

The fine art of gossiping

Is it ever okay to talk about someone behind their back?

Bitch!

Features 20-21



'I want to represent the 99 per cent'

Green Co-Leader sets new agenda

News 9

The logical case for Trump?

FREE
Take a copy

US election buildup

Comment 14
Politics 8



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VARSITY

'I wasn't treated like an actual human being'

Varsity investigation reveals disparities in intermission practices and their harmful effect on students

INVESTIGATION 2-5



EDITORIAL

Cambridge must change its non-sensical rules on intermission

Students are well aware of the pressures which we all face, and years of campaigning, advocacy and support mean that – though problems remain – they are not totally hidden. We are constantly encouraged to talk about issues which we face, to support and provide community for those around us who suffer from mental welfare issues.

The issue of community is key – support, self-care and solidarity are collective actions. Never are we more aware of this than in the infamous Week Five.

Intermissions are different. Students who intermit are normally already over-burdened with physical or mental illness, or both. They try their hardest, battling through sickness and fatigue to hand in one more essay, or make that 9am lecture.

Before long, many find the work has become too much. At this point, intermission should be a kind, considerate and sensible process – giving students the time to recover, and then sensitively bringing them back into college when they are better.

Instead, they are often very alone, presented with alienating guidance which seems written with no consideration given to the human factor.

They are often misguided by senior tutors who fail to understand the issues they face. Then, they find themselves treated no differently to any other student when they return. Worst of all, they are still told, after years of campaigns, that they are banned from Cambridge.

The University should undertake a review of its guidance, properly educating senior tutors about how to treat intermitting students. It should also immediately repeal the nonsensical, archaic and the embarrassingly unenforceable rule that intermitting students are not allowed in Cambridge.

It's time for the University of Cambridge to step up, and give students who intermit the sense of community they deserve. It's time to treat them as human beings.

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Investigation Intermissions

Revealed Sick students failed by Uni guidance

● *Intermitting Cantabs are still banned from the city, despite years of campaigning*

Written by Tom Richardson
Investigations Editor

The intermissions investigation team is Louis Ashworth, Sam Harrison, Jack Higgins, Anna Menin and Tom Richardson

A *Varsity* investigation has revealed serious problems with the intermissions process, despite years of student campaigning on the issue. Archaic and unclear guidance from the University, inconsistent treatment when intermitting and returning, and mishandling of mental health issues were all raised as concerns by the students *Varsity* spoke to, with the President of Student Minds Cambridge (SMC) calling out colleges' "distrustful nature" towards "troubled" students. The investigation found:

- Inadequate understanding of mental health issues by some senior staff.
- Archaic and unclear guidance on rules, including banning intermitting students from the city.
- Many returning students felt they had a lack of support.
- Total numbers are increasing, with disparities between genders, colleges and subjects.

Intermission, which involves students skipping terms, or often the whole academic year, is almost always aimed at helping students overcome serious issues, medical or otherwise. However, of the many students who contacted *Varsity*, all had experienced mental health issues, some alongside physical ailments, with many reporting that applying for intermission had worsened their condition.

It is the colleges which are largely responsible for intermitting. While some students reported feeling supported through the process, others endured delays, during which their condition worsened, as well as suspicion from senior staff. One student told *Varsity*: "at no point did they treat me as an actual human being."

Disparities between colleges also translated into markedly different rates of intermission. Between 2010 and 2016, the non-mature college with the highest

rate, Girton, intermitted almost double the proportion of students as Corpus Christi, which had the lowest rate. This may reflect different attitudes towards granting intermission, with some students reporting reluctance from their senior tutors and others being pressured into the process.

Disparities in the treatment of students were also apparent between faculties. One postgraduate student said that his department lacked the "basic knowledge" that "mental health and physical health are not the same," suggesting that they treated his severe anxiety "much like after one breaks an arm". While departments are not directly involved in intermission, data nonetheless showed significant gaps between Triposes, with Psychological and Behavioural Sciences students almost five times as likely to intermit as Engineers.

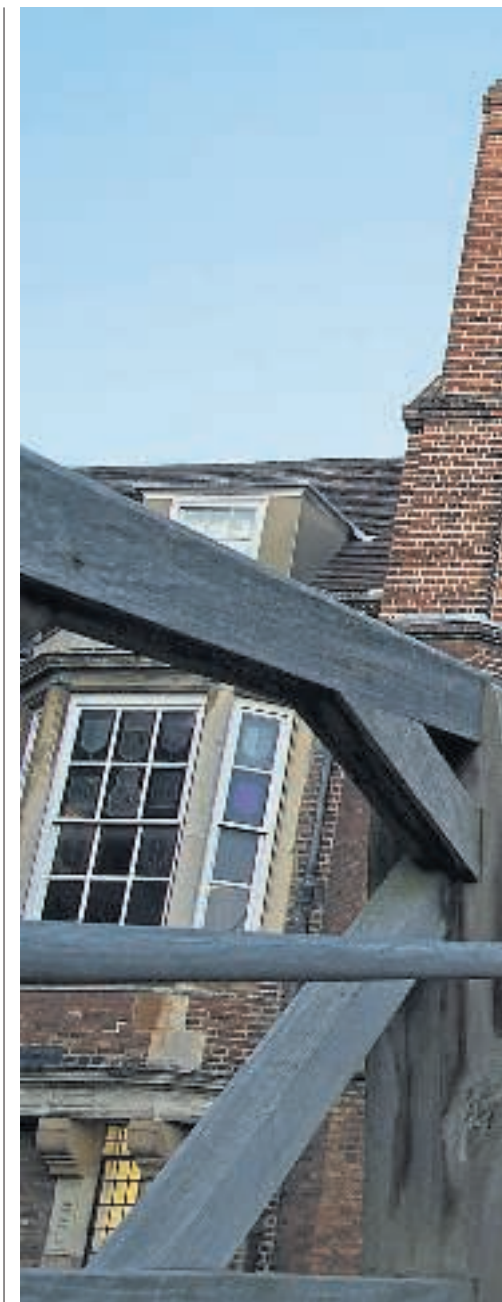
The total number of intermissions also appears to be rising, albeit with some fluctuations. Between 2010 and 2016, the

250

The number of students who intermitted during the academic year 2015-16

total number of students intermitting rose from 195 to 250, with rises observed in four of the six years. Sophie Buck, the CUSU and GU Welfare and Rights Officer, put the rise down to "greater acceptance of intermission as an option and stigma reducing campaigns", including 'Degrading is Degrading' in 2011. (See box opposite.) However, a University spokesperson noted that "data fluctuates year-on-year", and warned that the small numbers available "do not provide sound evidence of patterns".

For many students, attaining permission to intermit was the first of a number of challenges they faced. Once intermitted, a number of complex regulations come into force for students, who are required to sign an agreement as part of the process. They are routinely barred from entering colleges and University buildings, and most were advised not to visit Cambridge at all. Students reported feeling confused by the rules, and cut off from their friends. One student even



reported being barred from their college's June Event, despite non-University guests being otherwise permitted.

Responding to *Varsity*'s investigation, the University stated: "it is important that students use their time away from their studies to focus on the cause of their intermission (often recovering from illness) and that this is not disrupted."

However, SMC President Keir Murison strongly criticised current intermission procedures, telling *Varsity* that the group "condemn[s] the practice". Murison noted that, although leaving Cambridge and returning home is "useful" for some students, for others "going home is not an option if their life there is not healthy". The University pointed out that the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) remains available to students during intermission.

The most difficult stage for the students *Varsity* spoke to was their return. Cambridge is, according to a 2016 investigation by *The Guardian*, the only one of the 30 universities contacted which required some students to sit an exam, as well as submit medical evidence proving that they had recovered, in order to return.

A University spokesperson said that it was "rare for an intermitting student to be required to take an academic assessment as a condition of returning", and that this would only be the case if it "would provide reassurance to both the student and their College that the student is in a strong position to resume their studies".

Buck suggested that such exams were

Intermissions Investigation



Raphael Levy, Queens'

“At no point did anyone treat me as an actual human being”

My experience of attempting to intermit was a disaster from start to finish. I suffered severe panic attacks leading to the loss of my voice and have been in therapy since. I initially decided to make the application on the advice of my course director after discovering that my results would not enable me to continue my Master's. I was told there was no strict deadline. Two weeks later, I received an email informing me that the committee had declined my application on a technicality.

It transpired that because I had submitted work it was assumed that my mental health was fine. I was advised to make another application, which was once again declined on a technicality. After my dad phoned them and made it clear this was absurd in the extreme, I received another email approving my application.

The reason I was intermitting was because of panic attacks and anxiety, and the fact that I was messed around and given false information is likely to cause anyone further anxiety, especially when I had offers to study law next year dependent on being allowed to retake the MPhil.

Returning was no better. I was told to submit the relevant forms at least two weeks prior to the start of term. I did so a month and two weeks prior to the start of term. I still had not heard back on the day before term was due to begin despite emailing twice.

At no point did anyone have a clue what they were doing or treat me as an actual human being with emotions, feelings and the capacity to respond to events. Instead, there was a blind insistence to stick to rules that either should not have been applied or simply did not apply regardless of the detriment to my health that it would cause. Cambridge failed spectacularly in their duty of care towards me and I am launching a formal complaint.

“effectively discrimination” against disabled students, requiring them “to get into Cambridge twice”, the stress of which could hinder their recovery. Moreover, she said that “intermitting students do not have the adequate resources to prepare for these exams,” alluding to the ban on entering University facilities.

While some students reported feeling they had a strong support network upon their return to college, the overwhelming majority reported feeling socially and academically disadvantaged, with one saying that joining a new cohort of students “can make you feel like an outsider even after you return to study”.

Many returning students reported unclear or absent information. One Natural Scientist at Clare, whose request to return in Michaelmas was rejected because they had intermitted in Lent, told *Varsity*: “a lot more could have been done by college to make sure I was rehabilitated correctly so I wouldn't have to struggle with both academic and social demands.”

Another reported that the University had not replied to their completed application to return until one day before term started.

Indeed, one student at Selwyn, who found they had to start their new course in its second year, reported finding the transition “incredibly stressful”, and that they were now feeling “totally overwhelmed”. The student has since dropped out entirely.

Data showed 228 students never returned from intermission over the six-year period examined, out of a total of 1,301.

▼ Raphael Levy, on Queens' bridge (LUCAS CHEBIB)

A degrading experience: what is intermission?

The process of intermitting, or ‘disregarding terms’ as it is referred to by the University, is designed to give students time to recover from an “illness or other grave cause” that has made it impossible for them to continue their studies.

Such “grave cause[s]” can include bereavements, family circumstances, needing to deal with an emergency situation, or other serious issues that have impeded their ability to study effectively at Cambridge.

It is most common for students who intermit to resume their degree at the start of the next academic year, although each case is determined on an individual basis. The total period spent intermitted is not usually allowed to exceed two academic years, although exceptions are made if the student has spent the majority of that time waiting for treatment they need to undergo before returning to their course.

The process of “disregarding” part (or all) of an academic year allows students to take examinations in a subsequent year in which they would not otherwise have been allowed to sit them. To be granted this,

the student's college must apply to the University Council's Applications Committee, usually requiring the submission of medical evidence demonstrating that the student is currently unable to continue their course.

If an application is granted, the student must then sign a written agreement stating how their intermission will work, which is also signed by their senior tutor. These agreements often stipulate that the student must leave Cambridge (unless their home is in the city), or that they sit exams before they can resume their course, and they are usually banned from using University or college facilities while they are intermitted.

Exceptions are sometimes made about the student remaining in Cambridge if they are receiving treatment for a physical or mental health condition that would be lost if they returned home.

The justification given for such measures is that the process of intermission is intended to mitigate any disadvantage that has been caused to the student by their circumstances, rather than to grant any academic advantage. This also means that intermitting students cannot receive any additional tuition.

The intermissions system has repeatedly come under fire in recent years. In 2011, students launched a petition to change the name of the process, which was known at the time by the Univer-

sity as “degrading”.

The petition, started by the campaign ‘Degrading is Degrading’, called for a removal of “any and all restrictions of movements of students,” as well as an end to the requirement for students to leave Cambridge, “or for Cambridge based students to be banned from their college.”

It also called on the University to work with the campaign and the Disability Resource Centre to “produce detailed policy on the degrading process to be made accessible to all students and be enacted equally throughout the University.”

The petition, which called for “a fairer, less degrading system giving students needing to intermit the respect they deserve,” received over 1,600 signatures, and the process was subsequently renamed “disregarding terms” in the University's Statutes and Ordinances.

At the time, then-CUSU Education Officer Morgan Wild told *Varsity* that “the University's treatment of students who are forced to spend time out of their studies is anachronistic and hopelessly out of step with the rest of the country.”

Students who are considering intermission are advised to speak to their tutors, and are able to contact the Students' Union's Advice Service for support.

Anna Menin

▼ *Varsity* backed a campaign against ‘degrading’ in 2011



Investigation Intermissions

Women and older students more likely to intermit

Tom Richardson
Investigations Editor

Rates of intermission are considerably higher among women and mature students, data obtained by *Varsity* under the Freedom of Information Act has revealed. Between 2010 and 2016, female students represented over 53 per cent of intermissions, despite comprising only 47 per cent of the student body during the same period, a six per cent disparity. The gap was consistent, with women as the major group in intermissions numbers across all of the six years examined.

Speaking to *Varsity*, CUSU and GU Welfare Officer Sophie Buck suggested there was a lack of data on why people intermitted, but suggested disparities along gender lines came down to the increased prevalence of mental health issues among women. She also noted that “any kind of oppression poses added stress; women, for example, are much more likely than men to experience sexual harassment, and this can lead to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.”

Even more stark was the difference between the numbers of mature and non-mature undergraduates intermitting. Over the 2010-2016 period the proportion of undergraduate students at the three mature colleges was more than double than at the non-mature colleges. Wolfson in particular intermitted an average of almost six per cent of its students across the six years examined, the highest of any college, compared with only two percent at Girton, the highest rate among the non-mature colleges.

A fluctuation in statistics for mature students could be attributed in part to low sample sizes, but the disparity is present across all four mature undergraduate colleges.

Buck told *Varsity* that, having consulted with the welfare officers at the mature colleges, she suspected they intermitted more frequently “principally because of a lack of social support,” noting that “there are often very few mature students taking each subject in mature colleges”, which tend to be smaller, “so they miss out on valuable intracollege subject solidarity.”

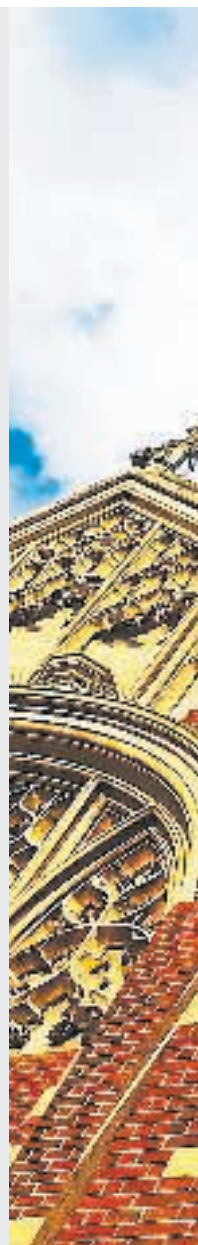
Rory, Selwyn

“I’m surprised by the lack of support for returning students”

I intermitted with severe depression just before my first-year Chinese Studies exams last year. I felt that dissatisfaction with my subject had contributed to the deterioration in my mental health, and had for some time been pursuing a change in subject. My grades from Michaelmas term were extrapolated and used to say that I would likely have achieved a 2:1 had I not fallen ill.

This extrapolation was vital in fulfilling the departmental criteria to organise a subject change to HSPS. To my surprise, the senior tutor and my tutor told me that I would move straight into the second year of the HSPS Tripos, rather than starting from first year. I felt uncomfortable with this, feeling that my lack of experience in the subject would put me at a disadvantage when recommencing my studies, and add to the stress and pressure of reintegrating in college. This was on top of feelings of inadequacy I would surely feel, having failed to even complete my first year of study.

So I returned to commence the second year of HSPS, having neither been set any extra examinations by college, nor even passed my first-year Chinese Studies examinations. Upon my return, my new DoS mistook me for a first year and included my name on the first-year HSPS mailing lists, despite my officially being enrolled in Part IIA. I’m now finding second-year HSPS incredibly stressful, and I have just changed two of my four papers, so I’m now in a position where I will be catching up on catching up. I’m surprised by the lack of support for returning students. I’m now feeling totally overwhelmed and have since decided to withdraw entirely.



(Clockwise from left) Selwyn College (MIHNEA MAFTEI), Jennifer Thorpe (LUCAS CHEBIB), Pembroke College (STACEY MACNAUGHT) and Newnham (ANNA MENIN)

Mixed messages:



Anonymous, Clare

“A lot more could have been done by college to make sure I was rehabilitated correctly”

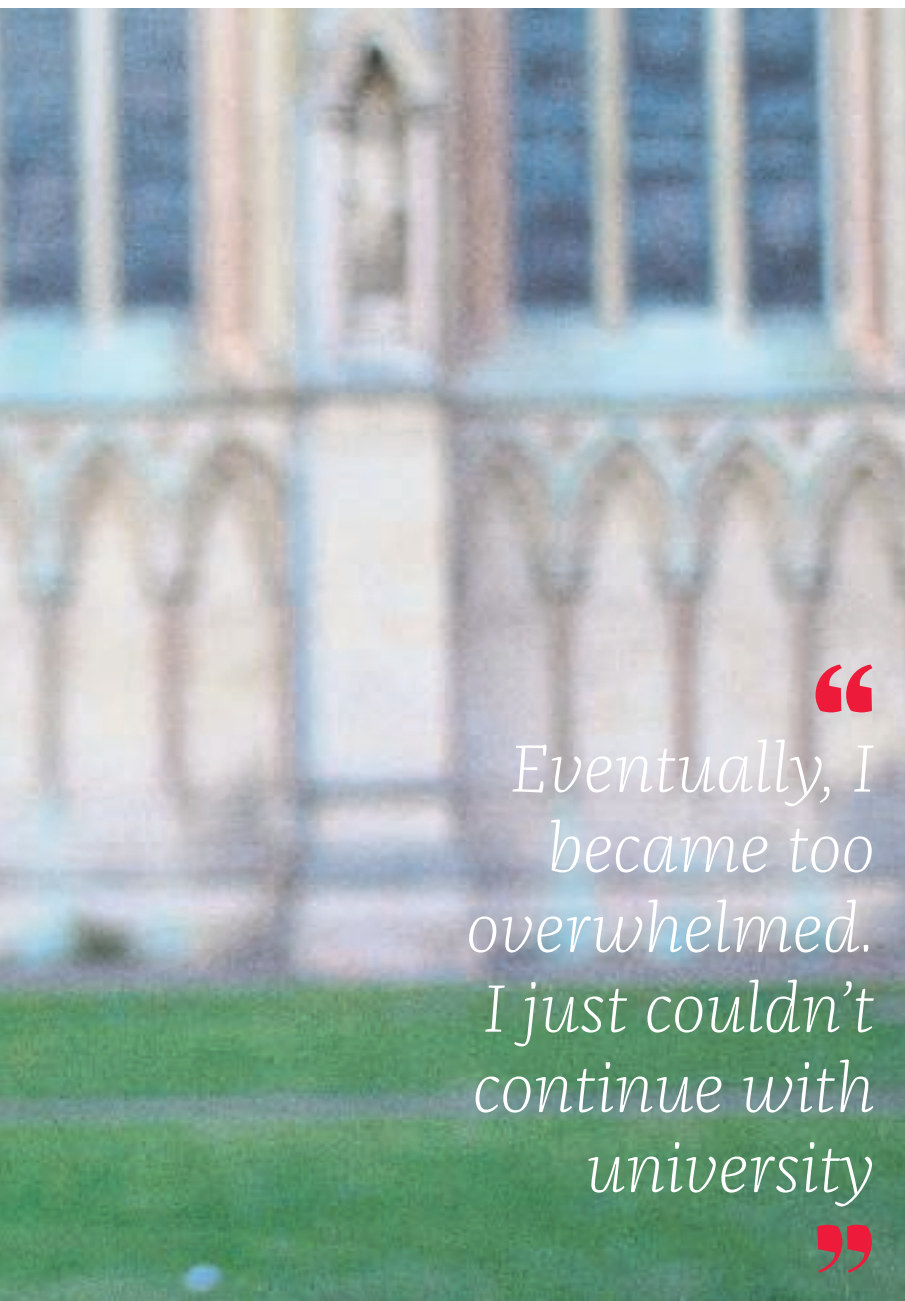
After matriculating in 2013, I intermitted in Lent 2014 due to clinical depression; I was aware that something was wrong in Michaelmas 2013 but was only diagnosed in time to intermit in Lent.

Due to me having completed first term, Clare only allowed me return in Lent 2015; this was despite the fact that I: a) tried to testify that even my first term was undermined by depressive symptoms, b) a whole year out of a strenuous subject like maths would do me a great disservice academically, c) I would be at a huge disadvantage socially, having not done Freshers’ Week in 2014.

Despite appealing and even having my GP submit a letter stating that coming back late would be detrimental to my mental health, the University did not grant me entry in Michaelmas and all of the things I said would occur, in fact, did. I believe a lot more could have been done by college to make sure I was rehabilitated correctly so I wouldn’t have to struggle with both academic and social demands.



students' experiences with intermission



“Eventually, I became too overwhelmed. I just couldn't continue with university”

Jennifer Thorpe, St John's

“College were extremely supportive

My health began to decline during the summer term of my first year when, on the day of my exam, I had a seizure leaving me with a minor head injury, forcing me to spend the remainder of my day in hospital. Following my ordeal, I decided to continue through to second year; however, anxieties associated with a desperate need to prove myself (having missed all my exams) and the stress of coursework deadlines led to a worsening of my epilepsy and anxiety.

The words of my tutor following my seizure of 'you can enter second year but MUST pass the year' haunted me for the best part of six months, giving me the impression that intermitting was not an option. Over the Lent period my condition worsened, with my anxiety prevented me from leaving my room and left me with sleep problems, depression, and an increase in stress-related seizures. Eventually, I became too overwhelmed to continue and visited the college nurse to tell her I just couldn't continue with university. The college nurse immediately told me that I should consider intermitting, reassuring me that I had the grounds to do so. She played a pivotal role in the process, providing me with emotional support and contacting the college tutor. They explained the process and allowed me to leave a few weeks into Easter term.

College were extremely supportive, reimbursing me for the four weeks' rent after I left and granted me money to pay for private specialist counselling while I was on the NHS waiting list to see a consultant psychiatrist.

The process was fairly straightforward. College paid for a doctor's letter outlining why I should intermit, which they submitted to the exam board. The only requirements I had to meet was another doctor's letter recommending my return, also paid for by college. Upon my return, I feel that I have a strong support network in my college, the Disabilities Resource Centre and the Department of Geography, providing me with a positive outlook.



