

VARSLTY

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Pay hike proposed for next Vice-Chancellor

- Documents show potential pay rise of 38 per cent
- University seeks to compete with rival institutions

– EXCLUSIVE –

Kaya Wong & Louis Ashworth

Cambridge's next Vice-Chancellor could be set for pay rise of up to 38 per cent, *Varsity* can exclusively reveal.

Reserved minutes acquired by *Varsity* show that the Remuneration Committee have proposed a salary range of "£400k-£450k" for the next Vice-Chancellor (VC), who is due to take up the position in 2017.

The proposed salary range, which includes a pension, would constitute a pay rise of between 23 and 38 per cent compared to the most recently released figures, which indicated that Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz received a salary of £325,000 in 2014/15.

However, even if the increase came

to be at the higher end of the possible range, it would still most likely put Cambridge's VC's earnings below his or her counterpart at Oxford, where VC Andrew Hamilton received £462,000 in remuneration in 2014/15. On the other hand, the average pay packet for the Vice-Chancellors of Russell Group universities is smaller, at £297,600 in 2013/14.

The committee minutes note that the proposed salary range is "broad", and that it is "simply a basis on which to initiate discussions with potential candidates".

It states that this proposed range was "in effect, a guide rather than a price." The pay packet is being offered in the hope of attracting high-quality candidates for the position of Vice-Chancellor.

According to the same document, "job satisfaction might be more important to candidates than pay

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Students rail against Bouattia election

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CUSU cuts threaten TCS print

Joe Robinson
Senior News Editor

An internal CUSU email seen by *Varsity* sheds light on the "structural problems with CUSU's funding model" that have resulted in plans to end the print edition of *The Cambridge Student*.

The email was sent to members of the TCS Trustees and CUSU sabbatical officers by CUSU's General Manager, Mark McCormack. It explains what he characterises as the "difficult situation" that has led to the "reduction in resource allocation for TCS in the 2016-17 budget".

It lists the "reduction in revenue capacity of some income streams", the "increased size of the sabbatical team" – including the new Disabled Students' Officer role – the "increased organisational cost-base", and the "lack of university support" as part of this situation.

These problems, which the email claims have "been understood for some time", have led CUSU to consider a number of cost-cutting initiatives.

These include "restructuring staffing in the business team", "forming a shared service with the GU, with profit and cost sharing", and, in the short term, "reducing the size of the sabbatical team", including deferring the election of the next CUSU Coordinator until a "fuller review of the constitution takes place" before the start of the next financial year.

Continued on page 3



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A sad day for student journalism

EDITORIAL

We Cambridge types are an ambitious lot. From Union hackery to earnest politicking for both Left and Right – and yes, even the odd bit of journalistic skulduggery – plenty of us dive into life in Cambridge with a more or less conscious desire to do ‘something extra’.

In many cases, it is this same drive which motivates us to work hard; it’s probably the means by which most of us earned a place in this institution.

However, in another respect, that same ambitious streak is precisely what allows us to get up each other’s noses so frequently. Hardly a week goes by that we don’t have cause to report on some row or other between members of this university.

In a system that necessarily pits us all against each other – a reality which has

once again become all too evident of late, as thoughts turn to exams and the changes to the publication of class lists – it’s perhaps not surprising that this can sometimes result in the odd rivalry or two.

So, we’re all in it together, and yet we’re all fundamentally competing against each other – it’s a difficult balance.

The practical result of this is a rather mixed bag: we may furtively curse our rivals when they’re doing well, but we will all still gather around to commiserate and offer support when things aren’t looking so rosy.

For example, the other people on our courses are rivals in the exam hall, but our friends and peers outside it, and we rightly feel a need to be there in support when results day doesn’t go their way.

And so it is now. As we learn that the 17-year history of *The Cambridge Student’s* print run may well be coming to an end following a financial decision made by its parent organisation, CUSU, we stand with our rivals, peers, and friends.

TCS will be missed, and our thoughts go out to those who have lost what is by now something of a Cambridge institution, and something which matters a great deal to them.

Though *TCS* was in many senses founded as a trenchant rival to *Varsity*, and continues that particular habit to this day, with regular enough jibes, it will also be missed by all of us who have chosen to make student journalism our certain ‘something extra’.

After all, like those who study alongside us during our time in Cambridge, *TCS*

has been part of a wider collegiate atmosphere – spurring us on to be better, to do better, and to get to stories faster.

It’s a shame, then, to see a part of that atmosphere disappear, just as it’s a shame to see any newspaper struggling in these difficult times.

But we can take some comfort from the knowledge that the spirit of friendly rivalry, which underlies so much of the Cambridge experience, and which undoubtedly drives much of this city’s student media, will not be disappearing with the ink-and-paper version of *TCS*.

As the fight goes on to save *TCS*’s print run, and as Cambridge’s other student outlets continue to look to the future, it’s clear that this is not the end of the road for the inquisitive, ambitious spirit which is so important here.

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VC's salary surges in recruitment push

Continued from front page

satisfaction", and that factor "would be taken into account in negotiations and in determining the support which would be made available to the individual concerned". As such, "remuneration arrangements would not be specified in the job advertisement".

The proposed salary range was based on remuneration packages for Presidents and Vice-Chancellors "in equivalent institutions in the UK, Australia and the USA", in order to "reflect the standing of the university" and also "attract a strong field of high quality candidates".

A university spokesperson said: "An important component of reaching the recommended range for remuneration, including pension, was careful analysis of published data about Vice-Chancellors' and Presidents' pay in the US, Australia, and the Russell Group."

"We must compete globally to attract the best qualified candidates. The best person will not come to Cambridge just because of the remuneration package, but understanding the current pay environment internationally is an important factor in recruitment." They added: "The next Vice-Chancellor will need to provide academic and administrative leadership to the whole university... We are seeking an outstanding individual capable of delivering the university's mission."

In February, *Varsity* reported that Borysiewicz's bill for flights was four times the national average of £8,560

for VCs, standing at a total of £38,786, following statistics obtained by the University and College Union (UCU).

The figures showed that, in the past five years, vice-chancellors' salaries have risen by an average of 14 per cent, compared with 5 per cent for other staff. The Vice-Chancellor role carries several other perks, including the use of the Vice-Chancellor's lodge, which was worth £4.52 million according to a valuation from July 2014.

According to data released in 2013 by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the highest-paid university President in the USA, Robert Zimmer of the University of Chicago, earns \$3,358,723 annually (£2,336,828), although 40 per cent of his income was due to deferred compensation.

Surprisingly, Harvard President Drew Gilpin Faust was only the 54th-highest paid in the USA, with \$899,734 (£625,989) per year in 2011, while the President of Stanford also earned less than \$1 million.

The highest-paid VC in the UK in 2014 was Neil Gorman from Nottingham Trent University, who earned £623,000 in 2014: 90 per cent more than Cambridge's current VC, Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, who was not listed in the top 10 earners.

Despite this, Borysiewicz's current pay packet represents a 43 per cent increase on his predecessor Alison Richard's salary for 2008/09, £227,000, placing him among the seven highest-paid senior post-holders in the university.

Future of TCS print in doubt

Continued from front page

The proposal that "TCS go online", which would bring to an end the newspaper's 17-year print run, was justified on the basis of the assertion that "the cost of the paper has for some time outweighed the revenue it brings in."

The nature of the financial situation is disputed by the newspaper's editorial team.

While the email notes that "profit margins aren't the most important criteria [sic] for CUSU's decision-making", it explains that CUSU "does try to gather modest surpluses in the very least so that we can continue to fund work for students."

McCormack listed the other options available to CUSU as "reduc[ing] the size of the staff team, which supports other core activities from the compliance to mission advancement [...] or, rais[ing] affiliation fees, which would risk disaffiliation."

He added that he "sincerely hope[s] that the TCS Board will understand that the proposal of a move to online is regrettable yet necessary" in financial terms, and that he had "continued very hard to sustain the paper in its current form."

Zoah Hedges-Stocks, Editor-in-Chief of TCS in Michaelmas and Lent 2011, described how she found the suggestion that the print production could be closed down with so little warning shocking.

"It could be the beginning of the end for TCS, and it would be a very sad loss for Cambridge student journalism



if it were to go. The university has such a strong journalism scene precisely because the competition between *Varsity*, TCS and *The Tab* drives up standards."

She also stated: "CUSU's behaviour appears to be both unconstitutional and bafflingly illogical. Unlike many student papers in the UK, TCS is still turning a profit."

"Not only does it make money, but alongside the other student media it serves as an important tool to hold the union to account."

"It seems very strange that a financially-troubled student union would want to cripple something that makes money and helps students."

Jem Collins, Chair of the Student Publication Association, said: "It may sound overblown, but student media really is vital to both university life and

democracy, keeping students informed and holding power to account."

"It doesn't just benefit those who participate, but the whole student body. For SUs to try and pull the plug on funding for something this important is frankly an embarrassment, especially when you look at the consistent quality of the work at TCS."

Rob Cashman, CUSU's Education Officer, stated: "No decisions have yet been taken on whether CUSU will continue to fund the print editions of TCS."

"We have informed TCS of the rationale behind what is a proposal from the Board of Trustees, and we are committed to continuing to meet with TCS so that together we can explore ways in which CUSU can undertake its activities in a way which makes best use of its limited resources."

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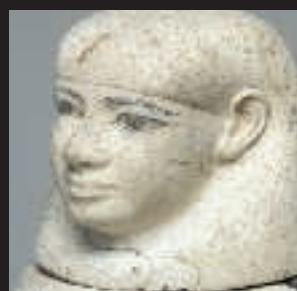
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Climate change is 'life-and-death' question

• Zero Carbon report demands divestment • Claims uni could have saved £112 million

Anna Menin &
Siyang Wei

The Cambridge Zero Carbon Society has today released a report calling on the university to "withdraw all its investments from fossil fuel stocks, bonds and investments", arguing that divestment is a "moral imperative for the University of Cambridge".

The 74-page report, entitled *Fossil Fuel Divestment at the University of Cambridge*, was written by members of the Society, and has a foreword from the Master of Magdalene College and former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams.

In his foreword, Williams praises the report as a "worthy product of Cambridge at its best", and argues that the issue of climate change "is one that is seen increasingly clearly to be bound up with these basic matters of justice".

The report argues that it is "indefensible" for the university to invest in a manner which "actively propagates" the "global disaster" of climate change.

It states that Cambridge "must acknowledge its responsibility as both a major investor and as a respected institution", and that for it to continue to invest in fossil fuel companies "is not only to legitimise them but also to profit from their harmful practices."

“

IT IS A MORAL, SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL NECESSITY

Cambridge's status as a "world-leading institution", it continues, means that its "decisions reverberate around the world".

"This places a considerable burden of responsibility on Cambridge to make the right choice, while also providing the university with an incredible opportunity to positively influence global debates about climate change."



Zero Carbon marked a red line outside Senate House during a recent campaign

It warns that, despite their "excellent opportunity to take a lead in the low carbon transition university", Cambridge also "runs the risk of falling on the wrong side of history should it choose not to divest."

The report also argues that, as an academic institution, the university "should align its investment policy with the consensus of its research", and that, as climate change research is a "common theme in a significant proportion of departments in Cambridge", a "reflection of this interest and expertise" is "necessary" in the university's investment policy.

It goes on to reject what it terms "soft" approaches to investment, such as shareholder engagement, as "ineffective", claiming that they "cannot hope to achieve change on the scale or timeframe necessary".

"Divestment forces and frames the debate in a fashion appropriate to the severity and urgency of the issue, allowing it to impact both policy and public consciousness", it continued.

In a statement to *Varsity*, the Zero Carbon Society said: "Whether it's the £112 million that might have been saved by divesting three years ago, the

DIVESTMENT AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Divestment from Coal & Tar Sands: Cranfield, Heriot-Watt, Birmingham City, Oxford, Edinburgh, Hertfordshire, Portsmouth, and Westminster Universities; LSE; Wolfson College, Oxford

Full Divestment: Surrey, Oxford Brookes, Bedfordshire, Glasgow, Sheffield, and Warwick Universities; University of Arts London; SOAS, University of London

Cambridge City Council has also partially divested

not be a more appropriate time to act", it continued.

In November 2015, CUSU Council passed a motion in support of divestment, which stated: "it is morally wrong for the University to invest in fossil fuel reserves while leading the way in sustainability research".

The report will be submitted for consideration by a working group of the Advisory Committee on Benefactions and External and Legal Affairs (ACBELA), established in May 2015.

The Committee's goal is to evaluate the university's Statement of Investment Responsibility in light of "developments in the understanding of the integration of environmental, social, and governance aspects... in investment decisions" in relation to the university's "mission and core values" – particularly its stated value of "concern for sustainability and its relationship with the environment".

The group is due to submit its own report of recommendations to the University Council on 23rd May this year.

Speaking to *Varsity*, the Zero Carbon Society Campaigns Officer, Alice Guillaume, said: "Cambridge's divestment from fossil fuels is not just an economic issue: it is a moral, social and political necessity."

"If the university is serious about its image as a morally responsible, future-orientated and globally engaged institution, it needs to end its investments in the very companies that are putting our planet, and particularly the most vulnerable, at risk", she continued.

The Zero Carbon Society began its divestment campaign in Michaelmas last year, and has gathered over 2,000 signatures on a petition calling for the university to divest. The Society is also planning a 'March for Divestment' on 30th April.

Rowan Williams:

It's time for
Cambridge
to divest
from fossil
fuels



This document is a very remarkable achievement in itself, representing a fusion of serious and wide-ranging research, lucid argument and moral passion. As such, it is a worthy product of Cambridge at its best – and what it does is to appeal to Cambridge at its best. If we claim, as we rightly do, that a good university is an institution that poses large and serious questions to society overall, and that seeks to shape minds and lives which are not passive, conformist and afraid of responsibility, then the issues raised in these pages are a proper matter for the university and the colleges to consider. Environmental degradation of one kind and another is a life-and-death question for many communities around the world, especially for some of the most economically vulnerable; this is something which, as Chair of a global development NGO (Christian Aid), I am made conscious of very regularly. The cost of our slowness or indifference to these matters is immensely grave for the poorest in our world, and many of them are bewildered by our sluggish responses. We repeatedly and rightly insist on our public commitment to opening the resources of the university more and more widely, and this means that we have recognised a duty to those whose voices are historically muted or silenced by poverty and inequality. The climate issue is one that is seen increasingly clearly to be bound up with these basic matters of justice.

But the argument here is not only about ethics; it is also about the long-term prospects for our economic life. Patterns of profit and investment are changing fast, as people recognise the impossibility of expecting limitless returns from limited resources in our world. To change our own patterns of investment may be, as the authors of this report contend so forcefully, the most realistic future to plan for. It is not as though we were being invited to undertake a bit of reckless moral posturing with no economic basis. The pragmatic case is as solid as the moral, and deserves the most careful scrutiny.

Not all readers will agree with everything in these pages. But as an invitation to serious debate, we could not have a better starter. Clear, well-documented and deeply challenging, this is a case that demands attention from all of us in the university and the colleges, and I hope very much that it will have the readership it deserves.

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core aims and values of the University that run counter to fossil fuel investments, or simply Cambridge's responsibility as a moral institution to fight the existential threat to humanity that is climate change, divestment represents common sense on every level."

"It is also urgently needed – the poorest and most vulnerable in this world are dying of drought, extreme weather and other horrors, because of our fossil fuel addiction. In the week that the biggest private sector coal mining company in the world went bust and global temperature records were once again smashed, there could

Cambridge students call for NUS disaffiliation

Group calls for CUSU referendum, as NUS President-Elect faces accusations of anti-Semitism

Julius Haswell & Jack Higgins

A group of Cambridge students have called for the disaffiliation of CUSU from the National Union of Students (NUS), following the election of its new president, Malia Bouattia.

The group, named 'NUS: Let Cambridge Decide', has submitted a formal motion CUSU Council calling for a university-wide referendum on Cambridge's membership of the NUS. They expect a vote to occur before the end of the academic year.

Bouattia won by a margin of 44 votes, defeating the incumbent Megan Dunn in the first round of voting. She is currently the NUS Black Students' Officer, and pledged in her manifesto to "build a stronger national union ready to lead the way in the fight for the education we all deserve and need".

However, Bouattia – the first black and Muslim president of the NUS – has sparked controversy on the basis of comments she made in the past, and faces allegations of anti-Semitism.

The *Independent* has reported that the NUS's new President-Elect has been questioned in an open letter by more than 300 heads of Jewish student societies and protesters as to why she referred in 2011 to her alma mater, the University of Birmingham, as being "something of a Zionist outpost in British higher education".

The Union of Jewish Students (UJS)

released a statement after Bouattia's election, saying it hoped the relationship with her would be positive, but that many Jewish students remained concerned.

"There will, however, still be many Jewish students who have not been satisfied with Malia's response so far to the concerns raised by Jewish students over the last few weeks," it said. "Now, knowing the result of the election, these questions still need to be answered."

“

YOU WILL HAVE SEEN MY NAME DRAGGED THROUGH THE MUD

Bouattia also made headlines when she spoke against a motion condemning the actions of ISIS. The NUS has said that Bouattia disputed the wording of the notion, not its sentiment.

Upon her election, Bouattia was congratulated by advocacy group CAGE, which former NUS President Megan Dunn has criticised as a "deeply problematic organisation", whose leaders "have sympathised with violent extremism and violence against women".

It has also emerged that Bouattia has shared multiple platforms in British

universities with Moazzam Begg, a previous detainee at Guantánamo Bay, who was charged with providing terrorist training and funding extremism.

NUS: Let Cambridge Decide said that Bouattia's election is "a horrifying message to Jewish students in the UK". It continued by saying that "attention has been repeatedly drawn to her anti-Semitic comments. Unfortunately, Malia's election is just the latest event in a tide of anti-Semitism sweeping UK universities."

The Cambridge students have also taken issue with the fact that at an event in 2014 – as NUS Black Students' Officer – she claimed a "Zionist-led media" oppresses the "Global South", and gave support to "resistance", even if this assumes a "violent form".

In regards to calls for disaffiliation, CUSU's current President Priscilla Mensah said: "CUSU represents a significant number of Jewish students and takes their concerns, with regards to the outcome of the elections, very seriously."

"As the democratic body for the students of Cambridge, we would endeavour to support any students seeking to bring a motion to CUSU Council on CUSU's current relationship with the NUS."

Responding to these allegations, Bouattia said that "for me to take issue with Zionist politics, is not me taking issue with being Jewish," and that she does not see "a large Jewish Society on campus as a problem".



Malia Bouattia

In her election speech, Bouattia said: "I know many of you will have seen my name dragged through the mud by right-wing media. You'll have read that I'm a terrorist, that my politics are driven by hate. How wrong that is. I know too well the price of terrorism, the consequences of violence and oppression. I saw a country ripped apart by terror, was pushed into exile by its doing. I know too well the damage done by racism and persecution – I faced it every day." She went on to say that she "will continue to fight it in all its forms, whoever its target, whether it's anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia or any other bigoted idea".

Elinor Clapson, chair of Cambridge Universities Labour Club, tweeted: "Oh lord I have concerns wabout Malia Bouattia too but can't deal wth [sic] budding outraged middle class white man crusade to disaffiliate from NUS" in reference to the Cambridge

campaign.

Bouattia's election has drawn other criticism from the Jewish community in Cambridge. The Cambridge University Jewish Society (CUJS) has issued a statement saying that they "are appalled at the election of Malia Bouattia as NUS president."

"She has repeatedly made both overtly anti-Semitic remarks and other comments which cause Jewish students to feel threatened. Whilst we recognise her democratic mandate, CUJS strongly believe Malia Bouattia is unfit to be President of the NUS and a representative of the student population. We are grateful to our fellow students who opposed her campaign and who we know will continue to stand in solidarity with us over the next year."

Furthermore, the *Guardian* reports that Wes Streeting, Labour MP and former NUS president, is concerned that Bouattia's radical left-wing politics would hinder the influence of the union. "I struggle to see how she and now the majority of the NUS executive can reasonably claim to represent mainstream students across the country," he said. "It is a gift to the Conservatives which allows them to further marginalise student opinion when there is a real need to fight on issues like interest on student loans and cuts to bursaries. NUS has really hit the rocks."

Manchester and York universities have also announced campaigns for disaffiliation.

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Students under

Tensions are brewing over the government's Prevent strategy, student unions paralysed without student support. *Varsity*

Academics call for debate to combat government plan

Louis Ashworth

Senior Investigation Editor

Resistance is growing within Cambridge towards the government's anti-radicalisation 'Prevent' strategy, and a debate about its effects is to be held next month after several senior university members backed a motion opposing its implementation.

A motion has been put before the University Council, which calls for the university to hold a meeting "open to students and to all employees of the University and Colleges", on the topic of Prevent. Sources have told *Varsity* it was signed by over 20 university professors and PhD candidates.

In response, a discussion will take place at Senate House at 2pm on 10th May, at which students can give speeches of up to 15 minutes in length, expressing their thoughts and concerns regarding the legislation.

The Prevent legislation has caused widespread controversy, with critics describing it as biased against Muslim students, and creating a divisive narrative around students from ethnic minorities.

Despite opposition from schools and higher education institutions, including the University of Cambridge, the legislation was passed last year, requiring educational bodies to monitor their students for signs they may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

Many colleges have set up their own committees to monitor students, and an umbrella Prevent Committee for

the entire university has been created. The only student representatives to sit on it will be the CUSU and GU presidents, who will be forced to leave during sensitive discussions.

There have been protests at numerous universities against the Prevent strategy, and the National Union of Teachers recently passed a motion which opposed it, saying the legislation caused "suspicion in the classroom and confusion in the staffroom". It has been reported that no action is taken in around 90 per cent of reported cases.

Speaking to *Varsity*, security expert and Professor of Security Engineering at the Computer Laboratory, Ross Anderson, emphasised the problems with Prevent.

He said that he initially opposed the Prevent scheme "as it's unlikely to do any good, based on the available evidence of how people get radicalised".

"Now [Prevent] has unfortunately passed into law", Anderson said, "the university has to comply with it, but the university also has to comply with human-rights law. This includes, for example, the right to privacy, which can only be infringed by means of explicit laws that also satisfy the test of being proportionate and necessary in a democratic society".

Anderson emphasised the strengths of the university's current system, including the proctorial system and college structure.

"Our traditional approach to balancing freedom of speech with public safety relied on the proctors who have

handled the job rather well for many years," he said. "I have every confidence in their ability to do so in the future".

"I believe the risk of radicalisation in Cambridge is pretty low anyway because of the college system, which forces students to socialise with others from different backgrounds. The supervision system also helps, as do our clubs and societies, and the general ethos of the place.

"Back when I was an undergraduate in the 1970s, I cannot recall a single case of a student going off to join the IRA or the Baader-Meinhof gang, and although words were occasionally exchanged between Jewish and Palestinian students it stayed at that level and never escalated into anything unpleasant."

He added: "It is vital to maintain an inclusive community that is welcoming and supportive to all students and we must not tolerate any stigmatisation or marginalisation of students from particular religious or ethnic backgrounds. If Home Office guidance ever pushes in this direction we must resist it vigorously on human-rights grounds".

The motion to the University Council asks that university administrators "consider the impact of existing measures taken in view of the Prevent regulations, as well as anticipated and possible other measures; their likely effectiveness; their compatibility with academic freedom and human rights; and the appropriate governance of these measures".

Prevent round-up: how are other unis reacting?

Anna Menin

Deputy News Editor

'Prevent', the government's counter-radicalisation programme, has long been the subject of some controversy, and this has only escalated since universities were given new legal duties to combat extremism on campuses in September last year.

The National Union of Students (NUS) has been vocal in its opposition to the measures, and passed a motion resolving to "publicly oppose" the Counter Terrorism and Security Act at its 2015 national conference. It also declared that NUS officers "will not engage with the PREVENT strategy".

"Any expectation by the state for academic staff to be involved in monitoring their students is deeply worrying

and could have a chilling effect on relations between staff and students. We fundamentally believe that universities and colleges are places for education, not surveillance", it continued.

There was further outcry in December when a Politics student at the University of East Anglia (UEA) was questioned by counter-terrorism police after reading pro-ISIS materials online as part of their course.

