, as did her excitement when I mentioned I was interested in getting involved with CICCU. "That's great!" she beamed, and then introduced me to the head of the society, Anna, who took my details with the same irrepressible cheerfulness, promising to email me about a college prayer group.

I left the talk feeling overwhelmed by the CICCU members' utter joy and enthusiasm at my interest in Christ.

As I began attending their events, CICCU was hosting their main 'mission week'. This seemed the perfect chance to comprehend how and why CICCU tries to spread the good news; and so, hoping to understand more about what they were aiming to achieve in this week, entitled 'The Search' and packed with FLT-style events, I went along to their main weekly meeting, known as 'Central'.

Central was more like a traditional church service than the FLTs. While I enjoyed the hymns, I was a little perturbed by the way some attendees would raise one arm at a particularly poignant point in the song, a level of visceral emotional engagement that seemed oddly out of place. The entire service was geared towards preparing for mission week, bookended with advice to make the most of this "best last

were currently in hell with Hitler. The response came that there were "degrees of punishment" and that hell is not a "one-size-fits-all" place where Hitler is sat next to your grandmother. But there was definitely no contradiction.

After the talk I went up to talk to the speaker, Michael. I asked if he found it a challenge to preach the word of God to university students – university being, in general, a hub of pre-marital sex, alcohol, drugs, and generally the least stereotypically Christian behaviour around. He laughed at this and said that his hope for the people who came to the talk was that they might know God not as vindictive, restrictive or overly moralising, but experience the joy of knowing him.

In many respects, the utter dedication of the CICCU committee will always be somewhat of a mystery to me; in the 'mission week' they ran five lunchtime talks, three internationals'

events, and three evening talks, all with plentiful food provided. How anyone could give up that much of their time here in Cambridge is, and always will be, beyond me.

But evangelism is, in some respects, something that anyone can get behind – belief in God, Jesus and the Holy Ghost pre-requisite, of course. And what increasingly struck me as the week went on was how vague a lot of the Christian ideology was; nothing was said which could have pin-pointed a specific branch of Christianity, just broad and comprehensively 'Christian' beliefs.

One CICCU attendee confided in me that she privately thought that the overwhelming focus on evangelism was a tactic to avoid having Christians of different branches sat bickering in a room. When I sat down with

Trinitarian and CICCU member Hannah Roberts, she agreed that, without a specific denomination, the main role of CICCU is evangelical. Like most of the CICCU members I had met over the past few weeks, she was bright and cheerful and irrepressibly enthusiastic about her religion; she said that it was, to some extent, natural for Christians to want to share the good news with their friends because it was the way to the most satisfied life, and that "you wouldn't really love your friends if you didn't want to share that with them".

I asked if CICCU members genuinely believed that their friends would go to hell if they did not come to Christianity; Hannah replied that "we do believe that Judgement is real" and agreed that a friend rejecting her appeals to come to a CICCU talk or chat about the Bible can be difficult to deal with. But she said, smiling, that even if a friend rejects Christianity now, she continues to hope that "one day" they will find Jesus and come to know his love, and live the "fulfilled" life he makes possible.

Hannah's undaunted hope that the people she loves will come to Jesus and, in turn, experience salvation from judgement, seemed to epitomise the impervious optimism of CICCU as whole. Evangelism may be a handy way to sidestep a lot of theological infighting, but the CICCU members' intrinsic desire for their friends to know the joy of Christ fuels the organisation through long mission weeks, and countless rejections.

“

YOU WOULDN'T REALLY LOVE YOUR FRIENDS IF YOU DIDN'T WANT TO SHARE [CHRISTIANITY] WITH THEM

chance" to help other students know about Christianity. The main prayers asked God to bless committee members for the upcoming week and to "open the hearts" of those who attended the events, who were "so desperate" without Jesus in their lives. This was evidently a huge focus, and I wasn't quite sure how much of it was based on the fact that it directly preceded mission week.

Doubtless, when we were encouraged to split up into smaller groups to pray, the two girls next to me both voiced prayers for God to help the week run smoothly, but one also said that a friend of hers, whom she'd been asking to come along to CICCU for a while, had finally agreed to come to an event. She bowed her head and softly asked for her friend's heart to be "opened to your light".

With her obviously heartfelt sincerity in mind, I went along to one of the mission week talks at Great St Mary's church; "how can a loving God send people to hell?" An effervescent speaker named Michael gave a twenty minute talk, which at times was more akin to stand-up, with some pretty humorous anecdotes about having your bag searched at airport security and throwing computers out of windows.

And yet, while he emphasised that the "turn or burn" style of Christian evangelism was definitely not worth pursuing, he did make things pretty clear: God has no interest in forcing you to accept him, and he takes no pleasure in condemning even the very worst of humankind to hell, but that there is no get-out clause for generally good people who are not Christians. In one of the questions afterwards, a student asked if this meant that the 6 million Jews who died in the Holocaust



# Fitz debates CUSU disaffiliation

Fitz considers leaving CUSU in a series of recent JCR meetings

**Till Schöfer**

Deputy News Editor

Fitzwilliam College JCR has decided to hold discussions with its members concerning possible disaffiliation from CUSU.

The question of Fitz's continued participation in the students' union was heavily debated during a meeting held

on 24th January. Describing a previous CUSU meeting as "pointless as usual", Fitzwilliam JCR listed some of its contents with the organisation.

The debate concerning possible disaffiliation centred on the two main issues of sexual health supplies and the university shadowing scheme. According to the minutes of the meeting, CUSU's supply of contraceptives and other sexual health items is substantial enough that any alternative systems would be short-term and could not match the current system. The potential loss of the CUSU shadowing scheme was also thought to

have the potential to significantly impact on Fitzwilliam College's access programme.

The following week's meeting, however, concluded that "the JCR is concerned with the current undergraduates of Fitz", and hence access should not prominently feature in its deliberations. It also concluded that "there would be no change to sexual health supplies", as students remain eligible for these thanks to their individual affiliation to CUSU.

Currently only Gonville and Caius and Corpus Christi have led successful disaffiliation campaigns.

Corpus still receives sexual health supplies for its students on an individual basis and still participates in the shadowing scheme, while Caius relies on the NHS as a sexual health provider.

The experiences of these two colleges have formed a key part of the disaffiliation debate. It was therefore decided at the second meeting to call for an organised discussion with the head of CUSU, Helen Hoogewerf-McComb, and the leader of a disaffiliated JCR.

Central to the discussion has been the findings of the Robinson Report, not available to the JCR at the time of the first meeting.

Detailing the various benefits of affiliation and consequences of disaffiliation, the report, compiled for the Robinson College Students' Association, aims to give a clear outline of the position of a college within CUSU structures.

The failure of current CUSU President Helen Hoogewerf-McComb to supply Fitz with the updated report in time for the 24th January meeting was cited as "a classic show of CUSU efficiency".

Representatives of Fitzwilliam JCR said the report "seeks to be impartial and objective in regards to the value of CUSU membership. As such, it was (once acquired) fundamental to our decision to hold a 'general meeting'".

Shots directed at CUSU in the minutes of the earlier meeting include the accusation that "CUSU said they'd send an informative handbook, but hey, CUSU say a lot of things".

In the 'actions to be taken' section, CUSU were told "Put that in your pipe

and smoke it".

Discussion ended with a decision to expand the debate to include other colleges and the student body of Fitz.

"We will ultimately have a discussion/debate first with Helen and the other affiliated JCR presidents, and then with college, which we would like to do before third years leave, as they have the most experience of what CUSU actually offers," it concluded.

A Fitz representative summarised

“

CUSU SAID THEY'D SEND A HANDBOOK, BUT HEY, CUSU SAY A LOT OF THINGS”

the current state of the debate:

"This is not a 'campaign' in the traditional sense nor has the JCR collectively formed an opinion on CUSU. We have simply decided to debate this issue as individuals amongst the wider student body," they said.

JCR Vice-President Damiano Sogaro gave Varsity the following statement: "Although I strongly feel that CUSU is neither as efficient (and consequently not as helpful) nor as active as it might be, this does not mean that it is not a force for good.

"The only question is whether disaffiliation provides a greater 'good' than staying with CUSU. The only way to come to an answer is through an informed debate."



Fitzwilliam College's JCR has commenced debates on the consequences of CUSU membership

# Brothers speaks out against transphobia

Labour's first blind transgender parliamentary candidate speaks at the Union

**Sarah Collins**

News Correspondent

Emily Brothers has hit back after Germaine Greer's recent appearance at the Cambridge Union.

Speaking on Wednesday night, Labour's first blind transgender parliamentary candidate used her talk at the Union to highlight the rights of trans people to be protected from ridicule.

Following a policy-oriented talk given to Cambridge University Labour Club, the Labour candidate for Sutton and Cheam drew warm reactions from a quiet union chamber as she veered from the speaking style of a seasoned politician to paint a personal picture of a woman who has battled with depression and the constant feeling that something did not fit.

Brothers was steadfast as she described life's many challenges. "I use my resilience," she said.

With regards to Rod Liddle, the Sun columnist who said that she could not know that she was "the wrong sex" because she was blind, she said:

"I asked him whether he knows that he is a man when the lights are off,

Much of Brothers' address criticised the tabloids and spoke of a constant fear of being "outed" by the media while trying to build a political career.

"In an ideal world, I wouldn't have to speak out about my gender identity, because it would be private," she said.

Brothers defended freedom of speech, declaring:

"I don't believe in censorship," but endorsed campaigns like Trans Media Watch that hold the press to account for the bullying and harassment of trans people, and suggested that the press needed to remain independent but required tighter regulation.

When an audience member asked

“

IN AN IDEAL WORLD I WOULDN'T HAVE TO SPEAK OUT ABOUT MY GENDER IDENTITY”

how Brothers felt speaking from the same platform that had hosted Germaine Greer, whose anti-trans views caused further controversy during her Union talk on 26 January, Brothers appeared unruffled and gave her little air time.

"We do not deserve ridicule," she stated emphatically.

Brothers also challenged the audience to question the way people with disabilities are portrayed in the media, describing an incident when she was interviewed for an article, and the editors decided to use a photo of David Blunkett's dog to accompany it, rather than a photo of Brothers herself.

Reading from notes in braille, Brothers again turned to wit to challenge the unwillingness of the media to promote a positive image of disabled individuals. "I know I'm not glamorous," she joked.

When questioned by the audience about the upcoming election, Brothers gave a vague but notable suggestion that Labour would consider entering a coalition, but she still emphasised Labour's ambitions in the election.

"We are campaigning for a majority," she said.

When asked if Ed Miliband was competent as a leader, her response was simply "yes".

She addressed the question of making politics more appealing to young people with the suggestion that a wider social media presence would attract attention, but quipped: "I suggest some of my shadow cabinet don't go nightclubbing too often."

Brothers was scathing about the Conservatives.

When asked if she thought it was possible to be an LGBT Tory, she responded:

"I couldn't imagine being a Conservative." She condemned Conservative views that she feels are stagnant, describing their core values as "failed ideas".

She did, however, recognise that David Cameron had been "brave" in his passing of equal marriage.

Brothers spoke with excitement about the current and future Labour movement as she detailed her memories of the "solidarity" of the picket line in Liverpool during her childhood, and spoke of that same solidarity within Labour today.

Her fight for "social justice" was unapologetic as she claimed Labour would achieve "economic recovery for the many, not the privileged few".

She closed by extending an invitation to the audience – "Join us on this radical journey."



Brothers spoke at the Union on Wednesday 11th February

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# University chancellors reject Labour's proposal to cut tuition fees

£6,000 fees for higher education deemed 'implausible'

**Kenza Bryan**

News Correspondent

An open letter by a coalition of university vice-chancellors has warned that reducing tuition fees from £9,000 to £6,000 a year would "damage the economy, affect the quality of students' education, and set back work on widening access to higher education".

The letter, published by the Times was signed by 19 English board members of Universities UK (UUK), representing various institutions including the University of Bath and the University of Bristol.

The group warned that "at least £10 billion of additional public funding would need to be found and ring-fenced over the course of the next parliament to close the gap" and dubbed the proposal "implausible", given the major parties' commitment to spending cuts.

The letter also pointed out that a simple reduction in tuition fees would benefit higher-earning graduates more greatly, and called on the government to instead increase support for student living costs.

In December 2013 the Shadow Universities Minister Liam Byrne announced that it was Labour's long-term goal to introduce a "graduate tax".

Imogen Franklin, a second year English student, commented: "If fees were to be reduced, a graduate tax might make more sense as a buffer strategy to avoid pressure on university funding. Currently the money parents spend to top up their kids' students loans acts as a graduate tax of sorts."

The Liberal Democrat and Conservative coalition tripled tuition fees to a maximum of £9,000 per year

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**£10BN OF ADDITIONAL PUBLIC FUNDING WOULD NEED TO BE FOUND**

in September 2012, prompting widespread criticism concerning graduate debt and the potential impact on students from poorer backgrounds.

According to the BBC's assistant political editor Norman Smith, "trebled fees have deterred thousands of potential students from applying" Noa Lessof-Gendler, a second year English student at Corpus, said that "reversing the Tory fee policy will raise the morale of young people and their faith in the government".

Universities UK set up a panel at the time of the raise in tuition costs



Labour have hinted that they will reveal their fee proposal later this month

to examine the quantitative effect they were having on universities and students.

Sir Steve Smith, president of Universities UK in 2010 when MPs voted to raise tuition fees to £9,000, now estimates that the cost of a £6,000 tuition fee policy would be two billion pounds a year.

UUK acknowledges, however, that the reduction in fees remains "speculation", as Labour has not explicitly committed to the proposal as yet.

Ed Miliband, leader of the Labour

party, first announced plans to cut tuition fees from £9000 to £6000 at the party's 2011 conference in London, but no further announcement was made on the topic at the official conference in 2014.

In a recent interview with Varsity, Shadow Education Minister Tristram Hunt refused to comment on the matter, but hinted that campaign decisions would be announced in February.

Sir David Bell, the vice-chancellor of the University of Reading and former permanent secretary at the

Department for Education, commented, "in the next couple of weeks, it will of course become principally an election battleground issue".

Appearing on Radio 4's current affairs show, The World at One, the Shadow Education Secretary Tristram Hunt stated that Labour was "not going into the election with promises we can't fulfil", reassuring voters that his party "are going to have a fully-costed proposal, which supports our universities, delivers fair access and a good return for the taxpayer."

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## NEWS IN

## BRIEF



## Cambridge lab raided

Government agents have raided a laboratory in Milton to stop the production of an unlicensed cancer therapy. Regulators in Guernsey informed their UK counterparts that Immuno Biotech was using products not fit for humans and non-sterile equipment to produce a protein therapy that claims to be able to cure HIV and cancer; no trials have yet been completed.



## Mamma mia! "Mario Bros" attack music shop

Two men attacked the PMT Music Shop on East Road while dressed in stolen costumes of the Nintendo characters Mario and Luigi. This week Lawrence King, 25, was sentenced to eight weeks in prison, suspended for a year, after pleading guilty to drunkenly assaulting staff and trying to steal a guitar and keyboard while dressed as Mario in January.

# Action for #endweek5blues campaign gets underway

CDE's programme of events begins

**Eddy Wax**

News Correspondent

Cambridge Defend Education's week of events to mark its #endweek5blues campaign was launched this Thursday. The campaign, which advocates introducing nine week terms with a reading week in week five, aims to highlight mental health issues that arise from mid-term stress with a series of events including a rally on 18 February, the launch of a CUSU mandated petition and the publication of a CDE zine.

The campaign has posted a series of messages on its Facebook page as students begin their protests.

"You are legally entitled to engage in protest and CUSU Council has voted that CUSU should act to protect students engaging in strike action," one reads. "As a student union, your JCR or MCR, along with CUSU, have a legal duty to protect students from victimisation for taking part in political protest."

CDE has also published a draft email for students who wish to bring their support for the campaign to their supervisors' attention to use.

The open meeting, which took place at the University Centre last Tuesday, also focussed on the aims and direction

of the campaign. Although all present were in favour of pushing for the implementation of a reading week, it was stressed that those attending wanted to make the student body aware of the apparent structural oppression that students at the university are subjected to.

One issue specifically discussed was the need to distance the initiative from the idea that students merely want an additional holiday. The campaign also aims to discredit the notion that the immense pressure of a Cambridge degree is an essential part of the experience of studying in Cambridge.

In a Varsity survey, 53 per cent of students were in favour of a change in term length. However, 53 per cent said they were either unsure or did not know whether CDE's overall impact in Cambridge had been positive or negative, while 14 per cent thought it was negative.

The campaign 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".

On Tuesday morning, CDE began publicising "solidarity squares", blue felt badges that allow the wearer to make clear their support for the campaign.



CDE have revealed plans for a rally to mark the end of Week 5

The measures planned by CDE echo university-wide calls for an end to the apparent institutionalised pressure exerted on the students of Cambridge.

Daisy Hughes, CUSU Women and Class Campaign Manager and founding member of Whose University?, expressed her views on the #endweek-fiveblues initiative in an article for the

Huffington Post.

"I'd rather that my university didn't discriminate in this way against vulnerable members of its student body," she wrote.

"I think that we can keep the academic rigour for which Cambridge is famous while adapting the system so it doesn't break the people in it."

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# Government U-turns on young Cambridge cancer patient's benefits

Sufferer's Disability Living Allowance reinstated during protest by residents

**Gemma Maitland**  
News Correspondent

A U-turn by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) was met with cheers from a small, but vocal, group of protestors gathered outside Chesterton Road's Job Centre on Friday 6th February, in support of seven-year-old Cambridge resident and cancer sufferer, Tommi Miller.