Hannah, Pembroke

“I felt cut off from the student community

I didn't really have a choice when it came to intermitting, as my college had to follow hospital advice: I did feel backed into a corner and powerless at the time, though in hindsight I think intermitting was for the best. Although most of the college staff were very supportive, I was given the impression that my presence in college might negatively affect those still studying, as though my circumstances were in some way burdensome to others. I was permitted to stay in Cambridge, largely because of the proximity to Addenbrooke's, and my college were supportive in offering me graduate accommodation to rent while I did; I don't feel they were overly punitive, but there was an implicit understanding that I was temporarily no longer a student. I felt cut off from the student community, and struggled with the lack of purpose and social group.

While applying for intermission was very much out of my hands, the process was fairly smooth: preparation for returning was a far more stressful ordeal, as there was no information as to when/whom you should contact if you were considering returning to your studies. The deadline for approving my appeal to return had passed when I contacted the University, and so I only had confirmation three weeks into Michaelmas term – my college were quick to act with regards to informing Student Finance and the relevant authorities of my return, but there was very little information available about the process. Upon returning I was informed of various University support systems, and Pembroke offered to help if I wished to access them. I do feel that, while such support systems are necessary, the social side of reintegrating after intermission is often overlooked: joining a new year group throws up its own problems that can't be addressed by the UCS, and it can make you feel like you're an outsider even after you return to study.”



Miriam, Newnham

“I wasn't allowed to attend the June Event, even though non-University members were allowed to go

For me, intermitting was a relatively smooth process, at least administratively. I'd been thinking about it for a while and my DoS had mentioned it in passing as an option, so once I made up my mind and consulted my parents, I went from theoretically considering it to signing the forms in about a week. My DoS was very nice about it – probably because she could tell it was needed. I didn't talk to all that many members of staff; I think I had a meeting with the senior tutor, but since I don't remember it, it can't have been particularly emotional.

It was a couple more weeks before I actually left because I stayed to make sure I could attend various hospital appointments. The timing meant I was able to fulfil my commitment to perform in the ballet show, *Romeo and Juliet*, which was good; it was basically the only thing that had stopped me intermitting earlier in the year.

I didn't feel I was given entirely clear information.

I wasn't sure on the rules regarding visiting friends in college, nor the reasons behind other rules. For example, I wasn't allowed to attend the June Event, even though non-University members were allowed to go as guests. I didn't particularly mind, but it seemed like an arbitrary rule. College didn't explicitly ban me, and I did pop into my faculty library during the summer, but I was very unsure about whether or not I would get in trouble for doing so.

Thankfully, I wasn't required to do anything academic to return (just prove that I was medically well enough by means of a letter from my GP, which was reasonably painless), but I did find that it was a tough transition. I left at the end of February, which meant I wasn't 'better' by the time the summer started, so I hadn't done much work during the Long Vacation. It made for a few evenings of dissertation-related panic early on in term.

“Have you experienced intermission?

We would like to hear from students who have intermitted, whether it was good or bad, to find out more about how the University's guidance can be improved.

If you have intermitted, and would like to discuss what the experience was like, please contact the Varsity intermission investigation team at: investigations@varsity.co.uk. Please give your name, your college, whether you wish to be anonymous, and an outline of what your experience was like.

Interview

Matthew Elliott



‘We’re stepping out of Europe and into the world’

Alice Chilcott

“It’s so nice to be talking to you guys,” Matthew Elliott, Chief Executive of Vote Leave, is addressing the Cambridge University Conservative Association (CUCA). “I was at a conference before this,” he tells the audience. “There was so much intellectual dishonesty going on!”

If anyone needed reminding, Cambridge was one of the strongest Remain constituencies, with a vote of 73.8 per cent. Yet tonight, besides a few concerned or curious academic types, the audience seem to be mostly Leave voters. There is an odd atmosphere – palpable satisfaction with just a hint of siege mentality. One attendee’s observation that “it’s so hard to be a Brexiteer in Cambridge” draws murmurs of assent from the overwhelmingly male audience. For weeks before the referendum, Elliott had been loudly predicting a Leave victory. Nevertheless, when he sits down with me after the Q&A, he tells me of the night itself: “we were actually all quite downbeat in a way. We were sort of wondering what was going to happen.”

Yet he was surprised at the rapidity and smoothness of the Conservative response to the result. He quickly affirms that he did not support Andrea Leadsom’s bid for the leadership, but suggests he would have liked to have seen Boris Johnson as prime minister. “When Boris announced [his leadership bid] in *The Sunday Times*,” he says, “I genuinely supported that. I bought into the idea that you needed to have a ‘Leave’ prime minister.”

► Matthew Elliott was a key player in the Vote Leave campaign during the EU referendum (CONSERVATIVE-HOME)

“We wanted to have a broad-base campaign”



had used in the past, we wanted to have a broad-base campaign with sensible people from business, academics, etc. There’s no love lost between myself and Nigel Farage.”

It’s a distinction which seems to preoccupy him. He later reminds me that “we denounced the ‘breaking point’ poster in quite vocal terms, so we don’t feel any responsibility for that”. Yet twice in under 15 minutes he dodges the issue of whether Vote Leave owes at least some of their success to anti-EU prejudices propagated by UKIP. If he disowns Farage, he is reluctant to disown Leave voters. “I think there’s a clear distinction between Nigel Farage and the UKIP leadership, and the UKIP activists. Lots of UKIP activists, who are good people and passionate people, took part in Vote Leave events.”

But he knows Farage? He smiles wryly.

No love lost

The differences in personality between the cogitative, private Elliott and the boisterous Farage were reflected in the two men’s separate campaigns. Elliott’s Vote Leave, pitching for liberal centrists, emphasised the EU’s democratic deficit above the immigration question. Farage wanted a campaign that was like UKIP: populist and visceral. Each was convinced that the other would lose the referendum, and although their fears did not come to pass, it seems the bad blood has not disappeared.

But all that disintegrated, he tells me, with Gove’s leadership bid. The phrase “stabbed in the back” escapes his mouth before I can say it. “I was so surprised, because they had worked extremely closely together on the campaign and I never saw any ill-will between them. For me, it must be said, the immediate aftermath of the campaign was very sad.”

Elliott is incredibly well-versed in the argument he makes, but delivers it with the peculiar detachedness of one used to being harangued at dinner tables. He is optimistic about Theresa May’s premiership: “May has impressed people. She hasn’t been kowtowing and tugging her forelock to international leaders.”

Perhaps predictably, he is keen to present May’s coy preference for the Remain camp as a political advantage at the negotiations table. “She can say to other member states, hand on heart, ‘I was Remain but you’ve got to listen to the people now.’” Then, that now well-known line once again: “Brexiteer means Brexit.”

Elliott walks the fine line between condemning Farage and UKIP on the one hand, and their voting bloc on the other. “We made an explicit commitment to be distant from UKIP,” he tells me firmly. “We didn’t like the tactics they

“We don’t talk. Basically, he won’t talk to me, because [we] stopped him from heading up the official Vote Leave campaign. The funny thing is, and I don’t think he accepts this, but he wouldn’t have won the campaign.”

Elliott is just as unequivocal in condemning Farage for his endorsement of Donald Trump. But he is relaxed when I ask him if he’s irritated by Trump’s appropriation of Brexit. “I think Trump will be as successful as Nigel Farage would have been on his own, had he been running the [Leave] campaign – i.e., he’s going to lose.” I cannot help but remind him that Cambridge had one of the highest Remain votes in the UK. “After Lambeth,” he interrupts with a smile, “where I live.” Can he, I ask, understand why the vote to leave has upset a great many people on a personal level?

“I can understand it,” he says, after a long pause. “I have been in situations as a Eurosceptic where I was in the minority position, and felt that the EU was imposing laws on my life and curtailing my freedoms, so I can understand how frustrating it can be when you feel that the political system is against you.”

“We’re not stepping out of Europe and pulling up a drawbridge. We’re stepping out of Europe and into the world.”

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So long, Stratchey

Newnham's Stratchey building, built from 1966 to 1968, was demolished yesterday as part of major reconstruction works at the College.

Diggers pulled down the internals of the building, with a site supervisor telling *Varsity* that builders had been banned from using explosives due to the proximity of other buildings.

Stratchey – which contained several student bedrooms – was considered to be a luxury block when built, but had recently become too costly to maintain, with the kitchens and bathrooms described as small and squalid. The Porters' Lodge is also being destroyed, and a new entrance will be built on Sidgwick Avenue.

The buildings will be replaced with new "high quality, flexible and energy efficient" accommodation.

Louis Ashworth

▼ How *Varsity* covered the plans for the new block in 1961.



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Varsity

Politics

Countdown Academics and Americans brace themselves for polling day

Cambridge wrestles with spectre of Trump

Joe Robinson
Political Editor

Several events in Cambridge over the last week have focused on Tuesday's upcoming American presidential election, many have centred on the candidacy of Donald Trump, amid polls suggesting that the election will be extremely tight.

The first of these events was last Monday's debate at King's Politics Society, entitled 'Does Trump have a point?', which saw a number of academics joined by journalists and peers to discuss the merits of the GOP nominee's campaign.

Dr Chris Brooke, a Politics Fellow at Homerton, contended that though Trump represented a "threat to the republic", he nevertheless echoed the anger widely felt against both parties. In particular, Brooke contended that Trump was "call[ing] bullshit" on the "folksiness" that he claims the Democratic and Republican party establishments use to conceal what is essentially elite control of the political process. *Spectator* deputy editor Freddy Gray drew parallels between Trump's campaign and the success of Jeremy Corbyn, arguing that both represented a "cult of leadership" around a "strange figure that nobody thought could win". Speculating that he may have entered the race to help his business, Gray nevertheless concluded that "Trump has destroyed the Republi-



can Party and that is no bad thing".

Helen Thompson, Professor of Political Economy at Clare, emphasised Trump's critiques of both US foreign policy and also the corruption she believes is endemic at all levels of US government. Quoting Jimmy Carter, she argued that Trump was correct in asserting that there is something "fundamentally rotten" in the operation of both parties.

Thursday night saw the Union debate the motion 'This House Has No Confidence In The American Electorate'. The proposition's case was opened by barrister Lucas Fear-Segall, who argued that the "deep strain of racism" in the American electorate was partly responsible for them having "made a series of singularly poor decisions", including so many of them voting for Mitt Romney after electing Obama. He also pointed to America's militarism, which extended beyond "arming themselves to the teeth" to "equipp[ing] their police with military hardware and tacitly instructing them to shoot young black men on sight" as evidence of their lack of trustworthiness.

▲ Some observers have called Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton the least popular candidates of all time (COMPOSITE: LOUIS ASHWORTH)

Continuing the case for the proposition, University of Reading's Dr Mark Shanahan branded Trump an "orange, thin-skinned, narcissistic pensioner" while calling Clinton the "apogee of Washington insiderism", while undergraduate Connor MacDonald looked to Obama having "utterly failed to manage expectations" as an explanation for the rise of Trump and Clinton.

Opposing the motion, Alex Sundstrom of Republicans Overseas UK emphasised wage stagnation, citing "globalism and advanced technology" as a reason workers might vote for Trump. Making parallels to Brexit, Sundstrom argued that only Trump, uncontrolled by special interests and donors, could break the grip of Washington politics that had harmed workers. Historian and bestselling author Dr Nina Ansary highlighted how the candidates were both deeply unpopular with the American electorate. She said: "Does the average American voter really want either of these individuals to occupy the Oval Office? The research indicates a resounding no".

The logical case for Trump?



Joe Robinson
Political Editor

Much of this election's coverage has, rightly or wrongly, focused on the candidacy and character of Donald Trump. The Republican nominee is seen as a threat to the foundations of the American republic. His supporters, so the argument goes, are casting their ballots on the basis of an irrational fear of the 'other' and a wistful yearning for the status quo ante. Making America great again, in this analysis, amounts to little more than thinly-veiled dog-whistle politics.

But these perspectives miss out on the important issues that Trump's campaign has brought to the fore (and, by his conduct, done a tremendous disservice to). It was, after all, issues that brought him into politics. In a 1988 interview with Oprah Winfrey, Trump noted that he was "tired of seeing the country ripped off" but warned that "if it got so bad, I



Clinton signing NAFTA, which preceded a collapse in US manufacturing

wouldn't want to rule it out totally". It seems that, despite accusations of flip-flopping on policy that have been levelled at him, Trump has been remarkably consistent on a number of big-picture issues which have gained momentum since the 1980s.

On trade, Trump's mercantilist views tap into a growing well of anti-free trade sentiment, which most recently has forced Hillary Clinton to harden her trade rhetoric and even, during the 2008 primary season, led then-Senator Obama to promise a renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. The reasons for Trump's feelings are evident: US manufacturing employment has collapsed, now constituting just 7.7 per cent of American jobs, while at the same time exports have been massively outpaced by China. Combine a record \$365.7 billion trade deficit in 2015 with a national debt approaching \$20 trillion, and there is a compelling case for a radical shake-up of US trade and economic policy.

Trump's zero-sum view of international relations and trade, where for others to benefit the US has to lose, has put him at odds with a political establishment that sees the US as being the world's indispensable nation. But he might well strike a chord with an electorate that sees things getting worse and wants to, as a young Arkansas governor declared in 1992, make America great again.

Expert view: 'I expect partisan polarisation to get worse'



Dr Aaron Rapport,
Fellow of Corpus Christi College,
speaks to
Jack Higgins

Do you think if Clinton wins that America will return to normal?

I absolutely do not think it will be a return to normal. At least 40 per cent of the electorate seems to be willing or eager to vote for a person in Trump who has authoritarian tendencies, and zero political experience to boot. Senate Republicans are already indicating that if Clinton is elected they would block a vote on any of her Supreme Court nominees to replace Justice Scalia. This could lead to a revolution in the way the Senate does business. The director of the FBI just may have broken the law by intervening in a campaign a week before election day. I expect partisan polarisation to get worse, not only between but within the parties.



▲ Obama has faced considerable opposition from Congress (NASA HQ PHOTO)

Are politicians really more dishonest than they used to be?

The phrase 'post-truth politics' assumes there was some prior era in which truth was front and centre as a political consideration for candidates and office-holders. Not only is that not the case, but one shouldn't exaggerate the degree to which voters are deeply committed to finding candidates who tell them the truth. People like to have their world-views reinforced. Political discourse is as much or more about signalling your allegiance to various social groups and causes then it is about trying to present an accurate and unbiased take on the world. Given a conflict between people's concern for the truth and their partisan allegiances, I would put my money on partisanship seven days of the week.

What will Obama's legacy be?

Obama currently has better than a 50 per cent approval rating according to the national polls in the US. I think he has been a good president overall. He inherited an economic meltdown and two wars, and managed these issues fairly well in the face of an obstructionist Congress for most of his administration. US actions under his watch have left a mess in Libya, but he has been restrained in his use of force compared to the previous Bush administration, and has resisted the most aggressive voices on foreign policy - especially as far as Iran is concerned. I think the historical evaluation of his presidency will rest a lot on how 'Obamacare' fares once he has left office.

University's City Deal rep resigns

Caitlin Smith
News Correspondent

Professor Nigel Slater has stepped down from his role as Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Enterprise and Regional Affairs. He was appointed to the post in January last year.

Professor Slater, a Fellow of Fitzwilliam College, will continue in his role until the end of the year, "after which time the role will be carried out by the wider senior leadership team," a University spokesperson said.

As part of his responsibilities, Professor Slater sits on the executive board of the controversial Greater Cambridge City Deal, a project aimed at improving the quality of life and prospects of Cambridge residents.

The City Deal, one of several similar projects across the country, seeks to tackle the problems surrounding housing, transport and training opportunities for local residents which have arisen following the city's rapid development as a global research and technology hub. The project has a budget of £1 billion over 15 years.

Campaigners, including local MPs, councillors and residents' groups, have highlighted several issues with the proposals of the City Deal. Controversy has centred on its plans to deal with congestion, particularly the Peak-time Congestion Control Points (PCCPs). The measures would see six roads in central Cambridge closed to all vehicles, except buses, bicycles, taxis and emergency vehicles, during rush hour.

The University has also been accused of a conflict of interest regarding the proposals to create a new bus route between Cambridge and Cambourne, with the proposed route running through University-owned farmland. Campaigners say the plans threaten green belt land between Madingley Mulch roundabout and West Cambridge.

Earlier this year, chief executive of Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce, John Bridge OBE, also resigned from the City Deal's board, which is now down to three of its original five members.

In their statement, the University said Professor Slater "decided to stand down in order to focus on his research interests and his role as Professor of Chemical Engineering in the Department of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology." They added: "The search for a new Pro-Vice-Chancellor is underway."

According to the *Cambridge University Reporter*, the role's title will be changed to (Pro-Vice-Chancellor) Enterprise and Business Relations, reflecting its responsibility to "enhance and develop the University's engagements and partnerships with industry and commerce, and the wider enterprise economy in the University's immediate region."

Although there has been no information released as yet regarding the University's future representation on the City Deal board, the spokesperson affirmed that "the University remains committed to its City and regional responsibilities and leadership."



**Breaking news,
around the
clock**
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Green leader lays out desire to 'represent the 99 per cent' at talk

Amy Gee
Senior News Correspondent

Jonathan Bartley, the recently elected Co-Leader of the Green Party, visited Cambridge on Tuesday for a discussion and Q&A session with local activists and Revd Jeremy Caddick, the Dean of Emmanuel College.

The session was hosted by the Cambridge Young Greens in Clare College, where Bartley emphasised the Green Party's relevance to current politics and condemned the government's response to the crisis at Calais: "It's absolutely shocking, it's disgraceful, it's a national shame, that less than 50 miles from the British coast, there is a refugee crisis".

"And the best that we did was, in the tabloid press, have a debate about whether some of those children were over eighteen or not. That is absolutely scandalous. Someone has to stand up and say it," said Bartley, "and that has come down to the Greens."

He celebrated how "the Greens have managed to shift the economic debate" on points such as universal basic income.

Bartley stated that many of Jeremy Corbyn's policies from the Labour leadership election "were just lifted from the 2015 Green Party manifesto", adding that "those policies have become mainstream. And that's a big win."

Bartley argued that only the Greens are adequately responding to "a future where we have to deliver on climate change," saying "you can't, as Jeremy Corbyn wants, support Hinkley C and give it a £30 billion subsidy, and at the same time support the renewable energy revolution."

Citing Labour's supportive stances on Heathrow expansion and Trident, Bartley questioned "which party is preparing Britain for its place in the world in the 21st century, and which party is looking backwards to the 20th century, and 20th-century solutions?"

Bartley voiced support for energy divestment campaigns, but warned that "quite often as Greens we're seen as what we're against, rather than what we are for. And divestment implies withdrawal, and we've also got to make the case for reinvestment."

He also criticised the first-past-the-post electoral system, advocating for a proportional system. "I don't want to just represent the 48 per cent that voted Remain - I want to represent the 99 per cent" he said, referencing areas "neglected by both Labour and the Conservatives" due to electoral complacency.

Bartley argued that for many, the EU Referendum was a "your vote counts whichever way you cast it" decision for the first time. "There's this feeling that people really want their vote to count, and we've got to give that to people."

While he praised "authentic, grassroots campaigning" from communities on issues like housing and library closure, he cautioned against putting too much faith in social media activism, as "a lot of it is happening in a social media bubble" and "echo chambers".



▲ Jonathan Bartley, Co-Leader of the Green Party, speaking in the Latimer Room at Clare College
(AMY GEE)

He also condemned current government "narratives" - "turning the working poor against the non-working poor, the disabled against the non-disabled", and spoke angrily of the government's failure to challenge the fact that wealth is "being held very, very tightly by one per cent of the population who are super rich".

"Until someone comes along and challenges that and changes the story, things aren't going to change," Bartley stressed. "Labour has not been dogmatic in their messaging. The Greens have been but we haven't been heard. We need to get that progressive alliance on the Left, to start telling that story".

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Are you up for the challenge?

News

Cambridge remembers Pink Floyd guitarist

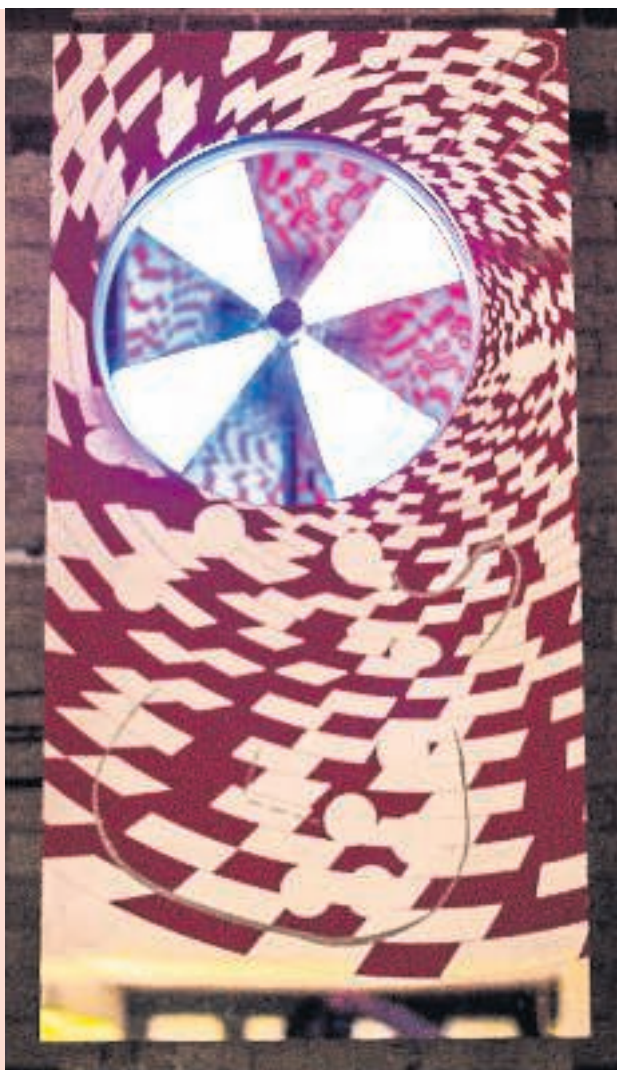
An artwork (right) in memory of Syd Barrett, a founding member of Pink Floyd, has been unveiled at the Cambridge Corn Exchange.

Barrett, who died in 2006, was born in Cambridge in 1946. There have long been calls for the city to commemorate the musician in some way. At last, on the 70th anniversary of Barrett's birth and the 10th anniversary of his death, those calls have been answered.

Although he was Pink Floyd's main songwriter in their early years, Barrett's heavy use of psychedelic drugs and mental health issues meant that he had to bow out of the public eye just as the band were making their breakthrough.

Pink Floyd would go on to release *The Dark Side of the Moon* and *The Wall*, two of the best-selling albums of all time. The band paid tribute to their former bandmate in their 1975 song, 'Shine On You Crazy Diamond'.

