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# VARSITY



## Where do we go from here?

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**I**n the early hours of Wednesday morning, the United States elected a racist, bigoted, misogynistic climate change denier to its highest office. Running on a platform of ignorance, lies and prejudice, Trump's victory represents the triumph of an abusive, mean-spirited politics. It's a hard reality to stomach. His unstoppable egomania and bullying disposition stand in direct contention with the human values we develop and nurture during our time here at university: hope, compassion and empathy. The result reinforced what people have felt since the general election of 2015 – a realisation gut-wrenchingly repeated by the Brexit vote in June – that newspapers, television stations and social networks aren't just poor indicators of how a vote will go, they are often actively and acutely wrong. As *The New York Times*' outcome predictor – no doubt carefully balanced for a tight race – swung ludicrously from an 80 per cent chance of a Clinton victory to a terrifying 95 per cent for Trump in a matter of minutes, the unthinkable materialised into reality. From January, the most powerful man in the world will be a shameless man, whose stained business career and vile rhetoric bring shame upon a country which has always defined itself so much in terms of its progressive values. ➡

# EDITORIAL

(continued from front page)

Our concern should equally be targeted closer to home. Nationalism is on the rise in Europe, as shown by the success of right-wing parties such as the AfD in Germany. Though it has removed their *raison d'être*, the political climate following Brexit has legitimised the worst facets of Britain's right wing, who now pursue their own political agenda without a mandate. It is hard to remain positive after a series of political defeats that seem to go directly against the wishes of younger people. That our generation should be forced to live with the consequences of Brexit – the loss of our European citizenship – seems cruelly unfair. For all the distrust of political institutions, voter turnout among younger people is disappointingly low. The most optimistic estimates suggest that just 64 per cent of 18–24-year-olds voted in the EU referendum, outnumbered by the 90 per cent of those aged 65 and over. Belligerent Facebook statuses are not a reasonable substitute for turning up at the ballot box.

Perhaps the single most defining characteristic of 'millennials', or whatever label you choose, is an instinct for deferral. Presented with conflict, we choose avoidance; with hatred, we default to humour. Where our parents' generations marched and protested, we are all too happy to sit and tag each other on memes, and declare that the challenges which face us are insurmountable. Our generation was promised that we were born after the 'end of history'. We were told that the great battles for fairness, equality and justice had already been fought, that ours was to simply carry the torch forward to an ever-more egalitarian society. Instead, we have been thrown once again into times of darkness.

Facing fascism, irrationality and hatred, we must resist. Our generation cannot afford to be apathetic, and if we want to maintain the values which so much blood was spilled defending over the course of the last century, we must be prepared to fight. Young people must never resign themselves to hopelessness. To do so undermines the central tenet of progressive, optimistic values – that each generation should live in a world better than the one before. We need to be prepared to challenge those who would denigrate and disempower us, to challenge perceived authority and always push to make sure our voices are heard. Since World War Two, political progression in the West has always been driven by the young. That mantle now falls upon us, and we must not cast it off in our apathy and frustration. Refuse to be patronised, never bow to those who would see our views sidelined, and always maintain a belief that we can still shape the world to be a better place. Refuse to be another lost generation. There is no time to waste.

Cover illustration by Matthew Seccombe

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## Interview

# Mark Regev 'The Israeli press is one of the most free on the planet'

● **Anna Jennings and Patrick Wernham**  
*push the Israeli ambassador Mark Regev on press freedom in an exclusive interview*

**Anna Jennings and Patrick Wernham**  
 Interviews Editors

"I'll answer any question about Israel government policy and explain why we do something: that's my job," the Israeli Ambassador claimed as we sat down together for an interview during his second visit to Cambridge in a fortnight. This seems a pretty standard job description for the Ambassador to the United Kingdom, but for Mark Regev, whose ties with Netanyahu's government include his stint as Chief Spokesman for the Prime Minister of Israel from 2007 to 2015, the line between diplomacy and politics is perhaps more blurred.

Netanyahu's right-wing government has fallen under sharp criticism in recent years, both internally and on an international-scale, but public debate has often struggled to distinguish between criticism of the government and that of Israel's right to exist as a country. When we asked if it's possible to be anti-Netanyahu without being anti-Israel or anti-Semitic, Regev had no doubts.

"Of course. If you want to argue about Israeli government policy ... then fine. That's not anti-Semitism." He elaborated: "anti-Semitism is if you go beyond that, if you demonise the Jewish state, if you say that the Jewish state has no right to exist". He repeatedly stressed that Israel is a country like any other, and should be treated as such. "Many people in this country will criticise the policies of the French government, or the Russian government, or the American government: no one denies the right of those countries to exist".

Regev was also keen to emphasise the

centrality of debate to Israeli politics. "You have 120 members in our Knesset [Israel's parliament]. We have very fierce and fiery debates about Israeli policy: what is right, what is wrong."

However, Regev's opinions are not shared by all. The World Press Freedom Index has reported a drastic fall in the freedom of the Israeli press since Netanyahu assumed office in 2009, from being ranked 46 out of 167 in 2008 to 101 out of 179 in 2015. When we asked him to explain this shift, Regev's responded simply: "I don't know their methodology".

Some critics such as the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* have accused Netanyahu's government of a slide towards authoritarianism in its treatment of the media. The Prime Minister himself is Communications Minister for the country, and has been condemned for his close links to the Editor-in-Chief of the Israel *Hayom* newspaper, which have not been made fully transparent. When we spoke to Regev about these details, he refuted the suggestion of anything problematic. "I don't accept that at all. I think if you look at the Israeli press, it's one of the most free on the planet." Once again, he drew a parallel with other countries.

"We have an aggressive press, very similar to the British press; you just have to listen to the radio in Israel, watch the television, read the newspapers, and you'll see there's a whole cacophony of criticism of the government, and that is part of our democracy.

"Anyone who tells me the press in Israel is not free, I don't think they know what they're talking about."

Netanyahu's government has also come into conflict with domestic NGOs.

“We have an aggressive press, very similar to the British press”





# Interview



It has recently moved to change the National Service Law, meaning that young Israelis will no longer be able to volunteer with B'Tselem, a NGO which has been critical of governmental policy regarding the building of Israeli settlements. We were curious as to how this squares with an Israel that is supposedly open to debate and ruled by a non-authoritarian government.

Regev responded assertively. "Israel's NGO culture, I would argue, is more vibrant, and richer, [and] second to none on the planet. And I think anyone who objectively looks at the strength of the Israeli NGO community can see that."

He explained that the issue lies in resistance to the newly introduced transparency law, not Netanyahu's response to criticism.

He defined this law as meaning that "if you're an NGO, which means non-governmental organisation, and you're getting funds from a foreign government (more than 50 per cent of your funds), you have to be transparent and declare that".

However, critics have alleged that this law is unnecessary, and that it is an unfair way of targeting the NGOs most critical of the government, such as Peace Now and Breaking the Silence. Regev, on the contrary, feels it is an essential step in securing the country's internal democracy.

"I don't think that's an anti-democratic move, I think that's a democratic move. I would ask you as British citizens – you had a very vibrant debate about membership of the EU, and you had two campaigns. If it was discovered that a foreign government was funding one of those campaigns, would the British voter

have a right to know that? ... I would argue that's transparency and the voter has the right to know."

As Ambassador, Regev has spoken out publicly recently against the rise of a new form of anti-Semitism in British left-wing spheres.

He elaborated on this in our discussion: "I think that's one thing people have to understand: that anti-Semitism is a disease that infects, can infect, all strata of society".

But 20th-century history and a label of being progressive can make the Left feel that this is not an issue they face. "I think it's an important thing that people can't be in denial. People can't say because I'm on the left side of politics, or because I'm educated, 'it can't be about me.' It can!"

"It's very convenient for some people to say, oh you know, anti-Semitism:

that's the uneducated skinhead. We know that intellectual capability and education have not made people immune to anti-Semitism."

He looked to literature to support his comments. "Look at someone like Voltaire, or Dostoevsky, people who no one doubts their intellectual prowess [sic], but if you look at what they actually wrote about Jews, it was anti-Semitic in the extreme."

Mark Regev later expanded on this theme when speaking at the inaugural talk of the Cambridge Middle East and North Africa Forum. In conversation with Dr Glen Rangwala, Regev was perhaps more circumspect about the problems Israel faces, although he remained keen to assert that Israel is not to be singled out. "Israel has faults; the only country in the world that doesn't have faults is North Korea".

▲ ▼ Mark Regev spoke in conversation with POLIS lecturer Dr Glen Rangwala (PHOTOGRAPHS: CALLUM HALE-THOMSON)



## CLASS WAR

### CUSU grapples with Class Lists vote fallout

Following a student referendum which went against CUSU policy, and a motion forcing the students' union campaign for an opt-out system, **Aoife Hogan** and **Sophie Penney** speak to members of Regent House about their voting intentions. **Sam Willis** breaks down what the constitutional possibilities are like for amending the University's abolition grace, while **Caitlin Smith** and **Angus Parker** look at the situation in Oxford and other universities around the country. **Louis Ashworth** reflects on what the referendum result means for CUSU Council.

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## MEDIA MYTHS

### The press's part in cancer cure falsehoods

Exaggeration, hysteria and unhelpful behaviour – **Shudong Li** examines the hyperbole surrounding media portrayals of scientific breakthroughs, and asks why the media, and scientists, are often so hasty to jump on any research advances without properly consulting the facts.

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## LOST SOLIDARITY

### White women in the US must now protect women of colour

With statistics suggesting more than half the white women in the United States voted for President-elect Donald Trump, it appears that his comments about groping and attitudes to towards women had little effect on a key demographic. **Richelle George** lambasts the absence of solidarity, and calls upon white women to do their bit to protect people who suffer oppression due to their race and gender both in Cambridge and in America.

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## FULL EXPOSURE

### Charlie Amesbury prepares for Varsity battle

With CURUFC still yet to take a win against Oxford this decade, **Paul Hyland** speaks to star full back Charlie Amesbury about professional rugby on and off the pitch, tackling a Cambridge education, and handling comparisons with Welsh national player Jamie Roberts.

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## News Class Lists

# Class List campaigners prepare for Regent House ‘battleground’

● *Autonomous campaigns vow to continue fight against publication as CUSU is forced to make policy U-turn*

Aoife Hogan and Sophie Penney

The fate of Class Lists will be decided once and for all with a vote by Regent House next month.

From 28th November to 8th December, members of Regent House, which is comprised of academic and senior administrative staff of the University and colleges, will vote on whether they accept the report of the University Council, which advocates that Class Lists should no longer be publically displayed.

Last week's student referendum forced CUSU to change its stance and support the retention of Class Lists but with an easier opt-out policy. Yes exceeded the required threshold of 10 per cent of eligible voters, earning 55.23 per cent of the total of 4,758 votes cast. The result mandates a significant change from CUSU's pre-referendum position: in November 2015 CUSU Council members voted 20 to zero in support of the abolition of publically displayed Class Lists.

The outcome of the referendum takes precedence over any previous CUSU policy, and can only be overturned by another student referendum.

CUSU have also drafted a fly-sheet after a Council vote to uphold a motion submitted by Save The Class List, which pushed CUSU to actively inform Regent House of student desire for an easier opt-out system. The document will be circulated to members of Regent House before their vote; however, it remains unclear as to whether CUSU's revised position will have an effect on Regent House members.

Nick Downer, Bursar of Selwyn College told *Varsity*: “We do need to make sure that any proposal doesn't deny colleges access to the data that is needed to monitor, maintain and improve the standard of teaching.” However, he stated: “I would not oppose the ending of the public display of Class Lists.”

Dr Kylie Richardson, University Lecturer in the Department of Slavonic Studies, considers the opinion of the student body an influential factor: “In general as with all educational matters at Cambridge, I would want to see a setup that the student body as a whole generally felt was in their best interests.” She added: “I wouldn't want to play a role in enforcing anything due to historical/traditional reasons that our students didn't feel served their best interests.”

