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GENERAL ELECTION SPECIAL ISSUE

Labour tops Varsity poll

FERNANDO: HUPPERT READ; O'CONNOR: ZECHINER



Varsity News Team

13 days before the general election, a Varsity poll of over 1,000 Cambridge students – the largest poll of this demographic conducted thus far in the run up to 7th May – can exclusively reveal the political leanings of the student community.

Conducted between 2nd March and 10th April, students were asked which party they would vote for if a general election were held tomorrow, with respondents able to change their answers throughout the duration of the polling period.

Among the 1,063 participants in the Varsity survey, Labour topped the poll, with 32 per cent intending to vote Labour.

Perhaps surprisingly, the Conservatives came in second place, with 24 per cent of the vote. This is likely to be the result of the fragmentation of the vote on the left of the political spectrum: the Greens came in a close third place, with 22 per cent of student votes in the poll, and the Liberal Democrats came in fourth place at 19 per cent.

A further two per cent would vote for UKIP, and 1 per cent for other parties, including the SNP, Plaid Cymru and the Northern Irish parties.

Daniel Zeichner, the Labour candidate for Cambridge, said he was very pleased that Labour's "very strong offer to Cambridge students" was starting to resonate.

"It's clear that many [students] feel let down by the Lib Dems," he told

Varsity. "We now have a radical and practical offer for students which will make a real difference for those about to graduate, current students, and those to follow in future," citing a range of policies including a reduction in tuition fees to be paid for by restricting Pension Tax Relief for the wealthiest pensioners, increasing maintenance grants and ending unpaid internships.

"I also find that students care passionately about social justice, and like what they see from Labour on the living wage, and that we will scrap the unfair Bedroom Tax."

Rory Weal, the Chair of Cambridge Universities Labour Club, agreed that students are turning to the party because they feel Labour "really is offering something distinctive and different... this election."

Tactical voting: Tories vote at home

Further analysis, however, indicates that Cambridge students may not be as left-leaning as they initially appear.

Varsity's survey asked respondents to indicate whether they intended to vote in Cambridge or their home constituency. For those who plan to vote in Cambridge, Labour's share of the vote remains strong, at 33 per cent compared to the Tories' 19.9 per cent, who slip into fourth place behind the Greens (24.5) and Lib Dems (20.2).

However, among those planning to vote at home, the position is reversed, with the Conservatives receiving a 40 per cent share to Labour's 27 per cent.

This appears to indicate a 'tactical voting' trend, with student

Conservatives unwilling to waste their vote in what increasingly appears to be a tight Liberal Democrat and Labour race for Cambridge.

As one third-year Conservative voter from Corpus told us: "As much as I'd like to see Cambridge turned blue, there is no way Chamali Fernando will be able to fend off both Labour and the Lib Dems to win Cambridge," he said.

"My home constituency is more marginal for the Conservatives, and my vote will make more of a difference there."

Chamali Fernando, however, remains optimistic, telling Varsity that "job security, apprenticeships and that Government must not spend money that it does not have while transferring current national debt liabilities to

Continued on page 4.

INSIDE:

UKIP PROFILE, OWEN JONES, JEREMY PAXMAN, STUDENT CAMPAIGNS

A swinging town

This general election, the Left is split; Green, Liberal or further afield SNP – there are numerous options and parties that could, come May 7, take away Labour's chance at a majority in what is still a first-past-the-post system.

Not to be outdone by archaic political institutions, however, the age of digital democracy has come up with an idea: Vote Swap. Found on a Facebook newsfeed near you, voteswap.org encourages voters "not wanting to wake up after the election to a Conservative Prime Minister" to 'swap' their votes between constituencies – voting Green or Labour tactically to keep the Tories out.

Type CB2 into Vote Swap, however, and voters are faced with a different, and in the current electoral climate increasingly rare, message: "This is not a seat where we could advocate a vote swap... Vote according to your preference."

Whatever the polls may tell you, ours and others,

the Cambridge seat stands undecided. It was the Conservatives, not Labour, who gained the second largest vote share in 2010; Huppert's incumbency holds a strong record; the constituency is one of under five target seats for the Greens nationally; and according to Daniel Zeichner, if Labour can't win Cambridge, they can't win at all.

This leaves an important but burdensome task for students voting in Cambridge this election; to vote not tactically, but ideologically. To cast our vote, not because of who we don't want to see in government, but who we do. The chance for our voice, and our politics, to meaningfully influence the outcome of this election is a rarity in 2015. One has only to look to Homerton and Girton, both in the safe Tory seat of South Cambridgeshire, to remember how easily individual choices and voices can get lost in the selection of a local MP.

Cambridge has a diverse selection of candidates from all the main parties, all of whom have at

least a reasonable chance at success. Over the past term, Varsity has aimed to show Cambridge students the best and worst of them, from one-on-one interviews with each of the PPCs to keeping students informed when national politicians take an interest in our small, but crucial, seat. We have talked to Jeremy Paxman about interviewing politicians, Owen Jones about writing about them, and Patrick O'Flynn about being one – one who might be UKIP's next leader, at that.

The reason that this small student paper has been able to provide this kind of coverage – from small group meetings with the Shadow Chancellor to quizzing David Willetts on £9,000 – is that the Cambridge seat matters. It matters to Cambridge, and it matters to the country. We are one of the few deciding seats left, and this is an election where there is a lot to be decided. The Left is split and the Right is under fire – students in Cambridge have the privilege of consulting their own politics when deciding between them.

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Varsity Online

For the remainder of the Easter term, Varsity will be publishing online only. The next print edition will appear for May Week on 17th June.

To get involved this term, email editor@varsity.co.uk.

Corrections

In the issue printed on Friday 27th February, a Sport article entitled 'Dwain Chambers visits the Union' incorrectly stated that Sadie, a young woman featured in a video that was shown about the work of the charity Teens Unite of which Dwain Chambers is a patron, passed away. Sadie has not passed away, and this mistake was due to an inaccuracy in our reporter's notes. We would like to apologise for this mistake to all those affected.

EDITOR Talia Zybutz EDITOR@VARSITY.CO.UK **DEPUTY EDITOR** Tom Freeman DEPUTYEDITOR@VARSITY.CO.UK **BUSINESS MANAGER** Mark Curtis BUSINESS@VARSITY.CO.UK **ONLINE DIRECTOR** Joe Whitwell **PRODUCTION & DESIGN EDITORS** Sareeka Linton, Sanjukta Sen, Phoebe Stone, Daniella Mae Brisco-Peaple, Harry Stockwell PRODUCTION@VARSITY.CO.UK **NEWS EDITORS** Eleanor Deeley (Senior), Till Schöfer & Richard Nicholl (Deputy) NEWS@VARSITY.CO.UK **POLITICAL EDITOR** Richard Nicholl NEWS@VARSITY.CO.UK **NEWS FEATURES & INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR** Sarah Sheard NEWSFEATURES@VARSITY.CO.UK **COMMENT EDITORS** Tess Davidson & Georgia Turner COMMENT@VARSITY.CO.UK **SCIENCE EDITOR** Harry Taylor SCIENCE@VARSITY.CO.UK **FEATURES EDITORS** Elissa Foord & Leo Sands FEATURES@VARSITY.CO.UK **CULTURE EDITORS** Will Hutton & Ciara Nugent CULTURE@VARSITY.CO.UK **THEATRE EDITORS** Gabriella Jeakins, Amy George (Deputy) THEATRE@VARSITY.CO.UK **FASHION EDITORS** Livs Galvin & Gayathiri Kamalakanthan FASHION@VARSITY.CO.UK **REVIEWS EDITOR** Matilda Ettegui REVIEWS@VARSITY.CO.UK **SPORT EDITOR** Peter Rutzler SPORT@VARSITY.CO.UK **INTERVIEWS EDITOR** Ellie Olcott INTERVIEWS@VARSITY.CO.UK **ONLINE EDITORS** Alex Izza & James Sutton **VARSITY RADIO** Will Helipurn & Alex Rice DIGITAL@VARSITY.CO.UK **CHIEF SUB EDITOR** Eliza Jones **PHOTOGRAPHERS** Jess Franklin, Jonny Rowlands, Harriet Wakeman & Daniel Zhang PHOTOS@VARSITY.CO.UK **ILLUSTRATORS** Dani Ismailov (Cover), Sophia Buck, Meggie Fairclough, Ben Waters, Suraj Makwana, Sanjukta Sen, Daisy Schofield, Jack Parham ILLUSTRATION@VARSITY.CO.UK **VARSITY BOARD** Dr Michael Franklin (Chairman), Prof. Peter Robinson, Dr Tim Harris, Chris Wright, Michael Derringer, Michael Curtis (VarSoc President), Amy Hawkins, Talia Zybutz



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Election Profile: Patrick O'Flynn

PATRICK O'FLYNN/UKIP



Richard Nicholl
Political Editor

Patrick O'Flynn MEP is a hard man to pin down. For weeks, I had been desperately trying to find a spot in his schedule to interview him for Varsity, but between his commitments in the European Parliament and as Economic Spokesman for UKIP, finding time to sit down with him was not easy.

Eventually I got the call. He could only squeeze in time for a phone interview, so I dusted off my battery of questions.

I asked him about UKIP's chances in Cambridge. Across polls and across the local and European elections, UKIP tends to poll at around three per cent, and if anything the general election could be even worse for the party. This is especially true of students: UKIP received two per cent in Varsity's survey. What's his angle?

"My ambition was to put UKIP on the map in Cambridge," says O'Flynn. "I particularly wanted to give a democratic outlet to a fairly significant proportion of the electorate in Cambridge who I think are ignored and overlooked, who tend to be the more long-standing Cambridge residents without links to the university."

"I want to offer something different on the ballot paper [to] the soft-left, liberal-left, middle-class sensibility," he says.

The Cambridge field is very liberal this time around: besides Julian Huppert himself, both Rupert Read (Green) and Chamali Fernando (Conservative) are former Liberal Democrats.

This is why, he said at a UKIP public meeting on Friday 17th April, he doesn't attend very many hustings, telling the room that there are normally "the same 250 liberal middle-class do-gooders" in the audience each time.

Asked about this, he audibly sighs. "I could spend my entire time going from hall to hall speaking to between 50 and 200 people at a time and there would be very few UKIP voters, or even UKIP considerers, among them, because it does tend to be very middle-class people who are already connected into the political process and who find the choices already on offer to be very much to their taste."

"I've instead spent my time doing action days in target wards, several of which are not even known to the vast majority of the student body."

His mentions of the students so far have been slightly disparaging. It's hard to blame him. Young Independence, UKIP's youth wing, don't even have a presence at the university.

Yet UKIP's policies on tuition fees are not exactly hard-right: to the contrary, their manifesto pledges to *abolish* tuition fees for STEM subjects and medicine.

"When Tony Blair brought in top-up fees and initially scrapped maintenance grants, I was against both moves. I was a political journalist on the Daily Express at the time, and we had a campaign against top-up fees."

"Fundamentally, I don't believe in fees for home

figures. I would agree that international students coming to study at reputable universities – not just the bogus colleges that have sprung up in recent years – that flow of international students is a good thing. It generates money for higher education, and the people who come are generally of high ability. There's no intention to knacker the flow of international students."

"If we are to have fees, my preferred financing model would be to give students the choice of paying back, say, two per cent of future earnings for a given number of years, because that would give the universities and the colleges an incentive to produce people who are going off to be a big success."

Lastly, I touch on one of the most visible concerns in Cambridge: transport. UKIP's national policy is, bluntly, fairly pro-car. They promise to "scrap HS2", stop tolls on public roads and review the use of speed cameras, and ran in the 2014 European election on a platform of slashing fuel duty. Won't this make congestion in Cambridge worse?

"One advantage is that it's a compact city so moving around doesn't involve great distances, particularly for the student body," he says, briddling a little at the suggestion.

"I would like to have lots and lots of relatively small-scale improvements, rather than some kind of... Cambridge underground," he says, referring to some of the more outlandish policies mooted for the City Deal in January. "I would prefer looking at, for example, the phasing of traffic lights. There are some that just don't work: I'm thinking of Castle Hill down to Northampton Street."

I decide to finish on a less serious question. Patrick O'Flynn went to King's, like his Labour opponent Daniel Zeichner. Bins outside King's last week bore stickers reading 'LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR: SKIP UKIP'.

O'Flynn laughs raspily down the phone. "I was an exact contemporary and a big mate of David Laws at King's, so probably until my emergence David was about the most shocking thing that had ever happened to King's politics. I may have snatched that title!"

Indeed he has. O'Flynn is a far cry from the UKIP stereotype, charming and thoughtful, but unless something radical happens, he hasn't got a hope in Cambridge.

But his true goals are elsewhere. With Nigel Farage promising to step down as UKIP leader if he loses in South Thanet, we may be hearing from Patrick O'Flynn again, and sooner than we might expect.

“
WITH FARAGE PROMISING
TO STEP DOWN IF HE LOSES,
WE MAY BE HEARING FROM
O'FLYNN AGAIN

students," he continues. "At this election, we've managed to come up with a fully-costed scheme to exempt the STEM subjects from tuition fees for home students."

Of course, the European Union forms part of UKIP's education policy. "Part of that is being able to charge non-British EU students the full-rated international fee. I would like us to be in a position at the next general election to be able to say that we will abolish tuition fees altogether."

So how does UKIP intend to square education policy with its hardline approach on immigration? International students provide an important source of cashflow to British universities.

To my surprise, O'Flynn agrees with me. "We will count students separately in the immigration

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POLICY BOX

- ✓ Rapid referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union
- ✓ All legislative powers to rest with Westminster
- ✓ Negotiate a new trade agreement with the EU
- ✓ Control immigration with points system, limit of 50,000 skilled workers a year and a five-year ban on unskilled immigration
- ✓ No tax on the minimum wage
- ✓ Extra £3bn a year for the NHS in England
- ✓ Meet Nato target of spending 2% of GDP on defence, and look to increase it "substantially"

Over 1,000 deliver their verdict in Cambridge’s largest student poll

Continued from page 1.
their generation” are all issues striking a chord with students she meets on the campaign trail.
She also says that students “don’t believe” Labour’s promise for a reduction in tuition fees, and that because the Liberal Democrats “disowned” students over the issue, “consequently the Conservative position makes sense.”

“We came SECOND in 2010, and we have been campaigning full-time for a victory in 2015,” she told us.
Among students planning to vote in Cambridge, however, the Conservatives languish in fourth place on 19.9 per cent, behind the Liberal Democrats and the Greens, who come in second place on 24.5 per cent.

Echoing Daniel Zeichner’s sentiment, Green candidate Rupert Read attributed his party’s success among students to a sense of social justice and “how different we are from the old parties.”

“[O]nly the Greens oppose Trident and TTIP, only we stand firm against UKIP xenophobia, only we can be trusted to be serious about dangerous climate change, and only we have policies designed to create a more equal society... Young people really care about these things!” he told Varsity.

However, he was quick to advise against voting Labour in this seat, as an absolute Labour majority would mean, in his words, electing a government that is “pro-Trident, pro-TTIP and pro-austerity, a government whose rhetoric on immigration will be sub-UKIP, a government that will utterly disappoint you”. Instead, he advocated voting for anti-austerity parties, like the SNP, Plaid Cymru and the Greens, to “hold a Labour minority Government to its better angels”.

Read also advocated tactical voting in this election, urging any Green-leaning students to vote in Cambridge.

“[U]nless your home is in Brighton Pavilion, Norwich South, or Bristol West, please vote here rather than at home... This was our third strongest

seat in the 2010 general election and is one of our top target seats nationwide this time: your vote can almost certainly do more good for us here than it will at your home.”

Lib Dems victim of a Green surge

Commenting on the Green Party’s strong result in the poll, second only to Labour among students voting in Cambridge, Luke Illott, Chair of the Young Greens, told Varsity: “This election is a tale of two generations.”

“Among older Britons, raised on two-party politics, it’s hard to understand what the Green surge is all about. But for young citizens, the Greens aren’t just a major political party; they’re the party that speaks for them.”

Varsity’s findings, however, stand in contrast to a recent Lord Ashcroft poll, where the Lib Dems gained a 55 per cent vote share among 18-24 year olds planning to vote in the Cambridge seat. Taken during the vacation, the poll only included 19 18-24 year olds, whose weighted base was greatly inflated to 93/550 to reflect the demographics of this seat. Labour came a

“I HAVE YET TO MEET A SINGLE GREEN ACTIVIST WHO’S NOT INCANDESCENTLY CHARMING.”

very distant second at 18 per cent, with the Greens in third on 17 per cent.

Overall, the Liberal Democrats topped the Ashcroft poll with 40 per cent of the vote, nine per cent ahead of Labour. Given the statistical distortion of the youth vote, however, the validity of this poll lead is questionable.

Today’s Varsity survey, with its more comprehensive polling of the youth demographic, paints a different picture, with the Liberal Democrats polling third among students who plan to vote in Cambridge at 20.3 per cent – nearly five per cent behind the Greens and 13 per cent behind Labour.

Student disaffection with the Liberal Democrats, often attributed to Nick Clegg’s broken promise not to raise annual tuition fees from £3,000 to £9,000, could prove decisive in the upcoming election.

Such disaffection is reflected in the National Union of Students ‘Liar Liar’ campaign, launched last week, which seeks to target those 36 Lib Dem MPs who voted to increase tuition fees in 2010, though some criticised the £40,000 cost of the campaign.

A counter-campaign has been set up called #trollNUS, which encourages students to undermine the “long tradition” of Labour dominance in the NUS by donating to the Lib Dems.

As a second-year student from Emmanuel told Varsity: “As one of the few year groups that, in all probability, will ever be affected by the highest tuition fees that this country has ever seen, I could never vote Lib Dem in this election.”

Illott, however, insists that “our [Green] appeal for young people isn’t just about how much money we’d leave in their pockets”.

“Our values resonate with the ambitions of today’s youth to build a better society for their own children,” he told us.

“Fundamentally, I have yet to meet a single Green activist who’s not incandescently charming.”

However, Julian Huppert, Liberal Democrat PPC for Cambridge and MP for Cambridge in the last Parliament, stated that he remained confident in student support in the upcoming election.

“What is quite clear is that when students listen to all the candidates, the result is very different. At the hustings event at the Cambridge Union, after hearing us all speak, the Labour vote share declined whereas mine increased substantially to 40 per cent,” he told us.

“I know students want to support someone who will stand up for them and their values and I am committed to that. They know that I kept my promise and voted against tuition fees, unlike when Cambridge had a Labour MP, who promised to oppose them and then voted in favour... I have championed the living wage, secured same-sex marriage, worked to ban revenge porn and pushed the government for more action on climate change.”

Certainly, it is a noted trend nationally that Lib Dem incumbents poll more highly in personal approval ratings than their party. A survey in The Cambridge Student (TCS) published yesterday asked which candidate respondents would vote for, rather than which party, and found that the Liberal Democrats polled second only to Labour. While the TCS poll was hosted on a Google document, and could thus be accessed by those who are not members of the Cambridge student community, its 732 respondents placed Julian Huppert in a one per cent lead over the Greens.

TCS’s results, which refer only to the Cambridge seat, stand in contrast to Varsity’s survey, which found that the Liberal Democrats came a full five per cent behind the Greens among respondents who said they would vote in Cambridge.

Indeed, this Green surge is corroborated by national data. The Tab national, in a poll released on 21st April, revealed the same trend as Varsity’s overall survey; Labour is favoured among students, followed by the Conservatives, with the Greens coming in third place in front of the Liberal Democrats.

Similarly, a survey conducted of over 500 Cambridge finalists by High Flyers last week found that the Conservatives and Labour were tied at 31 per cent, with Greens taking third place at 23 per cent and the Liberal Democrats coming last with only 12 per cent.

Cambridge political culture: men vote Tory

The political culture of Cambridge students frequently features in the local and national press. Controversy broke out on 15th April after a Vice video entitled ‘Talking Politics with Drunk Toffs at the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race’ claimed to represent the political views of those attending these two universities. The Tab retaliated, stating that “Rather than trying to counter the issues [the presenter] has with ingrained elitism, he is per-

petuating them.”

Varsity’s statistics, however, paint a more nuanced picture.

Excluding those colleges that did not return a statistically significant number of respondents, only Downing, Corpus, Trinity and St John’s would elect the Conservative candidate. Left-wing parties fare significantly better: not a single person from King’s voted for the Conservative candidate, with over 47 per cent opting for Labour. Conservative numbers were also particularly weak at Magdalene and Selwyn, where only six and 15 per cent would vote Tory, respectively. In contrast, no statistically significant college returned a Labour result of below 15 per cent.

Magdalene were also the college with the most Lib Dem voters, at 29 per cent. However, the Lib Dems were not the most popular party at any college, with a plurality of students at Magdalene (37 per cent), still opting to vote Labour. King’s and Selwyn were the only colleges with respondents who would vote for far-left parties, with votes for the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition and Left Unity parties.

Conservatives do, however, top the poll among male voters, with 29.8 per cent to Labour’s 27.2. Among women, however, Conservative numbers are a weak 17.0 per cent, behind Labour’s 38.4 per cent and the Greens’ 28.0.

Murray Edwards was the only college to return a majority vote, with 51 per cent of students favouring the Labour candidate.

Olivia Barber, former JCR President at Murray Edwards, is currently the Vice-Chair and Women’s Officer of Cambridge University Labour Club. In the past, she used the JCR President’s email address to advertise a visit from Daniel Zeichner to college members as “an invaluable chance to have your crucial views heard on the issues that you believe need to be focused on should he get elected this May”.

When asked whether she thought this constituted a conflict of interest, and whether she would have advertised a Lib Dem or Tory event in the same manner, she insisted she did not act improperly.