The organisers took action after learning that Tommi's family had been forced to rely on food bank assistance for months, following the DWP's refusal last year to award Disability Living Allowance.

The family had previously received the benefit but, when Tommi briefly went into remission last April, the support was withdrawn, despite his ongoing medical treatment.

When the cancer returned in September – affecting Tommi's spinal cord, brain stem and bone marrow – the family continued to be denied benefits.

His mother, Ruth, explained that Tommi had recently undergone "eighteen sessions of radiotherapy to

the brain," with a further two years of chemotherapy in prospect, but that "DWP staff showed little regard for our situation."

Shortly after the protest started, news broke that the Millers' claim had been favourably settled by the DWP. Cambridge MP Julian Huppert, who intervened on behalf of the family, said they would receive additional support for the months they'd been waiting, compensation, and will not be subject to review for four years.

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**"I'M FED UP OF SEEING PEOPLE PUSHED INTO DESTITUTION FOR 'AUSTERITY'"**

Huppert was "delighted" at the result, but admitted, "I really wish the DWP had sorted this out correctly the first time."

When asked about her feelings regarding the decision, Ruth stressed that other families continue to endure similar situations: "I really just hope no-one else has to suffer like we did."

Ruth, along with a friend, now hopes to found a charity aimed at helping others in comparable circumstances. She was also keen to thank those who

had supported her family, as "without the help of our friends and community we would have truly been stuck."

Friday's protest began with an altercation between security personnel and protestor James Nichols, who was physically restrained after attempting to place a banner over the Job Centre's window. Speaking to police later, Nichols said the use of force had been "entirely unnecessary. They could have asked us to remove the banner, but they didn't."

Daniel Brett, the demonstration organiser, admitted he had no personal connection to the Miller's, explaining: "I don't know the family but, as a father of a child the same age as Tommi, I understand." He went on, "I'm fed up of seeing people pushed into destitution for 'austerity'."

Among the protestors was ten-year-old Sara, who held a sign she created with her younger brother. Her father, Arsalan, said Sara had pushed him to attend.

He commented, "anybody can be vulnerable to situations like this," and hoped to "show solidarity, not just with the Miller family, but with everyone in this country who's suffering under austerity."

On learning of the protest, Tommi's mum said it had come as a "complete shock," but added "we were pleasantly surprised that people took time out to do such a bold, brave thing for us and we thank all involved so very much."



A protester at the rally last Friday



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# Cambridge honours Alan Turing's work

University street and cross-university facility to be named after computer scientist

**Joe Robinson**

News Correspondent

Following Benedict Cumberbatch's Academy Award-nominated performance in *The Imitation Game*, the University of Cambridge is set to honour the life and achievements of code-breaking genius Alan Turing by naming a road after him on the North West Cambridge Development. The university will also play a central role in establishing the cross-university Alan Turing Institute.

The Cambridge alumnus, who studied mathematics at King's College and graduated with first-class honours in 1934, is among the notable figures whose names are to be used for streets on the North West Cambridge Development, which is due to be completed in 2017.

The 150-hectare development, located on farmland on Madingley Road, is set to include a primary school, 3,000 new homes, a Sainsbury's supermarket and academic and research facilities. The development is forecasted to cost in excess of £1 billion by its completion. Other figures such as Hughes Hall founder Margaret Wileman and archaeologist Miles Burkitt are set to have streets named after them as well.

Renowned for his work in cracking the Nazi Enigma code at Bletchley Park during the Second World War,



The mathematician helped crack the Nazi Enigma code at Bletchley Park

Turing's scholarly legacy is also being carried forward by Cambridge academics who are playing a leading role in the foundation of the Alan Turing

Institute.

Announced in Chancellor George Osborne's 2014 Budget, the institute will promote the development and

use of computer science, algorithms, advanced mathematics and "big data" (extremely large data sets which are analysed computationally to reveal

patterns and trends).

The Centre for Economics and Business Research estimates that the big data marketplace could benefit the UK economy to the tune of £216 billion, creating 58,000 new jobs in the UK by 2017.

Cambridge, alongside other leading British universities such as Oxford, Edinburgh, UCL and Warwick, will

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“AN IMMENSELY EXCITING OPPORTUNITY FOR THE COLLECTIVE EXPERTISE OF CAMBRIDGE”

contribute funding, academics and research to the British Library-based facility.

The institute will receive primary funding in the form of a £42 million endowment from the British government, with its delivery being coordinated by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council.

Cambridge academic Professor Paul Alexander commented: “The Alan Turing Institute is an immensely exciting opportunity for the collective expertise of Cambridge and its partners to rise to this very important challenge and make a huge contribution to the future success of the UK economy, our ability to provide health and societal benefits and the ability of British universities to remain at the cutting edge of research”.

## Universities' T&Cs 'breach consumer law'

Which? reveals some unis use 'unlawful' terms in ability to change course content

**Jack Higgins**

News Correspondent

A fifth of universities are acting unlawfully in the legal terms they use regarding course modifications, a report by Which? has revealed. Furthermore, over half of UK universities have been found to use terms that allow them to change the content and mode of assessment of courses as they choose. Only five per cent of universities were found not to have used unlawful terms.

The report was based on responses to Freedom of Information Act requests from 142 UK universities. 49 institutions were criticised for not providing sufficient information for Which? to analyse.

Megan Dunn, NUS Vice President, welcomed the report's emphasis on “valid and long standing concerns about fairness and protection for students”. She said it was “completely unacceptable” that “universities can currently dramatically change – or sometimes entirely close – courses during students' studies”, and called for a “frank conversation” on the issue.

In one particular instance, a student was alerted two weeks before starting university that she had to study an entire extra subject she had not signed up for, in combination with her original degree.

Other students complained about assessment methods differing from those advertised, shifting from coursework to examinations, or about being forced to repeat topics because of final year modules being cut entirely from the degree course. 26 institutions were also found to be breaching the law by using terms that permit them to increase fees with no prior warning of the size of the increase.

Which? Executive Director Richard Lloyd expressed concern over the “widespread use of unfair terms”.

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UNIVERSITIES CAN CURRENTLY DRAMATICALLY CHANGE – OR SOMETIMES ENTIRELY CLOSE – COURSES DURING STUDENTS' STUDIES

whilst the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is looking to examine evidence from this report. The government department disclosed that 31 per cent of universities used wording that may infringe upon the law.

Conversely, Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive of Universities UK, argued that student satisfaction is at an all-time high and that a unique part of the university experience is that courses change according to current research.

The problems do not, however, regard the implementation of new modules,



Many students receive different course options and assessment from those advertised

but instances where the course has “been turned on its head”, as a student at the University of Greenwich complained to the Guardian newspaper.

The University of Cambridge has not been found to be using unlawful terms. A spokesman told Varsity: “Cambridge

believes that it treats its students fairly. If course changes are proposed, the University takes care to ensure that no student is disadvantaged, and that information for prospective students is accurate.

“The University has responded to the

Competition and Markets Authority draft guidance and has its recommendations under consideration.”

The CMA plans to publish its full advice shortly and is setting a time limit for when it expects universities to comply.

# The Interview: Quentin Blake

## DRAWING ROALD DAHL



Ellie Olcott meets Sir Quentin Blake, Britain's best-loved illustrator, to talk about his student years and working with Roald Dahl

In the preceding few days before I had the good fortune to speak with Quentin Blake in his London studio, I was very aware of what a pervasive impact he has had on British culture. I spent one day in London and I saw people eating Ben's Cookies, the logo of which Blake drew; I noticed a plethora of greetings cards and even bed sheets donning his work. Why does his work continue to be so popular? The answer is simple: it makes people happy. There is something irresistibly and relentlessly charming about his drawings and after spending over an hour in his company, I can say that this charm extends to his personality.

Blake welcomes me into his spacious flat where he works. The large windows that look over a typical London green square let light stream in and provide the perfect environment for his drawing. The studio is filled with hundreds of books that he has illustrated; a sign of his prolific career. Does the fact people still love his art encourage him to continue to work with such zeal? "I think I'd do it anyways!" he says with a gleeful smile, but acknowledges, "It helps". Blake has always been interested in literature, which he studied at Cambridge. He looks back fondly on his student years and with hindsight says it was the right decision not to go to art school straight away: "I thought, if I go to Cambridge, I will carry on drawing, but if I go to Art school, I might stop reading!" In the end he did not spend

that much time drawing whilst at Cambridge, wryly admitting "I think I thought I ought to be more serious". He led a fairly "quiet life" at Downing College: "I did a lot of reading". Studying English "contributed" to his desire

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**DAHL POSTED HIS OWN SANDALS TO HIM, WITH A NOTE SAYING "THIS IS WHAT THE BFG WOULD WEAR!"**

to become involved in the world of fiction. He spends a long time getting "a sense of the mood of the story", typically reading the manuscript twice in order to make the illustrations "part of the interpretation".

People associate Blake most closely with the novelist Roald Dahl, with whom he illustrated 18 books. Was Dahl very precise in his demands of Blake? "He wasn't prescriptive but I think he knew how to be if he wanted!" Blake says light-heartedly. He describes the working relationship he had with Dahl: "First I would find the moments that would be good to illustrate, and then do a set of drawings of what I thought the characters looked like because you want to relate to the manuscript before you want to

relate to the author in a way. And then I'd go to him and go through it all and get his comments". Blake deliberates on his choice of words when he says "he could be quite a tough character... he was capable of falling out with people if he thought it would produce the right results!"

Evidence of this "very good" working relationship is manifest in the production of *The BFG* in 1982. This was the first long book Dahl and Blake worked on together and it was then that the "the collaboration really got under way". Most children's writers only commission a few illustrations in order to render the book more aesthetically pleasing. Dahl however broke convention by demanding more and more drawings from Blake.

Dahl originally described the BFG as "wearing an apron and boots", something which he altered when he saw the materialisation of this in Blake's drawings. The apron, according to Dahl, "got in the way", "you don't think about it when you're writing it but he has to run across the mountains and jump up and down!" Blake knew the boots had to go when Dahl posted his own sandals to him, with a note saying "This is what the BFG would wear!" The illustrations Blake produced are integral to the reading of Dahl books. They have enabled generations of children to be exposed to the brilliant imagination of these two men.

Nowadays Blake keeps himself very busy as he continues to work with

authors, such as David Walliams on his recent novel, *The Boy in the Dress*. There are a few drawings scattered across his desk which he is currently working on. These are going to decorate the walls of a parent's room at Great Ormond Street Hospital. Why do people ask him to do drawings for hospitals and care homes? "Generally I'm quite good at cheering people up!" He adds after some contemplation, "You can only be cheerful in the way you draw. You can't be inappropriately cheerful and you have to keep a lot of things out of these pictures".

He recently did some paintings for an eating disorder clinic in central London. This commission was particularly sensitive because "normally I like to draw in parallel worlds but here they [the patients] were already in a kind of parallel world which isn't very good. So with those, I drew pictures of ordinary life wanting to convey that 'it's alright'". He tried to incorporate food in subtle and inoffensive ways: a woman feeding birds for example. Someone who had previously suffered from anorexia contacted Blake and told him that when "you look at them and you don't feel criticised, you feel accepted".

His work has always been done with the intention of making people happy. But has he ever considered engaging in the more satirical side of illustration and drawing political cartoons? "It's not that I don't have opinions. It's just I can't seem to work in that way. I never wanted to express

opinions like that... I want to make fun of people but not to attack them"

I think the reason people are so fond of his work is because it seems to evoke a feeling of freedom and joy in the observer. His work appears spontaneous and free, does the drawing process reflect this? "If it goes over the line, it isn't really by accident! Its scratchy and looks like it hasn't been finished but really its exactly what I intend. I think the drawings appear spontaneous much in the same way someone acting on stage appears to be spontaneous, even though they have rehearsed it many times! People acting, speaking lines as if he just thought of them".

Blake is kind enough to humour my audacious request that he draw something for Varsity. I watch as he conjures up a true Blake-esque drawing of some students reading this venerable newspaper. I can't stop smiling as I hear the scratchings of his pen against the paper, "I'm not going to draw King's College Chapel you know!" he jokes.

I was afraid before conducting this interview that if I found Blake to be a person who had let his success take over his personality, it would somehow taint his drawings; drawings which let me hark back to a happy childhood.

Any feeling of nostalgia is well protected however, as I can say with all confidence that Blake is not only a brilliant artist, but also a thoroughly nice man.

# Comment

## Why are we so afraid to be alone?



Husna Rizvi

*My 'lonely week' taught me not to be afraid of solitude*

Have you ever felt that lull at the end of a night when your socialising with your group comes to end with a sloped silence and someone breaks it by saying "... Well I'm gonna go to bed, I'm quite tired", and you're tired too, but your heart sinks anyway – you ignore your own needs because you're so scared to be alone? This is me, everyday.

It took me a term and a half to realise that studying at Cambridge is an intensely solitary experience. The amount of solitude that is necessary in order to churn out that weekly essay is, I used to think, excessive – at times even crippling. There were moments when I felt like I was trapped within my room, like an only-child whose mum had left them at daycare.

Now I see my 'me-time' as paramount to my own self-sufficiency.

I used to rely on friends to go to talks, the UL and even coordinate times to eat dinner in hall in order to spare myself the thought of eating alone. I wasn't just afraid of being seen alone, but being it too. If friends weren't up for seeing Aubrey De Grey talk about living forever then that was it: no more Aubrey. I was missing out because I was afraid, and I no longer wanted to be.

About a fortnight ago, my friend said perhaps one of the cleverest things I've heard to date. She said, "Why is everyone so hell-bent on resisting their own pain?"

So I stopped resisting. I tried eating, working, clubbing and attending events all on my own. If you're like me, the thought of doing all of the above will scare you. You'll ask yourself what people will think of a person that seemingly has no friends. Perhaps you'll feel pity. Or perhaps you'll realise that those feelings of pity are a manifestation of your own insecurity to spend some time with yourself, and see if you're an alright person to hang out with – to see if you're any fun.

I went against the former for once and here's how my week turned out: I started out little, avoiding the library. I realise now that this is an institution built to allow us to socialise without really socialising. To feel the comfort of people around you and work at the same time. But once I stopped thinking of my room as a prison that perpetuated a sense of FOMO (fear of missing out), and more as my little private space with good natural light and silence, it got incrementally better. I enjoyed the silence for once.

I now think of my room as a magic but dull-looking place that suspends time the minute you walk in to it. My room, my delusions, my rules.

Next came the hard stuff: eating alone. I think society really sucks for reinforcing the idea that you must be sad if you eat alone. It makes people feel like they have an obligation to feel pathetic even if they just want to eat a jacket potato in the dining hall, in turn giving them this useless anxiety that they can't shake off like a bad itch. That being said, nobody really seemed to care about my jacket potato or me. The relief that comes with realising that it's not all about you is indescribable.

And the last feat of my rigorous anthropological research: going out alone. At the start of the week I was dreading this, but towards the end I could feel the faint glimmer of excitement upon me.

I won't lie. I was anxious. Surely people would notice I wasn't with anyone and therefore would deduce that I was a friendless, boring sod. I went anyway. I was there for the music. Perhaps I'd bump in to people and they'd let me latch on to them in order to preserve my dignity. Perhaps people would think me cool for being

"brave" and aloof and self-sufficient. In the end, all these considerations racing around my mind at hyper-speed proved too much and I got marvelously drunk. The music was wonderful as expected. I did inevitably bump in to a few people who consistently asked me "Who are you here with?", to which my spineless reply was "Long story", and continued dancing with a grin on my face, floating through the crowd of partygoers.

For most of the night I found myself warmly lost in the music as I intended, and at other times scanning the room for people I knew. And then came a realisation: "Of course you're looking for people, you are a social animal – it's okay to be a little needy, you can hang out with yourself too, you did your bit, you're happy."

In some sense, trying to sustain a forced sense of isolation perhaps only made me realise how co-dependent I really am. Yet on the other hand I'd rather think of it as an experience that allowed me to accept my own vulnerability as an integral part of my independence. Being alone doesn't mean you're lonely. And not resisting it, in fact, made me happier. Even if just temporarily.

## Millie Brierley

*Galentine's Day: Who needs men when you've got breakfast food?*



"What shall we watch?" I ask my friend. She looks at me and shrugs. I shrug back. We have reached an all too familiar impasse. We scrunch up our noses, and, with indecision threatening to defeat us once again, immediately become the vultures in the Jungle Book who are actually the Beatles: "I don't know – what do you wanna do?" "I don't know – what do you wanna watch?"

In such situations, someone always has to pipe up and make a decision, and this time it was me. "Parks and Recreation?" I offer. My friend hasn't seen it, but she's happy to give it a try.

By the end of the week, she is texting me quotes from the show, watching interviews with the cast on YouTube, and reminding me, oh so wisely, that ovaries should always, always come before brovaries. I have, inadvertently, created a monster.

Yet, unlike Frankenstein, I can only look on proudly, as my magnum opus quotes Leslie Knope back at me, and sends me Jean Ralphio memes on Facebook. This, I think to myself, must be how a lioness feels when she sees her cub take down its first gazelle. It's a magical feeling.

There are a lot of reasons to love Parks and Rec. And Amy Poehler is only one through six. The glorious abundance of breakfast food is number seven. Galentine's Day is number eight.