After a short solo career, which ended at the Corn Exchange in 1972, Barrett lived much of the rest of his life as a recluse.



Hawking commended

Sam Harrison
Deputy News Editor

Professor Stephen Hawking has received a Pride of Britain Award for Lifetime Achievement in recognition of his accomplishments in the field of Physics in the face of a 50-year battle with motor neurone disease.

The famous physicist and Fellow at Gonville & Caius College is praised on the Award's website for a career spent "grappling with the biggest questions facing humanity... while in the cruel grip of the most debilitating disease any of us could suffer."

It also praises his "boundless passion and enthusiasm for the universe" and his ability to convey them "with wit, wisdom and humanity", concluding: "His stellar career and full and happy life fifty years after his devastating diagnosis are the most potent symbols imaginable of the power of the human spirit."

Hawking was presented with the Award by Prime Minister Theresa May, who described him as "an amazing man" and "one of the most inspirational scientists in the history of our time".

Hawking used his acceptance speech to paint a picture of the future, which, he predicted, would benefit from "the development of robots [and] driverless cars" but be marred by "many challenges such as climate change and the effect that this will have on the world."

However, he ended on an optimistic note, saying: "I am sure the next generation will rise to these challenges."

Hawking has frequently voiced opinions on the promises and perils of technological innovation in the future, particularly regarding artificial intelligence (AI).

In October of this year, he opened the Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence, a multi-disciplinary institute at the University of Cambridge dedicated to the issue of AI. There he offered a similarly equivocal message, opining that AI would be "either the best, or the worst thing, ever to happen to humanity".

He elaborated: "The potential benefits of creating intelligence are huge. We cannot predict what we might achieve when our own minds are amplified by AI. Perhaps with the tools of this new technological revolution, we will be able to undo some of the damage done to the natural world by the last one - industrialisation. And surely we will aim to

► Professor Stephen Hawking is widely regarded as the world's best known physicist
(SIMON LOCK)



“
The
potential
benefits of
creating
intelligence
are huge
”

finally eradicate disease and poverty.”

In his words, the new institute will be “crucial to the future of our civilisation and our species”, adding that “we spend a great deal of time studying history, which, let's face it, is mostly the history of stupidity. So it's a welcome change that people are studying instead the future of intelligence.”

The ceremony did not miss out on a cheeky quip of its own, this time about Britain's vote to withdraw from the European Union. Hawking told May, “I

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CRETACEOUS CEREBRUM Fossilised dinosaur brain discovered

A team of Cambridge scientists, working with the University of Western Australia, has confirmed the discovery of the first fossilised dinosaur brain. The fossil, originally discovered in Sussex more than a decade ago by amateur fossil hunter Jamie Hiscock in 2004, has been preserved in highly acidic, low-oxygen water that has 'pickled' the brain tissue of the dinosaur, believed to be an *Iguanodon*, in the 133 million years since the 30-foot-long reptile died.

SHADMIN ERROR WomCam election beset by confusion

By-elections for the executive committee of CUSU's Women's Campaign have been disrupted by a mistake that has left several students off the electoral roll. CUSU Women's Officer Audrey Sebatindira blamed an "admin error," but did not specify how many students were affected. Those accidentally left off the roll were permitted to submit a paper ballot at CUSU offices, but only within narrow windows on Wednesday and Thursday.

at Pride of Britain



deal with tough mathematical questions every day, but please don't ask me to help with Brexit."

Hawking endorsed a vote to Remain in the EU, arguing that Brexit would be "a disaster for science". He has since accepted the Leave vote, but maintained in a *Guardian* column that the outcome of the referendum was the result of the unequal distribution of national wealth.

A spokesperson for the Department of Mathematics and Theoretical Physics at the University told *Varsity*: "The Depart-

ment is delighted that Professor Stephen Hawking has received the Pride of Britain Award for his lifetime achievements, not only as one of the world's most distinguished and famous scientists, but also for his inspirational battle against severe illness for more than 50 years.

"The tremendous relevance of Professor Hawking's work has been highlighted again this year by the LIGO discovery of gravitational waves from merging black holes, confirming a number of his theoretical predictions"

SUSTAINABILITY GONG ARU shortlisted for sustainability award

Anglia Ruskin University has been nominated in the Sustainable Business category at the 2017 Sustainability Leaders Awards in recognition of its commitment to sustainability. It was the first UK university to sign up to the Rio+20 declaration, a commitment to sustainable practices in higher education and founded the Global Sustainability Institute in 2011. The winner in all 19 categories of the Sustainability Leaders Awards will be announced in January next year.

WHERE'S WALLY? Cat-astrophe averted at Trinity Hall

A missing cat who went on a week-long adventure in Cambridge has been returned to his owners. Wally, a six-month old tabby cat, had become a frequent visitor to Trinity Hall and other colleges in the centre of Cambridge, where he became an instant favourite of students. Once Wally had been identified as missing after posters appealing for his return went up around the city, he was swiftly caught and returned to his delighted owners.



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around the
clock
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University opens centre to tackle 'post-truth politics'

Matt Gutteridge
Deputy News Editor

A new centre based at the Faculty of Mathematics had been established by the University, aimed at countering the narrative of 'post-truth' politics.

The Winton Centre for Risk and Evidence Communication, established by a £5 million benefaction from Winton Charitable Foundation, seeks to promote the presentation of accurate, relevant, and transparent information on important issues.

Led by Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter, the centre will seek to develop methods for analysing and distributing quantitative evidence driven by the needs of different audiences. This will be achieved through ensuring that risk, data, and evidence is presented in a clear and unbiased forms.

Professor Spiegelhalter, a fellow of Churchill College, has been Winton Professorship of the Public Understanding of Risk since 2007. His research, which focuses on the modelling of uncertainty, the unknown, and the unmeasurable, has been the subject of the BBC 4 docu-



▲ Cambridge
Faculty of
Mathematics
(DMITRY TONKONOG)

mentaries *Tails You Win: The Science of Chance* and the award winning *Climate Change by Numbers*. Professor Spiegelhalter was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 2005, made an OBE in 2006, and knighted in 2014.

According to the centre's aims, researchers will collaborate to ensure that "everyone has a right to balanced evidence on issues important to them; evidence presented in a transparent way, to inform but not persuade". The centre's first project will be to create a website to clearly display the benefits and harms of alternative treatments for women with early stage breast cancer.

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Science

‘Nobody else I’ve ever met has it’: life with a rare condition

Saskia Pain
Science Correspondent

I’m writing this article at midday, lying in bed, having just thrown up. But, unlike most other students, the reason isn’t a bad hangover from a night out: it’s because I have a rare illness, called Sphincter of Oddi Dysfunction (SOD).

If you’ve heard of SOD then you’re probably either one of my friends or a very precocious medical student, because it’s something most people (including many doctors) don’t know about. There are no articles about it, nobody else I’ve ever met has it, and it can be a struggle even to find decent medical information or a doctor who can help.

The Sphincter of Oddi is a band of muscles at the bottom of the biliary tree which controls the flow of pancreatic juices and bile into the duodenum, and is a necessary part of the digestive process. In someone with SOD, the sphincter muscle does not open when it should and can unpredictably go into spasm. This prevents the bile and pancreatic juice from flowing through normally and causes a backup, which can then cause problems with the liver and pancreas, which is very painful. It usually occurs in people who no longer have gallbladders. The main symptoms of SOD are sickness, diarrhoea, fatigue and episodic flare-ups which cause severe pain. These flare ups are unpredictable, can cause pancreatitis or liver problems and often lead to hospitalisation.

While having SOD is unusual, having some form of rare illness actually isn’t, as nearly seven per cent of people in the UK will be affected by one at some point in their lives. Having a rare condition can be difficult, lonely and limiting, and can be particularly hard in an environment like Cambridge – one with an overriding focus on success, high work load and pressurised terms. In an environment built for able-bodied students, support and understanding make a huge difference, so here are a few things you need to know about having a rare illness.

It can be limiting

Meeting the constant work deadlines of intense eight-week terms is just not possible for me, as I spend much of my day too ill to work properly, and then miss weeks at a time recovering from a bad flare-up that has put me in hospital. After pushing my body to its breaking point at the beginning of second year, I had to admit that the system and my health were not going to cooperate. Accepting the limits, both of an institution that is so prestigious, and of my own body, was really hard. Thankfully I was able to push for studying adjustments that put me on an equal footing, which made staying at Cambridge possible, but this was hard-fought and also hard to admit I needed.

It can be isolating

Having any medical condition can be isolating. Fatigue, pain and sickness mean I have to spend a lot of time in

bed resting and sleeping. I also have to be careful about doing too much and setting off a bad attack, so it’s very rare that I can participate in the kinds of tiring social activities most people do without thinking, like clubbing. I tried having a proper night out the night before my 21st and spent my entire birthday in hospital. Would not recommend.

Because flare-ups are unpredictable, I can be unreliable. I often really want to go to events, from committees to dates to birthdays, and try to plan for them, only to end up in too much pain to leave my room. Some people understand but lots do not and, as happens to many chronically ill people, I lost quite a few friends when I first became sick.

I have other health conditions that isolate me in the above ways, but a rare illness is even lonelier because you don’t have the same community of fellow sufferers you can lean on for support. Thankfully, the internet has allowed me to connect with others who do have SOD, and the Disabled Students’ Campaign is a great source of solidarity.

It can be invisible

Not only is SOD an invisible illness in that I look physically the same as I did before, I too am invisible when I am struggling. When things are rough, I am in my room, or I’m in hospital. Either way, I am hidden from most people. They see me when things are relatively good, when I’m not throwing up, when I have energy, when I seem ‘normal’.

Doctors haven’t heard of it

Most nurses and doctors haven’t heard of SOD. This is understandable: there are thousands of different conditions and they can’t possibly know them all. But having paramedics, nurses and doctors all Google your condition on the way into hospital isn’t particularly reassuring.

With a rare illness, you’re often in the unusual position of knowing a lot more about your condition than the medical professionals you first encounter. I go into hospital with a printed care plan from my specialist with what needs to be done in an emergency, but even so...

You might not be believed

When your condition is invisible and rare, sometimes people just don’t believe you. This is difficult when academics, distant family members or peers think you’re being lazy, or suggest you just need to ‘think of yourself as well’ (unfortunately, positivity, fresh air and kale do not stop your bile ducts from being shit). It’s even harder when it’s doctors who don’t believe you. This happens all too frequently prior to a diagnosis, when certain medical professionals will dismiss any symptoms as being caused by ‘normal teenage anxiety’.

Even when endless tests and specialists have finally diagnosed your condition, there are still some medical professionals who won’t believe you, and I can’t begin to explain how painful that is. Going to a GP to ask for better anti-sickness tablets and being sent away with the name of a book on ‘psychosomatic illnesses’ is painful. So is being stuck in



“As happens to many, I lost quite a few friends when I first became sick”

agony for six hours in A&E without the treatment you desperately need because the senior nurse has decided you are a drug-seeker. It didn’t matter that I had a folder full of my medical evidence; it didn’t matter that I asked them to contact my consultants; and it didn’t matter that I was in and out of consciousness from the pain. They saw a young person come in with an illness they had never heard of, asking for specific medications and the assumption was that I was a liar. Whether it comes from doctors, friends, or strangers, questioning and disbelieving disabled people is invalidating.

Treatment can be limited

Because research into rare conditions is usually not very lucrative, there are often limited procedures and a lack of proper medications. Thanks to a few doctors willing to try different things, I take a mixture of medications licensed for different conditions: a cholesterol-lowering medicine that has the side-effect of treating bile-acid malabsorption; a nitrate spray usually used for angina that relaxes the bile ducts; post-chemotherapy medicines that reduce sickness; and a calcium channel-blocker to relax the ducts. While these things help me, there isn’t (yet) a cure.

It can be scary

While I try not to dwell on it, having a rare illness is scary. I wake up every day not knowing if it will be a good one, and every time the pain gets worse I fear I will end up in hospital. The future can be scary too. In an environment where so many people are focused on ‘the next step’ of securing internships and getting jobs, I worry there might never be a cure, that my life may not look how I thought it would. Planning for the future isn’t just exciting, discussing the privatisation of the NHS isn’t just political: these things are full of fear for me.

It changes you

As someone who had always been fiercely independent, I could never have imagined asking my boyfriend to pick up my prescription, or allowing friends to do my supermarket shop. But I have learnt that relying on people isn’t weak. Having

▲ Chronic conditions can be isolating and make you feel invisible (MITYA KU)

“Discussing the privatisation of the NHS isn’t just political: it’s full of fear for me”

Commentary

We must do more to combat rare illnesses

Jon Wall
Science Editor



Entering Week Five, Cambridge’s thoughts turn to health. We profile some sufferers of various conditions at Cambridge – in particular the sufferers of rare conditions, who are not always helped by scientific research. Whether the illness has a significant impact on day-to-day life, or affects a sufferer’s ability to do certain tasks, the impact is always significant and always human.

This is why it is an issue that many health professionals do not deal with rare conditions in an appropriate way, or – perhaps more importantly in the long term – that research is often not targeted at sufferers of these conditions. Commonly, treatments are the side effects of drugs aimed at other problems. Where conditions are particularly complex, it can be difficult to justify funding, or to find people for clinical trials.

However, continuing to move towards more integrated, less commercial approaches is vital. We can and should do more for these sufferers.

a chronic illness means your friendships are tested pretty early on. It’s hard to be surface-level friends with someone who has held your hand in an ambulance and seen you at your most vulnerable. As a result, my relationships are generally deeper and more real. I trust people more, I am more open, and any self-protective barriers were broken down when I projectile vomited in public and my friends fell about laughing at how impressive the trajectory was.

As someone who slept my way through science classes, I never thought I would regularly use words like duodenum or know the difference between raised ALT and AST enzymes. I never thought I would understand the world of disability politics, or know more about the law. It has introduced me to all kinds of amazing people who are changing the system for the better, and has given me a greater passion for social justice. Although having SOD is hard, I am also a better, more driven, more empathetic person because of my experiences.

I wanted to write this article for two reasons. First, so non-disabled students would have more of an insight into the life of someone with a rare illness and make fewer assumptions about what disability looks like. And secondly, because I want other students with a rare illness to know they are not alone. If you’re able, please push for the things you need. We shouldn’t have to push so hard for diagnosis, for treatment and for adjustments, but we deserve to be here and to be unapologetic in asking for what we need to make that possible.

▼ Doctors are often unaware of the rarest conditions (GERMAN TENORIO)



Vertigo is common, yet commonly overlooked

Keir Baker
Science Correspondent

I tilt my head. The world spins in a clockwise direction, ad infinitum. The feeling of nausea and a dull pain in my head begin to build. It feels like it just won't stop and I am scared.

I move my head back. The world – to my great relief – returns almost immediately to normal. Any discomfort I had felt resides, yet the threat of that awful experience still lingers.

I suffer from an affliction called Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV). It is one of the most common causes of vertigo – the sensation that you, or the environment around you, is moving and spinning – and its symptoms tend to be particularly intense and distressing. BPPV is also far more prevalent than its low level of awareness would suggest: 30 per cent of the UK population will have experienced it before they reach the age of 70, and research by the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation found that nine per cent of 198 young Americans aged between 18 and 34 unknowingly suffer from it.

Worryingly, it is often misdiagnosed by GPs or wrongly ignored by sufferers, many of whom falsely attribute it to stress or a migraine. And in extreme

examples, some with the affliction – including myself – have been sent for traumatic MRI scans to search for non-existent brain tumours. There is no cure, only management techniques.

First properly identified by Robert Barany in 1921, BPPV is also fascinating from a scientific perspective for a variety of reasons. The actual process that causes the symptoms sheds light on the complexity of the labyrinthine structure that is the human ear. Within the main chamber of the ear – known as the utricle – lie embedded in a gel-like substance minute crystals of calcium carbonate, known as otoconia. For the vast majority of the population, that is where they remain. But for sufferers of BPPV, the otoconia have been dislodged and allowed to migrate into one of three semi-circular canals adjacent to the chamber. Within these canals are sensors that send messages to the brain in reaction to head rotations or movements, and the symptoms of BPPV are caused by the dislodged otoconia interfering with these sensors. When a sufferer tilts their head into the aggravating position, the spinning results from the free-moving crystals 'knocking' against them.

Interestingly, researchers are still at a loss as to how the otoconia become displaced. A variety of theories have been put forward, none of which are backed

“
I tilt my head. The world spins, ad infinitum
”



up by empirical evidence. Indeed, I personally conform to a number of them: a head injury resulting from a misjudged game of British Bulldog on a concrete playground, a tendency for inner-ear infections like labyrinthitis, a potential genetic link, and a lifestyle of high stress and little sleep may have contributed to the dislocation of my otoconia. Scientists have also struggled to identify any way in which BPPV might be fully cured. The crystals are too small to remove via an operation and there is no known drug to counteract their effects. I have thus come to accept it as an affliction that I will deal with my entire life, potentially impacting my ability to play some sports (particularly as a goalkeeper) and sleep in certain positions.

However, there are management tech-

niques that, if done at regular intervals, can nullify the symptoms, to prevent BPPV from having any significant impact on the lives of sufferers. For example, the easy-to-perform 'Epley manoeuvre', which involves a practitioner helping to manipulate the patient's head and body in an effort to relocate the crystals back to the utricle, has a success rate of around 80 per cent. Though the process can be quite traumatic – the repositioning inevitably triggers dizziness at a very intense level – it provides much-needed relief from the symptoms to the extent that life feels effectively normal.

BPPV is therefore scientifically fascinating, continually receiving in-depth research and examination. Practically speaking, though, it is an illness that needs more public awareness, particularly for students who may dismiss it as the result of stress, tiredness, and a work-intensive university lifestyle.

BPPV and similar conditions are particularly disruptive in Cambridge, with our short and intense eight-week terms. Given that BPPV has symptoms that can cause significant physical and psychosocial limitations if left untreated, I hope that increasing awareness of its existence can prevent others from suffering the panic, confusion and worry of their studies being affected by an affliction they cannot resolve.

▲ Keir Baker
(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

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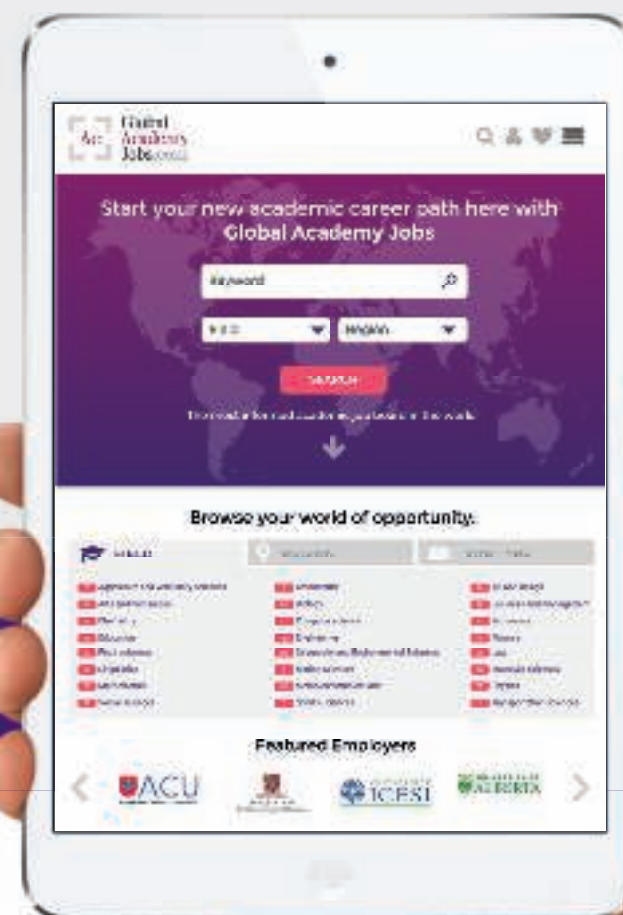
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Comment

Hillary, this is how we can Make America Great Again

Democrats might be content to watch Republicans stew, but Hillary must work hard to calm rural America



Chris Canary is studying for an MPhil in Public Policy at Hughes Hall

Chris Canary

I spent the last two years living abroad in China, observing my home country, the USA, from afar. I would wake up in the morning to news of mass shootings, a gridlocked Congress, and an increasingly vitriolic electoral process as the presidential campaign began to ramp up. Then I would cycle off to class to teach a course on American culture and institutions.

I was working in the Foreign Studies College at a large university outside Beijing, and one of my first tasks was to teach students how the US government was organised. We discussed the three branches of government and the checks available to make sure individuals didn't gain too much power.

I paused there, looking for some kind of reaction in the eyes of my students, before continuing. I showed my class the graphic of a tree seen in many secondary school textbooks – the US Constitution providing the trunk, with the executive, legislative, and judicial branches flowing out of the top. The tree looked healthy and vibrant. My front row students dutifully took notes.

What we didn't touch on was the need for a general consensus towards progress – a baseline level of respect and willingness to compromise among our leaders in order to move matters forward. In this increasingly polarised political climate, that is all but absent. The exorbitant amount of money in politics, the torrent of news leading people to retreat to simplistic narratives, and the myriad ways legislation can be defeated has led to political stagnation.

This stagnation feels like regression, and voters are seeking an outlet: Donald Trump. Next week, however, Trump will lose the US presidential election. The base of the Republican party is shrinking with changing demographics. Urbanisation, immigration, and education tend to pull voters leftwards. If the Republican Party fails to evolve, it is possible that the Democrats will become the dominant political party for the next decade.

Hillary and her party leadership might be tempted, therefore, to sit back, contented, and watch the Republicans stew. This might feel good, but it is dangerous in the long run. Even if we make many of the necessary institutional and legal changes to get the gears of government

grinding again, we will only be part way there. What we also need is a period of national reconciliation – right and left need to interact with each other again.

Hillary must engage with the American electorate as no president has done before. She travelled extensively as Secretary of State, and now she needs to do the same – with a decidedly domestic focus. She needs to speak at town halls in each and every state and seek to create a real dialogue with the American people.

She should start with the states in which she had the least support. The swing states have been given their due during the campaign, and now it's time to talk with Nebraska, Wyoming, and West Virginia. These states hold the frustrations of rural America, and they feel left behind. She needs to field questions and talk about her vision for the country. She needs to answer questions until there are no more questions left to ask.

So what should her vision be? That government can be a force for good. That government is for us. That government, done right, can be transformative. This sounds a bit flimsy, so let me add this: while the Republicans are down, she needs to unapologetically hammer away at their political dogma that any government is bad government.

This is the dragon that needs slaying. American is a country of rugged individualists – far more so than our friends in



▲ Rural towns such as Clinton, Nebraska, feel left behind (ANDREW FILER)

Europe – but we need to be able to meld that philosophy with one of institutional cooperation. This will not be easy. But perhaps our leaders can begin to make compromises again, and our national psyche can begin to recover.

In addition to addressing the anger of the American heartland, we also need to address our ugly history of racism. It is worth considering the creation of a truth and reconciliation commission to confront the legacy of slavery, institutional racism, and police treatment of people of colour.