“I don’t particularly see my publicising Daniel Zeichner’s visit to the college bar as a result of my political

affiliations, but rather reflective of the fact that other political parties/societies do not organise events like this,” she told us.

“Had any of the other MP candidates chosen to visit the college bar in an attempt to seek out the opinions and concerns of students, I would have of course happily publicised it.”

Murray Edwards’ result is reflected more broadly in a gender breakdown of respondents. Despite controversy over Harriet Harman’s “gimmick” pink bus, Labour fare significantly better with women voters, earning 38.4 per cent of the vote compared to 27.1 per cent among men.

So too do the Greens, who received 28.0 per cent of the vote among women compared to 16.7 per cent among men. The Greens topped the poll at Newnham, with 33 per cent of the vote compared to Labour’s 31 per cent.

The Chair of the Cambridge Young Greens, Luke Illott, put this appeal down to the Greens’ desire to “build a fairer society”.

What does this mean?

The range of surveys and polls conducted in the student press over the past weeks are unanimous in showing the Liberal Democrats are haemorrhaging their left wing to a revived Labour and surging Green Party.

Popular conceptions that the Conservatives are unelectable in this seat, despite Fernando’s protestations to the contrary, are also borne out by the headline figures for those voting in Cambridge, though support for the Tories more broadly among the student body remains considerable.

Striking in their absence are UKIP, despite their candidate for Cambridge being a highly notable figure in the national party. Receiving only 2.1 per cent of the overall vote, there were no votes for UKIP at more than half of statistically significant colleges.

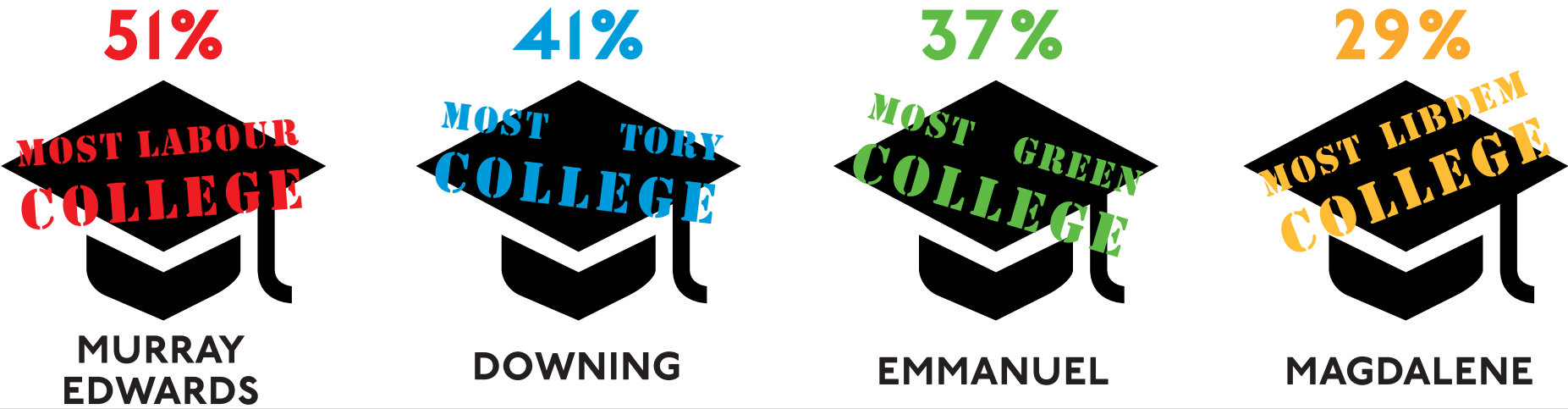
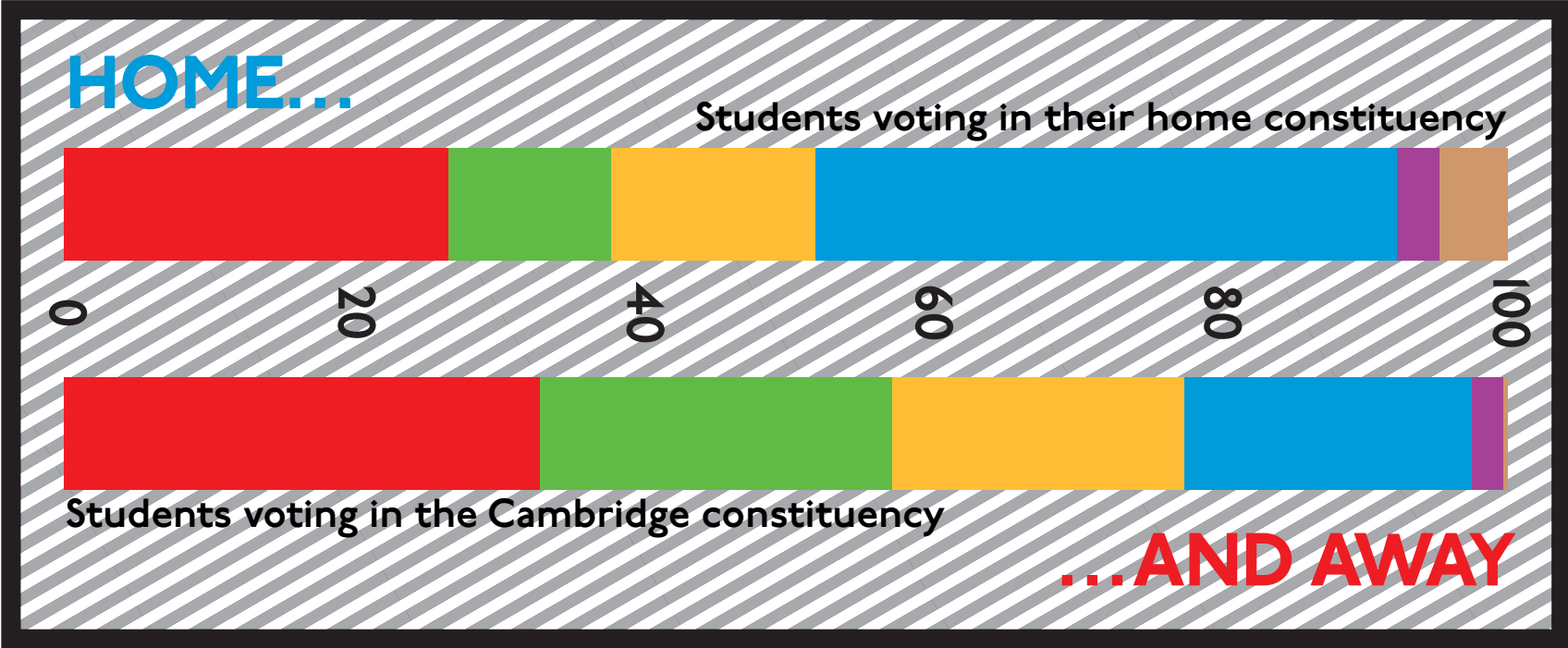
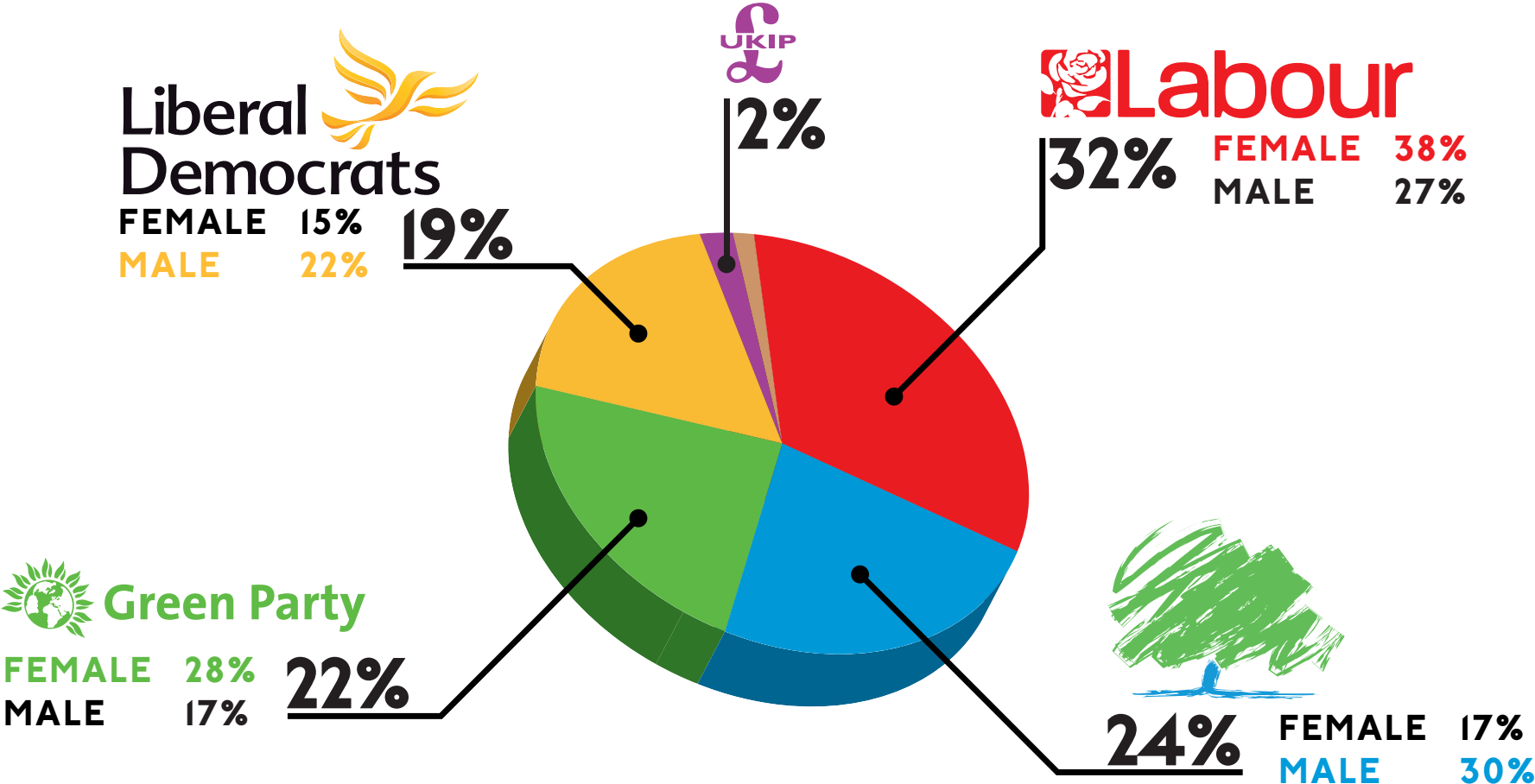
What is clear is that the Ashcroft polling for Cambridge was significantly lacking in representation from 18-24 year olds, students whose votes could be decisive in this marginal constituency come 7th May.

With less than two weeks until polling day, the Varsity survey should help focus the conversation on this representation.

Methodology

- ✓ This survey was only accesible through the Cambridge-specific ‘Raven’ portal, meaning it was only open to those affiliated with the university.
- ✓ The sample size of this survey was 6 per cent of the grad and undergrad population of Cambridge.
- ✓ Because each response was associated with a unique code anonymously linked to each Raven log-in, this meant any duplicate responses could be filtered out in the final calcuations.
- ✓ Homerton and Girton Colleges were treated separately in the calcuation for the Cambridge seat, as they fall in the South Cambridgeshire constituency. Students at these colleges can therefore not vote in the Cambridge constituency.

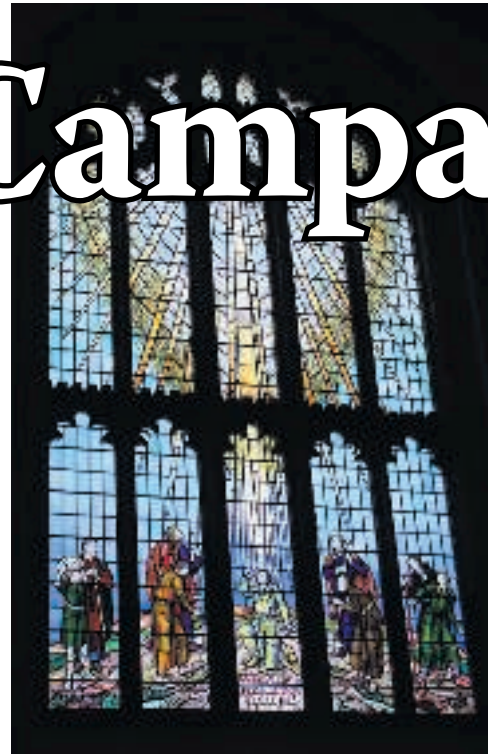
VARSITY GENERAL ELECTION SURVEY 2015



1,063 unique respondents in total, 974 of whom specified who they would vote for; results are collated into the pie chart.
In the calculation of voting patterns between Cambridge and home constituencies, the 95 respondents from Homerton and Girton Colleges were excluded, as they fall in the South Cambridgeshire constituency. Of 727 unique respondents who indicated their intention to vote in Cambridge, 683 indicated which party they would be voting for, whose results are collated on the "Home" graph. Of 185 unique entries who indicated their intention to vote in home constituencies, 169 indicated which party they would be voting for, whose results are collated on the "Away" graph.
Of 1,063 unique respondents, 1,043 specified their gender, of whom 584 were male and 454 female, of whom 544 and 411 respectively indicated which party they would vote for.
Of 1,063 unique respondents, 1,030 indicated college affiliation. Colleges were judged as statistically significant if they returned more than 30 respondents who indicated an intention to vote; see facing for the 19 colleges included.



Campaigning



With student societies taking on ever more campaign roles, Varsity spends a day following the new breed of student activists

Richard Nicholl
Political Editor



Liberal Democrats: #winninghere?

The sun lit up the railway station in brilliant Liberal yellow, where a small huddle of activists from the Cambridge Student Liberal Democrats (CSLD) were waiting for their fellow activists. I went to meet them on the Liberal Youth National Action Weekend on Saturday, as dozens of young Liberal Democrats from across the country descended on Cambridge.

At first it was quite hard to tell where they were. I then spotted a flash of a yellow Lib Dem badge on a coat and went over to introduce myself. One activist, Chloe, suggests that they try to look more liberal: suggestions include wearing socks with sandals and engaging in same-sex kisses. Chloe herself is wearing a No More Page 3 t-shirt, as endorsed by the Liberal Democrat international development minister Lynne Featherstone (and modelled by Harriet Harman, deputy leader of the Labour Party).

The Liberals are in good spirits, and they have reason to be. The best news for them in months was the most recent Ashcroft poll in Cambridge, giving them, with 40 per cent, a

nine-point lead over Labour. But as Ashcroft himself noted, it's only a race once one mentions the name of the Liberal Democrat candidate, Julian Huppert: without his name on the ticket, Labour would be set to win by five points. Any candidate who can shift the polls by 14 points in his favour is undoubtedly formidable, drawing support from Labour, the Conservatives and the Green Party.

The personalisation of the Cambridge contest is something Nomi Farhi, the Chair of CSLD, freely admits. "Everyone just really loves Julian!" she says, to nods of approval from the student activists. "Even Labour activists secretly love Julian." Apparently there is a new Huppert hashtag (#UpTheHupp) and another activist tells me that they've taken to calling him 'J-Hupps'. I mention the other moniker he's earned in Cambridge, "Huppert the muppet", but they're too busy singing Bob Marley's classic 'One Love' to notice.

So what about the others? "I kind of want to help out the Greens because they're just so useless at campaigning," says Callum Delhoy, the Liberal Democrat PPC for Daventry (incumbent: Chris Heaton-Harris (Con), who received 56.5 per cent of the vote in 2010). "They don't get any data." Delhoy is tall, broad and bearded, so I have to do a double-take when Nomi

tells me he's 18 and attends Hills Road Sixth Form. He is flanked by a lower-sixth activist called Dale, whose scarf is bigger than his head.

Suddenly, Nomi loses her patience standing around in front of the station after a train comes in bearing no activists. We set off to King's College by taxi, where in the Chedwyck room she rallies the troops.

"LIBERALS!" she barks, and the room murmurs in attention. She outlines the plans for the day, every so often shooting me a glance as I buzz around taking photographs. We are

“**ANY CANDIDATE WHO CAN SHIFT THE POLLS BY 14 POINTS IN HIS FAVOUR IS UNDOUBTEDLY FORMIDABLE**

to be divided into several canvassing groups, and for more detailed planning she passes over to Nicola, a local activist. "Let's get Julian re-elected, guys!" cries Nomi, and she is met by an exhausted but enthusiastic cheer.

Nicola insists that the assembled Liberal Democrats focus on the successes of the coalition government, with a particular emphasis on Julian Huppert's occasional rebellions. Undeterred by the hint of paradox, she tells the yellow army to avoid negativity about other candidates, but reminds us to tell Labour voters that Labour is "crap on the NHS and crap on the economy".

There is one other thing. "We're losing the slateboard war to Labour," she says reproachfully.

"Slateboards don't vote!" one activist heckles, but he is quickly hushed as the outsiders are divided from locals and students, then paired up with each other to go out canvassing. One man, leaning against a pillar, mutters:

"It's like a really awkward school disco, isn't it?" It is. Watching the two groups trade members and split off into little groups, it is all I can do to not start tapping out the rhythm to 'Cotton-Eyed Joe'.

There is some confusion outside Queens' College as we run into a large group of local party activists, accompanied by the man of the moment, Dr Julian Huppert. It is quite important, apparently, that Huppert is not seen to be exceeding the passenger capacity of his car. Eventually, though, car space is sorted, and I am dispatched to Cherry Hinton with Nomi, Chloe, two other activists and Lucy Nethsingha, the County Councillor for Newnham.

We are in deep Labour territory. All four of the councillors for this area, at the City and County levels, are Labour. The Vote Labour signs sticking out of hedges and stuck to walls look like brightly-coloured sniper nests. Eventually, Lucy parks and peers at her clipboard as we extricate ourselves from her people-carrier.

We move slowly along Headington Close, with each activist taking one house at a time. Lucy mostly stands back, recording whether the people at Number 23 are occupied or whether Number 35 is a staunch UKIPer. One man, who undoes three or four locks before he opens the door, engaged Chloe in quiet but intense conversation for a few minutes.

"How was that?" I ask when she walks away, the door clicking shut behind her.

"Well, he's not voting Labour," she says hopefully. At the next house, we lose her for ten minutes to the occupier.

I ask Nomi if they often get long conversations on the doorstep. "Not really. But out here there's a lot of elderly people. I sometimes think they just want someone to talk to," she says sadly. "I think we're providing a sort of public service."

Does she ever lose her patience? "Not to their faces," she says, smiling ruefully. "Sometimes they'll close the door and I'll turn away and just go

'Grrr, how can this person be so...'" She waves her hands around.

Meanwhile, Chloe has got herself into another long conversation. I eavesdrop; the subject of tuition fees comes up. She later describes them as 'soft Labour', and then she stops. "I should have mentioned that Julian voted against tuition fees, shouldn't I?" she says thoughtfully. I look at a leaflet in my pocket that proudly declares Huppert's brave rebellion on tuition fees, and smile helpfully.

Perhaps it's more of a problem than I think. Some people refuse a leaflet, either because they have too many or because they're busy, usually with children. From an open window at one house, we can hear a baby gurgling. It's a quiet cul-de-sac here, but an Ocado lorry rumbles by worryingly close.

"I suppose we'd better stop standing in the middle of the road," Lucy says.

"Well, you know what Bevan said about people who stand in the middle of the road," I reply.

She looks at me for a moment. "Sometimes they get to direct the traffic," she says briskly.

That's certainly the theme of the Liberal Democrat campaign this time around – to portray themselves as a moderating influence on the two extremes of Labour and Conservative. When Julian Huppert comes to address the party's communal lunch in St Paul's Church on Hills Road, just across from his campaign hub, the emphasis is on a moderate immigration policy, instead of "chasing the UKIP vote", as Huppert puts it.

Huppert really is the man around whom this whole campaign is revolving, and even the atrocious national poll ratings for the Lib Dems don't seem to be restraining their enthusiasm for their candidate. As they smile for the camera with a shout of "Up the Hupp!", there's a round of applause and a cheer. Then they split and depart for another round of canvassing, the golden boy in tow. Whether it will last, however, remains to be seen.

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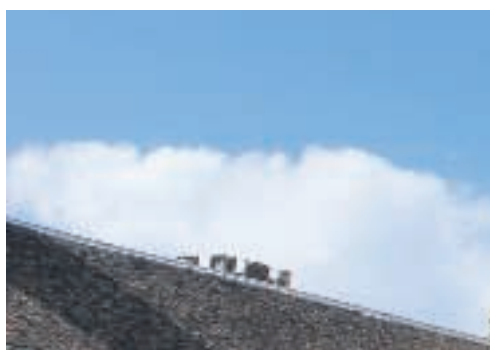
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in Cambridge



Labour: old dogs, new tricks

In the shadow of the Soviet flag in King's Bar sits the Executive Committee of the Cambridge Universities Labour Club (CULC), scarlet cards and crumpled leaflets spread haphazardly over a table. I have never seen a more exhausted-looking group of activists: when I see them on Sunday 19th April, they are nine days into their ten-day pre-election campaigning blitz, known as CULC Camp. When I arrive, they are putting the finishing touches to their plan for today's voter registration drive, the day before the deadline.

"We're all so tired," say two of them in perfect unison. "We're all completely dead till we get to the doorsteps," says Holly Higgins, "But then..." She mimes perking up, grinning, opening her eyes wide in the manner of a serial murderer.

Something catches her eye, and she snatches up a Liberal Democrat leaflet.