Last week Jack Drury, a spokesperson for Save the Class List and the Yes vote, told *Varsity* that the result was “a victory for students' rights to choose what happens with their grades.”

“We applaud the No campaign for their commitment to welfare”, he said, “but ultimately it is clear students don't want to be spoken for. CUSU must accept the result of this referendum and change the nature of their representations to the University accordingly.”

Nicholas Taylor of Save the Class List also commented that “the vote in Regent House is now the key battleground” for enacting a simplified opt-out system.

However, the concerns of the 44.26 per cent of students who voted to maintain CUSU's original stance on Class Lists have not been silenced by last week's Yes vote.

Leaders of the No campaign told *Varsity* they will “continue to campaign and represent the views of those who recognise that Class Lists, in any shape or form, are an actively hurtful and archaic tradition. We must now turn our attention to the vote at Regent House which begins at the end of November, and see how the University chooses to respond!”

CUSU's Disabled Students' Campaign (DSC) held an emergency meeting on Tuesday to discuss the campaign's response to the referendum, and to formulate an “action plan” in order to be as “vocal and effective as possible in pushing for the correct outcome.”

In a ballot held at the open meeting, the DSC voted in favour of campaigning for the abolition of Class Lists. The meeting drew special attention to the disproportionate effect of the issue on some campus groups, leading those present to question whether a referendum was the most suitable method of seeking change on the matter. The issues discussed were largely in line with the concerns of the wide majority of No voters in the student referendum, giving rise to some tension with three members of the Yes campaign who were present.

However, it was ultimately resolved for the Disabled Students' Officer, Jessica Wing, to draft a fly-sheet, detailing their reasons for supporting abolition.

Wing told *Varsity*: “While it is now central CUSU's position to campaign to keep class lists with an easier opt-out, it does not mean the entire student



body feel this way. It's not unexpected that an issue disproportionately affecting minorities would not get the support of a majority,” she added.

As autonomous campaigns, the DSC, Women's Campaign (WomCam), BME Campaign, and LGBT+ Campaign are not bound by CUSU referenda and all four have voted to campaign for abolition. Wing and Audrey Sebatindira, as the respective heads of the DSC and WomCam, are also exempt from the mandate to sign CUSU's fly-sheet, despite being sabbatical officers.

The DSC's fly-sheet is currently open to signatures from student members of University Council, JCRs and MCRs from across the University, requiring 10 signatories to gain validity. At this moment in time, *Varsity* can confirm support from CUSU's Women's Officer and the JCR President of Girton College.

“CUSU must accept the result of this referendum”

◀ CUSU President Amatey Doku must campaign for the continued publication of Class Lists (QUIY-ING GIULIA LAI)

## CUSU Council is still out of touch

Louis Ashworth Editor

One year ago this week, as a bright-eyed first-year fresh from my second CUSU Council experience, I wrote an article: ‘CUSU: A heart in search of a body and a brain’.

Retrospectively, I was a bit of a prick in it, a view shared by then-president



▲ University Centre (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

Priscilla Mensah (I later learnt). To an extent, she had a point. Already working with a single-minded determination and backing some tough arguments, being slagged off by an upstart hack who'd been at Cambridge for less than two months probably didn't go a long way to endear her.

Many criticisms, however, still stand. Any keen fresher (or aspiring student politico) who heads down to the University Centre – CUSU Council's newer, colder venue – is bound to leave a little underwhelmed. Progress through motions is turgid, and discussion is still hampered by a strange paradox: when someone is actually making an interesting point, time limits are enforced, but when someone is taking forever to say something,

they tend to be given it.

Most of the (small) body of attending JCR and MCR reps remain passive, and speeches are reserved for a select few who shape the debates. Pinning down the source of this problem is complex. It is impossible to make any thorough attempt at figuring out how Council members decide how to vote.

In a perfect world, when the Council agenda arrives, the presidents and externals should consult their colleges about how they should vote on certain issues, or at the very least casually liaise with their own committees.

It's not a great stretch to say that this happens extremely rarely, if ever at all. Most embrace the joys of a representational system, and vote based entirely

upon what they personally think – which isn't such a problem most of the time.

Last week's referendum showed the flaw in that approach – a popular vote of the student body rejected the unanimous judgement of councillors. Amatey Doku may dismiss this as reflective of a changing Council, but I find it impossible to believe that the same thing wouldn't have happened with this group as it did with last year's. Then, the presidents and externals meekly capitulated to a policy, proposed by sabbatical officers, which demonstrably lacked student support.

Poor policy reflects badly on both CUSU, and the college unions. In the future, councillors must make more effort to be properly representative of their constituents.





Senate House, where Class Lists are posted (left); 'Save The Class List' campaigners Rajiv Shah and Nicholas Taylor (right); and fellow 'Yes' campaigner Jack Drury (below) (All photos: Louis Ashworth)



# 'Good cause' clause offers route for introducing an opt-out

**Sam Willis**  
News Correspondent

Cambridge students have been dealing with the constitutional fallout of not one but two referenda.

The 'Yes' result of the Class Lists referendum now means that CUSU must campaign for the retention of the Class List with an extended opt-out system. The final decision, however, will be taken by Regent House, which consists of all fellows, lecturers, and senior admin staff younger than 67.

Each member will have one vote, either for or against the submitted Grace – a change in University policy – to abolish Class Lists. Members are not obliged to acknowledge the opinion of CUSU or any other student body in the exercising of this vote. The vote will take place between 28th November and 8th December.

Contrary to what some have speculated, the deadline for amendments to this Grace has passed. The Grace will be voted on in its current form, providing a binary choice between abolition or retention of the Class List. The extended opt-out students were promised in the referendum will not be possible from this vote.

Four possible scenarios arise from this situation. In the first scenario, members

of Regent House ignore the CUSU referendum and decide to vote for the abolition of the Class List.

This is not an impossible outcome. The members are specifically voting on the recommendations of a report published in July, which recommended the abolition of the Class List. This report is unchanged, and much of the tension surrounding the vote arises from the fact that its gauge of student opinion, a prominent reason for abolition, now seems out of date.

The report states that "The central bodies [of the student organisations] remain of the view that the public display of class-lists is undesirable, unnecessary, and no longer benefits the interests of the collegiate University or the various parties within it."

In the second scenario, members decide to vote against the Grace and then move on from the matter. This scenario would not yield the extended opt-out system promised during the campaign. Any students who wish to opt out will have to follow the procedures currently in place.

The third and fourth scenarios retain the Class List with an extended opt-out. In the third, members vote against the Grace, but a new Grace proposing an extended opt-out system is soon after submitted. This outcome is certainly possible, though the time-frame in which it

might occur is difficult to determine.

The fourth scenario was proposed by the Yes campaign. The current University ordinance states that students can only opt out of the Class List if they can provide 'good cause' for doing so, which requires demonstrable medical evidence. The Yes campaign argued that the definition of 'good cause' should be broadened to include personal choice. This would require no new University legislation.



The future of Class Lists now lies with Regent House

As with Brexit, the possible scenarios are numerous. Unlike Brexit, however, the question of 'sovereignty' – of power – is clear. The final decision lies with Regent House and the University more broadly. The CUSU referendum only has power in so far as it undermines the basis of the original report. Regent House members might ultimately decide that there are good reasons for voting for abolition regardless.

Whatever the outcome, democracy will decide, though it will be the Regent House vote, in which students are not enfranchised, rather than the recent referendum, that will be decisive.

## A class of their own: how other unis handle results

Class Lists – also known as Pass Lists, enumerating those students who have passed their exams – were a feature of many of the UK's oldest universities for centuries. However, in recent years several institutions have abandoned the practice due to concerns over student welfare and privacy.

The University of Oxford discontinued its publication of Class Lists in 2009, abandoning the long-standing tradition which saw students assemble outside the Examination Schools to pick out their name and result from banks of sheets of paper.

The decision was taken after a trial period during which a more flexible opt-out procedure was introduced. Students had always been able to apply to have their name removed from the lists under the Data Protection Act, but were only successful if they were able to prove that featuring on the Lists caused them distress.

During the trial period, this requirement was dropped, leading to 40 per cent of students choosing to opt out.

In the University's consultation document about Class Lists, it was noted that "the additional load falling on Boards of Examiners, Faculties and Departments, the Colleges and the Central Registry [as a result of the high percentage of students opting out of the Lists] would require careful consideration".

Oxford eventually decided to abolish Class Lists completely, and students now receive their results online, where they are not available to members of the public or other students.

More recently, there have been dis-

cussions surrounding the wearing of academic dress at degree ceremonies, because of its potential to set apart students who have achieved Firsts from those who have not.

Similarly, the Education Committee of Durham University, with representation from the Student Union, elected in 2012 to stop publishing Pass Lists online.

In a statement, the University said that "the decision was prompted by feedback from students, who were unhappy about results being published online with unrestricted public access".

Unlike Class Lists, Pass Lists do not display each student's classification, instead generally only listing those students who have been permitted to continue to their next year of study or who have successfully completed their degree.

However, according to the University's website, "increasing numbers of students [had] been requesting that their names [were] omitted from the published lists". Students now access their results through a password-protected system.

At the University of Warwick, Pass Lists are displayed in the foyer of University House. For finalists, their degree classification is also displayed. The University has introduced an opt-out system, whereby any student can request to have their name removed from the list.

Despite the discrepancies in Class List policies between different universities, the University of Cambridge appears alone in offering students such a complex and demanding opt-out procedure.

Caitlin Smith and Angus Parker



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## Investigation Intermissions

# Graduate and international students let down by intermissions process

- Inaccurate advice given to sick students
- Foreign students fear deportation

Jack Higgins and Tom Richardson  
Intermissions Team

Graduate and international students face particular difficulties during the intermissions process, *Varsity* has learned, with one student describing it as an “overwhelmingly negative and stressful experience”. This follows last week’s investigation into the intermissions process, which highlighted the lack of support some students experience when intermitting, unenforceable rules, and unnecessarily stressful procedures.

Among the issues and experiences raised by the graduate and international students who contacted *Varsity* were delays in processing intermission applications, students being “messed about” by bureaucratic procedures involved in the process, pressure being placed on one sick student to repay scholarship funds, unsympathetic behaviour from senior college staff, and difficulties intermitting as a result of immigration laws.

One graduate student highlighted the difficulties raised for students who receive scholarships for their qualifications. Despite having been told by her college that the Student Registry (SR) would not ask for overpaid scholarship money back, the student told us that she was left in a “financial mess” when asked to repay over £5,000 within two months of intermitting. She claims that the College’s advice contradicted official intermissions guidance, which states that “[if] any funds have been paid to you in advance, you must refund [them] immediately.”

An international student told *Varsity* of the additional difficulties they faced in navigating immigration law. Despite having been diagnosed with depression, they were unable to intermit because rules concerning Tier 4 visas demand that, “if a student is not engaged in full-time study for a period of time”, their visa expires and they are typically asked to leave the UK. The student found the SR unresponsive during the process: having secured the permission of their supervisor, college tutor, and department for an extension to their thesis, they were informed without explanation, they told us, that the SR had denied it.

All students who spoke to *Varsity* emphasised the stress and fear that the process caused them, particularly with regards to their financial situation and uncertainty about their academic future. One expressed fear that they might not finish their PhD as a result of the additional pressure of the intermissions process, in the event of which they would be obliged to repay their entire scholarship. Another student, with autism, said that they had confined themselves to their room for fear of having their behaviour scrutinised and used against them.



▲ Magdalen, a PhD student from Emmanuel (LUCAS CHEBIB)

Rev. Jeremy Caddick, Dean of Emmanuel College, told *Varsity*: “as someone who is involved in the process, I am very conscious that it is really important that people are treated humanely. Some of the things that people experience as hostile, such as requiring extra medical appointments or setting exams before people return, are actually done to help.” He added: “Tutors don’t want to send people back into situations where the old problems recur.”