Like Germany after the Second World War, we need to bravely confront our



▲ Hillary Clinton has a massive task ahead of her as President (GAGE SKIDMORE)

past in order to move forwards. This movement would likely work best via a decentralised, grassroots-based approach, supported by federal funds.

It will be hard to manage two parallel national conversations. To achieve this, Hillary will have to turn over some of her international responsibilities. Her pre-inaugural transition team needs to raise the profile of Tim Kaine and pick a high-profile Secretary of State who can independently work with the international community, without Hillary feeling the need to micromanage.

Thinking back to my time in China, it was hard to describe the US in glowing terms. At the same time, however, I was surprised to find myself becoming more patriotic. Living abroad is a crash course in cross-cultural comparison, and there is much the US has to be proud of. We strive to create a better world and have been the inspiration for democratic governments across the globe. The delicate balance of our system is beautiful, despite its many flaws. And if Hillary Clinton's presidency can set us on a course to come together again, those flaws can fade into the background and let our strengths shine through.

“The delicate balance of our system is beautiful, despite its flaws”



Ted Mackey

Hating on houseboats? Cry me a river...

Houseboats. Like houses, but wetter. A familiar sight to any of us who frequent the river at obscenely early hours of the morning, and the bane of any novice cox's existence (alongside swans, other boats, and the river bank itself). Houseboats are an integral part of river life in Cambridge. Some, apparently, want to evict their residents, but who couldn't love the friendly banter (read: bitter animosity) shared between the early morning rower and the houseboat owner? It's friendly jibes like 'get the fuck away from my boat!' that really make that 6am start worthwhile. The Cam community is like one big family, only with a river instead of a house and oars instead of genuine emotional connection.

It's not hard to form an emotional connection with houseboats, though. I myself find relief in knowing that, even though it's 6:30am and I may or may not be feeling that Cindies from the night before as I row down the Cam, at least I didn't get the name on my boat printed in Comic Sans... Comic. Sans. It's also hard not to chuckle at the shameless punnery of 'Fanta-sea', forever hoping that someone will moor next to them with a boat called 'Is this the real life, is this just...' (Usually followed by a spot of verbal abuse from the cox to stop staring at the houseboats and focus on my abysmal rowing.)

As a self-professed expert on houseboats, having spent much of my rowing career within touching distance of them (read into that what you will about my rowing prowess), I've learnt that although they get a bad rep, they really are there for you when you need that push in the right direction – just so long as you don't scratch their paint in the process. Sometimes they even come with cute dogs, which is a panacea for any damage Cindies has done to my body.

So thank you, you Comic-Sans-loving, pun-making, dog-owning houseboaters. Love them or hate them, houseboats are part and parcel of life on the Cam – and I have the utmost respect for their owners. Anybody who can cope with being around that many boaties every day is a stronger man than I.

Cartoon by **Ben Brown**



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The sound of the underground? S Club and Steps

When the world discovers you like to listen to Eurodance, you're better off just accepting it



Will Hall
studies English at
Emmanuel College
and often performs
at Footlights
Smokers

Will
Hall

I was recently on the Tube, merrily listening to my iPod and minding my own business. The background noise of the train-on-track means us music lovers are free to hold down the Volume Rocker to our heart's content, and watch as the little white dots race along the screen with ear-splitting abandon.

Me being me, of course, I managed to cock this up. I had been lost in the land of my playlist for a couple of minutes when I became aware that a) the music wasn't quite as loud as it should be, and b) people were starting to look at me. Eye contact on the Tube is never a good sign, so I decided to investigate further. The volume, it transpired, was indeed whacked up to full - that wasn't the problem. No, the problem was that my headphones weren't plugged in. As I looked down and saw the loose male jack dangling between my legs (steady on), I realised that the whole carriage had been forced to listen as I had inadvertently attempted to fill the underground with the world's smallest boombox, like a 21st-century remake of *Say Anything*,

only set in London, and with an alarmingly red-faced protagonist.

This wouldn't have been so bad, of course, were it not for my song choice. For the track my phone had shuffled up first was none other than 'Saturday Night' by Whigfield. You remember the one - that nineties Eurodance classic which begins with a strange buzzing sound not unlike the iPhone alarm, and continues in a heady trance of keyboard, clapping and what appears to be some sort of quacking sound. The immortal opening lines - "Saturday night, I feel the air is getting hot/Like you baby" - rank, in my opinion, as one of the finest similes ever put to music. Truly, the subtle lyrical beauty of the "Da ba da dan dee dee da/Nee na na na" segment speaks to me with the same passion as any of Keats' poetry. More, probably, given I haven't read any.

So why the embarrassment, Will? If you're such a fan of this disco claptrap, why the shame at playing it aloud? Well, disconcertingly intolerant disembodied voice of the reader, that's just the thing. See, while I will happily scoff a whole

banquet of nineties electro floor-fillers in one sitting, it is very much a private passion. To make matters worse, as I shamefacedly fumbled to fit the headphone jack back into my phone, I clicked next on my playlist and was greeted with an uninterrupted series of much cooler, more appropriate artists. Why did I have to lead my accidental musical sermon with Eurodance, when one swipe away was Bob Dylan, or Nina Simone, or Jeff Buckley? (To be fair, queued after those was 'Tragedy' by Steps, but still.)

This got me thinking - we are all guilty of classifying certain kinds of music as 'cool' and others as embarrassing. We all speak of 'guilty pleasures' or 'admit' to liking songs which don't make the grade. David Cameron, when that book with that allegation about that farmyard animal was published, was asked by one journalist whether he was embarrassed about the rumours that were spreading. The ones about his student days. The ones about what he'd got up to at Oxford. The humiliating ones. You know: that he'd listened to Supertramp. (I happen to love Supertramp - although again, I confess, I'm probably not going to announce that publicly. Especially not in print).

Celebrities who appear on Radio 4's *Desert Island Discs* are faced with the di-



▲ "Why did I have to lead my accidental musical sermon with Eurodance?"
(MATTHEW SECCOMBE)

lemma of whether to be honest about their playlists or not. Sue Lawley asked Simon Cowell: "Do you really like these records or have they been chosen to enhance your image?" (He eschewed his *Pop Idol* offspring, choosing instead Sammy Davis Jr and Frank Sinatra.) Ed kept the Mili-brand in check by selecting as his if-you-could-only-choose-one record 'Angels' by Robbie Williams (after Kirsty had pointed out that sometimes listeners are "sceptical about politicians' choices" on the show). Often castaways will embarrassedly apologise for one of their eight, assuring the listener it's been chosen ironically, or because it was their late great-aunt's dog's favourite song.

All of which affirms my view that there seems to be a hierarchy of cool in music. However, I think it's high time we all stopped worrying about what people think about our music tastes. Surely, for every deep house remix, I'm allowed the odd S Club 7 relapse? Or, in between gulps of the soaring four-octave brilliance of Freddie Mercury, I can quickly imbibe a bit of Bieber? I certainly hope so. My iPod, and life, would doubtlessly be all the duller if not. So go, ignore the haters. Turn up the volume. Listen to whatever the hell it is you want. Just make sure you plug your headphones in first.

Comment

Of course I oppose Heathrow: why wouldn't I?

My small town of 30,000 people deserves better than the hell of Heathrow's 'third runway'



Nick Chevis
studies History at
Downing College

I grew up under the Heathrow flight path. For as long as I can remember, the rumble of jumbo jet engines shuddered overhead at regular three-minute intervals. Countless phone conversations were hopelessly inaudible until quiet could be found in some well-insulated building. Friends from abroad, freshly landed at Europe's largest airport and whisked back to our place in a matter of minutes, would gawk at our apparent immunity to the succession of noisy machines streaming overhead. We were powerless but to tolerate the flight path. Cambridge didn't just bring mile-long reading lists and freshers' flu – it brought an eerie silence too.

You'll be unsurprised to hear that I am opposed to the expansion of Heathrow and the prospect of another 250,000 flights a year rattling over my parents' house. I'm not massively keen on the extra 50 million cars that will be clogging up the M4 by 2030 either. But I have a vested local interest. It's much harder to carefully consider each and every caveat of the seemingly endless Heathrow-Gatwick-Boris Island debate when one of the options is so extremely close to home. Big boosts to the tourism industry, employment figures and investments in infrastructure struggle to add up to more than the potential impact on my family's quality of life at home. The faceless eco-

nomic titans suddenly shrink away from the heart of the argument. It's clear what is best for my local community and that is enough to settle the argument.

It isn't just my little cluster of chums who are set to suffer: from the piles and piles of 'Say No to Heathrow expansion' leaflets that flew in through our letter box emerge damning soundbites. New flight paths will subject two million people to 'unacceptable' aircraft noise. We are told the third runway will produce an additional three million tonnes of CO2 a year, the equivalent of Kenya's total annual emissions. An entire village will be flattened and many others partially demolished, forcing whole communities out of their homes. Granted, this isn't the Three Gorges Dam – a relocation of one million people-plus – but 3,000 homes is a sizeable cost to pay nonetheless.

Wouldn't Gatwick be a better option? Couldn't we let Gatwick have their new runway up and running by 2025 and allow them to fund it privately without asking the taxpayer for a £6 billion subsidy? London could finally join the likes of Paris, New York and Beijing with at least two major airports. A second runway at Gatwick would breed a healthy culture of competition, breaking Heathrow's monopoly on the market.

But then, quite understandably, Heathrow sounds like a much better idea to the people of Reigate or Crawley. Heathrow will also be able to accommodate 740,000 flights a year, further advancing Heathrow's imperious stat-

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ure on the world stage of aviation. As MP Chris Grayling proudly proclaimed in the House of Commons last week, Heathrow's expansion will net around £60 billion for our economy, more than compensating for the initial cost to the taxpayer.

Evidently, local interests have a strong impact on our attitude to issues of national importance. I can absolutely understand that there are some sizeable benefits to be enjoyed through a Heathrow expansion, and would venture to suggest that, if it weren't for the location of my family's home, I may well have ended up thinking it was quite a good idea.

However, my fundamental point of sway isn't the future of British aviation, nor is it the potential impact on the economy. Rather, it is the effect that Heathrow expansion will have on my small town of around 30,000 people. In these terms, the easy selfishness of our political interests shines through. It goes without saying, this is nothing malicious. It isn't as if I'd like the good people of Reigate or Crawley to suffer – I'd just rather my community didn't.

It is the job of our politicians, we hope, to make decisions for the greatest good of the greatest number. Inevitably this demands losers as well as winners. In this case, it seems a couple of hundred thousand more planes going over my mum's roof (and maybe a bit more traffic on the M4) is the price I'm going to have to pay.

◀ A crowded runway at Heathrow airport (PHILLIP CAPPER)



Nick
Chevis

If happiness is an avocado cocktail, count me out

Suggesting that we can achieve a constant state of 'happiness' is a lie. I want to feel so many more things than happy



Anna Fitzpatrick
studies HSPS at
Magdeline College

Anchored to my bed by decomposing limbs, fusing to the sad sheets like moss clinging to bark, I scroll through Instagram. The artificial glow of my phone is acid to my eyes. I stayed up again.

My limbs are soggy, full of water. I remember being told in swimming class that to tread water more easily, you need to take off your sopping clothes. I want to peel them off and feel the cool water on my naked body, to dive down and retrieve the brick. I am drowning myself and it is my fault. But I would rip my skin off raw. So I stay in bed.

I keep scrolling, in a trance like state. A pretty quote: "happiness is a choice". Through this little device, I peer into the realm of people that are 'happy'. Unequivocally, unqualifiedly, absolutely happy. When someone tells you that their goal in life is 'to be happy', it is a refreshingly simple answer to an overwhelmingly complicated question.

When someone asks you the question: 'are you happy?' you're supposed to say yes. Yes is the correct answer. To say no is read as telling someone that you have a problem that needs to be solved. In an online culture of documenting plastic smiles and 'live, laugh, love' quotes – 'I

► Happiness is about more than a juice cleanse, whatever Instagram may tell us (SKITTERPHOTO)

am not happy' is a controversial statement. But I'm not. I am not happy.

Not in the sense that I experience happiness as an enduring, unwavering feeling. I have been, and will be happy. Presented as the pure, ideal to be reached, 'happiness' seems to be a state of being that we collectively perform online. On social media, we're all singing "if you're happy and you know it clap your hands" as loud as we can. I keep scrolling. Another pretty message: "I've got 99 problems and they all involve carbs".

With self-improvement being the mantra, the implicit message is that we can choose to be happy – if we just ate less bread. Happiness seems to be the collective goal and juice cleanses are how we get there. Happiness is a sickly avocado cocktail, that only the rich can afford. If happiness is a choice easily made through avoiding bread like it's poisonous, then it's your own fault if you're miserable.

But it's not that simple. Reducing emotional fulfilment to this equation is ironically tormenting. If you're not 100 per cent happy, 100 per cent of the time, you're made to feel weird. 'Live, laugh, love' as a mantra is a taunting lie.

What an obsession with documenting self-improvement indicates to me is a gaping hole of potential, a void of inadequacy. I don't believe happiness is tangible and it's not helpful to pretend that it is. Emotions are complex: a kaleidoscope, a nebula, that we're yet to understand. What makes them valuable is that none are exactly the same. To appre-

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The idea
of pure
happiness
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ciate them, our eyes need a background. We can never experience one emotion completely uninterrupted. We'd become numb. Suggesting that we can be to reach for something that isn't there.

So why do we confine experiences of fulfilment to a single word? I want to feel excited, scared, tiny against the Universe, pensive, alarmed, angry, motivated, and reflective. I want to feel light, then dark, then light again. I want to feel so many things that can never be swallowed in a multi-vitamin tablet.

The idea of 'happiness' is so vague that it is empty, being filled by advertisers with waist trainers and detox kits. 'Happiness' is plastic and it is being marketed to us through unhealthy and punishing 'wellness' regimes.

So, telling someone that you're not happy shouldn't be controversial. It shouldn't make you feel alien, or like you are asking them for something. I'm

not happy and that's OK. To be happy forever would also be to feel that nothing is wrong with the world. In this way, 'happiness' as an ideal state is inherently conservative. Instagram will have you believe that everything is perfect when you eat a kale salad. Except it's not. This isn't supposed to be nihilistic: I think there is hope in the capacity for change that anger galvanises. The saying that "if you're not angry, you're not paying attention" holds true for me.

The idea of pure happiness is overrated. You can't choose how you feel. You don't choose to have depression in the same way that you don't directly choose to have a physical illness. The idea that you should aim for a static state of happiness needs to be challenged.

We need to normalise the idea that emotions are like a cardiograph: if you see a straight line, it means you're dead.

Anna
Fitzpatrick

With or without the Union, solidarity continues

PalSoc member Ed McNally offers his personal defence for the group's recent protest at the Union



Ed McNally studies History at Pembroke College

Ed McNally

Controversy at the Cambridge Union is nothing new – they have long basked in it. When the South African ambassador came to speak in the 1980s, their website fondly recalls, student protestors rioted outside, bricks flying. In retrospect, one might reasonably wonder what was to be gained by providing a platform to the representative of a settler-colonial state engaged in the violent enforcement of racial subjugation while cadres of the ANC were imprisoned and black South Africans lay dead on the streets of Soweto. Similar questions may be asked of the Union's new annual tradition of hosting representatives of the Israeli state.

"What's so horrifying about understanding that the entire Palestinian people is the enemy?" asked Ayelet Shaked, Israel's current Justice Minister, in the midst of Israel's last exercise, during the summer of 2014, in massacring Gaza's stateless, besieged civilian population, which left over 2,000 Palestinians dead, including at least 551 children. When the new Michaelmas term came, then-ambassador Daniel Taub was among the first through the door of the Union, as was the case after the preceding assault in 2012. Last year, the Union asked Cambridge University Palestine Society (PalSoc) for suggestions of potential Palestinian speakers, expressing a desire

to host a joint event, only to retract this when the Israeli embassy didn't fancy the list, instead inviting their spokesperson alone.

These events, including new ambassador Mark Regev's appearance last week, have taken a Q&A format, with speakers not shielded from hostile questioning. But the Palestinians, victims since 1948 of Israel's colonial dispossession and routine brutalisation, have been conspicuous by their absence in the Union's busy speaker schedules. Giving primacy to the voice of the oppressor at the expense of those without one serves merely to reproduce the drastic power imbalance that enables perpetration of war crimes with impunity and denial of fundamental Palestinian rights – among them the right of refugees to return home.

In its attempts at even-handedness, the Union underscores its miscomprehension of the realities on the ground in occupied Palestine. That neutrality in the context of deliberately perpetuated, racialized injustice is an impossibility is a tiredly repeated statement in the Palestine solidarity movement, but many, including some at the Union, are at best ignorant of this reality, and at worst engaged in wilful denial through the pretence of impartiality.

The fallacious objectivity obligation will be fulfilled, supposedly, when the

Palestinian representative to the UK visits later this month. However, as an appointee of the Palestinian Authority (PA), the unelected body to which Israel subcontracts enforcement of its occupation in parts of the West Bank – an arrangement commonly characterised as neo-colonial – he is hardly an embodiment of Palestinian civil society.

Mark Regev's illustrious past career as spokesperson for the Israeli Prime Minister's office means he is, atypically for a diplomat, a well-known face. During Israel's recent attacks on Lebanon and Gaza, he toured our television screens, professionally packaging actions condemned by the UN as war crimes as justified self-defence. As ambassador, Regev has been an eager presence on campuses, with visits to SOAS and Oxford as well as Cambridge.

Such appearances take place against the backdrop of an international crisis of legitimacy for the Israeli state. There is a deep-seated fear, as the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement gains momentum on campuses across the West, that Israel – once spun as the 'light unto the nations' in the dark Orient – sits on the brink of becoming the pariah state that South Africa was three decades ago. The reactive propaganda offensive manifests in Israel in the Ministry of Strategic Affairs and, closer to home, in another appearance for Regev in Cambridge this week, hosted by two US 'advocacy' groups for Israel.

In strategising to salvage Israel's global



▲ Students held a candlelit vigil outside the Union last Wednesday (LUCAS CHEBIB)

reputation, its apologists and ostensible defenders seek to present the problem as one of Palestinian intransigence and lack of dialogue. This claim, echoed by a moralising Regev at the Union, is directly contradicted by the historic diplomatic record. In defending the vitality of Israeli democracy, Regev neglected to mention the 50 laws that discriminate specifically against Palestinian citizens of Israel. In defence of settlements, he pointed to a slow-down in construction – never mind that each and every one contravenes the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Students will continue to stand in solidarity with Palestinians and elevate their voices against Israeli oppression, with or without the Union.

“Many are engaged in wilful denial”

‘Micro-crime’: a challenge to our conscience?

You shouldn't have to tame your rebellious streak to perfectly adhere to the law



Matt Gurtler studies German and Russian at Emmanuel College

Matt Gurtler

Did you see *Bake Off* last week? Wasn't it absolutely criminal how Paul gave both Candice and Jane the famed handshake and completely shunned Andrew? Do you know what else is criminal? You. Probably.

Recently, the law on TV licensing has been changed, removing a well-known, well-loved loophole. This loophole meant that you didn't need a TV licence to watch live or catch-up BBC TV on a laptop or mobile device, as long as it wasn't plugged into the mains. Not any more. The TV licensing website now says: "Anyone who downloads or watches BBC programmes on demand on iPlayer must be covered by a TV licence" – whatever the device. So unless you have delved into your pockets and coughed up the necessary money for a TV licence, watching BBC iPlayer is now a crime.

This is not the only so-called 'micro-crime' that is common among citizens of the UK. A recent poll revealed that 75 per cent of British people break the law on a 'small' scale, and many others probably do too, but don't admit to it. Other micro-crimes common among the people of the UK include paying someone cash-in-hand, and avoiding paying fares on public transport. In general, the



▲ Following the law to the letter would lead to an Orwellian world (MICHAEL ELY)

“75 per cent of British people break the law on a small scale”

attitude towards these crimes is that they're not really illegal. In fact, my use of the word 'crime' there probably warranted a raised eyebrow or two. How can something really be the law if it isn't enforced? Surely if everyone does it, it's ok? It's not really breaking the law. And anyway the law's just a guideline, isn't it? These are the unsaid sentiments behind committing these micro-crimes.

The whole idea of micro-crimes and crimes that aren't really crimes casts us right into the lion's den of bigger questions about morality. All in all, there are three different positions that we can take. First, we can say that the law is the law, so anything within the letter of the law is acceptable, and anything that is against the law is wrong. Secondly, we can say that the basics of the law should

be followed, but there are a few bits on the edges that can be taken away and extra bits can be added to form our own idea of right and wrong. Thirdly, we can say that the law is irrelevant and everyone should do what they want, regardless of what the government or another person thinks.

I would hazard a guess that most of us fall into the second category. If we feel no twinge of guilt while watching iPlayer without a TV licence, then we can't possibly fall into the first. As for the third category, it's practically impossible to form our own morality in a vacuum. Whether we like it or not, our ideas of right and wrong are based on the law. Not to mention the threat of some severe fines or jail time, depending on how deeply buried your rebellious streak is.

So what are the problems with this 'follow only the basics of the law' attitude? Simply put, it is extremely vague. What is it based on? If we don't have a supreme authority on moral issues, then everyone has their own opinions on whether something is permissible or not and thus the whole of society becomes a huge pit of people disagreeing with each other.

To take an extreme example, although it is perfectly legal, corporate and private tax avoidance is thought to be wrong by the majority of members of the public. However, companies such as Starbucks and Amazon, and persons such as those who were exposed in the Panama Papers earlier this year, clearly don't have a problem with storing their assets in

offshore accounts to avoid paying tax on them. Who's right?

We could argue about the morality of micro-crimes and tax avoidance until the end of time, but if everyone takes the second (or indeed the third) viewpoint mentioned above, there is no guiding light that provides us with a way of settling arguments about whether something is right or wrong. In the least blunt way possible, this means that the only logical response is to follow the law to the letter.

Sadly, this means paying for a TV licence, so we should all go and do that now, end of story.

Or is it? Fortunately we don't have to exist in a terrifying Orwellian world, where everyone perfectly adheres to the law. Humans are not robots and we can cope with moral disparities. It is possible for each person in this country to have their own ideas of morality tightly or loosely based on the law.



◀ You'll be able to watch Paul Hollywood with a clear conscience (TIM FIELDS)

We simply have to move on and let people legally avoid taxes or illegally dodge fares if that doesn't scratch their morals. Fortunately, however, we can say that next year, we won't need to face a moral dilemma to watch *Bake Off* – Channel 4 is not affected by TV licensing laws.

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY

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Bitch!

**If you can't say
something nice...**

**...is it better to say
nothing at all?**

by Anna Hollingsworth

Vulture

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Most of us can't get through the day without it. **Anna Hollingsworth** tried to give up bitching for a whole week – and made some rather profound discoveries along the way

Illustrations by **Abigail Popple**

Hello, nice to meet you, I'm Anna and I'm a bitch destined to burn in hell. I talk about people behind their backs and I have come to be known as a bit of a gossip. It's gotten to the point where my friends now use 'have you got any goss for us?' as the standard way to start a conversation with me.