"Are you actually serious?" she shouts, drawing looks of alarm from her comrades. She frantically indicates to a piece of Huppert campaign material distributed to Cambridge colleges which claims that Labour pledged to abolish tuition fees in 2010.

"We never said that! That's a flat-out lie!" says Rory Weal, the Chair of CULC. Rory is something of a celebrity, having made national news when he gave an impassioned speech to Labour's national conference in 2011, at the age of 16.

It soon becomes apparent that what the letter is referring to is Ed Miliband's preference, during the Labour leadership election, to abolish tuition fees and replace them with a graduate tax. The tax goes unmentioned.

Tom Wilson, the campaigns officer, smirks and waves his phone to cheer the others up. "We broke a thousand

retweets last night," he says. He's referring to the Katie Hopkins poster, which went viral the day before. Even the French press picked up the story.

It certainly seems to have struck a chord, but the Labourites around me don't pay much attention to it: planning continues apace, with tactical chewing gum handed out and little cards distributed. The intention today is to knock on doors across fresher accommodation, as freshers were never registered by their colleges and had to register individually at this election.

I ask Rory if he has any concerns about knocking on doors when most people are preparing for exams, prelims or otherwise. He hesitates for a moment. "We do, yeah, and that's why we're not doing it on behalf of the Labour Party. The focus today is just on voter registration." He gestures to the cards, which are indeed non-partisan besides a little drawing of a Labour-marked ballot paper going into a box.

The same cannot be said for the leaflets being handed out, nor the most perplexing piece of publicity that CULC have come up with: door-hangers, which are to be hung on the handles of freshers who aren't in. SHOW THEM THE DOOR, they scream above the famous picture of David Cameron and Nick Clegg on the door of 10 Downing Street.

"This is what revolution looks like, guys!" says Holly, with only a hint of irony. They do seem to be more organised than the Liberal Democrats were, and far more so than the paid volunteers for CUSU. CUSU are running their own voter registration drive today, but a group of five of them are sitting across from CULC in the bar and are mostly sitting and chatting in front of a somewhat lacklustre board. One of them is wearing a braid of flowers in her hair. Nobody is talking to them as the final Labour groups are dispatched.

I head off with Rory and three other activists to John's, as one of the group flits up and down the stairs, opening

doors with his university card. I stand with Rory outside a fresher's room, feeling faintly out of place. He knocks. There is a pause. Distantly, a toilet flushes. "Good start," he says, knocking on the other three doors. Nobody is in, so we move on. Most people have already registered and several are international students who can't vote, but everyone who answers is (surprisingly) receptive to the Labour group, even a man puffing up some stairs with a heavy-looking suitcase.

Going round the John's fresher accommodation takes the best part of an hour. Towards the end Rory takes a call and gives me a nudge.

"Would you like to speak to Cleo?"

Cleo Newton is the designer of the Katie Hopkins poster – truly the woman of the moment. I say yes, and soon I am talking to her in Second Court. She is quiet, though she speaks with nervous rapidity, and seems utterly bewildered by her newfound popularity.

"We wanted to do something with an edge, something different, something humorous," she says. The timing was an accident, as the poster was designed and printed the day before her column in the Sun emerged, in which she refers to migrants drowning in the Mediterranean as being "like cock-roaches". CULC found themselves caught up in a perfect news storm.

"We also wanted to show we're a party with serious policies," she continues, referring to the other pledges on the underoccupancy penalty, zero-hours contracts and unpaid internships, "but we don't take ourselves too seriously. I think negative politics doesn't really get through."

Our time is up and we are whisked back to King's to regroup and for the party members to receive their orders. The parliamentary candidate, Daniel Zeichner, is there giving the offending Liberal Democrat leaflet from earlier another roasting.

"They fixed that one," says Zeichner flatly, referring to an exit poll from a recent hustings that showed the Lib Dems far in the lead on 40 per cent.

"They shipped people in."

Meanwhile, the talk of the table is a comment from UKIP's candidate, Patrick O'Flynn, at last night's hustings describing the audience as "the same 250 liberal middle-class do-gooders moving from hall to hall," comparing it to the allegedly biased audience faced by Nigel Farage at the BBC Challengers' Debate a few days before.

"I suppose if you know you're going to lose, you might as well have some fun with it," says Tom. UKIP does not look likely to win this seat, sitting at around 3 per cent in Cambridge polls; a lamppost outside bears a sticker saying LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR: SKIP UKIP. One Twitter user reacting to the video of O'Flynn's comments described him as a "Thunderbirds villain made flesh".

Next on the menu are several colleges lacking a present CULC member, among them my college, Emmanuel. I hesitantly raise a hand and offer to guide them to the fresher accommodation, emphasising my non-partisan credentials as a sort of protective incantation. Zeichner offers to come along, so I jump at the chance.

"We've met before, haven't we?" he says suddenly on Petty Cury. Indeed we have: I interviewed him last term. He apologises for not recognising me sooner.

"When you're in that semi-glazed state, things start to blur together." I can understand. I've met Julian Huppert three times since I interviewed him and he didn't recognise me once, but then again, he is a busy sitting MP.

By the time we get to the Emmanuel freshers' accommodation in South Court, though, Zeichner is in his element. "I haven't decided how I'm voting yet," says one slightly bemused fresher as she opens her door.

"Well, let me try and convince you!" says Zeichner, beaming and striding across the hallway to engage her in conversation, for a good five minutes or so.

I talk to one of the Labourites, Fred Jerome, about the candidate. Zeichner

is now on his fifth attempt to get into Parliament, and his campaign got off to a rocky start after he only narrowly won the selection in 2012. Councillor George Owers described him as a "terrible candidate" at the time, and local gossip says the party divided over his selection.

"I like him. He's very passionate about the stuff he's running on, but there is that... candidate-itis," says Fred. He shudders slightly. "All candidates get it. They love talking to people." As we leave Emmanuel, the Labourites are falling over themselves in surprise at the positive response. Some are suggesting they do some more daytime campaigning, and we say goodbye to Daniel Zeichner.

I part ways with Labour at King's Bar once again, taking a few final photographs and listening in on logistical planning. The election is going to be very, very tough for both parties: Huppert seems to have a comfortable lead, but the strong student vote could overturn that, especially in light of the polling results released by Varsity today. Moreover, the Lib Dems have a doubly hard job, fighting to break a Labour majority in the City Council as well as defend their parliamentary candidate.

The next few weeks promise to be exhausting. Many of the students for both parties, are knowingly sacrificing good performance in their degrees to elect their favoured candidate, even finalists. There is more warmth and more professionalism in CULC, but the Cambridge Student Liberal Democrats have a strong record to defend and are flush with national money. Huppert remains a good advertisement for the Lib Dems. It is in their interests to keep him where he is, and in Labour's to dethrone him.

Watching this hard, often fraught race play out, it is difficult not to be excited by democracy in action – and difficult not to think that whoever wins will have worked incredibly hard to get there. To the winner, the spoils – and God help the losers.

Owen Jones rallies student left to Labour

Till Schöfer
Deputy News Editor

In light of the upcoming election, the Cambridge Universities Labour Club hosted an evening with Guardian columnist Owen Jones on 20th April.

Jones, the author of the bestselling books 'Chavs: The Demonisation of the Working Class' and 'The Establishment – And How They Get Away With It', reminded students that they are an important electoral demographic in a constituency that is currently a tight Labour-Liberal Democrat contest. The Guardian columnist also made several references to the recent CULC posters mocking the conservative opinions of Katie Hopkins, who, he insisted, is the "most odious individual that has ever lived".

Jones was quick to criticise the content of the Conservatives' general election campaign, arguing: "They know they're going to lose... that's why they're so vicious." According to Jones, this strategy was to blame for the 'vilification' of Miliband.

Jones focused heavily on inequality within the UK. The fact that the UK is the sixth largest economy in the world in terms of GDP, yet still has one in four children living in overcrowded accommodation and millions of people on social housing waiting lists, exemplifies, in Jones' eyes, a government policy of "socialism for the rich, capitalism swim-or-sink for the rest".

He went on to argue that national rhetoric aimed at vilifying certain social groups, such as immigrants and

benefits claimants, was part of an elitist Conservative strategy of "divide and rule". According to Jones, "They're saying don't be angry for being robbed... Be angry at the undeserving neighbour who wasn't robbed."

Attacks on the Conservative Party were accompanied by a concerted effort to discredit the policies of the Liberal Democrats. Attendees of the event were called on to "kick out every Lib Dem we can out of all constituencies". For Jones, the Liberal Democrats' U-turn on tuition fees in combination with Huppert's alleged support of the bedroom tax and the privatisation of the NHS, underlined why no Cambridge student should vote Liberal Democrat.

Having analysed the coalition's policies, Jones readjusted the focus of his speech to explain his support of the Labour Party, despite his frequent criticisms of previous Labour governments. Jones admitted that he would prefer a more left-wing party, however insisted he "would rather argue [with] a Labour government than fight a Conservative one", a sentiment which elicited applause from the audience.

Jones received further applause when he proposed the necessity of nationalising the UK's railway network and drew comparisons between Chartists, suffragettes and the creators of the NHS, all of whom he sees as proponents of "progress against the oppressive teeth of the leadership".

He concluded his speech with the words "let's stand together, let's win together and let's fight this battle together."



Jones' talk was moved to the Lady Mitchell after over 700 people expressed interest on Facebook

During the question and answer session that followed, concerns about Labour's tough line on immigration were answered by Jones with a personal story of the help his grandmother received at an NHS hospital by immigrant staff. Jones went further by likening Katie Hopkins' comments about refugees to the type of rhetoric prevalent under the Nazis and by discrediting UKIP's credentials as outsider politicians, by claiming they, like many politicians, were privately educated ex-City-boys.

When one audience member asked Jones to estimate the likelihood of an SNP-Labour coalition, he responded by claiming it would be a Tory-DUP-

UKIP government that would be the ultimate guarantor of Scottish independence, not a Labour-SNP coalition. According to Jones, the Conservatives are pursuing a "scorched earth tactic" against Scotland and are demonising Sturgeon, which will inevitably lead to a strong Scottish independence movement in the case of a Tory victory.

The Guardian columnist continued by emphasising his support for electoral reform. Jones argued that in the case of a hung parliament or a minority government, the largest party should offer the electorate a referendum on electoral reform.

Theories concerning the link between Labour and the economic crash

were dispelled by Jones, who stressed that until 2008, the Conservatives had supported every economic decision that Labour had made.

Jones concluded his visit to Cambridge by criticising inequality in education, advocating a removal of public schools' charity status and an increase in early education investment. According to Jones, an 'AAB' at a state school in an ex-mining village should be seen as equal to an 'AAA' at Eton.

The final words of the evening were uttered by Daniel Zeichner, Labour candidate for Cambridge, who claimed: "If it's not a Labour victory in Cambridge, it's a Tory government."

Interview: Owen Jones

Ellie Olcott
Interviews Editor

I don't think anyone is under any illusion as to where Jones' political allegiances lie; the left-wing writer, who has an impressive cult-following of 277,000 loyal fans on Twitter, was as clear in person as he is in 140 characters about his beliefs in his talk to the Cambridge Universities Labour Club earlier this week. With the socialist revolution still pending, however, Jones is spending the general election campaign rallying the troops to Labour. But why, indeed, has he come to speak in Cambridge? Jones has a history of vocal criticism of what he regards as elitism in Britain's top two universities; in 2011 he wrote a piece for LabourList entitled 'Abolish Oxbridge'.

When pressed, however, he gives me a slightly tempered alternative to the abandoning the universities. He proposes allocating a "certain amount of places automatically for the brightest kids from working class backgrounds, telling me that many kids from these backgrounds are discouraged from applying because Oxbridge is a "completely alien world to them".

"It's got the trappings of a certain type of elitism," Jones continues. "It feels very, very off-putting." Jones admits media portrayals such as VICE's recent 'investigative' documentary interviewing drunk 'toffs' at the annual Oxbridge boat race make him feel "sick". "It's unfortunate that they basically tracked down intentionally the most obnoxious sounding people", he observes, because it makes it seem like those universities are "full of these types of people".

But his outlook isn't entirely pessimistic. "Cambridge is actually slightly better than Oxford in terms of dealing with some of the trappings," he tells me. A graduate of University College, Oxford, he laments his alma mater's insistence on wearing a full suit and gown – "and the right colour shoes," he adds – to sit exams, something

not expected of Cambridge students.

Yet Cambridge is still undeniably a place where these kinds of "trappings" flourish. So what does he think of the fact that his employer, The Guardian, is sponsoring the white tie Peterhouse May Ball? He is taken aback. "Oh, I didn't realise that."

How does he respond to this controversial move from a left-wing paper? He pauses. "The Guardian sponsors all sorts of random stuff," he says hesitantly. "It's certainly not my department. I have no editorial control. Would I personally sponsor a white tie ball? No. But if that's what The Guardian wants to do, that's their money, I guess."

Jones is a forthright advocate for the Labour Party, and why students in particular should vote for them: for him, they are the only party that will fight for the working class and place the issue of social mobility firmly back on the agenda.

He does not support the Party's every move, however, and was less enthusiastic about Labour's foreign policy record during his CULC talk. Though it is true that foreign policy remains less of an issue for

the electorate when deciding who to vote for – it features below the economy, immigration and the NHS in surveys of important electoral issues. However, it seems to me the issue has been unfairly marginalised from the election coverage. Despite relative disengagement with foreign policy among the public, the toxic legacy left by the Iraq campaign on the Party still causes great disaffection among many left-leaning voters. So is Miliband taking the Party in the right direction?

"It is welcome that he broke with the New Labour approach," Jones tells me. "He made it clear during his leadership campaign and since that the Iraq War was a calamity."

He is also encouraged by Miliband's "critical" stance on what he calls "the Israeli state's continued occupation of the Palestinian people and the attack on their human rights."

But Jones still has his criticisms, "Miliband wasn't critical in the way I would have been about the war in Libya," he concedes, a conflict

that has resulted in "a country that is frankly disintegrating". He would also like to see a tougher approach from Labour towards dictatorships, an area again where Blair's record is mixed. He is thus condemns Western support of absolute monarchies in Saudi Arabia and Qatar, a policy he argues perpetuates terrorism.

"Pressure needs to be put to bear on Labour to shift on that," he says, arguing he has not seen this kind of approach from the opposition since 2010. He argues for "a totally different Western policy", one based "on democracy and on human rights" rather than war and invasions.

Jones persuasively protested during his talk that he would prefer to argue to force a Labour government to make good its pledges on social reform than fight with a Tory one to stop policies such as the Bedroom Tax which, he argues, further marginalise the most deprived. But while his support for Labour on domestic issues is clear and passionate, his mixed attitudes towards Western foreign policy in general seems to leave him doubtful that the next Labour government will change the status quo that Blair's government worked to support, with a greater focus on promoting human rights than engaging in bilateral foreign intervention. In this regard, Labour does not have a leg to stand on, especially in its criticism of Russia.

"Russia has undermined international norms, but that is what the West did in Iraq," he tells me. "Their moral high ground has been completely eroded." But the problems require more than foreign policy change.

"The problem with international law is that it is disregarded at a whim by large powers [when] inconvenient."

From this perspective, it will require more work than one government could muster to genuinely promote the tenants of democracy and human rights. Particularly when that government is drawn from the same Party that led Britain into Iraq.



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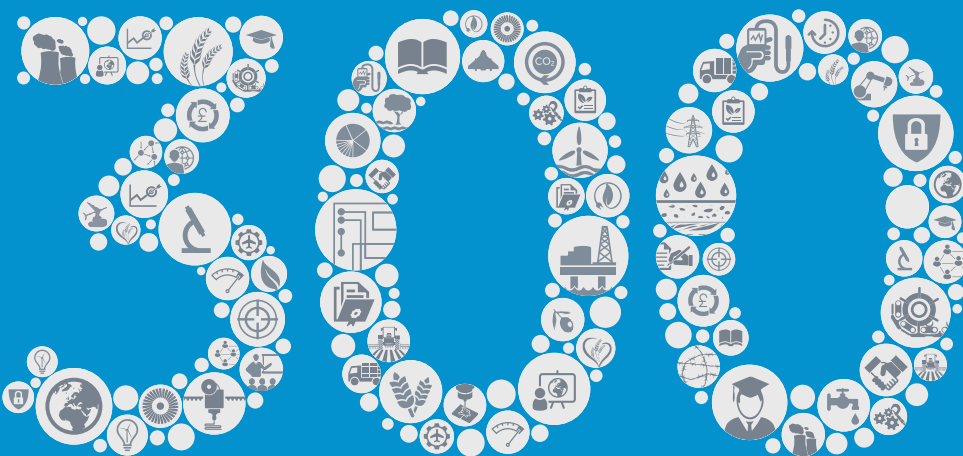
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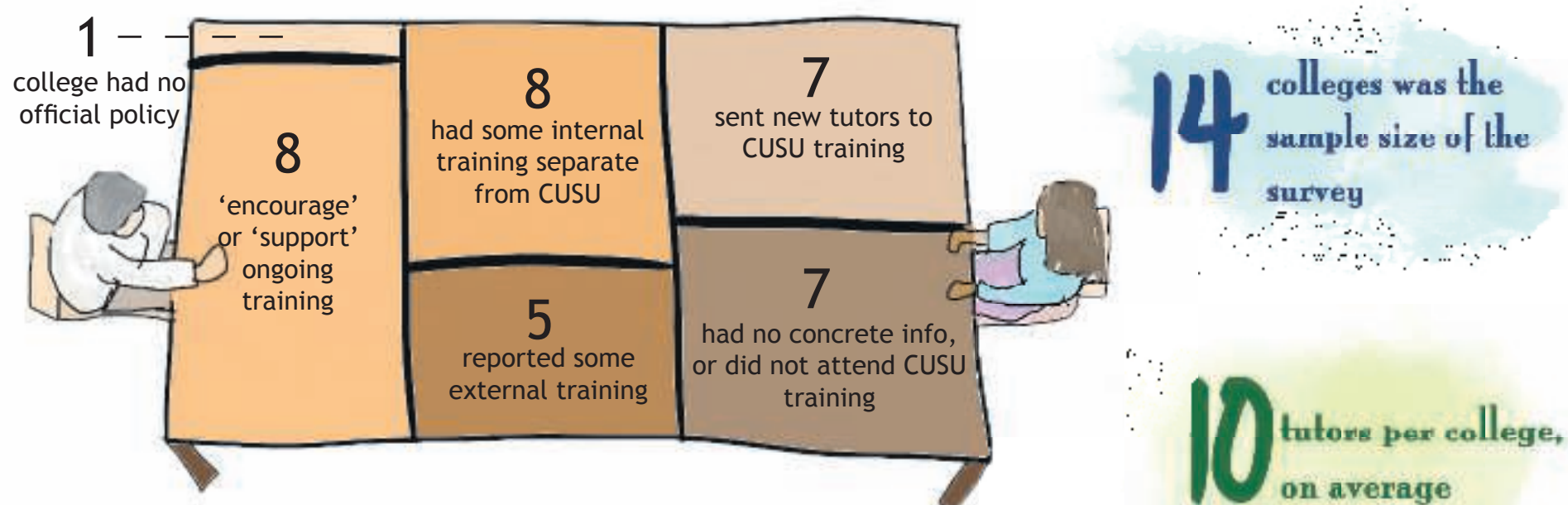
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A game of tutors

A year on from CUSU's campaign to instigate tutor training, **Sarah Sheard** explores whether chance still plays a role in being assigned a competent tutor.



It seems a truth universally acknowledged in Cambridge that tutors are consistently inconsistent. For every positive story about a tutor providing valuable assistance to a student in hardship, there seem to be 10 anecdotes involving impassive, unhelpful or obstructive tutors.

I've developed this hypothesis from seeing the testimonies published by student campaigns such as Cambridge Speaks Its Mind (CSIM), but also from my own experiences with tutors.

In my first year, I had a tutor I can only describe as utterly disinterested. My first, and only, meeting with him lasted barely two minutes; he was the last person I would have gone to in a crisis. Luckily there were alternative forms of support available within my college, and in my second year I was re-assigned to a more approachable tutor.

Personal experiences aside, it is clear tutors have always been subject to criticism in Cambridge; CUSU ran a successful campaign to introduce training for all new tutors in 2014, hailed as "a win" by then-Welfare and Rights Officer Helen Hoogewerf-McComb.

The training was obviously designed to combat an inconsistent system in which many tutors were only informally trained, if at all.

But the new training, implemented for the first time in October 2014, is not mandatory and only applies to new tutors. Inconsistencies would seem to remain, but is it just that the awful stories and testimonies are always more memorable, creating a biased image of the true state of tutors in Cambridge? Those stories are the ones, after all, that are posted on Facebook and widely shared, whilst someone who has a positive experience with their tutor is much less likely to shout it from the rooftops.

And so I took a representative sample of undergraduate colleges and

asked how many tutors took the CUSU welfare training, and what the college's policy is on training all tutors, as opposed to only those appointed from 2014. This, I hoped, would provide a broader idea of the consistency – or lack thereof – within Cambridge's tutorial system.

It was immediately clear some colleges' tutorial offices were far more organised than others. Some were unhelpfully vague; Clare admitted that none of their eight tutors had attended CUSU's training but had undergone "informal training ... on a weekly basis within College", while Newnham cryptically said that "it is unknown how many of Newnham's tutors went to [the CUSU] training day", maintaining that all have had "some welfare training".

Still, both Newnham and Clare were more helpful than the tutorial offices at Queens', Peterhouse and Emmanuel, which, when asked how many tutors

college had "no specific policy" pertaining to training all tutors even once, let alone in terms of refresher courses.