*Varsity* also spoke to Jessica Wing, the CUSU Disabled Students’ Officer, who said: “intermission has been a fo-

cus of the Disabled Students’ Campaign for years – back then it was known as ‘degrading’. Currently I am leading on looking into the conditions that colleges might set students to return to study. My concern has always been that the regular practice of setting students extra exams is tantamount to indirect discrimination, and this urgently needs to be addressed.

“What I do moving forward depends on the colleges’ response: students have expressed dissatisfaction and I will be looking for ways to progress this in a constructive manner.”

## “Have you experienced intermission?”

We would like to hear from students who have intermitted, to find out more about how the University’s guidance can be improved.

If you have intermitted, and would like to discuss what your experience – whether good or bad – please contact the *Varsity* intermissions investigation team at: [investigations@varsity.co.uk](mailto:investigations@varsity.co.uk). **Please give your name, college, whether you wish to be anonymous, and an outline of what your experience was like.**

### Magdalen, Emmanuel

“I managed through seven years of severe ME without antidepressants... Now I can’t function without them

Intermitting from my PhD was an overwhelmingly negative experience, both in terms of my college’s response and that of the Student Registry (SR). I have suffered from ME for seven years, experiencing muscle and physical weakness and pain, headaches, insomnia and severe exhaustion daily. These worsened over Michaelmas to the point that I decided to intermit in February, not receiving a response until after Lent. My application was denied. I re-submitted the same application and it was accepted. This delay was undeniably stressful.

When I wrote to the SR to ask about my scholarship they did not answer the query. I turned to College for advice. I was told in no uncertain terms that the SR would not ask for scholarship money back while I was intermitting, and that College would help with any financial difficulties that arose.

In June I received an invoice from the SR for £5,189.60 to be repaid within a month. I was unable to pay this as I have no other source of income other than my scholarship and come from a relatively poor background.

“I lost three months of my intermission, which I badly needed”

College made vague offers of help, but then offers of grants became an offer of a loan, before being rescinded altogether. I spent four months struggling to find a solution to this financial mess.

In an attempt to mitigate the financial burden, I returned to my studies in July, three months earlier than the date suggested by my doctor. I lost three months of my intermission, which I badly needed. The SR accepted my application to return, but refused to answer emails regarding the payment of my scholarship instalment. This state of affairs came to an end after I received a letter from the SR in early September 2015, giving me 24 hours to pay the invoice. My supervisor kindly stepped in and paid the invoice in full from faculty funds.

This experience has been detrimental to my mental health. I had managed through seven years of severe ME without resorting to antidepressants and anti-anxiety medication, but now I cannot function without them. Complaints to both College and the SR have received overwhelmingly inadequate responses.

“All students who spoke to *Varsity* emphasised the stress and fear the process caused”



# Local residents petition against Adams Road busway

**Anna Menin**  
Senior News Editor

A petition has been launched to oppose the transformation of Adams Road from a pedestrian and cycle route into a busway as part of the 'Cambridge City Deal' proposals.

Adams Road, located in the west of Cambridge, is a principal link between the city centre and the West Cambridge Site and is regularly used by cyclists and pedestrians. It is currently not a through road for motor traffic but, under the Council's draft proposals, Adams Road could potentially form part of a new bus route.

The North Newnham Residents Association has created a petition calling on policy-makers to review their proposals, citing concerns that the plans would cause danger and disruption to both people and the environment if approved.

The Council's proposals did include a statement that "any infrastructure would seek to enhance [the National Cycle Network] where possible".

However, Dan Strauss of the North Newnham Residents Association told *Varsity*: "the combination of thousands of bikes, cars, narrow pavements and

30 buses an hour seems impossible. It's hard to suggest what solutions may be found - we fear that the most likely outcome would be to divert bikes." He urged cyclists to sign the petition and called upon the Council to work on improving cycle safety instead.

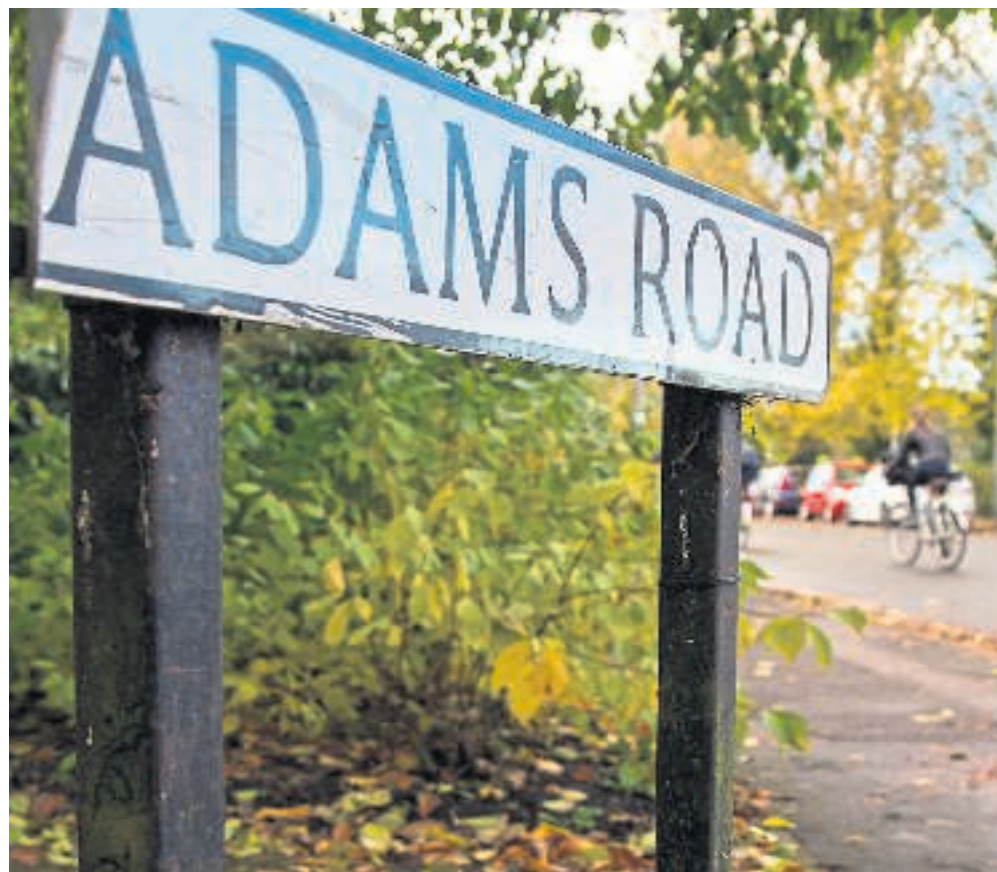
The road is a well-used access route for students travelling to the laboratories and University Sports Centre at the West Cambridge Site. Consequently, many have expressed dissatisfaction with the proposals.

Robinson student Matthew Chapman said: "I, along with hundreds of others, use Adams Road several times a week to access the University Sports Centre and West Cambridge Site. It is convenient and safe - introducing buses will increase the danger to hundreds of people every week."



The petition has attracted support from academics, including Mary Beard, Professor of Classics and Fellow at Newnham College, as well as local councillor and lecturer in the Faculty of Law Markus Gehring, who believes that "existing transport infrastructure is sufficient".

The petition has already surpassed 500 signatures, and will be sent to Councillor Lewis Herbert, Chair of the Greater Cambridge City Deal Executive Board.

► Adams Road is a key route from west to central Cambridge (LUCUS CHEBIB)



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## News

# Artificial Consciousness

## Can we make machines that feel?

*Daniel Gayne reports from a packed Lady Mitchell Hall on a topic which has excited experts and laymen alike*

Billed as an evening of expert discussion, organiser Clemens Öllinger-Guptara was expecting 'Is artificial consciousness possible?' to be an intimate "fireside chat" with two specialists in the field. But a change of venue and 2,100 people registered as 'interested' on Facebook later, a snaking line of hundreds shuffled into Lady Mitchell Hall.

Murray Shanahan, Professor of Cognitive Robotics at Imperial College, and Tim Crane, chair of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Cambridge, probably aren't the kind of household names that would fill a hall of 500.

But Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become something of a trendy topic of late. While specialists rave about new horizons, famous figures like Tesla CEO

Elon Musk and physicist Stephen Hawking have warned of the technology's dangerous potential. It's this thrilling combination of fear and anticipation which piqued the interest of experts and laymen alike.

These anxieties have seeped into popular culture too. Alex Garland's 2015 sci-fi thriller *Ex Machina* told the story of a young programmer who is selected to participate in a ground-breaking experiment in synthetic intelligence by evaluating the human qualities of a breath-taking humanoid AI. And this is where Murray Shanahan, who was science advisor, began. He offered not an answer to the question of whether a machine could be conscious, but whether it could pass the 'Garland Test' featured



in the film.

"The real test is to show you that she's a robot and then see if you still feel she has consciousness", protagonist Nathan says in the film, and this is how Shanahan thinks the problem should be judged. In the film, Ava passes the test with morbid results. But in sharing an extract from a final cut scene of *Ex Machina*, in which we come to understand that Ava expe-

▲ The 500-person Lady Mitchell Hall at full capacity  
(DANIEL GAYNE)

riences the world in a completely alien way to us, Shanahan uses this to suggest the possibility that, if AI were to be conscious, they would be "conscious exotica", or a "creature with greater capacity for consciousness than us".

Tim Crane took the stage with a promise to "pour cold water on everything Murray has just said". He began by commending AI's achievements, which

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proved many of its early sceptics wrong, citing the most recent triumph, Alpha-Go's victory over a human player at the incredibly complex game 'Go'.

But despite this fundamental progress in sophistication, Crane was sceptical of projections which suggested AI would soon develop consciousness. He noted how the creators of Watson, the computer which won at the game show

*Jeopardy!*, had boasted of its ability to observe, interpret, evaluate, and decide like humans by reading millions of unstructured documents every second. "I can read a lot of unstructured documents, I'm head of a philosophy faculty", he joked, while pointing out that no human is capable of this.

So existing AI can imitate humanity, but it does not possess general intelligence, simply huge computing power. For this reason, the Turing Test, or Shanahan's 'Garland Test', are both insufficient for addressing the issue of consciousness, since they only show whether we can be fooled.

So is artificial consciousness possible? Yes, concludes Crane, while warning that his is "a boring answer". In principle, consciousness could be replicated by building a human being, but "not only is AI not doing this, it shouldn't be doing this".

The speeches were followed by a Q&A in which a student, who was doing a dissertation on the theory of minds, commented that the problem of verifying consciousness which the Turing Test attempts to solve was "more of a metaphysical problem", noting that there is no way for us to confirm any other human being's consciousness.

Ultimately, there was a great deal of agreement between the two thinkers, if no concrete answers. They concurred that the real challenge for AI is in achieving the

*"I don't think you have to have consciousness to have superintelligence"*

general intelligence that defines living things from rats to humans, with Shanahan saying: "I don't think you have to have consciousness to have superintelligence".

The evening drew to the end after a few more questions. A second-year PBS student told me that, while he had found Shanahan's contributions "new and interesting", he felt that the huge audience reduced the quality of discussion, noting that they didn't have the time to explain anything properly which limited them, while they couldn't control audience question quality".

While there were no solid answers by the end of the night, the field will not be lacking in funding in the years to come, with Cambridge rivalling students in enthusiasm. The University has just established the Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence thanks to a £10 million grant from the Leverhulme Trust. Since Wittgenstein and Turing, Cambridge has been the place to study consciousness. And with such huge interest in the topic, it looks like it's only just getting started.

▼ (left to right) Tim Crane, Murray Shanahan, and Clemens Öllinger-Guptara  
(LUCAS CHEBIB)



## What is the Turing Test?



The Turing Test distinguishes a machine's ability to exhibit intelligent behaviour equivalent to a human. A human evaluator would judge a conversation between a human and a machine, in the knowledge that one is a machine, but not knowing which one. If the evaluator cannot reliably tell the machine from the human then the machine is said to have passed the test. In the film *Ex Machina*, Caleb introduces what has become known as 'the Garland Test', named after the film's writer. "The real test is to show you that she's a robot and then see if you still feel she has consciousness" Caleb tells the film's other protagonist. This test is a modified Turing Test which begs the question of whether machines can be conscious.