No one likes a bitch. As Eleanor Roosevelt famously, and somewhat unfortunately for me, once said: "great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people." Similarly, there's a Jewish proverb which goes "loose tongues are worse than wicked hands." If this wasn't damning enough, there's another Psalm which reads: "Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy." Gulp.

The idea of living my life in apprehension of eternal damnation and being branded as a small-minded busy-body was incentive enough for me to take on the task of trying to give up bitching for a whole week. Seven whole days without one single snide comment or a fantastically juicy chinwag with a pal. Extremely ambitious and no small feat.

I apologise for the mother of all anticlimaxes, but no, I didn't succeed. In fact, I failed miserably. But that is not to say I didn't try. There were many times when I was on the verge of making a snide comment or catty remark about some mildly annoying habit of a mutual acquaintance and managed to refrain myself. On a number of occasions, I successfully caught my tongue just in time to stop myself picking up on someone else's unkind remark and taking it into the claws-out sphere of gossip.

Yet, come one fateful dinner, I found myself asking for full reports about the previous

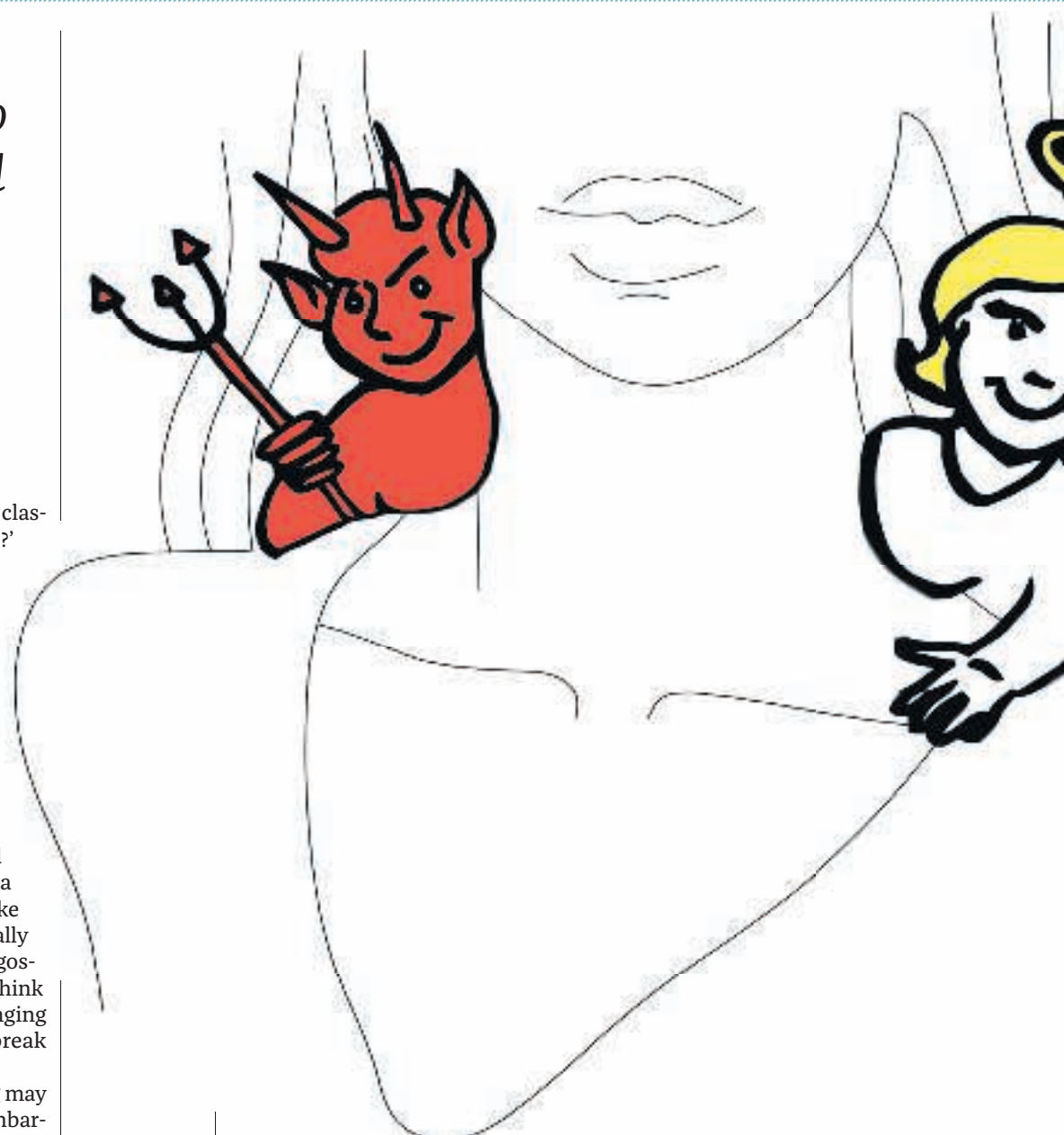
night's clubbing antics from friends. The classic interrogatives of 'who got with who?' And it didn't stop there. Whenever I got annoyed by someone's behaviour – yes, I do get annoyed a lot – I couldn't avoid going on a rant as soon as the person tipping over my annoyance threshold had left the room.

It wasn't all conscious bitching, either. I'd catch myself laughing about someone's mannerisms or quirks in a wholly good-hearted and jovial way when I realised that this, too, would qualify as talking about someone behind their back – just a few steps away on a continuum from full-on bitching. To make matters worse, my test week didn't actually involve any interaction with my most gossip-loving friends. I don't even want to think about the totality of the failure that hanging out with them during my weeklong break from bitching would have resulted in.

My failure to go teetotal with bitching may be embarrassing, but at least for once embarrassing myself here in print serves a higher purpose. Despite my failure, I am completely certain that I am not alone in often being a gossiping, bitching, psychoanalysing person. It is quite simply what people do – what everyone does from time to time.

Evolutionary psychologist Robin Dunbar found back in 1997 that the vast majority of people devote about two-thirds of any conversation to gossip, irrespective of factors such as gender or social standing. These numbers come as no surprise. After all, psychoanalysing acquaintances is much more interesting than talking about the weather, or the embarrassing pitfalls of our most recent supervision or your favourite up-and-coming musician.

In more recent research, Dunbar, now a professor of psychology at Oxford, has gone so far as to claim that gossip is what makes us human. It serves as a way of



▲ Is talking about someone behind their back ever okay?

transmitting vital information about whom to trust, and helps us to bond with family and friends. As such, it has been crucial to human evolution: an individual's social network is argued to be the single most important factor in keeping the individual alive. Petty gossiping hardly seems a way for the individual to grant themselves a greater chance of survival. However, the gossiping I'm referring to here can be as harmless as just keeping up with one's social scene (even if it involves talking about people behind their backs).

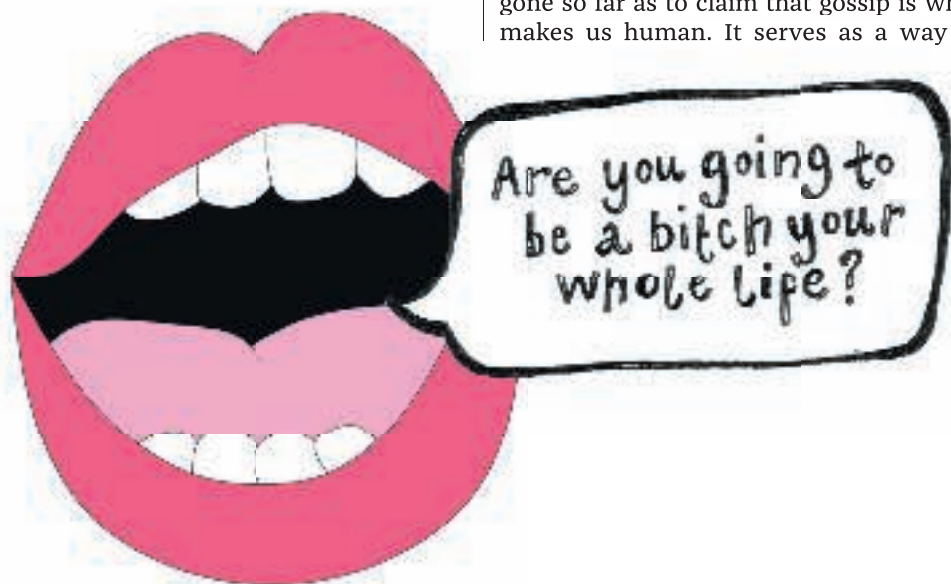
The importance of gossiping to human nature is also suggested from a non-evolutionary perspective by Dr Jennifer Cole, a senior lecturer at Manchester. She found that people are not only suspicious of those who gossip too much but, interestingly, also of those who gossip too little. If we need a healthy dose of gossip to survive and to fit in, who can blame us?

However, just because something is evolutionary and natural does not mean it should be acceptable. Just think about nutrition as a parallel: humans have a strong predisposition for fatty and sweet foods – hence the queues to the Van of Life and the droves of people going in for samples at the Fudge Kitchen. This evolutionary craving was crucial to survival in times when sufficient nutrition wasn't very readily available. However, in the era of supermarkets and 24/7 delivery services, the very same temptations have resulted in greater health risks.

So, it leads us to ask, surely we have evolved enough grey matter to go on surviving with-

◀ Heard of the 'if you've got something to say, say it to my face' mantra?

“Gossip is not inherently untrue or ill-meaning”



out bitching?

When it comes to talking about people behind their backs, I believe that there are lines to be drawn, even if the Bible and a former US First Lady may not agree with me. Spreading lies, bullying, breaches of trust, and unnecessary bad-mouthing are all toxic behaviour that can hardly be a foundation of healthy social networks. Yet gossip is not inherently untrue or ill-meaning; rather, at its very basic, it is a form of sharing opinions rather than hard facts, and more often than not, those facts just happen to be speculative.

It is drilled into us by life coaches, magazines and armchair psychologists that gossiping is detrimental to relationships, and confronting issues by talking directly to the person concerned is always the best option. Who hasn't heard of the 'if you've got something to say, just say it to my face' mantra?

More serious issues should obviously be talked about and solved with the parties involved face-to-face. These discussions can be constructive, and they can certainly serve to help avoid misunderstandings.

But confronting people about every single minor flaw they may have would just wreak havoc.

For example, telling a third party how annoying you find your supervision partner's obnoxious attention seeking or how you hate the loud slurping and munching sounds the person you're having lunch with produces may actually just prevent you from exploding at said attention seeker or lunch-muncher unnecessarily.

In some cases, it can be argued that the net gain from releasing that bit of steam (and avoiding an unnecessary confrontation between you and that person) warrants it.

I've been stuck in classes with the worst kind of Hermione Granger-style 'teacher, look at me' types, but do I really need to risk spoiling our polite relations when I can avoid an open catfight with a little bitching - excuse me, opinion sharing - with friends, especially when after a few weeks, our paths will likely never cross again?

Conversely, if people are saying things behind my back (about, for example, my questionable forays into student journalism of dubious quality or violent love of polka dots) that aren't necessarily very polite - as I'm sure they do - do I need to know? Quite honestly, I'd rather not.

In a way, I think I agree with Oscar Wilde when he says: "If there is anything more annoying in the world than having people talk about you, it is certainly having no one talk about you."

When we gossip, we fulfil what it means to be human. Of course, there's always the risk of really hurting people - but at the same time it offers the opportunity of affirming social relations and avoiding conflicts. I won't bad-mouth or spread lies (that's something I would always try my best to avoid), but I won't be continuing with my no-gossiping experiment. I have to wave a white flag at eliminating all comments spoken behind other's backs.

My tongue may be loose and my mind may be small, but at least when I burn in hell, I'll know that for the most part, I was just being human ●

Gin and Tonic, not gender stereotypes

Mojitos and Margaritas aren't just for girls. **Chris Canary** gives you his rundown of effeminate cocktails for manly men



Our generation seeks to rise above stereotypes. We're breaking glass ceilings, tearing down gender binaries, and valiantly fighting against inequalities of all stripes. And I would like to do my part by declaring, loud and proud, that sugary cocktails - so-called girly drinks - are delicious. Men should not be afraid to embrace Cosmos, Sex on the Beaches, Mai Tais, and brightly-coloured alcoholic concoctions of all varieties.

It took me a long time to get to where I am today. I hate the taste of beer, but entering uni I was afraid to admit it. I saw long lines at the bar, with people queuing to get their hands on what I viewed to be one of the most vile vats of fermented nastiness known to man. Vile nastiness that also required mandatory and frequent trips to the bathroom (like Pringles, once you pop the fun doesn't stop). Were we all just lying to ourselves? Was this

mass psychosis, or perhaps a particularly strong response to clever marketing? Perhaps it was just the cheapest alcohol we could get our hands on. So I stood at dozens of parties, demonstrating my maturity by casually holding a beer, hoping it would end.

After first year, the craziness died down. Going out became a more casual affair. I found friends who preferred bars where you could find a place to sit. Most importantly, I was introduced to the

Amaretto Sour. This was to be a pivotal moment in my journey to becoming a sugary cocktail-loving man.

If you haven't tried an Amaretto Sour before I'll walk you through the process. There are three ingredients: amaretto liqueur, lemon juice, and simple syrup. Get amaretto where you get your liquor, buy a half dozen or so lemons for lemon juice, and buy a small bag of white sugar for the syrup. The syrup is made simply by mixing equal parts water and sugar in a pan on the hob until it becomes clear. Pour the amaretto liqueur, lemon juice, and simple syrup in a 6:4:3 ratio in a glass filled with ice. Boom. Done. If this seems too complicated, stay tuned for even easier recipes below. But trust me, it's worth it.

From the Amaretto Sour I moved onto other drinks - the Dark and Stormy, Sidecar, White Russian, and the ubiquitous Mojito. But don't think my journey wasn't without adversity. At a hostel bar in Malaysia, on a rooftop overlooking Kuala Lumpur, I once ordered a Sex

on the Beach only to be denied by the Russian bartender. "That drink is for women," he said, and turned away. Oh, the shame. I suppose he wanted me to order the Machine Gun Oppression or something masculine-sounding like that. Men, I implore you to be strong. Hold your ground. Don't give up. Don't say it's for your partner. It's for you, and it'll be delicious.

Now, once you're past the social stigma there's another hurdle: you're a Cambridge student, you're busy, and cocktails take time to make. Not so. Below are a few recipes with three or fewer ingredients that require little to no preparation time. Enjoy!

The Greyhound Vodka and grapefruit juice, in whatever ratio you like.

Black Russian Vodka and Kahlúa or other coffee liqueur, in a 2:1 ratio, poured into a glass with ice. Stir well.

Dark and Stormy Rum and ginger beer, in a 1:2 ratio, poured into a glass with ice.

Kalimotxo Red wine and Coca-Cola, in a 1:1 ratio. Not for everyone, but a decent poor man's sangria. Try adding lime.

Amaretto Sour Amaretto liqueur, lemon juice, and simple syrup (1:1 water and sugar melted in a saucepan until clear) in a 6:4:3 ratio, ideally mixed in a cocktail shaker with ice or simply poured into your flatmate's tea mug and hoping for the best.

So there you have it. My road to becoming the person I am today, drink-wise at least. If you're like me but have up until now been afraid to admit it, stay strong. The world is changing. Your friends will support you. Embrace the colour, the sugar, and the silly drink names. Also, I would be remiss to add another option: you don't have to drink at all. Save your sterling for a trip to mainland Europe. That's fine too. Do what makes you happy, and avoid standing around with a drink you don't like. Cheers ●



“
He wanted
me to
order the
'Machine
Gun
Oppression'
”

Culture

An antidote to national institutional decline?

Churches in Cambridge

Joshua Kimblin discusses the wonder of Cambridge's many religious spaces, in a city bucking the trend of declining congregations

In Cambridge city centre, you are never more than 500 metres from a church. If you include chapels, then you are never more than 300 metres away. Such a large concentration of churches in such a small area raises questions over their use: how many people attend church in Cambridge? What attracts people to these institutions?

There is good reason for asking these questions. Earlier this year, it was announced that weekly attendance at Church of England services had fallen below one million people for the first time: the media duly responded with reports of a crisis within Anglicanism. Each secular milestone is the consequence of a long-term but apparently interminable decline in church membership across Britain. In 1930, 30 per cent of the British population were members of a church – of any denomination. In 2010, the figure was 10.3 per cent and, according to the latest Church Statistics survey, membership is projected to fall to 8.4 per cent by 2025. Last year, a report pointed out that more than a quarter of churches have fewer than 20 people in a Sunday morning congregation. This negative news cycle echo chamber has all the acoustic quality of the empty church halls themselves.

An equally gloomy prognosis has been offered for the health of the church buildings themselves. There are now over 900 churches on English Heritage's "At Risk" register, which highlights historic buildings in poor state of repair. There are no easy financial solutions: the bills for maintaining Britain's architectural heritage are huge. For some, notably the journalist and conservationist Simon Jenkins, the only solution is to give Britain's struggling churches away to local trusts and communities, as desanctified buildings and assets. Almost exactly a year ago, Jenkins declared dramatically in *The Guardian* that "England's churches can survive, but the religion will have to go."

Against this background of national decline and media alarm, Cambridge demonstratively bucks the trend. On average, 4.7 per cent of the English population attend church. In Cambridge, the Chaplain of Christ's College told me that up to 10 per cent of the population can be found in a church on Sunday mornings. The Cambridge mission is growing, too: a friend who attends City Church Cambridge told me that the organisation has recently renovated its building in order to accommodate its ex-



▲ St John's College Chapel (Wikicommons)

panding congregation.

This vibrancy and resilience is largely due to the unique Christian heritage attached to Cambridge and the University. History has bequeathed 39 churches to the city and the surrounding area, meaning that Cambridge has churches to cater to all Christian denominations, from Baptist to United Reformed. There is no shortage of clergy to serve them, either: Cambridge has one of the highest numbers of resident clergy (per capita) in the country. Equally, the clerical tradition of the University has always been strong, and remains so. Since Cranmer, the University has produced 18 Archbishops of Canterbury, including the last two. Within the colleges themselves, chapels can create Christian communities on a small scale and engage those who would otherwise not attend any form of worship. The number of students attending Evensong services is a case in point. Before the last Christ's College Evensong, I asked two students – one a Methodist, the other an atheist – about their reasons for going and received identical replies: "because it's nice."

Although that answer may seem banal, it reveals something profound about our contemporary relationship with churches. We are increasingly drawn to the aesthetic and sensory appeal of churches and chapels. The buildings themselves are beautiful. Cambridge has an abundance of architectural riches, from the glorious fan vault of King's College to the panel tracery in the windows of perpendicular chapels. The stained glass and choral music only add to the effect. We also see Britain's churches, and especially its cathedrals, as historic microcosms. They are filled with the physical tokens of our past: tombs, plaques, carvings and gilt. Their defaced statues and charred walls tell us of conflict and war; their extensions and architectural adjuncts tell us of prosperity and growing

▲ The vault of King's College Chapel (Jean-Christophe Benoist)

► St Bene't's is soon to celebrate its first millennium (Wiki-commons)



populations. The names on headstones give us the names of families who moulded Britain as we see it today. Some of Cambridge's churches have the added authority of being ancient. St Bene't's, for example, is approaching its millennium celebration, having been founded in 1033. The city's churches often have surprising significance, too. It is well-known that all undergraduates must live within three miles of the Church of St Mary the Great. It is less well known that the same church is the origin of the famous Big Ben bell chimes.

Cambridge's ecclesiastical history and culture is unique. The fact that the enduring image of the University is a chapel, albeit a very grand one, indicates its association with the Church. More importantly, the curious mixture of secular, historical and religious interests which we vest in our churches might even suggest a way to salvage those which are increasingly empty, decrepit, or both. Only by attracting the secular interest of the local community in these historic buildings can we hope to equally preserve their religious functions. It may be a hopeful dream, but a dream which separates the image of churches as relics from the image of church renewal ●

“Only by attracting secular interest can we preserve religious functions”

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Upcoming events you can't afford to forget

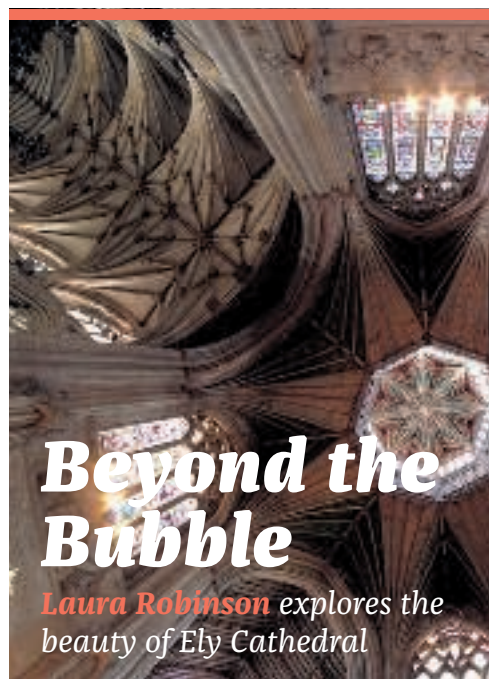
Sludgy Portrait of Himself / Museum of Cambridge
Until 5th February 2017

Jesse Wine brings together objects from Cambridgeshire's folklore tradition in an abstract narrative, with sound work by Daniel Woolhouse taking the form of a museum audio tour, as part of the Kettle's Yard in New Spaces and Places project – entry for students costs just £2.

Flowers of Earth and Blood / Alison Richard Building
Until 23rd December 2016

Artist Lala Meredith-Vula presents photos which detail her journey to rediscover her origins and identity over the last 25 years. Her pieces handle the aftermath of war in Kosovo and Bosnia as well as the blood feud reconciliation movement, which provoked the end of blood feuds in Kosovar history.

Find more cultural content online at:
varsity.co.uk/culture



Beyond the Bubble

Laura Robinson explores the beauty of Ely Cathedral

Upon googling “Cambridgeshire”, you will be met with a torrent of maps of the British Isles, non-descript photographs of swathes of green, English countryside, and a splattering of images of King’s College Chapel. The former are, of course, a sensible result in inputting such a general term, but the latter is peculiarly specific: King’s College Chapel is a symbol, the badge of Cambridgeshire, emblematic of the University and town’s roots in a religiosity that is only observed in the student consciousness through candle-lit Evensongs in college chapels and weekly postings by the college Christian society. King’s College Chapel evidently holds an architectural splendour, a curious history and a convenient central location that has motivated its display on postcards, T-shirts and keyrings, as well as its etching in the public mindset. Yet unbeknown to many, there is a site in Cambridgeshire that boasts a more ancient lineage and an architectural style that can equal the spectacle of the chapel, and it’s only an hour away: Ely Cathedral.