Students at UEA taking a module entitled "Clash of Fundamentalisms" had been instructed to read passages from an online magazine published by ISIS, but a link to this was later removed from the course materials following the student's questioning.

Speaking to *Concrete*, the UEA student newspaper, the university's Campaigns and Democracy Officer Chris Jarvis said that it was "worrying"

HOW OTHER UNIVERSITIES ARE REACTING

EXETER:

- **October 2015:** the Students' Guild passed a motion condemning Prevent, which said: "Prevent is a discriminatory programme which unfairly targets Muslim students and treats them as suspects, based on racial profiling, creating a highly insecure environment for Muslims despite being guilty of nothing."
- **15th March 2016:** controversy erupts over 'Islamist' Moazzam Begg being hosted at an anti-Prevent event.

BRISTOL:

- **13th April 2016:** an open letter signed by over 70 people was sent to the University of Bristol's Senate protesting against Prevent.

WARWICK:

- **11th March 2016:** a staff assembly passed a motion condemning Prevent.
- **17th April 2016:** the university's updated plan rejected the "desirability, let alone the feasibility, of implementing a proactive filtering system".

OXFORD:

- **31st October 2015:** OUSU passes motion mandating: "OUSU Officers to not co-operate with the Prevent strategy or serve on any bodies overseeing the implementation of Prevent, and to boycott it as far as legally possible."
- **16th January 2016:** VC Louise Richardson criticises Prevent: "whole groups of students may see themselves as being suspect. The Prevent legislation is not explicitly anti-Islamist but it's widely perceived to be directed against extreme Islamists and I worry that Islamic students would feel that they are suspect."
- **12th February 2016:** St Hilda's JCR passed a motion mandating JCR officers "not to co-operate with the Prevent strategy" and to "boycott it as far as legally possible"



Students protest Prevent at the University of Salford

surveillance?

with a discussion to take place soon at Senate House, and with explores what's going on.



SIMON LOCK

that a student studying fundamentalism could not look at ISIS propaganda without being visited by Special Branch.

“[This] confirms our suspicions that the government’s Prevent agenda is quickly turning students into suspects.”

“If we’re not careful, the Prevent strategy could end up preventing the wrong thing – learning about, critiquing and ultimately defeating terrorism – and could lead to the criminalisation of study”, he continued.

There was further controversy surrounding Prevent in February, when the UK’s terror watchdog called for an independent review of the government’s counter-terrorism strategy.

David Anderson Q.C., an Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, raised his concern that

elements of the Prevent strategy were “ineffective or being applied in an insensitive or discriminatory manner”.

“

THE GOVERNMENT’S PREVENT AGENDA IS QUICKLY TURNING STUDENTS INTO SUSPECTS

“[T]he lack of confidence in aspects of the Prevent programme, particularly but not exclusively among Muslims, is undeniable”, he stated.

In response, the Students Not Suspects Campaign, organised by the NUS and its Black Student’s Campaign

to “campaign against this discriminatory Prevent duty and to achieve its repeal”, published an open letter containing an “urgent call” for the legislation’s repeal.

The letter, which has over 400 signatories, including academics from around the world, accused Prevent of “undermining the very ethos and relationships of mutual trust and openness that are fundamental to education and our public services whilst endangering other legal rights and protections.”

This was followed by a debate at the Association of University Administrators’ (AUA) annual conference last month, in which delegates voted roughly two to one in support of the motion that the duties implemented by Prevent “endanger freedom of expression and contribute to a long-term decline in academic liberty”.

Student unions frozen without council mandates

Louis Ashworth

Senior Investigation Editor

The legislation does not extend to cover student unions, but the official ‘Prevent’ guidance says that the government “expect student unions and societies to work closely with their institution and cooperate with the institutions’ policies”.

Priscilla Mensah, CUSU’s President, has said that the student union “does not currently have a political position on the Prevent Legislation; a political position on Prevent would have to be decided by students through CUSU Council”.

She added that she will be initiating a “student-led Prevent group, which will meet for the first time in Easter Term,” on 4th May. She said that this “Prevent Taskforce” will be a place for “society, College and Faculty representatives to discuss with the GU and CUSU Presidents concerns about how Prevent is being implemented on the ground”.

Mensah added: “It is imperative that students are made aware of, and understand the facts about how the Prevent legislation will impact Higher Education institutions. CUSU’s main concern is ensuring that no student, student group or society is negatively impacted by the university and colleges’ legal commitment to Prevent. I urge students to get in touch if they would like more information or clarification on the Duty”.

Graduate Union (GU) President Chad Allen expressed his personal antipathy towards the Prevent strategy, but emphasised that the GU’s hands were tied with regards to action.

“To be very clear,” he said, “the GU has no formal policy on the Prevent strategy, as our Council have not made one. Obviously, the GU is subject to laws made by Parliament, and we’ll comply with them. That being said, my personal view is that the Prevent strategy is misguided and counterproductive and I am very happy to participate in the burgeoning anti-Prevent movement at Cambridge”.

Asked whether he was satisfied with the level of student representation on the university Prevent committee, Allen said: “Ideally, we’d have some representation from students outside

CUSU and the GU – particularly from students active in societies which will be affected. However, I understand why all those put under a legal duty by Prevent are obliged to be members; and this makes the committee already very large”.

“Pris[cilla Mensah], Amatey [Doku] and I will just have to make sure we fulfil our responsibility to represent students by engaging with and acting as the voice of those affected by the legislation.”

Council minutes say that the university “would suggest that Prevent training for elected officers and staff of Student Unions should be provided through the National Union of Students”.

“

A POLITICAL POSITION ON PREVENT WOULD HAVE TO BE DECIDED BY STUDENTS

Mensah told *Varsity* that “CUSU will likely seek to have one member of the Students’ Unions’ Advice Service complete the Prevent training in the course of the next academic year.”

Allen was more ambivalent about the value of spending money on training.

“We’ve both considered it and sought advice from the university,” the Graduate Union President said. “Just to be on the safe side, the appropriate members of the GU team will be taking the recommended free online training courses”.

“I can’t see any benefit in spending any more time or money on additional training,” Allen added.

Speaking in a personal capacity, Allen said that “The Prevent strategy is yet another case of the Home Office following their trademark ‘something must be done, this is something, this must be done’ line of reasoning”.

“Prevent is little more than dog-whistling; if the government really wanted to prevent radicalisation it wouldn’t be promulgating regulation which alienates BME and Muslim students by treating them as suspects”.

Poor food hygiene reports for several student favourites

Louis Ashworth

Senior Investigations Editor

Several cafes and restaurants frequented by Cambridge students have recently received low ratings for food hygiene, *Varsity* can reveal.

Under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS), all food businesses receive a score between 0 and 5. Five is the highest, while a 0 indicates that the business's hygiene standards represent a risk to public health.

45 businesses in the Cambridge City area received ratings of 1 or 2, which denote respectively that "major improvement" or "improvement" is necessary. There are currently none in Cambridge with a score of 0.

Michaelhouse Cafe, situated on Trinity Street opposite Gonville and Caius's Porters' Lodge, received a rating of 1: "major improvement necessary", reported an inspection last September.

Its owner, Bill Sewell, spoke to *Varsity* about what had led to the rating. He said that the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) "visited us when we had just had a large new oven installed and we hadn't finished sorting out the new arrangements".

Sewell said that the "cleaning [was] not good enough in the kitchen on the day we were visited", and that they "had a deep clean immediately" and "refreshed and re-emphasised" cleaning procedures following the report. He also said that temperature control records had not been completed, and that labelling was "not always



adequate".

Sewell said: "On all these areas we are monitoring our progress to ensure that our operation is in excellent shape and that we achieve an improved rating when we are next visited".

"I'm really surprised – I'd always thought Michaelhouse was clean and well-managed," a Linguistics student told *Varsity*. "I hope they use this as a chance to rectify things. Just goes to show that maybe it's best to keep an eye out for those stars in the window, and get suspicious if they're not on display."

Caffè Nero on King's Parade received a rating of 2 ("improvement necessary"), at an inspection at the start of March. A student favourite, the coffee house is situated opposite King's Chapel.

Despite repeated promises from the

manager and assistant manager that they would give a response, Caffè Nero did not reply to *Varsity's* requests for comment.

Clare College received a rating of 3, "generally satisfactory", last September, while St John's and Corpus Christi received ratings of 4, an EHO designation of "good", in February and November respectively. All of Cambridge's other colleges received ratings of 5 in recent inspections.

The Golden Curry Tandoori and Ocean Supermarket on Mill Road, Coffee Tree Cambridge, by Aldi, and Kang Qiao, by the Grafton Centre, have all received ratings of 1 within the past six months.

Fans of Cambridge nightlife will be pleased to hear that The Gardenia and the food van Uncle Frank's both received the top rating of 5.

Two businesses linked to the university recently received low ratings: Origin8, in the Faculty of Education, and the Langley Larder cafe at the Post Graduate Medical Centre, both of which received ratings of 1.

Origin8 was recently re-inspected, and received a new rating of 5.

"The Origin8 cafe has always struck me as slightly overpriced," a first-year Education student told *Varsity*, "which from a value for money angle makes finding out about its low hygiene rating in September quite shocking."

"I know it's a business external to the university that runs it, and this suggests to me that the university should perhaps more closely monitor its functioning."

In a statement, a University spokesperson said: "The University takes food safety very seriously. As soon as we are made aware that contractors have received a one-star rating we make arrangements for our own independent food safety consultants to visit to ensure the high standards we expect are maintained."

"The Langley Larder outlet at the Post Graduate Medical Centre, which

had held a 5-star rating until this report, has now made changes to its operation and a better inspection report is expected.

"We set high standards for the way our contractors run food outlets throughout the University and expect a 4-star rating or above from all of them."

In Wales, restaurants must display their hygiene rating or face a fine; this is not yet the case for those in England.

CB2 Bistro, which is located near Anglia Ruskin University, received a rating of two.

A spokesperson for the restaurant said: "Last year we have been through lots of changes which weren't ready yet at the time when we had our inspection."

They told *Varsity* that CB2 Bistro now has a new manager, "have changed a lot", and resolved "all of [their] problems".

"I can surely state that those problems will never happen again. We take everything more strict [sic] now," the spokesperson said.



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Union debates NUS disaffiliation

Julius Haswell

News Correspondent

On Thursday evening, the Cambridge Union played host to an overwhelming victory for the campaign calling for CUSU to disaffiliate itself from NUS. The emergency debate, which was only decided upon on Wednesday, read: "This house would disaffiliate from the NUS", and saw proposers Connor MacDonald and Oriyan Prizant win compellingly over the opposition.

The debate was sparked by the recent election of Malia Bouattia to the presidential position of the National Union of Students, having drawn much criticism for alleged anti-Semitic views and connections with Islamic extremists.

The proposition mainly focused their arguments around Bouattia's stance towards Jewish students, with Oriyan Prizant saying that "Malia Bouattia is a bigot. She is a bigot filled with hate." He went on to say that NUS is a union that is meant to represent students' interests, including international students, but instead says to Israeli students "we are no longer representing you – we are boycotting you."

However, his most powerful

criticism of NUS and Bouattia came towards the end of his allotted time, where he condemned Bouattia for indicating that "Yazidis are not human enough to merit human rights."

Connor MacDonald, an NUS delegate himself, also criticised NUS for its hard-left political stance, saying that the union no longer dealt with the interests of students, but focussed on pedalling a left-wing ideology.

MacDonald went on to call for full disaffiliation, as he believed NUS does not want to debate with anyone, and actively ensures that those people who disagree with them do not have a platform.

He said: "The student Left does not want to debate," and indicated that the union will shut down "anyone who dares challenge their iron grip."

The idea that NUS is an organisation in need of change was also taken on by the opposition, particularly by Olly Hudson, also an NUS delegate, who said publicly about the NUS conference that "Anti-Semitism is the scourge of the student movement and the willingness of some to speak over the lived experiences of Jewish students in the most powerful forum of student

democracy has both shocked and scared me."

He said how he was disgusted that anti-Semitic ideas were applauded at NUS's conference, and how the commemorations for Holocaust Memorial Day were voted against as it gave privilege to Jewish students.

However, he criticised those students who now came out against NUS, saying that "those who want to disengage have never engaged."

He called for faith in students to change NUS, saying that the fight for the changes was "not a fight that's going to be won by throwing toys out of the pram."

Angus Satow, second opposition speaker also called for students to change NUS, not abandon it, as he said that students' rights are under attack like never before, and are in need of a union to protect them.

He received heckles from the floor, however, when he indicated that students shouldn't relapse on student unions because of the actions of one person.

He went on to say that he did not believe that Malia Bouattia was a bigot, as her speech was centred around liberation; an idea which was met again with murmurs from his audience.

Cambridge could scrap free parking for staff

Kaya Wong

Senior News Correspondent

University of Cambridge staff would no longer get free parking under a proposal being considered by a university 'Car Parking Working Group' tasked with tackling congestion in the city.

The working group, chaired by Professor Eilis Ferran, pro-Vice-Chancellor for Institutional and International Relations, is undertaking early consultation with staff members regarding whether the proposals should be taken forward.

It is hoped that the measure, in addition to alleviating the severe congestion problems that the city face, would help Cambridge "become a world-leading university for sustainable travel".

The parking spaces are currently free to use for staff members who have obtained a permit, which are currently awarded according to a strict list of eight priorities.

Currently, research and other students are not granted parking rights, with undergraduates not allowed to keep cars while studying at Cambridge.

Other proposals being considered

to encourage sustainable travel include extending cycleways, expanding the guided bus network, constructing a new highway, and introducing a congestion charge zone modelled on that of London.

Congestion is considered a serious problem in Cambridge, with various incidents in recent years resulting from a lack of proper traffic infrastructure.

“

**MAJOR COMPANIES WILL
LEAVE CAMBRIDGE UNLESS
SOMETHING IS DONE**

According to a report by Cambridge Futures, an independent not-for-profit group that studies alternative methods of development in the Cambridge Sub-Region, the city's rapid economic growth has far outpaced the development and renewal of its transport infrastructure.

Even though the population of the city has been maintained at just over 100,000 since the start of the

millennium, the city's surrounding towns and villages have also experienced rapid growth, leading to an ever-increasing number of commuters, including staff members of the university that reside outside of Cambridge.

It is further anticipated that the proposed building of 42,000 homes and the creation of 50,000 new jobs in the region will further burden the transport system, the repercussions of which could reduce the quality of life for residents and even cast its shadow over the local economy.

"The population growth in surrounding villages and market towns has been amongst the highest in the country," notes the Cambridge Futures report. "As a result there is a daily influx of workers from outside the city: this outnumbers the resident workers. Traffic congestion has grown as a result of more people commuting by car, causing delays, accidents and pollution: their dispersed origins mean that public transport is unviable for many of these journeys."

The report also warned: "There is a danger that an increasing number of major companies will leave Cambridge unless something is done about transport."

A university spokesman said: "These



Free staff parking is under threat, as Cambridge reviews policy

proposals will consider the relative merits of charging for car-parking on university sites, with the aim of ensuring that any new policy adheres to the principles of equality, flexibility, accessibility, and considers how the university can contribute to reducing

congestion and carbon emissions generated from commuting and business travel.

"Any proposed policy changes would be subject to a thorough staff consultation process as well as scrutiny by the relevant university committees."

Ridley Hall dismisses links to Panama Papers

**Anna Menin &
Louis Ashworth**

Ridley Hall has distanced itself from documents apparently showing an alumna using its address in dealings with an offshore firm.

Documents as part of the 'Panama Papers' show that the theological college's address was used as the operational address for a client sundry account in the name of Chan Ee Teng, also known as Felicia. These accounts are used by offshore services firms to record miscellaneous charges of an officer or master client.

Chan is a "master client" of an offshore company, DrewXander Ltd, one of the registered addresses of which is Portcullis TrustNet in the British Virgin Islands. She is also a master client of the similarly named DrewXander Trust, which is connected to three "shell companies", Execorp, Managocorp and Sharecorp, all of which have Portcullis TrustNet as a listed address, as well links to numerous other companies listed in the leaked documents.

A *Guardian* investigation from 2013 found that the Portcullis TrustNet address has been used as part of tax avoidance schemes. It is linked to the Portcullis Group, a wealth management company.

As well as the British Virgin Islands, Portcullis Group also has offices in the Cayman Islands, the Seychelles, Samoa, Singapore, and the Cook Islands, among others. It claims: "Our international network gives us the reach and ability to provide a multitude of services in a variety of regulated jurisdictions, bringing advantages in terms of cost, convenience and efficiency."

Ridley Hall, on Sidgwick Avenue, is one of the theological colleges closely linked to the University of Cambridge. Though not formally part of the

university, many of its graduates have their degrees provided by Cambridge.

Jo Kibble, the college's bursar, thanked *Varsity* for bringing the situation to her attention, and said that "no one at Ridley Hall was aware that the college's name and address was being used as the operational address for the account in question".

Kibble said that the college has "discovered that the account belonged to a former independent student". Chan studied Christian Theology between 2007 and 2009. She said that Ridley Hall has "no affiliation" to Chan. She also said that "Ridley Hall has no links to the DrewXander Trust, nor to Portcullis TrustNet Chamber". When contacted by *Varsity*, Chan said: "The master client list stated on ICIJ website is outdated and inaccurate".

"In fact this information was stolen from my lawyer's office in Singapore and used in the 'Panama papers'. A police report has been lodged in Singapore process [sic] against the perpetrator of the stolen data."



Ridley Hall

She said: "I am not a UK resident and has [sic] never been. Whatever taxes that were required to be paid in the UK have been paid". It is unknown whether Chan's use of the address could affect Ridley Hall's charitable status. The bursar did not reply to *Varsity's* request for comment on this matter.

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News in Brief

DEATH AND LATTES

Cambridge hosts Death Café

Cambridge has been playing host to a 'Death Café' on a monthly basis, as people have met at CB2, on the corner of Norfolk Street, armed with a hot beverage and a slice of cake to discuss the topic of death.

Since Jon Underwood first held a Death Café in London five years ago, they have spread to over 33 countries.

CAMBRIDGE ERECTS WOODEN TOWER

Wooden tower to be built in London by Cambridge

Researchers from the University of Cambridge, alongside designers from PLP Architecture, have proposed a 300-metre-tall skyscraper in London.

Offering an alternative to traditional steel and concrete designs, the tower was presented to London mayor Boris Johnson earlier this month. The building would represent an addition to the Barbican housing estate.

PROJECT SUPERSPIN

Cambridge super-computer gets £2.7m funding

The University of Cambridge will be leading a project to build an energy-efficient, high-performance super-computer.

The scheme, titled 'Project Superspin', has been awarded £2.7 million by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. It hopes to produce prototype memory and logic devices by 2021.

'THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN BEING REALLY, REALLY RIDICULOUSLY GOOD-LOOKING'

King's College battles its image problem

King's College is hardly unphotogenic, but it is reportedly struggling to find pictures of its students just being normal human beings. In order to counteract "an abundance of pictures of King's students attending formals and ents," King's College Student Union's (KCSU) Access Officers sent out an email over the Easter break asking for photographic submissions.

In the email, KCSU Access Officers Nina Grossfurthner and Fraser Alcock said they wanted more photos of students doing "perfectly mundane things". The photos are destined to be used on the CUSU page for the college, in an attempt to broaden the college's appeal to prospective students.



The Week in Numbers

£112m

The amount Cambridge could have saved if it had divested three years ago, according to Zero Carbon

38 per cent

The potential pay rise that the next VC could get in comparison to the current incumbent, according to proposals

215

The number of points Peterhouse scored as they romped to victory in the University Challenge final

YOU'RE PULLING MY FIN!

Human limbs evolved from sharks' gills

Research by Cambridge zoologists has backed up a formerly discredited theory suggesting that hands, arms, feet and legs in humans may have evolved from the gills and fins of sharks, skates, and rays.

The study, co-authored by Dr Andrew Gillis, has found that a so-called 'Sonic the Hedgehog gene' is responsible for the growth of the protein needed for these cartilaginous limbs. The theory was first put forward by the German anatomist Karl Gegenbaur in 1878.

'DAMN INTERESTING' ROMANS

Beard receives Bodleian gong

The University of Oxford's Bodleian Library has awarded its highest honour, the Bodley Medal, to the Cambridge classicist Mary Beard. Professor Beard, Cambridge's Chair of Classics, the classics editor at the *Times Literary Supplement*, and an award-winning writer, was described as "a prodigious scholarly phenomenon" by the Bodleian Librarian Richard Ovenden.

The award recognises contributions to "literature, culture, science and communication", and Beard accepted it "on behalf of myself and on behalf of the Romans".

Rally for Regeni demands answers

Protest will question lack of transparency in Egypt's investigation into Cambridge student's death

Daniel Gayne

Senior News Correspondent

A 'Truth for Giulio Regeni' rally is due to take place today, protesting the lack of transparency in the Egyptian investigation into the murder of the Cambridge student brutally murdered in Cairo in January.

The event, organised by Cambridge University Amnesty International, Amnesty International Cambridge City Group, and supported by the Egypt Solidarity Initiative, criticises the Egyptian regime for its lack of transparency regarding the investigation into the murder of Italian student Giulio Regeni.

Despite Egypt agreeing to reopen the case, tensions with Italy have continued to rise. After two days of meetings in Rome failed to yield results,

Italy withdrew its ambassador to Cairo, Maurizio Massari, on 8th April. The following day, Egyptian authorities sparked further controversy by refusing to hand phone records over to Italian investigators.

Liesbeth ten Ham, chair of Amnesty International Cambridge City Group, linked the incident to the human rights failings of the al-Sisi regime in Egypt, which gained power by coup in 2013.

"What happened to Giulio Regeni was truly appalling," she said. "We're deeply worried that the Egyptian authorities are attempting to cover up his death."

In the UK, petitions launched by colleagues and friends of Regeni in the UK have already prompted action. After one petition to the UK government gained 10,000 signatories, the Foreign Office called for a full and

transparent investigation.

CUSU, former Liberal Democrat MP Julian Huppert, Daniel Zeichner and other groups had all previously called for a robust inquiry into his murder.

“

'GIULIO WAS ALMOST CERTAINLY MURDERED BY THE EGYPTIAN SECURITY FORCES'

But the Egyptian government has drawn criticism for a perceived long silence and slow response.

The *Middle East Eye* reported that Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond had written to David Cameron as early as 24th March expressing concerns over the Egyptian government's handling of the case, leading some to suggest that the government is prioritising business over criticising the country's human rights record.

Before the Foreign Office's call for an investigation, Crispin Blunt, Conservative Chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, said that there was a perception that ministers had "deprioritised human rights".

Daniel Zeichner MP, who will be attending today's rally, called the government's response "wholly inadequate".

"Our government should be standing up for academic freedom, not trading it off against short-term economic

considerations," he said.

Dr Anne Alexander, a former colleague of Regeni's, told the BBC: "It should not take 10,000 signatures on a petition to make the government speak out and add its voice to those who are calling for an independent investigation into his brutal murder."

"We hear constantly about how UK businesses can benefit from the close ties between the British and Egyptian governments. Yet when a PhD student from Cambridge is tortured and killed, ministers seem reluctant to say anything critical of the Egyptian authorities."

Regeni, who was tortured over several days, is believed to have borne injuries which are the hallmarks of Egyptian state violence. According to Paz Zarate, an international lawyer and former colleague of Regeni, "Giulio was almost certainly murdered by the Egyptian security forces."

A university spokesperson expressed support for "all calls for justice in the case of Giulio Regeni" and said that the university had written to the Italian government, making plain to them that "we share their concerns at the failures of the Egyptian authorities".

Members of the university, including Professor Eilis Ferran, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Institutional and International Relations, Professor Susan Smith, the Mistress of Girton College, and Professor David Runciman, the Head of Department at POLIS, also sent a letter to the Italian authorities expressing their support for the Italian government "in its

continuing pursuit for the truth and its desire to see a thorough and rigorous investigation".

Today's rally will begin at 15:30p.m. on King's Parade, and is expected to last half an hour.

Timeline

25th January – Regeni goes missing

3rd February – Regeni's body found in a ditch outside Cairo

16th February – CUSU Emergency motion passed demanding full investigation

24th March – Egyptian police kill four gang members suspected of Regeni murder in shoot out

8th April – Italy recalls ambassador after second day of talks in Rome

9th April – Egypt rejects request for phone records

12th April – UK advocates a full and transparent investigation

13th April – Relatives of accused gang are summoned for questioning

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Neanderthals: victims of human disease?