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The deadline for applications is 5pm on Monday 14th November 2016.

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VARSLTY



## News

# Fallout Cambridge reacts to Trump's shock victory

**Danny Wittenberg**  
News Correspondent

Students and senior academics at the University of Cambridge reacted with shock and regret after the billionaire real estate developer and TV personality triumphed in the US presidential election on Tuesday night, beating his Democratic rival Hillary Clinton.

Around 800 undergraduates gathered at the Cambridge Union to watch as the results were announced into the early hours. The debating chamber became a hotbed of support for Clinton, with loud 'boos' erupting at Republican wins.

President of the Cambridge Union Asia Lambert, summarised the mood of most members: "I am deeply saddened by the result. I cannot understand how people have elected someone with such an abhorrent record against women, minorities, those with disabilities and the LGBT+ community. I can't help but feel like this is a huge step back."

The outcome was still uncertain when the Union closed at 4:00am, but mounting concern, as Trump secured a swathe of key states, silenced ironic chants of "Make America Great Again".

Connor McCabe, President of the Cambridge University American Society, said: "I am extremely jarred. Donald Trump has consistently demonstrated a lack of respect for significant portions of our population. Trump does not represent my America."

While some students expressed their horror at waking up to the victory speech from Trump HQ, Politics lecturer Dr Chris Bickerton said he "wasn't particularly surprised".

The Queens' Fellow attributed the success of the property tycoon to a "void between politicians and voters", alongside the "power of populist and technocratic discourses which are the products of this void," embodied by Trump and Clinton

respectively.

Dr Bickerton also drew attention to the "sort of complacency on the part of the liberal establishment that we saw before the Brexit vote," arguing that it "may be why Trump's victory has come as such a shock".

Dr Peter Sloman, meanwhile, described the verdict as "extraordinary" and a "striking reminder that although the United States is becoming younger and more diverse every year, older white voters are still a major force".

Dr Sloman compared Clinton's failure to find "a way of reaching voters who felt threatened by globalisation and cultural change" with Obama's "great achievement" of mobilising black and Latino voters while winning typically conservative states like Wisconsin.

Student debate ceded to condemnation and consolation, however, as an 'Anti-Trump Solidarity Event' assembled in the CUSU Lounge yesterday.

Corpus Christi undergraduate Amiya Nagpal, who established the safe space, explained she "wanted to organise something that could be a site of solidarity for those who feel personally affected".

"I woke up this morning afraid not for those in the US, but for the rest of us, for the ethnic minorities and LGBT+ folk who will be harmed. This is a time to be justly angry, scared, and sad", she concluded.

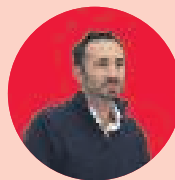
Dr Aaron Rapport, an International Relations lecturer from the same college, echoed some of those sentiments, citing the Republican control of the White House, Congress and the Supreme Court. "We are about to see whether the US is a country ruled by laws or men", he said, and "whether the Republic can protect against tyrannies of the majority."

Despite suspicion about his policies and prejudices, Cambridge this week demonstrated that Donald Trump has kept his promise to stun the liberal, educated elite.



▲ The Union's election night extravaganza  
(FREDDIE DYKE)

## Enter the Donald: what does the result mean ?



**Dr. Christopher Bickerton** Fellow at Queens'

“We've seen the same sort of complacency on the part of the liberal establishment that we saw before the Brexit vote, which may be why Trump's victory has come as such a shock.”



**Dr. Peter Sloman** Fellow at Churchill

“Despite the historic nature of her candidacy, Hillary Clinton never really found a way of reaching voters who felt threatened by globalization and cultural change.”



**Asia Lambert** President of the Cambridge Union

“America has made such great steps over the past eight years to increase social cohesion and I can't help but feel like this result is a huge step back in the opposite direction.”

## Central Library threatened by book cuts

**Rose Aitchison**  
News Correspondent

A planned £325,000 cut to funding for books at libraries across Cambridgeshire has spurred a backlash by local residents and students alike.

The 'Save Our Books' campaign has gained more than 900 signatures on an online petition calling for Cambridgeshire County Council to cancel the planned £325,000 funding cut for library books.

This cut is cited by Cambridgeshire County Council as a cost-saving austerity



◀ Are local libraries getting shelved?  
(LUCAS CHEBIB)

measure, which was decided upon following a public consultation last year.

Stressing their desire to consult with stakeholders and the wider community before implementing any proposals, Cambridgeshire County Council have said that "recent Government announcements now mean the Council has to find an extra £5-£11 million, depending on Council Tax. Since 2012, the Library Service has saved £2.5 million and now needs to save a further £0.5 million."

A protest organised through Facebook, which took place on Friday 11th outside Cambridge's Central Library, was expected to be attended by dozens of local residents and students.

Labour MP for Cambridge, Daniel Zeichner, and representatives of the Unite union were also expected to make an appearance.

Protestors were encouraged to bring their favourite book to the demonstration, and to use the hashtag #Wave2Save to promote the 'Save Our Books' campaign through social media.

Supporters of the campaign voiced similar concern online. 'Shirley H', a signatory to the online petition, asked: "How can a world city of learning think it is right to cut free access to books?" Another supporter, 'Helen C', pointed out that "Libraries are so important for children to enjoy and appreciate so that their reading continues into later life."

Alex Tiley, organiser of the protest, said: "As a Cambridgeshire resident, I'm really worried about the cuts that the Tory run county council are proposing to our local library services."

"Libraries are already struggling under the supposed 'savings' that the government and county council are making," he continued, "and many libraries have only been able to survive by concerned people in their local communities volunteering at them, like my mother. It's pretty clear that there aren't really any more 'savings' that can be made by cutting books in a library - what on earth is the point of a library if there aren't any books?"



# Staff subjected to ‘xenophobic abuse’, says Pembroke Master



**Ciara Nugent**  
News Correspondent

Lord Chris Smith, Master of Pembroke College and an unaffiliated peer in the House of Lords, has warned that the University is already feeling the effects of Britain's vote to leave the EU.

Speaking to *Varsity*, Lord Smith said that Cambridge is being left out of some research opportunities due to “Brexit uncertainty” and that University staff have been subjected to “xenophobic abuse” since the referendum result in June.

He also called on the government to guarantee UK universities that it will make up for possible funding shortfalls caused by Britain's exit from the EU.

Some University and college staff have reported an increase in xenophobic abuse, he said. “For example, where staff are living around Cambridge, in some of the villages and towns nearby, people are telling me ‘I was shouted at in the street’ or ‘I had a note pinned to my garden gate’. It's just so worrying that the referendum result seems to have given licence to this sort of abuse and denigration.”

“For someone who is here, who has devoted their life's work to being here, suddenly they're saying: ‘We're not feeling particularly welcome.’ That is truly sad”, he added.

However, Lord Smith specified that this kind of abuse has not occurred within the University, where “both among staff and students there's a very positive attitude towards colleagues with European backgrounds.”

He is also hopeful that the University's relationship with Cambridge residents will remain unaffected by the referendum result.

“Cambridge itself – not talking about more rural areas around Cambridge – voted very substantially for remain.” The 74 per cent for remain and 26 per cent

for leave, he said, revealed that “town and gown are much more closely aligned on this than people might have thought before hand.” In a *Varsity* poll conducted before the referendum, 85 per cent of University students and staff said they would vote to remain in the EU.

Lord Smith also warned that while it may be “early days” in planning for UK universities' futures post-Brexit – given the uncertainty surrounding the terms of the UK's departure from the EU – research projects at the University are already being affected.

He said he had heard about “research proposals that are beginning to get knocked back.”

High-level university research, he explained, is increasingly done “in collaboration with other universities” rather than by individual institutions. “And already there do seem to be accounts of research proposals where collaborating universities are saying: ‘We'd rather we didn't put Cambridge on the list when we're applying for this because we think that's going to make it more difficult now, post-Brexit, for us to get approval’. And that of course is really worrying for Cambridge colleagues who are trying to push forward with their research work and are finding it more difficult as a result of this.”

Lord Smith expressed concern that UK universities so far do not receive “any guarantee from the UK government” that “if research funding disappears from Britain because of leaving the EU, they, the government, will regard it as a priority to replace it.”

Last week in the House of Lords, amid claims that the government has given behind-the-scenes guarantees to carmaker Nissan to encourage them to stay in the UK, Lord Smith's fellow crossbencher Lord Hannay of Chiswick criticised the government for failing to offer the same “assurances” to “the presidents of the Royal Society, of the British Academy and of Universities UK [...] in spite of their very serious concerns”.

Lord Smith told *Varsity*: “we are a research-based industrial country these days. A large amount of our economic wealth is derived from the work that is done on researching new techniques, new products, new discoveries. And a lot of that work goes on in places like Cambridge. And this is incredibly important, not just for the future of our universities but also for the future of our economic wealth as a country.”

“UK universities generally have done extremely well out of EU research funding. They have had a disproportionately high level of funding from EU funds and Cambridge has been one of the leading universities in that,” he said. Among the funding that the University stands to lose are “European Research Council grants, Horizon 20/20 grants, Erasmus funding – a whole range of programs from the EU which have become increasingly important over the years for research being carried out here in Cambridge.”

Last month, figures released by UCAS suggested there has already been a decline in the numbers of EU students applying to Cambridge, with a nine per cent drop for courses whose application deadline was 15th October.

## PROFANITY SURVEY

### Women more likely to swear than men, survey finds

Research by the Cambridge University Press and Lancaster University has shown that women are much more likely to swear than men. Data from the early 1990s showed that men used the F-word almost six times more than women. However, by 2014, women used it more than men. The research, conducted on 376 volunteers using recordings of their conversations, also showed that women were more likely to say ‘shit’ than their male counterparts.

## SHELTER BLAZE

### Fire crews called to early morning fire at homeless shelter

Firefighters were called to Jimmy's homeless shelter on East Road to tackle a blaze in the early hours of Thursday morning. Two fire crews were sent to extinguish the fire, which was in a third-floor room of the shelter, situated in Cambridge city centre. No one was hurt in the event, with the building being evacuated before the emergency teams arrived. An investigation has now been launched to determine the cause of the fire.

## CONSTABLE AND CO.

### Exhibition of British landscape paintings opens at Downing

A new exhibit has opened at Downing College's Heong Gallery, and includes a seldom-seen piece by John Constable entitled *View from Goding*. The painting, usually kept in Downing's Master's Lodge, is one of many pictures of British landscapes on display. The exhibit, called *Portraits of Place*, is open until the 15th January, and features works from the Kettle's Yard collection, as well as pieces by the four-time Turner Prize shortlisted artist, Richard Long.

## POETRY IN LOCOMOTION

### Councillor pens epic poem about public transport

A campaigner has written an epic poem in protest of the City Deal busway plans, which will affect parts of the West Cambridge site and Grange Road. The poem, was written by Dr Fox, a parish councillor at Coton. The poem, which is entitled ‘To Ada Lovelace’ and is 106 lines long, proposes a scheme using current roads with an added bus lane around the most congested area, arguing that it would be cheaper and less environmentally damaging.



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▲ Lord Chris Smith told *Varsity* about his concerns  
(LUCAS CHEBIB)

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## Science

# The media tells us that ‘cancer is cured’. It’s not true and it’s not fair

**Shudong Li**  
Science Correspondent

‘The Boy Who Cried Wolf’ teaches us the consequences of proclaiming falsehoods, a universal lesson taught to children around the world. It tells us of the numbing effect of a boy’s repeated baseless cries for help, eventually leading to his demise.

Last week I read a science article on the BBC. It told me of the “game-changer” that was immunotherapy. This new form of treatment engages our own immune system in the war against The Big C – a phenomenon that was only discovered in 2003 and has since been fast-tracked to the forefront of cancer therapeutics. Now, as one of the flagships of contemporary cancer therapy, immunotherapy has been grabbing the headlines, which are careful to float only similes of the word ‘cure’ – effectively teasing at the heartstrings of members of the public affected by this disease.