Galentine's Day, which falls on the 13th February every year, is like a bunch of lionesses, just kicking

it round the watering hole, over waffles. They've ditched their lion companions for the day, and left them to look after all the cubs. They're letting their (non-existent) manes down, and are ready to drink that watering hole dry.

Or, in human terms, it's a bunch of gals, just kicking it at the local watering hole, over waffles. Lioness or gal – there is, in this instance at least, very little difference.

If it's not already clear to you, Galentine's Day is the gal equivalent of Valentine's Day. Instead of a romantic candlelit dinner for two (or a large Domino's pizza for one, depending on your situation), you get together with all your gal pals for a morning of breakfast food and sheer revelry. It's the talisman protecting you from all the violent pink and candy hearts which start clubbing you over the head to usher in this august holiday as soon as the New Year begins.

Galentine's Day is, of course, first and foremost, about having fun. It is really just an excuse for ditching work, catching up with friends, and day drinking. But, never one to let a teachable moment pass me by, I think we could also stand to learn a thing or two from it as well.

There is a lot to be said for maintaining strong bonds with friends. For putting time into relationships with people you've known since you thought it was acceptable to use the toilet at the same time as another human being. Or for investing in friendships which still occasionally know the odd awkward moment.

Such things are precious, yet fragile. They are liable to be weathered by all kinds of external forces – work, family, boyfriends, girlfriends – not injurious in themselves, but which nevertheless take their toll. Without proper care and attention, our friendships are vulnerable to knocks and scrapes, scratches and scuffs. They become dull, and gather dust. Eventually, we hide them away in drawers because we forget their true worth.

But that is where Galentine's Day comes in. If Parks and Rec has anything to do with it, 13th February will become our yearly reminder to give our friendships a quick buff and polish. To give them back their shine. It's no magic formula, of course. Just like Valentine's Day cannot save a failing relationship, Galentine's Day cannot breathe life into a friendship where all parties concerned have already started mourning. But that's not to say it's not important, all the same.

Galentine's Day is an occasion to turn to the people you like – your secret keepers and treasure minders – and say to one another, "What we have is precious, and I want to hold on to it." You stand in a circle, hold each other's hands, and use your love, your laughter, your happiness and your memories as a shield to protect your friendship from everything that seeks to tarnish it.

Or, you order waffles and whipped cream all round, and tell each other why you're all the best people you know. Either way, those lions don't get a look-in.

# Freedom of speech, not of abuse



## The Ismist

### Allan Hennessy

Over the last couple of weeks, a friend and I have experimented with Grindr. Having had a fleeting conversation, in which sexual preferences were exchanged, my friend organised to meet up. When they arrived, they were greeted by me instead. The results were shocking. 19 out of the 20 users were unfazed by the change in person and were still as eager as ever to “give [me] a draining”. From the outset, I’d like to point out that I sent them all packing. To dispel any myths on what this article is about, it is not a criticism of casual sex, nor is it a criticism of homosexual relationships. So, what am I saying? Quite simply, Grindr devalues sex, and most people who think this never admit it because they fear that they will have accusations of social conservatism levelled at them.

The art of courtship is something quite beautiful. Grindr takes away from that; there simply is no courtship involved. A typical conversation includes the exchange of sexual preferences and nude photos, which, often, are miles away from the truth. The fact that all these men were unfazed by the fact that they were deceived exemplifies the dehumanising effect of Grindr; as one desperate subject told me, ‘a mouth is just a mouth, an arse is just an arse’. I’m not sure I agree.

Some might say that Grindr is just like ‘hooking up’ with someone in a club. But that is simply untrue. On Grindr, the desire for sex precedes any encounter. In ‘real life’, the desire for sex comes after meeting your partner.

Some might also say that those who use Grindr know what to expect. Given that they consent, it is not our place to criticise. Two points are to be made here. Firstly, I am criticising the nature rather than the legality of Grindr. Just because adults consent to meaningless and dehumanised sex, that does not preclude criticism. Secondly, deception in the world of Grindr is rife. I can be a liberal, too, and say that we need to uphold human dignity by ensuring that people are not deceived about their choices and that we need to protect the vulnerable from exploitation, all of which is true.

The gay community is as much to blame for this as anyone else. Consider a heterosexual version of Grindr surviving the wrath of the feminists. Do you think anyone would condone a man telling a woman that ‘a mouth is just a mouth’? Feminism would class this as objectification. Why, then, is it OK for gay men to objectify each other in this fashion? I ask this question as a gay man myself. I am not going to throw around liberal and conservative labels. But my message is clear: Grindr devalues sex, and it is allowed to do so because the liberal cloak stops people from raising justified objections. Let’s just sit back and realise that it’s all just a bit too grim.



### Chris Page

*The Spiked free speech rankings are themselves silencing*

Have you heard the news? Sexual harassment policies and Dignity at Work schemes are the latest assault on freedom of speech. Or, at least, that’s according to the website Spiked Online, which earlier this week released its Free Speech University Ranking. This helpful guide used a traffic light system to rank universities according to the extent to which they censor free speech. Such a study, in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo attacks, should be an important tool for free expression. And this would be so – if it wasn’t so fucking stupid.

Cambridge is ranked ‘amber’ (having “chilled free speech through intervention”). I clicked on the Cambridge page to see why this was, and the first piece of evidence was the prohibitions on offensive emails. Last year, I was the victim of a prolonged campaign of email harassment that drove me to the brink of breakdown. In that case, was it really their ‘right’ to send me daily death threats? The second thing flagged up was a prohibition on porn. Has Spiked confused freedom of expression with masturbation?

Also flagged, more disturbingly, was CUSU’s anti sexual harassment policy. I’m pretty interested in my freedom of expression. But I missed the memo where our society decided harassment was a fundamental right of individuals, so key to our identity as free beings that J S Mill would turn in his grave and personally defend it to the death, while asking nearby women to show him their breasts.

Scrolling through the rankings perplexed me. I could find no reason why trans-rights policies were cries

of censorship, or why I should receive death threats on Twitter because people disliked my piece about Germaine Greer. There seemed to be no reference point in reality, but instead the paranoid ramblings of an idiot for whom “freedom of speech” was a shield to ward away monsters. And these monsters appeared to be women, LGBTQ+ people, survivors of sexual violence, and those who object to using Pornhub in the computer room.



**“ WAS IT REALLY THEIR ‘RIGHT’ TO SEND ME DAILY DEATH THREATS? ”**

Debates about free speech are never far away in Cambridge. Every year I’ve been here there have been arguments, articles and angry Facebook comment threads on the subject. So let’s get back to principles. Freedom of speech is, in essence, the right to speak freely without censorship. Fine. But it is conceived as a way of protecting individuals from higher authority – in most cases, the state. It should not guarantee the right to be listened to, the right to a privileged platform upon which to speak (possibly surrounded by high fences) or the right to know that you can say whatever you like and not expect people to call you an idiot, or even organise a demonstration against you. The

reason we have a concept, both in morality and in law, of “hate speech”, is because we acknowledge that there should be limits on free speech: words have an impact. Violence can be verbal as well as physical.

The highlighting throughout the Spiked report of ‘safe-spaces’ policies and the like is hugely disturbing. These policies exist because we have to live in the real world, and the real world is not some idealised fantasy land where we’re on a level playing field, without any discrimination on the basis of being the wrong colour, or attracted to the wrong sex. Having a ‘safe-space’ is a great aid to freedom of speech. It allows members of oppressed groups to speak without fear of being drowned out by more privileged voices. Yes, I am acutely aware of the irony of me using my privileged position as a white straight boy, given the platform to say this in a student newspaper. But it does aggravate me, considering that true free speech is under threat, whether by extremist groups or by government legislation (\*cough Theresa May cough\*), that Spiked is blaming some of the very tools for empowering people to speak for limiting free speech.

Spiked’s definition of freedom of speech is the right to say whatever you want without fear of consequence, whether that’s degrading, sexist, homophobic, racist, transphobic, or just vile. We live in an unequal world. By attacking the structures that seek to counterbalance that, Spiked is really just trying to engage in its own form of silencing. They aren’t after freedom of speech, but the freedom to be a complete dick.

## We need to use our political voice



### Sriya Varadharajan

*Of course politicians suppress our wishes and prospects: we let them*

In the months before the general election, university campuses across Britain will begin to fill up with leaflets, banners, and posters. Notifications for voter registration drives, canvassing events, and hustings will pop up on our Facebook feeds. Everywhere you look, there’s someone willing to give you their opinion on student disengagement with politics. We don’t vote, we vote for the wrong people, we don’t care, we’re misinformed, we’re inexperienced, we’re naive, and the obligatory derisive comment about Russell Brand and the fundamental flaw he exposes in the psyche of the millennial generation. It’s rare, if not outright extraordinary, to hear a voice asserting its confidence in student politics.

Few people would argue that these naysayers are wrong. The 18-24 demographic is consistently the one with the smallest voter turnout, and many of us, when questioned about politics, would dismiss the topic as one that is irrelevant, pointless, perhaps even a little distasteful. “I don’t really know anything about it,” you’ll hear, or, dismissively, “They’re all as bad as each other, anyway.”

People often dismiss our generation as apathetic, but this apathy is born out of a fundamental scepticism most teenagers and young adults have towards politics in this country. Time and again, our desires and voices go ignored or are even actively suppressed. In the past year alone, the surge in Green Party support, bolstered in no small part by students, went largely unreported by major news providers. #CameronMustGo trended for weeks on a website

used most in the UK by 18-24 year olds, and again went unreported. In December, after a debate about fracking at Canterbury Christ Church University, police rather ominously asked for the names of all the attendees. Our generation tends to be far more liberal than the norm, and so there is little space for our voices because of the nature of our (in more ways than one) conservative society.

Efforts to involve students in politics are obviously undermined by



**“ TIME AND AGAIN, OUR DESIRES AND VOICES GO IGNORED ”**

this, leaving aside the fact that these efforts are often lacklustre enough in themselves. The very concept of winning over ‘students’ seems ridiculous – even in an environment like Cambridge, which has never really been accused of an abundance of diversity, I’ve met far more people from more varied cultural and socio-economic backgrounds in the past few months than I would have back home, simply by virtue of not having lived in the same town as most of the people I know for most of my life. The big ‘student issues’ – tuition fees, and perhaps the voting age – do not apply in the same way to all of us, and hardly apply at all to most.

But the fact remains that ultimately, feeling like we aren’t a part of the political scene and that we can’t change things is fundamentally wrong. In a

democratic society, several million people should not be excluded to the point that we feel our voices go unheard. We have the right to feel like our voices, our votes, and our actions are taking the country in the direction we want it to go. Most of us are in a vulnerable situation just because we are dependent on external financial support of some kind, but many of us also belong to groups who have been historically suppressed. In any case despite what the media and our reading lists suggest, rich white straight cis men are not actually a majority group and solidarity with each other, taking into account our different backgrounds and experiences has to be the first step towards creating that space for ourselves within politics.

Whether it’s voting for parties that have a better track record on human rights and a more empathetic manifesto, no matter how marginal, or supporting campaigns for specific issues such as the living wage, we can only make a change when we come together and demand it.

At the end of the day, we’re adults. We’re intelligent, we’re empathetic, we essentially care (or we should do) about the place we live in and the people we live with. Politics can be an effective tool for creating a more equal society, and we should be able to play an active part in making that happen. I believe that fundamentally, most of us care about making the world a better place; I also believe that we can come together as a community to change a system that we all recognise is corrupt. And most of all, I believe it’s a thing worth doing, because we deserve better than this.

# This Valentine's Day, is chivalry dead?

Valentine's Day is here and love is in the air, but is this a day we can really call fair?

The annual celebration of romance which grips the western world is not only a chance for emotions and passions to run wild, but also for taking a step back and thinking about what Valentine's Day means in the modern age, and what it says about society's attitudes towards gender roles in particular. Do we envisage the door-opening, bill-paying knight in shining armour treating his princess to the most special evening she could imagine, or do we think that men and women should play a more



Yes: Sam Dalton

equal role, with the girl leading the way if she wishes?

If Valentine's Day is to reflect a commitment to equality and gender emancipation, then the latter viewpoint is the one we should be encouraging, not constricting. Despite the romantic sphere being a largely private one, the way in which they interact and the power dynamics involved are nevertheless connected to gender roles in broader society, perpetuated by our longstanding ideas about romance. If the view of women as rational, autonomous beings, equally capable of working and participating in the public sphere, is to be advanced, then the image of the knight in shining armour is a deeply harmful one. It suggests a man of power, strength and valour, and a woman of beauty, delicateness and passivity.

This is not to say that men do not like beautiful women or that women do not often like a man of power (indeed evolutionary psychologists point to cross-cultural surveys showing that men put slightly more value on appearance and women on status), but rather that to restrict our images of gender roles along these lines, and to actively promote or expect one form of romantic interaction over another, is very much against the advance of women as equal, and is harmful to women's freedom of choice. The idea of a man taking a woman out for dinner, opening doors for her as they enter the restaurant, pulling her chair out and then paying at the end of the meal is a date format rooted in an age when men were powerful wage-earners and women domesticated

housewives. Why should we want to perpetuate this?

An expectation that the man should pay the bill contradicts and undermines the push for women to gain equal wages and employment opportunities, and women who still want both are greatly mistaken. When the man's wallet comes out at the end of the meal, and his princess smiles and thanks him for taking her out to dinner, the image of the powerful, earning man and the soft, delicate woman is perpetuated, affecting attitudes about gender roles which can then infiltrate into the economic realm and harm the prospects of women gaining top positions in careers of their choice.

But the death of chivalry is of benefit not only to women, but to romance more broadly. The idea of the dominant male taking charge and the woman following his lead prescribes a singular model of how romantic interactions should be conducted. And yet, in some cases, the girl might want to initiate dates and act as the more decisive partner or, better still, the two might play an equal role in initiating and paying for dates. If it feels too mechanical splitting the bill by exact amounts after every dinner, then alternate in taking your partner out.

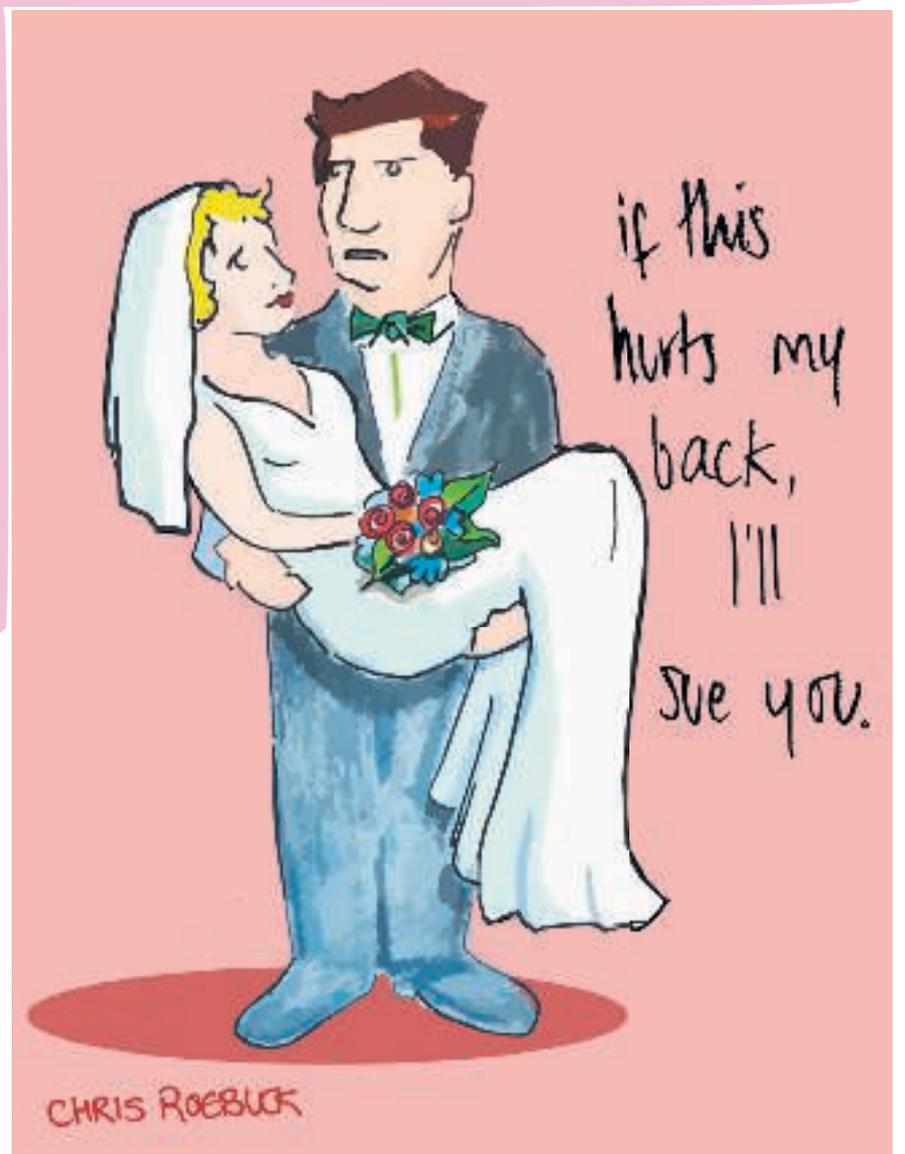
Stereotypical and rigid ideas of chivalry might prevent a girl from pursuing a guy because she doesn't want to be seen as the one doing the chasing, and

wants instead to conform to what she thinks is the 'right' way for a relationship to come about, and the 'right' way for a girl to act, that of being taken care of and treated as a beautiful princess. Fulfilling relationships might never happen as a result of these outdated conventions, undeniably a travesty for romance. Certain aspects of individual personalities might never be expressed, for both men and women.