Sarah Foster

Science Correspondent

Disease infections have had a profound impact on human history, from large-scale epidemics like the Bubonic Plague, which wiped out a third of Europe's population in the mid-14th century, to the less deadly ailments that irritate us on a daily basis. Diseases also affect us in more intimate ways. As we evolve alongside pathogens, our genomes change: genetic variants that provide resistance are preserved while weaker ones die out. Understanding which infectious diseases plagued the first humans is no simple task, as much of the remaining artifacts from tens of thousands of years ago are fossilised bone. However, a growing number of high-quality genome sequences from Neanderthals and other early hominins (a term encompassing humans and their closest ancestors) have provided researchers with an immense repository of information, revealing that some infectious diseases are perhaps far older than previously thought.

The Neanderthals, who inhabited Eurasia from around 250,000-28,000 years ago, were hunter-gatherers who lived in small bands of 15-30 individuals. Such conditions, it has been postulated, were unsuited to the rampant proliferation of infectious diseases. In fact, it has been claimed that infectious diseases exploded long after the Neanderthals had been replaced by anatomically modern humans who migrated out of Africa and outcompeted Neanderthals and other hominins in Eurasia. Disease and pestilence exploded, the argument goes, with the onset of animal domestication and agriculture around 8,000 years ago, when large and dense populations living in proximity created the ideal conditions for diseases to jump from livestock and spread quickly throughout vulnerable populations.

A paper by Cambridge's Charlotte Houldcroft and Simon Underdown of Oxford Brookes University synthesises evidence from pathogen genomes,

early hominin genomes, and evidence from bones and other artifacts to propose an update to this paradigm. The authors argue it was likely that many diseases infected hominins far earlier than previously thought, and therefore that the agricultural era perhaps affected the dynamics of existing diseases more so than promoting the widespread emergence of novel human pathogens.

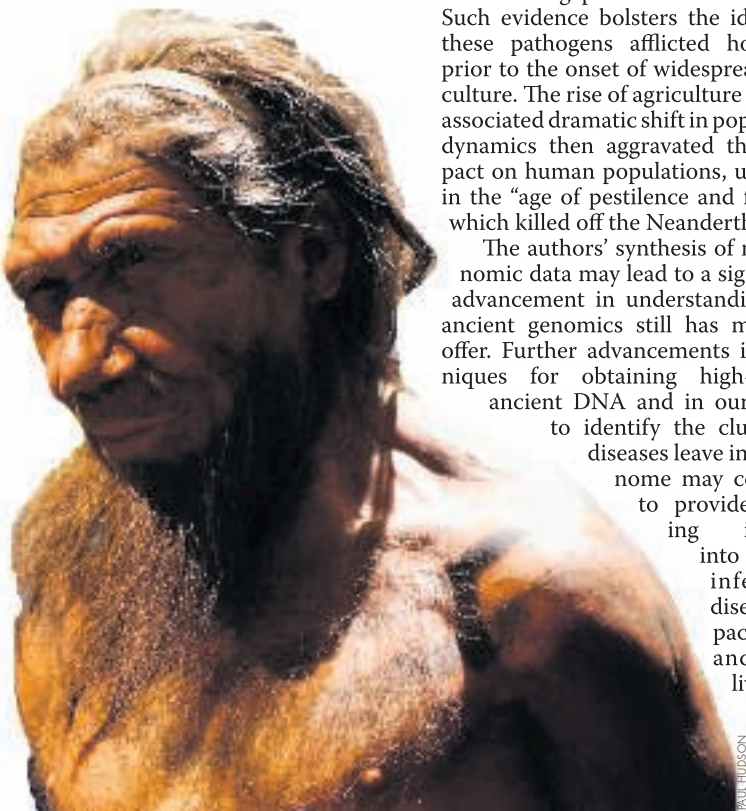
The story goes as follows: early humans migrated from Africa to Eurasia, carrying with them African diseases, and in their new home our ancestors encountered Neanderthals who carried a different subset of infectious diseases. Neanderthals and humans interbred – humans who are not of African descent carry around two per cent Neanderthal DNA – and almost certainly exchanged diseases. Exposure to the wave of unfamiliar pathogens carried out of Africa by humans probably contributed to the demise of the Eurasian

Neanderthal population.

Detailed comparisons of modern human genomes with those of Neanderthals have revealed small bits of genetic information related to infection and immunity that researchers believe made their way into the human genome through interbreeding with Neanderthals. By conferring increased resistance to the new suite of diseases that humans encountered as they moved into Eurasia, these bits of Neanderthal DNA may have conferred an advantage on the humans carrying them, and therefore remained in the gene pool. In particular, researchers found Neanderthal-derived genetic variants protective against tick-borne encephalitis virus and bacterial sepsis in the modern human genome.

Some diseases thought to have been transmitted from animals to humans, such as the bacteria that cause typhoid and whooping cough, had actually been co-evolving with hominins long before being passed on to livestock. Such evidence bolsters the idea that these pathogens afflicted hominins prior to the onset of widespread agriculture. The rise of agriculture and the associated dramatic shift in population dynamics then aggravated their impact on human populations, ushering in the "age of pestilence and famine" which killed off the Neanderthals.

The authors' synthesis of new genomic data may lead to a significant advancement in understanding, but ancient genomics still has much to offer. Further advancements in techniques for obtaining high-quality ancient DNA and in our ability to identify the clues that diseases leave in the genome may continue to provide exciting insights into how infectious disease impacted our ancestors' lives.



'Sexy' genes behind age of losing virginity identified

James Fraser

Science Correspondent

Losing one's virginity – specifically, the age at which one does so – has become something of a hot topic among adolescents in the 21st century. Most research on sexual behaviour so far has concentrated on socioeconomic and cultural factors; perhaps unsurprisingly, many such correlations have been established.

Younger age at first sexual intercourse has been linked to social disadvantage, family instability, and lack of religious affiliation, not to mention the strong influence of one's peers. However, analysis of genomic data published in *Nature Genetics* this week points to considerable chromosomal sway over such milestones.

Researchers at the University of Cambridge's Medical Research Council Epidemiology Unit surveyed the DNA of over 125,000 people in the UK aged 40 to 69, and found 38 gene variants associated with the age of first sexual intercourse.

These so-called Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms (SNPs – alterations to just one unit of the genetic blueprint) affected two broad types of gene. The first group encoded substances with roles in the onset of puberty and reproductive development in general, including the oestrogen receptor. This might have been expected, given that sexual activity typically follows pubescence.

Interestingly, the second set contained a number of genes involved in brain development and thus personality. *CADM2*, for instance, is involved in adhesion between neuronal cells and linked to a propensity for risk-taking.

This week's paper demonstrated significant correlation between the population distribution of an SNP in *CADM2* and the number of sexual partners, number of children, and the age at which virginity was lost. Conversely, an SNP in *MRSA*, a gene implicated in levels of irritability, was

observed to delay an individual's first act of intercourse. The links here seem plausible: engaging in sexual activity with more people and at a younger age could indeed be described as 'risky' behaviour, and a short temper is unlikely to get one's cherry popped.

The team ultimately concluded that roughly 25 per cent of the observed variation in sexual behaviour could be attributed to these genetic differences.

Nevertheless, Dr John Perry, a lead author of the paper, stressed that environmental factors were still extremely important and proposed more research "to show exactly how these genes help regulate the timing of the reproductive milestones".

Crucially, the large-scale study was made possible through UK Biobank, a registered charity based in Greater Manchester that was set up in 2006 to monitor physical and genetic changes in around 500,000 volunteers over the course of several decades. The researchers at Cambridge obtained their DNA samples from UK Biobank and were also able to verify their findings using similar databases in Iceland and the US.

As such, their study is representative of a wider movement in science and healthcare to isolate the root causes of an individual's well-being or illness from a wealth of confounding factors by looking at broad epidemiological patterns.

Perry's investigations have revealed "that individuals who go through puberty at younger ages have higher risks of many diseases of old age, such as diabetes, heart disease and breast cancer". Similarly, he writes, "first sexual intercourse at an earlier age is linked to a number of adverse behavioural, educational and health outcomes".

He supports the notion of future efforts to prevent early puberty, which is often brought on by poor nutrition and childhood obesity. Such views, backed up by meticulous research, herald a new era of medicine that is anticipatory rather than solely remedial, and personalised rather than prescriptive.

Survival of the dumbest: the (un)importance of intelligence



NEUROPOP

WITH
JOY

THOMPSON

We humans are unimpressive candidates for planetary domination: we're weak, defenceless, and can't

even outrun other top predators. Instead, the argument goes, we gained an unprecedented degree of evolutionary success through brain power alone. So why aren't creative and learning abilities – supposed hallmarks of human intelligence – more common in nature? (Not to mention the large brain accompanying them.) If intelligence were really a foolproof route to evolutionary success, we might expect big brains to be in the majority. However, this isn't the case. Although some animals are capable of feats of complex learning and memory, many others have managed perfectly well over millennia with tiny brains.

At this point we might ask if intelligence is really that useful. For some species, the answer can be 'not very'. Depending on the context, the evolutionary cost of intelligence may outweigh its benefits. Several years ago, Tadeusz Kawecki's research group created populations of fast-learning fruit flies. Fruit flies are one of the best organisms in which to study

evolutionary processes: they breed prolifically and, most importantly, have a short generation time, which allows human researchers to track changes in a population over a practical time frame. They taught groups of flies to associate a particular scent with unpleasant stimuli and only bred those that learned to avoid the scent. The super-smart descendants of these flies learned faster, but their improved ability to learn came at a cost: they did not succeed against a line of normal flies when competing for limited food, and died more quickly when deprived of water. In some cases, the researchers even found that greater learning ability was associated with decreased lifespan. They also found that another line of flies, selected for longevity, were 40 per cent worse at learning in early life than normal flies.

These drawbacks of higher intelligence may reflect the investment of energy in maintaining more neural connections and, perhaps, a larger brain. Certainly it seems that while

greater intelligence may enhance survival in some situations, it can be downright detrimental in others (at least in laboratory populations). Natural selection would only favour increased intelligence in populations where its total benefits are greater than its cost. If such environments are comparatively rare, perhaps this is why most animals have remained with comparatively small brains over time.

Such results force us to rethink our perspective on creativity, learning, and all the mental processes supposedly 'essential' for our evolutionary success. It may be better for us to describe intelligence as one survival strategy among many. Even though it may allow an animal to discover a better food source or alternative ways of attracting mates, creativity can still lead to time being wasted on experiments that don't work (as every science PhD student will attest). It's also true that creativity and innovation are most often used to solve problems when things are

going badly, at least for human endeavours. However, this also seems to be true across the natural world, and animals that would otherwise be evolutionary losers tend to innovate the most. For example, if you were a low-ranking individual in a group and had less access to food, searching for novel food sources might be the only way for you to survive during a drought. Perhaps the evolutionary story of human intelligence isn't actually one of brilliant individuals outstripping others, but of losers struggling to survive.



UNIVERSITY INTRODUCING



NINEB LAMASSU is a poet and PhD candidate at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

Why did you have to flee from Iraq and where did you live afterwards?

I was born into an Assyrian family in Kirkuk, in the north of Iraq. Throughout the history of the modern state of Iraq, Assyrians have been persecuted as the indigenous people and so my family found itself obliged to flee when I was seven years old: my father was actually arrested for being a political activist. It took us about 10 days, walking day and night in the mountains, until we made it to Iran, where we lived in refugee camps. After that we were granted refugee status in New Zealand, and then we moved to Australia. My grandfather was a technocrat employed by the British and when this ended, he was offered citizenship in Australia. I married in Australia and moved to the UK at the end of 2000. I then lived in London, and for the last three or four years, in Cambridge.

What have you been working on in the UK?

After completing degrees at SOAS and UCL, I did an MPhil in Cambridge on Modern Assyrian. I am now a PhD student working on the docu-

mentation of one of the Assyrian dialects which is an endangered language according to UNESCO: working to document it is what I am doing with my PhD. I am also employed by the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies as a research assistant.

Do you think the presentation of the Syrian refugee crisis by the Western media has been fair?

I wouldn't go to fair or unfair, but I would start with terminology. Calling these people migrants is wrong. There is a difference between a migrant and a refugee. For example: a well-to-do British person who does not like British weather and goes to buy a house in Portugal is a migrant. Somebody whose entire house, neighbourhood, city, has been demolished to rubble, who has to flee for his or her life to secure a reasonable future for their offspring, is not a migrant. They are a refugee.

I think the British public in general feel sympathetic about what has been happening but unfortunately the rhetoric has been hijacked by opportunist politicians to instil fear, that 'they are coming to take our jobs' and 'coming to



HANMURABI BARHY

take our land', but if we look through history, every time there has been a mass migration to a country, it has led to the enrichment of that country. If it wasn't for migration, we wouldn't have this beautiful mosaic of cuisines – we wouldn't have the word 'bungalow' or 'pyjamas' – so migration has always benefited the host country. But they have to find a way of integrating these waves of populations instead of side-lining them, because that is where the fear lies. We should not fear these people: they are not ISIS, they are fleeing ISIS. We should be careful, maybe, that is natural, but we should embrace these people and help them to integrate.

What are some of the broad themes and ideas behind your poetry?

There is a school of thought which says

that if you read a poem, the poet should not be in it: I respect that, but I am not one of those poets. I am my poetry, my poetry is me. For somebody who was born an Assyrian in Iraq, I 'did not exist' because of the nationalistic Arab policies. My language was prohibited, so reviving it is very important for me. A longing for something or someone that is gone, lost and cannot be retrieved is also an important theme. I really don't have a sense of belonging, whether in Iraq or Cambridge, Australia or New Zealand. So what I do is I create that home in my language. Through the process of using my language, I create a mental, abstract space in which I live. Only then do I feel a sense of belonging. I don't like to use 'Assyrian' as an identifier; I'm more comfortable being identified by my language than by my ethnicity, because at the bottom line we are all humans. But language to me is important, especially my language, which is endangered. I feel a duty to create – to coin terms in it – in order to fight what is considered its imminent fate.

Why do you translate your poems into English?

Poetry and literature are the means you use to make the cases of certain people and certain languages, and create awareness for them, which is why I translate my poetry. So, for example, if I'm writing about the suffering of Assyrian people, of course I write it in Assyrian because I want to reflect their ordeals and prolong the life of

their language. But the Assyrian people already know what is happening to them, so by translating the poetry I have written about them, I can raise the issue with the general public. The Palestinians have some great poets, like Mahmoud Dawish, who achieve greater good for the Palestinian cause than suicide bombers and hijackers because poetry creates friends and solidarity. Translating the works of the Palestinians and Assyrians, or any peoples being persecuted, is therefore very important.

Are there any differences between your poetry when it is written in Assyrian and when it is translated?

Of course. Robert Frost said that "poetry is what gets lost in translation," and the translations of my poems will never fully match the original text. Wordplay cannot be translated. Accents cannot be transposed either, yet they change meanings. You have to change the writing, but that's okay because the wording is not as important as the idea, the semantics behind the words.

What are your plans beyond your PhD?

I have just released my poetry collection, and I'm actually in the process of doing book-signings around Europe for the small Assyrian community that we have scattered. I've got two more publications in type-set. In terms of academic aspirations, I really would like to stay in Cambridge and initiate some kind of lecture series on the modern Assyrian language. That way, we can work towards the preservation and nurturing of the language for generations to come. That would be my ultimate dream.

Nineb was speaking to Joanna Taylor

Ben Miller: Cambridge “pulls back the curtain from the Wizard of Oz”

Eleanor Costello asks the actor and comedian about aliens, alienation, and almost leaving St Catharine's after matriculation

Ben Miller is probably best known as one half of *The Armstrong and Miller Show*, but he has also acted in prime-time TV dramas such as *Primeval*, *Death in Paradise* and *Doctor Who*. We were meeting to discuss a new twist in his career – as an author of non-fiction science books. I thought it was wise to confess straight away that I am an English student. “You'd be my ideal reader!” he cried. “My books are written for people that haven't studied science, but are curious about the world. I reckon I could explain this to someone who does English' is what was in my head most of the time.”

Miller has written two books, the first entitled *It's Not Rocket Science* and the second *The Aliens are Coming*. I asked him the obvious question – are aliens coming? “No,” was his succinct answer, laughing. “Well the aliens are coming, in the sense that I think within the next decade we will be able to tell whether there is any bacterial life on the nearest planets. There are probably a number of reasons why we haven't heard from any intelligent life.



COLIN THOMAS

One may be that there isn't any intelligent life out there, which seems unlikely. A more likely reason is that all intelligent life is too far away for communication. What is possible is that there is intelligent life close enough for communication, but it's not interested in communicating.”

I find it difficult to reconcile the man I'm speaking to, passionate about physics and evolution and philosophy, and the actor and comedian from the TV screen. Yet, Ben was originally a scientist. He studied Natural Sciences at Cambridge, before going on to read for a PhD in Physics. While studying for his PhD he joined the Footlights, and he eventually dropped out of university to pursue a career in comedy. I commented that this must

have been a hard decision. “Actually, dropping out wasn't difficult at all,” he corrects me. “When I was doing my PhD I very much felt that I'd found my calling, and that was to do comedy. I'm into science as a hobby, but I couldn't survive without comedy. I get so much benefit from comedy, it's a constant companion.”

In a sense, the book seems to be a culmination of his time at Cambridge as a scientist and a comedian: “I was incredibly lucky to go to Cambridge. It was such a formative experience for me. I went to St Catharine's. I love that college, and I still stay in touch. I came from a comprehensive school and there was no one else from my school at the university. It opened up a whole world for me.” Ben admits that it wasn't entirely easy initially to adjust.

“I was reading Natural Sciences, and there was very little time for anything else while you were doing that, in the first year particularly. As time went on and the workload decreased, I enjoyed all of it much more.” Miller explains, though, that “culturally it was still a huge adjustment. On the first day we were called to the dining room for a photograph, and the Head Porter looked me up-and-down and said ‘You can't be in the photograph in those shoes.’ I thought ‘Well, okay then, I won't be in the photograph.’ No one had explained to me that it was a matriculation photograph and that it

was such an important thing – I didn't know anything about Cambridge. So I went back to my room and I played my electric guitar, and I was playing it quite loudly in a ‘screw-you’ kind of way, and the Head Porter starts banging and banging on the door. I answered, and he said: “Where the hell are you? Everyone's waiting for you.” I said: “Well, you said I couldn't wear these shoes”, and he said: “Don't be an idiot and get down there now!”

He continued: “I walked down and

“**EVERYONE JEERED AND CLAPPED. IT WAS THE MOST ALIENATING EXPERIENCE.**”

the whole college was out, and I had to walk across the quadrangle. Everyone jeered and clapped. It was the most alienating experience. After that I really wanted to leave and go home, I thought that Cambridge just wasn't for me. So I was actually packing up my stuff when the porter came back. He said ‘I'm sorry, I didn't realise that you didn't know about matriculation dress. Just stay, for one more night.’ So I ended up staying for one more night, and then I ended up doing a PhD as well...”

Ultimately, his enthusiasm endured: “It was amazing, the whole experience was amazing.” He reflected in particular that “being part of Cambridge theatre was really what made me as a person, I think” – noting his good fortune in being able to count among his contemporaries David Farr, writer of critically acclaimed series *The Night Manager*, Rachel Weisz, and Doctor Who composer Murray Gold.

“They've all influenced me massively, and still do. I learnt so much from all of them. Mel and Sue were also here at the same time. I could go on and on. It's ridiculous. At the time we were just writing plays. David would write a play, Murray would write the music, Rachel would be in it, I'd be in it, Jez [Butterworth] would produce it. It was amazing.” I asked if he has any advice for today's students, or anyone trying to make it in comedy. His advice was simple. “Just don't give up. Don't give up.”

For Miller, a little over 30 years after matriculating, “one of the great gifts that Cambridge gives you is that it pulls back the curtain from the Wizard of Oz. Because you finally understand no one's going to hand it to you – the idea that there's a magical person out there who's going to ‘discover you’ – that's not going to happen. You need to write, produce, direct your own stuff. No one is going to give you a break but yourself.”

Comment

The election of Malia Bouattia is an insult



Noa Lessof-Gendler

We should not have to tolerate views like Bouattia's in our universities

I'd love to be celebrating the appointment of a black Muslim woman as NUS President. In many ways it's a fantastic achievement, and I recognise the struggle she must have gone through to get where she is now. But, unfortunately, I can't celebrate, because sometimes someone's identity isn't enough. Your politics also have to be in the interests of all minorities, and, shame though it is, Malia Bouattia's politics are not.

Bouattia has openly encouraged hatred and violence in the past. She has made it clear that she believes peace talks to be a waste of time and boycotts a "distraction" from real "resistance". In other words, non-violent methods of resolution aren't good enough. The fact that she's talking about the Israel-Palestine conflict is irrelevant – this is a vile attitude to take with regard to any situation. It shows total disrespect for the thousands of peaceful activists around the world who work resiliently to end wars and save lives. This woman tells them that their work is "problematic"? It's repulsive.

Her accusation of 'internalised Islamophobia' is also foul. It stinks of those low, squalid insults adopted by individuals who've realised that not everyone from their movement agrees with their methods. It patronises members of her own community who ask for moderation and tells them that they're too brainwashed to know what's good for them. It tells

them that they are to blame for their own suffering, for not fighting hard enough, or in the right way. Funnily enough, it's exactly the same kind of accusation I get thrown at me when I criticise Israel. 'Self-hating Jew,' say West Bank settlers and advocates of Netanyahu's government. Bouattia is adopting that language: "self-hating Muslims," she says.

And from where I'm standing, her views are certainly not far from those of an anti-Semite. I can tell because she uses all those classic tropes to scaremonger about Jewish influence, except, in the usual manner of the radical Left, she veils it as criticism of Israel. So the "Jewish media conspiracy" becomes "Zionist-led media outlets", and her alma mater, the University of Birmingham, becomes a "Zionist outpost" because of the size of its Jewish Society.

I can also tell because whenever someone like her gets called out on their views, they utterly fail to redeem themselves. It happened with Ken Livingstone in 2005 when he refused to apologise for anti-semitic comments, and it's been happening with Corbyn. He says: "I oppose all forms of racism", as though to explicitly oppose 'anti-Semitism' would give Jews too much ground. These people don't know how to say to concerned Jews, 'I value your presence in this country and want to reduce threats towards you.' Malia Bouattia can't say those

words. Her open 'apology' to the presidents and members of the Union of Jewish Students (UJS) was half-hearted and self-defensive. She shows no remorse for her past actions, and speaks only to shake off criticism. This is a pattern that recurs time and time again among people with such toxic views.

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I MUST CONCLUDE THAT THE NUS HAVE LOST THEIR SENSE OF REASON

So Wednesday was a pretty frightening day for Jewish students, and for all students who favour peaceful cooperation and tolerance. The NUS has done a magnificent job at electing a president who has absolutely no interest in creating unity between faiths on campus. If the NUS delegates who voted really cared about the inclusion of all minorities, they would have dismissed Bouattia as an inappropriate candidate when the criticisms directed at her first came to light. It is not reasonable for someone with such a bad record to occupy this position of authority. So I must conclude that the NUS have lost their sense of reason.

If you agree that Bouattia is unfit to fill the post of NUS president, and that the NUS made a grave error of judgement in appointing her, then I ask you to take action. We have to remind our delegates that we care about our representatives, and that we oppose the incitement of violence and hatred. We need to remind them that we will not tolerate racism from our executive bodies, and that we will protest and appeal and make a bloody huge fuss until every single student on every single campus feels safe and welcomed. Our Union's priority should be to bring students together, not to separate and divide. While Malia Bouattia is president all I want to do is run and hide. How do I know that she's not going to say something else that makes me fear for my safety in left-wing circles and among student politicians?

I particularly hope that those whom I've previously called on to condemn anti-Semitism and prove their support for Jewish students recognise the place of this event in an increasingly intolerant discourse. I asked last term for Labour supporters to make their spaces safer for Jews; I ask again for you all to open your minds to our experiences and become our advocates. Never before have I felt so alone or scared at university, and never before have Jewish students so desperately needed the support of their non-Jewish peers.