A quick search of ‘cancer cures’ on the BBC website draws up hits dating back to 1998, with more careless sensationalist titles such as “Cancer ‘cure’ breakthrough” and “‘Miracle’ cancer cure to be tested”. In the former of these articles – based on a treatment found to be successful in mice – the professor, when questioned, even stated that “this does not necessarily mean that we would be able to cure people, but it does make it worth exploring this further”. Yet the headline was still run – one which yelps for attention. The source of the problem here may seem obvious: blame the lies on journalists looking for a scoop. However, ‘The Boy Who Cried Wolf’ may have an accomplice...

In 2011, a comment article was published in the scientific journal *Nature*, one of the standard-bearers of modern scientific publishing. It described efforts by the author to replicate several ‘landmark papers’ in cancer research. These selected papers were all preclinical (experiments carried out in mice and other model organisms). Over a 10-year period, the author found that he was able to replicate findings in only six papers out of a total of 53 – an embarrassing 11 per cent success rate. These results suggest either the original findings were false or, more likely, the data presented were carefully selective, and the experiments carelessly designed.

Scientists have begun to identify and treat the areas which contribute to this crisis. One element is the culture of the peer-review publishing system which all present-day science relies on. Explaining and fully deciphering this hot-button issue would require an entirely new article. So for now, know that whether a science article is published often relies on how much of a big dog you are, how flashy the finding is and how picture-perfect the ‘story’. These factors all feed into a system which leads to publications which over-simplify the presented data.

As I lambaste the entire scientific community and my future employers,

Whether on GM food or cancer cures, the media tends to hyperbole (HERRY LAWFORD)



## GMOs: a case study for science and the media

**Ciara McCarthy**  
Science Correspondent

If you have ever been to America, you are likely to have eaten food containing GMOs. The first genetically-engineered food to be granted a licence for human consumption was a strain of tomato in 1994. Despite this, the risks of eating such foods are still widely misunderstood: a poll by the *New York Times* found that three-quarters of Americans had reservations about eating crops that had been genetically engineered. Media hype about this issue has confused many and stymied progress.

GMO simply stands for genetically modified organism, and by this definition would be used to encompass the sources of approximately two-thirds of the calories we consume. All of our major crop species have been genetically modified by humans over thousands of years via selective breeding. Selection for increased yield, ease of harvesting, and pest or disease resistance has produced plants that are unrecognisable from their wild ancestors.

As the world population continues to rise, we have had to continually up our game when it comes to producing foods efficiently. In India in the early 1960s, there was a huge threat of mass famine – nearby China was already suffering from one. The Indian gov-

ernment called upon Norman Borlaug, an American plant scientist, who recommended the introduction of semi-dwarf crops. These increased yields and India went on to become a major rice exporter.

In the 1920s scientists began to go further than just breeding successful crop plants – they found that mutating plants using radiation could potentially produce favourable traits that could be bred back into existing crops. However, this creates ‘linkage drag’ – along with the desired trait, crossing an elite variety with a mutant is likely to introduce lots of undesirable traits into the crop, which have to be bred out over multiple generations. Genetic modification offers a solution to this: specific genes leading to desirable traits can be inserted into the genome of a crop. It is the modern solution to a problem that humans have been trying to solve through plant breeding for thousands of years – the need to produce enough food to feed the entire population.

However, GMOs face concerted opposition that was never a problem for selective or mutation breeding. Greenpeace have said a GM crop is “environmentally irresponsible, poses risks to human health, and could compromise food, nutrition and financial security”. The public perception of GMOs has not been helped by widespread publication of results from questionable studies such as one by the French biologist, Gilles-Éric Seralini. In 2012 he

tried to implicate genetically-modified maize in the formation of tumours in rats. Among many other flaws in this study, such as small sample sizes, it was found that Seralini in fact used a species of rat that has an 80 per cent chance of developing tumours during its lifetime. Although the journal this study was published in has since retracted the paper, it has been used in the US states of Vermont and California as evidence to support the need for GM labelling on foods – a clear example of the media using (bad) science as evidence for a particular agenda, regardless of context or veracity.

No reliable evidence has been found to suggest that eating GM crops poses risks to human health – but some GM crops could have the potential to dramatically improve it. A good example of this is golden rice, which has been genetically engineered to produce beta-carotene, a precursor to vitamin A. This could help to combat vitamin A deficiency in the developing world, which currently affects a quarter of a billion people and leads to half a million cases of childhood blindness a year. Reporting on this subject, however, compared to the coverage of EU directives restricting GMOs, has historically been limited to say the least.

This is not to say that GMOs are risk-free – but the risks are more likely to be ecological rather than directly relating to human health. For example, the production of a toxin against a certain pest affecting other organisms, or the spread of a resistance gene from a crop to other plant species. A more concrete issue with GMOs is less related to science and more related to economics. GM crops are expensive to develop and so research is therefore mainly carried out by a small number of large multinationals: in 2015, a quarter of the world’s seed market was controlled by one company. Concerns have been raised about the implications of such a large amount of power over our global food supply being in the hands of a small number of big companies.

Overall, though, the majority of arguments regarding GMOs seem more related to whether they are ‘unnatural’ or whether scientists are ‘playing God’. The reason for this is a media narrative surrounding GMOs, one aided by organisations like Greenpeace and naturally conservative or anti-science politicians. Narratives like this have become far too common.

it is important to know that the people behind these landmark pieces of research rarely have the intent to deceive. As the author of the *Nature* comment article put it: “these investigators were all competent, well-meaning scientists who truly wanted to make advances in cancer research.”

So why should we care that both academic science and popular journalism are inadvertently crying wolf to the public?

When I interviewed for a PhD at the Institute of Cancer Research in London, my interviewer – on the topic of science and the news – told me that he understood why I wanted to write about science. He told me of how, after news headlines proclaiming a cure or breakthrough, his phone would light up. Concerned wives, husbands, brothers, sisters and friends of people affected by cancer ask for any information to ease their ongoing limbo-like state of mind.

These are the villagers, who come at the call of the boy, only to be left with disappointment. Emotional cycles of hope to heartache are the result, fur-

▼ CRUK says that one in two people in the UK will get cancer (SAMANTHA CELERA)



ther fuelling the growing resentment and disillusion towards the scientific establishment.

Unlike the ‘Boy Who Cried Wolf’, we instead have a system that is unintentionally spreading misinformation. The writers taking part remove the complexities and use headlines that hint at a successful therapy for loved ones. These have contributed to the presence of dangerous black-market ‘cures’ being heavily sought-after, which have even included blended mixtures of olive leaves and water.

More worryingly, a recent Radio 5 Live investigation discovered a black market for an injectable blood product, GcMAF, in the UK, which was being sold by a health food shop. It was sold as a cancer cure – an unlicensed product with a dubious scientific background. The scientific papers supporting it have since been retracted.

This is the new grey area for therapies: no longer is it the ridiculously homeopathic or the infantile olive leaves and water. It is an area of weak and sometimes falsified data supporting a treat-

“We need to embrace the complexity of cancer”

ment which has then snaked its way past regulations and into the modern pharmaceutical realm. It survives due to the desperation the public has for a standard and all-encompassing cancer treatment, after being told over and over again of the breakthroughs which are being carried out.

In fitting with the analogy of the ‘Boy Who Cried Wolf’, the bombardment of cancer breakthroughs hides the fact that immunotherapy really does seem to be a big step forward. It downright cures late stages of the deadliest type of skin cancer – melanomas. But if one reads this without exercising caution, one could easily be misled. We are talking about only one type of cancer and the treatment is not 100 per cent successful in all patients.

So maybe change has to occur in all of us. We need to lower our expectations and embrace the complexity of cancer. The fact is, if you put 10 cancer researchers into a room and ask them ‘what’s the cure?’, you will get 10 different answers, with half of them saying it’s impossible.



# In science fiction, reality is better than fantasy

**Devina Shah**  
Science Correspondent

Whether it's deflecting lasers faster than the speed of light, using humans as miraculously renewable energy sources, or modifying the DNA of an entire living organism, science on the big screen can be littered with inaccuracies. With overused, tired tropes and impossible situations that necessitate some kind of scientific *deus ex machina*, it might be unsurprising that science fiction isn't a genre that is always taken seriously.

There are certain examples – such as *Back to the Future* (1985) – that avoid the pitfalls of becoming bogged down in the details of their poor science, using it only as an initial platform to push their characters into humorous, unfamiliar situations. But real problems can arise when a seemingly serious-natured film wants to sell us bad science as its fundamental premise. The consequences of this can be more than just a jarring experience for the audience, but also the very real possibility of mass miseducation. A 2006 study found that just a single viewing of a film with wildly inaccurate 'facts' could negatively impact students' understanding of phenomena they had previously studied.

I'm not suggesting that science fiction needs any 'information dump' to be commendable, nor that filmmakers should have to curb their imaginations for pedantry's sake. But rather than presuming that the correct science would handcuff them in their storytelling, they should respect their audiences enough to provide them with a solid scientific foundation – off of which unfamiliar leaps can feel all the more rewarding. To quote Mark Twain: "First get your facts straight, then distort them at your leisure".

Even the accelerating development of scientific knowledge doesn't have to doom science fiction to become painfully outdated. Despite the wealth of bad eggs,

there are some hugely accomplished, scientifically sound films out there, and many have played a role in sparking my own scientific interests, drawing me to the field in the first place.

A personal favourite of mine, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), is an iconic work that remains both timeless and mystifying almost 50 years after its release – and so far ahead of its time in some eerily precise predictions of the future. This is a testament to thorough research conducted behind the scenes, where the set, props and core concepts had to dramatically outpace emerging technology of the time. Futuristic elements such as artificial intelligence serve not only to embellish the film's narrative, but also to raise important questions about the interaction between man and machine, an aspect of philosophy that becomes ever more relevant as technology continues to advance. Not only this, but the 'Newspad' gadget depicted in the film

▼ Some of the best science fiction relies on thorough research of current scientific knowledge (DIGITALART1)

was a key catalyst in raising the possibility of the invention of portable tablet computers, further validating the status of *2001* as a prime example of the power that science fiction can hold in society.

More recent 'hard sci-fi' ventures, such as *Gattaca* (1997), *Minority Report* (2002) and *Moon* (2009), follow in the vein of *2001* by depicting rich stories that are about much more than just hard facts, where a scientific or technological breakthrough acts as an initial platform to propel the film into thoughtful, widely accessible commentary. A slight suspension of disbelief is a small price to pay for films that can transfer the medium into more than just a form of entertainment and escapism into a tool for education and the critical evaluation of our own society. Research is absolutely key here, and its importance can be seen from two perspectives. Thorough research by the production team of a film can really make all the difference in weeding out

“Media portrayal of scientific research has a material impact on people's lives”

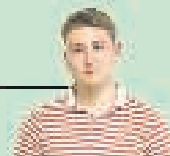
inaccuracies and strengthening a science fiction premise. In addition to this, aligning fiction with fields that are being actively invested in and researched at the present moment can be hugely effective, as evidenced by the recently returned TV series, *Black Mirror*. Each episode of the show explores how some revolutionary technology might have severe, often unpredictable, effects on society as we know it. An anthology of disturbing, cautionary tales, *Black Mirror* is all the more haunting in its unwavering realism and resistance to sensationalism.

Good science fiction has the capability to raise important points of conversation about how society might function – or malfunction – differently, thus bridging the sciences and arts. Just as science itself, the genre can push boundaries into previously unseen territory to create an awe-inspiring – or even disconcerting – experience. The very best science fiction does both.