Hailed as ‘The Ship of The Fens’, on approach of the diminutive city of Ely it is not difficult to gather the origins of the epitaph: the cathedral’s towering stature and boundless West Front makes it visible from a significant distance, nestling and swaying above the score of flat countryside from afar. It is truly the epicentre of Ely, its magnitude a flag that waves in tourists and signals its grandiosity. The West Front, before you even enter, is a testament to the interwoven architectural styles that have shaped the cathedral due to restoration work: its lower, round headed arches are Romanesque, while the remainder of the façade has beautifully wrought, ornamental foliage and partially curved arches that indicate Early English Gothic. Despite holding its roots in the Anglo-Saxon period,

◀ **The octagonal vault at Ely Cathedral** (Flickr: stawarz)

the structures from that era do not remain, although its dedication to its foundress, the near-legendary St Etheldreda, is instated in the modern statue of her situated by the altar of her eponymous chapel inside. Timelines collide, and give the site a fantastical, other-worldly atmosphere, no less due to the quaint lop-sidedness of the West Front.

Within is a network of naves, transepts and aisles, all collected into a cruciform seen from above, symbolising Christ’s crucifixion. It is these intricate details, the overwhelming commitment to constructing an edifice that breathes religiosity in all its components, that make Ely Cathedral an electrifying site to visit. The wonders of its externality are only enforced by the spectacle of its interior: the painting that stretches across the Nave ceiling, a Victorian addition, is a vibrant mix of red, green and gold, narrating the ancestry of Jesus from Adam to Abraham and beyond. Its colour and artistic style is instantaneously eye-catching, fantastically different from the usual vaulted or High Renaissance ceilings that are lauded. It makes a poignant juxtaposition to the Lady Chapel inside, once a colourful space in the Middle Ages, but now ashen due to the onslaught of time as well as the Puritan defacement of the space during the Reformation. Its windows open up to a glorious array of light, however, that fill the grey walls with a particular splendour, and while its empty pedestals and defaced figures signify its brokenness, David Wynne’s modern statue of Mary gives it life in the 21st century.

Perhaps the most spectacular component of the cathedral, however, is the Octagon: a momentous display of religious symbolism and 14th-century Gothic, it is a vast, silent space that sings in light with its lantern. Yet despite the archaic grandiosity of it, the statue of Christ in Majesty by modern artist Peter Eugene Ball, placed above the pulpit, is a reminder that the cathedral transcends any definition of its style or vibe. Indeed, the splatterings of modern art works is what creates the cathedral’s embracing atmosphere: Wynne’s Virgin Mary rebels against traditional depictions of her passivity, throwing her arms up in the air as her golden locks tumble over her blue dress during the moment of divine conception. It is progressive, as far as religious art can be.

Ely Cathedral has seen it all: there is no better edifice to be able to mark and track with your eyes the history and expanse of time that our world has undergone. It is a remarkable mixture of medieval, Victorian and modern artistry, and its brokenness lies besides its glorious, lofty structuring. The call to the community to help finance recent renovations was met with widespread approval and participation, and it is not difficult to see why. It is an education and an aesthete’s dream all in one, and it should be appreciated by Cambridge as a beacon for Cambridgeshire a lot more ●

“It is truly the epicentre of Ely, its magnitude a flag that waves in tourists”

Cambridge Envisaged / Michaelhouse Centre & Cafe

7th-19th November 2016

Showcasing art that focuses on the differing perspectives that Cambridge arouses – from its architecture and history through to life walking on its cobbled streets – pieces include stained glasswork from Caroline Forward, glazed abstract paintings by Peter Corr, and Paul Janssens’s use of found materials.



◀ **Bond steel NATO Base** 2006



5th – 11th NOVEMBER

What’s on this week?

PORTRAITS OF PLACE /
 Heong Gallery, Downing College



TOP PICK

Focusing on pieces that have been inspired by the locations and settings that have made up each artist’s life, this exhibition, part of Kettle’s Yard’s In New Places and Spaces, draws works from their own collection as well as pieces by Richard Long.

Free to attend on Tuesday 1st November, from 5-6pm.

Saturday 5th
Science Makers: Drones for Science
Makespace Classroom, Mill Lane, 12pm-5pm

This monthly event aims to “discuss and build low-cost, DIY and open hardware for science and education”. Featuring talks from researchers using drones for science, the day ends with a hands-on project.

synbio.cam.ac.uk

Monday 7th
I have lost myself
Corpus Playroom, 9.30pm

This play focuses on Auguste Deter, the first person diagnosed with Alzheimer’s Disease, and the recordings made of him by Dr Alzheimer.

adctheatre.com

Wednesday 9th
Kettle’s Yard Picture Loan Scheme
Murray Edwards College, 12.30-2pm

This annual tradition dates back to Jim Ede’s time as founder of Kettle’s Yard: students can borrow up to two pieces from the collection for a year, and it’s first come, first served.

kettlesyard.co.uk

Thursday 10th
Better than TV

Hot Numbers, 7:30-10:30pm

After the success of their first gig of Michaelmas term at Clare Jazz, the Cambridge-based band continue their aim to bring Jazz to Cambridge with an evening performance at Hot Numbers.

betterthantv.co.uk

Friday 11th
ARU Student Action for Refugees presents English Disco Lovers

ARU, The Academy, 9pm-2am

This charity event offers an exciting night of House, Nu-Disco and other eclectic sets. £5 entry, all welcome.

facebook.com/ARUStudentActionforRefugees

If you’d like to submit a **listing**, send details to
culture@varsity.co.uk



Paterson, Whiplash, and Birdman

Pany Heliotis on why the poetics of cinema are relevant for us all

After leaving a late night screening of Jim Jarmusch's *Paterson*, I started pondering what the point of the film was. More specifically, the point of making films on the topics of art and its artists? Surely art itself is the true reflection of an artist – the embodiment of their thoughts and life. Why devote an hour and 40 minutes to documenting their plight? *Paterson*, the story of the fictional poet and bus driver Paterson, offers an answer.

The film starts with poetic tropes that gradually release themselves into the language of the film. Shots of arbitrary details – a knee, the hinges on a bus door, an industrial dam – capture the poet's capacity to focus on the

mundane and elevate it to literary significance. Jarmusch, as one would expect, skillfully integrates repetitions of dialogue and recurring visual motifs to generate an internal rhythm that means the film hums along like a rigidly metered poem. However, being able to spot homonyms embedded in the dialogue is precisely the kind of niche film observation one would expect from an English student.

But what if these tropes, as well as mimetic, are allegorical? What if the film's concerns for the artist's struggle are merely veiled concerns of our own? Take Alejandro G. Iñárritu's *Birdman*. His long continuous takes blur the line between the actor's on stage and off-stage performance, suggesting an ambiguous seamlessness of different selves – where do their various performances end? So far, so self-indulgent. But let's take this further. Consider our own capacity to present different versions of ourselves. How often do you lose sight of one self and notice another self taking a dominant role in your everyday life? *Birdman* actualises this psycho-social phenomena – the washed up actor – Riggan Thompson, haunted by his id (his retired superhero persona), suffers both crippling self-doubt and monumental arrogance that gives him 'flight'. The selves elide into one other seamlessly, disorienting him and pushing him to near psychosis. Sound familiar? Remember Freshers' Week: "I'm on top of this, I've got this university thing down – hello Cambridge – oh, actually, my room's quite cosy and that guy I was talking to last night definitely hates me. I think I'll stay inside and get Dominos to deliver'.

Whiplash, a film about a narcissistic and determined drummer and his narcissistic and

determined teacher, also works as an elegy on the exhausting nature of ambition. The percussive jazz of the soundtrack not only references the character's vocation, it conjures the adrenalised heartbeat of someone striving for perfection. The tap-tap-tapping of the drum is like the tap-tap-tapping of fingers on a keyboard as you furiously assimilate last week's reading into essay-form, your heart beat duetting with the syncopated taps of the keys. The film's specificities evolve into something universal.

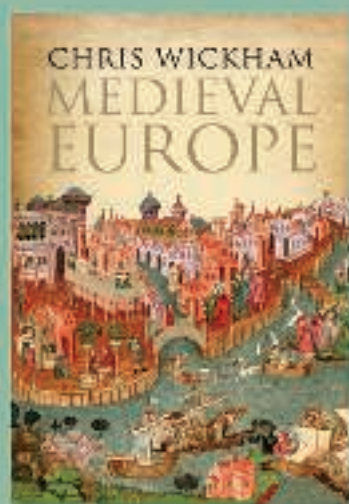
How does the literary Paterson's use of poetics resonate with an audience looking for a personal cinematic experience? Like much of Jarmusch's work, the film's existential ennui lingers on the lonely experience of living. His attention to detail and his commitment to scrawling verse in his battered notebook give his life an anchor, just like any hobby. The film merely emulates this. However when, later in the film, his writing suffers a major set-back, the character visibly degenerates – his lips adopt a blue hue and his shoulders collapse inwards. A chance encounter with a Japanese poet provides reinvigoration. The pair engage in a discussion on the lives of poets and suddenly we recognise the form's impact on the character's life. It offers an opportunity for discourse, to engage with the world through shared experience. The poet, the actor and musician all strive for communion with their audience. Though all these films adapt their form to mimic the artist, they also go beyond. The films reflect back at the audience the difficulty of communication and transmitting oneself in the social sphere. The archetype of the artist in film symbolises our own own thirst for an efficient communication of self ●

► **Birdman's elision of selves has surprising echoes of daily life** (Regency Enterprises)

“It allows us to engage with the poet on screen”



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The wonders of literary apparel



Alice Chilcott explores the appeal and the problem of wearing clothes covered in literary references

I am going to begin with a cliché. The books we read say a lot about who we are. Now you can even wear your favourite books, thanks to a recent boom of dedicated literary merchandise companies set up in recent years.

One of my best friends bought me a tote bag that says 'I BLOODY LOVE BOOKS'. Holding it, I feel like I've reclaimed the identity Topshop loaned to a generation of teen girls with those 'GEEK' and 'NERD' T-shirts.

There's something troublingly elitist about pairing fashion and literature with this kind of self-expression. It's a clear sign of your literary preferences (and personality), and is inaccessible to anyone who doesn't know the book. T-shirts often also sport more benign, pop culture references: 'I solemnly

“There's something elitist about pairing fashion and literature”

swear that I am up to no good'. The problem with these is that what begins as self-expression quickly becomes generic. Know the Levi-OH-sa / Levio-SAH quote? It's one of my favourites, actually.

But, somewhat vainly, I couldn't shake the fear that by wearing a T-shirt of it, I'd be accused of jumping the bandwagon.

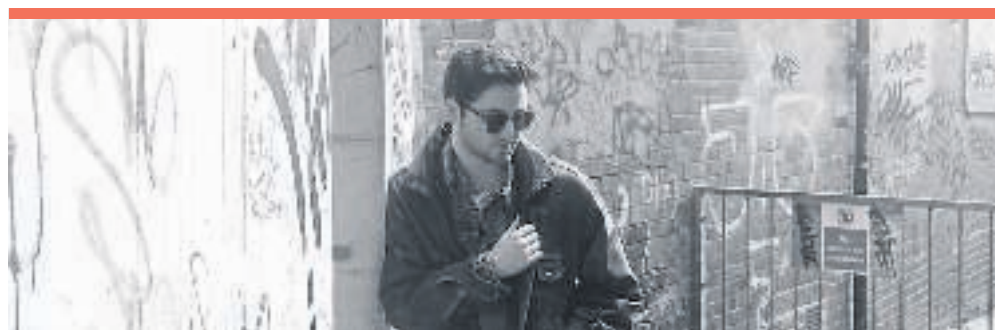
This is true of all of the examples I've discussed. Many people love *The Great Gatsby*, but what if you saw someone else wearing a T-shirt of it?

Two identical T-shirts just don't allow for the same sort of nuance in personal preferences.

It boils down to whether you care what people think. As Oscar Wilde says: "Fashion is what one wears oneself. What is unfashionable is what other people wear" ●



Read the full version of Alice's column at varsity.co.uk



Varsity Introducing...

Fionn Connolly

Patrick Wernham talks to the Sidney Sussex student about the importance of studying music, his influences and his upcoming plans



How did you get involved in music at all, and then start to pursue it outside of your studies?

Music was always this double thing. To get in somewhere like Cambridge, you always have to be doing extra stuff at school, and when you get here you're expected to do choirs and orchestras and everything else outside of your degree. I was about 11 or 12 when I started writing songs, and from then on it wasn't really anything I thought about: it was just something I did. I started playing the violin when I was five, and from then until about 10

or 11 it was all classical, and then I discovered pop music. I found Pink Floyd: that was my way in, listening to *The Wall* on repeat!

Does studying music help your songwriting?

To a certain extent I would be writing songs no matter what I was studying, but there are aspects of it where I think 'ah, this would feed in nicely.' So, there was a part of the course which talked about the Romantic fragment, where with a song cycle in classical music you can have certain songs that fit into a larger arc

and work really well as a larger whole, but are also approachable as a single unit. So for me, and because I love Pink Floyd, an album should really aim for that.

Could you describe your music?

I don't really know how! 'Alternative' for lack of a better descriptive word. It's kind of folk-infused, electronic singer-songwriter-ish!

Who else would you cite as influences?

Joni Mitchell and James Blake. With Joni Mitchell, it's her emotion, and the way she conveys it through her lyrics. As for James Blake it's certainly his musical approach, his recording techniques, the way he uses glitchy effects. There's so much to learn from so many different people – I love Bon Iver, and I used to be really influenced by people like Tom Odell and Gabrielle Aplin. You can draw influences from so many places – I'm currently writing a song based on a poem that's based on a painting I once saw in a library – the poem hasn't been released, but I'm in contact with the poet, Alison Hayek, which is very exciting.

Have you got any upcoming plans?

I'm planning to release my debut album at the beginning of next year; I don't yet have a release date but my single 'Real Fear', which is on my SoundCloud, is going to be featured and I'm planning to release another single, called 'Half/Answers' in the next few weeks.

You can listen to some of Fionn's music on his soundcloud, at soundcloud.com/fionn-connolly

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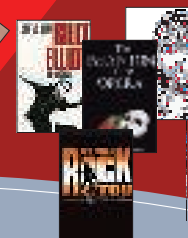
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Fashion

FEATURE

The new emperor's clothes

Elizabeth Huang dissects the sartorial choices of the candidates for the US Presidency

Illustrations by **Alisa Santikam**

On 8th November, Americans will descend *en masse* to polling stations to choose their next president. While we've painstakingly dissected the policies, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, less attention has been paid to the external elements. What do the sartorial choices of candidates tell us about them?

In politics, where image is king, politicians try hard to use their clothing as symbolic shorthand for that elusive political creature: values. This election, both Trump and Clinton have succeeded in cultivating distinctive visual styles that say interesting and sometimes contradictory things about their campaigns.

The classic Trump look is a dark, boxy suit with a distinctly corporate feel, accompanied by a tie (typically in loud, Republican red). By wearing business suits, Trump is selling two messages: first, that he is ready to be CEO of America; secondly, that he is a materially successful embodiment of the American Dream. Trump's suiting is also a nod to Ronald Reagan's personal style: he wants to suggest

that he too can lead the USA out of decline and into glorious capitalist prosperity.

Yet there is an inherent tension between Trump's expensive power suits and his attempt to appeal to economically marginalised groups. Cue the marketing genius of the Trump hat emblazoned with the now immortal slogan 'Make America Great Again'. The rope cap has strong associations with blue-collar America, allowing Trump to broaden his appeal. By taking advantage of existing associations between clothing and class, politicians can inhabit a space of nebulous identity shaped by the external trappings of clothing.

Though likewise besuited, Bernie Sanders cuts a very different figure – rumpled, even dishevelled, Sanders dresses in the clothes of the everyman. Yet despite this, he makes use of fashion's historical connotations in the same way as



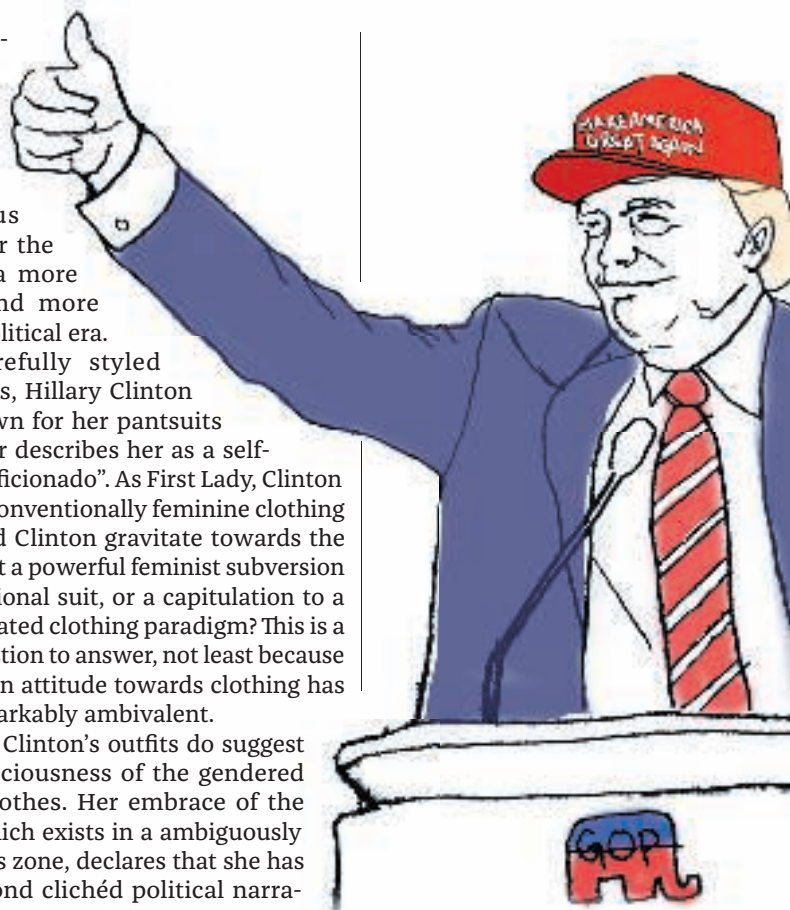
“
Fashion
is its own
visual
language
”

Trump, offering young voters an opportunity to share in a vicarious nostalgia for the fantasy of a more innocent and more authentic political era.

More carefully styled than Sanders, Hillary Clinton is well-known for her pantsuits – her Twitter describes her as a self-confessed “aficionado”. As First Lady, Clinton wore more conventionally feminine clothing – so why did Clinton gravitate towards the pantsuit? Is it a powerful feminist subversion of the traditional suit, or a capitulation to a male-dominated clothing paradigm? This is a difficult question to answer, not least because Clinton's own attitude towards clothing has seemed remarkably ambivalent.

That said, Clinton's outfits do suggest a keen consciousness of the gendered nature of clothes. Her embrace of the pantsuit, which exists in a ambiguously androgynous zone, declares that she has moved beyond clichéd political narratives about gender. While Trump's suits are very much about actively conveying a message, Clinton's pantsuits do the opposite. Instead of drawing attention, they are paradoxically silent, allowing Clinton's own words to be heard above the media's usual clamour about famous women's clothing.

Fashion is its own visual language, a set of actively changing symbols. However, image is often illusory and fashion's dynamism makes it a dangerous image tool. A wolf in sheep's clothing? We'll have to wait and see ●



Drug abuse is the new black

Emma Walsh

Moschino's Spring/Summer 2017 'Capsule' Collection, inspired by the packaging of over-the-counter medication, has been highly controversial, especially in the US, for frivolously making drug abuse a trend. Fashion is supposed to be leading edge and, today more than ever, political. However, is this glamorising of mental illness and drug abuse a step too far? Are their designer bags shaped like pill cases and clothes plastered with pill prints making the abuse of prescription drugs 'trendy'?

Moschino is a billion-dollar company. But is it making this money by buying into the glorification and celebration of life-threatening illnesses to increase its profits further? Fashion is fun. The price tags of designer brands may be excessive, but the consumers do feel they profit from their

purchases. But selling fashion items, such as a £460 clutch bag resembling painkillers or a £540 shoulder bag that looks like an oversized pill container, and thus endorsing drug abuse for profit, is not only exploitative, but dangerous.

Many, especially in the US, view the collection as trivialising a serious issue. Deaths from overdose on prescription opioids have quadrupled since 1999 and almost two million Americans abused or were dependent on prescription opioids in 2014. This is a serious epidemic affecting millions of lives.

Moschino, however, defends the garments and accessories as reflecting “Jeremy Scott's fun, provocative language” present throughout the brand's collections. But is this collection a step too far?

Nordstrom, a major US department store, clearly thinks so as they will no longer be selling the controversial collection after protests from many doctors, addiction specialists and parents of overdose victims.

Jeremy Scott claims “fashion is the only drug I do”, but for others it is not. Moschino have called the negative interpretation of the collection “a misunderstanding”. But if the collection is supposed to be tongue-in-cheek, what is the joke? Are those protesting not elite and fashionable enough to understand the punch line?

However, while we can hope that the initial idea wasn't to promote drug addiction, what was the purpose? It could be a comment on the American obsession with prescrip-



▲ Prescription opioid addictions affect many Americans (Tom Varco, top image Moschino Official)

tion drugs, in keeping with Moschino's provocative collections. But does this collection start a conversation, reducing the stigma surrounding mental illness, or is it an offensive glorification of drug abuse? Are these bold and bright creations a step too far, or the beginning of the future for edgy fashion?

Quite arguably, by making something deadly fashionable, this undermines the seriousness of the issue for so many people. What about the parents whose children have died from a drug overdose? Or the person whose life has been ruined by addiction?

The romanticising of mental illness in the arts is an increasing issue. It is becoming fashionable to be depressed or anxious; meanwhile, there are people struggling to get through the day.

The stigmatisation of mental health needs to be overcome. But perhaps the way to do this is not through encouraging damaging behaviour that will ultimately lead to a spiral of decline in the mental health of Moschino's consumers.

Not only is the fashion industry largely blamed for eating disorders, but is drug abuse now being advertised as the new 'skinny'? Are pills the new black, and death by drug overdose the new death by starvation? Fashion should push the boundaries, but endorsing drug abuse to a largely young demographic seems, for a designer brand, to be in quite poor taste ●

Check out Varsity Fashion's Instagram photos:
[instagram.com/varsitycambridge](https://www.instagram.com/varsitycambridge)



Octavia Akoulitchev Fashion in the days of Brexit

It was admittedly difficult to forecast a post-Brexit British fashion industry through the shadow of overcasting gloom. Isolationism is diametrically opposed to London's identity as the world's locus of vanguard artists, writers, and musicians. In their fusing of cultures and art forms, they create fertile ground for fashion – which we all use to express our positions within wider contemporary culture, beyond the shores of our island. Concretely, London's status as fashion's capital city can be directly traced to it providing the best fashion education in the world, which inevitably attracts the best students. Just look at the designers leading Europe's most influential fashion houses: Phoebe Philo (Céline and Chloé), Stella McCartney (Chloé), John Galliano (Givenchy, Dior and Maison Margiela), Alexander McQueen (Givenchy)... all were educated in London.