Race activism in Cambridge gets it so wrong



Che Nabeta

Pointing out racism is all well and good, but we can't stop there

Since joining the University of Cambridge I have genuinely struggled to adapt to the culture here. As a black man from inner-city London, I questioned whether this was due to some bias against me and people like me.

First off we need to be very clear on what Cambridge's problem with racial bias is. I do not believe there is an active agenda to perpetuate racist sentiment; in fact, the university puts a great deal of resources toward the issue of under-representation.

Yet there are systematic biases which lead to the under-representation of ethnic minorities – and, most poignantly to me, black students.

Cambridge is structurally racist. It is not actively or deliberately so, and I believe it is damaging to represent it as such. My experience is that similar levels of racism occur in London, perpetrated by people of all races, genders and socio-economic backgrounds. Our university is an easy target for such remarks, but this does not change the reality of the wider situation.

Black and white labelling (excuse the pun) is simplistic, and in opposition to the reasoned approach that makes us good Cambridge students. Any bias minorities experience here is a vestige of an institution built in a time when prejudiced views were widespread, and there was no need to

consider how to access anyone other than white men. An accurate portrayal is central to the dissection of the causes of racial issues. None of this is profound, but the simple idea is being swept away by misplaced activism.

There is a pervasive culture of fear when it comes to race discussions, which is made worse by ill-informed labelling. By calling someone 'racist' you make a statement about their beliefs and intent, so such terminology must be used correctly.

There seems to be a viewpoint forming that merely 'discovering' racism serves as effective activism and improves race relations. It's not, and it doesn't. Such 'activism' does not tackle those viewpoints or fundamental structures that discriminate.

For example, there is little merit in stigmatising monuments – like the Cecil Rhodes statue in Oxford – or May Ball themes on the basis of the potential offence they may cause. These things are subjective.

Many lines of argument for this university being racist are born of inferred symbolism in artefacts, porters asking for IDs, or dressing in a national costume that you yourself do not identify with. But if you look for racism unthinkingly, you can find it in almost anything.

Once myself and a group of friends (the vast majority being black males) decided to take a stroll through

Trinity College, in an explicit attempt to see whether the porter would stop us (I wasn't privy to the motivations beforehand). The porter didn't. Why not? Well, presumably he believed that we all went to the college or were members of the university. Then again, he could have been so intimidated by a group of young black men that he dared not say anything. The thing is, you can't really know; anyway, it's his job to ask for the ID of people who look unfamiliar.

Furthermore, the artefacts and monuments of this university are not de facto symbols of racial supremacy, nor are acts of dressing in others' national garb. Wearing a people's national attire can be a great show of respect – world leaders do so often. We should allow people their autonomy and put an emphasis on why such things can be offensive, if and when they are.

I believe all this does – looking for racism and offence in symbolism – is to fuel an environment of hypersensitivity. We need to educate; the majority of students at this university do not frequently associate with a broad base of people of an ethnic minority. Interaction and free conversation is fundamental to dispelling any myths and stereotypes held. Given Cambridge's demographic, we have a real chance for people with limited access to one another to interact.

This leads me to the other problem I have: the targeting of messages on racism to the archetypal, white middle-class, cis-gendered, heterosexual male. Racism can be perpetuated by anybody, regardless of identity.

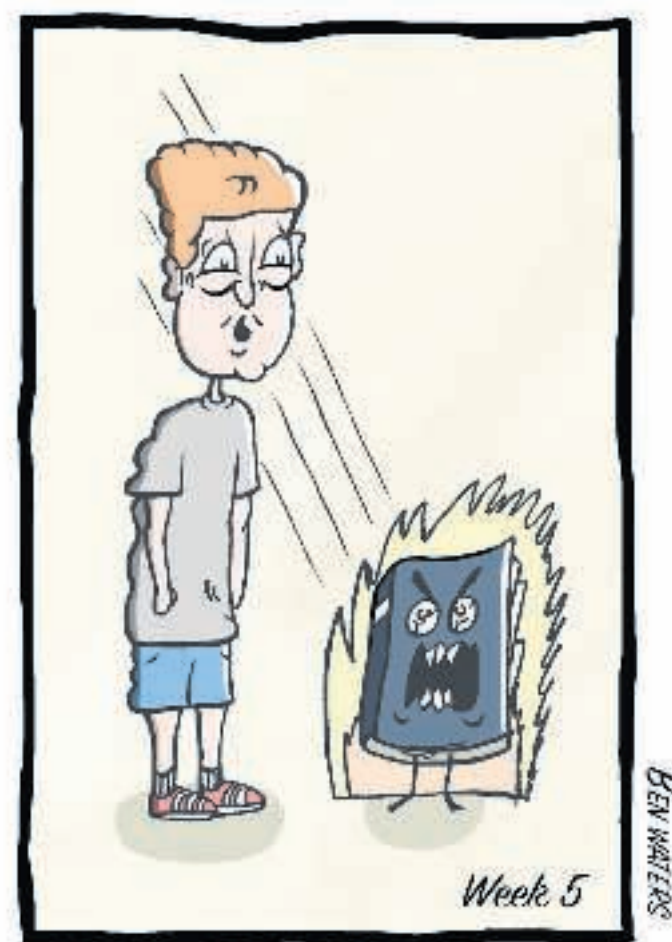
We also cannot shy away from the fact that such labelling is being used as a tool to subjugate voices of dissent. We should want to hear and challenge bigotry, but the hypersensitivity brought about by mislabelling makes such discourse sparse. I am in no way an advocate of anyone purposefully acting to offend, but people should be free to speak their minds without fear of unjustified vilification.

Fundamentally, we do not want to put off applicants because of all this. Three years ago I wouldn't have applied to this university if I was made to believe that it was especially racist.

There is great work being done by people to combat racial bias; many good people are mentoring applicants and increasing the participation of BME students. Let's not muddy the waters by targeting dubious symbolism so as not to seem racist, or by creating divisions with empty rhetoric.

BME students have power where once we did not. I, for one, wouldn't like this to be undermined by tenuous arguments that distract from the greater problems that we face.

TYPICAL STUDENT RELATIONSHIP WITH WORK DURING EXAM TERM...



The folly of Prelims in a term of real exams



Emily Fishman

Easter term for first-year prelim students is anything but fun

Last weekend Robinson College library was full to the brim with a group of anxious first-year art students, about to sit their first 'real exams'.

The truth is, this experience is identical in every college, with first-years intensively focused, scribbling notes and frantically cramming every last fact, quotation and opinion into their heads.

One of them caught my eye and looked up at me over a high pile of early Medieval English notes and muttered: "I think my brain is going to burst." I smiled sympathetically, because one year ago I was one of them.

Despite an intense atmosphere, full of nervous tension and quiet enough to hear a pin drop, these exams are not real, nor do they officially count towards your degree. This is the senseless system of Prelims.

What angers me most about Prelims, is that they are branded as 'easy exams', the chance for art students to have fun, free time and enjoy Easter term stress free and revision free.

This perception is false. I, as a naive fresher, also believed this myth. I remember looking forward to an Easter term where I would read for pleasure outside, have picnics with friends, punt along the Cam with strawberries and champagne.

But none of that happened – in fact, I had the same amount of work, if not more, than in my other two terms. Without the prospect of 'real' exams at the end of Easter term,

supervisors see it as justifiable to step up your workload by increasing the frequency of seminars, doubling the length of reading lists and providing more challenging essay questions.

It seemed as if I was being punished for not having exams – any excuse for a supervisor to give you extra work was granted.

Not only was Easter term more challenging than my other two terms, but even when I did find free time there were no friends around to have fun with.

In fact, what made Easter term and having early 'mock' exams utterly dispiriting was being part of everyone else's exam stress. For five weeks the vast majority of students are perched on a precarious edge while your own work-related problems are laughed at.

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EXAMS AND REVISION
SHOULD BE A UNIFYING
PROCESS

Cambridge felt like a ghost town, as other students were trapped inside the library or glued to their desks. Even when there is fun, the fun is subdued; a night out turns into an early night in, a formal becomes non-alcoholic, or a simple trip to the botanical gardens becomes a revision session for a

fellow bio nat-sci.

Quite simply, there is no fun when exams are on, but worst of all Prelims grant you the opportunity to have it when nobody is around.

I am not wishing that I had gone through the stress of 'real' exams, nor am I suggesting that everyone feels the same during Easter term.

In fact, every time someone asked me how I was feeling about not having revision, of course I would say it was 'great'. It was – but there was still a part of me which wished I could be a part of the 'real exam' term.

This longing was deeply felt when the exams were over. When the end of Easter term eventually came, everyone, no matter how well they went, could take part in official end-of-term celebrations.

However, Prelim students were significantly left out, unable to join in. Not only did many feel unworthy of participating (having not endured the stresses of exam term) but also many of us were still working – as unbelievable as that sounds, it was sadly the reality.

Term for myself finished in week 8 of Easter term, while term for a normal exam student may have finished in week 6 or week 7.

The irony was that this time round, it was myself and fellow Prelim students who could not participate in the end of exams and end-of-term celebrations.

It's insulting to hear that art students get branded as having a somewhat 'easy' or 'cop out' Easter exam term, especially when work during

Easter term is even more challenging than in the other two terms.

Also, the reality is far less enjoyable when there is no one around to have fun with during term. Exams and revision should be a unifying process; they are stressful, but through them friendships are strengthened and memories formed. With the current system running two divergent systems of exams, Prelims can create a solitary Easter term for those not confined to the library.

This time round, I am sitting 'real' exams. But the question which needs to be asked was were Prelims worth it? Is exam term this year any less daunting from having sat mock exams?

The simple answer is no. In fact, there seems to be more pressure on Prelim students than those with first-year exams. Having to cram everything in from Michaelmas 2014 is a relentless task, especially when October 2014 seems like a world away.

Not only is the quantity of content for Part I exams in excess, but the quality of note-making (which was carried out during fresher term – among matriculation, Cindies, and general fresher naivety of Cambridge) was significantly poor, compared to recent work in second year.

University is a learning curve, and forcing students to recite their knowledge of first term goes against the path of intellectual maturity. Prelims are nonsensical, another absurd tradition that Cambridge should abolish, along with the outdated class lists.

Anti-depressants taught me the value of being irrational

Emily
Bailey-Page



It's time everyone got a bit more emotional

I can be pretty irrational. I am also a woman. In a lot of people's eyes, this makes me a bit of a problem.

My hormones have a big effect on me. In the week or so before my period (yes, I said the p-word, don't call the police!) I experience a significant worsening in the symptoms of anxiety which I usually manage.

Yes, you heard it right, I am also an anxious woman, which counts as a double scoop on the ice cream cone of irrationality. A study published a couple of weeks ago in the journal *Current Biology* suggests that the causes of anxiety are very much physiological – literally in the level of your brain's plasticity – which makes a lot of sense to me.

When I'm struggling with anxiety or depression it's not that I think anxious or sad thoughts that I could only control better if I wanted to – you know, if I really tried to be 'rational'. Various metaphors I have used to friends and family in trying to communicate the very physical sensation I feel include: white noise, but as a sensation inside your body, getting louder and louder until there's no room for other thoughts or sensations, or like trying to hold on to your mental acuity but finding that it slips away like sand pouring through your fingers.

I started as a columnist in January, before the initial nausea that comes in the first few days of anti-depressants had faded away, and I talked about it. I talked about it publicly in the pages of *Varsity* where any of my tutors, supervisors, friends or people that maybe had only vaguely heard of me because I turned up to a party in their college one time could read it because

I wanted to let everyone know that I wasn't ashamed about it.

More than anything, I wanted to prove to myself I wasn't ashamed. Each time there is still a twinge of panic that I will be judged, that people won't be able to see me as a full and ordinary human. This is how stigma works. Not in the taunts or derogatory comments, but in the fear that otherwise decent people are going to view you very differently.

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'IRRATIONAL' IS A WORD OFTEN USED TO DISMISS AND UNDERMINE WOMEN

'Irrational' is a word often used to dismiss and undermine women. The ideal human, apparently, operates on principles of perfect logic, because emotions are always obstacles and inconveniences. But for me, openly embracing and acknowledging my emotions, my fears and my anxiety in all their tumult is the ideal solution, because I am not a robot but a human.

Staying in touch with my emotions lets me know when there's something wrong in my life. Although my anxiety gets blown out of proportion sometimes, dealing with it has forced me to fine-tune my diet, my exercise and my self-care, and after a term of figuring out various different ways of helping myself feel better, I no longer feel disabled or inhibited, but empowered.



Julie Holland, an American psychiatrist, warns against over-medicating women's moods: a method, she suggests, of further shaming their natural, and in fact desirable, responses to the world.

Although I support what she has to say, my experience of medication has not been that it eradicates any part of myself that I find unworthy or problematic. I've just been able to accommodate and listen to that part of myself without letting it take over completely.

The thing is, the chronic disparaging of emotions isn't just an issue for women. Even the phrase 'repressed emotions' is basically the hallmark of

traditional, toxic masculinity. And it's not just women who are under the influence of hormones – everyone is, that's literally why we have them. Neither is anxiety or depression the sole preserve of any gender. Diagnoses for women currently outstrip men, but mood disorders among men are also chronically under-reported.

A society in which emotion is taboo not only misses out on the benefits that emotional intelligence has for our self-awareness and relationships, but it also finds itself unable to deal openly with them when they become difficult. No one is a perfectly rational being, and neither should we strive to be.

Head space

In her final column, Rhiannon Shaw looks to the future



Rhiannon Shaw

On a freezing day in December, I chose to do something that my mother had always warned me against. For everyone's safety – primarily my own, but more on that later – I have decided that this shall be my last ever column.

Why, you ask? Did I get too caught up in the hazy world of print journalism? Did I lose myself in the sex, drugs and cosy offices on Mill Lane? Did my column come to its natural end because it's now Easter term and there are other people who want to write about things?

No, no and no. It's because of me. I'm waving goodbye to this column as I would my fondest friend. Me. For you see, this column has been largely about me. I, Rhiannon. Admittedly, it's been about me and my brain, but that was only after *Varsity* turned down my column about my battle with athlete's foot.

What my mother feared all those months ago has come true. She was right to think it would be all me, me, me. It has all got a bit self-centred, this 'my opinions and my experiences' malarkey. So, it's time I returned to my real life. Time to ditch the print deadlines and go back to barely thinking about myself and my brain and stuff.

Kidding! Well, this is my last column, but I can assure you that my addled mind will still be a major part of my life. Its lovable antics just keep me coming back for more! More psychoanalysis, more self-reproach, more theorising about my various troubles! The show doesn't end here, folks, and you can get my weekly mental health updates for a one-time payment of £19.99!

Or maybe you could come to the doctors with me. Or cycle down to the University Counselling Service in the rain. Or stand outside a class with me and help me explain, snot pouring from my nose, that I can't do the presentation I prepared for because my brain kind of feels like it's melting.

Actually, please don't. That would

be weird, I barely know you, and talking about my mental health in real life is ridiculously hard and embarrassing. I guess I'm just trying to point out that writing this column has been very different to how I have previously related to my mental health.

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I'M WAVING GOODBYE TO THIS COLUMN AS I WOULD MY FONDEST FRIEND

And, yeah, I say 'my mental health' because, though I hope people have found my column relatable and maybe even helpful, it's really been most cathartic for me. Perhaps it has been entirely selfish.

But it's so hard to get out of your head when you're unwell. It's hard to see yourself as part of a bigger picture, or even to see beyond the mental

illness that has coloured your world view for however long. I think writing like this can help extricate the 'real you' (cue montage of a lady flipping her hair and smiling while eating Special K) from the 'depressed you'.

I've come to realise that a depressed person is really the most self-centred of all, not because they forget to put other people's needs first or are particularly nasty, or whatever, but because they can't see themselves in context.

Their pain seems unique and unassailable because representations of real depression and anxiety are so few and far between. So they draw into themselves and finally end up blaming themselves, coming to think that they are the same as their illness and thus can never feel better.

That's why it's so essential to get talking about mental health like it's just another aspect of life. And when I say 'just' I don't mean to belittle anyone's experience. Depression and anxiety are never 'just' anything. They're overwhelming and horrifying, but they're also far more common than

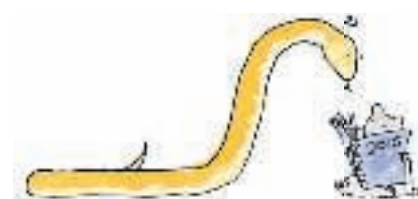
most people fully appreciate, and that's why this ridiculous, outdated social taboo is so damaging. It makes people feel isolated.

It makes this column particularly unusual when, in reality, one in four of us will be affected by mental illness in any given year. It transforms a reasonably dull young woman, who is really just talking about herself and her experiences, into someone who's 'brave'. I'm not brave. I'm just talking about something that any person should be able to talk about.

I've really loved writing this column. I've loved writing about my brain in a way that makes it feel like any other brain that has gone through a rough patch and can pull through. I've loved that it's just another article on the website, or just another share on a Facebook feed.

I mean, I dig racking up the likes as much as anyone, but perhaps it's been way healthier for my ego to admit that, hey, I'm not as weird as I thought I was.

I'm just someone who was sick and is getting better.



The Pro-EU leaflets: a missed opportunity



James Wand

Cameron's camp has missed a trick in spending public money on pro-EU propaganda

The government's £9 million, glossy pro-EU leaflet that landed on the doormats of 26 million homes has caused much controversy. Supporters of the Leave camp are outraged that the government is squandering taxpayers' money on 16 pages of state propaganda, while the Remain side claim that this document contains vital evidence proving that the risk of exiting the EU is too big.

However, both arguments miss the point. The government's leaflet is less a matter of misspending and more a matter of missed opportunities: opportunities to present a balanced view from both campaigns, discuss more of the issues at the core of the debate and provide those disengaged with the politics a reason to cast a ballot.

Voters need to be confident in their decision, and this leaflet missed the opportunity to invigorate, energise and enthuse the electorate.

An all-too-common concern among the public, and shared by EU officials, is that they are ill-informed about the European Union. The electorate yearns for clarity in a world of statistics, in order to allow themselves to reach a confident conclusion about what they think will be best for the UK.

EU commissioners are similarly concerned that a public lacking knowledge about what the Union has done and continues to do – in terms of trade, job opportunities and investment – will lead them to make the wrong decision. With Nigel Farage spouting anti-immigration rhetoric

in one ear, and David Cameron overflowing with love for his new 'British deal' in the other, it's easy to see why we might be confused.

Yet this latest publication from the government does nothing to appease the concerns or answer the questions of the undecided voter. Indeed, rather than presenting the unbiased views of a government providing the people with objective information, this pamphlet better resembles those opinions of pro-EU Conservative MPs backing the Prime Minister's renegotiation deal.

Rather than allowing Eurosceptic members of the government to outline their own argument against membership, the leaflet ignores the fact that important cabinet ministers are not following their leader into battle.

Rather than explaining what the European Union does, who runs it, and how we partake in the legislative process, it is more concerned with what a 'good job' David Cameron has done in securing our special status within the organisation. A lack of information will lead to a bad decision either way, and one we don't want to end up regretting.

In the last referendum on Europe in 1975 the government presented a very similar booklet, but with some stark differences. It highlighted how the EU worked, what the negotiations had actually changed, and stressed the importance of voting. Times may have changed, but the government has undeniably missed an opportunity to use its know-how and resources to

provide the public with a balanced and accurate analysis of what the EU means to Britain in the 21st century.

Dangerously, the pamphlet seems fixated on the economy and security, without considering the important social aspects of the EU or issues that might matter to those (mostly young)

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RISKS THE OPPORTUNITY OF IT BEING BRANDED 'PROPAGANDA'

people increasingly disengaged from the political process.

This booklet is a missed opportunity to explain the benefits of other core European achievements which may be squandered if the UK votes to leave. Of course, the economy does matter, and while insecurity over jobs, investment and trade are all valid arguments, they are not the only components of EU membership.

The pamphlet fails to mention the impact the EU has had on working people, offering Brits maternity and paternity rights, and improved health and safety regulation. Indeed, the publication is too business-centric, with more emphasis placed on imports and exports than the protection afforded to workers.

This missed opportunity prevents

the government from speaking to everyone, and instead risks the possibility of it being branded 'propaganda' to get the Tory faithful, mostly interested in reducing red tape and barriers to trade, to cast a 'remain' vote on referendum day.

Annoyingly for young people, who are often berated for low voter turnout, there was no mention of the impact of the EU on our universities or on education. For a pamphlet which talked about a 'once in a generation vote', there was no mention of how the EU's environmental policy has affected us and our planet's future.

It's wrong that the government should spend money on a booklet that is aimed at the whole electorate, and yet only address a limited number of issues. Granted, this is a pamphlet rather than a novel, but to fail to speak to those interested in working rights, opportunities for students and the environment is to deny the electorate the whole picture which we all know we need and deserve.

Was the government wrong to print this pamphlet? No. But it was wrong to present only the narrow, and biased opinion of those members of the government campaigning to remain. It was wrong to not allow other government ministers campaigning against the Prime Minister to have their say.

It was wrong to concentrate on only a few issues which may not resonate with the whole electorate.

The government didn't misspend on this leaflet: it missed an opportunity.



Miranda Slade

On Finality by Miranda Slade

The sun is finally beaming down on us all. The clocks have gone back and the wind that chafes the faces of cyclists has lost its bite. Spring has truly sprung and that can only mean one thing: we are living in the end times.

This is my fourth and hopefully final exam term, and as such I have been conditioned to be incredibly suspicious of sunshine in Cambridge. While this may be one of the most beautiful cities in the world when the sun is shining, there are students stuck in places deep and dark within the UL where the sun cannot touch and no one can hear your sobs. It isn't all doom and gloom. At least one reign of terror is coming to an end: mine.

While I have two months left of being a student, this is the last time I can call myself a columnist (I don't actually refer to myself as a columnist – it sounds like a pretentious self-fashioning as Cambridge's Carrie Bradshaw, and I'm scared of my DoS finding out about my extra-curricular career of self-promotion). I'm not sure what drove me to take this

position – and after weeks of relocating misplaced hyphens, I'm not sure *Varsity* editors are either – but god it's been fun.

I've never kept a diary. Such an effort at archiving one's own life seems slightly excruciating to me. Although my capacity for both narcissism and introspection is endless, I am first and foremost an extrovert, and being in a protracted dialogue with myself scares me. Chronicling my misadventures for you readers and publishing sexual aggressive comments about politicians is much more appealing.

From the moment I lied about my age to get a Bebo profile in 2005, I've had my entire adolescent life to assimilate the philosophy that it is a normal impulse to validate any feelings or observations by posting them on the Internet. There doesn't seem much point otherwise. As the old adage goes, if a girl goes to lunch and doesn't post a picture on Instagram, did it really happen?

As an English undergrad, you may assume that I would have considered the ineffaceable historicity of

literature earlier, but no. These are my finals, I thought, and I've finally found myself in a situation I can't bullshit my way out of. But even this wasn't when I learnt my lesson about how intransigent words can be. That came a week before my dissertation deadline when I lived every millennial's nightmare. The day I broke my phone.

How poignant it felt when these events collided. The irony was not lost on me. With no final draft and my deadline rapidly approaching, it was not looking good. I slept through all of my alarms and woke in a bleary-eyed panic. Grabbing my phone, I hurled myself down the stairs and into the bathroom. I met my own bloodshot eyes in the mirror, and apparently over-enthusiastically moved towards the toilet. I heard a splash. My iPhone. How do you know you are a true child of generation Y? When you see your smartphone in the toilet and before you have time to think your hand is submerged and fishing it out.

Afflicted by more millennial traits, I wasn't even patient enough to leave

my phone in rice for 48 hours to rectify the water damage. I couldn't find any rice, instead choosing to cover my phone in couscous, meaning I had concocted something that resembled a Banksy piece called 'Gentrification Tabbouleh' and smelt faintly of urine. I eventually found some rice belonging to my housemate and added it to the tabbouleh with the enthusiasm of a demented and sleep-deprived Jamie Oliver. My housemate would later tell me that I had effectively pissed in her long-grain basmati rice; I have yet to replace it. I left my phone in a Tupperware box of mixed grains and middle-class guilt for all of 20 minutes before giving up and running to Carphone Warehouse.