## The media's science problem

**Jon Wall**  
Science Editor



Science and the media have always had an uneasy relationship. Science can too often provide a crutch for the media to lean on, with new 'evidence' for a policy or an earth-shattering 'breakthrough' offering a quick and easy story. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but the nature of modern science, with research groups desperate for funding and university press departments keen to emphasise success, mean that announcements can tend towards the hyperbolic. At the same time, media organisations are swift to use science as validation for a narrative they wish to construct – the list of things the *Daily Mail* claim causes cancer is ever-growing and increasingly contradictory. Even when scientific evidence is taken in its own light, it seems that the media's processing of research papers involves a series of black-and-white filters. Research papers acknowledge nuance and room for uncertainty, but press releases focus on success. By the time these reach the airwaves, or the print edition of a national newspaper, the research has modulated into either a full-blown panacea or crisis.

What is particularly troubling is that this (mis)use of science has extended into the political sphere, as inaccurately-portrayed ideas filter through to the politicians who make key decisions about science funding, and the applications of scientific research. These are politicians such as homeopathy supporter Nadine Dorries, who was appointed to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, only attended two per cent of its meetings, and then was rewarded by being appointed to the Health Committee. The Green Party and associated environmental

campaigners are some of the worst offenders when it comes to twisting scientific research to suit their various narratives – and let's not even talk about climate change denier Trump.

While these are outliers, so very, very few of the current crop of MPs have scientific backgrounds, and though it is worth noting that recent science ministers such as David Willetts and Jo Johnson have been relatively good at engaging with science, the British 'establishment' as a whole is not. Media and politics are largely dominated by arts and humanities graduates, and while they bring valuable perspectives, being able to understand nuance and subtlety in technical subjects is vital. This technical information will drive the future of our country, whether that be in energy, security, emerging technologies or the eradication of disease – yet the problem persists. Greater campaigning for science in the media in recent years has reaped some dividends, but on the whole there are still major problems. Media misrepresentation of scientific research has material effects on how people live their lives – for example, in trying to stay healthy to avoid contracting cancer.

Misreporting works against this. To expand on Donald Rumsfeld's well-known quotation: researchers know that they have known knowns and known unknowns – so why can't the media get a grip on it?



Misleading headlines are all too common (CORY DOCTOROW)



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# Comment

## Trump has landed a blow to the land of opportunity

*Those who travel to the US in search of a better life may never be allowed to thrive under Trump*



Gracelin Baskaran is studying for a PhD in Development Studies at Lucy Cavendish College

Gracelin Baskaran

My father emigrated from India to the US in 1987 with \$20 and dreams of a better life. His parents, who had little education, laboured long hours in a field to put food on the table.

My father was the first in his family to go to university. It wasn't easy: as a boy he earned 10 cents a day carrying heavy scrap metal on his back for long stretches, barefoot. His two older brothers worked long hours in odd jobs to pay for his education. He ultimately earned a doctorate in Physics, before moving to Alaska for a postdoctoral fellowship.

He became an immigrant, in search of the American dream. The idea was that, no matter where you came from, success was within reach if you were willing to work hard – or at least until this election.

As long ago as 1999, Trump made his stance on immigration clear: no new people. "I'm opposed to new people coming in. We have to take care of the people who are here," he quipped.

Immigrants have long been viewed as a drain on the American economic system, contributing little but taking a lot in welfare benefits. When my parents and sister emigrated to the US, they weren't putting much into the system, but they were savers: with my father's \$20,000 postdoctoral salary, he purchased three flight tickets from India to the US and still managed to save \$10,000.

Over their 30 years in the US, my parents would go on to contribute to the economy in countless ways. They purchased a couple of houses, put three kids through university, donated to charities, and bought cars. They contributed in non-monetary ways as well. My dad's been instrumental to the continued development of Detroit's major research university. They've donated much of their time to church, helping with the local foodbank and homeless shelter.

This election has thrown me into an existential crisis. I am left wondering: would any of it have happened if Trump had risen three decades earlier?

In his book, Trump argues that foreign students who come to study in the US should be able to stay and use their skills to in the US, rather than take them back home. He deems this form of immigra-

tion "acceptable". My dad's older brother, who worked as a store clerk to support my dad's education, never earned even one per cent of the wages needed to send my dad to university in the US. My dad would likely never have met Trump's qualifications for entry.

My views on refugees, skilled migrants and illegal immigrants were upended last year, when I worked in the refugee camps in Calais. Until then, I believed the myth portrayed by the American media, that refugees were uneducated and poor. But as I distributed supplies in the camp's Afghan Square, I found myself chatting to professors, doctors, lawyers, and teachers – all refugees.

One man reminded me of my father. He was a middle-aged man, once a university law professor in Kabul. He, too, had come from a poor, rural farming background and gone on to earn a PhD. He told me how his family fled in the middle of the night and that the idea of being a professor again was a mere pipe dream. If driving taxis and washing bathrooms every day for the rest of his life would guarantee opportunities for his children, he would do it.

It felt like déjà vu. My dad was a lecturer at Texas A&M during the 1990s. He dealt with immense racism during his time there. Despite being far more



Protesters rally for the protection of immigrants' rights (SACHA KIMEL)

published than most of his colleagues, he was refused tenure repeatedly and ultimately laid off. With three kids under the age of 13, he felt the weight of the world on his shoulders. My dad once told me something I'll never forget: "If I have to push carts at Walmart or carry potatoes in Idaho to help you guys, that's what I'll do. As immigrants, we will always have to work harder to stay afloat."

Was the professor-turned-refugee I met in Calais any different from my father? Not at all. Yet because of Trump's immigrant-phobia, my new friend may never have the opportunity to create a new life; his kids may never have the opportunity to chase their dreams and change the world. Instead, he'll spend his days in a cold, wet tent, hoping for



President-elect Donald Trump speaking in Maryland (GAGE SKIDMORE)

asylum status, preferably in an English-speaking country so that his kids can continue their education without further disruption. My father? He wasn't a natural at English, but he persevered. Today, he's a fully-tenured professor, among the most published in his field, with over 125 articles and two books to his name (all in English). His kids are all on track to do better than he did.

The only difference between these two men – my father and the Afghan refugee? The political landscape during their hour of need. I woke at 5:46am in Brussels, the morning after the US election, in a complete state of shock. As I dragged my feet to the European Parliament to serve as Secretary General and represent the United States at the Young European Leadership delegation meeting, a painful reality set in. My grandparents, two illiterate field labourers in rural India, couldn't have dreamt of a world where, thanks to their hard manual labour, their grandkids would go on to work as a Wall Street executive or do a PhD at Cambridge. I am a product of the American Dream.

On Tuesday, that became a mere pipe dream.

“My dad wouldn't have met Trump's criteria for entering the US”



## Nailya Shamgunova Every accent tells a story

What does it mean to speak a language well? If you believe my parents, the ultimate aim is to have 'no accent' – to be indistinguishable from a native speaker, because being foreign somehow makes you inferior. Surprise, surprise, I never managed this. I used to hate the way I spoke. I used to stay away from public speaking, avoid acting and debating, just because I sounded so foreign.

It took me years to realise that everyone has an accent – people from Liverpool, Newcastle or Glasgow don't speak like most BBC commentators. When I tried to explain that to my parents, my explanations still felt like an apology: having an accent is acceptable because everyone has one. Now the trick was to have the right accent.

I have been mistaken for Scandinavian, Dutch and American. Once, another Eastern European person assumed I was British. Those were some of the proudest moments of my life.

Recently, I met someone, and though their English was next to perfect, I could instantly tell that their first language was Russian. This changed my perception of them. Despite their sophisticated and nuanced ideas, having a Russian accent meant not being Western European, and, in my mind, was still equated with not being 'good enough'. I realised that I still had a lot of the internalised xenophobia that I came to this country with – a horrifying thought for a mainstream Cambridge liberal.

Living in this country has taught me that you can tell so much about a person just from the way they speak. Any accent tells a story. A foreign accent tells a story of someone being resilient and determined enough to learn an entire language, to read the news in it, to write their diary in it, to listen to BBC podcasts and speak it at a grocery store, at a seminar, at a pub with friends or in the company of a loved one.

I still have a long way to go, but I am starting to accept my accent, because it is an essential part of me, of where I come from, and of what has shaped me. It's part of my story.



Cartoon by Ben Brown



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# A Spanish señorita saved me from my selfie

*Telling a story doesn't require 4,236 photos of you pouting. What will it take for you to stop snapping?*



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

Will  
Hall

I was recently in Spain when a funny thing happened. Well, I think it's funny. I was at a popular observation point, at the top of a hill, when I asked an old Spanish lady to take my photo. I did that unhelpful thing that we all do when we don't know how to ask for something in another language – I unwittingly started to remove some random words in the hope that it would make more sense when pared down. (It didn't.) Thus: "Would you mind taking a photo of me?" became: "You...take...photo...me?"

I persisted, this time re-arranging the words in the hope that they would somehow sound more Spanish: "Photo...you...me?" and then, "Take...you...photo...my?" and finally the only Spanish I could remember from GCSE "¿Dónde está la piscina?" María (as I later learned she was called) eventually said, "Ahhh! I take your photo?" I beamed and, just as I was confirming that that was indeed what I meant, she said "No" and walked off.

I recount this story because I was recently surprised to learn that every two minutes there are more photos taken

than in the entire 19th century, quite a startling statistic. And to be honest, I can hardly get all haughty about it, seeing as I daresay I'm responsible for about 90 per cent of them. We all love to have a memory of big events in our life: that time we visited the Empire State Building, that squad trip to the beach in Corfu, or our kids' first day at school. (Mum, if you're reading this, don't worry, I'm not a father – it's just an example.) And given the fact we now always have some sort of photographic device on us at all times, capturing these special moments has never been easier. I'm starting to sound like an Apple advert. But all I'm saying is, it's not all bad – it's nice to be able to take photos every so often.

Case in point: my sister and I recently made a photo album for my parents' 25th wedding anniversary. In flicking through the carefully-curated archive, played out in neatly-affixed 35mm snapshots, it was touching to see their anthologised memories: their wedding day, for example, or the moment when they bought their first house, or – most emotionally – the day in 1979 when my father cut off his mul-

let. (On second thoughts, maybe some things are best left un-photographed.) Sure, some were less interesting than others ('Tony, the car rental man at the airport' or 'the garden furniture at the hotel'), but I guess if you've paid for the prints you want your money's worth, so why not shove them in the album? Besides, there is something really quite interesting about a photo of the queue at the Vatican in 1982, isn't there? No? Just my family then.

The key difference between then and now is the limitlessness of digital photography: no spool to reload, no film to run out – just a swipe left with your thumb and endless acres of The Cloud ready to house your every snap.

When our children look through our photo albums, what, I wonder, will they ask? "Daddy, why are there 4,236 photos of you pouting with various sights of historical interest in the background?" Or: "Mummy, why do we have seven leather-bound volumes chronicling solely photos of smashed avocado on toast?" Among these there'll be the odd meme you saved, grainy videos of concerts you thought it would be sensible to film in full (never to be watched again) and a screenshot of a text containing directions which you forgot to delete.



▲ "Every two minutes there are more photos taken than in the entire 19th century"  
(MATTHEW SECCOMBE)

'Story time' will no longer be a dramatic reading of *The Gruffalo*, but rather a look through your parents' favourite Snapchat posts. The National Portrait Gallery will be shut down and replaced with an Instagram account (heads-up: Holbein looks best in 'Valencia'). Funeral orders of service, rather than being adorned with a timeless and touching headshot, will instead show a 'puppy filter' selfie with a number eight in the corner: Here Lies One Whose Name Was Writ In Snapchat.

As I write this, flicking through the long-forgotten 'memories' on my phone which were diligently recorded by my past self for the benefit of my future self, my present self can't help but wonder whether we should all just stop, or at least slow down. By all means still take photos – I'm not saying we tell the humble picture where to selfie-stick it – but perhaps stop trying to replicate everything we experience in 6x4 miniature. God knows it will be hard, and our Instagrams may suffer for it, but I think we can do this together.

So thank you, María. You weren't being difficult, you were saving me from a photographic deluge, and I admire you for speaking without restraint – or rather, I should say, #nofilter.