Seven colleges sent their new tutors to CUSU's tutor training, but equally, another seven could not offer me any concrete information. The phrase "the college encourages ongoing training" often cropped up in responses, but even this was referring to internal practice rather than anything standardised.

Girton, Homerton, Emmanuel, Fitzwilliam, Trinity, Downing and Clare all stated that their tutors have weekly meetings and/or informal training within college: but, crucially, there is no way to compare what 'informal training' means from college to college. Students are left at the mercy of whatever college authorities deem appropriate, leaving their welfare dependent on the college they attend.

Murray Edwards quickly emerged as the most well-equipped; the college runs fortnightly discussion groups to discuss welfare provision and also provides specific training for tutors on issues such as eating disorders and self-harming. Tutors are also specifically trained with regards to disabled students, while Cambridge Rape Crisis conducted a training session with the tutors, porters and nurse about supporting victims of sexual assault.

Amy Leach, a second year student at Murray Edwards, had an overwhelmingly positive experience after tearing her knee ligaments several times over the course of a year, describing her college as "extremely supportive". The Senior Tutor, Juliet Foster, kept in "continual contact" by email and was able to co-ordinate taxis and a wheelchair to help Amy get around college and town. She also arranged for Amy to sit her exams in college and secured an exam warning for her.

"All in all I could not have asked for a more warm and supportive senior

tutor," Amy said. "In my view, she is a key reason why Murray Edwards continues to be such a caring and supportive environment."

But it seems glaringly obvious that Amy's positive experience was, at least in part, down to pure chance in being assigned a competent tutor. CSIM has countless anecdotes of unluckier students who have to cope with the added stress of unhelpful tutors, as well as welfare issues.

"THINK ABOUT HOW DISGUSTING YOU ARE"

One student detailed in an anonymous testimonial that when she was suffering from depression and bulimia and was self-harming, her tutor told her to "think about how disgusting you are" and to stop herself purging, and said that she was jeopardising her friends' welfare and exam performance, despite the tutor then revealing confidential details to these friends about her conditions.

The tutor also demanded to see the cuts from her self-harm before declaring her to be a "danger to the community", justifying this with "if you do that to yourself, what's to say you won't go and cut somebody else's arms up?"

Another harrowing testimony from CSIM was of a student who felt they were under "house arrest" after intermitting. Despite living in Cambridge their entire life, the student was informed by the Senior Tutor at their college that they "must not enter the University, the college, or any part of the city of Cambridge" and was even threatened with expulsion when they

were spotted by a member of college staff on Trumpington Road.

Although a spokesperson for the university stated that "the University has no power to ban a student from the city or prevent them from living in Cambridge, especially if this is their main residence", they could not comment on individual cases. The CSIM testimony concluded with the student remarking that they are "too afraid of losing my place at Cambridge to go any further than the end of my road".

The veritable barrage of anecdotes at CSIM and similar campaigns is testament to the remaining disparities in the system. As one student linked to CSIM told me, "it's impossible to know how 'good' a tutor is going to be at their job until they have been assigned to you." Although he added the caveat that there is usually "a handful of decent tutors in each college", the struggle lies in convincing colleges to re-assign a student from a bad to a good tutor during a difficult period.

The solution? Presumably honed from his CSIM involvement, the same student suggested that "all tutors should undergo training... not just new tutors, all of them", adding that specific training should be included to support sufferers of mental health conditions, disabled students and survivors of sexual abuse, along with clearer guidelines on financial hardship.

Student feedback was also raised as an issue which is too often dismissed; "if a tutor receives enough negative feedback, they should step down from their position... their ability to support students should be paramount."

For me, creating mandatory, centrally run training is a no-brainer. The utter lack of standardised training creates a dangerous lottery of whether your tutor will be capable of understanding and dealing with the problem in a way that preserves your dignity.



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The Interview: Jeremy Paxman

GET A BLOODY ANSWER



SURAJ MAKWANA

Following his grilling of the party leaders, **Elissa Foord** talks politics and politicians with this former Varsity Editor

“Pull yourself together!” No equivocation, no sugar-coating, no nonsense: even from the interviewee’s side of the Dictaphone, Jeremy Paxman takes no prisoners. And, as I found out from this reproof, no Americanisms either.

To be the object of his, albeit light-hearted, berating places me in noteworthiness, if not consistently good, company: over the years the public have watched him sink his teeth into the world’s Blairs, Berlusconis, Camerons, Milibands and Russell Brands, to name only a few from a long and distinguished list. Reflecting on his portfolio of scalps, he remarks, “I don’t think there’s anything special about me really. Such notoriety or reputation as I have is more down to how I interpret my job.”

“I think a journalist’s job is to ask questions, and, if you ask questions, you should get an answer... or it should be abundantly clear that the question is not being answered.” A squirming Michael Howard being asked by Paxman 12 times in a row, “did you threaten to overrule him?” comes to mind.

“You must get a bloody answer!” he recapitulates. “The only difference between a journalist and everyone else is one of opportunity. If you have that opportunity, you owe it to your viewers to get an answer.”

A career spent cutting through political obfuscation has left him

somewhat war-weary, “You see ‘em come and you see ‘em go. You see one tendentious position after another being advanced, it does tend to make you slightly jaundiced.” Yet his determination not to be “fobbed off” has

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THERE REALLY OUGHT TO BE A BOX ON THE BALLOT PAPER THAT READS ‘NONE OF THE ABOVE’

in no way been assuaged, even with Newsnight behind him. The Prime Minister himself discovered this all too plainly over Easter, as 2.6 million viewers watched Cameron writhe whilst Paxman pressed him on his figures, demanding “do you know and are not telling us, or do you not know?”

His relationship with politics and politicians is complex. However, one unambiguous commitment he maintains is the importance of voting: “I think that if you live in society, you vote. If you don’t bother to vote, then you disqualify yourself from ever passing comment on anything that’s happening or being done by government... I think it really, really matters.”

He admits that he did once abstain from a General Election but “felt bad about it immediately.” And once you reach the ballot box? At this, he seems faintly despairing: “I can understand that the choice is not attractive. Very often it seems like the choice between a flea and a louse.”

Despite taking Russell Brand to task for not voting, Paxman does in some way engage with his message of political disillusion. As he discusses what is at the front of his mind in the run-up to the election, he notes “there really ought to be a box on the ballot paper that reads ‘none of the above.’” He continues, “If voting were to be made compulsory, I wouldn’t really have a problem with it, but I do think that we ought to be given that opportunity.” In recent weeks, he has engaged with the leaders of the two biggest parties on the weightiest issues concerning the electorate; yet his primary concern is to have the choice to cast a vote for none of them.

Turning to the quality of political discourse at election time, he remarks, “The idiotic thing about our system is that these people stand up there and they reduce everything to simple binary choices. It’s ‘vote for me, I’m right; my opponent is wrong.’ We all know that life is much more complicated than that.”

Paxman is forthright in his belief that people should vote, but guarded as to his own allegiances. The most he will reveal on this topic is that “on the

whole, I’m in favour of the government getting out of people’s lives.” A

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NOBLE PEOPLE DO NOT TEND TO ADVANCE AS FAR, PERHAPS, AS THEY OUGHT TO IN POLITICS

number of papers reported last year that he declared himself a one-nation Tory, although he has shied from confirming as much.

He has also been asked by the Tories to stand as an MP, and as Mayor of London, a job he would not take for “all the éclairs in Paris.” But, a member of CULC in his Cambridge days, he hails from roots further left. Wherever his beliefs do lie, he is firm that his job should be no platform for them, “You must respect the fact that you shouldn’t use or abuse your position in order to reflect your, in my case, probably pretty incoherent views on the public.”

And what of politicians themselves? In his book, *The Political Animal*, which discusses the anatomy of the politician, he presents them as a breed apart, to be analysed and understood with difficulty. He has frequently been

accused of being ‘sneering’ towards them. However, he is quick to stress “It’s not true that they’re all charlatans. There are many noble figures who go into politics.” He continues: “The difficulty is that many of these noble people do not tend to advance as far, perhaps, as they ought to in politics. And I am sorry about that... Of course there are some scoundrels – there are some scoundrels, doubtless, even on the staff of Varsity now – there are scoundrels everywhere, and there are noble people everywhere. That is the human condition.”

He has been often charged with taking the Rottweiler treatment too far, or of spreading an irresponsible disdain for Westminster. And it is right to keep an eye on his behaviour given his political sway, but he does seem to have a healthy conception of his responsibilities. He aims to subject his interviewees all, indiscriminately, to the highest level of scrutiny he can muster. If he can do so fairly, the democratic eyebrow can be lowered.

True, power in our society does not lie in the hands of elected officials alone. And, rightly, his critics stress that he should not temper his acrimony in dealing with those whose power lies outside the realms of the constitutional, the chief executives and bank-chairmen that he encounters. But, so far as his political journalism goes, politics is a blood sport: no surprise, then, that to get results he must go straight for the jugular.

Comment

Classroom porn: the future of sex ed?



Millie Paine

Teenagers have watched it anyway: they might as well do it in class

Well known throughout the world for their sexual liberalism, the Scandinavian countries have always been ahead of the curve when it comes to pornography. After having lifted the ban on it in 1967, Denmark was the first country in the world to legalise it in 1969.

Now, the suggestion of a Danish sexology professor that pornographic images and films should be shown in classrooms as part of sex education has sparked fierce debates, and (fairly understandably), outrage.

However, the suggestion shouldn't be dismissed for being too extreme too quickly: using pornography as a platform for discussion and critical engagement may be an invaluable aspect of sex education. With the vast majority of young people having access to the internet on smartphones and computers, viewing pornography has become easier than ever before. Anybody, of any age, has access to a plethora of explicit and sometimes violent imagery at their fingertips. As a result, most of us will probably have had some exposure to pornography by the time we have our first sexual experiences, and the material that we view can have a significant impact on the way we approach sex.

It is generally agreed that most porn is unrealistic. Surgically crafted breasts, insatiable appetites and endless stamina are all frequent features, which typically aren't part of most people's sexual encounters. Porn does not depict many aspects of real sex – intimacy, love, mistakes and shortcomings. It sacrifices realism for the sake of storyline or fantasy. This can place unrealistic expectations on all genders to live up to unattainable sexual standards, thereby creating serious dents in the sexual confidence of people of all ages.

Perhaps more damaging is the impact that porn can have on women: not only does it affect what women expect of themselves when it comes to body image and performance, but a lot of pornography actively depicts misogyny and objectification, focusing on domination and submission. It promotes the idea that consent to sex is not necessary, insofar as it depicts non-consensual sex in which women are seen to enjoy it. This can have a devastating effect on the way men view women, potentially normalising violence and objectification.

So if pornography is so damaging, why would anyone suggest showing it in the classroom? First and foremost,

by the time young people reach the age of consent, most will have already viewed pornography in some form or another. The difference between being shown it at school and viewing it in private is that the former allows for contextualisation. Viewing and discussing pornographic material in a mature way can teach young people how to properly interpret and think critically about it. If the material is there in front of them, teachers can point out the ways in which porn is a warped depiction of sex. This can range from reassuring young men that the size and stamina of porn stars is unrealistic, to urging young women that they should not be expected to submit to violence and aggressive sexual behaviour if they don't want to.

What's more, pornography could be used as a platform for discussion regarding many aspects of sexual health. For example, more of an onus can be placed upon the practice of safe sex: teachers can emphasise the importance of practising safe sex even if porn stars don't. Moreover, porn can be used as the basis of a discussion on gender stereotypes and body image: teaching young people what not to think, and how not to

behave, when it comes to sex, will allow them to become far more critical consumers of the industry.

This suggestion might be regarded as extreme by many. Perhaps, in some ways, it is. But what's important is to resist the temptation to build a straw man. I've seen countless comments on forums in response to this proposal by people who seem convinced that we as a society are going to start condoning 'paedo' teachers screening 'Back-alley Sluts 3' to 9 year olds. Obviously this is far from the case – we're talking about trained professionals, and moderate content. What's important is not to underestimate the capacity of young adults to handle this sort of material in a mature fashion; treating students as mature and discussing things frankly with them makes them more likely to translate this mature and sophisticated approach into their sex lives, throughout adulthood, and have the capacity to judge the type of material that is only going to become more and more accessible to them.

The bottom line? Pornography can have its place in classrooms, and could be just what society needs to combat the warped views of sex and gender that it has created.

Private schools' homophobia problem



Jack McConnel

Why we can no longer ignore homophobia in private education

I came out at school because I was bored. Impending A Levels and the monotony of exam term in my last year at a small boarding school in northern England just wasn't cutting the mustard at what numerous well-meaning middle agers were telling me was the prime of my life.

My confidant pulled off being simultaneously the most outrageously homophobic yet confusingly supportive person I have ever met. Once I'd told him, he willingly did the rest.

Summer fishing brought along the inevitable 'do-you-want-my-rod-McConnel?' jokes. I learned to describe exams as "difficult", not "hard", and a handful of girls decided I was now the best thing since Jack Wills started doing tweed. I'd got it good: school was almost over and I was the most confident I'd ever been – ever. And no-one was trying to nudge me back into the closet.

Or so I thought. "Are you sure?!" was a common refrain. I avoided stereotypes after I was told being gay didn't mean I could "camp it up so much". Others were "fine" as long as I didn't "do any of that gay stuff". This didn't bother me. Nor did the ban on same-sex couples going to the Leavers' Ball. I was sure homophobia was experienced by other people. It just wasn't a thing in the 2010s, right?

Well, no. I realised afterwards I was the first to come out at the school – and unfortunately the last. There were rumours of someone in the 80s hanging himself after doing so but back then, I thought, it was hardly surprising.

I wonder if it's so different now.

Seven LGB pupils and recent leavers subsequently got in touch; only one was 'out' and the rest were not comfortable with who they were; I hadn't spoken to three of them before. One, a young successful man, stays with his "girlfriend" to "maintain the illusion". He also lives with depression.

One younger pupil, worried about their relationship with God, felt uncomfortable taking Communion. He feared, I assume wrongly, that his

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ONLY ONE PER CENT OF
LGBT PUPILS DO NOT HEAR
COMMENTS LIKE “THAT’S SO
GAY” EVERY DAY

Housemaster would try to segregate him from other boarders in case he brandished his sexuality.

I was told more recently about something termed an 'arousal test'. Although the boy 'passed' – he was too scared – he said that what few thoughts he had about 'coming out' were quickly banished. Though more confident later, he still could not speak to school staff, friends or parents about his sexuality.

One incident happened during a weekly ritual involving 10 to 15 boys ganging up on one person after lights-out – all in good fun, of course. One February night in Year 10 was

particularly bad. The group pinned the target to his bed and poured a ready-prepared bag of vomit over him. Standard insults (they didn't know he was gay) intensified during the procedure as they shouted "beat the homo", "fucking fag" and "gay piece of shit". He fell to the floor and they kicked him. That boy was me.

Cases like these are often simply classed as standard bullying, not specifically instances of homophobia. Consequently, a whole culture of anti-LGBT sentiment is going unchallenged: the constant "that's so gay", which remains unchecked and sometimes even used by teachers, the almost non-existence of LGBT discussions, and the assumption that everyone is heterosexual until proven otherwise are all examples of this pervasive, damaging culture.

LGBT friends predictably had similar experiences: there was no same-sex sex-ed and the few LGBT issues which were discussed in PSHE were irrelevant (my favourite: "What to do if a gay man approaches you in a bar?"). I remember one discussion on whether we "believe" in transitioning. There were no openly LGBT staff, and LGBT-relevant stories never featured in assemblies, a daily sacrosanct affair for moral instruction. LGBT people were not acknowledged, certainly never affirmatively. And yet the Office for National Statistics estimates as many as seven per cent of the population are LGBT.

With some variation, this is likely a standard school experience for most LGBT people. According to Stonewall, only one per cent of LGBT

pupils do not hear comments like "that's so gay" daily; nine in ten secondary school teachers say they hear the phrase frequently.

Fortunately, change is on the horizon for state schools. Bar UKIP, all the major parties have outlined comprehensive manifesto commitments to LGBT people. Political will is there.

But these policies only apply to maintained schools. Although the independent sector is exempt from many initiatives, they must adhere to standards requiring them to "encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 [Equalities] Act." Independent schools' inspectors are unclear on how this can be achieved.

I know some teachers in some schools work actively to combat anti-LGBT attitudes – and that is great. But it just isn't enough: the current situation is evidently failing privately-educated LGBT+ pupils. This must change. Oxonian and Old Etonian Jamie Jackson gained national coverage and overwhelming support from over 50 former pupils with an open letter to his old headmaster expressing similar concerns. So many more people identify with the problem. To this end, a group working to improve attitudes in independent schools has been set up. We have some powerful proposals and will be discussing different approaches. Whoever and wherever you are, if you have an idea, want to get involved or put us in touch with open-minded teachers, get in touch at jafm4@cam.ac.uk.

Homertonian Blues

Sarah Sheard

After almost two years at Homerton, I'm well-accustomed to missing out on various activities. When Cindies is a dangerous drunken stumble from your room, you become blind to the struggles of the Homertonian, who faces a treacherous cycle, taxi ride or trek into town and risks sobriety upon admission.

One thing I never thought I'd miss out on was voting in Cambridge. Homerton falls just outside Cambridge and into South Cambridgeshire, a predicament also shared by our cousin Girton.

All my in-depth knowledge of incumbent Julian Huppert's hourly schedule, honed from a term of relentless campaign emails to the Varsity News account, is wasted. The speculation, calculations and polls on Cambridge mean nothing to me now, try as I might to get excited about what is one of the most unpredictable elections in years.

Cambridge is a battleground seat in which the Lib Dems, supposedly haemorrhaging 7 out of 10 voters since the coalition, may just hold onto power with Huppert. Lord Ashcroft's recent poll set Labour's Daniel Zeichner on a one per cent lead, although it only consulted 19 people between the ages of 18 and 24; the possibility is a huge swing influenced by the inflation of students in term-time, for which Varsity's election poll is the more useful, and tantalisingly close, survey.

Aside this electoral inferno, infused with the drama of the reigning Huppert battling off the Tories and Labour (who each managed a quarter of the votes in 2010), South Cambridgeshire is like watching paint dry. The Tories have comfortably held the seat since 1997 with an average 47 per cent share.

I have accepted my vote will likely make no difference in South Cambridgeshire. This I can deal with – my home town is a safe Labour seat – but to have a 'useless' vote stripped of potential is infuriating when I look past Hills Road to Cambridge's electoral landscape.

Despite daily cycling into Cambridge and spending most of my time there, my vote is lumped in with disparate, generally affluent villages throughout South Cambridgeshire, most likely full of London commuters.

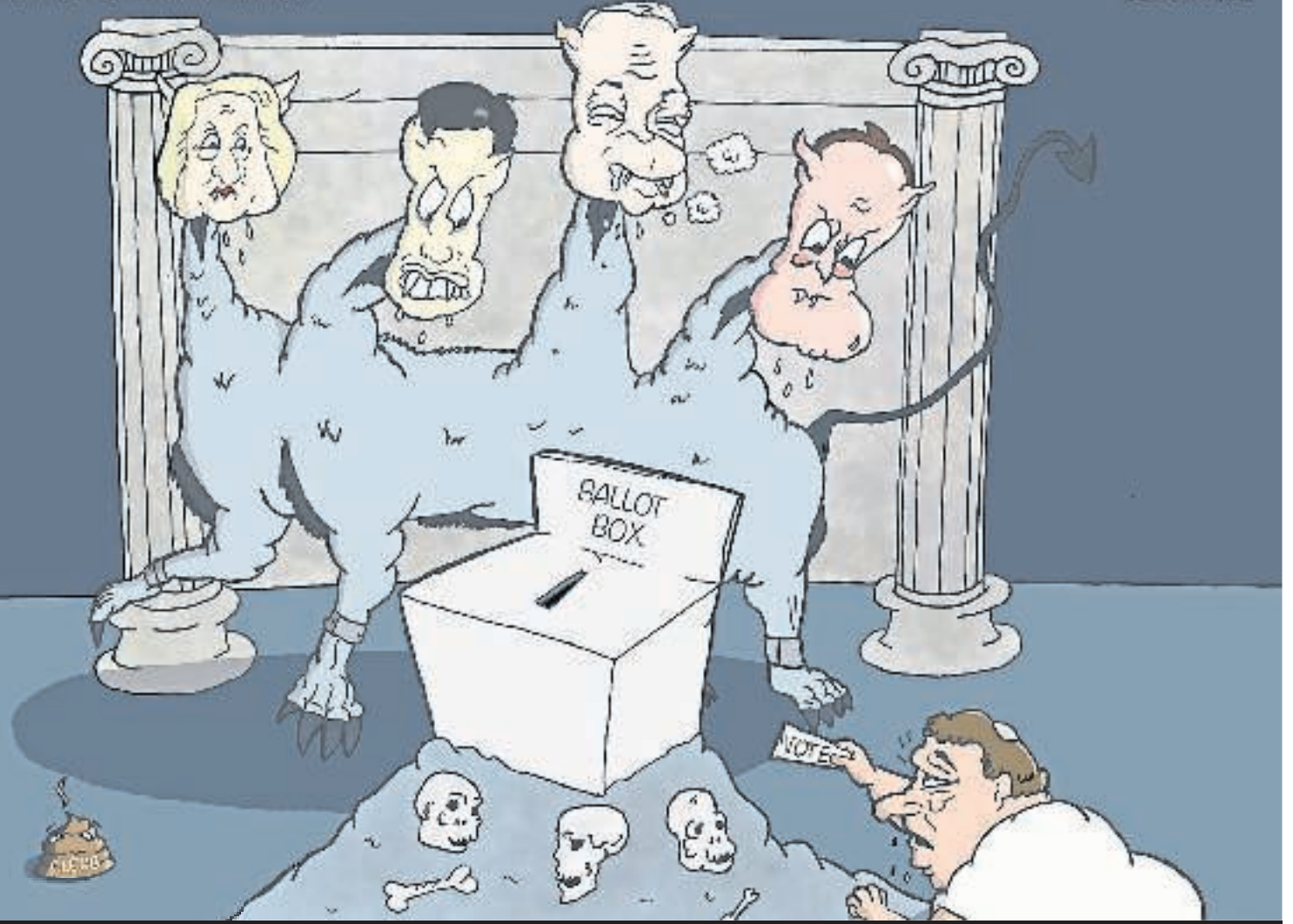
Hanging out with anyone from CULC or the Cambridge Lib Dems – I'll admit I've burned some bridges on the right-wing side of student politics – is all the more painful when canvassing can make so little difference in a safe seat like this.