Obviously I am not the sort of person that backs up. My phone was a tragic case of hubris. I've always had a misdirected sense of pride for having the hedonistic capability to only live in the moment. This philosophy was sadly undermined.

I know this because as soon as the screen dissolved into nothingness and my life became a dead weight in my hands, I was flooded with worry

and regret. I worried for how I would get through the next few hours in the library without a game of 1010. The future suddenly felt bleak and inevitable in a way that deadlines just don't, until it's too late. Sadder still was the loss of so many memories. Texts that I hadn't thought much of when I sent them became memorialised with a romantic optimism that they could have become the holy writ of an epic romance.

It is only at this juncture between the moment and the end at which you become profoundly aware that you are writing history (even the secret one) and the future at all times. If there is any lesson to be gleamed from my columns and the life that inspired them it is this: don't think first. Thoughtless or thoughtful, happy accident or bitter mistake – it is only looking back that any of it makes any sense. The best thing about these columns is that they have given me the opportunity to ridicule myself, and hopefully to make the seven of you that read this laugh along as well. Older, but certainly not wiser, it's once more unto the breach, dear friends.

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A new dawn for Palmyra?

after ISIS's retreat, what is the future
for the ancient Syrian city?

By Bea Hannay-Young

Vulture



Rebuilding Palmyra

Bea Hannay-Young argues that we shouldn't 3D print our way out of history

In 2015, ISIS destroyed the Temple of Bel – a Roman shrine within Palmyra, a UNESCO world heritage site in Syria from where they had been co-ordinating assaults. The International Criminal Court condemned the attacks as a war crime. Now, this week, a replica of the gateway of the Temple, 3D printed by digital archaeologists at the University of Oxford, has been erected in Trafalgar Square in a “show of solidarity” with Syria.

It is easy to recognise the virtue of quickly and easily undoing the damage ISIS wrought. Palmyra was a symbol of identity for the Syrian people, and a point of cultural pride. To rebuild is highly symbolic of the resilience of the displaced and oppressed in the face of ISIS's terrorism, and the commitment of Syria's government to restore order.

The 'new Palmyra'

The last Palmyra was a feat of human endeavour and creativity, meticulously planned and executed with bricks and mortar. The 'new Palmyra' will be born of circuit board sand drones. I am wholly in favour of sensitive restoration to minor structural damages to landmarks. Without this, sites such as the Great Wall and Stonehenge would have long ago fallen into disrepair and would simply not be accessible.

However, Palmyra sat for the most part already in ruins, and any effort at reconstruction shouldn't be seen as a cosmetic endeavour.

Past lessons

We ought to have learned by now that over-restoration damages and devalues the past in much the same way that removing an oil painting from its original frame damages the overall value of the piece. It's also hard to see how any new development will remain true to the original techniques of material and architectural construction. Like a band-aid on a bullet wound, a 'New Palmyra' is simply a quick-fix.

There's a reason some things are left ruined. They're reminders of the past, and warnings to the future. No one would ever have suggested rebuilding the Twin Towers. More problematic is the financial means that will be exhausted in the reconstruction process. Syria is in the grasp of a brutal civil war that shows no sign of ending. An estimated 7.5 million Syrian children are internationally displaced, starving, and living in makeshift camps.

No estimated costs have been yet provided, but the number will surely be in the millions. For comparison, the post-genocide reconstruction of

a Cambodian temple cost £9 million. For further comparison, with £176 you can buy a tent with washing, sleeping and cooking facilities for a Syrian family. You do the maths. I have no doubt that Syria will rise again, and that maybe one day Palmyra shall too, but surely we have a social responsibility to protect and preserve life above stone.

International intervention

This is, of course, complicated by the desire of the Syrian government to rebuild the site – the Syrian Director of Antiquities Maamoun Abdulkarim pledged Palmyra will stand again within five years, calling for international support in the process.

Should Western governments denote that the money and resources can be only used for direct aid? It is not our place to prescribe how the Syrians may wish to best engage with their own history, or to donate aid only as and when we see fit.

Disguised nationalism?

The parties involved – namely Russia, Italy and the United Kingdom – seem more preoccupied with promoting their personal status than with preserving worldwide cultural value. Russia is laying the biggest 'claim' to assisting in the rebuild since their troops were instrumental in the

recapture of the area. When did a project aimed at promoting shared history and humanity allow countries to use war crimes as a vehicle to score points on a nationalist agenda?

It's no more than Western condescension, especially hypocritical after allied NATO forces were accused of using culturally sensitive areas in Iraq such as Ur, the legendary birthplace of the prophet Abraham, as military bases. In doing so they may have violated the tenets of the Geneva Convention.

Empowering the people

So, to rebuild? Palmyra may yet become a symbol of hope and strength and resistance, but it shouldn't be seen as a priority to make it so while people starve. There are better and more powerful ways to empower Syrian people – groups such as Action for Hope work to promote intangible cultural heritage in refugee camps in Jordan through archiving oral histories and providing the means to play traditional folk music and cook familiar dishes evocative of home.

Their work is small, but it is valuable. Over time, sites and their significance grow and change. As tragic and destructive as the bombing of Palmyra was, it occurred nonetheless. History cannot – and ought

not to – be rewritten. Sift through the rubble. Rebuild what we can with the pieces that we have left, but do not create a mimicry in attempting to heal that which cannot be undone.

Making it look as though ISIS never subjected Syria to the onslaught sanitises the cultural impact of terror.

PALMYRA: A BRIEF HISTORY

- 2000 BC ● Founded
- 1932 AD ● Abandoned during French Mandatory rule
- 1980 ● Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- 2015 ● Occupied and ransacked by ISIS
- Mar 2016 ● Palmyra recaptured by Syrian government forces

Never tasted sweeter



Clare Cavenagh urges you to embrace the gory world of Renaissance revenge tragedies

Like another two hundred or so English first-years, I'm just emerging from the Renaissance paper. Along with knowledge of some very weird devotional poetry, more sonnets than I ever want to see again, and a new collection of rhetorical figures, this paper introduced me to one of my newest and very deepest obsessions: the Renaissance revenge tragedy.

Revenge tragedies are amazing.

They could compete with some of the grossest torture-porn-horror of today, but are acceptable to read on the train.

They make you look sophisticated and erudite, while really behind their

socially acceptable, Oxford World Classics covers, they're chock full of sex and violence and violent sex and weird crazy people of all kinds. They also make perfect exam-term reading: you can get through them in about three hours tops, they'll definitely provide an excellent break from whatever it is you're revising, and they're a safe outlet for the surges of uncontrollable violence which exams tend to arouse. Here are four of my very favourites to get you started. Spoilers, mind.

1 First of all, there's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* by John Ford. Cracking title, and a familiar enough plot to make it a great one to begin with. This play is essentially *Romeo and Juliet*, except instead of

feuding families keeping the young lovers apart, it's just one family. Giovanni and Arabella, the couple at the centre of the play are brother and sister. On top of the incest, this play is happy to bring the violence. Following a disagreement, Giovanni stabs Arabella, cuts out her heart, and then prances around the stage with it skewered on the point of his dagger, waving it at the other characters. Nasty.

2 Pick number two is the best choice if you're looking for maximum respectability in your twisted revenge horror. William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* was his take on the genre, and it can provide you with a reputable name without the need to compromise on

gore. Titus features an odd extended meditation on the body of a woman who has had both hands and tongue removed to stop her telling or writing the names of her attackers.

This scene is monumentally nasty, but for me the worst is saved til last. It aint over til the baddies have been tricked into eating their minced sons baked into juicy pies. Don't feel like reading? The 1999 film *Titus* is brilliant, and doesn't scrimp on the gore.

3 If you'd like your revenge tragedy to be tinged with just the tiniest hint of cute romance, then I highly recommend *The Duchess of Malfi*. The Duchess is a strong independent widow who falls in love with her butler and secretly marries

Winter is coming

Sarah Doré muses over the return of TV's most anticipated series, due to hit our screens later this month

Game of Thrones has become something of an exam term tradition for me in the last three years. Every week, myself and a group of friends have gathered, snacks in hand, to watch the highs, the lows, and the often painful deaths of our favourite characters. And in just a few days time, to the delight of millions round the world, the HBO hit series is back for more. Game of Thrones isn't just a TV series, it's an event. Despite controversy in the media, especially following events in season five, *Game of Thrones* remains one of the most popular television series of all time, with a budget of \$7 million per episode. What is it that makes the show so popular? There has to be, I think, some credit given to the sheer scale of the show. The *Game of Thrones* universe is huge, and even larger in the book series. This helps broaden its appeal no end, as the interlinking plot lines and characters ensure that there will be something for most people to enjoy.

Part of the joy of watching *Game of Thrones* is watching this universe expand, as new families are introduced and old rivalries revealed. At times, the show feels more like a historical epic than a fantasy world, such is the intricacy of the political alliances and lore. Unlike previous popular historical epics (such as *The Tudors* and *Spartacus*), *Game of Thrones* benefits from the fact that there is no historical accuracy that must be followed. As much as you root for Spartacus, you know that his rebellion is ultimately doomed.

The same is not true for *Game of Thrones*, where it feels like anyone can die, and ultimately, anyone could sit



him. They're completely adorable, but unfortunately her two creepy brothers didn't especially want her to take a second husband, so they set about torturing her to death and essentially killing anyone she's ever spoken to for good measure. Highlights include the Duchess being tricked into kissing a severed dead man's hand, wax models of her murdered family being wheeled onstage and a joke about apricots and horse manure. But in my opinion, the best bit is a little two-minute snippet featuring the creepiest of the brothers, Ferdinand.

He's a bit stressed out from all the murder, and the other characters find him lurking out the back of the Milan cathedral with a corpse slung

on the Iron Throne. If the universe is complex, that is nothing to the characters that populate Westeros and the lands beyond the Narrow Sea. There are perhaps only two characters on the show (Joffrey and Ramsay, to my mind) who are utterly without redemption. The rest exist somewhere on the spectrum of ethical ambiguity, changing their alliances and morality to suit themselves. Jaime Lannister is a good example of this; he began the first series as a firmly established 'bad guy'. Yet over the course of the last five series, the screenwriters have slowly revealed layers of his personality. It has gotten to the point where several of my housemates have developed a crush on him, despite his incestuous relationship with his sister and the small matter of him crippling a child in the first season.

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FEMALE CHARACTERS ARE TREATED EXACTLY THE SAME AS THE MALE CHARACTERS

The writers are masterful creators of complex characters who both attract and repel viewer support. Last season, Stannis gained something of a cult following – only to have the darker side of his desire for kingship be revealed when he allowed his only daughter to be burned alive.

One of my personal favourite characters has always been Sansa Stark. *Game of Thrones* has been criticised by some feminists (often rightly so).



over his shoulders. They ask him what the hell's going on, and he sort of cackles, and shouts "I'm a wolf! My fur point inwards!" before running off into the night.

4 If after all that you find yourself becoming desensitised to the revenge tragedy, and are looking for something a little more extreme, I recommend moving on to *The Revenger's Tragedy* by Thomas Middleton, a play that does what it says on the tin. The action follows Vindice, a man on a mission to get revenge on a randy duke who sexually harassed Vindice's girlfriend into suicide. Peak gross comes when Vindice, who has disguised himself in order to work for the duke, is asked by the big man to sort out a new girl

However, one of my favourite aspects of the series has been the way that female characters are treated exactly the same as the male characters. They have hopes, dreams, ambitions, schemes and divided loyalties, just as the men do. None of them are one dimensional stereotypes, and they all progress as the show develops. Hence my like of Sansa, a shy, naive and sheltered young woman at the beginning of the first series.

The loss of her family, her forced marriage to Tyrion, her fleeing from the capital and ultimately, her (again forced) marriage to Ramsay Snow all shape Sansa into a woman who has seen the worst that Westeros has to offer, and still finds the courage to keep standing. Although it's too early to say, I wouldn't be surprised if season six involves Sansa calling in her banners and avenging the death of her family on the Boltons. This is the complexity that *Game of Thrones* thrives on; a hated character like Jaime Lannister can become a fan favourite, and a naïve girl like Sansa can become one of the strongest characters on the show.

Most compelling of all, I think, is the sense of escapism provided, which is vital during Easter term. Stressed about exams? Join Dany and Tyrion across the Narrow Sea and daydream about riding dragons across the red waste. Supervisor slates the final draft of your dissertation? Tune in on April 24th and see if Jon Snow is really dead (for my two cents, I'm betting not). *Game of Thrones* provides escape to, in many ways, a simpler world: one where there are no essays, looming exams or hopeless job prospects.



for him.

Vindice sees his opportunity and makes a kind of necrophile's sex doll for the duke, using the skull of the dead girlfriend, which he covers in poison. The doll is presented to the duke in a dark room so that he doesn't notice how icky it is, and he kisses it, is poisoned, and dies.

With the (hopefully metaphorical) carnage of exam term fast impending, I can't recommend strongly enough that you pick up a Renaissance revenge tragedy. Just remember to wait for an hour after eating, and not to leave them lying around where the squeamish could find them. Happy revenging!

ANNA'S CULINARY CORNER



Who wouldn't be guilty of it? We love telling tourists to experience Cambridge by biting into Chelsea buns at Fitzbillies, or spending their travel savings on a slab of fudge from King's Parade. Yet, as calorifically scrumptious these may be, they aren't actually authentic Cambridge. I used to have a sepia-tinted image in my mind of a Cambridge student cycling along with satchel in one hand and Chelsea bun in other (somehow managing superhuman steering skills at the same time), until I discovered that Chelsea buns were, perhaps not so surprisingly, not a Fitzbillies invention but the intellectual property of Bun Shop in Chelsea. My love for the Fudge Kitchen took a similar hit when I unsuspectingly walked into a copy of the Cambridge branch in Windsor; so much for the Cambridge fudge being made from the milk of the cows in King's Backs. You might think you're doing the Cambridge thing, just as the Mathematical Bridge is allegedly still in place without a single screw, but the thing is, most of the time you just aren't.

All hope is not lost, though. Cambridge does have some claims to authentic culinary fame – they just happen to be off the beaten tourist track. A while back, I had a bizarre experience reading a formal menu: most of the menu was, as usual, ineligible, being about 80 percent in French. However, the dessert was spelled out in the bluntest possible English: Cambridge Burnt Cream. Now a healthy dose of burnt cream is just what I want to finish my evening off with.

Having recovered from my initial shock and regained some of the language skills I'm supposed to harness as a linguistics student, I made the very clever observation that 'burnt cream' is exactly what the supposedly classier French 'crème brûlée' translates into. More often than not, using a foreign language in menus and the like is just a case of going for the fancy factor; think of all the poor souls tattooing 'sweet and sour chicken' in Chinese characters on their bums just because it looks nice, or Japanese shops advertising items as literally 'ridiculously overpriced' because of the coolness of English words.

However, burnt cream goes beyond

this, carrying an actual historical Cambridge connection. Crème brûlée was introduced in Trinity in 1879, when the hall served a cream dessert with the college arms impressed onto it with a branding iron. The story goes that a Trinity undergrad sampled the delicacy at an Aberdeenshire country house. He then offered the recipe to the college cook, who refused to make it (to be fair, I wouldn't be the first one to jump at the opportunity to serve burnt cream). But true to social hierarchy, the success of the dessert was guaranteed when the undergrad rose through the college ranks, becoming a fellow and getting his way with his culinary desires. Even with some backstory, though, 'burnt cream' doesn't sound like the yummiest option; then again, you can't really when complain when your traditional British alternatives include spotted dick...

It's not all about what you eat, though: how you consume your sustenance is of equal importance. After a year of drinking and dining in ancient halls, I thought I had most dining etiquettes securely figured out. My imagined etiquette prowess was shattered, however, when at a college feast at Corpus a drinking horn was presented and passed along with an elaborate ritual of bowing, standing up, sitting down, and turning your back to your neighbour at the right time. What the students were happily sipping their bright orange punch out of was nothing less than a six and a half centuries old drinking cup. This piece of not-quite-your-standard kitchenware was presumably presented to the college on its foundation in 1352, and it is believed to come from an aurochs, a now extinct ancestor of modern domestic cattle. My sincere apologies for sending any readers working in conservation and heritage into cardiac arrest.

To go authentic in the Cambridge culinary scene, you have to up your ante from queuing for free samples from the Fudge Kitchen to swanning around high table at John's. That said, my favourite foodie traditions are more mundane and probably even less Cambridgey than Fitzbillies' finest afternoon tea: I think it's time I snuggled into my own culinary corner with a portion of cheesy chips from the Van of Life.

INTERVIEW

Ruling Class

Will Roberts talks to co-creator Nathan Miller about engagement in politics, crowdfunding, and his web-series *Ruling Class*

So tell me about *Ruling Class*.

Ruling Class is a four-part web series, about a character called Quentin who is running in his school's elections, the winner of which will become headmaster of the school. At first he's very sceptical of the elections, thinking that people are just running for the benefit of their CVs. However, a girl that he likes starts to take an interest in him and the elections, and as a result he decides to run and takes the elections far more seriously.

And how was the idea formed?

I had an initial script about the elections, which I ended up developing with Matthew Lee and Mark Danciger, who I met through CineCam (the university filmmaking society). Then we casted within Cambridge, raised the money to make the film, and ended up shooting it for over a week and a half in London.

The series is clearly engaged in politics; would you say it's a satirical piece?

Well the series is aimed at kids, hence the high school setting, but we are definitely trying to poke fun at certain political conventions as well. All the candidates and pupils, based on their opinions, fit into different parts of the political spectrum, so there's definitely an element of satire in the show.

So would you say the show is attacking our political culture?

The show is definitely satirical, but I don't think we necessarily have any agenda or that we're attacking anything in particular. The show is aimed at kids, and through the show we want to encourage more young people to get involved in politics. One of the reasons Quentin starts to gain support is because he utilises his musical talent to create a more engaging campaign, and that's the main message of the show; that politics can and should be more fun and engaging.

You crowdfunded in order to make the film, which nowadays is a really popular method for getting productions off the ground. What were

your experiences with it?

The first problem was that we didn't know how much to ask for, but we ended up trying to raise £3,000. I think the main thing we tried to do in order to reach our target was to show how much we cared about the project; we prepared a lot of drawings of what we thought the show would look like, we made a video interviewing the cast about their characters and the story, and we just tried to prepare as much as possible so people didn't feel like they were just throwing away their money. It ended up being a big success as we raised just over £3,500. That and the money we received from within Cambridge and from ThinkBig, an O2-run initiative, meant we could start production as soon as possible.

What are your opinions on the film-making scene in Cambridge?

I think the scene is definitely growing as more and more films have been made over the last year or so. I think big projects like *Ruling Class* definitely help. Due to time commitments,



we had a different crew on set practically every day, which meant people got to try out loads of different skills and components of filmmaking. I think people are definitely put off by filmmaking mainly because they don't know where to start. But at CineCam we're starting to do more introductory workshops, teaching people the basics of filmmaking. Once you've made your first film, you start to get pretty addicted, so those kinds of thing I believe are helping to expand the scene.

Has it been tough to keep going or have you always had the motivation to complete it?

Yeah it's been a long process, but the best thing is that there have been no arguments among the main team, we've always been on the same page. Assembling the post production team took a lot longer than we thought; for roles such as a composer, we had to look outside of Cambridge and ended up using people at film schools, which took up a lot of our time. But I'm really glad we've got to this stage. So many people worked on the



project, and it's great to finally have something to show for all the effort that people put in.

And finally, why should people watch *Ruling Class*?

Well first of all, if you know young people that you want to get engaged in politics, the show is a great place to start. But above all I just think it's great piece of comedy-drama. While the show does have other motives, I think it is first and foremost a piece of entertainment that everyone will hopefully enjoy.

The first episode of Ruling Class is available on YouTube now.



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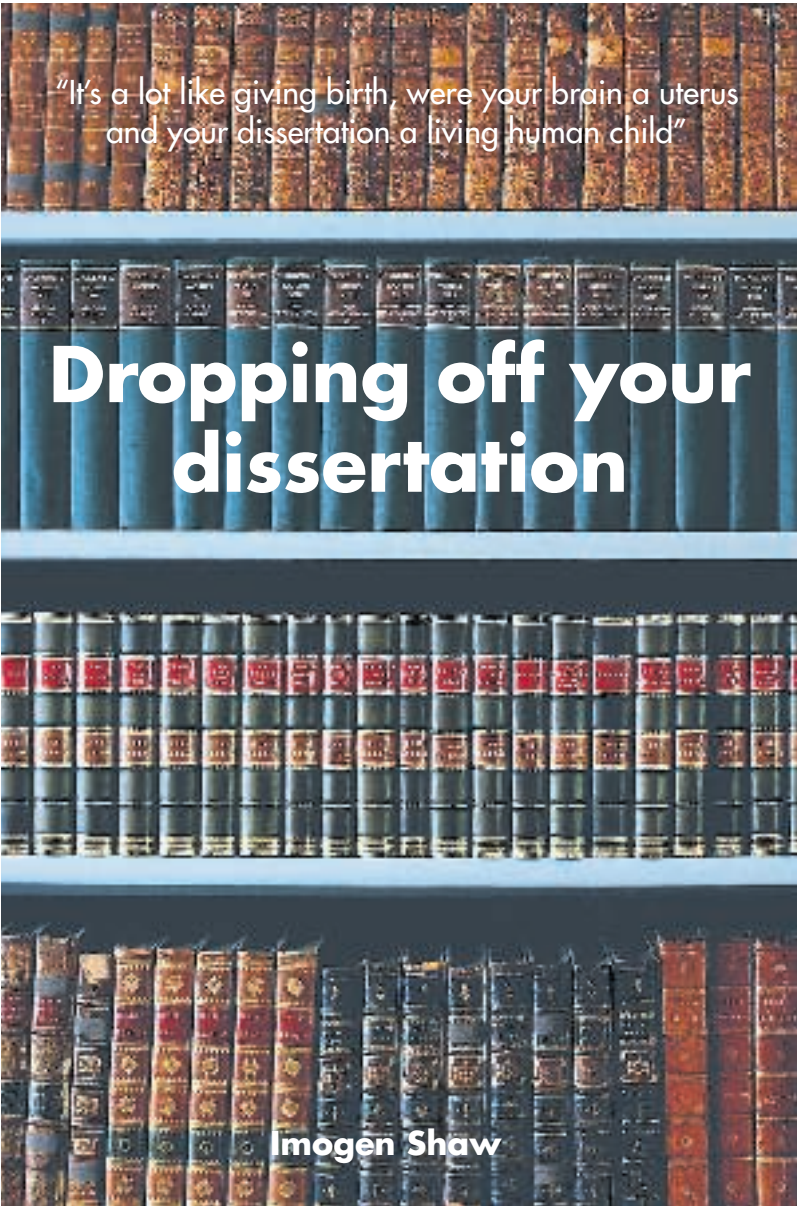
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T&C'S APPLY



"It's a lot like giving birth, were your brain a uterus and your dissertation a living human child"

Dropping off your dissertation

Imogen Shaw

Completing a dissertation is a lot like giving birth, if your brain were a uterus and your dissertation were a living human child.

Carrying a dissertation for several months has significant consequences on your lifestyle, such as a reduction in alcohol consumption, disturbances to your sleep, and restrictions on your movement (apart from running back towards your desk to frantically bash out your conclusion: *why it is justified to argue that Milton's inclusion of personal and political context not only impacted the imagery but also the style of his poetry...*)

Then, suddenly, your dissertation is no longer inside you. It is a real, tangible thing that exists in the world. You can cradle it in your arms. This is a beautiful moment.

You have struggled through the pain and now you can make self-congratulatory Facebook posts and take Snapchats of it looking all cute and dissertation-y. You can quote its first words, lovingly – *"The Special Operations Executive (SOE) was officially established on the 22nd July 1940..."* Aww.

But, all too soon, your dissertation must leave you. It feels like you only finished it yesterday, because you totally did, and now it has to be dropped off along with everyone else's dissertation.

The panic sets in; what will you do all day now that your dissertation won't be at home with you? All that time spent nursing it is now your own again, but what did you do during the

days before you had your dissertation to think of? That time seems so long ago now.