Thankfully more and more couples are equalling things out with regard to the small things like paying the bill, particularly in the student population, signalling a shift away from restrictive chivalrous attitudes towards an emancipation of romance and furthering the cause of gender

equality. Yet a recent study of 17,000 men and women in the US discovered that 84 per cent of men and 58 per cent of women said that men still usually paid when the bill came, even when they had been with their partner for some time.

There is still a long way to go before romantic interaction is liberated from all the outdated, rigid constraints imposed on it. The gradual death of chivalry is something that should be celebrated as much as Valentine's Day itself: it is good for women, whose progression in society won't be compromised, good for men, who will rightly save money, and good for romance all round, which will become far more interesting and diverse as a result.



When people hear the word 'chivalry', they are likely to imagine a medieval scene involving a knight in shining armour rescuing a cowering maiden from some kind of deadly peril. Or, at the very least, they will have an image in their head of a man graciously helping a woman: carrying a heavy object for her; offering his jacket during the cold; or (heck) even holding a door open for her.

Historically, chivalry has been recognised as the combination of qualities expected of an ideal

man – which traditionally include courage, honour, courtesy, justice and a readiness to help others. But what relevance could this hold for us, in the 21st century? It certainly does not mean that we should expect men to have these qualities ingrained in their personalities (I know more than a few about whom you could say such qualities are 'lacking'). Neither does it mean that women have to rely on men to help them – we are perfectly capable of sorting out our own problems, thank you very much. And moreover – if we wish for it to cohere with our own set of moral values – it does not mean that chivalry has to be limited to men alone. Women too are perfectly capable of displaying their own acts of 'chivalry', whether this be paying for drinks or the bill at a restaurant (we're all students, we can't expect to escape this), or even just committing small acts of kindness and thoughtfulness.

It goes without saying that times have changed greatly since the original 'Age of Chivalry' in early medieval Europe, and the modern western world likes to think of itself as pushing towards a more gender-equal society. While it is hard to deny that there may still be some way to go, we can at least respect the motivation of the Feminist movement and its achievements in bringing us closer to a society free from gender discrimination, subliminal or otherwise.

Chivalry was originally born out of a patriarchal worldview in which women were seen as helpless and incompetent, in need of protection from their male counterparts. But

just as all social practices evolve with time, this does not mean that it still has to be synonymous with such oppression today. In fact, not only would it be wrong to say that chivalry is dead, but also harmful. We don't need to do away with chivalry as a concept: we need to adapt or reinterpret its meaning and ideology in a modern day context. This would involve detaching it from its sexist connotations, while retaining the positive aspects. Ultimately this could greatly deepen the value and dignity in interpersonal relationships (romantic or otherwise). The words we need to focus on are 'courtesy' and 'respect'. Feminism has made incredible progress in bringing us closer to a position where women and men are recognised as equal, and accordingly, I believe that women should take pride in being independent. We should not rely on men to define us in our professional or personal lives. Correspondingly, this could remove the pressure on men to feel that they have to always perform chivalrous acts for women – paying for dinner, or asking the girl out.

We get it. But perhaps there are also positive reasons to explain such deeply ingrained social standards. Despite the advances in social equality between men and women, we cannot ignore the appropriate feeling of flattery, or even plain happiness, when someone does

treat us with some consideration, or displays their affection (or generosity) through some kind of meaningful act of selflessness. A woman can support egalitarian principles while still wanting to be treated with courtesy and respect and appreciating kind gestures in some form or another. An act of chivalry is a perfect example of this and there is nothing more attractive to most people than a true gentleman – to use the classic phrase. In the contemporary world of booty calls and hook ups it is refreshing to meet someone who demonstrates chivalry even in their smallest actions, maybe opening the door for you or picking up a book you may have dropped on the floor.

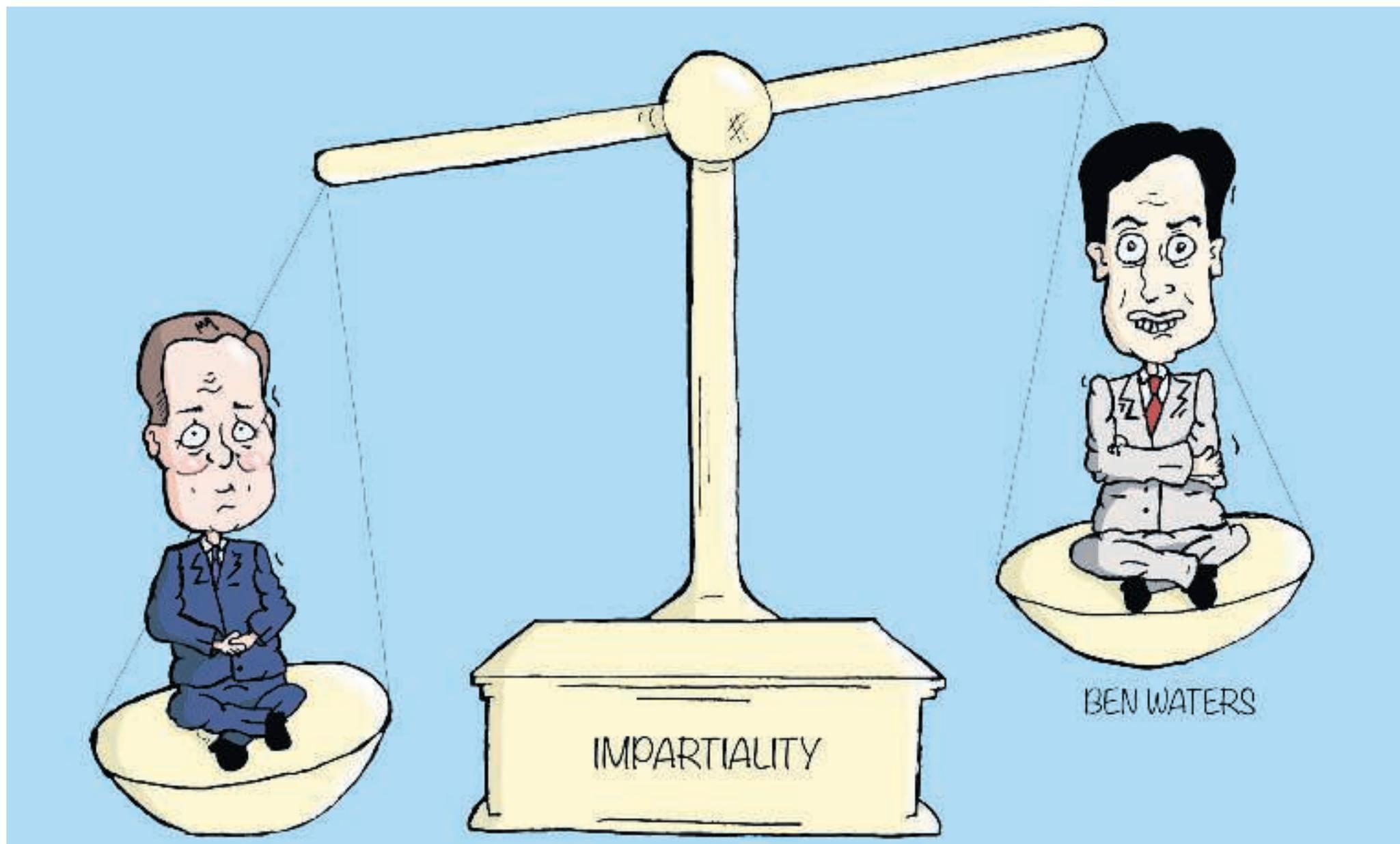
Whilst some men may use their physical strength to help others (it doesn't necessarily have to be just women), on contrasting occasions they may prefer to display chivalry in a more subtle, and even gentle, manner. Chivalry in the 21st century

does not have to be defined by big statements or actions alone. It's the thought behind the act that counts, which is why small gestures of chivalrous behaviour can be just as meaningful as larger, more obvious ones. I'm not saying that men should be permanently on standby to do this. On the contrary, it is important to appreciate that chivalry does not have to be limited to traditional gender roles. No matter who we are, we should not be complacent and lower our standards when interacting with each other. Instead, we should make the effort to display sincere acts of genuine respect and kindness.

Though the original image of the 'chivalrous knight' is certainly outdated, chivalry can now be preserved in any act, big or small, of courtesy, respect or generosity between men and women, equally. Chivalry is not dead, and I hope it will never die.



No: Hebe Hamilton



## Can the news ever be neutral?



Raisa Ostapenko

*Subjectivity in news reporting is a betrayal of journalism's fundamental ethical principles*

With the commercialisation of the internet and the introduction of new methods of transmitting information, journalism has undergone significant changes in the past decade. News agencies have moved into the hitherto-unfamiliar area of broadcast journalism, broadcasting corporations have embraced the written word, mainstream media has made use of 'social media', and the triple threat – the ability to operate on multiple platforms (online, radio, TV) simultaneously – has become a necessity for continued success and audience retention. The internet has also given everyone a voice: we have witnessed the rise of the recreational blogger communicating news to the public; the ordinary citizen promulgating personal opinions on social networking sites; the left or right-leaning online 'intellectual' magazine.

In this time of change, it is of the utmost importance that professional journalists think critically before embracing new trends and abandoning traditions. The past year has seen countless heart-breaking developments rooted in ethnic, religious, and political discords, from the shooting down of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 over Ukraine to brutal and senseless beheadings by ISIS. The emotional significance of these events begs the question of how journalists can manage to continue reporting objectively and whether they even should. How far should we go in embracing new trends? Is it permissible for news reporters, in particular, to introduce subjectivity into their activity?

In my opinion, the answer to these questions is a categorical, non-negotiable "no". Subjectivity – while perfectly appropriate for editorials, opinion pieces, columns, and blog entries, and occasionally for analyses and features, given that readers are informed that the ideas represented therein are not neutral – has no place in news reporting.

News agencies are not political parties; news reporting is not marketing. Our professional function is not to sell a product, promote a position, teach, preach, or be didactic. Our function is to be informative and truthful. Our duty is to present untarnished facts that allow people to form well-informed opinions. End-users, on the other hand, should cultivate analytical minds and avoid turning to mass media in search of conclusions they should be making themselves.

When making a conscious decision to become a journalist, one should be prepared to leave personal convictions at the door and develop the ability to see events through a lens of neutrality, instead of being swayed by background or personal experience. Any alternative approach to news reporting is a betrayal of the fundamental, ethical principles of the profession: impartiality, fairness, and potentially even accuracy.

A journalist has the potential to influence millions of people. The profession can easily be misused to manipulate unsuspecting audiences, as evidenced by the information war in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. Nevertheless, imposing opinions on others is a breach of free will and

failing to provide them with a "complete picture" is a violation of their right to be informed human beings. Consequently, every journalist bears a strict moral responsibility to be impartial. Truly ethical and professional journalism can never have an agenda.

The Reuters Handbook states that journalists must "never identify with any side in an issue, a conflict, or a dispute"; the BBC's Editorial Guidelines define impartiality as the act of giving "due weight to the many and diverse areas of an argument." This can be achieved by being open-minded and by representing a wide breadth of opinion in reporting.

Impartiality can be compromised in many ways, even by using non-objective vocabulary. Any one journalist's failure to be impartial, whether by omitting a main strand of an argument or by engaging in political campaigns outside of working hours, can damage the reputation and legitimacy of an entire news corporation, agency or paper.

Impartiality does not automatically mean that all perspectives must be covered in equal proportion. The BBC, for instance, encourages its journalists to achieve 'due weight', which means that "minority views should not necessarily be given equal weight to the prevailing consensus." Reuters takes a similar position, stating: "the perpetrator of an atrocity or the leader of a fringe political group arguably warrants less space than the victims or mainstream political parties."

Additionally, it is crucial to note that impartiality does not mean that

a journalist must be detached from the 'truths' that we, as humans, have come to accept as self-evident: ethical values, systematised understandings of right and wrong, or more philosophical concepts like justice, freedom, and equality. These 'truths', though appearing in religious and political discourse, are fundamentally secular and apolitical, and neutrality should not come at their expense. For instance, the majority of humans are likely to agree that terrorism is immoral, so when reporting on terrorism, it would be perfectly acceptable for a journalist to express disapproval even when producing a balanced report.

Violating impartiality can also potentially compromise accuracy. Journalists must never knowingly mislead their audiences and must make an effort to pursue the truth. You might be wondering how anyone can determine what the truth is. The beauty of ethical journalism is that 'the truth' (i.e. the well-balanced picture reflective of reality) often appears in the course of the investigative process.

Audiences count on us to do our jobs properly and to be transparent. Real journalism offers a solution to the uncontrolled, informational chaos plaguing the internet. Our accuracy and analysis separate us from rumour-mongers and sensationalists. Our objectivity separates us from propagandists.

It is only if we maintain our ethical principles that journalism will remain a noble profession and a beacon of hope.



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## A Brief History of

## EDDIE REDMAYNE

How could I not join the Eddie Redmayne fan club in 2008, after hearing him thus describe kissing Scarlett Johansson in *The Other Boleyn Girl*, "Together we had lips bigger than Christendom. We didn't even need to stand in the same room." Only the absence of Mick Jagger prevented a pillow-lipped Tudor health hazard – an image that has kept me entertained for years.

Following Redmayne's most recent role, which brought him back to Cambridge, as Stephen Hawking in the *The Theory of Everything*, there has been widespread and febrile speculation that he is poised to receive the Oscar for best actor, making him the first Cambridge alumnus to do so. Given this, it seems only right that we should find out a little more about this dreamy Cantab and (forgive me), commence a Brief History of Eddie Redmayne.

During his time as a History of Art undergraduate at Trinity College he led, by all accounts, an 'active' life (in evidence of which I refer you to his photograph on the wall of the Pitt Club). Those of you currently in the midst of writing dissertations may also be interested to know that he wrote his on *Yves Klein Blue*; which was either heroically ambitious or monumentally foolish for a man

who is acutely colourblind. His sojourn in Cambridge was, however, perhaps most memorable for his second year starring role as Viola in the Globe's 2002 production of *Twelfth Night*. This performance attracted much attention, with Paul Taylor noting in his review for the *Independent* that the cross-dressing Eddie Redmayne would "bring out the bisexual in any man".

Upon graduation, Redmayne gave himself a year to see if he could make it as a professional actor. One of the first roles he took on post-University was as Billy Grey in the Almeida production of *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?* for which he was awarded: 'Outstanding Newcomer' (Evening Standard Theatre Awards) and 'Best Newcomer' (Critics' Circle Theatre Awards).

Needless to say, at the end of the year he did not need to hotfoot it back to Cambridge to seek the sage advice of the Careers Service.

Redmayne went on to add an Olivier and a Tony to his awards cabinet for his portrayal of Rothko's assistant in the 2010 production of *Red*. The following year he turned back to the camera and starred in *My Week with Marilyn*, a film about an aspiring filmmaker's brief roll in the hay with Marilyn Monroe.

However, it wasn't until 2012 that Redmayne truly became a household name. He took the role of Marius in the film adaptation of *Les Misérables*, another Oscar high flyer – although, sadly no one could actually see his performance through all the tears. The acclaim heralded by *Les Misérables* helped him to land his lead role in *The Theory of Everything*, and with that, we are brought full circle back to Cambridge.

Redmayne's list of credits and awards (Golden Globe, BAFTA, Oscar?) impressive as it is, may in the future be seen as merely the opening act of a major international career.

Recently he beat Nicole Kidman and Marion Cotillard to the part of the transgender painter Einar Wegener in Tom Hooper's new film, *The Danish Girl*, which begins filming this year. He is also currently starring in the Wachowski's *Jupiter Ascending* (so type-casting does not appear to be a problem at this time).

And Eddie, if you're reading this, you are welcome to sleep on my floor should you find yourself back in Cambridge filming *The Theory of Everything 2* anytime soon – we all know how hard life is as an emerging actor.

Nancy Hine

UNIVERSAL PICTURES

What's On: Week 5

## Theatre



ADC main show 'Tis Pity She's a Whore (Tues 17th-Sat 21st Feb, 7.45pm, ADC). Following singer Annabella through the glamorous but seedy world of a 1928 Florida Speakeasy, this show promises both an enjoyable romp and some broken taboos.

## Exhibitions



This week sees the opening of MOONSTRIPS: Eduardo Paolozzi and the printed collage 1965-72 (From Tues 17th Feb to Sun 7th June, Fitzwilliam Museum). As the name suggests the exhibition focuses on Paolozzi's art using words cut from popular magazines and scientific journals, which played a formative role in the development of British art in the 1950s and 60s. Expect originality and bright colours.

## Music



For Funk, Soul, Disco, and classic Hip Hop try the very tiring-sounding Mr Margaret Scratcher's Funk Workout (Fri, 13th Feb, 10pm-3am, The Fountain Inn). For House, Electro, Garage, and Bass then take your date to The Movement (Sat, 14th Feb, 10pm-3am, The Fountain Inn).

## Film



The biggest release this week, but almost certainly not the best, is the long-awaited *Fifty Shades of Grey* (released Saturday 14th Feb). You surely already know what it's about so we'll leave it at that. For a less S&M-y Valentines day trip to the cinema, take advantage of a one-off screening of *Casablanca* (14th Feb, 3.45pm, Cambridge Arts Picturehouse), a fantastic opportunity to see a classic on the big screen.