And while safe seats are only one part of a bigger picture, the fact that I can't make much of a difference is all the more galling when I hear inner-city college people declaring that they "don't care about politics" or aren't intending to vote. They have a real choice in who they want to represent them in Parliament.

On the other hand, even if the Tory candidate for South Cambridgeshire was a parrot chanting "long-term economic plan" on the hour, he'd still get almost half of the votes. I don't have a choice in that.

A VOTER'S WORST NIGHTMARE...

BEN WATERS



Life in the UK after 7th May



Chris Rowe

It is two months after the election, and the country has changed for the worse...

It is two months after the election which saw Ed Miliband and Alex Salmond seize power. The deal struck was a 'confidence and supply arrangement', whereby Salmond provided the confidence and supply which the electorate denied the Labour leader. Salmond evidently moderated his terms given the tiny proportion of votes he garnered: he merely wanted to help write the Budget, oh, and to rid the UK of Trident. Small beer.

The alarm clock rings. It is 8am. I stir and move towards the bathroom before deciding to skip a shower. The hot water is off – as a result of Miliband freezing energy prices at a record high, hygiene has now become a dispensable affair.

I can't exactly complain about being in fuel poverty. It would be futile – now that I live in a 'mansion', in the eyes of the tax collector, I'm not exactly going to elicit much sympathy. Every morning, I wake up and put some pennies (well, several hundreds of pound coins) in the piggy bank. Better to have no hot water than be turfed out of my house.

Home being no longer particularly hospitable, I decide to breakfast in town. I've become used to the bagpipes playing on the streets; a fraction of the UK population has given the SNP a commanding voice in government. Perhaps, as a result, Scottish nationalists no longer wish to leave the Union. Incidentally, the SNP now vociferously opposes electoral reform. It seems that the painful sounds of the bagpipes, so closely mimicking my state of despair, are here to stay. These tunes beg the question in my mind as to why the English independence campaign remains so lacklustre.

Desperate for peace and quiet, I plunge into my nearest café. Awaiting my scrambled eggs on toast, I rest my head on the table. My melancholic state, and my increased invocation of the British sigh, which, again, Salmond wants to legislate to make the preserve of the Scots, has not eluded the notice of all present. One man, Vince Cable, who has now finally usurped control of the rump grouping of Lib Dems, enquires as to the cause of my sadness. I tell him about the lack of hot water in my 'mansion' and, surprisingly, he is sympathetic.

Good old Vince, pious as ever, tells me that hope is not to be found in God's salvation (for, after all, I live in a 'mansion' and I was formerly an investment banker), but rather in playing the system. "The idea of the tax was initially mine", pointed out Vince. He went on, "the trick is, my friend, to make sure that instead of having one house, you accumulate several under the £2m threshold". He conceded this may not be ideal: "If you can't be bothered with the fuss of countless estate agents, buy a yacht or two instead – they escape the tax".

Stunned by his prescience, I nevertheless see some problems with the peripatetic lifestyle which he espouses. "If I buy up multiple properties of lower value, will that not exacerbate the current housing crisis, hurting the poor more than the rich?" Vince was quick to retort, "the 'mansion tax' was not designed to help the poor. No, it is much more sophisticated than that. It is meant to bash the rich, and publicly".

Puzzled, I wander back home afterwards and decide to return to bed.

Given the misery of my conscious state, I decide not to set my alarm.

Entering the realms of sub-consciousness, however, is no more pleasant. Things aren't quite what they should be. Well some things are – David Cameron, now in his second term as PM, still has his baby face when I turn on the TV. But punch-wielding Jeremy Clarkson is standing by his side as Foreign Secretary. Unsurprisingly, all diplomatic relations with Argentina have ceased. However, the appointment of Clarkson is much to the delight of Cameron's children who had lamented his dismissal from Top Gear. I am less impressed but concede that every government needs its own Prescott.

But who is that boisterous man behind them, pint in hand? Nigel Farage? I quickly turn the TV off and decide to go to my local haunt, the nearby café. It is closed but has a helpful sign on the front: 'Workers needed'. I thought, how strange – there used to be several lovely staff. Oh, they were Polish.

I return home to boil the kettle. 'At least I can afford to do that now', I think to myself. The phone rings: a thoroughly English accent informs me that "your operation has been cancelled due to the deportation of our staff". I ask when it will be rearranged. She quickly refers me to the helpline of some private company, 'Farage & Co'.

I awake. Who knew sleep could be so troublesome? Trying to muster the strength to persevere, I can no longer turn to the image of the ever-suffering Nick Clegg. For he has fallen, trounced in the last election. That's when I know I'm in trouble.

Class and the Cambridge student



Patrick Killoran

Why does the right-wing media make straw men out of Cambridge students?

Cambridge students are a group of interest to the British right-wing media, always portrayed in a specific light. This includes claims that we all share a 'privileged-and-we-like-it' attitude, with no regard for wider society or anything other than ourselves. These media outlets use this caricature of the Cambridge student to tap into the UK's obsession with class, but is it also a part of their widespread advocacy of class warfare?

Recently we saw both The Telegraph and The Daily Mail pick-up articles on the student and social media success Caroline Calloway, whose online product consists of packaging her personal experiences into picture format, often alongside a well-written life commentary. Caroline's selection of personal experiences is definitely atypical for the average student – but typical doesn't sell. In a win-win situation, Caroline was able to self-promote her upcoming book, while The Daily Mail got to peddle their image of Caroline's "fairytale life... of care-free days of dreaming spires, black-tie balls and champagne on the river". The Telegraph dedicates paragraphs to the Pitt Club and Caroline's extravagant anecdotes, such as getting stuck in the palace of Versailles and going hunting.

This depiction is certainly not representative of students' lifestyles, and whereas Caroline uses it to sell a 'quintessentially British' experience, the right-wing media have used it to reveal to a primarily aspirational-middle-class readership, falsely, that we all live in some upper-class bubble. This type of exposure, which has been twisted from its originally

personal and well-intended outlook on Cambridge into a sweeping generalisation, has unjustly damaged our public image.

It is not just the isolated case of Calloway's interviews that has the Cambridge student body in the line of fire. "[Cambridge] Students are toff their heads" reads a headline from The Sun, showing a fairly innocuous 2009 picture of a drunken girl above an article spewing the usual hate given to students after Suicide Sunday. The Daily Mail summed up its determination to attack us in an article regarding the same event, contrasting the drunken antics with the sophistication of Trinity May Ball, all accompanied with photographs of the aforementioned girl and top-hat donning ball-goers. The reader is invited to imagine what our parents will think "when they see the widely distributed photographs" once they've speculated how many of us will "be in the cabinet in ten years' time".

All articles have included anonymous complaints about how our behaviour was "absolutely disgusting", and has usually ruined a family day out. A search through The Telegraph's archives for 'Cambridge University students' reveals articles ranging from the criticism of barely-legal behavior on a Varsity ski trip to an analysis of our sex lives based on a Tab survey. The ski-trip coverage in question was in January 2011, the month the Arab Spring began, and can be found in their World News section under France. These exemplify the coverage we get from right-wing papers for displaying what is best described as normal student

behaviour.

However, it is fair to say that the class distribution among the Cambridge student body is unrepresentative of that of the country as a whole. This, along with the media's blatant silence or patronisation when it comes to student activism, misrepresents us to readers.

The university is working hard to change this: the 2014 UCAS End of Cycle Report states that the proportion of successful applicants from areas within the bottom 40 per cent of higher education participation (predominantly working class areas) is greater at Cambridge than the national average.

The increase in state-educated



WE ARE USED AS STRAW MEN BY RIGHT-WING MEDIA TO REPRESENT THE UPPER CLASS ELITE

students at Cambridge was the greatest of all UK universities between 2012 and 2014, a 5 per cent increase to 63 per cent, making Cambridge an embarrassing but improving fourth-worst in the UK.

These figures, although not ideal, show that the Cambridge University student body is far from the tabloids' depiction of us as a malevolent bunch of elitists.

Meanwhile, real elitists, such as the

Tory and New Labour politicians, who have overseen the greatest rate of increase in inequality out of any rich country since 1975, act unchecked.

Arguably against the interest of the working class, these papers have used such class-laden divisiveness for decades. The Sun and The Daily Mail were important negative influences on public opinion during the 1984 miners' strike, the breaking of which left many working-class communities poverty-stricken.

All mainstream media outlets have taken part in the ongoing witch hunt of benefit frauds, who committed less than 2 per cent of total fraud in the UK in 2012, with significantly more money being lost in accidental, erroneous benefit overpayments.

This campaign has led to a shift in public opinion whereby the poorest working-class people (as well as many disabled people and single parents) are seen as social pariahs and leeches.

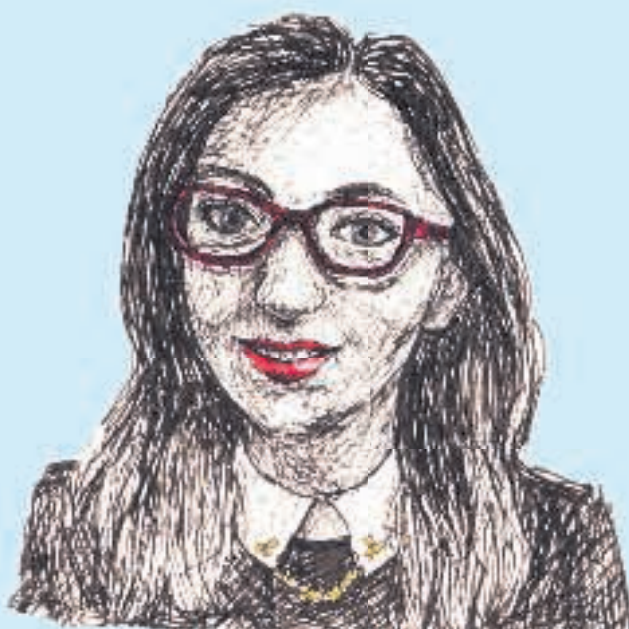
In the television media, shows such as Sky1's 'Harrow: A Very British School', E4's 'Made in Chelsea', Channel 4's 'Benefits Street' and ITV's 'The Jeremy Kyle Show' all perpetuate class-based fascination in their viewers and entrench class differences and stigmatisation.

Class warfare is a strong term, and although Cambridge students aren't exactly under constant scrutiny by the media, we are used as straw men by right-wing media to represent the upper-class elite.

We are woven into the media narrative that still uses one-sided class warfare to appeal to working-class people.

Millie Brierley

How to pretend that voting is exciting



As someone who watches both Question Time and Keeping up with the Kardashians regularly, I have often lamented the lack of opportunity to bring these two realms together, complementary as they so clearly are.

But, a few weeks ago, in an interview which will echo through the ages, David Cameron revealed to Heat magazine that he was the thirteenth cousin of reality star Kim Kardashian-West.

This means a number of things. Firstly, we have finally heard our Prime Minister say the name "Kardashian", and it was as weird as we ever could have imagined. Secondly, some poor sod at Tory HQ was given the job of searching David Cameron's name on Ancestry.com, under instructions to find "someone big". (Him off of Corrie? Nope. That one from that band? Nope. Her with the bottom? Gold.) Thirdly, and most importantly, this means that the Conservatives believe the Kardashians to be the way to the electorate's collective heart.

And, on this point, we happen to agree – although perhaps not for the same reasons. While Cameron was, presumably, intending to show Britons that he is SO down with them, what he actually did was solve a problem that politicians have been scratching their heads over since they last drew swords in parliament. (Probably).

It's no secret that British voters are, as a whole, a tad disenfranchised. The last General Election, in 2010, saw voter participation at

65.1 per cent. A UK turnout of 35.4 per cent for the 2014 European Parliament elections put the number of voters below the viewer ratings of some X Factor finals.

If people would generally prefer to watch fancy karaoke than have a say on matters which impact upon their lives, something must be done. And perhaps we should be looking to Simon Cowell for inspiration. Or Ant and Dec. Or the entire E! Network. If reality TV is so able to draw in the nation, then perhaps it could also teach politics – which, for its part, seems to have a knack for repelling the nation – a lesson or two.

So, as we enter the final fortnight of campaigning, I want to see the candidates channelling Cameron's newly-discovered relation with some good old-fashioned pandering to the people. How much more exciting would that seven-way leaders' debate have been, if presented by Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman, and featuring glittery Lycra and cheeky Charlestons. Strictly Come Politics? I'd watch that.

And then there's ITV's new show, Ninja Warrior UK. If we're happy to judge a prospective leader on his ability to eat a bacon sandwich with grace (the only person capable of which may be the PM's thirteenth cousin herself), then I don't see why we can't just give the candidates helmets, and ask them to swing from rope nets over a pool of freezing water. Finish the course – win a seat. Simple.

Local hustings could go a bit

Britain's Got Talent, with spectators using buzzers to make any displeasure known. Candidates would declare, with a tear in their eye, "This means the world," before being sent home by the buzzer-happy electorate.

Or, stick them in a house and watch things get ugly, Big Brother-style. Voting would be by text, with a long process of emotional evictions. Miliband would be thrown by the kitchen. (Only one?!) Cameron and Clegg would buckle under the pressure and have it out in the smoking area. TV gold.

While I'd like to keep TOWIE's Amy Childs as far from Question Time as possible – and I am (mostly) not suggesting forcing ballroom dancing on the various party leaders (Farage in a sparkly leotard is something nobody wants to see) – with turnouts as low as they are (particularly among youth), it is clear that politicians are failing to make the Election exciting. And this is a failure indeed.

So, until this stops being the case, we must be prepared to do it ourselves – to create our own excitement around poll day. If politics seems dull, we have to tell ourselves that it's interesting, just long enough to put our cross in the box. If parliament looks monotonous and bland, we're simply going to have to pretend otherwise for now. Until someone can truly convince Britain that voting is exciting, we're all just going to have to fake it.

And if that means imagining Nicola Sturgeon eating a witchetty grub in the jungle, then so be it.



Don't dismiss Brand – he's with us



Sriya Varadharajan

Criticism of Russell Brand is often more elitist than sincere

Russell Brand has always courted controversy. From his short-lived days as an MTV presenter a good 15 years ago and his infamous encounter with Andrew Sachs' answering machine in 2008 to his run-ins with paparazzi, he has been a favourite of the tabloid press for decades and one of the celebrities that respected middle-aged authority figures first point to when they're looking to explain exactly what's wrong with the youth of today.

For the last few years though, as I'm sure almost everyone knows, his chosen playground has been politics. Or, as I suspect he might put it, given his disenchantment with the politics of politics, justice – revolution, even. Revolution is, after all, the title of his most recent book, which I must confess I've not read. I saw it for the first time on sale at Urban Outfitters, and assumed rather snobbishly and hypocritically that a book sat on a shelf next to a stapler shaped like a bunny in a shop which has faced criticism for selling clothes that trivialise depression, school shootings and the Holocaust, could not really on a number of levels be, as the blurb suggests, "the beginning of a conversation that will change the world".

My initial cynical reaction to seeing a book entitled 'Revolution' in a major chain shop was prompted by the idea that any truly subversive ideas it presented would surely be

contradicted by its capitalistic and materialistic surroundings. More so when these surroundings have been suggested to profit from the commodification of ableism, the gun industry and anti-Semitism. When I put it that way, my reaction seems fair enough. But this reaction of mine is, I think, one that is illustrative of and, crucially, influenced by one of the major criticisms levelled at Brand: that he is a hypocritical sell-out, claiming to preach social uprising while sat firmly and comfortably on the throne of \$15 million that is estimated to be his net worth.

This, again, is fair enough. But the problem I have with this criticism is that too often it comes from people who are themselves in no position to throw stones: those with a fair amount of money, influence and power, who do not agree with what Brand says and seek to sway others to their points of view. Not to create a caricature villain of the establishment right-wing sort – sometimes I don't have to, but that's beside the point – the fact remains that the ideas Brand preaches often directly attack their privileges and priorities. So while many of them deride him for being naive and immature, for his contentious past and for the long words he uses, some discredit him for hypocrisy from a falsely objective standpoint, failing to take into account the glass houses they're standing in.

And this is what I'm wary of: the claim that Russell Brand is attention-seeking, commercialised and hypocritical is influenced strongly by those who are most at danger of being destabilised by him. Not, necessarily, that I think he has that power, because the real danger of this claim is not to Russell Brand. It's to those he represents – because whether we like it or not, he has somehow become one of the millennial generation's foremost representatives. We are so often accused of naivety, of immaturity, of bad behaviour and of throwing around big words and big ideas we don't fully understand – and, yes, of materialism and hypocrisy when we suggest that the world could, perhaps, be better than it is now. This, of course, is a moot point – in a consumerist world, we cannot be blamed for being consumerist as well.

So when we criticise Russell Brand, we have to think about where exactly these criticisms are coming from, and who is voicing them. It's worth saying, here, that I personally don't support him wholeheartedly. His articles, otherwise interesting and enjoyable, often feature throwaway sexist remarks which fundamentally throw a spanner in the works for his plans for revolution by alienating half the people he is intending to support. I don't believe that abstaining from voting is a good idea. I think many activists have voiced his ideas before,

including those who don't have the privileges he has and so have not been heard.

I empathise with his call for societal change, but I think that too many people are in too fragile a position for that to go well for anyone apart from those who are already stable, making it no change at all. I also don't really know what practical solutions he's offering, though that might be unfair of me to say. Perhaps he elaborates in his book.

But I'm saying all of this from a very different viewpoint to the white, straight, middle-aged and middle-class men who tend to write disapproving articles about him in newspapers from the Mail to the Guardian. I know that broadly all of us share a sense of disenchantment with the world as it is now, along with most of the people in our generation. I also have sympathy for the classist backlash he's faced, including, but by no means limited to, those who ridicule his vocabulary.

Do I think that Russell Brand is starting a conversation that will change the world? No, not even slightly. But I do know that if the revolution he seeks does come, although I do not think he will or should lead it and I hope he's gracious enough to know that too, he and I and most of the people I care about will be on the same side. And hopefully, one day, we'll all see that better world.



Vulture

CULTURE • FEATURES • FASHION • THEATRE • REVIEWS

Modern Heroism

Lucrezia Baldo on Printmaking and the legacy of Napoleon Bonaparte

Modern Heroism marks the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. Its purpose is to tell the story of that period not by creating another biography of Napoleon, but rather by looking at it from the point of view of emergent print culture. The series of lithographs on show illustrate how the concept and perception of the figure of the hero was transformed at the beginning of the 19th century.

Lithography, a printmaking technique invented in 1796 by German author and actor Alois Senefelder as a cheap method of publishing theatrical works, which emerged at the same time as other changes brought about by political turmoil and industrialisation. Curator of the exhibition, Amy Marquis, notes that "lithography was a remarkably fast printmaking technique". The immediacy with which the press could respond to events made it the perfect medium to react to social and political issues.

Artists who supported Napoleon's regime immediately adopted this method to glorify the Emperor's military exploits. Political in nature, these prints demonstrate nostalgia for a past age and its conception of the 'hero'. The exhibition

is displayed to offer a certain progression; from formidable historical battle scenes, such as Gérard's 'Battle at the Milvian Bridge', we pass to more poignant scenes that emphasise the contrast between the glorious past and the decay of post-Napoleonic France, as in Charlet's 'Support me Chatillon... I am about to faint!'. The work of artists such as Vernet, Charlet and Raffet appealed to the now unemployed soldiers of the Napoleonic army as much as to the educated middle class. They contributed to create Napoleon's legacy and they still influence much of the conversation about him today.

Yet, what is really fascinating about the exhibition is how well it conveys the change in attitude towards the notion of hero in the post-Napoleonic period. This is the time when writers such as Balzac and Hugo were shifting the focus of literature towards a new heroic figure, a much more humble one. In his 'On the heroism of modern life' in 1846, Baudelaire wrote: "The majority of artists who have attacked modern life have contented themselves with public and official subjects, with our victories and our political heroism... However, there are private subjects which are much more heroic than these. There are such things as modern beauty and modern heroism. The life of our city is rich in poetic and marvellous subjects."

The same transformation can be perceived in lithography. Prints of valorous soldiers are quickly replaced by political and social critique.

This gives birth to beautiful prints such as Auguste Raffet's 'Freedom or death!', which visually references Delacroix's famous 'Liberty Leading the People'. It commemorates the July Revolution of 1830, during which Parisian citizens overthrew the Bourbon regime. Another highlight of the exhibition is its collection of satirical caricatures.

With his prints, Honoré Daumier, and his publisher Charles Philipon, directly challenged the corrupt and blundering government of Louis-Philippe I and the restrictions imposed on the freedom of expression. At the time, caricatures were considered outside the 'serious' arts and they were seen as dangerous by the regime. Censorship represented a great issue for contemporary artists, who often faced incarceration and fines.