“

IT FEELS LIKE YOU ONLY FINISHED IT YESTERDAY, BECAUSE YOU TOTALLY DID

You try to settle down with a nice bit of revision for your Long 18th Century literature paper, but your mind is elsewhere. You can't stop thinking about your dissertation, wherever it is now. Presumably the Faculty office. You worry; it's small for its age, only a couple of hundred words over the minimum permitted word count.

What if the markers don't take to it? It's not its fault if it doesn't quite fit in with what's popular in the Cambridge School. That's just how it was made, an adorable quirk, just like that possibly wrongly formatted third footnote. It adds character.

What's more, you'd never admit it but, however hard you tried, you worry that all the other students provided for their dissertations better than you did. You wonder whether you too should have splurged on multi-coloured treasury tags, or spent longer choosing a title-font that perfectly straddled the boundary between originality and cool professionalism.

Did you really explore *every* relevant avenue of inquiry? Is an undergraduate quoting Marx in an essay that isn't really about Marx truly that overdone? Is it bad that you developed a peculiar distaste for F. R. Leavis during the dissertation process and it hasn't gone away?

(Respectively: no – impossible, yes, it is, and nope, that just means you are an English student.) But, in all honesty, none of that matters now.

At times like this, it is important to remember that your dissertation flying the nest is a rite of passage. It's hard, but you have to trust that the work you put in to your dissertation has done its job, and your metaphorical academic offspring can stand on its own two hypothetical feet.

THE MAYS ANTHOLOGY XXIV

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Across


- 1. Woman entering level (3)
- 3. Wasted French youth finds way to let off steam at party (4,5)
- 8. Half of Tory MP's family in bar propose rankings system (8,5)
- 9. International society of chemists admits first members – Cambridge physicist and mathematician (5)
- 10. Mother jokes about pieces of debris (7)
- 11. Good girl gone off the rails for drink (6)
- 14. Break bone for exam (6)
- 16. Meek way to drunkenly celebrate end of term (3,4)
- 18. Order cited as corrupt (5)
- 19. Eastern artist's period (3)
- 20. Suds I use primarily mixed with cyanide on festal day (7,6)
- 21. Superb pitch gives real results (5,4)
- 22. Ordinary rock expected initially to contain mineral (3)

Down

- 2. Flowers and no strings attached on this! (5)
- 4. Early siesta considered most relaxing (7)

- 5. Salve massaged into meats (5)
- 6. Lob menu around for lotus plants (7)
- 7. Artist admitted in twist injury (6)
- 12. Restrained hymn (7)
- 13. Tear in, form monster (7)
- 15. God that is swallowing element (6)
- 17. Towns concealed ski toilet (5)
- 19. Carbon fibre developed by research professor (5)

Please submit answers to editor@varsity.co.uk.



INTERVIEWING THE CAMBRIDGE CAMPAIGN

IAN JOHNSTON

On June 23rd, Britons will be asked if the UK should remain a member of the European Union, or if it should leave. In Cambridge, support for the 'Out' campaign remains low. I met up with **Ben O'Neill**, the Communications Officer of the Cambridge Brexit Campaign, which hopes to persuade students to vote to leave the EU.

The group has been planning events since November and will be increasing its activity in the run up to the referendum. Interest in the group is low, but Ben seems optimistic. "We've been pleasantly surprised by numbers at our previous talks. The reality is that it's very difficult to engage people who aren't usually interested in this sort of thing. The European Union is just one of those issues that bores people."

He admits that the low student support for the 'Out' campaign is not solely down to political apathy. "A lot of students have a passive opposition to Brexit. They perhaps associate it with UKIP and think that it's a nasty option. We'll be trying to change that perception but some just won't

engage with us for those reasons and that's a shame."

I ask what his personal convictions for leaving are. "The ability to be self-governing is the main issue for me. When we have an EU Commission creating laws and imposing them on us, there is a problem. Personally, I also think we need more control of our borders." He accepts that many of the laws created by the EU may be useful, but argues: "That's not the point. They weren't voted on by British people. It wasn't done through a democratic system. The EU Parliament has no legislative power but the EU Council can create laws. And they aren't obliged to listen to what the Parliament says."

“
IN THE PAST BORIS HAS
JOKED THAT WOMEN ONLY
GO TO UNIVERSITY TO
FIND A HUSBAND

When pushed to name laws passed by the EU which have negatively affected Britain, he hesitates. "Well,

there are these laws that we see in the *Daily Mail*: crazy directives about bendy fruits. The EU also has a lot of leverage. In Greece there was a stand-off between the EU and the Greek government."

The benefits of the EU include access to a single European market, the protection of workers' rights, free movement of people and cross-border security. Ben insists that these won't be put at risk. "If we were to leave, we wouldn't be pushed out straightaway. There would be a period of negotiations and then we would decide what to do. All these issues will be discussed but it's very much in the EU's interests to have free trade deals with the UK."

As for workers' protections, he claims: "It's a much smaller world than it used to be. Leaving the EU may prove an inconvenience but the fact that people go to the US to work proves that, if we want to work elsewhere, we can."

As Cambridge Brexit Campaign is attempting to win over students to the Out Campaign, I ask what benefit Brexit would have for students in particular. "I don't think there are any inherent benefits to staying in the EU. It's a neutral area for students."

Students in Switzerland are not

entitled to Erasmus loans and the think tank Open Europe has predicted that Erasmus loans for British students could be put at risk. When told this, Ben was unconvinced. "I don't buy that. It could be the case, but we don't have any limits on people from all over the world studying here. We have lots of students from Asia and the US and we recognise their contributions to Cambridge."

“
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES
HAVE THEIR OWN
UNIVERSITIES ANYWAY

I suggest that poorer students from European countries may struggle to come to Cambridge without Erasmus loans. "Perhaps. But European countries have their own universities anyway. If you're making the point that poor people should be entitled to study where they wish, I would agree. But why should we favour some people based on geographical location?"

The 'Out' campaign has been buoyed by news of Boris Johnson's support for Brexit. Ben affirms: "All the

national campaigns will welcome his support. He's advocating a double referendum strategy, whereby we vote out, the EU gives us more options and then we vote again. It seems a bit risky but that's his view. In any case, he's the most popular politician in the country and hopefully students will be swayed by what he has to say."

I ask if Boris can relate to university students. In the past he has joked that women only go to university to find a husband. "That doesn't make what he has to say on the EU any less valid. I think politics should be about arguments but personality does play a huge part. If he says things that some people don't like then so be it, he doesn't speak for everyone. There is an array of different opinions in the Brexit movement. We have moderate Labour MPs, plenty of Conservative MPs and even George Galloway, who has very different views from Boris."

To complement this range of voices, the Cambridge Brexit Campaign has been inviting a range of speakers to garner support for the movement. "Brendan O'Neill is coming next week. We're also going to help the local campaign leaflet the town."

"We've got eight or nine people on the committee but I think people will get more involved as the referendum approaches."

A Love Letter To Cambridge

Finalist **Sarah Doré**: an ode to everything I will miss about Cambridge

I wasn't planning on applying to Cambridge at all. I went to a state school in the Oxfordshire countryside: nothing too rough, but certainly not a school with a stellar record on sending pupils to Oxbridge. When I changed my mind, it was to see if I was good enough to get in; I never seriously considered coming here. And then I was made an offer to study HSPS at St John's, and I didn't see how I could refuse.

Before coming here, I was so sure that I wouldn't fit in. I was wrong. I have never fitted in anywhere like I fit in here. I was the shy, nerdy girl who was picked on at school. Here, I am the confident, nerdy girl who will talk back to anyone who even tries to pick on her.

I'm going to miss being a student – at what other point in my life will it be socially acceptable to eat cereal for three meals of the day, to stay in Cindies until closing, to flash my chest in the St Catz bar (actually, I'm not sure that was acceptable even at the time). When else am I going to sit up late with my housemates, in hysterics and not even sure what was so funny in the first place.

I'm going to miss the city. I'm going to miss the beauty of the sun when it hits King's College in the mornings. I'm going to miss the splendour of the Fitz gardens in summer. I will miss sitting on the backs during May Week and drinking cheap cava straight from the bottle. I will miss walking over the Bridge of Sighs, cycling over

orgasm bridge, running along the river. This city has become my home; its nooks and crannies have become my hideaways.

Some of my happiest moments have been spent on the river Cam. I've spent hours on it, rowing, sculling, and coxing. I've gone out in the rain, in the sun, in the thunder and the lightning and the hail. I've cycled alongside it, shouting encouragements to novice crews. I've navigated its difficult corners with my crew, urging them on, promising them that we're gaining, we're close, we're going to bump them. This, at least, I am determined not to lose. It is perhaps an unusual requirement that where I move to when I graduate needs to have a river, but that is one

of the targets I have set myself.

I will miss the madness of May Week. I will miss that heady feeling of sitting in the final exam of the term, watching the clock count down, writing that last sentence, squeezing that last bit of knowledge out of your exhausted brain. The joy of emerging from the exam room, as you unite with your friends and go relax on the backs. Staying awake until the early hours of the morning, dancing at your May Ball, sipping cocktails with your friends.

I'm going to miss the friends that I've made here the most. I'm going to miss the women I live with, who are in turn funny, and sarcastic, and grouchy, and kind and wonderful. I

will miss the friends I made at rowing: the girl who always told me to chill, the summer rower who showed up for the sun each year, the stroke seat who could always make me laugh.

I will miss all of the random people who have wormed their way into my heart along the way: the shy mathmo who always listens, the girl who started out as my clubbing partner and became one of my closest friends, the sarcastic ex-roommate.

Ultimately, though, I may not be ready to go; I feel like I'm not really leaving. I will still have friends here, I will still come back to visit them. And who knows? I could always do a master's degree.

Making revision a little more personal

Yen Ping Chan talks us through getting your revision space right

Everyone has different needs in terms of efficient working for exam term. Some people work well alone, others need the pressures of people around to stop procrastinating and focus. Some people get irritated at a slight squeak, some people pump music to study. Over the years, I have gradually collected the criteria I need for a good work space. Here they are:

1. Lighting

I dislike my room because of the yellow lights and small windows. Natural sunlight is the best, hence I can often be found on the top floor of my college library where the entire surrounding is glass windows.

However, I must not sit directly facing the window or the rising sun will be too glaring/reflect off my laptop.

2. Space

This space thing is in slight tension with the people criteria. I need people, but I don't want people breathing down my neck. I still like my back facing a blank wall so no one can see when I occasionally log on to Facebook to check notifications. I like pressure but I still want to feel at ease.



3. Music

If I do science problems, it should be in total silence, but since I'm working on essays this year, reading assignments come nicely accompanied with music. The selection of music is extremely crucial: they cannot all be sleepy songs, nor too many disco ones.

Classical music works sometimes, but I often like more wordy songs too. This is problematic, because it can sometimes be distracting. That is why I have resorted to foreign language songs because my ear won't pick up the words and send my thoughts off tangent.

To date I've done Korean songs, Indonesian/Malay songs, German songs and Russian songs.



4. Far away from food

Hence the top floor of the library again. When you have to climb down four flights of steps to get food you feel less tempted to procrastinate by going for a bite to eat.

5. People

Yes, I procrastinate a LOT. I need social pressure. Although, I occasionally like cuddling up in bed under my sheets, just me and my laptop. That can be done too.

6. Mess

Sorry, I can't work on a starkly organized table. I'll feel uneasy. Qualifier, though: the mess has to be MY mess.

No one else's belongings in my territory.

And voilà! I get my perfect personal revision workspace.

Vogue at 100

a century of style

Fashion is an industry that always moves forward. When Anna Wintour was asked what her favourite cover of American *Vogue* was during her time as editor, she coyly answered: “the next one”. As the world changes around us: socially, politically and economically, we look for new clothes to fit our constantly changing sense of personhood. Therefore, creatively and commercially, fashion has no choice but to concern itself with what’s around the corner. It is a hugely lucrative and business-driven industry. Top designers create six collections a year, magazines work with a three-month lead time, and, with the rise of digital media meaning constant updates and untapped new markets, there just really isn’t time for fashion to sit back and reflect.

To put on the exhibition *Vogue 100: A Century of Style* at the National Portrait Gallery, therefore, seems to be at odds with the current state of the industry. Fashion is in a pivotal state of transition and disarray as the Kardashians and Kanye West takeover the runway, traditional formats for fashion shows are replaced by ‘see now buy now’ models, and creative director after creative director, from Raf Simons to Hedi Slimane, has announced their departure. As traditional print publishing goes through an existential crisis, with the staggering rise of free digital media like Twitter, Instagram and blogs, perhaps a look back through the old photo albums is a sobering way for a publica-

tion like *Vogue* to stabilise its sense of self from the dizzying new heights of the monster fashion has become.

On entering *Vogue 100*, however, you are surprisingly not confronted with the past, but the present. Behind a dazzling vertical collection of covers through the ages is a swanky video display with clips of every it-girl of the millennial generation from Cara Delevingne and Emma Watson to Alexa Chung and Edie Campbell. Set to sleek ambient house music, this is a firm nod to the magazine’s shift towards digital and multi-media platforms, and proof that even a retrospective in honour of their one hundredth birthday isn’t going to make them too nostalgic.

The angle the exhibition takes is that, since its creation in 1916, the magazine has been a “cultural barometer”, putting fashion in a wider social context and reflecting the changing lifestyles of women while showcasing the best of British culture. The *Vogue* franchise first reached the UK during the First World War, when shipping restrictions meant British women were unable to import the magazine from the USA, and indeed an early feature of the magazine were war reports from the trenches. After all, every reader, whether mother, wife, daughter or sister, would have had someone close to her on the front line.

From Cecil Beaton’s wittily poignant

1941 photograph ‘Fashion is indestructible’, to a fresh-faced Kate Moss photographed by Corinne Day, the exhibition proves that *Vogue* has been a consistent zeitgeist for contemporary culture. A cheery Prince Charles is photographed with his chickens, while a typically scruffy Boris Johnson sits perched atop a construction site in the Olympic park on the feature ‘Blond Ambition’. There is a strong focus on the icons of our age. Every significant figure of popular culture seems to have graced the pages of *Vogue*, from Posh and Becks and One Direction to David Bowie and Queen Elizabeth.

However, the fashion imagery *Vogue* creates transcends the pedestrian reality of current affairs. Photography is not just a practical and commercial means for us to view clothes but an art form of which it is the photographers who are the real stars. During the “disjointed times of sanitised entertainment and dystopia” of the 60s and 70s, Helmut Newton brought Britain his vision of extreme glamour with images like the sulphurous ‘Limelight Nights’.

We see Norman Parkinson and an Amazonian Jerry Hall voyage through the Soviet Union, Bruce Weber gives us a fresh take on Romanticism and Tim Walker offers us delicate but fantastical images that look like they’ve come straight from the pages of Lewis Carroll. Somewhat ironically, in a world where we are constantly



bombarded by images, an exhibition is a simple but obvious way to force us to stop and really look at some of the most poignant photography of the last century.

Despite the frenetic pace of fashion, *Vogue* has stood strong as a cultural heavyweight whose prestige as a bas-

tion of style and taste surpasses even the illustrious list of names that appear in its pages. So, happy birthday, *Vogue*, and here’s to many more.

Vogue 100: A Century of Style is on display until Sunday 22nd May at the National Portrait Gallery.

I woke up like this



Abbie Ruse looks at the summer trend for nightwear

With pyjama suits still very much on trend, and with the spring/summer 2016 catwalks full of lingerie and nightwear, getting dressed this summer should be as easy as rolling out of bed.

In the words of designer and style icon Coco Chanel, “It is always better to be slightly under-dressed”. It was in fact Chanel herself who popularised loose-fitting pyjama trousers as elegant but practical beachwear for women in the 1920s. Suddenly it was sexy and chic for a woman to, dare I say it, look comfortable! This season, comfort dressing is back on the cards as unforgiving skinny jeans are tossed aside in favour of wide-leg trousers, tight-fitting bodycons are replaced by silky slip dresses, and big granny pants become an underwear drawer

essential.

Although the pyjama and nightwear trend has been cropping up on the catwalks for quite a while now, there’s just something about the combination of delicate silky fabric, low temperatures and rain that’s been putting me off! But as warmer weather approaches, the pyjama suit is an ideal way to combine comfort and style.

Pair with sunglasses and white trainers for an effortless daytime look or put on some strappy heels and a statement necklace for going out in the evening.

Take inspiration from Gucci’s ready-to-wear pyjama suits in bold seasonal prints that are perfect for spring. Or, for a subtler look, check

out Alexander Wang’s slouchy deconstructed pyjama shirt or Thakoon’s cotton pyjama sets in blue with contrasting red piping. If you’re feeling less adventurous (and aren’t quite ready to wave goodbye to your skinnies) opt for a pyjama-style silk shirt paired with your favourite jeans, or enjoy the satisfaction of loose-fitting pyjama bottoms with a simple T-shirt on top. However you wear it, the relaxed silhouettes and luxurious fabrics are classic, cool but most importantly comfy!

The slip dress is also extremely popular at the moment, with its simple and flattering shape appealing to many women. A straightforward and plain design looks great worn over a white T-shirt during the day, while fabrics such as silk and lace are

perfect for going out at night. Saint Laurent paired delicate sheer slips with leather biker jackets, completing the look with a tiara to create the perfect feminine-grunge contrast while Calvin Klein’s take on this trend involved cascading silky fabric and sporty metallic plimsolls.

While the spring/summer catwalks are the perfect place to look for inspiration, a number of high-street chains such as Topshop and Zara are offering fashionable nightwear for a fraction of the price. Alternatively, think authentic and opt for actual pyjamas.

If you find the right cut and fabric not only will you nail this trend but it will also make looking chic for early morning lectures easy and effortless!



FROM WINTER TO SUMMER



From scarves to shoes

Changing wardrobes for every season can be a pain. **Victoria Bowden** tells us what she is going to miss most about winter clothing

Fun in the sun

Laura Day takes a look at the fashion trends which are popular Down Under

This Easter vacation, I spent three glorious weeks traipsing down the east coast of Australia with my younger sister, stopping off at eight different locations, beginning in Cairns and ending in Sydney. It was fantastic: the trip of an entire lifetime. But it was also hot. Too hot, at times. Being pale and ginger is not conducive to coping with the sun, either, and the 34-degree heat and humidity also did not help things greatly. My sister and I spent many a day on the beach, but also many a morning wondering what to wear.

We were ill-equipped for the heat. Brits don't tend to have a wardrobe full of lightweight clothing, bikinis, camisoles, and flip-flops – especially not those Brits, like our family, who tend to holiday exclusively on the home island. This led us to take note of what the Aussies wore, and try to emulate. Everyone wore flip-flops – even to work – and women seemed to get away with wandering into shops and restaurants wearing only a bikini on their top half, and skimpy shorts on the bottom half. Never in a million years, in the UK, would I dream of walking into a restaurant in flip-flops and a bikini, but in Australia it seems to be the norm.

Being in Australia gave us time to reflect on body image and body positivity as well. Because of the heat and the constant sunshine, everyone Down Under wore what they wanted, seemingly without body concerns or harboured self-embarrassment. I'm not saying that the Australians appeared to be free of body dysmorphic thoughts, but that there was an increased sense of body confidence and satisfaction, no matter the size or shape. I feel as if, in the UK, we're constantly concerned about being 'Beach Body ready' come the summer months, or that we need to slim down for the wedding we're

attending in August. But when you live somewhere like Australia, it's practically summer all year round (well, on British terms it is), so why bother harbouring anxieties over how you look? It was much more an 'everyone's beautiful' atmosphere – it was inspiring, comforting, and eased any fears my sister and I had.

“
EVERYONE WORE FLIP-FLOPS – EVEN TO WORK

That's not to say, though, that we didn't stick out among the crowd. Not only am I a redhead, but I am a deathly shade of alabaster as a result, and it is genetically impossible for me to tan (even just a little bit). So I was one of those people who could be seen layering on the Factor 50 sunscreen at regular intervals throughout the day, and who went home the same shade of sheet white that she went. My sister is also very pale, but is instead blonde. Yet, unlike myself, she has legs up to her eyebrows, which, when wearing shorts or a swimming costume, are two long pins of porcelain white, in deep contrast to the golden Australians around us.

But we enjoyed it, and had a lot of laughs. As summer comes to Cambridge, I'd implore everyone to wear what they want, without anxiety over how they look, what size they are, or whether or not their tan is just right. Life is too short to worry about clothing that much. As summer descends, embrace the playsuit, welcome the strappy tops, and covet the sandals. Just go for it – summer is never here for that long.

So I have a confession: I own an obscene number of shoes. I'm not entirely willing to put a figure on the amount, but let's just leave it at a lot, like a lot a lot. When the new seasons come I always get a thrill at the fact I can bring out a different collection of shoes. Summer wedges? Yes, please. Suede autumn ankle boots? Of course. Sturdy leather winter boots? Absolutely. It's these boots that I miss in summer.

There's something reassuring about a pair of winter boots that are weatherproof and you're justified in wearing with anything, because, y'know, it's raining and we live in England. But summer sandals just aren't as versatile; most of them are completely flat or sky high (ahem, not suitable for the cobbled streets of Cambridge) and it's very hard to find a good pair that go with everything. Black winter boots can get you through any scenario, from lectures to going out, they can cover it all, and I miss this in summer.

Summer shoes also come with the pressure of having pedicured toes, painted in an array of cheerful colours. Toes that could be hidden in woolly socks are now proudly on display to the world, and I'm not sure how anyone else feels, but I don't really like toes.

They're weird-looking and I'd much prefer to keep mine hidden from the world. But in summer I can say goodbye to that. Even Kate Middleton suffers from society's feet-judgement. Just last week she was slammed by media across the world for daring

to bare un-pedicured feet and bare toes while in India – shock horror, I know.

Furthermore, there is the whole tights fiasco, where it's spring and not quite bare-legs weather but you don't exactly fancy wearing boots either. You're left staring at open-toed shoes with horror as you realise that you can definitely see that you're wearing tights, no matter how nude. Damn it, there goes my chance of tricking people into thinking that my legs are this tanned and blemish free.

While on this note, summer means shaving – there's no more hiding behind jeans or tights and suddenly you either need to commit to not shaving and be proud, or

grab the nearest razor. The number of days I've sweltered in leggings because I woke up too late or too lazy, realised that I did not want to display my bare legs to the world and thus couldn't wear my new pair of shorts is sadly too high.

Lastly on my rant of things I dislike about summer clothing (and, believe me, I can think of many more things that could be added to the list), is the fact that slowly as spring moves into summer I can no longer throw on a scarf with my outfit. In winter

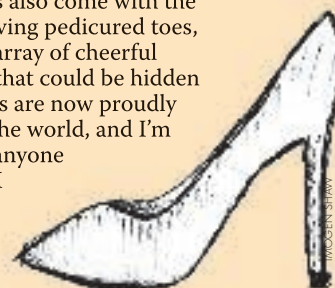
it's reassuring to know that you can be wearing something atrocious as you crawl to the library at 9am, but chuck on a big blanket scarf and no one can see. Plus you have a blanket ready for when the essay becomes too much and you need to crawl under the desk.

Wearing a boring black dress? Grab a colourful scarf and BOOM! – outfit made. But as the summer sun comes, your scarves just mean sweltering and you actually have to co-ordinate a reasonable-looking outfit on its own. It's sad and much more effort. Bye-bye, go-to clothing (and life) staple.

“
SUMMER SANDALS JUST AREN'T AS VERSATILE

Obviously there are things I'm looking forward to about summer fashion – sunglasses being the main thing, as my 'I have an exam in two days and haven't slept in four' eyes are shielded from the world. However, this doesn't make up for what I miss about winter.

Here's looking forward to November when I can crack out my winter wardrobe once more.



PREVIEW

Constellations

Eleanor Costello meets with the cast to talk about love, chance, fate and the multiverse

Nick Payne's *Constellations* follows the encounters of Marianne, a cosmologist, and Roland, a beekeeper, across multiple universes. The play exploded onto the theatre scene in 2012, swiftly transferring to the West End and Broadway. It toured the UK last year and sold out at the Cambridge Arts Theatre. Marthe de Ferrer says that directing the show was a no-brainer: "I'd been obsessed with it for a year and a half, but the rights have only just become available. As a director there's so much freedom and every production that's been so far has been very different."