## Comment

# We mustn't alienate those we don't agree with

*Vilifying voters stops us from understanding where our differences lie*



Anna Jennings  
studies English at  
Clare College

Anna  
Jennings

Last week, Cambridge voted on Class Lists. This week, America voted for its next president. What we saw play out in the former is perhaps an interesting microcosm for understanding the latter.

Before the referendum on Class Lists was officially announced, a narrative was created – largely by the campaign to scrap Class Lists – in which opting to get rid of them was the ‘right’ vote to help combat the University’s issues with mental health. To vote to keep Class Lists therefore made you a bad person, insensitive to the issues of others.

When you vilify a significant segment of an electorate, you do not change how

they vote. Brexit showed us this. Instead, they become alienated, disenfranchised, disengaged. Some people respond to this by becoming increasingly vocal and radical, as we saw with many of the Trump stories making sensationalist headlines this summer. Much of the British press was so aggressively anti-Brexit that it was a natural response for many of the Brexiteers to feel outcast – and therefore create their own dialogue outside the mainstream. Once thus disengaged, there is no longer any obligation to play by the rules of ‘normal’ politics, leading to an exponential rise in extreme views.

However, there is also a second group of voters who support Class Lists, Brexit,

and/or Trump who do not respond to the vilification by speaking louder to each other, but rather by becoming silent. And this is where the real problem lies. Whole groups of people have been made to feel that their personal opinion is wrong, invalid and something to be ashamed of. This means that they do not tell people how they are voting, and do not engage in the debate. We all, no matter how we voted, are then surprised by the result. I don’t think many of the 55 per cent of voting students who supported Class Lists felt during the debate that they were in the majority, but there was a silent, anonymous solidarity to be found in the ballot paper.

The problem here goes beyond confounding polling predictions. The silencing removes an entire group of people from the discussion, meaning that there is no opportunity for persuasion, reasoned debate or compromise between the two sides. This deepens the sense of division in the electorate, which becomes extremely problematic once the votes are counted. When a result is as close as the EU referendum, Class Lists, or the US election, we must recognise that both sides have points which a significant number of people support. The outcome, then, should not become a binary dichotomisation of one side ‘winning’ and the other being forced into submission. What needs to happen is an appreciation of the fact that the best solution must lie somewhere in the liminal space between the two.

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Silencing  
removes  
an entire  
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But we don’t like this liminal space. Sensationalist media and our desire to join a ‘side’ create a dialogue in which it is hard to be somewhere in the middle, seeing value in both arguments. There is a pressure to have an opinion, and you are framed as a traitor if you do not commit fully. This schism once more disenfranchises and alienates a large group of people with more nuanced or ambivalent views, and they in turn become more likely to vote in protest against the perceived establishment.

Voting today is a public act. Gone are the days of coy traditional Britishness where one should not reveal one’s vote. Instead, in the run up to Brexit I was inundated with opinion-based Facebook statuses, the liking of which was deeply political. This perpetuates an echo-chamber effect, in which people feel validated in their opinions as their friends, who tend to be voting the same way, parrot back the same, creating an unrepresentative and misleading image of the electorate. Once more, the silent divergents feel excluded, further fomenting those feelings of disenfranchisement.

But these silent divergents have won. CUSU will support Class Lists; Brexit will occur; Trump will become the next US president. The people who voted thus aren’t an abstract entity: they are ordinary people who exist among us. And if we want to have a say in the complex political procedures which have now been triggered we need to talk to them, not rage at them.

◀ Class Lists have proved a highly contentious topic (CMGLEE)



# In dark times, the light of sacrifice still shines

*Remembrance Day isn't just about our troubled politics; it's a time to remember those who gave their lives for peace*



Chelsey Holness  
studies Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic Studies at Hughes Hall College

Chelsey  
Holness

Every year, we have a day to pause – just the one to reflect and remember the past. Some see Remembrance Day as controversial. But it isn’t about your political beliefs, not about the decisions of current governments. It isn’t about encouraging militarism or the glorification of war.

Just for a small while, we have a time that doesn’t revolve around politicians and what they are or are not doing well enough. We have a time that is all about ordinary people for a change. It is about the men and women, past and present, who have served their country. Looking to the past, we see why it is important that we carry on the Remembrance service, with all the ceremony that it entails, and rightly deserves.

When we wear a poppy and observe the two-minute silence, we are proud of the people who were brave enough to do their bit for their nation, even if they did not want to.

We think about those who have served under our flag and try to comprehend, difficult though it is, how they have defended our interests, making sure that we have freedoms now that were threatened in the past. We think about the people involved in recent conflicts

► Europe’s poppy fields serve as a timeless reminder of the horrors of war (TIJL VERCAEMER)

and the impact on their lives.

It has been 100 years since the Battle of the Somme, since the dread and the horrors endured in the trenches by men who were a world away from their homes, jobs and families. On 11th November, we remember them and their sacrifice, through silence observed in their memory.

Too soon after World War One, of course, all was endured again, when the Second World War saw civilisation turned once more on its head, and there was everything to defend. Though horrifying, there was glory to be found under the banner of victory – for all those who suffered, be it the men advancing in all sorts of climates to push back the enemy, the women at home doing their bit to keep the country going, or those who turned their hand to codebreaking, farming or factories to support the war effort. Ordinary people had to do things they would never have imagined doing in their lives.

One of those people was my great-grandfather Edward W. T. Holness – my hero.

He had many interesting stories to tell about his time in the Royal Artillery during the Second World War. Like when he found a horse in a field in France and rode across the country to evacuate at Dunkirk. Or when he fought in the Battle of Monte Cassino, breaking through the Axis powers to Rome. He was in the heat of the desert in North Africa, commanding a battery of field guns that were shelling the Germans to allow the infan-

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try to push forward. He stayed with a police chief and his family in Greece and was given a revolver before he went on his way. He flew home from Berlin in a Lancaster Bomber.

What adventures for a son of a fisherman in Kent, an ordinary man who achieved a mention in dispatches and had witnessed a great deal. Each of his medals tells a story with a gravitas that I could never hope to fully appreciate.

Remembrance Day is about unification, not division. Whatever decisions are made now or in the future, history cannot be changed. Even if we never see war again, sacrifices have been made, and we should never forget that.

It is a day to remind us that people are capable of true bravery in the face of adversity, and that we would be a very different nation if not for the efforts of those who defended us in the past.

We can criticise governments on

military decisions every other day of the year, but 11th November is the one time to soberly think about the efforts and sacrifices of people like my great-grandfather – just one of the many.

Remembering war does not mean that we think it is great. War is only ever a means to an end. But at what cost? Whether pacifist or militarist or somewhere in between, the fact remains that there are people who suffer in the name of it. People who cannot do anything about the political situation in which they find themselves.

Remembrance Day is not political. It has only ever been about making sure that these incredibly brave people are thought about and thanked. These are the people that Britain can forever be proud of.

My great-grandfather always said he had a ‘good war’, but many were not so lucky. That should never be forgotten.



# What I learnt from a 'dick pic' critic

*It's time to combat damaging male sexual tropes. I spoke to the creator of the blog 'Critique My Dick Pic'*



Anna Fitzpatrick studies HSPS at Magdalene College

Anna Fitzpatrick

If you're a woman with access to the internet, there's a very strong chance that you've received a picture of someone's penis. Out of the blue, unsolicited and lacking any context, the standard dick pic does nothing for me. I'd probably get more pleasure from looking at a picture of a lampshade. It'd certainly be more aesthetically pleasing. The feeling you get when a random stranger sends you a photo of their cock is the feeling I'd imagine the owner of a dog gets when it brings a dead animal into the house as a 'gift'. You don't really want it. It's kind of gross, but you're supposed to act impressed.

Unrequested dick pics are a weird phenomenon of the contemporary social media age. The equivalent, in real life, would be to print off a photograph of your penis, approach a woman in the street and show it to her without saying a word. Maybe people did that in the olden days - I don't know. Maybe, before cameras were invented, people drew pictures of their dicks and sent them via pigeon. Either way, it's nasty, and it's unsolicited.

In non-picture form, there is a name for showing people your genitals when they didn't ask to see them. It's called 'flashing' and I'm pretty sure that it counts as a criminal offence. So why is receiving unrequested dick pics such a

normal experience for women online?

Madeline Holden is the exception. Running a blog called 'Critique My Dick Pic', she voluntarily inundates herself with submissions. I suspect that we all have a lot to learn from her project. Maddie tells me that, like most women, she was used to dick pics being "unsolicited and of terrible quality", so when she received an "unusually good" one from someone she was seeing at the time, it was jarring. Joking with her friends that they should create a public service to teach men to take better dick pics, 'Critique My Dick Pic' was born.

I ask Maddie what makes a good dick pic. She tells me that "the worst thing about most dick pics is that they're too zoomed-in and narrowly focused on the dick itself," which I totally agree with. So does my friend, who's looking over my shoulder as I write this, reporting to me that most times she's received dick pics, she didn't ask for them and that she thinks they're gross.

The consensus between my friends and I is that a huge part of arousal is mental, facilitated by psychological and emotional context. A zoomed-in picture of a dick tragically neglects this dimension. Maddie elaborates that "the best dick pics avoid this trap by being more contextualised, with a wider frame," further adding that success results from

"paying attention to things like lighting, framing, setting and the overall tone of the picture".

But, "before you even begin to think about the picture's quality," Maddie tells me, the most important rule for dick pic sending is that it is consensual. If you're considering pressing send, she says that it should be to someone "you are sure wants to see it". With consent being the basis of her blog, Maddie's 'Critique My Dick Pic' serves to change gendered dynamics in an important way.

She projects a body-positive message, too. Her ethos is to critique 'with love'. I ask her what this means: "It means I will never be snarky or cruel about a sender's body." Nor will she "go into the merits of the body parts themselves". This highlights an important issue. Men are bombarded with imagery of masculinity as big, ripped and 12 inches long. With the average penis size in the UK being between four and five inches, it's no shock that many people miss the point of Maddie's blog by seeking validation that their dick is 'good enough'. "They want me to tell them that it's big, basically," she laments.

In running 'Critique My Dick Pic', Maddie gets a rare look at the fragility that a lot of senders are too afraid to show offline. She reports that "it's not unusual for men to use my inbox as a kind of informal therapy session to vent all their insecurities about their bodies," revealing "how crushingly vulnerable a lot of men are about their dicks".



▲ Stereotypes about male sexuality are damaging for everyone (GIORGIONI)

"We need more body shame-free spaces"

But Maddie's blog addresses this issue by putting traditionally marginalised bodies in the spotlight, encouraging submissions from trans people, for example. We need more body shame-free spaces like hers to tell people that it's okay not to look like the images we're exposed to in mainstream media.

Online, people are taking back the narrative from a system that profits from our insecurities. They are celebrating their bodies through hashtags. And importantly, people who make ad campaigns or billboards are ensuring that these people - flawed and real - are being seen.

We need to keep talking about body image.

# White female voters let down women of colour

*Trump's presidency will disproportionately harm women of colour. White women voted for him*



Richelle George studies HSPS at Trinity College

Richelle George

Unless you live under a proverbial rock or decided to spare yourself the horror of the 2016 US presidential election and move to Mars, you will have heard the news by now: the leader of the 'free world', arguably one of the most powerful people on the planet, is now Donald Trump. A man who understands the world in stereotypes and bigotry. A man who has been accused of sexually assaulting minors and racially profiling prospective tenants.

You might find it unbelievable that Americans chose this man to be their leader. I did, too. I couldn't fathom how a man who had offended so much of the population through racist tropes and vicious verbal attacks had managed to weasel his way into the White House under the guise of democracy. Like many, I was thoroughly confused. Until results of exit polls came out, breaking down voter preference into gender and race.

The polls showed that 53 per cent of white women voted for Trump.

Then, my confusion became anger at a betrayal. I spend a lot of time in Cambridge engaging in feminist debate, and something that's repeatedly discussed in these circles is the danger of white feminism leaving non-white women out

of the feminist movement. The general consensus seems to be, or so I thought, that white women have begun to recognise their duty in supporting women of colour.