But how, we wondered, could all this possibly continue if foreign students couldn't easily get visas? Or if British designers couldn't easily get European work permits? Well, according to 90 per cent of British Fashion Council designers (who voted Remain), it couldn't. One of these voters, Mary Katrantzou, relies on non-British soil to provide 85 per cent of her

brand's employees and a diversity of artistic perspectives. That says something about the 'Britishness' of the people fuelling London's fashion industry. London's leading reputation depends on its providing a hub for the world's fashion renegades, and neither telling them what to do, nor thinking it can do the job better and pushing them out.

But Brexit would mean doing both those things. It would also, as if things weren't bleak enough, mean an increase in prices for the British fashion buyer. Oh wait, there's worse – in an industry which relies on image and inherent association, what would happen to brands synonymous with British heritage? Could Burberry really expect buyers to associate their trench coats with aspirational English luxury, and not some xenophobic creep in an anorak who'd cut off his nose to spite his face? Perhaps not, because upon Brexit's announcement, Burberry suspended plans for a trench coat factory in Northern England. Everyone, it seems, was re-evaluating the concept of British heritage, and ultimately, London's orientation as fashion capital.

But maybe we were hasty. Orwell – who I had admittedly not been far off from in my vision of the future – famously argued that in order to create culturally relevant art the artist must remain outside society, and not be 'swallowed up by it'. Of course, this metaphor only works if the artist maintains a critical perspective and connection, but it turns out that London's designers are doing just that.



▲ Will BoJo's knitty-gritty politics hurt London fashion? (Matt Brown)

London has always been the first of the quartet of fashion capitals to make the most of new forms of communication, from Instagram to Snapchat, and responsible for this is, again, the education system, which teaches students not just how to cross-stitch, but how to integrate the latest technologies into their marketing strategies. Innovative communication is so inherent to the city's fashion industry that Boris Johnson's political blunder can't shake it any more than his graceless skydives. Just look at Christopher Bailey's show last month: fearing Brexit-related visa issues for foreign buyers, he live-streamed his show, selling the collection directly off the catwalk. This increased sales, but more importantly increased audiences. Communication is so natural a part of London's fashion identity that externality is in no way equivalent to isolation, rather, it's a creative impetus.

This attitude of, quite frankly, not caring about the bleak state of things and doing what you want anyway seems to be a running theme in the London fashion world. Just think of Natalie Sara Massenet, who in the depths of the fallout of the dot-com bubble, decided to set up the world's biggest online boutique – Net-a-Porter – and, more to the point, succeeded. 'British heritage' might be an image in jeopardy, but maybe there is something in the resilient nature of Burberry's trench coats.

London's status as world fashion capital is inevitably changing. Fewer designers? Yes. More expensive? Yes. But irrelevant? As if ●

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Theatre

PREVIEW

‘A more naturalistic and more sympathetic take on revenge tragedy’

A production that has plenty of chemistry, writes
Vanessa Barganza

The Duchess of Malfi
ADC Theatre
8th - 12th November, 7:45pm

I sit off to the side of the rehearsal room, trying to make myself as invisible as possible. Zen music drifts through the sun-drenched air, and across from me two people sit cross-legged in the middle of the floor. They are holding hands, and I am immediately struck by the connection they seem to have. Every gesture and flicker of expression seems to respond instinctively to the other person, giving the impression that an entire unspoken conversation is being carried out, untranslatable by any onlooker.

Naturally my first question for Kate Marston and Joe Sefton, cast as the Duchess and Antonio in the Marlowe Society's upcoming production of John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, is how being a couple in real life affects their portrayal of the famous tragic lovers.

They look at each other, then at director Anastasia Bruce-Jones, and all three simultaneously burst into peals of laughter. Kate and Joe are not actually a couple, they explain, as Anastasia fist pumps the air and I feel my face redden. But their obvious chemistry promises a casting match made in heaven.

Anastasia envisions a “more naturalistic and more sympathetic” take on this classic Jacobean revenge tragedy. She tries to teach Kate and Joe to feel each other's energy in rehearsal by asking them to lean towards and away from each other according to how drawn or repelled they think their characters feel to each other at a given point in a scene. Her attempts to foster an emotional connection between the play's romantic leads stem from her own experience connecting with dramatic material.

“I had a real struggle doing *Hamlet* at one point, and there was an exercise we were doing

where you felt how forwards and backwards impulses affected your character. I think that can be really helpful. Often it's easier to feel things when we're doing things. Physical can lead to emotional. Different people work indifferent ways. So doing as many different things as possible... going for physical, spiritual, and energetic approaches”.

Yet Kate recalls that she was initially slightly sceptical of such approaches: “It can be quite dangerous, emotional recall, because you can be quite mixed up between yourself and the character,” she remarks. “It reminds you the things the characters are feeling are real. But it allows the audience to relate to it”.

Kate has been considering carefully the delivery of the play's most famous line, when its heroine declares “I am Duchess of Malfi still”. “I've been trying to say it and lay the emphasis on different words. I don't know whether it's the fact that she's the Duchess

“
A
casting
match
made in
heaven
”

or the Duchess of Malfi.” The line comes, intriguingly, at the point of the Duchess' greatest suffering in the play, and Kate is “not sure it's her trying to assert her authority so much as reminding her of what she is”.

Joe faces a rather different challenge, as he finds that he often has to navigate the conspicuous silences of Antonio and their contrast to the voluble Duchess. Part of the complication comes from the vast class separation between the characters. “It's working out what he can and cannot say, and what's wise to say,” Joe explains. “I think particularly in the proposal scene. He's constantly reminded of who he is, so I think it's partly like the speech where he says he loves listening to her talk.”

“And I can imagine his mind wandering quite a lot and then zoning back into what she's saying. I think when you've got this character that you're playing opposite, it's written so beautifully that I understand why he doesn't say anything”.

Anastasia remarks too that she has made significant changes to the drama's primary villain, the Duchess' twin brother Ferdinand. Webster's text, she explains, often makes it very easy to stereotype Ferdinand, whereas this production will offer a new interpretation, attempting to push against the original play's “insensitivity to mental illness” ●

▼▲ The cast of *The Duchess of Malfi* get into character (Johannes Hjorth)



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FEATURE

A defence of musicals

Thomas O'Connor tells us why musicals are more than just the junk food of theatre

The term 'musical theatre' can send shivers down the spine. The dramatists bemoan its triviality. The opera buffs ridicule its lack of musical merit. The public see it as juvenile, daft fun.

So what it is about the genre that keeps shows running forever? Why do certain people go weak at the knees for the musical? What is worth going to see?

'Musical theatre' is a term which covers almost anything (apart from opera) where drama is told with songs. It takes many forms: there's the jukebox-musical, inspired more

►►
CUMTS's musicals go down a storm
(Daniel Karaj and Oscar Yang)

by an ageing pop group's tax bill than any creative force. *Mamma Mia*, *We Will Rock You* and *Jersey Boys*: these are the fodder for the coach parties.

Then there is the transfer from the cartoon film: Disney is king of this. *The Lion King* and *Aladdin* give more tacky optimism and plastic merchandise than you can possibly take. And the film-turned-musical: *The Bodyguard*, *Kinky Boots*, *Legally Blonde*. All with a guaranteed happy ending. These are the junk food of theatre, where sentimentality reigns supreme.

For the arty musical, Sondheim has been the go-to composer for theatre full of wit and intelligence. But even his Pulitzer Prize for Drama doesn't prevent his shows closing early, or not even reaching the West End or Broadway. *Sweeney Todd*, *Sunday in the Park with George* or *Assassins* reach a level of psychological intensity rarely seen in musicals.

But something has changed: the triumph of *Wicked* has heralded an age of shows written for every teenager who knows that their own personal problem is the most important thing to have ever happened to humanity. Pushing it further was *Spring Awakening*, a musical where the contemporary soft-rock score finally reflects what the youthful cast would genuinely produce.

In the latest Broadway smash hit *Hamilton* they abandon the idea of singing in favour of

rap. It is about the Americans of then, told by the Americans of now. The cast is entirely African-American and Hispanic and the music is genuinely 21st-century. *Hamilton* has thrown aside 100 years of musical theatre tradition and it is tipped to spark a whole new era of spoken word musicals. It opens in London in 2017.

For those who don't want to wait that long, there are other fabulous pieces of non-commercial musical theatre, like David Bowie's ethereal and thought-provoking *Lazarus*. And if you really want to explore the darker side of theatre, then check out *Whisper House* (from the writers of *Spring Awakening* and *American Psycho*).



If you're looking to expand your iTunes library, check out Jason Robert Brown's *Parade*, or Michael John LaChiusa's *See What I Wanna See*. For new UK writers, there is *The Go-Between* by Richard Taylor, which has a melodic complexity that Britten would have been proud of, and Conor Mitchell's powerful *The C**t of Queen Catherine*, very much something for those who don't want singing nuns, phantoms or boy meets girl tweeness.

There is a more to musicals than watching *Glee* may lead us to believe. Cheesiness and superficiality have their place, but you don't have to dig far to find the power of a good story told with intelligently written music ●

Opening in Week 6

Tuesday 8th

Are You Sitting Comfortably?
 Corpus Playroom
 7:00pm ('til 12th)

A View from the Bridge
 Pembroke New Cellars
 7:00pm ('til 12th)

88mph: A Time Travel Sketch Show
 Pembroke New Cellars
 9:30pm ('til 9th)

Wednesday 9th

Foxfinder
 Judith E. Wilson Drama Studio, Faculty of English
 7:30pm ('til 12th)

Comedy Weakly
 ADC
 11:00pm ('til 12th)

IN CONVERSATION

The cast and crew of the Corpus show speak to Kritarth Jha

I have lost myself
 Corpus Playroom
 7th - 9th November, 9:30pm

I have lost myself is a play that resists definition. It isn't Shakespearean. It isn't a Greek tragedy. It's far from an adaptation of a well-known Broadway play turned cult movie. In fact, for the two hours that I sat in on rehearsals, there wasn't much dialogue at all. So, what is this play about?

At its heart, *I have lost myself* is about Alzheimer's disease (and the early onset kind at that), a disease hugely under-represented in mainstream media, widely misunderstood by the public and barely understood by the scientific community. Because of the peculiar nature of the disease, patients suffer a loss of brain functions like memory, followed by the loss of speech and, eventually, every facet of their personality.

Using techniques of physical theatre, director Jonathan Ben-Shaul and producer Phoebe Bright have explored the anguish and the inner workings of the mind of Augustus Deter, the

first person to be diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and the woman whose self-observation forms the play's title.

The play has been developed collaboratively under Jonathan's leadership, beginning with only the basic structure of each scene. As a result, a lot of the action comes from movement rather than dialogue. Indeed, when I walked into the rehearsal, I was greeted by a scrawny guy in a white T-shirt being pushed around the stage. I was pleased to learn that this was indeed part of the play and not blatant bullying: a sequence carried out by the chorus. In fact, Oliver, who has previous experience with physical theatre in the National Youth Theatre and Frantic Assembly, may have helped choreograph his own pushing around. Mauritz Spenke, who will play the lead Augustus, has a powerful performance in store for the audience. One can only imagine how the impact of his performance will be amplified when the Corpus Playroom becomes his cosy little bedroom – and we're invited in to join him. If you're looking for something different, refreshing and insightful, I highly recommend watching *I have lost myself*. I know I will ●

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BRISTOWS

Music

PREVIEW

Jazz Fest swings into town



The Cambridge Jazz Festival, now in its second year, has a stellar lineup of jazz stars, writes Karl Schwonik

The Cambridge Jazz Festival, now in its second year of operation, will once again be offering up top names, engaging educational workshops, copious concerts and literally something for everybody this year. The festival, taking place in a plethora of venues throughout the city between the 16th to the 27th of November, is a music highlight for the year. In spite of losing hundreds of posters due to their mysterious over-night confiscation as they were posted around town, this will be a festival to remember.

Founder Roslin Russell may be the busiest person in town. On top of running this festival (which, for a smaller jazz centre, is of incredible size), Russell has a family, a PhD from Cambridge and a career in science, as well as being a musician herself. When asked about the founding of the festival, Russell says that she “finally got the courage to approach a number of other musicians (many of whom do other things) with this great idea”. Great indeed. In classic Cambridge style, Russell is taking on, and succeeding at, more than most of us mortals.

Local highlight: far from taking credit, Russell is quick to point out and highlight the immense talent in the Cambridge jazz community and some of the artists she will be hosting later this month for the festival. Locally, the Cambridge University Jazz Orchestra (CUJO) will be performing one of the featured shows in the line-up with special guest Soweto Kinch (full disclosure: currently holds the drum chair in CUJO). This big band is made of excellent players from across the University and from several different academic disciplines. On the group, Russell notes that “CUJO is a breeding ground for future jazz stars,” and that the combination with Kinch will be a magical evening. Their performance together is on the 26th at the Mumford Theatre.

Workshops play a large part in this year’s festival. “Jazz musicians are the most talented out there,” declares Russell: “we need to have these musicians for the next generation here in Cambridge. When you hear and learn about jazz, it feels like all the parts of your brain

simultaneously light up.” Audiences can learn more about jazz in general, refine their big band skills, learn Latin rhythms, take up a percussion instrument, find out just what is jazz harp, work on their vocal chops and even do some jazz hip hop throughout the week. Additionally, Sara Mitra and Magic Box are presenting an all-ages event where you can bring the kids and introduce them to this great artform.

“Jazz is trendy right now,” says Russell. It is true in the sense that jazz is evolving and now encompasses numerous cultures and musical styles. Kinch’s style is firmly rooted in hip hop and jazz-funk that became popular several decades ago. This kind of back-beat infused genre-crossing music is prevalent. Just last week, one of the more popular albums in jazz this year, Donny McCaslin’s *Beyond Now*, showcased the group that backed up David Bowie on his last album. Bill Laurance, an alumnus of the famed Snarky Puppy band, is also no stranger to this genre-defying playing. Russell says his show on the 25th at the West Road Concert Hall, and the subsequent workshop the next day from this “fantastic guy and amazing musician,” is also not an event to miss.

Other highlights from this vast festival are too numerous to list here. As a quick primer, here are a few suggestions. For the straight-ahead listener check out Alan Barnes at the Leys School on the 22nd. If you are a vocal jazz lover, make sure to catch Lauren Kinsella and her group Snowpoet at the Unitarian Church on the 26th. And finally, for those looking for Cuban-influenced music, Charanga del Norte are playing at the Churchill College Chapel on the 22nd. There are many supporters that Russell thanked in our hour together last week as we spoke about all the exciting acts coming to town. Of particular mention were the University of Cambridge, the city of Cambridge and Arts Council England. Their support is integral to the event and Russell, as well as local jazz lovers, is deeply grateful for their support of such a world-class festival ●



▲ **Soweto Kinch will perform on the 24th November at Hidden Rooms**

“Jazz is evolving and now encompasses numerous cultures and musical styles”

REVIEW

‘A visceral musicality’



The RPO played with energy and alacrity, writes James Watkins

*Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Cambridge Corn Exchange
28th October 2016*

★★★★★

This season sees the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO) reprise their role as orchestra-in-residence at the Cambridge Corn Exchange. At their opening concert last Friday, conducted by Alexander Shelley, who is currently the chief conductor of the Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra and music director at the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, they brought the perfect blend of energy and alacrity to the 30th anniversary of the Cambridge Classical Concert Series.

Given the long-standing commitment of the RPO and Cambridge Live to outreach programmes and diversifying of the contemporary classical audience, it is fitting that the programme opened with the overture to Rossini’s *Guillaume Tell*. One of the most loved and most accessible of all orchestral overtures – perhaps overshadowed in the collective conscience only by that of Bizet’s *Carmen* – it was a lively way of warming up orchestra and listeners alike.

Indeed, Shelley – conducting without a score – used the affectionate bluster of the overture to highlight from the outset the excellent rapport he’s built with the RPO since his appointment in January of last year. The orchestra looked on with rapt attentiveness during his intimate dialogue with principal cellist Jonathan Ayling in his serene solo introduction, and the audience couldn’t help but follow suit.

The whole first section of

the overture was spaciouly done with a reverent remove, such that the blustery crescendi which punctuate the famous theme roused even more than usual. The Mendelssohn Violin Concerto was a treat. Carolin Widmann, acclaimed German soloist, married perfect technique to a visceral musicality. The saccharine tones of her 1782 G.B. Guadagnini violin soared over Shelley’s delicately thrumming orchestra in the first movement’s moorish theme.

The movement’s cadenza did as all cadenzas do and fascinated the audience, but it was the understated virtuosity directly following it as the orchestra wistfully took up the theme that stole the show.

Shelley made much of the lachrymose ambiguity of the second movement’s opening bars, which allowed Widmann to truly blossom into her delightful pastoral C major theme. Her encore, the Sarabande of Bach’s *Second Partita*, was announced in a gruff bark at odds with the warmth evoked in the concerto – but this was quickly mollified by an excellent performance.

The elision of the third and fourth movements was handled with aplomb: an ephemeral flick of Shelley’s wrist and the monumental climax that rode us into the fourth was dissipated in a flash, heralding the arrival of one of Sibelius’ most stirring finales. Twelve or so minutes later, the audience filed out of the Corn Exchange with none of the usual apprehension of the cold chill of a miserable October – our bellies were well and truly satisfied, full of freshly-stoked Sibelian fire ●

★★★★★ = AMAZING
★★★★☆ = GREAT
★★★☆☆ = GOOD

★★☆☆☆ = OK
★★☆☆☆ = BAD
☆☆☆☆☆ = ABYSMAL

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New releases

ALBUM



★★★★☆

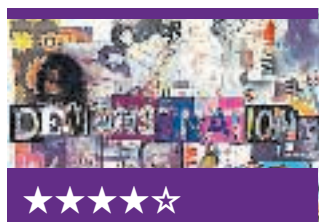
Big Baby D.R.A.M.
D.R.A.M.

D. R.A.M. is an American rapper and singer, making music somewhere between R&B and trap-rap. If your immediate reaction is 'another one?', I don't blame you. His first full-length album arrives at a time when its genre is double-edged. This year has shown there's an audience for bright R&B influenced rap.

But the fact that Drake, Chance the Rapper, Rae Sremmurd and literally hundreds of Soundcloud rappers have dominated the hip-hop world this year makes it difficult to stand out. *Big Baby D.R.A.M.* doesn't try to do this with an album that is unapologetic about being '2016 rap' ●

Miika Jaarte

ALBUM



Hamburg Demonstrations
Pete Doherty

Hamburg Demonstrations is Peter Doherty's second solo album, and the former Libertines' frontman finds himself in a peculiar position. 10 years after a bitter split, the band made its spectacular comeback: playing at Reading and Leeds Festival and Glastonbury before releasing the album *Anthems for Doomed Youth* in 2015.

Many of the songs on the album, such as 'Birdcage' and 'Down For The Outing', have been floating around for the last few years.

Its last track, 'She Is Far', which describes a walk through London in the winter, was written in the Libertines' early days. This is complimented by strong newer material on the album as well ●

Tom Hill

4th - 10th NOVEMBER

Highlights of the week

Friday 4th Lottery Winners

Cambridge Junction, 7pm (doors)
Recently signed by Warner Brothers by the same person who signed The Ramones, Madonna and The Smiths (among others), Lottery Winners are a band on the rise. To top things off, it's also a benefit gig for WaterAid.
£17 adv

Tuesday 8th Cambridge Music Festival: Steve Reich turns 80

Cambridge Corn Exchange, 7:30pm
The legend is celebrated for reaching yet another milestone in his career. £15.25 (concs)

Thursday 10th Cambridge Modern Jazz: Andrew Bain Project

Hidden Rooms, 7pm
Bain brings his high-octane ensemble of heavy hitters from the UK and across the pond. £12 (concs)

Sunday 6th Dodgy

Portland Arms, 7:30pm (doors)
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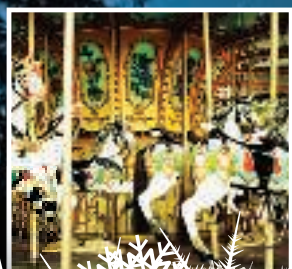
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Reviews

THE TOP 5

Teen Films



Clueless (1995)

Based on Jane Austen's *Emma*, *Clueless* is film with impeccable comedy and fashion choices. Alicia Silverstone's Cher fancies herself as a matchmaker, who has to accept that not all of her matches are perfect.



10 Things I Hate About You (1999)

By far the best Shakespeare adaptation, *10 Things* is a feisty feminist movie, with Kat giving some of the greatest put downs in film history. Bianca and Kat are banned from dating, unless the other does.



Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986)

Desperate for another day off school, Ferris runs wild with girlfriend Sloane and best friend Cameron, all while trying to avoid detection from his sister, parents and the school's principal.



Juno (2007)

Ellen Page stars as pregnant teen Juno. With her relationship with sort-of-boyfriend Michael Cera still on tentative ground, and the addition of prospective adoptive parents, she struggles balancing her new life.



Mean Girls (2004)

Tina Fey's *Mean Girls* is an irrepressibly quotable cult classic. Lindsey Lohan plays the previously home-schooled Cady, who ends up infiltrating a notorious clique, only to be entangled in a plot to take down its infamous leader.

FILM

A gloriously unconventional work of sci-fi, writes
Alex Izza

'Marvel is pushing itself'

Doctor Strange
Dir. Scott Derrickson
Opened 26th October

★★★★★

Marvel is pushing itself. It could quite happily have kept churning out its conventional cannon of superheroes like Iron Man and Captain America. But who needs convention? After the roaring success of a film about a man who can shrink to the size of an ant, Marvel clearly decided that anything was possible. Logically, therefore, the next step was to cast aside the very fabric of reality and replace it with sorcerers using magic to tap into infinite dimensions.

"Mikkelsen is wasted as the villain in this film"

The film opens by introducing us to the life of the arrogant but successful neurosurgeon, Steven Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch). After a car accident destroys his professional career, he finds another path in the enclave of the Ancient One (Tilda Swinton) by connecting with his astral self. Strange delves into the complexities of the mystic arts, and mysteriously improve, credited to his "photographic memory". Thematically, *Doctor Strange* seemed unsure of its direction. Hubris runs throughout the film, with director Scott Derrickson beautifully drawing out the trope of a 'great' man's downfall and his ultimate redemption. Yet this is contrasted to a dizzying onslaught of magical terminology, as the viewer is introduced and then immediately expected to care about moments

▲ **Cumberbatch is a perfect fit to play the arrogant genius Doctor Strange** (Walt Disney Pictures)

▼ **Swinton's Ancient One teaches the mystic arts** (Walt Disney Pictures)

such as Kacellius (Mads Mikkelsen's) theft of pages from the Book of Cagliostro. As a result, certain pivotal later scenes in the film lose their emotive impact. The viewer struggles to process decades of fantasy lore, when they should be absorbed in the unfolding inter-dimensional drama.