I met with Marthe and the rest of the cast in the ADC bar. At first glance the play appears to be a typical girl-meets-boy love story, but with a quirky twist. The same characters come together in the same situations again and again, but the outcomes of each scene change radically, depending on the smallest of circumstances. Ella Duffy, who plays Marianne, comments: "It's a really interesting challenge to have to bring out very different ideas with exactly the same lines. It's really fun to play with. It's fascinating to think that a person can say one thing, one sentence, and that can change your entire life. If Roland responds in an angry way or a sad way to what Marianne says then that changes the entire play." It's a very relatable, if unsettling, theme.

We've all wondered what might have happened if we'd met someone in slightly different circumstances, or if we'd left out that (hilarious) but unflattering anecdote on a first date. Ed Limb, who plays Roland, says that the play is naturalistic as it exposes the multi-faceted aspects in all of us. "Who you sympathise with changes in each scene. In some of the scenes he's not very likeable, and she's not very likeable. Sometimes in a certain situation under a lot of pressure, they say very unpleasant things and do very unpleasant things. No one in real life is linear."

Ed dissects the scene he's just been rehearsing, in which Roland reacts to a devastating revelation. "In some scenes he reacts with this desperation, fear. With some of them it's real anger. I like the idea that all of those impulses are there in every scene, it's just that in some of them they come to the fore."

Marthe agrees that it is this uncertainty which shapes the play: "The scenes are really cleverly put together. In one scene Roland can be so sympathetic and your heart goes out to him, and then he turns around and does something absolutely awful. It's the way they're placed together. And my view of individual scenes has changed. I'll see it on the page and think 'Oh, that scene's so tragic' and then you see it on its feet, and it's a lot

funnier than you thought. The tone of each scene completely shifts."

"I think the audience will enjoy some of the comic elements of the more serious scenes," Ella adds. "Some of the arguments that we have, and the way we deliver the lines, will make the audience laugh unexpectedly."

Clara van Wel, the assistant director, chimes in. "I think that's what's great about this – because there's just two people on stage, it could be very intense, but because it's realistic it's got a humour that makes you more invested in the characters because they're very endearing." Clara also draws attention to the role of music in the production. Toby Marlow is composing an original score for the show that he'll perform on-stage on a grand piano. "Music is so important during the play," Clara states. "It lifts everything."

I ask if there's anything which they personally will take from the play. Ed immediately says: "It's the idea of being sympathetic and sensitive, because people can have gone through so many experiences to shape who they are. Someone could be a genuinely good person, but just had a bad day at the office or something. That comes through in the way that you see different sides of the same people. And you tend to think of something as being destined, but it gives you



OSCAR WANG



CLARA VAN WEL

this sense that actually we have a lot of agency, we shape our different relationships."

Clara interrupts with a smile. "There is this whole idea of free will, and instead of love at first sight, thinking that it's meant to be, it shows how

frail that connection can be. But it is romantic at the end of the day. We keep following the options where they are together."

Constellations is showing at 11pm, Wednesday 27th - Saturday 30th April 2016, at the ADC.

Shakespeare Revisited



In light of the bard's 400th anniversary, **Charlotte Taylor** analyses what makes Shakespeare so timeless

The 23rd of April marks the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, and of course it is being commemorated with suitable theatrical aplomb – the BBC promises a lavish live celebration, and productions of Shakespeare will no doubt be even more ubiquitous than before. It is a curious event to celebrate in many ways, and not one most people would imagine as complimentary. But perhaps in the case of Shakespeare it is oddly appropriate: after all, this is the man who gave us some of the greatest reflections on death and mortality in any language.

To a certain extent, though, what we are really celebrating is that the man Shakespeare fell off his mortal coil and provided ample room for the myth of the boy from Stratford to enter centre stage. No sooner had he dotted the 'T' on his will than the legend of the provincial genius who goes to London and almost instantly makes good was embellished, crystallised and preserved for posterity. It is now impossible to call forth the flesh and bone of the man, and so the person 'William Shakespeare' has become a tenuous entity, whose very mortal existence has even been questioned.

But if Shakespeare the man is

unrecognisable to us, then the modern productions of his works would have been equally unrecognisable to the man. For the past 400 years, we have happily taken a free reign with his texts: we have written a happy ending *King Lear*, cut the fifth act of *The Merchant of Venice*, transposed the action of plays across place and time and transformed the villains into victims. Most shockingly of all we have even deigned to let women speak his hallowed lines (the horror!), and all of this has been done with relatively little in the way of opposition or controversy. Perhaps if Shakespeare had survived as more than a Renaissance ideal, none of this would have happened – but perhaps he would not have endured.

In many ways it is Shakespeare's illusiveness as a playwright that has sustained his legacy. After all, the play's the thing, and he was pretty good at writing them. So what is it that distinguishes Shakespeare from the rest? Largely, it seems to be his openness. An ability to re-interpret is essential in the arts, particularly the theatre, which constantly has to reproduce itself, but there are plenty of plays and playwrights who produce a piece that simply stands for one viewing and then descends into immediate stagnation. This cannot be said to be true of Shakespeare.

His works are not static entities that can be locked down to a particular interpretation: instead, they are multi-layered, textured pieces that demand constant re-appraisal and originality. As the man has descended into myth, he is more able than ever to remain a disinterested shadowy presence in a production rather than someone table-thumping his view. But this is only possible because the man himself made the myth through the mercuriality of his own works.

Perhaps the clearest indication of this openness is in the presentation of his work. In a period when Hollywood has had to face up to its own issues with representation, it is easy to overlook the how the works of the Bard have always been used to examine questions of race and gender, frequently against hostile political backdrops. In 1825, Ira Albright was the first black actor to play *Othello*, in a production that was brought to a standstill by the slavery lobby. Since then, the race of actors has mattered less, with David Oyelowo being the first black actor to be cast as one of the Bard's kings by the Royal Shakespeare Company. Shakespeare's own interest in playing with gender and identity have also made his works natural territory for more explicit examinations of

the issues. Last year, Harriet Walter played Henry IV following her successful turn as Brutus in an all-female production of *Julius Caesar* set in a prison. Shakespeare has come a long way from being a boys-only club! But these explorations of the issues are only possible because they use his texts. Shakespeare remains the single most-performed playwright in the world, and his plays have seeped into humanity's consciousness in a way that is without parallel. Almost anyone can recite the plot of *Romeo and Juliet* without ever having seen or read it, so an audience can immediately see the significance of swapped genders or a role reversal. Through his own generosity Shakespeare has become more than a playwright: he has become a recognisable human voice for everyone to exploit.

400 years of popularity constitute an impressive feat to celebrate, and in that time Shakespeare has evolved from man to myth to a collective voice for humanity. We shall never be able to know the man who died in Stratford four centuries ago, but that should not be our concern. This is perhaps the most fitting moment to revisit his works and reconsider our initial renderings because this is what his death allowed us to do: re-interpret.

PREVIEW

John & Jen

Nicholas Ash catches up with the cast of the Corpus Playroom mainshow



“Can we call the show Keeping up with John & Jen?” The idea is floated before it is shot down in a musical rehearsal at the Corpus Playroom. ‘Maybe let’s do this bit Jeremy Kyle-style?’ With a cast of two, and an intimate team offstage, ideas are bounced off each other as they rehearse ‘Talk Show’ from *John & Jen*. *John & Jen* tells the story of Jen and her relationships with the two Johns in her life; first her brother, then his namesake, her son. Meanwhile, this chamber musical is set against the background context of a changing America between 1950 and 1990.

Director Ellie Coote recognises it’s a big difference from her previous show, *West Side Story*, last term’s ADC Mainshow musical. She likes the freedom and potential of collaboration that a more intimate show offers; it is less about people managing and the technicalities and more about personal engagement with what’s on stage: “It’s a luxury to have a cast this small, especially for a musical.” When asked what made her choose this show in particular, Coote responds that “it is rare to find a musical focussing on a connection between two people that is not romantic. The brother-sister and mother-sister relationships make the dynamic between the two characters so much more interesting.”

James Daly and Olivia Gaunt are the ones taking on these complex roles. Sitting in on a rehearsal with them, you can clearly see that the two have an engaging chemistry, which Olivia attributes to them having worked together on every musical she has

been a part of in Cambridge. One challenge that they both point out of working in the close confines of the Corpus stage is toning down their level of performance. “There are so many acting subtleties you can explore here that you can’t get away with on a bigger stage.” Olivia notes: “It’s really nice to do the simpler things and make the performance more natural.” James adds that it really requires a change in mentality. In talking about the challenges presented in the characterisation Ellie notes: “When you’re young, you see your parents as the same for the entirety of your youth. You don’t feel like they’ve changed at all. It’s hard for us to find that arc in Jen’s story.” For James, the difficulty lies in the inverse: “when you’re playing a younger character, each year of difference is such an obvious change. When the scenes run straight into each other, you need to use the transition to make the aging process obvious enough.”

“I think one of the big benefits of [the intimacy of the Corpus space] is that there’s a much bigger vibe to play off of from the audience,” adds Assistant Director Rebecca Vaa. “You engage with people a lot more and it can really help to create a certain atmosphere.”

This could create a compelling ambience in the Corpus space, especially as the cast and crew tell me how particular scenes and numbers of the show bring back old childhood memories about how they related with their parents and siblings. James notes: “It’s one of those shows that’s very real and relatable. Every scene

you can sort of match to something in your own life.” Olivia explains: “because it goes through lots of periods of time and there are a lot of nuances in the script, there is something for everyone. Every single person will find something to relate to and will come away remembering their own relationships.” In a similar way, Musical Director Oliver Pickard recognises that there are tributes and pastiches to each different era as the story progresses through American history: “It’s not just a complete carbon copy. There is a good balance of paying tribute to the era as well as having musical integrity.” He particularly likes that there is a real mix of songs in Andrew Lipka’s music and Tom Greenwald’s lyrics. In some the sentiment is expressed through the characters’ lyrics, he observes, and in others it is in the phrasing of the music. I ask what they would like the audience to be saying as they leave. “They were so good,” banters Olivia. “She was so good.” Ellie adds that there could be a lot to discuss: “It does deal with some interesting themes, some of which are historical. It’s not that the show’s solely about those things; it is about these people’s relationships.” She does admit however admit that “as much as anything it is a kind of showcase for you guys [James & Olivia] as well. It’s such a big sing. I want people to come out saying they’re brilliant because they are.” “Warm and fuzzy.” Ellie and Rebecca agree. “We want people to come away feeling warm and fuzzy.”

John & Jen runs from Tuesday 26th April to Saturday 30th April at 7.00pm in the Corpus Playroom.

INTERVIEW

George Kan

Varsity talks to the director of the Week One mainshow

Describe *Grief* in one sentence.

Set in 1957, *Grief* is gripping drama, biting humour and bleak tragedy all in one suburban living room.

What drew you to *Grief*?

Before I left I had to do a fourth wall drama.. One interior set that doesn’t change and a handful of characters. I think the ADC theatre is designed for it architecturally. It’s Cambridge’s heritage to produce these kind of fundamentally British plays. However, very few are being put on, which is a great shame. They allow for really brilliant acting and beautiful sets. Luckily, this production has both a phenomenal cast and design team. What’s so good about *Grief* is that it is not only an excellent play from one of Britain’s greatest writer-directors, but it is also a more modern take on the form. The

scenes, for instance, are sometimes over 20 minutes long, while others are just a minute or two. The overall feeling is very, very filmic – it’s sharp and acutely observed.

Do you have a favourite moment from the play?

Too many. There are several moments when you just think “I recognise that”. Sometimes it’s hilarious, sometimes not so much. The play also opens out very slowly, as we begin to piece together who these characters are. So I don’t want to say too much. There is a great moment when the daughter is first offered alcohol.

How do you think the audience will react to the production?

The title makes it sound pretty grim. But it’s not all that. There is actually a



lot of humour, especially from a few certain characters: a scene with some W.I. types is particularly great. The comedy is brilliantly observed. Ultimately, however, it is a tragedy. It’s what you’re paying for and it’s what you get. But it is an excellent one.

What is the main purpose of theatre?

In my experience, it comes down to the people. I will quote Kim Cattrall: “Theatre is immediate, it’s alive, you’re there with the audience, it can’t be done again and again and again and again, it’s organic.” Maybe there’s some truth there...

Grief will be on at 7:45pm, Tuesday 26th April - Saturday 30th April 2016, at the ADC

LATER IN THE TERM

Top Picks for Easter term

Although Cambridge may seem to shut down during so-called ‘exam term’, the theatre scene remains active, continuing to produce several productions a week.

01

One Man Two Guvnors

Laugh in the face of your exam horrors with this much-loved comedy.

Tuesday 12th-Saturday 16th July, 7:45pm, ADC

Tickets £14/£11 (Tue £12/9)

02

The Eradication of Schizophrenia in Western Lapland

Experimental staging aims to explore and represent schizophrenia

Tuesday 10th-Saturday 14th May, 7pm, Corpus Playroom

Tickets £7/£6 (Tue £6/£5)

03

Shakespeare at the UL

This pop-up exhibition to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare’s death promises that even the most ardent of Shakespeare fans will take away something new.

Saturday 23th April, 2-4pm, University Library (Milstein Seminar Room)

Free

04

Butterfly Effect

Written by local playwrights, this drama explores how our worlds can be turned upside down in a second.

Wednesday 25th May-Saturday 4th June, 7:45pm, Corpus Playroom

Tickets £8/£6 (Wed £7/£6)

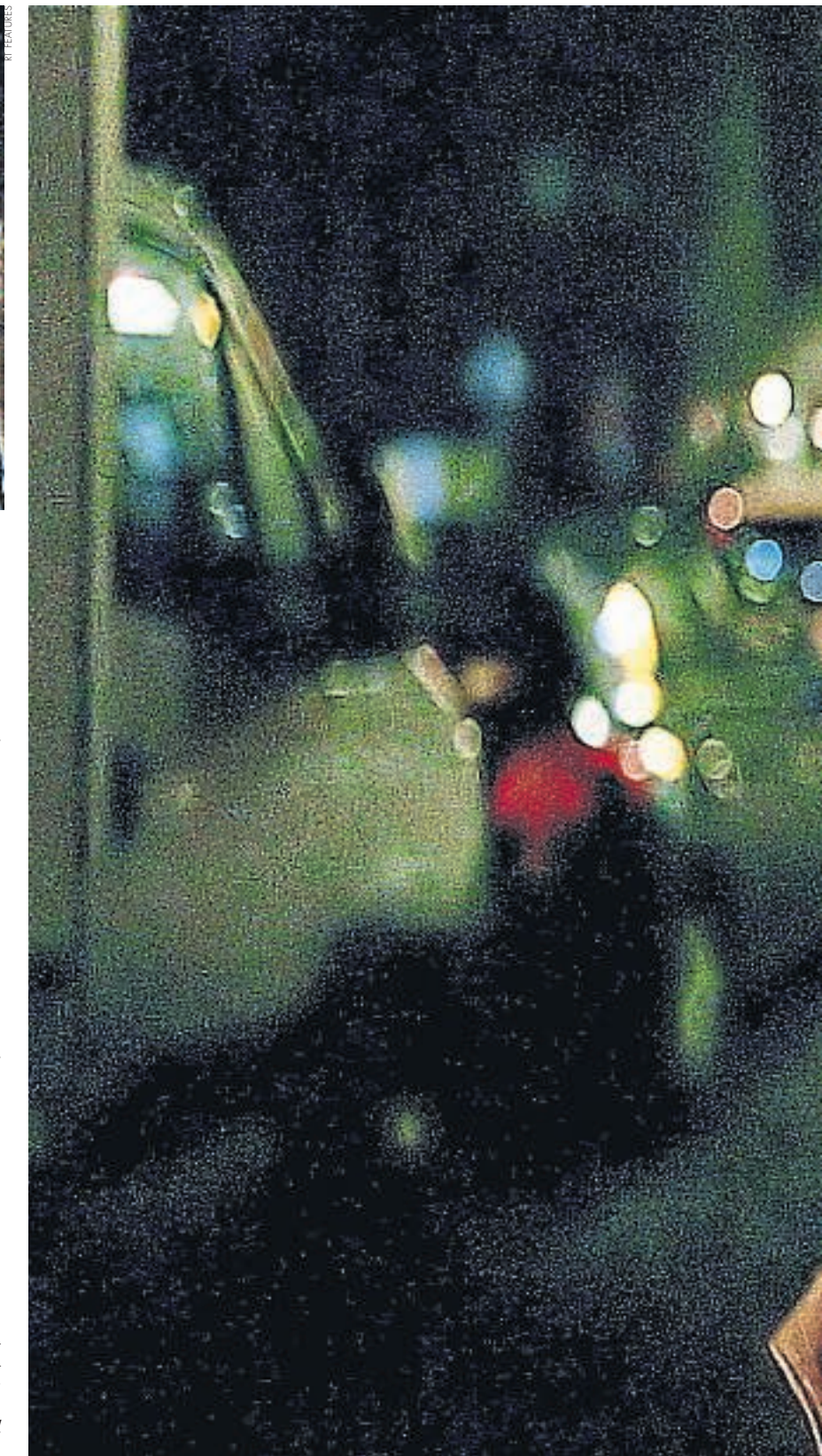
05

Judge Judy’s Buzz World: Footlights Harry Porter Prize Winner

A one-woman monologue, this show explores America’s storytelling traditions: winner of the Harry Porter Prize 2016.

Wednesday 11th-Saturday 14th May, 11pm, ADC Theatre

Tickets £7/£6 (Wed £6/£5)



FILM

The Witch

dir. Robert Eggers, 92 mins

★★★★★

Robert Eggers's directorial debut seems to have been mistakenly marketed as a horror movie. Yes, it's chilling, it's abundantly eerie and dark, and, I'll admit, there's a pretty spooky witch or two involved. But the film plays out like a disquieting period piece, brimming with tension and hinging on the violent disintegration of an isolated family. During a Q&A session at the Arts Picturehouse last week, actor Ralph Ineson joked: "It felt like making a kitchen-sink drama from the 1630s". But Eggers's domestic drama is more *Supper at Emmaus* than *Coronation Street*. Having previously worked as a production designer, his attention to detail is meticulous, down to the film's very fabric: the clothes were hand-stitched from the wool of New England sheep, the wooden floorboards sawn by hand without the aid of modern tools, and indoor scenes lit entirely by candlelight (the candles, of course, placed faithfully in 17th-century candlesticks). The script, too — a collage of fragments stitched together from contemporary documents and diaries — ensures that the audience is thrust into a flawlessly replicated far-gone era, one

that closes in and submerges you.

And all of this detail, excessive as it may sound, is essential to the building atmosphere of terror that brings *The Witch* to life. The material and spiritual conditions of the 17th century fuelled a profound, palpable belief in the supernatural which constitutes the sinister undertow of rural domestic life that drives the Puritan household to hysteria. I call the film a period piece because witches, folklore, and the earthly presence of Satan were not confined to the realm of fiction — they were the crude realities which crept in the forests, lurking perpetually at the fringes of the collective consciousness. In 60 years' time the Salem witch trials would make history. Religious fervour and unfamiliar landscapes combined to generate an environment in which evil creatures were not just fantasy, but possibility.

Jarin Blaschke's cinematography perfectly frames the little house in the New England wilderness, smoke gently rising from its chimney, the woods placed ominously behind as if they might swallow it. The camera lingers quietly over compositions, some of which appear like quotations from Rembrandts or Caravaggios. Mark Korven's dissonant acoustic hum of whining strings, punctuated by steadily ascending choral shriek-pieces and sudden clatters, accompanies the meditative and slow-burning horror in which the viewer is teased into terror at unexpected moments — I found myself wanting to cover my eyes even

at the most innocuous of scenes. While it lacks sudden jumps, or the extreme gore that has characterised recent horror efforts, *The Witch* does not fail to shock and move. The whole family's performances are as poignant as they are deranged, and even the youngest cast members are unnervingly convincing. Ineson's first acting job, he recalls, was in a production of the York mystery plays (medieval religious drama known for staging a clash the sacred and carnivalesque), and a similarly palpable religious intensity resonates through his character — not to mention the hoof-stomping Black Philip, played by Charlie the goat, who was apparently quite the method actor.

The Witch may disappoint some horror fans, but to those looking for a scare that sticks, it follows 2014's *The Babadook* in prioritising a fear that feels, often, all too real. It's the sort of fear that happens in the dark, in bed, when the obscure forms around you morph into threats, when nightmares seem to permeate the real world, and no amount of rationality can chase them away. The rare scenes that feature the eponymous witch are played out in such darkness that one's eyes are forced to squint in order to comprehend what is being portrayed. Eggers succeeds in communicating the kind of folk-lore horror that still manages to infiltrate the imagination and recall superstitions that we assume were left long behind.

Chloe Carroll

EXHIBITION

Encounters: Money in the Age of Discovery

The Fitzwilliam Museum

★★★★★

The success of the expedition led by Christopher Columbus, who (at least officially) was the first European to set foot on American soil, has all too often made us forget the many expeditions made by others during the Middle Ages who reached unknown parts of the world. There was also the fabulous odyssey of Marco Polo, who followed the silk road to China, or the mystical voyage of Saint Brendan in the Atlantic, or the journey of the Chinese admiral Zheng. He and his magnificent fleet of 317 ships, holding almost 28,000 crewmen, made it all the way to Africa and (just possibly) America.

ThereasonwerememberColumbus's voyage, however, is that his was the prime mover of one of the greatest revolutions in economic history, while

the other voyages above were merely symptoms of social development patterns which had already taken hold, with limited impact on the minds of contemporaries. This is nowhere more evident than in the Fitzwilliam Museum's exhibition: *Encounters: Money in the Age of Discovery*. The exhibition departs from the established depiction of the encounter between the Old and the New World, having been separated by a chasm of time after *Homo sapiens* migrated out of Africa, as a bloody affair of colonialism hiding behind the all-too-thin veil of a civilisation mission. The exhibition takes the visitor through centuries of remarkable changes for human societies, all told through the prism of that delightfully abstract holder of value and objectified human labour: money.

If you are willing to spend 15 precious minutes of your busy day exploring the world of bygone money, then this exhibition will be a delightful experience. It is perhaps the best non-textbook crash course in the history of finance offered in Cambridge. The display holds a treasure trove of stories about the contrasting experiences of European colonies in different parts in the world. In the Americas and Africa, traditional forms of exchange gave way,

quite bloodily, to European-style coins and later banknotes. The gold-thirst of Spaniards, who went deep into the Andes in their search for the mythical Eldorado, the city of gold, led them to discover the huge silver deposits the mountain held. The three Spanish silver coins in the exhibition tell the story of the brutal slave labour delivered by Inca people forcibly abducted to mine the ore needed to produce those coins. Their rugged, asymmetric shape is a tactile suggestion of the fact that the coin's value was derived from its quality of metal rather than what was written on it. Those irregularities are also suggestive of the greed of the conquistadores who launched them into circulation, impatient to exchange them for luxury and riches.

Taking a trip in financial history on a busy Cambridge afternoon would be overwhelming were it not for the remarkable conciseness of the collection. While all the artefacts are absolutely worth their while, an inquisitive visitor will find that their curiosity has only been stirred but by no means satisfied. However, there are ample ways to explore the topic further, and the exhibition provides an excellent introduction to a world of conquest, adventure, unbridled brutality and greed.

Georgi Rusinov

FILM

Victoria

dir. Sebastian Schipper, 138 mins

★★★★★

It's a long night in Berlin for Victoria, the title character of actor-turned-director Sebastian Schipper's exhilarating drama about a group of partygoers whose evening ends in disaster. Shot in one continuous take of two hours and thirteen minutes, *Victoria* is a technical marvel, and its methodological brilliance is matched by its exhilarating action.

Played by the talented Laia Costa, Victoria is a naïve but (as we will later find out) particularly brave young Spaniard who has come to Berlin to start afresh, after her budding career as a concert pianist was cut short. The film begins to luscious, thumping techno, as the camera picks out Victoria from a mass of silhouettes amid the blinding lights of a sweaty underground club. About to call it a night, she is convinced otherwise by the charming and persistent Sonne (Frederick Lau),

who leads her, along with his three friends, to their favourite hang-out spot on the roof of a nearby block of flats. The group, who must find a common language, speak a broken English that makes for endearing dialogue, most of which was extemporised from a minimal 12-page script. Infused with Richard Linklater's directorial influence, these initial moments are measured and building. Though they might have been condensed if Schipper had used multiple takes, cinematographer Sturla Brandth Grøvlen's long, unbroken shot rightly echoes the protracted antics of a listless, drunken group of friends.