## MISPLACED NOSTALGIA: BELLE AND SEBASTIAN

Shayne Lacey on why all children, and bands, grow up

Last month, the Scottish indie-pop band Belle and Sebastian released their ninth album, *Girls in Peacetime Want to Dance*. I have a poster of Tiger Milk, their very first album on my wall, and one of *Gold Help The Girl*, the musical film project that lead singer Stuart Murdoch released last summer. In short, they're one of my favourite bands.

However, I found myself having a (very twee) crisis with the release of their latest album. I put off listening to the entire thing, because I was struck with the fear that (a) it would be awful and (b) it would entirely taint the rest of their work for me. This then prompted even more soul-searching, and I realised that (c) I was exactly a year old when they released their early work, so do I have the right to be nostalgic about them as a band? and (d) perhaps it's ridiculous to expect bands to evoke the same powerful emotions that the music they created 20 years ago did. Also: (e) oh my God, I probably have an essay to write, I must stop dwelling on this.

What is it about the early Belle and Sebastian albums that make me feel so connected to the group? Is it just

an artificial nostalgia for a 1990s Scotland that I didn't actually ever experience? Did I just relish being a part of a group of moody teens that liked wearing cardigans?

Perhaps it was their charming origin story; among indie-pop bands, Belle and Sebastian's formation seems almost mythical, which is probably why Pitchfork made a documentary about the band's early days. The story begins in 1996 when Stuart Murdoch emerged from years of isolation and solitude due to chronic fatigue, and created a band with people that he met in a music workshop for the unemployed. I always felt there was some manifestation of these origins in their lyrics, but couldn't articulate just what in a satisfying way until I re-watched the documentary.

He explains, "I wanted to write about normal people doing normal things, because I wasn't normal". For instance, 'Expectations', one of the first songs I ever heard from them, is about a brutally mediocre experience of secondary school. The band modestly describes their following album, *If You're Feeling Sinister*, as a "strong set" of songs, but you'll frequently

find it on collections of 'Top Albums of the 90s'. This album effortlessly follows the story of all sorts of people: from track stars ('The Stars of Track and Field'), an army major ('Me and the Major'), to a teenage rebel ('Judy and the Dream of Horses'), and a lost Catholic ('If You're Feeling Sinister').

In their early days, the band shielded their personalities and adopted an idiosyncratic approach to the music industry: they released no singles from albums, did no promotion, no press, and didn't even appear in their own press photos for years. Obviously, this just isn't something you could do in 2015 and the band have moved on from their reclusive nature – they even have a Twitter account. It's fair to say that things have changed from the enigmatic style of their 90s 'glory days'.

Even Stuart Murdoch is no longer the same person he was in 1996, when he wrote those troubled but sweet and clever songs, living in a church hall and wearing corduroy. So I suppose that it's not really a surprise that their first two albums evoke such a strong, personal connection to such heartfelt and therapeutic songs, with anything

new being just a little bit scary.

Yes, the time that I got into them was around the time that I started my typically teenage period of self-discovery, and I've come to realise that it's unlikely to be nostalgia for a musical era that gives their early work a special place inside my heart. Aside from the obvious talent on display in their early work, the age that I was exposed to them, my personal era, probably played a role as well. Their songs speak about loneliness, but a lot of them are also strangely life affirming. It was only after some soul-searching that I realised the extent to which I associate them with certain places and certain people.

Murdoch describes it best when he says that 'If You're Feeling Sinister' is the record of the band in 1996. For me, I guess the album will always be a record of the trials and tribulations of being a fourteen-year-old girl in 2009. Human beings are not static – we are always growing, shifting, moving on. Belle and Sebastian have been getting older, and I'm not wistfully longing for a revival of their past.

Their new album, *Girls in Peacetime*

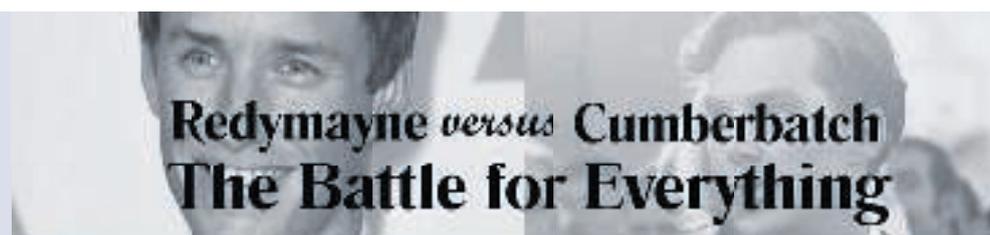
Want to Dance isn't like their first two albums and nor should it to be. This album sees them fully experimenting with the electronic disco vibe only hinted at in their older work, but the core of what drew me to them is still there: their storytelling, their honesty, their dark humour all wrapped in playful tunes. Nobody's Empire, their latest single and the opening track to the album, is the most "traditional" sounding Belle and Sebastian track, but it sees Murdoch discussing his chronic fatigue in the most explicit, personal way so far.

They're playing at the Corn Exchange on May 7th and I fully expect to see a mix of people who first discovered them on a mixtape in the 1990s and of young students who listened to songs like 'Get Me Away From Here' and 'I'm Dying' on repeat during their secondary school days. And I will be dancing along to their songs, old and new, with the same questionable style I had aged fourteen. Wise as always, Murdoch himself said of their new trajectory, "A little bit older, but no wiser, maturing like a fine wine ought to, our love for music, and the chance to lay it on your tender ear, is not diminished. We will pop you."

Eddie Redmayne and Benedict Cumberbatch are both fighting to win their first Best Actor Oscar, and it is Redmayne's multiple award-winning performance in *The Theory of Everything* as Stephen Hawking that is tipped to have the edge over Cumberbatch's Alan Turing. Although the subjects of each biopic might seem similar – both are scientific geniuses from Cambridge struggling through personal turmoil – the depictions are distinctly different to the attentive viewer.

It becomes harder to distinguish Redmayne and Cumberbatch when considering the 2004 BBC TV film *Hawking*, which, like *The Theory of Everything*, features a stunning portrayal (by Cumberbatch) of Hawking learning of and surviving his motor neurone disease diagnosis whilst writing his PhD. Both films are overtly emotional, focussing on the relationship between Hawking and his first wife Jane in conjunction to (and perhaps more than) his work in cosmology.

However, despite similarities in subject matter, each film feels remarkably different. Whilst both succeed in creating a crowd-pleasing balance between the romantic and scientific, *The Theory of Everything* has chosen to foreground love and religion, exploring the various interactions and entanglements of the Hawking family. The psychological transformation of Felicity Jones' Jane rivals Stephen's physical one, with



Eddie Redmayne might have the BAFTA, but who really has the theory of everything when it comes to playing Steven Hawking? Fiona Lin finds out.

his progressing disability both causing and paralleling her metamorphosis from seemingly naïve to resilient. Contrastingly, the dramatic focus of 2004's *Hawking* is the progress of his PhD, the climax being his epiphany about the 'bang' (a.k.a. singularity) at the beginning of the universe.

The biggest divergence, however, is the period of time covered in each film. Largely a function of its longer run time, *The Theory of Everything* covers far more of Hawking's life than *Hawking* – over two decades, compared to three years. So, though we start off at the same point in Hawking's life – when he is embarking upon his PhD and has just received his diagnosis – they end at different times, with Benedict Cumberbatch's *Hawking* still just able to speak.

By showing more of Hawking's life in *The Theory of Everything*, Redmayne is given the

chance to deliver an astonishingly visceral performance, believably showing the progression of his disease. From his initial pen fumbling, to the slight shifts in the crinkles of his eyes, each of Redmayne's gestures conveys so much about both Hawking's physical and mental state. Even when nearly completely immobilised, Redmayne is able to convey Hawking's lively sense of humour – such as when he pretends to be a Dalek, racing around on his electric wheelchair, and his distinctive synthesised voice shouting 'exterminate'.

*Hawking*, whilst featuring no less a remarkable portrayal of the physicist's intellect, does not allow Cumberbatch the same scope to effect a remarkable physical transformation. The already-ravaging effects of the initial stages of disease are portrayed as convincingly as in *The Theory of Everything*, but because of the script's constraints, Cumberbatch has no chance to depict

more of Hawking's physical decline.

Moreover, although *Hawking* does depict some of Hawking's quiet grief when hearing of his diagnosis, Redmayne's angrier, more angst-ridden response is far more believable, given the graveness of being told he had two years to live. As *Hawking* is a TV rather than big-screen film, it is unsurprising that the cinematography and music of *The Theory of Everything*, with its multi-million pound budget, are far superior. Although the soundtrack sounds rather boring on its own, its emotional riffs and swells further dramatise the most dramatic moments of the film. James Marsh's directorial style is evocative of Tom Hooper's in *The King's Speech*, with its uncomfortably close-up shots and faded colour palettes accentuating an atmosphere of confinement. Despite the faintly oppressive atmosphere of much of the film, Marsh has made it remarkably beautiful, with carefully composed shots of all the locations – Cambridge in particular looks like a picturesque tourist ad.

*Hawking*, featuring one of Cumberbatch's earliest notable performances and a non-patronising insight into Hawking's early scientific work, makes it still a film well worth watching. However, *The Theory of Everything* seems to outdo it, with its superior production values and longer timeframe allowing Redmayne to deliver a phenomenal performance of one of the country's greatest icons.

1. *The Night Circus*, by Erin Morgenstern

Read this with your significant other.

When I first read *The Night Circus*, I thought it must be the greatest book that had ever been written. It probably isn't, but it may well be the most tastefully crafted love story there is in today's fantasy genre. Apart from a delicately erotic scene towards the end of the novel, the book's magic is balanced on its use of anticipation: the 'butterfly' feeling that comes with first love. The book's darker undercurrents provide it with an element of the risqué and dangerous, and the illicit tension between Celia and Marco takes on an increasingly dark and disturbing hue as the narrative progresses. It is also very well written: you'll fall in love with Morgenstern's style as easily as with her protagonists.

3. *Like Water for Chocolate*, by Laura Esquivel

Read this if you are suffering the pangs of unrequited love.

If this book were a food, it would be molasses: thick, syrupy, dark, and, to be sure, not to everyone's taste. A wonderful alternative to Gabriel García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*, this Mexican novel is all about seduction. Which is more seductive, Esquivel's descriptions of desire, or of food? I suppose I don't have to decide as the two are sensually intertwined in this text; cocoa feels lustful, chorizo seems passionate. For anyone that has experienced the turmoil of unrequited love, this love story will provide both a graphic reminder, and an irresistible feeling of catharsis.

5. *Daisy Fay and the Miracle Man*, by Fannie Flagg

Read this if you are searching for an everyday love story.

Set in the American South of the 1950s, this story, like many, recounts the life and loves of a young girl. The reader follows her as she is gradually stripped of her romantic illusions in a world of 'ordinary hardship'. Similar in feel to Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*, Flagg uses a combination of humour and sorrow to grant us insight into troubles of poverty and illiteracy, fears of pregnancy out of wedlock, and the universal issues of heartbreak and disillusionment suffered by the young and innocent. The book will remind you of the need to open yourself up to love.

7. *The Blue Sword* (from the *Damar* series), by Robin McKinley

Read this if you are searching for dangerous and adventurous love.

One of my favourite specimens of 80s fantasy fiction, this book has unfairly lost its following over the years. If you are a fan of fantasy, this may be your Valentine. Set in a world reminiscent of the *Arabian Nights*, the love story that unfolds is an extremely enticing one. As a female reader, I couldn't but imagine myself in the place of the heroine. Sword-fighting and restrained romance bubble into a tense, perilous and alluring game of passion. There is also the occasional veiled political reference, for those that like some extra intrigue alongside their romance.

9. *All my Friends are Superheroes*, by Andrew Kaufman

Read this if you're experiencing the pangs of uncertainty in your relationships.

A wonderful and neglected novella, this book is perfect for any literary lovers out there. Short and sweet, it is a playful depiction of true, everlasting love. The writing is structured around a series of metaphors, turning itself into a variation on the style of magical realism. Easily read in a single sitting: an espresso shot of optimism, cheer and appreciation for the well-written word. Although the love story at the core of the book makes for a nice centrepiece, this is a text you can appreciate simply for Kaufman's powerful storytelling.

# 10 Overlooked Love Stories to Read this Valentine's Day

YOU'VE HEARD OF CATHY AND HEATHCLIFF, ROMEO AND JULIET, BELLA AND EDWARD, BUT NOW IT'S TIME FOR SOME ALTERNATIVES...

*Valentine's Day* does not need to be a cliché of romance. Whether you disapprove of candied hearts or are simply feeling in need of some romantic cheer, *Sophia Gatzionis* will certainly have a book for you.

2. *Crocodile on the Sandbank* (from the *Amelia Peabody* series), by Elizabeth Peters

Read this to spice up your love life.

Expect to be thrown in the exotic, faintly spicy atmosphere of late 19th century Egypt. Luxury and deprivation, enmity and desire fuse together, turning this intelligent historical novel into an excellent delineation of the unconventional romance between two unconventional people. This book carefully intertwines the thrill of archaeological discovery, detective mystery and a forcefully budding romance. It is entertaining, witty, and an unusual but exquisite choice for a love story. It is also the best of the *Amelia Peabody* series, and can be read entirely on its own.

4. *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*, by Jamie Ford

Read this book if you want to cry.

As suggested by its title, this book is the paragon of ambivalent love stories. Set during World War II, it explores the potential of young love within the constraints of a harsh historical reality through the story of Henry Lee, a Chinese American boy, and Keiko Okabe, a Japanese American girl. A realistic and touching example of romantic historical fiction, this is a story of awakening and of the melancholy of loss. It's sure to bring a tear to your eye as you recall your first loves this Valentine's Day.

6. *The Thread*, by Victoria Hislop

Read this if you want to be inspired by the powers of love.

I fell in love with this book because of its unique atmosphere. The character of Greece shines through, beautiful and resilient. It is comparable, even superior, to Nicholas Spark's work in terms of plot, setting, and writing style, and yet is a purer love story: less sentimental, more matter-of-fact. This is an ode to the ability of strong, determined love to endure through all sorts of difficulties and disasters, as much as it is an ode to the strength and determination of the Greek people.

8. *Anne of the Island*, (Anne of Green Gables Series) by L.M. Montgomery

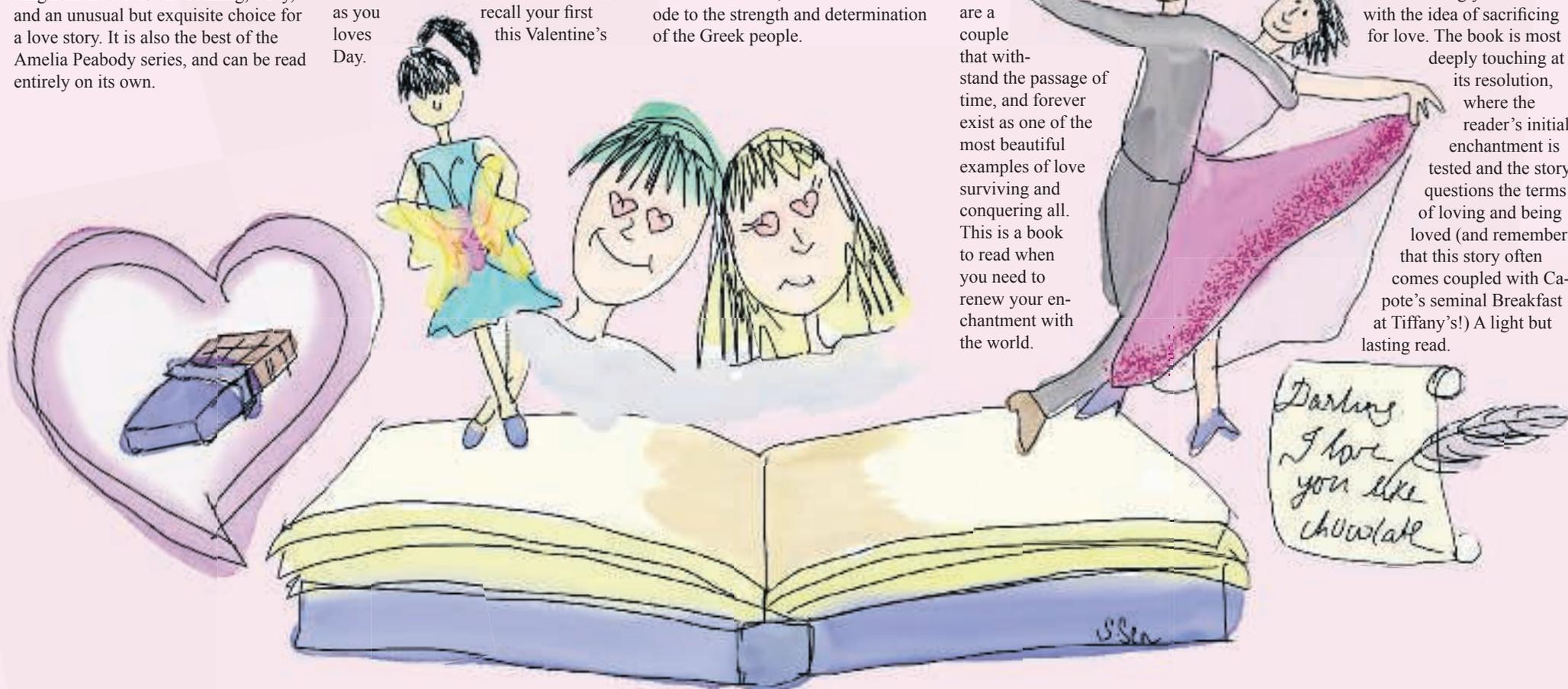
Read this if you're feeling blue.