Two lithographs that will certainly catch your attention are Daumier's 'Damn! Those boots are happier than their master! They drink!', and Desperet's 'Attack of Detached Forts by the 1st Regiment of Press Gunners'. These caricatures are amusingly provocative, and they illustrate the poverty and injustice of post-Napoleonic France.

The latter depicts an inventive pear-shaped fort with a face attacked by the French press.

Philipon, who had invented the caricature of the King as a pear, was imprisoned for five months for this offence. The modern 'heroes' were now the poor in their daily struggle for survival and the intellectuals who, holding their pens tight in their hands, protected the precious right to freedom of expression.

This exhibition of artistically beautiful lithographs helps us to understand our modern society and the impact that the press has on us in shaping our notion of heroes, and the events that form them. It also highlights the importance of freedom of expression in France and the rest of the world, urging us not to ignore attacks on this right. Given recent events in Paris, and the continued censorship of media in countries all over the world, this lesson remains painfully necessary.

The exhibition is open now at the Fitzwilliam Museum and runs until 28th June 2015

Theatre



Start off the term with some intrigue and 'explosive political farce' with *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (7pm, Tues 28th April - Sat 2nd May 2015, Corpus Playroom).

If you want to feed your 'election fever', then splash out on some professional theatre with party political comedy drama *The Absence of War* (7.45pm, Tues 28th April - Sat 2nd May, Cambridge Arts Theatre).

Events



Feel fit and philanthropic by heading along to the charity 'zumbathon' in Cambridge to raise funds for and awareness about the incredible work of Hope for Justice, a UK-based charity that combats human trafficking (10am-1:30pm, Sat 25th April, St Pauls, Hills Road). Registration is £10 and snacks and drinks will be provided.

Music



As ever, this week musical highlights can be found at The Corn Exchange.

Cambridge has the fortune of hosting indie legends Belle & Sebastian (Thur 7th May). The event is hotly anticipated, however, there still are a few tickets left; get yours now!

Film



Easter term marks the beginning of BLOCKBUSTER season. Expect to O.D. on superhero movies and Hollywood reboots, like *The Avengers: Age of Ultron* opening in cinemas 1st May, *Mad Max: Fury Road* (15th May) and *Jurassic World* (12th June).

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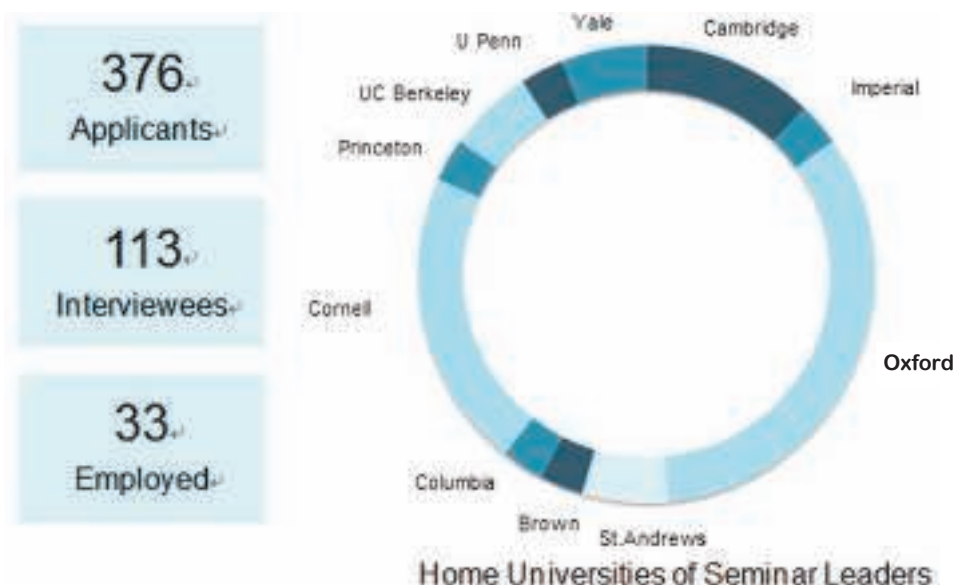
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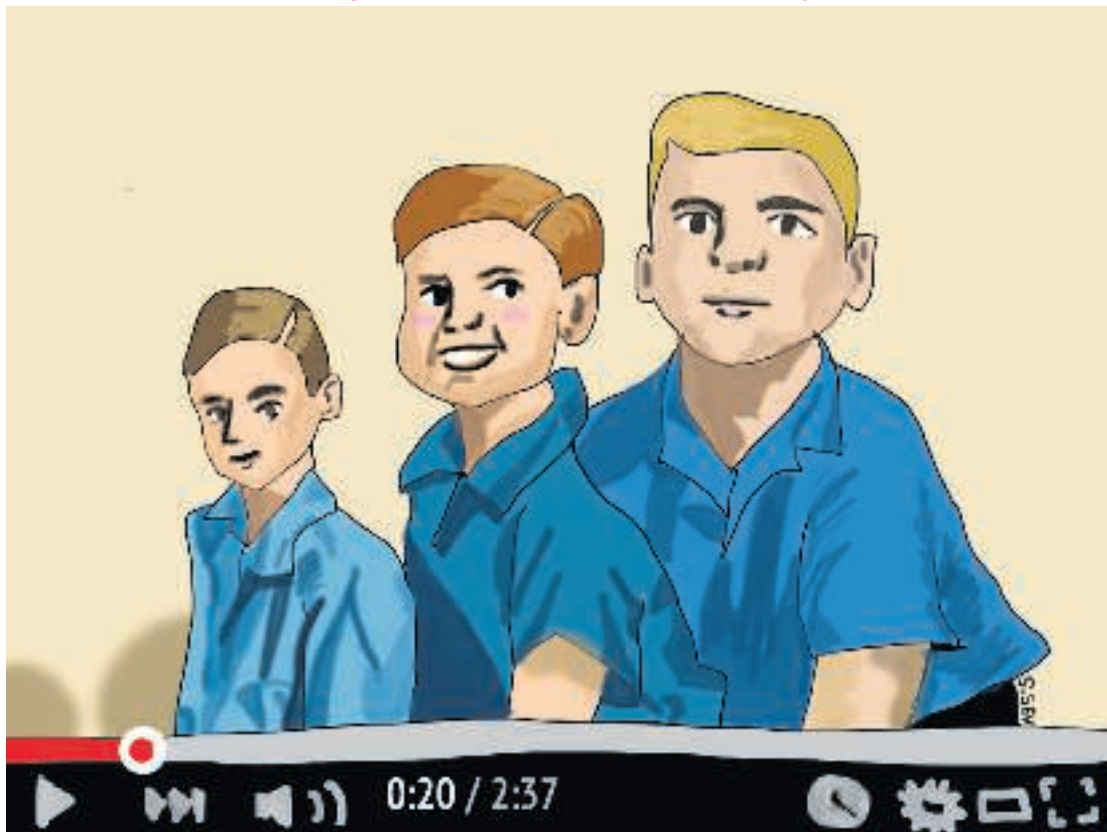
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SPOILER ! ALERT

Trailers are ruining our cinema experience, says Will Roberts



A lecturer reminded me of something very important the other week: you only get to read a text for the first time once – so relish it. Clearly this applies to all art forms: the first time you listen to a song, the first time you see a play, the first time you read a book; these are all special experiences should that, song, play or book, become something you cherish for the rest of your life. Yet, while the same can be said to an extent about film, our current ‘trailer culture’ is rapidly changing that. Ever since YouTube was created, movie studios have been churning out trailers, teasers and behind the scene videos like sausage meat, allowing viewers to know far more than they should before they see a film for the first time. Admittedly this allows you to decide how to spend your £8 when you go to the cinema, but it also permits over-keen fans to binge on film trailers, analysing each tiny detail that they may contain until they memorise each frame and word of dialogue, often causing them to form an opinion on a film they haven’t even seen yet. I am by no means saying I am exempt from this binging culture. Being disappointed by David O. Russell’s *Silver Linings Playbook*, despite having loved and obsessed over the trailer, taught me that trailer binging is a dangerous activity. Admittedly I massively preferred the film after a second viewing, but I still hold to this day that the film, which struck a chord with many viewers, would have had a greater impression on me had I not owned a laptop at the time.

Yet it’s not just trailer-bingers that are ruining the cinematic experience for themselves; more often than not it is trailer-editors that are ruining it for everyone else. One of the first examples of this was *Leap Year*, whose trailer contained 95 per cent of the plot, bar the ending, which any person with a couple of brain cells could guess without trying. While this was somewhat of an anomaly at the time, it’s become more and more common, and not just with regards to plot: comedy trailers are showing all the best gags, action films showing all their exciting pieces, horrors all the biggest scares and dramas all the punchiest lines. It’s one thing enticing audiences to see

your film; it’s another to completely ruin it for them. And what’s so interesting about this problem is that it’s a purely cinematic one. Of course books have blurbs, plays have reviews and albums have pre-released singles, all of which may give you a taste of the overall piece, yet in these art forms there seems to be no equivalent so damaging as the modern trailer. Once more, as this problem is escalating, it’s getting harder to avoid. If you go to the cinema regularly, you have walk out of the cinema and come back in after the trailers have finished if you want to avoid the danger of an anticipated film being ruined.

So how do we solve this nagging problem? The first solution is to edit trailers carefully; it’s extremely hard to create an effective trailer that doesn’t give too much away, but there are ways to do it. A good example of this is the trailer for *The Master*, whose director Paul Thomas Anderson crafted it by using scenes that didn’t make the final cut, a frankly genius move that’s seeping into more trailers. Admittedly *The Master* is catered more towards an art-house market, but a well-made trailer can still be made for the mainstream. Just look at the trailer for *Dark Knight Rises*; it sets up the plot, shows us the main characters and some action set pieces, yet look closely and you can see that almost no footage from the last hour of the film is used, allowing audiences to experience it fresh in the cinema. Perhaps an embargo on using footage from the last 30 minutes of a film would better cater to trailers that demand more than the ambiguous.

The other option, however, is for viewers themselves to go cold turkey and restrict themselves from viewing any trailers. I tried to do this last year, and although it was tempting to give in, it was often extremely rewarding. Admittedly this won’t work for everyone; some people like to know what they’re seeing before they hand over their money and that’s more than understandable. But if you’re like me, and will happily see anything, I dare you to go to a cinema, pick a film with decent reviews and watch it. Who knows what might happen.



Rhiannon Shaw on the much-appreciated optimism of Netflix’s new funny woman

I think of some of my favourite comedies and find that a pattern emerges. At certain times in my life, I’ve needed funny women. Ahead of this long term, I want to come home to the female characters that remind me that I am not just a sleep-deprived husk with a laundry bag full of regrets – Tina Fey’s Liz Lemon, Tumblr’s vocalising force for food and TV enthusiasts the world over; Tamsin Greig’s Fran Katzenjammer, the snarky best friend you always wanted, ever appearing out of a plume of smoke and wine; and, for the nostalgia trip, Raven Symone, wise, feisty and always up for a laugh.

Which is probably why I have been telling anyone who will listen to watch *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* on Netflix. Starring Ellie Kemper, the sleeper star of *The US Office*, it’s a show about women created by a woman. Well, co-created with Robert Carlock, but Fey’s marker is one which it is impossible to miss. Anyone who’s watched *30 Rock* will be familiar with her perfect blend of biting satire and pure ridiculousness, as well as her ability to write unique and just plain enjoyable characters. Meanwhile, Kemper is unstoppable as Kimmy, a woman with a middle school-education, starting from scratch. With a mixture of determination and naivety, she takes on the adult world of smartphones, spin-classes and dick pics with ‘unbreakable’ optimism.

The premise is an unusual one – after being imprisoned in a bunker for 15 years, Kimmy and three other women adapt to a world that pony-tailed cult leader Jon Hamm had brainwashed them into believing no longer existed. As the episodes play out, a theme is developed: it’s sometimes implicit, in the way Manhattan housewife Jacqueline Voorhees pines for her globetrotting husband, and sometimes painfully explicit, as when it is revealed that the cult-leader keeps the ‘Mole Women’, the bunker-dwellers, in line by repeatedly reminding them that they are ‘garbage’.

Fey is at her most inflamed and impassioned, behind all the silliness, imploring her female audience to reject any dominating and manipulative figure that seeks to run their life for them. Kimmy’s first instinct when she leaves the bunker? Buy some light-up Sketchers. Why? Because why the H-E-C-K not?

“Females are strong as hell”, the stand-out line from the jarring, Youtube-remix theme song, is subtly stitched into the writing of every female character. From Xanthippe, the Emoji-addict daughter who’d rather be bird-watching than underage drinking, to Cindy, Kimmy’s best friend in the bunker who buys a sports car and becomes manager of a pet store, because she “likes dogs”. It’s all a lot of fun and, as a result of the quick-witted writing and the seedy setting of a not-so-fairytale New York, never becomes sickly-sweet.

With a cast of old and new faces, including cameos from *Mad Men*’s Kiernan Shipka and *Breaking Bad*’s Dean Norris, it’s the kind of mainstream American comedy that stands out in a wasteland of clichéd sitcoms like *Big Bang Theory* and *Two and A Half Men*. Watch out for Titus Burgess, playing the Broadway-wannabe Titus Andromedon (whose auditioned for *The Lion King* 20 times in 15 years) – with lines like “But I’ve already done something today”, he’s going to be your spirit animal as exam term comes into full swing.

Episodes are only half an hour long, so you can binge-watch the whole first season without feeling too guilty, or have some self restraint and watch throughout the term. Watch it with your friends, watch it with your family – get out of your bunker of revision and remember just how fun and hopeful life on the outside can be.



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As an increasing number of the university's graduates find work in the corporate sector, Varsity investigates the tensions fostered by the expensive corporate recruitment strategies which subsidise so much of student life

Leo Sands

"I t is kind of the expected thing that an intelligent Oxbridge graduate will go for grad recruitment schemes and work for one of these companies." At least this is how one finalist puts it as he guides me through the thinking behind his latest application for a vacation scheme in the City. The statistics reflect this; last year the university's undergraduate courses collectively produced twice as many investment bankers and management consultants as they did teachers. If the tally is extended to include MPhil and PhD graduates, we managed to churn out an impressive 357 investment bankers and management consultants in 2014.

The graduate orientation towards the corporate world can feel so entrenched that it might seem like an inevitable part of Cambridge life, but it hasn't always been like this. Forty years ago, the Careers Service was reporting more than four-times as many Cambridge graduates going into school teaching (202) as into investment banking (43), and 'management consultancy' did not yet even exist as a category. What's happened?

Make no mistake, this shift in graduate employment destinations is not the result of some happy, anomalous accident. On a national level, the continual stretching of wage scales since the 1980s has meant that those on the wealthier half of the income spectrum need to earn more to live at the same standard. Forty years ago, you could graduate from Cambridge, become a secondary school teacher and support yourself comfortably in central London. Today, if you don't have access to an offshore family trust fund, a comfortable, financially independent life in the nation's capital immediately after graduating effectively requires you to be on a graduate recruitment scheme, more often than not a corporate one. What's more, this year's graduate cohort will be the first to leave university shackled with at least £27,000 of debt. The pressure to earn big and to earn quick has never been higher than it is set to be for those graduating in a few months, an appetite that only one sector of the economy can fill.

The historical slide into the corporate sector is greased, in Cambridge's case, by enormous sums of money poured into student societies by hopeful graduate recruiters. Excluding the Union, the five student societies and campaigns I spoke to collected more than £9,500 in corporate sponsorship over the last year alone. Taking into account the hundreds of student societies operating at the university, and the longevity of some of the sponsorship contracts they rely on, this must be just a fraction of the total. These figures are unaffordable extravagances to almost all types of employers. And so it is into the investment banks, management consultancies and Magic Circle law firms which the most aggressive and successful recruitment strategies are herding many of Cambridge's most ambitious graduates.

They sponsor the Union, they subsidise the autonomous campaigns meant to represent us, they buy us our sports stash, they give student journalists a platform, and they even give money to the Careers Service. And yet relatively little attention has been given to the emerged model of

corporately subsidised student life. Are they donations, or commercial transactions like any other? And if so, what exactly is expected in return?

Unsurprisingly, many of these societies are unwilling to talk frankly to the student press about their experiences with corporate sponsors. At the Cambridge Union, responsibility for managing relations with substantial sponsors falls into the hands of the Vice President, one of the society's few annual positions. "Much of what I do is covered by confidentiality agreements," Nick Wright (VP Lent 2014-15) emailed me when I asked to talk with him. "As a result, it would be inappropriate for me to give media interviews in relation to it." His message was embedded with a link to

"I HAVEN'T SUFFERED ANY SENSE OF BEING PUT UNDER PRESSURE TO DELIVER BOUND AND GAGGED STUDENTS...TO A PARTICULAR ORGANISATION BECAUSE THEY'D JUST WRITTEN A CHEQUE FOR 'X' MILLION QUID TO THE UNIVERSITY"

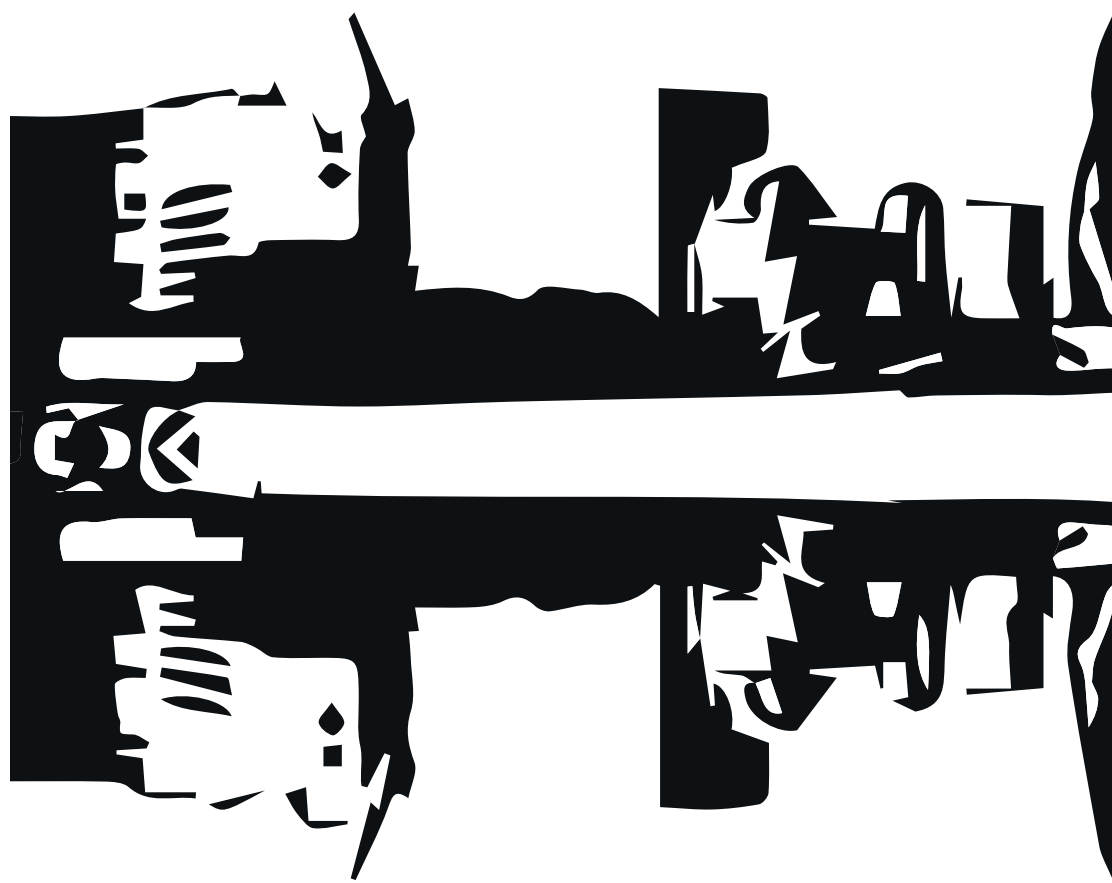
Deloitte's graduate recruitment webpage. Maybe Deloitte's website will be more helpful in explaining the relationship? Instead, I am met with some impressively vague corporate lingo: "We support others to make progress where it matters most whilst offering exciting opportunities for our people and clients to experience who we are in different ways."

One member of the Union's Lent Term Full Committee was more frank. "The trend towards larger student organisations depending more on corporate sponsorship is, on the whole, regrettable."

"Everyone knows that we've had debates where members have been turned away or sent to the gallery because of seats reserved by them [corporate sponsors]... or that they are anally retentive with respect to banners or email signatures that don't feature the Deloitte logo in the right proportion, in the right size, in the right place." What about the Union's refusal to openly discuss the details of its arrangement with its sponsors? "The corporate relationship breeds a kind of sycophantic hackery, some people will be in on the relationship and declare that some things are beyond discussion... naturally this leads to hierarchy and non-disclosure agreements."

Another student who has been heavily involved in the Union for over a year referred to a specific incident of tension between the Union and its exclusive sponsors that took place around half a year ago.

"Six months ago, there was a big thing where Deloitte threatened to pull out [of the sponsorship deal] unless the Union pulled their socks up and started sticking to their agreement." The tension is alleged to have boiled down to how much brand exposure the sponsor would receive in return for their donation. "Previous teams hadn't been putting enough Deloitte logos in places."



The student recalled that "for the invitations to speakers, for instance, they were supposed to have a Deloitte logo on it, and they hadn't been putting that on."

Responding to these allegations, the Union gave Varsity the following statement: "The Union is committed to keeping membership prices down, and sponsorship is a vital part of this effort. We are grateful for the support of all our sponsors."

Deloitte did not respond to Varsity's request for comment.