From here, the film gathers pace as the night quickly descends into chaos. After a brief yet mesmeric scene in which Victoria shows off her impressive skills on the piano (she and Sonne have returned to the café where she works, intending to open up for the day), she is roped into joining her new accomplices on an urgent errand, at the behest of Sonne's friend Boxer, an amicable yet shadowy character who had previously spent time in prison. The men promise that if she drives them to a nearby location, they will return her safely back to the café,



though it soon becomes clear that Victoria is in over her head. In what follows, we are given a window into Berlin's criminal underbelly in all its slick horror. Although the plot can, at times, feel far-fetched (later in the film, Sonne and Victoria manage to escape a platoon of armed police officers by slipping through some well-placed foliage), none of this really matters, because the relentless camerawork is so thoroughly immersive that we are pulled along with no time to question anything.

“A THRILLING CINEMATIC RIDE

By the film's end we feel physically exhausted, as though we too have been dancing, crawling and running alongside the characters in order to keep up with the action. This blurring between film and reality is *Victoria's* most striking feature. As one comment posted to the *Guardian's* online review reads, “[after watching *Victoria*] I just stepped out of the Barbican cinema and the City

of London seemed very unreal to me.” If the film, with its absence of cuts or pauses, somehow represents ‘real time,’ upon leaving the cinema, our own real time feels decidedly filmic.

In creating *Victoria*, Schipper claims that he wanted to make something “wild,” a film that would combat modern cinema's trajectory towards becoming merely a “circus animal which you go and stroke”. *Victoria* feels anything but tame; it is genuine and real, a thrilling cinematic ride along the streets of a city at dawn. In one stunning sequence, relief and elation give way to crushing fear as the gang emerge from the club to realise the police are on their tail. Throughout all this, the characters' increasingly intimate relationships really shine; they have only known each other for as long as we have been sitting in the cinema, yet their bonds feel life-long. How, we are forced to consider, could all of this happened in just two hours?

After all is said and done, as Costa's character retreats into the quiet streets of Berlin, one can't help but imagine the jubilation felt by the crew when the cameras stop rolling. Quite right, too; this is an impressive film that excites and shocks in equal measure.

Thomas Cornelius

ALBUM

Zayn *Mind of Mine*

released 25/03/16, RCA

★★★★☆

Zayn's departure from One Direction was world news. The social media outcry was monumental, and from the moment that he left the band, there was a huge amount of attention paid on what Zayn would do next. Separating himself from the pop image of One Direction became the overarching concern: dropping his surname and denouncing his clean-cut boy-band image, #ZAYN has presented himself as an independent artist with real creative autonomy. And this is what *Mind of Mine* represents, an unfiltered and uncensored presentation of Zayn as his own artist.

In this deliberate departure from the style of One Direction, Zayn undoubtedly marks himself as one of the frontrunners of contemporary R&B music. Throughout the album, Zayn seems to want to walk in the footsteps of Frank Ocean's 2012 album, *Channel Orange* in particular – providing his own formidable version of sultry, dark R&B.

Mind of Mine is, at its core, an album about love. Its discussions of romance, sex and heartbreak are raw and personal, and the scope of emotion that represents lends the album an appealing sense of honesty. It stands as a cohesive piece with a range of intensity reflected from the more high energy tracks such as ‘LIKE I WOULD’ to the more gentle and acoustic moments, such as the track ‘iT's YoU’.

A sense of cohesion across the album as a whole is further established by the inclusion of both ‘Intro’ and ‘Interlude’. The use of shorter interlude tracks is an interesting presence, something that arguably strengthens the album. Contrast this to Kanye West's *The Life of Pablo* – Kanye's short inserted tracks seem at times a reductive, disruptive distraction to the album's progress. But in *Mind of Mine*, the short intro and interlude are endearing additions, providing a gentle link between contrasting tracks. The interlude, ‘fLoWer’, is a particularly engaging addition. In the task of establishing Zayn's independent identity as his own artist, this track is striking given it is performed in Urdu, a nod to Zayn's Pakistani heritage.

It all lends *Mind of Mine* a thoughtful, comforting sense of tranquillity throughout. The use of gentle echoes and reverbs throughout the album provides an ambience that almost evokes a sense of gospel music. The more outgoing tracks, such as ‘LIKE I WOULD’ and ‘PILLOWTALK’ are the moments where Zayn appears to present a distinctive sound, strangely enough; these moments are also where *Mind of Mine* is at its peak of pop. The more gentle ballad tracks, like ‘BoRdErZ’ are undoubtedly skilled and heartfelt tracks, but they seem almost familiar. During these tracks, there is a strong similarity to ‘sad era’ Drake, as exemplified by his 2011 release *Take Care*. While this isn't to say the songwriting is particularly bad, it is true that its familiarity inhibits any sense of real individuality within *Mind of Mine*.

The celebrity of Zayn and his membership of One Direction made it inevitable that there was a huge amount of interest and attention paid to the creation and release of *Mind of Mine*. There was undoubtedly a sense of pressure upon Zayn as an independent artist to create something different from One Direction that would still be popular and well received. *Mind of Mine* suffers under this pressure. It is an album that, rather unavoidably, has been vastly over-hyped. While it is an enjoyable creation, it seems to lack a sense of excitement to make it live up to the interest in its release. That said, *Mind of Mine* serves as proof of the strength of Zayn as his own artist, and he is definitely worthy of a platform to create music on these new terms.

Perdi Higgs

ALBUM

Parquet Courts *Human Performance*

released 08/04/16, Rough Trade

★★★★★

For an intelligent, wry rock band like Parquet Courts it must be difficult to work out what to say in 2016. One option is not to say anything at all, an approach which the band decided to adopt for last year's *Monastic Living* EP. The withering critical reception that greeted its release might have given the band pause for thought about whether aggressive instrumental-only releases would be a fruitful career path, though one suspects that the reaction was entirely expected and welcomed. Previous co-frontmen Andrew Savage and Austin Brown chose to examine and pick apart the lives of 20-something Brooklynites, not least when stoned and starving; although they do so again with the usual wisdom, what makes *Human Performance* stand out quite clearly as Parquet Courts' best album so far is that they're not afraid to turn that gaze inwards. Perhaps the best example of this newfound tenderness is the title track, where Savage looks back on a failed relationship. Whereas he may have previously looked on from the outside with a slight sneer in his voice, Savage now appears genuinely heartfelt with a slight tremble in his voice as he notes that “so few are trials when a life isn't lonely.”

Not to be outdone by his songwriting partner, Brown offers up ‘Steady On My Mind’, a gentle, subdued song that recalls The Velvet Underground's ‘Pale Blue Eyes’ in all the best ways. Really, it should be no surprise that Parquet Courts can handle love songs in a way that deals with feelings, man, [Editor's note: yeah, totally dude] but avoids both cliché and cynicism. That is not to say that they've entirely turned away from the observational style that characterised their earlier records. The album's opener, ‘Dust’, uses the subject matter as a metaphor to ruminate on the oppressive claustrophobia of twenty-first-century city life. Yet Parquet Courts create something really special when they combine the two approaches, as they do on the album highlight, ‘Berlin Got Blurry’. While Savage still finds the time to comment on the local cuisine, he realises its wider importance in creating a feeling of loneliness and alienation. With its spaghetti western riff, never has foreign isolation sounded quite so catchy.

The willingness to delve into new subject matter is also reflected in the diversity of the songs. All the usual influences are there: it's a bit Modern Lovers, a bit Talking Heads. Yet the band seem more comfortable with them than they have before, and can truly be said to have transcended these touchstones for a sound that is genuinely theirs. ‘I Was Just Here’, with its angular guitar work, is equal parts funny and unsettling, while album centrepiece ‘One Man, No City’ manages to segue successfully from bongo drums to guitar workout. Parquet Courts are never going to reinvent the wheel purely sonically, and it is arguable whether in 2016 any guitar band is going to do so, but their confidence in exploring a variety of sounds suits them well.

It would have been easy for Parquet Courts to stay doing what they were doing. No doubt they could have mined several albums' worth of material from smart-alec observations and wiry guitars, and happily played show after show to a cult of fans. That's why it's even more encouraging that they chose to refuse that option, that they want to get bigger. Ambition has never been particularly high on the agenda for many indie bands, and it's exciting to think where the band could go from here. They shouldn't worry too much about it, though, as with *Human Performance*, Parquet Courts have essentially offered everything one could want from a rock band in 2016.

Patrick Wernham



RCA

A clash of cultures...on ice

It seems that only the ice is cold when it comes to Russian and American ice hockey. Sophie Penney investigates this unusual fusion

Sophie Penney

Sport Correspondent

Ice hockey is Russia's most popular sport. Living in Russia, my cultural assimilation would never be complete without going to watch a game. But it turns out that these games are not emblematic of Russian culture. Instead, they try to fuse the cultures of the world's greatest rivals: Russia and America.

This was more a spectacle than a game of sport, focusing on a pure entertainment value that can only be described as American. When I walked through the gates, multicoloured lights swooped around the darkened stadium and American pop music was booming throughout the stands. Two DJs were stationed in the middle of the ice, getting the party started.

Even when the lights went up and the match commenced, there was no stopping the entertainment factor from working its way into the game. At every break in play (which are about every 30 seconds in ice hockey) the American pop music would blare, keeping the crowd's hype level up. Cheerleaders would appear in the gangways waving their pompoms to the beat, and there is even a kiss cam.

This is not to say that the Russians don't add their own twists. Interspersed with the pop music were video clips of songs from Soviet films, shown on the



Like the Cold War, but with much more action

big screen above the ice rink. These were bizarre to say the least, one showing soldiers gleefully chanting about going off to war to fight for their motherland, and another with a pirate rolling a die.

Perhaps the most quintessentially Russian aspect of the game was the giant Gazprom balloon floating around the stadium during the breaks. This remote-controlled emblem of Russia's oil-based power swooped around the stands, serving as a reminder of government control or widespread corruption, depending on the nationality and perspective of the spectator.

I never thought I would see the cultures of the world's two greatest rivals unite in one sports match. These polar opposites seemed to come together but never fully gel, yet somehow the American elements were deemed permissible, perhaps even necessary, for the greater good of the game.

Ice hockey is also incredibly popular in Finland, but the experience of the game seems to be very different there, as a friend explained to me: "Here in Russia the game was more of a spectacle, you know, the American way. In Finland it's really just about the ice hockey – not all the teams even have

cheerleaders there. If they stop the game they continue playing straight away. I found the game experience here in Russia really strange. I go [to Finland] to see the teams play, not to see some random people dancing on the screen. But the differences are probably only because they don't have that much money in Finland."

“

THIS WAS MORE A SPECTACLE THAN A GAME OF SPORT

Every country seems to have their own version of the original. Except for the UK. And trust me, we're missing out. It is by far the most exciting sport I've ever seen live.

It's so fast that your eyes are constantly moving, trying to follow the puck as it flies around at incredible speeds. In fact, it actually often does fly, higher than the barriers, making the spectator a little tense at times!

The speed makes attacks on the other team's goal much more exhilarating, as a sudden super-fast strike will be hit right at the goal and the goalie will have to rely on lightning reactions.

The game I saw was also incredibly violent, with many bodies being slammed against the side, three sticks

ending up broken in half, and several heads hitting the ice. Players seem totally unfazed by the fact that their eyes are centimetres away from sharp blades, and by the possibility of bones being broken by the force. Yet they made no fuss, just got up and carried on in a heartbeat (except for the occasional fight).

There is no doubt that this game also involves incredible skill: their changes of direction on ice are what any English netballer would dream of; their sprinting pace equal to anything you could see on an athletics track.

This game in particular was special from a supporter's point of view. When SKA scored their winning goal, every single person in the 13,000-strong crowd jumped to their feet in a roar of excitement: that image will remain with me for a long time.

With so many home supporters present, the war-like chanting of 'pobezhdai' ('win'), 'tolko SKA i tolko pobeda' ('only SKA and only victory') and 'davai SKA' ('come on SKA') was a powerful force, driving the home side toward victory.

It is rare that you get to go to a match where everyone is supporting the same team. Of course, in Russia travelling to see an away game is a bit more of an ordeal. When St Petersburg play Vladivostok the away fans would face a 10-hour flight to support their team. But what a game they would be watching when they got there.

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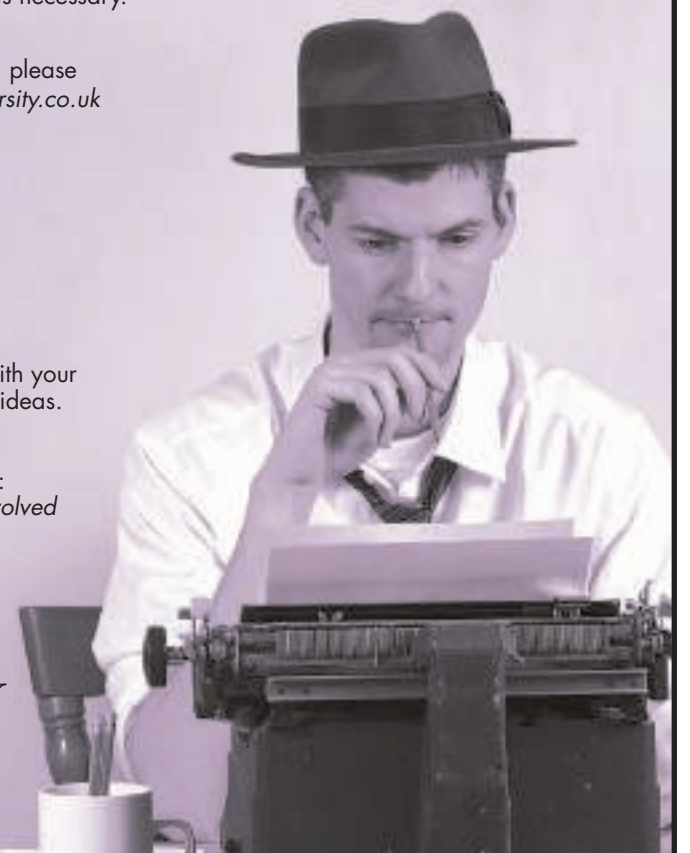
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Time for the losers to write history as well

Even if they lose, Leicester should be remembered as the champions, and not the chokers, of the 2016 Premier League season

Ravi Willder

Sport Editor

Sunday 15th May is a date etched into the diaries of even those who were previously indifferent to the trials and tribulations of the English Premier League, as the day on which this momentous and unprecedented season concludes. This season, of course, has elevated underdogs Leicester City from relegation fodder to potential champions, and seen the remarkable fall of previous champions Chelsea, not to mention the sad decline of Aston Villa, who will drop into the Championship next season.

The drama of the final day, though, is set to take place at the very top of the table, as the nation and even the world (a sentiment normally firmly rooted in hyperbole but one that holds true here) watches to see whether Leicester or Tottenham will win the Premier League for the first time ever. What is extraordinary, however, debatably even more so than Leicester's surge up the table or Tottenham's transformation from top-four challengers at best into potential winners, is the cruel manner in which history will only remember one of these two teams, both of which have demonstrated so many admirable qualities over the course of the campaign.

History, lest anyone need reminding, is a fickle beast at the best of times. The truism (attributed by folklore to



Leicester's King Power Stadium, the source of the vital home support

none other than Winston Churchill) that "History is written by the victors" perfectly expresses the delight that will await the eventual winners of the 2015/2016 Barclays Premier League, at the expense of the runner-up who will be consigned to a footnote in the annals of the so-called 'beautiful game'. History glorifies the winners at the loser's expense – just ask the Manchester United team of '11/'12, whose valiant efforts that season were forgotten in a heartbeat when Sergio Agüero netted the ball in added time in the final game of the season to hand City their first ever Premier League title. So what, then, will be the headline in this climactic year?

One would hope that, whatever the outcome may be mid-May, Leicester get the plaudits they deserve for a truly

outstanding season that has put the teams that usually inhabit the upper echelons of the league table to shame. This is a club that has a fraction of the resources of its competitors, and one that has had to rely on prudent financial decisions in the transfer market to rocket up the table.

More important than savvy moves regarding transfers, however, is the spirit Leicester have shown in their success. Their manager, Claudio Ranieri, has remained firmly grounded all season, playing down his team's chances in the face of constant media hype, and has refrained from resorting to criticising referees or other teams' tactics that we have seen so many a title-chasing manager do before him. Even on Sunday afternoon against West Ham, when Leicester had star

player Jamie Vardy sent off in a controversial decision that dramatically affected the outcome of the match, Ranieri steered clear of castigating the referee, stating his desire to "stay calm and speak about football" when asked about the incident.

Off the pitch, Leicester too have made a refreshing change to the steely eyed determinism of the bigger teams. Ranieri's innovative rewards for hard-fought victories have included ordering pizza for the whole team and allowing players a beer on the triumphant bus ride back – acts that may seem relatively unimportant but, in this age of scientifically counting each and every calorie to gain an imperceptible advantage, are a rarity. The fans, too, have played their part in the camaraderie, memorably staying

in the stadium after a tight win over Crystal Palace for a good 15 minutes after the final whistle to serenade the team and onlooker. Again, nothing too radical – except when compared with the empty seats and early leavers of the fans of grander teams. The club itself has responded to the fans' spirit, treating them to free doughnuts and beverages at a recent game as a thank you for their ardent support.

No one, of course, would wish to denigrate Tottenham's success if it transpires that they manage to do the unthinkable and usurp Leicester's position at the top just because of Leicester's admirable qualities. It would, however, be a shame if all Leicester's hard work on and off the field is forgotten – or worse, mocked – if they slip up in these closing stages.

Both the media and 'Twitterati' have been none too kind to failed title challengers in recent years, with Steven Gerrard's all too literal slip-up that cost Liverpool a first ever Premier League title being mocked incessantly in national newspapers and internet forums alike. One can easily imagine them dragging an unfortunate Leicester player, or even the whole team, through the mud should they fail to provide a fairy-tale ending to what has been the rags-to-riches story to eclipse all others. This is a team that deserves praise and remembrance whatever the outcome – one just hopes history will be as kind to them if they fail as it will be if they succeed.

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Writers of history?

Sometimes history must be written by the loser too. Page 31



Sport

Why men in Lycra is a sport to savour

As the cycling season gets properly underway, Felix Schlichter asks why more Brits don't enjoy such a great sport

Felix Schlichter
Sport Editor

For Belgians, recent footballing talent notwithstanding, nothing can ever rival the spectacle which takes place on the badly paved Flemish cart tracks every year around Easter Sunday. To the outsider, the sight might be something baffling; for seven hours, stick-thin young men, crammed into Lycra akin to a full-body condom, puff away at mind-bogglingly slow speeds over the worst-paved roads in Europe.

For many hours, little happens. A large swarming mass of cyclists wearing suitably dragon-fly-like sunglasses and helmets which look like they have been flattened in a trash compactor cruise through the Flemish countryside. The Belgian fans hang out of their caravans which they dragged to Oudenaarde from across the country, shout support and swig from plastic cups of Belgian Jupiler beer. Despite my bafflement, as the English visitor from across the Channel, the Ronde van Vlaanderen remains the greatest sporting event of the year.

Rumours that cycling has found a mainstream audience in Britain, have, to paraphrase Mark Twain, been greatly exaggerated. Beyond a minor sub-section of middle-aged, high-earning men who admire shiny objects in their garage, cycling has yet to be adopted as a popular, youthful sport. And beyond a minor sub-section of European immigrants, ex-pros, and journalists who need to carve themselves a new niche after being dropped from Europa League highlights on ITV4, there are few who settle down over April to watch the seven-hour long spring classics.

In these times when polemics seem to be more popular than ever before, it seems fitting that, disregarding those subsidiary debates on EU membership or the American presidency, a suitable polemic be proclaimed for the adoption of and heightened general regard for the magnificent sport of professional road cycling among the British sporting and non-sporting public.

There are few sports which have the history of pro-cycling; where do minor football matches appear in Hemingway, as the Tour of the Basque country does in *The Sun Also Rises*? When did tennis help political and religious refugees during the Second World War? It was none other than former Tour de France winner Gino Bartali who used to ferry top-secret anti-Mussolini documents in his jersey during supposed training rides in the 1940s.

Few sports can quite summon up the nostalgia that cycling does, be it the grimy black-and-white photos of the two great French cyclists of the 1960s, Jacques Anquetil and Raymond



CHRIS PROTOPAPAS



MONDADORI



BERT VERHOEFF

Poulidor, shoulder to shoulder upon the Puy de Dôme, or the grime-splattered face of Maurice Garin who had won the French 24-hour cycle race by riding 701km non-stop in the 1890s.

“

CYCLING, FOR ALL ITS LYCRA-BASED DERISION, USED TO BE COOL

Cycling, for all its (sometime justifiable) Lycra-based derision, used to be cool, or chic. Eddy Merckx, Jan Janssen, and Jacques Anquetil were the definition of Sixties and Seventies cool: black polo-necks, tailored blazers, Perrier for lunch and espressos in Parisian cafes. These men were the heroes of the French, Belgian and Italian publics. The cyclist as a devil-may-care, hell-raising force of nature went on well into the Nineties; whereas Freddy Maertens was known for drinking champagne during races, it was his Belgian successor, Frank Vandenbroucke, who pushed the limits of cycling, and lifestyle, into the

extremes. In the day, he would crush the competition with effortless ease, gliding away from his flailing rivals as if gliding on ice. But at night, he was found in the Belgian night-clubs, eyes wide, splutteringly incoherently, the cocaine pumping through his blood. Vandenbroucke's rapid rise as the darling of Belgian cycling was almost inevitably followed by an even more precipitous fall: failed drug tests, declining performances – three separate retirements and death from pulmonary embolism at 34.

Cycling has always bred the exceptional, and the extraordinary; but as Frank Vandenbroucke, or Marco Pantani, dead from a cocaine overdose five years after his Tour de France victory, proved, extraordinary was a word which could be applied both positively and negatively.

Few sports, then, quite fitted into the Zeitgeist as well as cycling did; from the daring, near-suicidal feats of the first cyclists, battling for more than 20 hours over the Alps on fixed gears, to the swooning cool of the Sixties, to the sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll of the Nineties. What happened on the bike deserves just as much attention. From tragedy, to tension and ecstasy, few sports can quite encapsulate heroism as well as cycling can; the

football match is limited to 90 minutes; the cricket match to the whims of the weather; golf to a general lack of movement.

“

TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY HAVE NEVER BEEN SO CLOSE

In other sports there is no Charly Gaul, who, 15 minutes behind his rivals, attacked the rest of the group with six hours left, or raced to win by half an hour after searing across the Alps in the pouring rain. There is no battle between Greg LeMond and Laurent Fignon, where over 3,000 kilometres of the racing across France boiled down to eight seconds on the Champs Élysées, as Laurent Fignon's less than aerodynamic pony tail saw victory snatched from him on the final day. What other sport can boast the epic Liège-Bastogne-Liège of 1980, when Bernard Hinault rode away from his competitors in the falling snow, wearing no gloves but Ray-Ban aviators to protect his eyes? It took two weeks for the feeling to return to his fingers.

Triumph and tragedy have never been so close as they are in cycling; witness Tom Simpson, fighting up Mont Ventoux and dying just two kilometres from the finish after a deadly cocktail of amphetamines and alcohol. Or take Lance Armstrong's tears as he pointed to the skies to dedicate his stage win to the recently deceased Fabio Casartelli, dead after a crash on the descent the previous week. That is not to say that death and heroic racing are inextricably linked. Controls on drugs, safety procedures, and better fitness checks have meant that the sport is finally getting safer. Its excitement remains undiminished. Its heroes live on.

Cycling has always struggled to catch on, not only because it has failed to ingrain itself into the British sporting psyche, but because of its relative complexity. Simply put, the more you understand about racing tactics, the more exciting the race becomes.

Time, space, and effort prevent me from explaining the nature of a pro-cycling race. I would hope that this brief taster might persuade you to turn on Eurosport on Sunday to watch Liège-Bastogne-Liège. Although if you don't, it won't diminish my enthusiasm. In fact, I'm watching La Flèche Wallonne right now.