Although the first book in this series is very widely read, the third sequel is far from well-known. It is a heartwarming, wholesome story of old-fashioned romance, abounding in suitors, beaux, letters, flowers, courting, dances and unrequited, but ultimately satisfied love. Anne and Gilbert are a couple that withstand the passage of time, and forever exist as one of the most beautiful examples of love surviving and conquering all. This is a book to read when you need to renew your enchantment with the world.

10. *House of Flowers* (short story), by Truman Capote

Read this if you are opposed to the idea of Valentine's Day.

Although not in the strictest sense a book, I could not leave this short story off my list. It is infused with his characteristic magical touch. The writing is exquisite, each sentence perfectly constructed and polished: a brilliant-cut diamond, ringing like glass and tasting of marigolds. Glittering with the seduction of the Caribbean, the story is fanciful and pretty, but unflinchingly concerned with the idea of sacrificing for love. The book is most deeply touching at its resolution, where the reader's initial enchantment is tested and the story questions the terms of loving and being loved (and remember that this story often comes coupled with Capote's seminal *Breakfast at Tiffany's*!) A light but lasting read.



# Crêpes de Cambridge

As Pancake Day crêpes up on us, **Phoebe Stone** sets out to discover where Cantabrigians should go to celebrate

## Benet's Café, 21 King's Parade

### First Class

**B**enet's Café sits proudly opposite King's, its sister café on St. Benet's Street having closed only a few months ago.

I've read some reviews. It's close enough to my department. I'm not expecting much. I'm wrong.

There is snow outside and the café is cosy yet airy, and not too full. The staff are relaxed and friendly. They offer a wide range of crêpe fillings, savoury and sweet, as well as American-style fluffy pancakes and gluten free options, so there's a wide selection to choose from.

A lifelong lemon and sugar fan – the vanilla of the pancake world – I opt for an apple and cinnamon crêpe with caramel syrup.

It arrives looking splendid, dusted with icing sugar and drizzled with dark, rich caramel. The crêpe is thin but still soft. The diced apple, suitably tart, plays off the sweet caramel fantastically. It's not at all sickly, just truly satisfying.

Another customer walks past me as I focus on the food with my camera. "Instagram?" he laughs. "Something like that," I reply. While a little steep at £6.75, Benet's has something of a restorative atmosphere, on the day I visit at least. I sit at the window.

There are magazines and a potted plant. There is table service. I feel like a goddamn princess. By the time I've demolished the crêpe, I realise that I actually did forget to take a photograph for my Instagram. High praise indeed.



PHOEBE STONE

## Cambridge Crêpes, Sidney Street

### First Class

**A** student and tourist favourite already (with a review page on their website so glowing it could blind you), Cambridge Crêpes are doing something right. Or make that everything. Despite the bright and breezy weather, dissertation work is taking its toll, not to mention a vague feeling of pancake fatigue. I opt for Nutella – because Nutella – with some banana thrown in for good measure at £3.30, and am told this has been an unusually popular choice this morning. I note my newly discovered career option of pancake trend prediction; although I would probably have had to apply for an internship by now. The two owners are wonderfully friendly, and several regulars turn up for a chat. Operating from a van, Cambridge Crêpes had the best café atmosphere I'd encountered so far, and it wasn't even a café. I begin to feel like an extra in a sitcom, desperate to become a recurring character. It all depends on the pancake. Watching it being made is a thrill and a torture. I've forgotten about pancake fatigue. I'm salivating. I'm handed a hot parcel of firm pancake enclosing gooey Nutella and perfectly ripe banana. The van, embellished with the numerous fillings available for your delectation, promises "a classy pancake". While I looked far from classy traipsing round Market Square with Nutella all over my face – as anyone unabashedly enjoying a treat on the go should – from the service to the taste, Cambridge Crêpes is a class act.



PHOEBE STONE

## Crêpe Affaire, 66 Bridge Street

### Solid 2:1

**F**airly new on the Cambridge scene is Crêpe Affaire, a company established in 2004, growing rapidly, and with an already solid clientele. The café is heaving as I slip through the door on a freezing cold evening, glasses steaming up. Again, this crêperie offers a decent selection of savoury and sweet fillings, and the pesto, mushroom and cheese combo persuades my otherwise conventionally sweet tooth.

The décor is simple with sunny touches – sunflowers adorn a back wall – and after grabbing some cutlery, I huddle in a small booth. After a small wait, I collect my pancake, a solid-looking brown triangular parcel stuffed with filling. It's big, it's ugly and it's really flavoursome. The mushrooms are succulent and the cheese seems good quality. When I locate a scrap of pancake not smothered in gooey goodness, it's a little hard, but it barely seems to matter – this is a real meal, and for little more than dinner in college at £4.40, not bad value, either. And with the promise of decent coffee, free Wi-Fi and freshly squeezed orange juice from a charming bright orange machine, Crêpe Affaire might be worthy of a second trip.

## Do it yourself: American-style Pancakes

1. Melt the butter, then leave to cool slightly
2. Sift all the dry ingredients (flour, sugar, salt, baking powder) together into a large bowl, before creating a well in the centre.
3. Beat the egg in a separate bowl, before adding the milk and mixing well. Add the butter and whisk with a fork to combine
4. Pour the wet mixture into the dry, and whisk again until all ingredients are incorporated and lumps removed
5. Add a generous handful of raspberries to the mixture, gently crushing them with your fingers as you go. Fold them into the mixture until evenly distributed. Leave to stand for a few minutes
6. Heat a frying pan over a medium heat – don't be tempted to turn the heat up any higher – and add a knob of butter or oil
7. Place a generous spoonful of mixture into the pan, using the back of the spoon to spread the mixture into a small circle
8. Wait until the pancake begins to blister and bubble before gently flipping it to allow the other side to cook – this should take a further minute or so
9. Repeat, stacking the cooked pancakes on a cool plate away from the frying pan and heat. Add a handful of the left over raspberries, a drizzle of maple syrup, and tuck in!

### Ingredients

135g plain flour  
3 tablespoons caster sugar  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 egg  
130ml milk  
2 tablespoons butter  
Vegetable oil or butter for greasing the frying pan  
Big handful raspberries (plus extra for serving)  
Maple syrup



PHOEBE STONE



PHOEBE STONE

# The Varsity Valentine's Co

Noa Lessof-Gendler

It's a feat almost as legendary as joining the mile high club. You think about it when you roll out of someone else's bed, fishing for socks inside jeans and turning your t-shirt the right way out, pondering the possibilities of their joining you for a morning in the library. You think about it when you're at your laptop, peering through the stacks at that glorious mop of hair. You think about it when you lean back in your chair, bored, sex on the brain as usual, imagining being pushed into that corner over there, rough teeth tugging on your bottom lip, fingers fumbling with your belt buckle, clutching Dorothy Whitelock's *English Historical Documents: Vol. I* as your knees tremble with passion...

Students (and possibly fellows) of Cambridge, it can be done. At the risk of security measures in the UL being increased to the point where they check pockets for condoms, here's a comprehensive guide. We'll start with the practicalities, and then we'll move onto aesthetics. Read this first. Don't mess it up. It's not going to be easy, and yes, you probably will have a panic attack and change your mind four or five times while cycling over to do the deed. Wiggling out is natural. Pulling out – no pun intended – is for the weak. See it through and you'll be a legend. And one more thing: the aim is to not get caught. I cannot stress this enough. Librarians are grumpy at the best of times and, while those in the UL are actually pretty lovely, I don't think they'd take too kindly to your fluids on their tomes. You might get sent down.

## 1. Pick your partner.

For some of you, this will be the easiest part. For the rest of you lonely sods, this bit is crucial. Aside from the obvious (consenting and of age, functioning genitals etc.), you need to make sure this person isn't going to freak out as soon as you've passed through the revolving door. UL wank doesn't sound like nearly as much fun.

## 2. Calm your nerves.

I don't mean get high on Xanax, but it's a good idea to get a full eight hours of sleep the night before and have a healthy breakfast because we don't want you passing out as though you're going for a blood test (also there are a lot of stairs in there, so fill yourself with energy). Maybe also a good idea to limit the caffeine – one cup of coffee is fine, but you don't want to get the jitters. Or the shits.

## 3. Psych yourself up.

Remind yourself that you're a pro. Or that everyone starts somewhere. Make a deal with yourself that you're going to see it through. Maybe promise yourself a reward, like lunch at Bill's or something. Whatever tickles your, um, fancy.

## 4. Look the part.

Obviously you'll be looking sexy because you just are, but attire is key. I strongly recommend those with a vagina to wear a skirt or dress, and those with a penis to wear trousers with a fly. Easy access. If you object to this suggestion, please consider leggings/trackies/anything else easy to whip off and back on at a moment's notice. It could mean the difference between getting your 2:1 and not getting a degree at all.

## 5. Come prepared.

As it were. If either of you have a penis, bring condoms. I'm not saying this to remind you about sexual health, because you're not an idiot. I'm saying it because semen can be messy, and honestly, you don't want milky drips running off *Visions of Empire*. Although if you'd enjoy the power trip, go for it.



## 6. Timing is key.

As with most sexual acts – and most library-related acts – timing is crucial. Just like writing essays the morning after Cindies, going for a shag in the UL at one in the afternoon is basically impossible. I suggest the morning when people are likely to be in lectures (FYI, the UL opens at nine). The next best time is four, when those who've been slaving away since lunch finally give up. Never just before it closes – people grab last minute books, and there are always a few stragglers milling among the stacks. Exam term is also a no go: that place is jam-packed from dawn until dusk.

## 7. So is location.

South Front is a good one – always fairly empty.

Consider the History of Art section. They never go to the library except to shag, anyway.

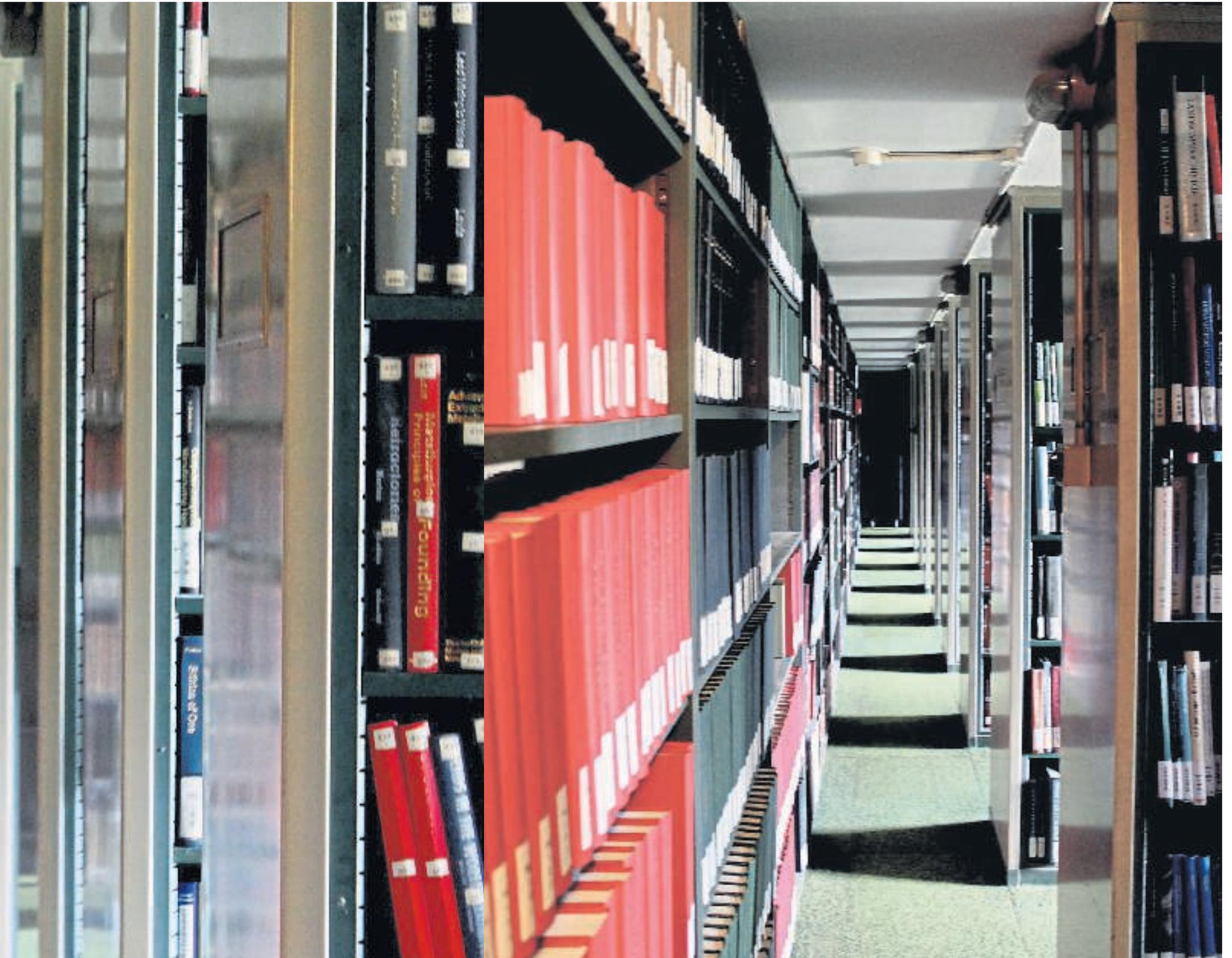
But there is no real hidden corner of the UL: any corridor that you pick could contain the volume that some unwary soul is hunting for whilst you've got your pants around your ankles.

To keep risk at a minimum, pick a distant end of an upstairs corridor.

## 8. Choose your pleasure.

For a combination of penis and vagina, the ol' perch on a shelf move is probably sensible. Two vaginas may prove trickier as kneeling or lying down for oral is going to make scrambling that little bit harder if you get caught. Also the carpet is scratchy on the knees. If one of you can do a handstand, then great. It's the same issue with two penises – you may find taking turns just works best, or you may decide to throw caution to the winds and go for a sixty-nine. I strongly advise against anal for any combination of genitals. You just don't want to risk the mess.

# mpanion to Sex in the UL



## For when love is in the air..



To spice things up, follow these bonus tips to add that extra bit of romance to your Valentine's excursion. No candles goes without saying – we've already lost one great library on this side of the Nativity, and we don't need to repeat the experience.

### 1. Toys etc.

If you're into kinky extra stuff, no need to stop here.

The no bags rule will mean that you'll need a coat with big pockets, but after that, Ann Summers is your oyster.

Just try not to leave puddles of lube.

Also, I don't think that handcuffs are a particularly good idea as they could obstruct a potentially crucial getaway.

### 2. Books.

Forget porn – the UL is full of super-hot erotic literature and, as an English student, I invite you to indulge. And we're not talking about *Fifty Shades*, here. For your delectation and delight I've compiled a brief list of infamous 'cliterature' tomes, complete with their classmarks:

- *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, by D.H. Lawrence, 1928 Original edition: Order in Rare Books Room (Not Borrowable) Syn.7.93.34
- *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, (aka *Fanny Hill*), by John Cleland, 1748 Order in West Room (Not Borrowable) (place a stack request)
- *Tropic of Cancer*, by Henry Miller, 1934 Order in West Room (place a stack request) 1998.8.9115 1985.8.3682
- *Delta of Venus*, by Anaïs Nin, 1940s, published 1977 Order in West Room (place a stack request) 1996.7.1418

### 3. Fun locations.

At the risk of exposing myself as a complete and utter heathen – it could be fun to do it in the Theology section. If either you or your partner are displaying symptoms in that region, go to the medicine section and diagnose each other. For a real winner, sneak into the Munby Room and shag on top of something 600 years old. It would be impressive, but probably not that sensible.

I hope this inspires a generation of revelry and fun in the UL; go and make some good memories in there. Undergraduates down the line will be finding your used condoms lying around as they research the Sonderbund War of 1847. And I'm not going to reveal if I have or haven't. Find me in the smoking area at Life and ask.



# MYSTIC MAGNETISM



*Photography | Barney Couch ; Models | Dan Schofield & Maddie Leadon ;  
Direction, Styling, Setting, | Livs Galvin & Gayathiri Kamalakanthan  
Clothes | Chic by Choice: <http://chic-by-choice.com>, +44 20 3095 7117,*

# Lost in Translation

**Gabriella Jeakins** talks translated puns and absurd dark humour with the team behind *Santa is a Scumbag*

It's often pretty difficult to pin down what makes something funny. Certain situations seem to balance just the right amount of wit or absurdity or downright silliness to get a laugh, but can easily go wrong without the right phrasing or timing. This is what makes translating humour very difficult. A translated punchline can be ruined by something as simple as the fact that one language uses more words to convey the punchline than the other.

There are also cultural differences, of course, which means certain humorous situations in some cultures have no obvious equivalent in another, and different cultures are more receptive to different senses of humour. Because it is so difficult to simply dub or subtitle foreign comedies, we can miss out on some fantastically funny foreign writing.

One Cambridge student however, has battled this to produce his own translation of the popular French comedy play, and later film, *Le Père Noël est une ordure*. The show has never been performed in English before and medical student Aurélien Guérout hopes that he can make this classic comedy appeal to a new audience. The result of his efforts is this term's Week 5 ADC Lateshow, *Santa is a Scumbag*.