Cumberbatch gives a strong performance as Steven Strange, delivering complexity to a role the viewer could easily disregard as another superhero in a cloak. He gives majesty to his clashes with the forces of the Dark Dimension. But he also makes an item named the Cloak of Levitation into a device for physical comedy, a gargantuan feat which adds welcome levity to the film's darker moments.

However, there is also a great crime: Mikkelsen is wasted as the villain in this film. His nihilistic hatred of the laws of the Universe is never really developed. As someone who re-watches *Casino Royale* regularly just to see his performance of Le Chiffre, it was soul-destroying to see Kacellius warped into little more than a plot inconvenience.

Doctor Strange is a gloriously unconventional work of sci-fi. The CGI set pieces are some of the greatest I have ever seen. Every Marvel film to date has relied on sprawling special effects, but here they have a purpose. The screen frequently explodes with a dazzling spectacle of colour, whether in the aptly named "Dark Dimension", or shattering reality to enter the (again, innovatively named) "Mirror Dimension". The visuals engross the viewer in this mystical vision of our world and give the action a pulsating and totally unpredictable quality; typified by the fight scene across the skies of New York which challenges every conventional idea of an action sequence.

It is difficult to capture such kaleidoscopic imagery and an avalanche of fantasy. Director Scott Derrickson has created something that is now the benchmark for the effective use of CGI. As a fully formed film, *Doctor Strange* is a mixed bag. A strong leading performance from Cumberbatch is lost as we are thrust headlong into a chaotic world of underdeveloped characters and disparate plot lines. These inter-dimensional set pieces will have a future in Marvel films only when they remember the value of retaining the viewer's attention. It is a rare film review that ends by defending CGI. Strange times indeed ●



★★★★★ = AMAZING
 ★★★★★☆ = GREAT
 ★★★★★ = GOOD

★★★☆☆ = OK
 ★☆☆☆☆ = BAD
 ☆☆☆☆☆ = ABYSMAL

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Upcoming releases: Cambridge Film Festival

FILM

It's Only the End of the World

Dir. Xavier Dolan
 Opens 14th April 2017
 ★★★★★

Xavier Dolan's latest film *It's Only the End of the World* is an intense, suffocating representation of the strained relationships within a family. The film won the Grand Prix at Cannes, the festival's second most prestigious prize; however, it has divided critics and audiences alike.

It tells the story of Louis-Jean, a well-known French dramatist who returns to his hometown after an absence of 12 years. We discover early in the film that he's gay, ter-

minally ill and has returned to announce his impending death to his family.

The experience of watching the film is uncomfortable and claustrophobic, a reflection of the strained relationships which weave together the fabric of Louis-Jean's family. The use of close-up shots limits the camera view such that the spectator feels that they are in the same room as the actors on screen. The cinematography is slick and cool but the scenes feel a bit disjointed and awkward.

Dolan's film is worth watching for the sheer intensity of the performances. It's nicely filmed and well-acted, but ultimately unsatisfying. Too many questions are left unanswered, and the film may be just a bit too stylised for its own good. The glossy aesthetic comes at the expense of a gripping plot or storyline



James Swaden



◀ Gaspard Ulliel's Louis-Jean struggles to tell his family about his illness (*Sons of Manual*)



Read the full versions of both reviews online at:
varsity.co.uk/reviews

FILM

Snowden

Dir. Oliver Stone
 Opens 2nd December 2016
 ★★★★★

A thrilling biopic following the events preceding and following Edward Snowden's decision to leak classified NSA files to the public in 2013, with Joseph Gordon-Levitt in the leading role. Gordon-Levitt does a fantastic job in character study, playing Snowden's mannerisms so accurately that when the man himself makes a cameo at the end of the film one can scarcely notice a difference. He is certainly the stand-out performer of the film, as he skillfully documents Snowden's cumulative guilt, horror, and

anxieties about the very operations he works on.

One of the few problems with the film was where it tended to fall into hackneyed Hollywood clichés, perhaps inevitable in the dramatisation of a story that demands so much technical understanding and computer operation. In spite of this, the film kept a tense and exciting pace, cutting between scenes of 'present' Snowden, and 'past' Snowden, with tensions apparent on both sides. If Snowden's real-life leaks were not enough of a call to action, this film certainly provides a second push. It is a well-executed tale of sacrifice in the name of the right to know, and the right to call our governments out on their surveillance practices. The film has perhaps been released strategically (the US election), and is, at this time, essential viewing ● Sarah Wilson

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Sport

Classy CUWAFc continue their unbeaten march

Cambridge

3

Bedfordshire

0

Keir Baker and Alexis Crockett
Sports Editor and Sports
Correspondent

Cambridge University Women's Association Football Club (CUWAFc) continued their undefeated start to the season on Wednesday afternoon by putting in a dominant display over the University of Bedfordshire to secure their second consecutive 3-0 victory.

In a high-octane and extremely physical game, which saw a number of the Light Blues players forced off the field with a wide array of injuries, CUWAFc were forced to work hard to break the deadlock. Yet their quality and determination won through and they created plenty of chances, never looking like they would miss out on the three points. Indeed, within the opening moments, the Light Blues were threatening the home side's goal as Daisy Luff broke through the defence, but the Fitzwilliam striker was unable to capitalise. The early scare shocked Bedfordshire into the game, and the match became a more even affair, with both sides struggling for cohesion thanks to a hard and bouncy pitch.

Yet CUWAFc remained on the front foot, with Ceylon Hickman, Becca Hirst and skipper Gerda Bachrati unfortunate to see attempts from free kicks – won by Luff and Zoe Cohen, who took bruises in the process – in dangerous-looking positions agonisingly skim the woodwork on the wrong side of the net.

But the goal would just not quite come

for the Light Blues: Hirst was denied again moments later as an incorrect offside call foiled what would otherwise have been a beautifully taken solo goal. With the half-time interval closing in, it looked like CUWAFc would go into the break without having capitalised on their pressure. Luff, though, had other ideas: pouncing on the poor touch of a Bedfordshire defender, some fine skill and a sharp turn of pace saw her drive through the centre of the pitch and round the goalkeeper to break the deadlock.

Goals, like all good things, often come in pairs. And so it was to be for the Light Blues: not even a full minute later, winger Liz Ashcroft was fed by the excellent Luff and drilled in one of her patented arcing shots from outside the area which

2

**The number of
3-0 victories
that CUWAFc
have recorded in
a row**

arrowed past the goalkeeper to take the scoreboard to 2-0 at the interval.

Stunned by conceding two goals in quick succession just before the whistle, the home side rallied and forced CUWAFc goalkeeper Zoe Woodward, in just her third appearance between the sticks, into two terrific saves within the opening moments. But CUWAFc were soon to get the measure of a reinvigorated and increasingly physical Bedfordshire side and began to contain their opponents. Regaining control of the match, they continued to keep the home side under relentless pressure in the centre of the field.

And their dominance was soon rewarded, as Katy Edwards turned on the afterburners to latch onto the end of a hopeful-looking long ball down the right channel and whip in a dangerous cross into the Bedfordshire box onto the

head of the lurking Luff, who dispatched the ball into the net with aplomb.

With the result settled at 3-0, the away side relaxed and began to enjoy some possession football to try and protect their well-earned clean sheet. Yet their threat always lingered: long-range efforts from Hirst tested the Bedfordshire keeper and substitute Henny Horsler, fresh from having scored her debut CUWAFc goal last week, was unfortunate not to add to her tally.

As the final whistle blew, the Light Blues' celebrations were jubilant. Yet another comfortable victory was confirmed for the away side, taking them to the top of the Midlands 2B League table with a 100 per cent record. Indeed, speaking to *Varsity*, CUWAFc's skipper Gerda Bachrati expressed her delight at her team's form.

"It was a challenging game today for the Light Blues, but with some confidence-boosting goals late in the first half, we managed to ultimately show our dominance and style of play and keep up our winning streak."

CUWAFc: Woodward, Malley, Gradin, Brown, Bachrati (c), Edwards, Hickman, Cohen, Ashcroft, Hirst, Luff, Substitutes: Conlon, Horsler, Geiger



▲ Nothing could stop CUWAFc from extending their winning run (GERDA BACHRATI)

So, has cycling cleaned up its act?

► Continued from back page

began testing riders during races. Slow to begin with, drugs testing became increasingly rigorous, culminating in the breakthrough year of 1977, when five-time Tour winner Eddy Merckx tested positive for Pemoline during La Flèche Wallonne. Amazingly, however, he was let off with just a one-month suspension and a pittance of a fine to his name.

And even when technology enabled the UCI to see who was cheating, their 'punishments' did little to change the status quo in the drugs department. Indeed, the 1990s saw doping experience a second wind with virtually untraceable EPO injections: Bjarne Riis was victorious in the 1996 Tour de France and remained highly respected until a 2007 book written by his former *soigneur* revealed his diet of EPO and cortisone.

However, Lance Armstrong's fall seems to have paved the way for a clean future, where talent and training surpass the syringe. The disgraced American enjoyed unhealthy power relations with members of cycling's governing bodies and fostered a toxic culture with those who stood against him suddenly rejected at the roadside. Tyler Hamilton and Floyd Landis, two former team-mates, both claim he boasted about taking EPO during the 2001 Tour de Suisse, crowing that the matter would be "taken care of" by his allies in the UCI.

In a gesture as disturbing as it is ironic, Armstrong once 'donated' \$125,000 to fund drugs-testing equipment. For Landis, this cosy relationship removed all legitimacy from cycling as well as any reason to believe that "the people run-



◀ Jan Ullrich, winner of the 1997 Tour, confessed to doping in 2013 (RENE SCHWIETZKE)

ning the sport really want to fix it".

Yet by exposing this code of *omertà* for all to see, Armstrong's fall led to a spate of confessions that has wiped the slate clean for professional cycling. No sooner had the US Anti-Doping Agency banned Armstrong for life and stripped him of his seven Tour wins, did 15 other high-profile cyclists confess to similar transgressions, including Jan Ullrich, winner of the 1997 Tour and 1999 Vuelta de España.

Once the secret left the peloton, the transformation was rapid: in the following Tour, won by Bradley Wiggins, not a single test returned positive. Notably, today's races are markedly slower: according to Ross Tucker, sports scientist at the University of Cape Town, the power-to-weight ratio of today's leading riders is around 10 per cent lower than in the EPO era.

In the post-Armstrong era, professional teams have begun to take a more transparent approach towards their preparations. Following the inevitable accusations of doping that Chris Froome had to endure throughout the 2013 Tour,

Team Sky sent all their relevant data to the World Anti-Doping Agency, and now, finally, cycling's authorities seem to have stepped up to the challenge. As part of the new Anti-Doping Administration & Management System, riders are now obliged to register their whereabouts every day of the year, and must notify the UCI immediately if they change their plans. In addition, each rider is issued a 'biological passport', where the results from regular blood and urine samples are collated and analysed for abnormal variation. Not only is doping no longer *de rigueur*, but it is getting much harder to outwit the authorities.

Of course, we still hear of riders' cheating, but cases are thankfully more comical than customary – think of Nibali holding onto a team car in the 2015 *Vuelta de España*. It seems that in the 'new look' professional cycling, cheating is no longer systematic. This sets it apart from several other sports in the modern era, in which a hollow victory seems more valuable than honest competition with fellow professionals. Somehow, the era of doping may finally be over.

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CURUFCW give outplayed Oxford an ominous sign

Cambridge	22
Oxford	0

Jess Lister
Sports Correspondent

Cambridge University Rugby Union Football Club's Women (CURUFCW) upped their game on Wednesday afternoon, putting heavy recent defeats behind them to record their first BUCS Premier South home win: 22-0 against their Oxford rivals at Grange Road.

Having been dubbed the 'Varsity Match warm-up' before kick-off, the highly-anticipated match was characterised by exciting tactical battles across the pitch. But it was the solid and clinical Light Blues who won through, reinforcing the belief that they go into December's Twickenham showdown as favourites to retain their Varsity crown.

Initially, with neither side wanting to give much away, the game was a cagey affair. Tactical switches – usual CURUFCW scrum-half Molly Byrne joining the pack and Jess Charlton shifting from number eight to inside centre – were taking their time to bed in.

Nonetheless, it was the Light Blues who began on the front foot: a knock-on from Oxford's hooker, Pat Metcalfe-Jones, gave the home side a chance to make an early mark on the scrum. But as the opening passages of play developed, the Dark Blues fought back to gain early possession and territory: a superb, jinking run from Elmarie Van Heerden resulted in an Oxford scrum just 15 metres from the CURUFCW line.

But the Light Blues were able to resist these early threats from the away side, imposing themselves notably on the line-out, despite Oxford's height advantage. Kate Marks' effective use of the ball in the centre of the park and drives from Laura Nunez-Mulder and Livvy Probert allowed the Light Blues to make up the metres and put the away side's defence under pressure.

Yet the match remained in the balance. Passion soon turned into well-controlled aggression, exemplified when CURUFCW's Sophie Farrant stopped a threatening break from her opposite number Gemma Robson with a crunching tackle on halfway. Indeed, the home side looked strong in defence and impervious to the quick interplay between Oxford centres Millie Rose and Affi Bunting. When the Dark Blues began knocking on the door via a five-metre scrum, a superb scramble defence from the home side kept them at bay.

CURUFCW's resistance was duly rewarded midway through the opening period. Charlton, whose switch to the backs had been an inspired decision that allowed her to plough through the Oxonians' defence on numerous occasions, received a superb off-load from Marks. She fed the Light Blues' skipper Alice Middleton, who used her pace to break through the Dark Blue defence.

While a superb recovery tackle from Sophie Trott denied the Varsity hat-trick hero the opening score, CURUFCW were not to be denied: quick hands down the

line after the ball was recycled quickly gave winger Lara Gibson space to hand off her defender and touch down for the opening try, which went unconverted.

Buoyed by going 5-0 up, the Light Blues pushed forwards straight from the kick, with debutant Emily Pratt making good ground. Oxford found themselves continually frustrated in the ruck by flanker Molly Byrne.

Indeed, the Light Blue forwards continued to dominate, hitting big in defence and relentlessly making up the metres in attack with the scrum, CURUFCW's main avenue of threat.

As the first half drew to a close, it was a case of two key mistakes as the scoreboard was put back in business. Charlton's premature counter-ruck gifted possession to the Dark Blues and Van Heerden came agonisingly close to capitalising – but for a forward pass, the South African might have drawn the side level.

It was a mistake the Light Blues punished almost immediately, as Pratt skipped through the away side's defence before passing to CURUFCW's Laura Suggitt who popped it under the posts. A second missed conversion left the score 10-0 at half time.

Oxford came back out for the second half determined to find a foothold in the game, but the opening few minutes were scrappy as a series of penalties and handling errors saw the ball switch sides again and again.

Stamping their authority on the game, the Dark Blues nearly pulled a score back, but for the sensational tackling work of Marks, preventing substitute Oxonian Anna Gibson from scoring after fine work in the breakdown from substitute Princess Ashilokun.

Yet five minutes in, CURUFCW found their feet to score the try of the game: Middleton seized on the loose ball and when it found the hands of Gibson, she turned on the afterburners to run 40 yards down the left-wing and score under the posts. A conversion from Middleton took the score to 17-0.

The Dark Blues were unrelenting in their pursuit of parity, but in their desperation to score, they left gaps in their defence. And at the 60th minute mark, Middleton took advantage, grabbing a try to take the score to 22-0.

As the clock ticked towards 80 minutes, there was drama: shortly after substitute Fiona Shuttleworth presented Middleton with a golden chance to score, which she spurned, a dangerous-looking high tackle from Chloe Withers on Ashilokun saw the referee produce a warranted yellow card.

Under pressure and down to 14 players, CURUFCW toiled away to prevent the determined Dark Blues from grabbing a consolation score. Both teams were putting their bodies on the line, exemplified in the 75th minute as Lydie Thorn pulled away from contact with a bloody nose. Just moments later, the referee drew the game to a premature halt to wave on treatment for a suspected broken leg (confirmed later as a dislocated ankle) for Oxford flanker Anna Gibson.

That the fierce passion with which the teams played had resulted in such injuries was indicative of the importance of the match for both sides, a fact noted by CURUFCW captain Middleton as she

spoke to Varsity after the match.

"Varsity clashes are always special occasions, and the CURUFCW approached the fixture with fantastic intensity and passion. There have been key aspects of the game that we've been working on in the last weeks and we were really pleased to see that come to fruition on the pitch today," she said.

"I'm dead chuffed that we've got this result under our belt for the BUCS league, and am of course excited that we now have this as a platform to work from ahead of the Twickenham clash in December. We have a tough four weeks of training ahead of us and are looking to continue working on some new combinations we had out on the pitch today. All in all, a good day in the office!"

CURUFCW: Middleton (c), Lara Gibson, Suggitt, Charlton, Farrant, Marks, Thorn, Sanchez-Schilling, Pierce, Nunez-Mulder, Probert, Pratt, Byrne, Withers, Elgar
Substitutes: Pittmann, Johannsen, Burgess, Shuttleworth, Bramley, Brickel, Evans, Monks

Oxford: Trott, Harrap, Bunting, Rose, Robson, Wilcock (c), Bliss, Smith, Metcalfe-Jones, Peker, Taylor, Van Heerden, Robinson, Anna Gibson, Behan
Substitutes: Matté-Gregory, McCay, Cartwright, Duffy, Ashilokun, Rees



▲ A superb hand-off saw Lara Gibson score her first try

(MATTHEW IMPEY)



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“I am excited we now have a platform to work from ahead of December”

Sport



Jess Lister
CURUFCW
triumph over
Oxford
Page 35



▲ The Light Blues fought hard against their talented and well-drilled Oxford opponents

(DANNY WITTENBERG)

CUWVC net historic set victory against the Other Place

Cambridge

1

Oxford

3

Danny Wittenberg
 Sports Correspondent

Cambridge University Women's Volleyball Club (CUWVC) clinched only their second set against Oxford in two-and-a-half years on Wednesday evening, during a hard-hitting, jaw-splitting encounter that saw the Light Blues fall to a spirited 3-1 loss.

Despite eventually losing, there were times where the rapidly-evolving Light Blues squad was bursting with acrobatic blocks and penetrating spikes to reveal glimpses of volleyball at its electrifying best. And while their 27-25 second set victory left little bearing on the result, it was far from trivial as the home side demonstrated the extent of their rapid progress.

Indeed, for a CUWVC side verging on a majority of new players, facing virtual volleyball virtuosos who finished first

in the BUCS Premier South division last season, and whom the Light Blues have not beaten since 2013, the performance will count as an undoubted success.

"It was a very good match, especially when we turned around the second set. This shows how much potential we have as a team when we believe in ourselves and refuse to give up," Maya Wright, the Light Blues' captain, said afterwards.

"We still have a few technical things to work on, like defending middle attacks and blocking, but we already saw improvement in our major issue which was serve-serve," she added. "We have a talented bunch of girls and I am confident that we will be successful this season."

The outstanding set turned upon a gutsy service spell by Heather Rigby, more than justifying her promotion from the second team this season. Resolute rearguard action and varied attacks helped CUWVC defend three set points at 24-21 down to level the score.

Few meetings between these Varsity rivals, whatever the event, could compete with the intensity that followed in sudden death. Neither side displayed obvious weakness in a series of gruelling rallies under maximum pressure. Every punch and block over the net appeared

to carry the force of a physical blow, before the Light Blues lodestar Alizée Pace provided the knockout attack.

"There were moments when we all played in complete harmony, which is impressive for a squad with so little time to get to know each other," Pace, a Natural Sciences fresher playing her third game, enthused.

The Light Blues consolidated their dominance for much of the third set, streaking away to a 19-13 advantage. The hosts lost concentration, however, at the crucial stage and allowed Oxford to fulfil their table-topping potential. Their opponents set up and prevailed in another close finish from 21-21, playing with an almost arrogant degree of energy and pulverising the ball on every spike.

"We can be proud of the way we fought for every single ball and there were moments when we played really well," said Weronika Wrzos-Kaminska, who showed her Norwegian elite league prowess with several point-blank blocks.

"I was disappointed by our mental attitude because it felt as though we gave up towards the end," she admitted. "Overall we did a good job."

Although CUWVC continued to score regularly, the match slipped away as

morale plummeted in the fourth, and ultimately final, set. Oxford, meanwhile, protected every ball as if it were porcelain and deserved to leave with their third successive league victory.

Nevertheless, the fixture gave valuable experience to a number of Light Blue debutants, including Anna Suchánková: "Everyone on the team supported each other well but we need to keep up our concentration and take a responsibility for the ball when others make mistakes," she concluded.

"We are still getting used to play with each other, since there are a lot of new faces on the team, including myself, and we will only get better over the course of the season. We are going to smash them next time."

The Light Blues will have an opportunity to exact revenge on the Dark Blues when Oxford return to the University Sports Centre for the Varsity match in February.

And in light of their fast-improving performances, it is not illogical to suggest that they have every chance of claiming victory.

CUWVC: Gibson, Wright (c), Wrzos-Kaminska, Pace, Suchánková, Neun, Rigby, Bellamy, Smyrilli, Baldrighi, Fallow, Bird

Tom Higgins Toon
How cycling
managed to put
the brakes on
doping

Professional cycling, with its colourful history of blood doping and internal corruption, has faced an uphill battle in recent years to demonstrate its worth to the neutral sports fan. However, the spate of confessions and subsequent openness about doping that followed Lance Armstrong's dramatic disclosure on live TV suggests that cycling, as an elite sport, may have a chance for redemption.

In recent years, cheating has become increasingly sophisticated, as riders turn to blood transfusions and epoetin (EPO) injections to artificially increase oxygen levels in the bloodstream. In a farcical period of 14 years from 1996 to 2010, 70 per cent of those finishing on the Tour de France podium were penalised for doping. Yet cheating is not a recent phenomenon: the winner of the 1904



Lance Armstrong (SEBASTIAN TINGKÆR)

Tour, Maurice Garin, was retroactively disqualified for taking a train, and it was not uncommon to see riders sneaking a bottle of wine into their packs to numb the pain of the arduous 450km stages.

Even if rules were not specifically broken – and they often were – fair play often played second fiddle to cunning chicanery. Diminutive in stature, the 1947 Tour winner Jean Robic would pick up water bottles ballasted with lead to make up lost time descending hills. Greatly embarrassed, the organisers passed rules stating only liquids could fill bottles. His solution? Fill them with mercury instead. Such chutzpah may have amused the crowds and outraged the authorities, but behind the scenes, riders were gambling with their lives. Roger Rivière fell into a ravine, allegedly too drugged to pull on the brakes, and tragically in 1967, Tom Simpson collapsed on the slopes of Mount Ventoux, with three vials of amphetamines in his back pocket and a combination of wine and whisky in his bloodstream.

Clearly, cycling's governing body, UCI, could no longer let matters slide and

Continued on page 34 ►