Not all sponsorship deals, however, are so wrought with tension. Jonathan Spittles, former Chair of CUSU LGBT+, had "only good things to say about sponsors, and bad about CUSU, at least as far as financing goes". It seemed slightly comic to me that the operating costs of a CUSU autonomous campaign, a liberation movement, were partly subsidised by Boston Consulting Group and, making a second appearance, the auditors Deloitte.

The £1,000 yielded annually through this contract makes up one-third of the campaign's total budget. Jonathan has a more logical explanation for the funding arrangements, and blames CUSU. "The extra sponsor funding is useful as we are not supposed to spend CUSU money on alcohol, which can be a problem for our events such as the garden party and Rainbow Ball."

"THEY ARE ANALLY RETENTIVE WITH RESPECT TO BANNERS OR EMAIL SIGNATURES THAT DON'T FEATURE THE DELOITTE LOGO IN THE RIGHT PROPORTION, IN THE RIGHT SIZE"

"The extra money is useful for printing costs associated with the magazine," he also tells me. Although BCG has been sponsoring the campaign for a while now, "before Deloitte, we were sponsored by KPMG".

A familiar chronology slowly emerges; contracts run into trouble as student societies are accused of not offering the sponsor enough brand exposure. "I believe many saw KPMG as too demanding, wanting to brand too many parts of the campaign."

It goes without saying that these funding

agreements are more than just altruistic donations. They usually take the form of legal contracts, and whether or not it goes unsaid something is expected in return. More specifically, that something is exposure to you, the Cambridge student who is unsure how to spend the 80,000 hours of their life that they will, on average, devote to working. The chance to capitalise on that dangerous mix of financial ambition in an envi-

1/3

Of CUSU LGBT+'s income comes from corporate sponsorship

ronment of relative economic uncertainty is one that some are willing to pay handsomely for.

How much? For the chance to expose your company's brand to members and supporters of the rugby club of one larger college, the going rate is £2,000 a year. The club's former captain explained to me how the exclusive sponsorship deal had been secured after he had promised one major banking group "unrivalled exposure to individuals both determined on the field and highly achieving off it".

"They required a certain number of brand names on the clothing, and they also requested to send an email out to the rugby mailing list. It familiarised our team members, and our large supporting crowd, with the brand, and in the past our sponsors have come to our annual dinner and done a little spiel there."

Was £2,000 worth it? "Through our scheme, there was definitely one person who got an internship out of it through the contacts that were developed, and I think he has now got a job in financial services lined up for when he graduates."

It is not uncommon for these sponsorship deals to result in an employment contract between the corporate recruiter and a senior figure within the society. After graduating last year, Alex* was recruited by the firm that had exclusively sponsored the student society he ran in his final year. The society's operational costs are still met entirely by this firm's sponsorship, and as such the names of both the society and the firm have been withheld to protect the society's sole source of income. "When I was running a society, I always



thought that these companies were kind of suckers, because no one actually paid any attention to the sponsors; we were just taking their money.”

In Alex’s case, the sponsor ended up signing him on as a consultant analyst: in all likelihood precisely the return the sponsors were hoping for. But what about Alex? Does he enjoy consultancy? “Enjoy might be a strong term. I like the people there...broadly speaking. The work isn’t fascinating, but I didn’t expect it to be fascinating. It met my requirements, but it is not something that I enjoyed and would see myself doing in the long-term.” He currently has plans to leave the firm shortly, returning to education to do an MPhil.

£85,000

Money donated to the Careers’ Service last year from 124, mostly corporate, employers

Alex is what Gordon Chesterman, the Director of the University’s Careers Service, would call “a refugee from the city”. How often do they come to the Service for advice? “We probably get one a fortnight coming in.” It’s usually a case along the lines of “I’ve had enough, I’ve worked six of the last seven weekends, I’ve got half a million quid in the bank, I want a life, I want to become a primary school teacher.”

At its helm for the past thirteen years, and before that working at one point as a graduate recruiter for PricewaterhouseCoopers, Chesterman understands the job anxiety of those soon to graduate. He is proud of the Careers Service’s independence, unlike commercial agencies. “We are funded predominantly by the university to serve the students’ best interests.

“I haven’t suffered any sense of being put under pressure to deliver bound and gagged students, oven-ready, shrink-wrapped to a particular organisation because they’d just written a cheque for ‘x’ million quid to the university,” he jokes.

A sizeable portion of the Service’s funding, however, does not come from the university’s purse. Its ‘Supporters Club’, founded in 1987, listed 124 sponsors on the back page of its Annual Report last year. This year, they collectively donated around £85,000 to the Service. Almost all

are management consultancies, wealth management firms, investment banks or corporate law firms. In return for supporting the Careers Service with donations, the members receive certain benefits, including two weeks’ priority booking for Careers Service events and access to various internal outlook reports and statistics on graduate directions and destinations.

The Careers Service then uses this money to subsidise programmes geared towards less lucrative sectors of the economy. “I behave very much as Robin Hood would and use the surplus that the students want to attend for career interest where there is just no potential for making money.” Last year, for instance, stalls at the annual Consultancy Event, Banking & Finance Event, and Solicitors Event were priced at £1070, whereas one at the ‘Work to Change the World’ Event was only £100. Chesterman is pleased with his efforts translating disproportionate demand from the corporate sector into a diverse programme of career options, suggesting to me that “with this income stream, there are a lot of students who probably owe their future job to the transfer of money under the Robin Hood banner”.

The Careers Service plays a tricky role in balancing the interests of students on the one hand with the demands of an unregulated job market on the other. In a free economy, it will always be the most lucrative sectors which can afford to invest the most on recruiting the best graduates. In one as deregulated as ours, the pay scales offered by the corporate sector shadow other occupational groups so dramatically in 2015 that if the question is one of money there is little, if any, competition. Chesterman argues that through the Careers Service he is able to harness these market forces into the interests of Cambridge students, using them to maintain a diverse programme of career events to suit many different tastes and interests.

Outside of the institutionalised setting of a university department, however, these forces become trickier to control. Chesterman tells me stories of more manipulative behaviour by firms at recruitment dinners in the “I was going to use the word aggressive, but I’ll use the word assertive” career sectors like finance, fund management, and asset management. Quite regularly students come to the Careers Service to complain that they’d been told “accept this offer by tomorrow, and you’ll get an extra couple of thousand” or “if you don’t accept this offer by next Wednesday, it

is withdrawn”.

This behaviour is innocent, however, in comparison to the predatory sexual advances routinely made towards female students at networking dinners. One law student described an unwelcome sexual advance at a black tie networking event for barristers, the first that she had attended. The practicing barrister, who “I guess would be in his thirties”, sat next to her, and lingered around as the night went on.

“As dinner drew to a close, and other guests began to leave, he remained seated and took a bottle of port, which he insisted we share. I wondered if this was the normal routine at networking events. By the time the waiters ushered us out, I expected him to call a cab and leave. However, he walked with me out of the college, and asked if I

“THE ENTIRE EVENT SEEMED TAINTED. WERE ALL BARRISTERS SLEAZY AND OPPORTUNISTIC, ATTENDING THESE EVENTS TO TARGET YOUNG STUDENTS?”

wanted to carry the conversation at a nearby bar, ‘drinks on him.”

“I felt compromised and vulnerable, so politely declined and half ran back to my own college.” Reflecting on the night later, “The man had known I was a fresher, yet had definitely hit on me. The entire event seemed tainted. Were all barristers sleazy and opportunistic, attending these events to target young students?”

Stories of fully developed romantic involvements between a student and potential employer, developed out of one of these networking events, are not uncommon. “A friend of mine had an extended sexual relationship with someone she met at a law recruitment dinner,” another law student tells me. In her own experience at these events, “the old guys are quite pervy and creepy, complimenting you in weird ways, making you feel a bit uncomfortable.”

“That’s why I don’t go to the dinners.”

It isn’t hard to understand the pressure to respond positively to a sexual advance made at one of these events, particularly if you are new to the networking environment.

“Older men have taken these opportunities to

flirt with undergraduate students when they are well aware of how keen these students are to gain internships at their law firms.”

Is this exploitative behaviour limited to experiences at sleazy dinners? Or is there something inherently exploitative in pouring so much corporate money into the more general, everyday runnings of university life and student culture? There is no question that it is done with a particular intention – namely one of long-term economic gain. The answer, I guess, comes down to your assessment of its implications. Is there anything wrong in itself with the corporatisation of the employment destinations of Cambridge graduates? The answer to that might just depend on whether or not you’ve secured a vac scheme yet.

**Name has been changed*

In Sum:

- Recruiters willing to pay as much as £2,000 for brand exposure on kit of one college sports club.
- Students feel uncomfortable going to corporate law networking dinners because of frequency of unwelcome sexual advances.
- Deloitte alleged to have threatened to pull out of deal with the Union six months ago after their logo wasn’t displayed prominently enough.



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A Tricky Business

The line-up of plays for this term is almost entirely bereft of original student writing. Of course, sketch shows, including the Footlights Spring Revue, which concluded last term, are exceptions. Outside of this category, and especially outside of comedy, Cambridge theatre has seen the performance of relatively few original student plays. I suspect there are two main reasons for this. The first is time, and too little of it. The second is that student plays must hold their ground against the works of such respected names as Shakespeare, John Ford, Arthur Miller and David Hare, to name a few whose plays were performed last term. Alongside Jacobean masterpieces and modern classics, most juvenilia may seem doomed to mediocrity.

Usually, there are very few applications for student-written shows in the more high-profile performance slots. After that, many of the remaining applications for student-written

shows are rejected by the ADC selection committee. This sort of quality check is justified; the novelty of new theatre ought not to be sufficient grounds for its inclusion ahead of shows that directors, actors and audiences might get more out of. But great plays have been written by Cambridge students. One famous example is Stephen Fry's *Latin!* or *Tobacco and Boys*, which he wrote in his final year at Cambridge, in 1979. The play premiered at the Corpus Playroom and went on to win the Edinburgh Fringe First prize in 1980.

This year, Jamie Fenton's 'tragic-farce' *Picasso Stole the Mona Lisa* and Jamie Rycroft's dark comedy *Midnight Café* are two of the Cambridge shows which have been awarded funding to go to the Fringe. Last term, there were also some non-comedic offerings from Cambridge students, such as Nathan Miller's spy thriller *We'll Meet Again*, but, as a rule, such shows tend to be few and far between.

It may be that comedy is easier for students to write. For a start, sketches are short, and they do not need to transition seamlessly from one to another to amuse. Comedy tends to often represent a distortion or exaggeration of some aspect of real life experience.

For tragedy to be successful, by contrast, it must be entirely credible. An audience may laugh at something beyond the realms of credibility, but they may only empathise with characters whose experience appear rooted in reality. So too, an audience may laugh at a character they've only just met, but they tend only to sympathise with characters developed over a period of time. Of course, writing successful comedy offers its own challenges, but the cohesion and credibility required of tragedy arguably makes it more difficult to write in the frenetic, disjointed student lifestyle that Cambridge appears to proscribe.

In any case, a solution to the void of original student theatre seems desirable, not only to feed an appetite for novelty, but also to create an environment in which would-be playwrights can further hone their skills. Awards such as the Harry Porter Prize – set up by the Footlights in 2003 for a one hour comic play – are available. The lesser-known Other Prize, co-ordinated at Churchill and adjudicated by the Royal Shakespeare Company, offers a £500 prize for an original play of any genre. Other, similar means of encouragement would be welcome.

There is, however, a third obstacle facing would-be student playwrights, and that is proximity to the people who, in many cases, would form the main inspiration for characters. Nowadays, it seems that writers are forever encouraged to write about what they know and, by implication, who they know. But in Cambridge, where inspiration and audience

inevitably overlap, this advice may be dangerous. Jack Kerouac, who developed his 'spontaneous prose' method while writing *On the Road*, was a master of writing from reality. After struggling for years to invent convincing characters and events, he determined at last, "I'm going to forget all that horseshit. I'm just going to write it as it happened." In this spirit, Kerouac completed the first manuscript of *On the Road* in less than a month. The final draft was, in many ways, a simple cipher; he replaced real names with fictional ones, but many of his characters' diagnostic features remained intact.

But that's not so easy to get away with in Cambridge. Fiction explores human vulnerabilities, weaknesses, mistakes and conflicts, so noses might be put out of joint if a playwright's friends (or acquaintances, or enemies) recognise themselves in a scenario that isn't entirely complimentary. On top of that, I for one don't feel sufficiently equipped with experiences to write a gripping narrative based solely on real life; as it stands, my life consists of a lot of beginnings and a few middles, but not very many ends, and I have found that, for me, invention is not just advisable, but necessary.

The way to overcome the obstacles of original theatre in Cambridge and, perhaps – if I might be so bold as to suggest – the heart of good writing, is to write convincingly about what you don't know. Or, at the very least, to weave what you do and don't know into a compelling melange (this is, after all, what I attempt every week in supervision essays). So, if you might be interested in writing a play, set aside the time and embrace the unknown, and if the powers that be could find more ways to encourage and reward original student writing, that would be great too.

Bret Cameron

MODERNISING CLASSICS

Classic plays in a modern setting can make a real statement, argues Joe Spence

Much as I appreciate the ex-Cantabrigian Rupert Christiansen's integrity as a journalist and critic, I couldn't help but feel that his recent *Telegraph* article, 'Modernising classics is a cheap trick', demonstrated a depressing level of snobbery and disengagement with the current theatrical climate. Now, to be fair, I haven't seen the production at the centre of his grievance, the National's recent revival of 'Man vs Superman': with VILF Ralph Fiennes in the leading role, you can't get tickets for love or money. Nevertheless, he raises several points which really can't be allowed to go unchallenged.

Mr Christiansen subscribes to the line that updating texts "patronises an audience by assuming it lacks a modicum of historical imagination or the

ability to draw its own parallels and conclusions". In other words, we shouldn't (for instance) have to bedeck the set of *Richard III* with swastikas for folks to twig the chilling permanence of violent despotism. But he seems to

forget that bringing a classic truly 'up-to-date' does not simply mean dreaming up heavy handed contemporary analogies. These days, modernised productions will frequently ask audiences to radically rethink their interpretation of the text. If someone were to ask me if watching *Othello* made me re-evaluate the challenges for women in positions of military authority, I would be forced into a slightly baffled

"Urrhm. No." But Robbie Taylor Hunt's upcoming production of *Othello* (ADC Week 4 Mainshow) is attempting to confront precisely

PUTTING A PLAY UP DOES NOT SIMPLY MEAN MEEKLY KOWTOWING TO TEXT AND AUTHOR

that issue by not only bringing the setting bang up to 2015 but also swapping the genders of four characters.

"There's a significant underrepresentation of women in theatre, so I hope the production exposes and tackles some gender problems," Robbie told me.

Shifting the subtext of classic plays to explore contemporary issues around gender politics can add fresh and relevant dimensions to what can sometimes be stale texts. This is certainly the case with *Othello*. "The frameworks of relationships and manipulations differ because of the gender differences, adding interesting new considerations and themes," Robbie told me.

Reading through his updated text, Iago's concocted suspicion of the (now male) Desdemona's affair with the (male) Cassio crackles to life with renewed danger and urgency. Iago's inception of such terms as 'foul' and 'false' into *Othello*'s vocabulary have infinitely more euphemistic weight than would be the case in a traditional production.

Naysayers, Christiansen included, will argue that we should respect the author's wishes and "use his thought process as a starting point".

But we are in an age of theatre where putting a play up does not simply mean

meekly kowtowing to text and author, with no room for directorial imagination.

Some of the most engaging productions are those which are prepared to dissect and interrogate classic texts, to challenge them even as they present them. This is not, as Rupert suggests, "theatrical solipsism", but a vital form of engagement with our artistic heritage, as we revisit and challenge our intellectual past in a manner that the most powerful theatre has a unique capacity to achieve.

I recall, for example, seeing a superb production of Camus' *Les Justes* at Corpus. The most striking, and chilling, feature was the presence of newspaper clippings, covering the

A TRULY UP-TO-DATE PRODUCTION CAN MAKE THE BOLDEST OF STATEMENTS, COUNTERING THE PRESENT WITH THE PAST

walls, and documenting the rise of international terrorism in recent decades (ISIS and the like).

At what point, I wondered as I watched, do the ideas espoused by these 'freedom fighters' tip over into a brutal imitation of the very regime they report to resist? What trail has been left by violent political resistance in the 65 years since Camus wrote the text?

A truly up-to-date production can make the boldest of statements, countering the present with the past, developing historical ideas and demonstrating that these plays, which can be reinterpreted and re-examined for every generation, truly are 'classics'.

Overlooked: Hammersmith's Hidden History

India Rose Matharu-Daley

Hammersmith Bridge marks a turning point in the Boat Race and in the character of the Thames. On the north bank, modern constructions in steel and glass pass to red-brick Victorian mansion blocks and Georgian terraces, whose gardens lead down to private moorings and sleeping houseboats. This stretch, with its weeping willows and nesting egrets, is almost blissfully rural, a slice of green tranquillity in the metropolitan pandemonium of London.

From the water, it does not seem as if much has changed since William Morris moved into Kelmscott House on the Upper Mall, which runs along the river, in 1879. There the English designer, writer, activist and committed socialist ran the Kelmscott Press, which published limited-edition print books, almost 19th century analogies of medieval illuminated manuscripts. Its masterpiece was a luxurious and gigantic woodcut edition of Chaucer, published in 1896, which Morris called his "little typographical adventure".

Kelmscott Press inspired many other private presses, including the Doves Press at No. 1 Hammersmith Terrace, named after The Dove, a nearby pub built in the early 18th century. Legend has it that a bevy of famous patrons made merry in various incarnations of the public house, dating as far back as the 17th century. There, Charles II wooed Nell Gwyn, a prodigious thespian and one of the few royal mistresses in English history to win popular affection.

The Dove was also the setting for Scottish writer James Thomson's composition of the celebrated poem *Rule, Britannia!* circa 1740. The words were set to music by Thomas Arne, a composer whose version of *God Save the King* became the British national anthem, for a masque at Cliveden about Alfred the Great for the Prince of Wales. *Rule, Britannia!* achieved instant popularity after its first public performance in 1745.

The poem may have been an attempt to foster an inclusive British identity to unite the English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish. Although Wales and England had been unified since 1536, the Act of Union only joined the English and Scottish parliaments in 1707. The British Empire was beginning to dominate the world in the 18th century and by the 19th century the sun never set on its territories. The words of *Rule, Britannia!* changed accordingly. Thomson's original refrain began: "Rule, Britannia! rule the waves." In the Victorian period, however, patriots sang: "Britannia rules the waves."

Today we know *Rule, Britannia!* from the BBC's *Last Night of the Proms*, which always includes an arrangement of the song. Also associated with the British Army and the Royal Navy, it still fosters feelings of national pride amongst modern Britons.

Interview: Wolf Alice



"I admire the 1975 in how hard they work, it's clear how much it means to them to have got this far and done this well, and if we follow a similar path to them I will be more than happy."

Ellie Rowsell, lead vocalist for Wolf Alice, clearly relishes the opportunities that being signed with Dirty Hit, the label that has brought us the likes of The 1975, brings.

Like most young artists, being treated seriously and being presented with a challenge is what caught the four-piece's attention: "They didn't beat around the bush in what they could, and wanted, to do for us, which was exciting and refreshing."



For Wolf Alice (comprised of Ellie Rowsell, Joel Amey, Joff Oddie and Theo Ellis) the last few years have been a whirlwind of activity. After releasing their first material through the online sharing site Soundcloud in 2012, they went on to tour with Peace and by the end of 2013 they were named the 'most blogged about band' by BBC 6 Music.

2014 saw them sign with label Dirty Hit and release their second EP *Creature Songs*, before being crowned 'Best Breakthrough Artist' at the UK Festival Awards in December.

One would think that all of this activity would mean Wolf Alice were in need of a break, but if their current itinerary is anything to go



by this certainly isn't the case. They supported Alt-J at their London O2 show in January – an experience which Ellie considers as "important", because playing with people who are different to you allows you to "reach out to different kinds of people" – before embarking on their own UK and Americas tour.

It is in the same vein as support slots that Wolf Alice attack festival performances. Presented with a vast audience who are ready to hear new

music, Ellie comments that "You can come away with new fans, so it's important to give it all you've got every time." Yet they are still a challenge, even for Wolf Alice who are now seasoned performers.

"Festivals are harder because they're not tailored specifically for you, so you've got to work around them."

Perhaps it is unsurprising, then, to find that for Ellie it is the headline tour which is the most special of the two: "I get more out of playing to people at headline shows because they have come specifically for you, which is a real honour." This is something which I'm sure fans who attended their gig at the Junction on 10th April would be thrilled to hear. It is in no doubt that attendees were in for the full, no holds barred, show.

For those who are new to Wolf Alice, you may have heard their name mentioned in connection with the BBC Sound of 2015 poll, where they were featured on the longlist.

The poll has a stellar reputation for correctly predicting the artists who break through to the mainstream in the year ahead; one look at previous winners Adele, Ellie Goulding and Sam Smith says it all. For Ellie and the rest of Wolf Alice, however, these aren't people who they would ever consider comparing themselves to. In



fact, they don't consider comparing themselves to any other people on the list at all.

Yet, this doesn't take away from being featured on the list: "It's exciting to be on the BBC Sound Of list, and it can be great exposure, both of which we are grateful for," Ellie comments. Most important of all, however, is to make sure that one doesn't let the pressure of this exposure get too much.

"Paying too much attention to what can come out of such things can put pressure on you, or give you expectations you don't need to worry about as an artist."