The show was originally written and performed in 1979 by the French comedy troupe *Le Splendid*, which Aurélien describes as "the equivalent of Monty Python in France". This group of writers and actors won countless César Awards and have each had a successful individual career, yet remain relatively unknown outside of France. He tells me that he really loves this particular play and that he thinks its style of dark, yet absurd and farcical humour will really appeal to a Cambridge audience.

Aurélien also draws attention to the fact that French theatre has generally been popular amongst Cambridge students. This is certainly true; Molière's *Tartuffe* was performed at Emmanuel College last year, *The Bald Soprano* was put on in French (with surtitles) last term and *Les Justes* is on at the Corpus Playroom this week. Dark comedy also tends to appeal to Cambridge students, with last year's Harry Porter prize winner *STIFF!*, a comedy set in a graveyard, as a notable example.

Director Rhiannon Shaw thinks French farces map particularly well onto British humour. "I think there is very much an overlap in the absurdity," she says. "As was pointed out they're very similar to Monty Python and this



level of absurd humour is common between French and British comedy."

Aurélien has also noticed a series of differences, however. He tells us that "French humour is quite mean... which British humour has less of". This is something Rhiannon says has been an issue while directing the show; "it proves a challenge

because obviously you don't want to seem to be poking fun at any of the character traits these characters might have." The show is very dark – it is set in the call room of a suicide hotline – and it can

prove tricky to get the balance just right between the humour and such serious and often sensitive themes.

Almost every aspect of the play has been Anglicised. Now set in London, it is somewhat difficult to believe these characters were once French.

Of course, no matter how similar the sense of humour between two cultures, sometimes jokes just don't translate. Aurélien has found that there are plenty of moments in the play that can't be rendered into English; "The French really love their puns and wordplay and some of the puns were very difficult to translate. I've come up with some of my own puns which work in the context... I hope!"

This is likely to be a show few Cambridge students are familiar with, so I ask Rhiannon what we can expect. She tells me it's a show filled with bold, exaggerated and not particularly likeable characters; "I think what you have to bear in mind about the characters is that none of them are supposed to be relatable. You're not supposed to feel a particular amount of sympathy for them. You're supposed to have a distance between you and them."

The cast certainly seem to be enjoying tackling such characters, though. As I watch them rehearse they really get into the roles and many little quirks really bring these hilarious personalities to life.

Overall, this show seems like both an interesting attempt to bring foreign comedy to an English audience and downright good fun. It's certainly something I'm looking forward to seeing!

*Santa is a Scumbag* takes to the stage on the 18th February, hoping that this French cult classic will endear itself to a Cambridge audience and that its farcical humour will no longer be lost in translation.



# Nepotism: The theatrical elephant in the room?

**Kimberley Richards** talks us through the issues of perceived nepotism in the Cambridge theatre scene

Depending on who you talk to, there are those who believe that nepotism is alive and well behind the scenes of Cambridge's student theatre. Yet surely such a jaded and clichéd phrase as 'it's not what you know, but who' has no place whatsoever in the vibrant student-led and egalitarian atmosphere that surrounds the theatre and performing arts in Cambridge. A world where the next Fry and Laurie, or Mitchell and Webb may spring forth at any moment.

In Stephen Fry's autobiography he mentions the 1980 Footlights Pantomime, *The Snow Queen*, in which he, Hugh Laurie and Emma Thompson all starred. There are two ways this could be taken. One is linked to this idea of nepotism, as it was clear that they were a group of chums doing what they loved, perhaps even a clique.

Or perhaps their friendship was a by-product of putting on a show together, and their place in that show down simply to the talent with which the three found their later fame – already present, even in embryonic form, during their time in Cambridge.

Does a nepotistic ethos exist in Cambridge, or doesn't it? 34 years separate Fry's 1980 pantomime from 2014's offering, and yet it wappears that the debate surrounding nepotism in the Cambridge arts scene is still relevant. Indeed, worthy of column inches dedicated to the subject.

There appears, as with many things in Cambridge, to be a two-tier approach towards the performing arts. The gap between the camaraderie felt in some societies such as Gilbert & Sullivan and the professionalism of the top billing ADC shows can be very stark. There is little doubt that you see the same faces appear in a G&S production time after time, despite their tradition of holding open 'sing-throughs' before each show is opened to audition.

The difference, of course, is in the title. The ADC is a theatre, G&S a society. Within that template it stands to reason that the competitiveness of the ADC is a far fairer representation of what the professional circuit is like, whereas G&S is a more holistic and ultimately 'done-for-fun' kind of enterprise. Simply put, not everyone will make the grade for an ADC show, but does that equate to nepotism if the pool of talent is actually rather small in any given year?

The accusation is not limited merely to the theatrical side of the Cambridge arts scene. In the case of groups such as the Opera Society (CUOS), the Pops Orchestra (CUPO) and the Show Choir, there is a range of personal experience that attests to both sides of the debate.

As Melissa\*, a regular performer with CUPO, has said: "if you know the right people, you've got more chance [of being successful at audition]". Or Ellie's\* analysis of her two failed attempts to get into Show Choir in second and

third year, despite singing lessons and regular singing with a choir, which means she "feels as though it's a case of [her] not being visible on the circuit" – she even cites frequently receiving positive feedback after auditions.

Clearly Melissa and Ellie do not perceive nepotism as limited purely to the interconnectedness of the ADC and Corpus Playroom, but a phenomenon that extends throughout the Cambridge musical scene. As for CUOS, it is true that here there is a clearer link between the choral scholars and chapel choirs, but this also does not guarantee success. The CUOS website itself says that "It is the hard work of determined students that enable CUOS to thrive", an ethos surely contradictory to the accusation of nepotism.

The impression that this is a close-knit group of people does linger, however, and this is one that, according to Zarah\*, isn't entirely incorrect. A choral scholar and regular performer with CUOS, among others, she is well placed to offer a more immediate viewpoint.

I ask her if it isn't as much 'who you know', but perhaps 'what circle you belong to'? The Music and English courses at Cambridge allow a natural flow of people between them and the performing arts. To many this reeks of an ideal breeding ground for nepotism, but as Zarah\* points out it is "easy to become part of [this circle]" and supports this with the fact that she has "been to auditions where I'm good friends

with the panel [and that] hasn't meant I've got the roles". These are awarded – in Zarah's\* opinion – on talent alone.

It is far from the case that all those successful on the Cambridge stage are students of a particular subject, even if certain subject groups seem over-represented. There are countless examples of non-English or Music students who regularly feature in ADC productions and musical societies, established through their determination and talent. Santa is a Scumbag was translated by a medic.

In a highly pressured term, with few hours free in a week to commit to rehearsing, producing and staging a show, the success or failure ultimately rests with the production team. With the ADC's ticket price rise this pressure is even more intense. Shows need to be worth every penny students spend on them, and we expect quality from the plays and operas on offer.

Directors and producers can hardly be lambasted for ensuring that these demands are satisfied in the cast they choose. Perhaps it is more accurate to say it is the differing levels of professionalism between the different societies, and the ADC, that allows accusations of nepotism to be fostered. But competitiveness does not promote nepotism; it simply prepares you for the harsh realities outside of the Cambridge student theatre scene.

*\* names have been changed upon request*





## Overlooked: Scott Polar Research Institute

India Rose Matharu-Daley

"Polar exploration is at once the cleanest and most isolated way of having a bad time which has been devised," wrote Apsley Cherry-Garrard in his memoir, *The Worst Journey in the World*. It charted his experience of Captain Robert Falcon Scott's Terra Nova Expedition to Antarctica. The explorers set out in 1910 with two aims: meteorological, geological, geographical and zoological scientific research; and to be the first to reach the South Pole. The expedition's most significant contribution to science was the discovery of fossils of the fern *Glossopteris*, which are also found in Australia, India, Africa and South America. This suggested Antarctica must once have been forested, and also helped to prove German geophysicist Alfred Wegener's theory of continental drift. As for the second aim, however, Scott's expedition failed. Roald Amundsen's Norwegian team beat them to the Pole by 34 days. Scott's party was hit by an ice blizzard on their return and, starved, exhausted and frostbitten, all five men died in March 1912.

I could not really fathom why anyone would voluntarily trek across the Antarctic until my first visit to the Scott Polar Research Institute, a centre for research into the polar regions. It boasts the world's most comprehensive polar library and archives, offers a Master's and a Doctoral Degree in Polar Studies, and its Polar Museum introduces the uninitiated to the history, culture and geography of the Arctic and Antarctic.

The North and South Poles? *That's nothing new*, you might think. But did you know that the Arctic is actually an ocean with varying ice cover? That the small area of land above the Arctic Circle is treeless and covered in permafrost? That Antarctica's surface ripples with mountains and active volcanoes? That it is the world's largest desert, but there are lakes beneath its glaciers? That it was only discovered in 1820?

By the end of the 19th century, most of the Arctic coastlines had been mapped and charted, but Antarctica remained the earth's last great *terra incognita*. Captain Scott, before his ill-fated Terra Nova Expedition at least, represented the golden years of the heroic age of exploration, when to set off into the dangerous unknown promised adventure, fame and fortune.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the importance of the Polar Research Institute lies in its environmental investigations. The cryosphere, which encompasses all of the ice on the earth's surface, is one of the most dynamic components of the planet's climate system. The better we understand the Arctic and Antarctic and the role they play in the delicate balance of our ecology, the more we will do to protect them.

## Preview: Enter Shikari

Enter Shikari's albums normally begin with a tirade. The band describes its music as "socially conscious" and the openings of its albums are always quintessential evidence of this, whether addressing environmental issues, as in *A Flash Flood of Colour*, or calling for solidarity in *Common Dreads*. Their new album, *The Mindsweep*, released on 19th January, follows in the same vein; in fact it is more explicit than ever, opening with "an appeal to the struggling and striving." Despite achieving more mainstream success after their last album, peaking at number four in the album charts, it is clear that Enter Shikari's colours have not changed.

When I interviewed Enter Shikari earlier this month, they told me that *The Mindsweep* differs from previous albums in that the "orchestral instruments are real and not sampled as before," and is "a tad more passionate and determined than *Flash Flood*." Listening to the album for the first time, this is clear from the outset; in 'The Appeal & The Mindsweep I, Rou bellows: "there was never a broadcast made of such urgency." Their album consists of regular diatribes against the establishment, most explicitly in 'Anaesthetist', which expresses fears regarding the privatisation of the NHS, culminating in the impassioned threat: "you want to profit off our health, step the f\*\*k back."

Enter Shikari is very politically engaged, so I asked how they choose what issues to write their music about: "Usually after the music begins to take shape you can get a feel for what emotions the piece will evoke and maybe which subjects it may gravitate towards lyrically." Their newest album also reprimands the Bank of England and outdated class divisions, and laments the myopia of our generation as a beluga whale.

Discussing the widespread political apathy in Britain today, the band said:

"It's hard to encourage excitement about something that, on the surface, is boring (even the word 'politics' is usually greeted with a yawn from most) and it's also hard to trigger interest in something that doesn't involve people at all. One vote every few years is not a situation conducive to interest; this system breeds apathy."

The Ancient Greeks would laugh at what we now call 'democracy', a word that derives from the Greek, 'Demokratia'. In their truly participatory democracy, anyone politically/socially apathetic was labelled 'idiotes'; the root of our modern word, idiot.

What we try and do with our music isn't just enrage people but embolden and empower them, the more included and worthy people feel, the more interested and determined they'll become. Another way to slap people out of apathy is to present them with future possibilities or alternative systems. This is another thing we try to accomplish through supporting such organisations as the Zeitgeist Movement. Nye Bevan (the founder of the NHS) once said 'Discontent arises from the knowledge of the

possible, rather than the knowledge of the actual.' The minute you show people a viable and realistic alternative that is based in equality and sustainability using the latest technology we have, people will demand it becomes reality, just like free wifi or the latest phone upgrade."

In his New York Times article (How Has the Social Role of Poetry Changed Since Shelley?), Adam Kirsch states: "Poets in our time prefer to imagine themselves not as legislators, but as witnesses – those who look on, powerless to change the world, but sworn at least to tell the truth about it." Whether or not you are aligned with the left wing of the political spectrum, their belief in the power of culture to shape our society is refreshing. In a Britain where politicians are failing to speak a language that the people understand, the "socially conscious" music of Enter Shikari is especially pertinent.

Although their music often addresses serious subject matter, the band certainly know how to have a laugh. The iTunes bonus track 'Slipshod' is about poor restaurant service and is accompanied by a charming animated music video. Moreover, when I asked Rou why he had got rid of his dashing beard, he responded: "I found myself becoming unrelentingly sexually attractive to the opposite sex. Just nipping out to get milk and cereal in the morning became an unyielding assault course of female yearning."

The band has featured at the Reading and Leeds festivals for nearly a decade, and is renowned for the calibre of its performances, having won Best Live Band awards from AIM and Kerrang. I asked what their most memorable performance was: "I guess the obvious answer would be any of the years we've played Main Stage at Reading. Purely on account of it being the festival I'd frequent as a punter and just feels like home base to us [sic]. We always get butterflies before going on and the audience is always energised and dedicated for us."

For those unfamiliar with Enter Shikari's music, it is difficult to classify it according to traditional genres. Their blend of post-hardcore, electronic, and alternative metal, often breaking into trance, metalcore, drum and bass and dubstep, makes them consistently exciting to watch perform. They are already famous for their human pyramids and electric mosh pits, and hold a record number of crowd surfers. I asked whether they had any new tricks planned; they responded: "The 'Where's Rory C' where the lights go down and Rory scuttles off somewhere in the venue and first person to find him wins a meet and greet with our mate Filthy Jon."

I will certainly be searching for Rory, the band's guitarist, when Enter Shikari perform on 24th February at the Cambridge Corn Exchange. This one is not for the faint-hearted, nor the closed-minded.

Jonny Shamir



POWONA/ENTER SHIKARI



## Selma



2011. The federal government of America opens a monument dedicated to Martin Luther King Jr. Carved out of white marble, he adds to the imposing selection of figures that bestride the USA's capital. He was the father of the Civil Rights Movement; a man whose words live on in political legend. And director Ava DuVernay somehow managed to pull from this well-trodden ground an original narrative.

The film's plot focuses around events in Selma, Alabama in 1965. Following his success in bringing segregation to an end in 1964, Martin Luther King Jr. turned his attention to the issue of voting rights for African-Americans. The film centres around the three non-violent marches he led from Selma to Montgomery, all in an effort to get the administration in Washington DC to recognise the futility of racial inequality.

Undoubtedly, David Oyelowo is the star of the film. He plays Martin Luther King Jr. with a gravitas that is

totally absorbing. Each and every line has a power that perfectly represents the popular support that he was able to command; a notable moment being him proclaiming "no more" inequality in Selma's grand church. This alone would build an enthralling, but ultimately one-dimensional character. Yet, in the hands of Oyelowo, King is not just the icon memorialised in marble: he is a human being. Oyelowo creates a terrible sense of urgency throughout King's life, with constant threats to his family putting a strain on the stability of everyone he loves.

One particularly poignant moment sees King joking about Selma being "as good a place to die as any," in answer to which his wife implores him to "not say that ever again." Carmen Ejogo lends brilliant support here as King's wife, capturing the fear of death that being married to such an iconic protestor could instil. She is almost brought to the edge of reason by King's work, frequently breaking down when they are alone together. Ultimately, this is DuVernay's masterstroke, portraying that, however grand a political movement may seem, the figures at its head remain insecure, flawed human beings.



Framing the central acting, the film draws out the ingrained nature of racial hostility in the mid-20th-century American South. Subtle nods to supposed African-American inferiority absorb the audience in the incivilities of the time. A scene that particularly affected me was a conversation between King and President Johnson (Tom Wilkinson), in which the latter

### KING IS NOT JUST THE ICON MEMORIALISED IN MARBLE: HE IS A HUMAN BEING

congratulates the former on the “trinkets” he has gained (the Nobel Peace Prize) and proceeds to then ‘apologise’ for the fact that “this voting thing is gonna have to wait.” Such degrading dialogue from the President reinforces the sweeping nature of racism as an ideology. It was more than the violent treatment of black people; it was an ingrained belief that black people were an ‘inferior’ race, making their rights secondary to those of whites.

Equally, the brutal treatment of

nonviolent black protestors is terribly realistic. Jarring camerawork draws you into the chaos, notably the tear gas and baton beatings of the film’s first march into Montgomery. But this is combined with heart-breaking poignancy. The scene in which Jimmie Lee Jackson (a black protestor, played very ably by Keith Stanfield) is murdered for peacefully protesting is one of the most touching of the whole film. His mother’s raw cries, juxtaposed with the staring corpse, is a perfect symbol for the thousands of black people brutalised by segregation in 20th-century America.

The cinematography adds to the tangibility of DuVernay’s portrayal of events. King’s final successful march into Montgomery is divided into footage from the film and actual coverage of the real march in 1965. This brings King’s work back to life, depicting the real men and women that fought for their right to be free. The juxtaposition between the real black and white footage and the rich colours of the film’s portrayal acts almost as a metaphor for Civil Rights’ success, demonstrating the transition from

a distant dream to final acceptance of racial equality. Jason Moran’s construction of a score that jumps between soaring orchestral pieces and contemporary soul only adds to the film’s poignancy.

Oyelowo’s delivery of King’s speech at Montgomery is the perfect backdrop to the march, acting almost to tie the terrible suffering of the black population to the realisation of the dream of equality. I defy you to watch the growing crescendo to ‘Glory Alleluia’ without shedding a tear.