There will certainly be a huge number of people keeping an eye on their progress this year to see if they live up to expectations. Irrespective of this, keeping things simple and focused on that which matters, the music itself, is certainly top of Wolf Alice's priority list, something which I commend them for wholeheartedly.

Asia Lambert



While We're Young



"We said our vows in an empty water tower in Harlem."

While *We're Young* is a film in which middle-aged meets hipster. A coming-of-age story for those post-forty, writer-director Noah Baumbach's latest work (following on from *Frances Ha*, *Greenberg*, and *The Squid and the Whale*) features a documentarian, his wife and their chance meeting with a young married couple that inspires them to cling on to their youth.

Unsurprisingly full of snappy and quirky dialogue (Baumbach has frequently co-written with Wes Anderson), this film is reminiscent of *Annie Hall* and *Manhattan*, plunging artistic and intellectual characters into the absurdity of city life, with street beach parties galore.

Josh's (Ben Stiller) life is in stagnation as he works on his magnum opus, a difficult to follow documentary crafted from hundreds of hours of interviews, described by his father-in-law and legendary documentarian

as "a six-and-a-half hour film that's seven hours too long." His childless marriage with Cornelia (Naomi Watts) is on the rocks. When Jamie (Adam Driver) speaks to Josh after attending one of his classes, they strike up a friendship resulting in the older couple ignoring friends their own age in order to hang out with the twenty-somethings.

Jamie and his wife Darby (Amanda Seyfried) are impossible to dislike – Jamie, an aspiring film maker, has a wall loaded with vinyls, and Darby makes artisan ice cream. Through watching their friendship develop, we are able to see the Netflix-using, iPhone-googling, laptop-writing Josh and Cornelia try to navigate a hipster world in which people watch VHS tapes, ride fixie bikes and type on typewriters. This clash of generations is evident in the soundtrack of the film; we hear David Bowie, contemporary remixes by edgy DJs and Antonio Vivaldi, an eclectic taste similar to Jamie's vinyl collection, complemented by Josh.

The bond between two married couples is strengthened as Josh and Cornelia realise that all their friends their own age already have children.



SCOTT RUDIN PRODUCTIONS

In a particularly comical scene, Cornelia runs out of a mother-and-baby dance class into one full of hip-hop dancers 20 years younger than her, able to exist but unable to fit in inside the two worlds she inhabits.

While *We're Young* is a blessing for Stiller, allowing him to shine in a more serious role than those in which audiences are more accustomed to seeing him. He confidently plays an obnoxious man who is struggling to understand where he went wrong in a changing world in which he was supposed to be the next big thing.

As his young friend/protégé's new catfish-style film begins to gather more steam than the documentary he's been working on for close to a decade, Stiller impressively portrays a man taken over by jealousy and paranoia, and the beautifully filmed confrontation scene that follows is painfully gripping.

Like Jim Carrey in *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* and Steve Carell in *Foxcatcher*, Stiller has been able to successfully make the leap from comedy to drama.

For the benefit of cinema, hopefully Stiller will continue to collaborate with Baumbach.

The writing for the most part is snappy and witty, and this dialogue-driven film feels like it could have been produced in the 1970s. At a visit to the doctor Josh learns that he is ageing faster than he had anticipated. "Arthritis arthritis?" he asks. "I usually just say it once," quips back the doctor. Adam Driver impresses throughout the film, though he is particularly superb near the end, when his lines allow him to fully explore his character, who previously seemed one-dimensional.

As good as most of the film was, the final act is a bit of a let-down. The ending (no spoilers!) is clichéd and predictable in an attempt to be heart-warming, though the character development of Josh is something to marvel at as this conceited and selfish man shows that he is both the most principled and naïve of those in the film.

Unfortunately, the female characters remain under-developed compared with their male counterparts. While Jamie is shown to be pulling

the puppet strings of everyone he meets, impressively hiding his careerism, Darby's role is limited to his quirky hip-hop dancing wife.

More focus on how their marriage worked would have been appreciated. Although Cornelia shines in the couple of scenes in which she is the focus, we cannot escape that her primary character attribute is that she is the wife of her husband and the daughter of her father, who mentored Josh in his youth.

While *We're Young* is an interesting take on what people do to stay young and the mistaken desire to accept that change is always a good thing. Hipsters are satirised, the dialogue is quick and Ben Stiller is sick in a bucket while discovering his hopes and dreams. What more could you want? The film dared to open with a quotation from a 19th century Norwegian playwright, but don't let this fool you: this is one enjoyable movie. Baumbach's latest work is punchy and emotive, and although it seems like a mediocre Woody Allen film at times, a mediocre Woody Allen film is still pretty damn good.

Mike Armstrong

Wild Tales

☆☆☆☆☆

It's turned out to be a lucky thing that the magical Almodóvar name has been plastered all over the press for the lesser-known Damián Szifron's latest film. Its touch has turned *Wild Tales* into mainstream gold, placing it in the position it rightfully deserves: this compilation of frantic, violent and hilarious short movies (strung together masterfully by their common theme) is constructed with the subversive talent and rebellious edge of the out-of-the-way, 'art-house' movie, yet plays out something like a raucously entertaining Spanish soap opera.

Szifron has previously written primarily for television, and, having labelled Argentina a nation where "TV is more like soap opera" while film remains on a different level, it is easy to recognise the melodrama and garishness of the former in Szifron's take on the latter. Not only do the separate stories follow on from each other like various episodes, but the events revel in the abundance of action – subtlety is not the aim, and nor should it be. Scenes unfold in a crescendo of tension, violence and hilarity, within lavish weddings and roadside diners – archetypal soap scenarios.

Nevertheless, the ideas behind the stories are serious, most of which converge in their angry reaction to Argentina's (and the rest of the world's) corruption and stifling capitalism; yet I found myself grinning uncontrollably throughout, delighted at the descent of each situation into carnivalesque chaos and destruction.

The opening scene sets up the tone of the film: passengers on a plane begin to discover shared links with Gabriel Pasternak, a failing and talentless composer who has consequently been humiliated throughout his life. The uncanny absurdity escalates until the realisation dawns upon them that everyone who has ever wronged Pasternak, in any way, is on the

plane, and plummeting to their deaths with the man himself at the wheel.

This is, of course, massively uncomfortable to watch in the wake of the all too recent Germanwings tragedy, yet it still manages to provoke simultaneous unrestrained laughter and horror as the plane hurtles straight towards a sunny suburban garden where his parents recline in deckchairs.

The atmosphere is one of losing control, of surrendering to animalistic urges to avenge; to wreak violence and havoc; to smash and destroy in the face of an engulfing system of controlling, unjust government and repressed urges. "The desire to react against injustice," says Szifron, "is something we experience very often because we are made to be free. We are animals in the same way that a dog or a bear is an animal." He sees beauty in the wild, away from the towering concrete structures amongst which citizens' cars are mercilessly towed again and again from the streets, injustices unacknowledged and money wielded as a weapon to aid this circular system. The characters allow their animalistic impulses to overflow, and it is an immensely thrilling and satisfying thing to watch.

The concept of 'carnival' – from the Ancient Greek Dionysia, to Roman Saturnalia and the Medieval European Feast of Fools – has long been rooted in the notion of irreverence towards societal systems of expected behaviour; a time for game-playing and role-reversing; irrepressible laughter and wildness; the grotesque and theatrical. It has been theorised that such rituals are necessary in order to release man's craving for the animalistic.

Perhaps Szifron's sequence of wild tales signals a growing contemporary need for such a release in the modern world. Whatever lies behind this curious compendium of fables, they are fiendishly entertaining and captivating.

Chloe Carroll



Afternoon Tea in Cambridge

In the fast-paced and hectic day of your average Cambridge student, afternoon tea is probably the last thing on your mind. I, however, have a very sweet tooth, so sugary snacks and cakes are a round-the-clock commodity in my life, particularly in the afternoon when you're feeling lazy and tired and all you want to do is take a nap. Cambridge has a great selection of places to grab some afternoon tea and cakes to get a quick sugar hit with friends during the working day.

Fitzbillies

Located right next to Pembroke, Fitzbillies is a classic, a Cambridge institution. It's one of those places you've probably walked past many times, felt tempted by its display of cakes and tarts but never actually eaten at – it took me until halfway through my second year to actually try it out. The cafe has an extensive range of sweet and savoury treats, including the famous sticky Chelsea buns, which have been sold there since 1921. We decided to share the classic afternoon tea, which also comes with the option of champagne for an extra six pounds.

The food arrived, impeccably presented, on a tiered stand that boasted different types of savoury sandwiches, fruit scones, an éclair, a fruit tart and a

muffin. An extensive range of teas and coffees are available, with the coffee supplied by an East London roastery called Climpson & Sons.

Shared between two, the afternoon tea set was just the right amount of food; the portions are so large that one set each would have been very overfilling! With a relaxed and buzzing atmosphere, Fitzbillies is great for catching up with friends or is even a nice spot to do some work if you feel like a change of scene. One of the cafe's main drawbacks is that because it's so popular, the service tends to be quite slow.

Harriet's Cafe Tearooms

If you're a bit bored of the ever-popular Bill's, then Harriet's is just down the street.

The menu is geared towards a traditional-style afternoon tea, although my friends and I decided to test its full range, ordering an odd mix of breakfast (Eggs Benedict), ice-cream and scones.

The cafe itself was quite empty, so if you're looking for a more lively vibe, Fitzbillies might be the place for you. However, the staff at Harriet's are very friendly and the service is excellent. There's also the added bonus of a small takeaway counter with an assortment of macaroons, meringues and tarts – just in case you need some more sugary snacks for later.

Anjali Shourie



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Why youth rugby is too dangerous

Why youth rugby needs to change

George Ramsay
Sport Correspondent

"Take his legs! Take his legs!"

That three-word refrain will forever be etched onto my memory. Coaches and parents alike would bark it out from the touchline as large, over-developed teenagers rumbled through line after line of pubescent defence, increasingly desperate as the giants trundled on until finally the tackle came, some thirty yards later.

Part of the reason why my rugby-playing days ended prematurely was because I listened to those touchline orders. As the six-foot-something boy-mountain pounded towards me, often with a couple of my own teammates clinging to his considerable bulk, I would tentatively dip my head down-wards, readying myself for the executioner's axe. The trick was to not meet the grunting monster with any force, but to simply let him topple over you. Most of the time it worked quite effectively, and often the shouts from the sideline would stop abruptly, instead replaced by those of "Oooh, good tackle!"

At first I loved it. I enjoyed getting stuck into the unglamorous nature of the game and was pleased to have a recognised role in the team,

an important cog in a semi-oiled (but quite rusty) machine. I played mostly as a full-back, and it was my job, as one coach delicately put it, to "tackle anything that moved". I was ruthless.

But then things started to change. The opposition got bigger, the tackles more frightening, and my pre-game routine became a ritual of physically assessing the opposition, calculating with dread just how big the big guys were. It also transpired that most of the larger players were also the fastest, and this seemed particularly unfair. They scored tries at will, swotting away the attempted tackles of those that dared go near them.

Deep down I wanted more from the game. Players on the TV with a number 15 on their back were playing a different sport to me. Jason Robinson seared through holes in the opposition defence, Geordan Murphy would leap salmon-like into the air to claim a swirling high ball and Percy Montgomery landed monster penalties from all angles of the field. My job as doormat for the biggest players on the pitch somehow didn't quite compare.

I dreamed of carving through an impossible gap in the opposition defence, chipping over the heads of dazed defenders before dummying round the last man and swallow diving under the posts. But this was never going to happen. The more vividly I realised this, the more disillusioned I became. I began to shy away from tackles, cowering from contact as an increasing number

of rollicking forwards slipped through my arms.

This is a problem faced by youth rugby nationwide. Teenagers develop at different rates, meaning it is perfectly likely for a six foot three, hairy-legged beanpole with several hours of weightlifting already under his belt to be pitted against a skinny little scrum-half with two terrifying years to endure before he even touches puberty.

In January 2011, 14-year-old Benjamin Robinson collapsed and died following two heavy impacts in a rugby game, an event that could have been readily avoided had the necessary measures been taken. Similar issues occur at senior level, and the new concussion laws introduced, which stipulate a player incurring a head injury is rigorously examined before being allowed to continue playing, seek to remedy this.

The answers need to be more hands-on. Players could be segregated into size and weight categories, and touch rugby should be played and promoted more widely to emphasise handling and dexterity rather than sizeable collisions. At the age of 12, I found myself thrown onto a full-sized pitch with a vast ocean of space to negotiate: the bigger guys had more time to get ahead of steam and impacts were greater. But by playing on a half- or three-quarter sized arena, the game can be more evenly contested. Youth rugby often felt like being a small fish in a very large pond, living in fear of



Legs taken: Rugby needs to tackle its injury problem

several other very large fish.

Rugby is a physical game. The emphasis must shift from the importance of size – encouraging young players to pound out heavy weights in the gym – to place greater onus on skill, speed and technique. This is partly due to the size and physicality of professional players who serve as role models, and partly due to the rates at which young people develop. As a sport, it will become more inclusive and the injury rate – currently worryingly high

– will begin to reduce, and hopefully the changes made from a young age will percolate through to senior level. Above all, it is the attitudes of coaches and players that need reshaping rather than the rules of the game.

My hope is that future generations of young players dipping their heads towards the pumping thighs of an oncoming player will be felling a pair of legs similar to their own. Equally matched opponents, after all, make the best sporting contests.

It is high time we boycotted FIFA

Radical action is needed to change football's corrupt governing body

Zack Case
Sport Correspondent

Corrupt, illegitimate, authoritarian. I am, in this instance, not describing the Soviet Union, Zimbabwe or any other systematically corrupt political regime. I am talking about FIFA.

The 2018 World Cup is going to be held in Russia, a country with an autocratic, expansionist government, still in touch with its Soviet past and with an entrenched racism problem. This would not be the first controversial sporting event to be held in Russia, where a vague law passed prior to the 2014 Winter Olympics at Sochi banned the distribution of material in favour of "non-traditional sexual relationships" among minors, which has been quite rightly condemned as homophobic.

FIFA has also awarded the 2022 World Cup to Qatar, where construction workers have been slavishly working (and dying at a rate of one every two days in 2014) to prepare for a winter World Cup which would disrupt the entire football calendar. In fact, 1.4 million migrant workers live in unhygienic and overcrowded conditions, and little progress has been made to reform the kafala system of exploitation whereby workers are essentially 'owned' by their employers.

The International Trade Union Confederation's General Secretary, Sharan Burrow, has dubbed Qatar a "21st century slave state". Giving this tiny, footballingly anonymous Gulf

state the World Cup was "one of the most ludicrous decisions in the history of sport", according to former FA chairman David Bernstein. He is surely correct.

Sepp Blatter has ruled FIFA since 1998. He is currently standing for his fifth term, despite promising not to run for presidential re-election and having run uncontested in 2011.

Indeed, he has not participated in a single election without allegations of bribery and corruption being thrown his way. Of course he does have at least some ethical principles: he did recently insist that Qatar should do more for its workers. You don't say, Sepp! But why on earth did you award them the World Cup in the first place? Blatter is clearly not fit for the job, something that is underlined by the sexist comments he made in 2004 about female footballers, suggesting they "wear tighter shorts and low cut shirts... to create a more female aesthetic".

This piece isn't really intended to be a report into corruption in FIFA – I have left that to the 'experts'. In all its moral integrity, FIFA launched an internal investigation into corruption, which cleared Russia and Qatar of any wrongdoing. For now, that is.

Surprise surprise, the published version has been criticised for being incomprehensible by the very lawyer, Michael Garcia, who conducted the initial 430 page inquiry, stating that "[the 42 page published summary] contains numerous materially incomplete and erroneous representations". In any case, crucial pieces of evidence about the alleged bribery involved in the Russian and Qatari World Cup bids have mysteriously disappeared, or have been destroyed.

I do, however, want to suggest a solution to the FIFA problem. The only



The final whistle needs to be blown on Sepp Blatter's corrupt reign

way to expunge FIFA of corruption is to boycott it. I do not propose an anarcho-syndicalist attempt to depose football's governing body. Football does need an umbrella organisation, mainly to act as legislators of the game and to coordinate worldwide tournaments. But direct action is necessary for its reform. I propose a boycott of Russia 2018, followed by a recasting of votes for the 2022 World Cup. Only serious and radical action can uphold the moral credibility of FIFA. A boycott is the only way to keep the 'beautiful' in the beautiful game.

This is, of course, extremely idealistic, and can only be successful if

there is universal assent – or at least the assent of the great footballing nations. What is a World Cup without Brazil, Spain and Germany (and dare I add England)? Qataris themselves would certainly rather watch another Argentina vs Germany final than seeing Qatar face North Korea (or any nation unlikely to abide by this international boycott).

What is FIFA if there is a unanimous refusal to turn up to its tournaments? And, who knows, given that every country has its own football association, surely there can be multilateral agreements to provide football compensation for Russia 2018?

It would pain me to miss a World Cup. But ethics and democracy do matter. FIFA does not abide by those fundamental principles. I want to see a World Cup in the country with the bid that has the highest value – not in terms of the cash involved in back-room deals. I want to see an organisation that is accountable and acts in the best interests of the sport – not dominated by rich, power-hungry men acting in their own vested interests. To improve the game, we need to improve its main player.

Bernstein was right: FIFA is "beyond ridicule". It is indeed a joke. But this joke is not funny.

Boycott FIFA?

Zack Case suggests radical action to force change

**Sport****Why prioritise rowing when we lose?**

Neglecting 'minor' sports damages Cambridge's sporting ethos

Sarah Collins

Sport Correspondent

"We can't recruit like Oxford do," bemoans Cambridge men's rowing coach Steve Trapmore MBE after this year's disappointing boat race performance. "We're academically the best university in the world, it's often hard to get the right balance between academics and sporting prowess." Cambridge has been trotting out this line for decades whenever faced with the question – why at one of the richest institutions in the world is sport so underfunded?

Cambridge's suggestion that commitment to sport must be sacrificed in the name of academia is contrary to all of the evidence, not only with regard to the effect of sport on the capacity of the brain to study, but also on the

**CAMBRIDGE'S PREJUDICES ARE ARCHAIC, AND SO IS ITS FUNDING SYSTEM**

fact that it is the other Russell Group intellectual heavyweights that dominate the University League tables in the UK, proving that brains and brawn do in fact go hand-in-hand.

This has, of course, been said before, when the dashing sportsmen and women of Cambridge had their photos taken with placards and demanded a review of funding for Cambridge Sport. The campaign attracted a great deal of attention and, in the end, the university relented, held a review and established a Sports committee that allowed for funding appeals. New committee, problem solved? The Blues runners, rowers, handball and badminton players can swish around in their Cambridge tracksuits with smiles on their faces at last? Not quite.

We've got a new sports centre and a new committee, but Cambridge is still miles behind its counterparts in sports performance for two reasons: its prejudices are archaic, and so is its funding system. While Cambridge clings to its prestige in the 'old-money' sports of rugby and rowing, this narrow-minded focus on the oldest sports damages the ethos of performance sport at Cambridge, and means that top-level athletes in other disciplines receive poor quality resources, some of them regressing rather than progressing during their time at Cambridge.

Revering rowing to the detriment



No wins for Cambridge: Oxford went home victorious after a historic day on the Tideway for the 161st Oxford-Cambridge Boat Race

of all other sports creates an anger among national-level athletes in other disciplines that go unsupported, when college rowing is given far greater publicity than university-level teams in more minor sports. While the treasurer of one college rowing club told me that they play with a budget of around £36,000 a year, the university-level Handball Club, whose men have just won the University Handball Championship, get only £1,270.

The disproportionate wealth of college rowing teams certainly pushes up the standards of collegiate rowing, but means that athletes that could excel in other sports are left high and dry, without sufficient funding for transport and kit to compete at the top level. From the richest university in the country, this is a disgrace.

The recent stats released by the Tab reveal that Cambridge dominates over Oxford in breadth of sporting prowess, as we won more Varsity matches

overall, so maybe it's time to pump some money into the sports that are winning, rather than continue with the treadmill of rowing and rugby.

Cambridge's sporting problem is its funding. Boat clubs are so wealthy because colleges support their teams, and are also supported by sponsorship and funding investment. None of the college boat clubs' funds came from the university, who are unwilling to part with their cash to see sport develop.

"We are good at rowing" should not be an excuse for the university whenever it is questioned about the lack of sports performance. The culture of high-level collegiate rowing is created not from university-wide funding, but from college pride, and actually athletes in other sports are getting better results. Therefore if Cambridge is the meritocracy it claims to be, the powers that be need to put their money where their mouth is and fund the sports that are holding our Varsity pride together.

The truth is that the university is simply not willing to spend money on sport, and even less willing to re-arrange their timetables to allow athletes

**THE UNIVERSITY IS SIMPLY NOT WILLING TO SPEND MONEY ON SPORT**

Wednesday afternoons off. However, Cambridge needs to spend a little more money to see better results.

Sports participation in Cambridge is massive, with so many contributing to college sport, but a lack of university-wide level funding means that performance sport will not take off.

When colleges are reimbursing

individual athletes for sports and transport costs, it would make more sense to ask colleges to contribute to a university-wide funding programme, which would deploy college contributions more fairly. With Trinity spending approximately £500 on one hockey goalkeeper's kit earlier this year (almost half of the University Handball Club's budget), it is clear that the richest colleges could help to build a more thriving university sports scene. Making Wednesday afternoons a time for the pitch, instead of the lecture theatre, would boost morale and maybe even academic performance, as healthier and happier students are shown to do better in exams.

Cambridge is supposed to be the more progressive, liberal wing of the Oxbridge duo. It's time we ditched the single-minded focus on rugby and rowing because as this year's results have proven, we aren't actually that good at them anyway.