Ultimately, this film is a necessity in modern cinema. Beneath the veil of this portrayal of the success of the Civil Rights Movement is a definite need to bring race back to the forefront of American consciousness. The piece’s Oscar-nominated original song, ‘Glory’, proclaims that “we walk through Ferguson with our hands up.” This is clearly a story that the production sees as far from over. And in a time when men are still killed for their colour in America, and Hollywood fails to nominate any black actors, I am inclined to agree with them.

Alexander Izza

### William Blake at the Ashmolean ★★★★★

We now know him as a visionary poet and one of the most remarkable minds of the eighteenth century. But in his day, William Blake lived in near-obscurity. His first and only attempt to make a public name for himself came in 1809, when he mounted an exhibition of his works in the flat above his brother’s London shop. It was a massive failure. Barely anyone attended, and its only review was so abusive and insulting that it sent Blake into a depression of several years.

Michael Phillips’s William Blake: Apprentice and Master exhibition is a lovely correction – a re-writing of the 1809 flop. Three spacious rooms in the Ashmolean are currently inhabited by a vibrant menagerie of prints, brilliantly coloured paintings, and enchanting ephemera – many of which are borrowed from Cambridge’s own Fitzwilliam Museum – as well as a reconstruction of Blake’s printing studio.

After steeping myself in this bewitching corner of William Blake’s rich world, I sat down. Watching all the people studying his work, I felt a sort of triumph for him, 200 years in the making.

It was amazing to see the different types of people that Blake attracts. An older man, unapologetically sporting vibrant pink corduroy trousers, halted his cane in front of Nebuchadnezzar, and in him I saw a flash of Blake’s impetuous spirit.

And then there were two boys who reminded me so of a young William and his brother, Robert, as they threaded their way in between their parents’ legs, clutching little notebooks and pencils. I watched as various paintings arrested them, causing them to feverishly bend to copy the figures into their notebooks, or cry “Oh look at the different colours!” or ask if their father could see what was

written on a scroll.

They truly seemed to be the essence of Innocence that Blake clung to in his writings, finding insight where the rest of us, fallen into Experience, could not. I melted at their sweetness – pushing their glasses up their noses and concentrating on Blake’s prints with the air of budding art historians – and I could swear that Blake twinkled at them through the works.

Indeed, it was hard to shake the feeling that Blake was present in these hallowed rooms. Especially in the last: a tribute to his final years and his legacy. Reverence hung in this final, dimly-lit room. On the far side were works by Blake and his followers, arranged above a knee-height dais. Many visitors perched there – as if we were all kneeling at some sort of altar.

And perhaps the most striking piece was a plaster cast of Blake’s head, residing in an unassuming, yet holy recess of the room. The bust was both godly and profane; a relic, and a man. Separated from us only by a thin layer of glass were his furrowed brow, his wrinkles, his hairline. Visitors approached him with a marked hesitancy. We peered from afar to read the label and moved away with-

out turning our backs, as if to keep a respectful distance. Powerfully illuminated and captivating, this bodiless head seemed suspended among us, a meditative visitor to his own exhibition. And in this dusty light, we held our breath – hoping, waiting for his closed eyes to open.

Sarah Weston



### Inherent Vice ★★★★★

Adapting a Thomas Pynchon novel was always going to be a challenge. Pynchon’s books, known for their dense, complex and fantastical characteristics, while making fantastic reading, seemed almost impossible to put on the big screen. Yet if anyone was going to do it, it had to be Paul Thomas Anderson, the great current American auteur, whose last two films, *There Will Be Blood* and *The Master*, left a lasting impression. Yet *Inherent Vice*, it pains me to say, does seem like a stumbling block.

There are undoubtedly great aspects to *Inherent Vice*. First of all the film looks incredible. Shot on 35mm by Robert Elswit and full of vivid colours to match its hippy, free-spirited characters, you can’t help being sucked into the dreamy, weed-infused world of 1970s California. Radiohead’s Jonny Greenwood once again provides an incredible score, which, mixed with an incredible soundtrack of 70s hits, makes the film sound amazing.

It’s also not surprising to say that its star-studded cast really knocks it out of the park. Joaquin Phoenix, with his portrayal of dope-loving PI Doc Sportello, shows us once again that, despite his awkward public persona, he is in fact one of the most diverse actors around. Josh Brolin, meanwhile, is laugh-out loud hilarious as LAPD Cop ‘Bigfoot’ Bjornsen. Yet it’s newcomer Katherine Waterston as Sportello’s ex-girlfriend Shasta Fay Hepworth who steals the show. She is only on screen for what feels like a total of 10 minutes, but relishes every moment and I hope to see more of her in the future.

However, *Inherent Vice*’s main problem is its plot, which is basically

incomprehensible. While Anderson maintains that the plot isn’t meant to make sense and is arguably a representation of what our dope-taking hero is experiencing, it makes the film a very frustrating experience. Just when you think you’ve got a grasp of it, Anderson introduces another character with another plot line, and you’re suddenly thrown off course and back to where you started.

While plot is hardly essential in *There Will Be Blood* and *The Master*, their characters are so rich and fascinating that plot and story become an afterthought. Yet *Inherent Vice* is so plot-heavy and goes at such a rapid pace that you can’t connect with either the story or the characters, leaving you in a clueless state of delusion. Although I stayed till the end, I have to admit that at least 10 people walked out at various parts of the film, suggesting that it was too much for some.

Yet throughout *Inherent Vice*’s 148-minute running time I was never bored. Anderson is such a fascinating filmmaker that he somehow manages to keep you interested in spite of your reservations. And at the end of the day, from the moment the action kicks in, you can tell that *Inherent Vice* is a film that demands to be seen more than once.

There’s definitely a great film in there somewhere, and because I love Anderson so much I’m willing to give him my time and watch the film again at some point. However, for viewers looking to see *Inherent Vice* just the once, you might find yourself walking out before the lights are switched back on.

Will Roberts

# Mental haggis and Murray's failures

A look at the real reasons behind his failures

**James Dilley**

Sport Correspondent

"Knock knock."  
"Who's there?"  
"Andy."  
"Andy who?"  
"Andy Murray."

That's right folks, Andy Murray is back in business. Or is he?

After an average 2014, which saw Murray fail to reach even one Grand Slam final, everyone's favourite grumpy Scot appeared to have turned over a new leaf when he reached the final hurdle of the Australian Open in January. The old foe Djokovic lay in wait, but he lay battered; the Serb was clearly nursing some injuries, as the constant wincing and grimacing after every point showed. Yet Murray, having brought the match level after a first set dropped to ol' Novak, proceeded to capitulate in the third set, going on to lose as his opponent made a remarkable comeback. A dejected Andy promised to do better next year, and that was that. Off he trotted.

Now at this point, one might wish to question how and why Murray failed so comprehensively after showing such grit to get to one set all at the close of the second. And I have the answer: Murray, as he has shown many times before in his career, is a weakling. Not physically; no, I envy his Adonis-like figure, especially every time I stumble out of the gym. It isn't that he's puny. Rather the problem lies in his mind: somewhere, deep in the mental codex of Andy Murray, is a glitch that needs fixing.

Murray's mental breakdown on court in Melbourne had echoes of those seen earlier in his career. Year after year Murray stormed through to the semi-finals of Wimbledon, the US Open, the Australian Open, like



"If you tell me how to beat you I'll-" "Andy, please, don't touch me"

an Adidas-sponsored William Wallace – only to be exposed by a far stronger opponent as limp, wet, smoked Alex Salmond.

And year after year, the British public reminded itself that because, like Salmond, Murray was Scottish, his surrender was permissible and even – dare I say – funny.

Things seemed to have changed after Murray employed the services of tennis legend Ivan Lendl as his coach in 2011: there was something new in the fibre of the man.

He appeared strong, focused, determined to win, possessing a tenacity that even began to challenge that of the infallible Rafael Nadal. And, behold, Murray deservedly went on to win his first Wimbledon title in 2013.

Yet here he was again in January 2015 – admittedly with a new coach in the form of Amélie Mauresmo – grimacing

like a honey badger with lock-jaw as the match fell beyond his weakened grasp. Something, therefore, needs to change if Murray is to reach again the heady heights of 2012. Perhaps the lad could employ a sports psychologist to help him understand that when things aren't going according to plan, you don't just – well – give up.

What you do is step your game up a level, just like all the greats do. Ask Federer, Nadal or Djokovic how they manage to stay so stoic in the face of adversity – although they probably won't tell you. Ditch Mauresmo and bring Lendl back. Do something. Bribe the umpire, I don't know.

Next time you watch Murray play, look closely and you'll see what I mean. Watch his face when his opponent gets a break point. Read his lips as he drops a point. The storm clouds inside the man's head are almost

visible; the frustration, in almost every case, palpable.

One thing is for certain: Murray's mental deficiencies will be the death of his career if he does not sort them out. Cries

of "Come on Andeh!" will only go so far; one day, those crazed fans will give up and start following NASCAR instead. The nation's moodiest sporting superstar needs to ditch those

loser blues and start winning.

Choose strength. Choose courage. Choose life, Andy. Only then will you become the hero that Britain so desperately needs.

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## Can Andy Murray get back to his best?

James Dilley reveals the real reason behind his failures



# Sport

## From Varsity to the BBC: Dan Roan

BBC Sports Editor, Dan Roan, reflects on his career

**Peter Rutzler**  
Sport Editor

I must admit, when Dan Roan accepted my offer to be interviewed, I was nothing short of thrilled. Roan, a Varsity sports writer come good, is certainly an inspiration for any aspiring journalist such as myself. Familiar to anyone who watches the BBC's national news programmes, the former Cambridge graduate has gone on to cover some of the world's greatest sporting events, including three FIFA World Cups and the London 2012 Olympics, as well as enhancing his reputation as a prominent interviewer, posing tough questions to the likes of Sepp Blatter, Bernie Ecclestone and of course, most recently, to disgraced cyclist Lance Armstrong in an enthralling encounter.

Having grown up in Northampton, a city he describes as having an "under-rated sporting tradition", especially with respect to their rugby and cricket clubs, Roan, 38, graduated from Fitzwilliam College in 1998 with a degree in Social and Political Sciences (now HSPS). During his time at Cambridge, he was involved heavily with the Union and this newspaper, and overall, despite the intense workload, he looks back at his time at university fondly.

"I worked so hard when I was there. I wasn't one of those guys you meet at Cambridge who it all comes naturally to, who effortlessly get through their course.

"But I was into my sport, a lot. I played football for the college, and that was so important to me."

Roan was also Press Officer at the Union, and this, combined with his work for Varsity, were particularly influential. "Writing for Varsity honed my passion for journalism, getting my head around what it took, discovering

much I enjoyed it and the thrill that comes with breaking stories, writing the news and getting your work published."

His job at the Union was to generate some noise in the papers and on television at a time when the organisation's profile and reputation were way behind Oxford's. "I got a bit of a buzz out of it, both the PR of it and equally the coverage." Often, he would use the role to get interviews for Varsity, a way he could combine his work with both.

Roan remembers his excitement when boxers Prince Naseem and Chris Eubank visited the Union, accompanied on both occasions by an entourage of journalists. But a memory of one speaker particularly stands out.

"The biggest single factor was when John Simpson came one day. I met him, interviewed him, and wrote to him afterwards and asked for work experience and he said yeah.

"I went along, I spent a few weeks there in the world affairs unit at the BBC, at the television centre, and I met all the big names, Ben Brown, Sue Lloyd-Roberts. It fascinated me.

"A few weeks later, his first book came out, it was called *Strange Places, Questionable People*, his first big autobiography. I looked at it while walking through

Cambridge one day and on page 8, I had to double take – there was my name, he'd mentioned and thanked me in the preface.

"To be mentioned in his book gave me the inspiration I needed to believe that this could be done."

From Cambridge, Roan successfully applied for a BBC Trainee Scheme, attaining one of eight places out of thousands of applicants. "That's where I feel I owe Cambridge and Fitzwilliam a huge debt, because I suspect without that, I wouldn't have made it, or at least it would have been a lot harder."

After the Trainee Scheme, Roan worked as a producer for BBC Look North and BBC Breakfast before joining Sky Sports News in 2003, having narrowly missed out on a place at Sky News. Within weeks he was given the chance to broadcast live, something that he'd never had the chance to do before.

"Every time I got an opportunity, I thought, I've got to make this count."

"It was a much more meritocratic place because it was a smaller, upcoming channel, and they were desperate for people to grab opportunities and prove their worth whereas at the BBC I'd been waiting for years. At Sky I was given the chance to prove myself and when I did, I was rewarded with more opportunities."

Roan certainly made an impression because, in 2007, he was appointed Chief News Reporter.

But it's not all been plain sailing. A year after his appointment, Roan decided to join Setanta on a four year contract, but nine months later, he was made redundant when Setanta GB collapsed.

"I went from being Chief News Reporter, a great job, very lucky, really happy, to being out of work wondering what on earth had I done, with a wife and a mortgage and everything else."

"If you'd said to me then that I'd be Sports Editor at the BBC. I would have said 'You're nuts, it's simply impossible. I've got to start all over again.'"

But Roan did just that. Two years after the Setanta collapse, he would return to the BBC as a Sports Correspondent, and in 2014, he was made Sports Editor.

"It's been an 11 year journey from when I left. When I was made editor the people who I'd worked with before could not believe this was possible."

Throughout his career, Roan has conducted many memorable, but often tricky,

one such interview, with Patrick Vieira in 2012, that led to him being banned from the Etihad stadium.

"They don't happen very often!" he quickly clarifies. "But I learnt from that. No one likes to get banned. Football clubs are very protective, they're increasingly reluctant to answer difficult questions.

"You have to ask difficult questions, you can't be afraid of that even if you clash with those that you're interviewing. I'd like to think that if you ask decent questions in a polite manner, you can usually be okay."

Roan has certainly encountered some challenging characters. You only have to watch his remarkable world exclusive with Lance Armstrong two weeks ago as a perfect example. That interview, which at the time he was unable to tell me about, was the hardest he'd ever had to do. But amongst the toughest interviewees, including a tight-lipped post-bribery trial Bernie Ecclestone, Roan singles out Sir Alex Ferguson, who he describes as "not used to journalists standing up to him." But for Roan, it is those challenges that he relishes.

"It's what makes the job fun," he says.

Besides his interviews, Roan has covered a plethora of leading global sports events. He was in Brazil last year for the football world cup, the third he has now covered. He has also followed the Lions tour of Australia, the Ashes test Down Under as well as the Rugby World Cup in New Zealand.

He was also at the heart of the BBC's coverage of the London 2012 Olympic Games, something he described as "amazing to experience" But he points out that his experience was very different to those sitting at home or relaxing in the stands.

"You're so immersed in it, up early, bed late, the work is so intense, and you're working for such tight deadlines. Your report has to be there for the six or ten o'clock news. Even if it's about an event that has literally just finished and you have minutes to turn it around.

"But when you do get to experience it, it's 'wow, I'm the luckiest guy in the world to be here.'"

His job has allowed him to travel to places that he'd never thought he'd be able to visit, such as Brazil for the World Cup, an event which he described as the single greatest event he'd ever covered. "It was romantic" he said, "you had good underdogs, you had Suarez, you had the 7-1, you had the right winner, it had everything."

Travelling, of course, does take its toll on family life. Roan describes how he has missed all three of his son's birthdays.

"It's not great," he says. "You can never say with any certainty that you'll be there. If something happens, all your plans go out of the window.

"It's a very unpredictable life, and you have to learn to roll with that, but

my wife is very understanding."

It is evident, speaking to Roan, that sport is not just about the winners and losers. For him, it is about the stories. Brazil, of course, saw widespread social unrest and huge protests over the World Cup.

He speaks of the scandals unfolding during the last Ashes test down under, England's "Stag do" Rugby World Cup in New Zealand, as well as highlighting the remarkable stories of the likes of Oscar Pistorious which captivate the public consciousness.

"Sport, it inspires, it's escapism, it's drama, it's triumph over adversity, it's victory and defeat and great personal stories. But it's also about politics, business, society and law and crime and legacy, the ethics and integrity. But on top of all these things it matters. Sport can move people like no other area of life."

2015 promises to be another great year of sport. The Rugby World Cup, which will be held in England, particularly stands out. Can England win it? "Well they should win it, with home advantage, and they've got more players to pick from than anybody else," he argues.

"But they're still in the cycle of development. This World Cup has come a couple of years too early for Lancaster than where he'd ideally want it to.

"They've got a chance, a real chance, but there's also a chance they'll go out in the group stages.

"It's New Zealand or South Africa for me."

As the conversation draws to a close, I ask him about the future of journalism as an evolving, increasingly online, industry. "I can't imagine life without Twitter," he says, and he particularly praises the advantages of social media, especially as a "news wire" where you can find out information first.

The variety of platforms from which you can tell stories, from the short and sweet nature of a tweet to a three minute news bulletin to a copious blog entry, are all areas that Roan enjoys about the digital age. But at the same time, while believing that newspapers will prove to be resilient to the online switch in the same way that books have responded, he shares his concerns over what he terms a "tendency in recent times, wrongly, to keep things quite simple, that it promotes the trivial over the in-depth."

"I love the great sports documentaries, sports novels and sports books, I hope there will be a fight-back of more in depth sports journalism going forward, even though it's online."

As we move towards a digital age in journalism, an increasing online focus and a desire for more information on the move, one thing we can be sure of is that great sport, and great stories, will continue. For Roan, having the opportunities to tell these stories is a "tremendous privilege."

"It's challenging, but it's worth it. No doubt about it."