That these discussions keep happening in Cambridge is crucial. The intersection of race and gender means that women of colour do not have the privilege of white women to tailor the feminist movement to suit their needs. When white women forget us, as they did in this election, we remain isolated. While we are fighting for ourselves, we need our white female allies to fight for us too.

Tuesday's election made clear that the majority of white women in America are happy to abandon the needs of the marginalised minority. It is with almost

▼ The lives and families of women of colour are put at risk by Trump (THE ALL-NITE IMAGES)



wary hope that American women of colour believed that their votes could make a difference this election, and perhaps they could have, had those with privilege not fought against them. With women of colour forming only a small portion of the American electorate, the solidarity of white counterparts was needed to secure the safety of American ethnic minorities. Without the solidarity of their allies, the votes of women of colour were not enough to avoid a Republican victory.

I struggle to believe that the white women who voted for Trump are unaware of the racist rhetoric he spewed during his campaign. I struggle to believe that 53 per cent of the white female American electorate failed to wander near a newsstand or television recently. We're left to presume that these women do not care whether their president thinks that black people are inherently lazy, that Muslims should be banned from entering the US or that Latino people are rapists. Perhaps they agree with him, or perhaps the intersection of other privileges, such as class, meant that some were able to justify a vote for Trump despite his misogynistic vitriol.

Setbacks like these do not warrant abandonment of the goal, but white cis-women must be prepared to stand for all women, including trans-women and women of colour. Being a white ally is recognising that your vote is not just yours. That it is your duty to listen to those who society places beneath you. White women, being oppressed by the patriarchy does not mean that you aren't

privileged in other ways.

Ignoring this results in tragedies like the one we saw this week. Ignoring this means women of colour are set further and further back by an electoral system which silences them. Whether you voted for Trump because you think he'll be good for American businesses or because you're not a fan of Hillary, your vote has put the lives and freedom of women of colour in danger.

Not just that: women of colour in the United States worry every day for the safety of the men of colour in their families and communities. Your Trump vote has placed those lives in the hands of a man whose policies are characterised by xenophobia and racism.

If you're a white woman reading this, let go of the guilt that risks making this issue about yourself. Women of colour don't need your guilt or your sympathy. We have always fought for our rights and our place in the feminist movement, and will continue to do so. Don't be offended by our anger, the hurt comes from the reminder that we still have so far to go in our fight for equality, even with our fellow women.

What women of colour need from white women is the acknowledgement that race means that we are not all the same. We are oppressed in different ways, and we don't have the same ability to change the status quo. It is only when we unite as women against all forms of oppression will we realise that a victory for Trump is undoubtedly a loss for all women.



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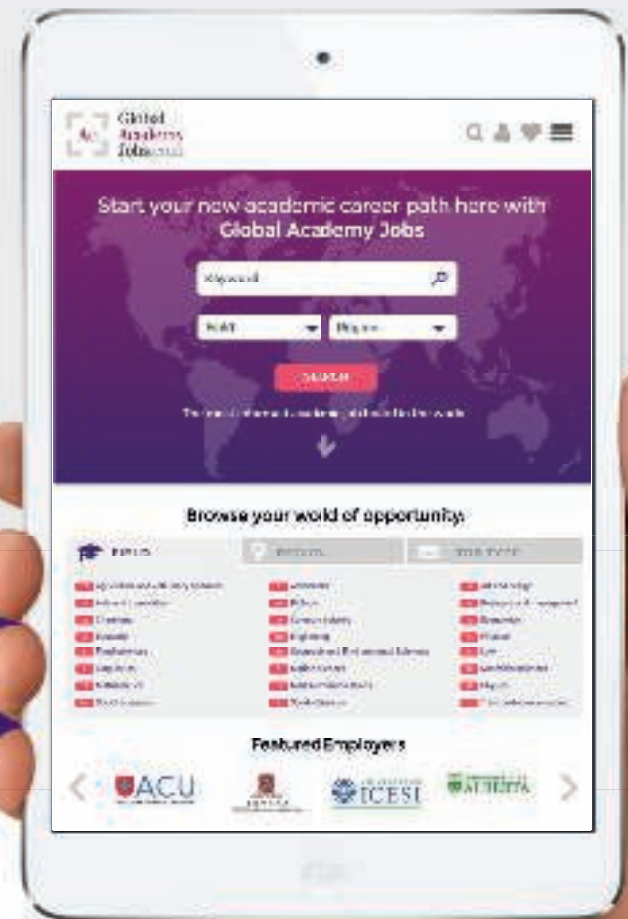
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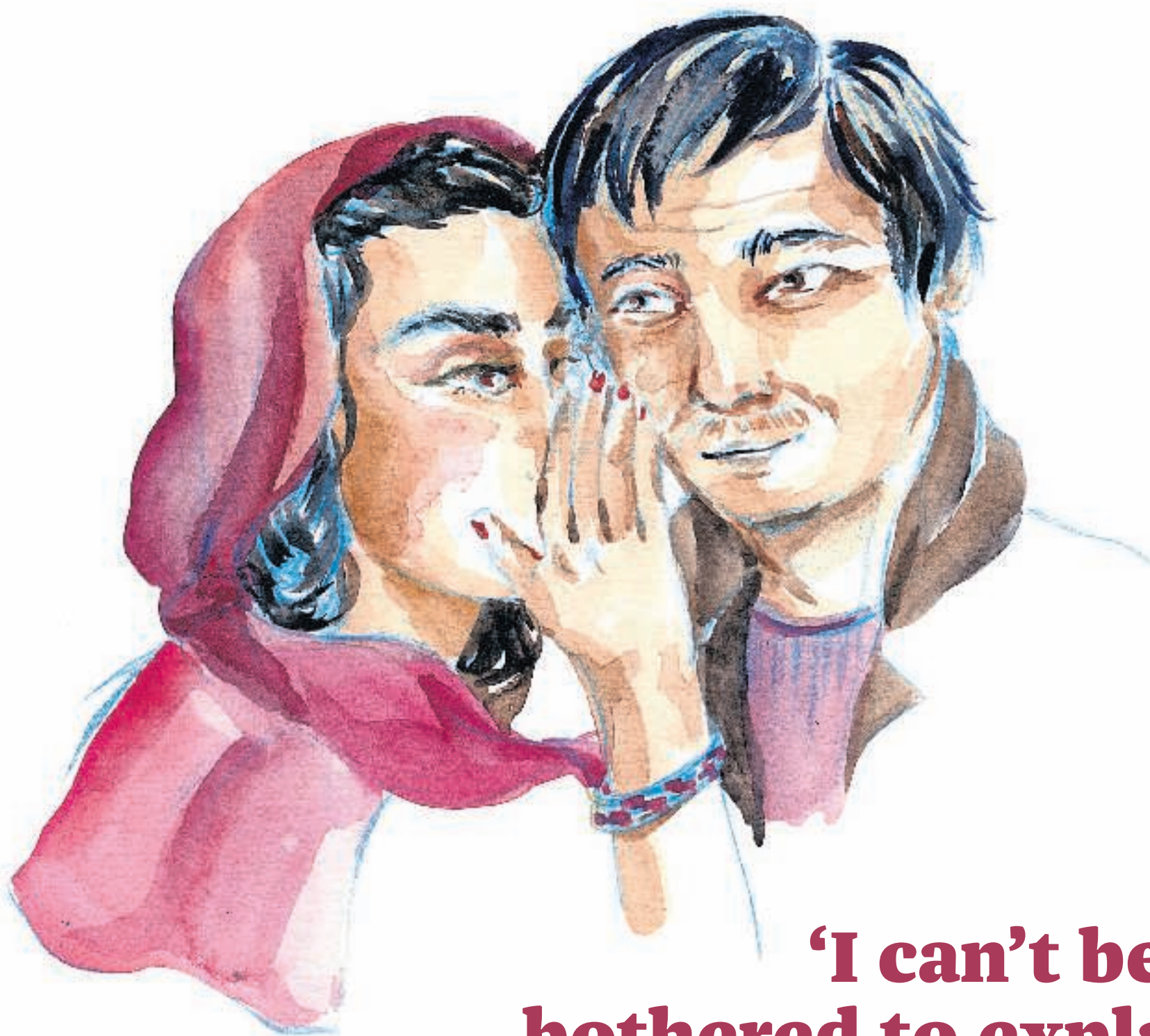
**New spaces and places**  
*In conversation with Kettle's Yard*

**The finer details**  
*Zoom in on the best street style*

**Top Trumps**  
*The President-elect in five cameos*

**Sexual healing**  
*The dire state of sex ed in schools*

**Mind the gap**  
*Elitism in Cambridge theatre*



## **‘I can’t be bothered to explain it’**

Why won’t Cambridge accept  
my interracial relationship?

by **Chandan Dhiman**

# Vulture

FEATURES • CULTURE • FASHION • THEATRE • MUSIC • REVIEWS



Some might think that we live in a post-racial society. However, the regular stigmatisation of interracial relationships in Cambridge suggests that there is still a long way to go, writes **Chandan Dhiman**

Illustrations by **Iryna Masko**

**W**ait, so how do your parents not know you guys have been dating for over eight months? That's so weird!' This is the question I have come to dread whenever my relationship is dissected among a group of non-BME individuals.

While I usually try to explain how my cultural background prescribes the circumstances of my relationship, I am increasingly questioning whether it is my responsibility to educate people who call my culture 'weird'. More often than not, I have found that it is much easier to reply with 'I can't be bothered to explain it'.

I am an Indian woman, and I am completely aware that walking down the street with my Chinese boyfriend makes us a couple that is not especially common. I thought that one of the challenges we would face as a couple would be trying to reconcile our two differing cultures, and all of the values, traditions and beliefs which follow. However, things have turned out to be quite the opposite. While my boyfriend still teases me about my inability to use chopsticks correctly, I tease his inability to eat a spicy curry without sweating. I love learning about Chinese culture: the food, the language and the cultural responsibilities that come with being a young Chinese man. I'd equally like to think that he loves learning about Indian culture.

Through sharing our experiences as people of colour, and comparing our cultural identities, we share a unique dynamic in our relationship that brings us closer together all the time. What I hadn't prepared myself for was the cultural insensitivity I would face, as people would question aspects of our relationship, which perhaps do not conform to the usual expectations. I also hadn't anticipated that people may not under-

stand that details of our relationship are personal and private.

As a child of an immigrant family, I have been raised in a fairly traditional environment where sexual conservatism is the norm. For me, it would be entirely inappropriate to tell my parents about my relationship, especially at a point in my life where there is an expectation that my focus should be aimed at establishing a career for myself, as opposed to finding myself a boyfriend.

Obviously circumstances have changed, and it is very normal for young people to meet their partners during their youth, with Wednesday nights at Cindies being a breeding ground for hook-ups and potential relationships. However, out of respect for my parents' cultural attitudes, my siblings and I have all managed to maintain our relationships without our parents' knowledge. For my elder siblings, telling my parents about their partners was only seen to be necessary when my father was needed to foot the bill for our big, fat Indian weddings. Anyone who has seen *Bend it Like Beckham* knows the drill.

Sitting in a room with my parents and witnessing a television scene airing an innocent kiss is enough for everyone in the room to pretend they were doing anything else but watching television. Knowing that I would probably never have 'the talk' with my parents was comforting, especially after hearing horror stories from people who had. In my culture, it is just something that does not happen. I would honestly rather spend a whole night standing sober in the sweat-box that is Fez than tell my mother how I used to fancy so-and-so during my GCSEs at secondary school.

Now, try explaining that to someone in Fez, who is rather tipsy, and whose tongue is slightly looser than usual. It is really not easy. And nine times out of ten, the next question which follows is: 'How oblivious do your parents have to be to not know you're dating?' I find this statement probably the most bothersome, because not only is it a particularly intrusive question regarding my personal life, but it is also a question that I find quite stupid.

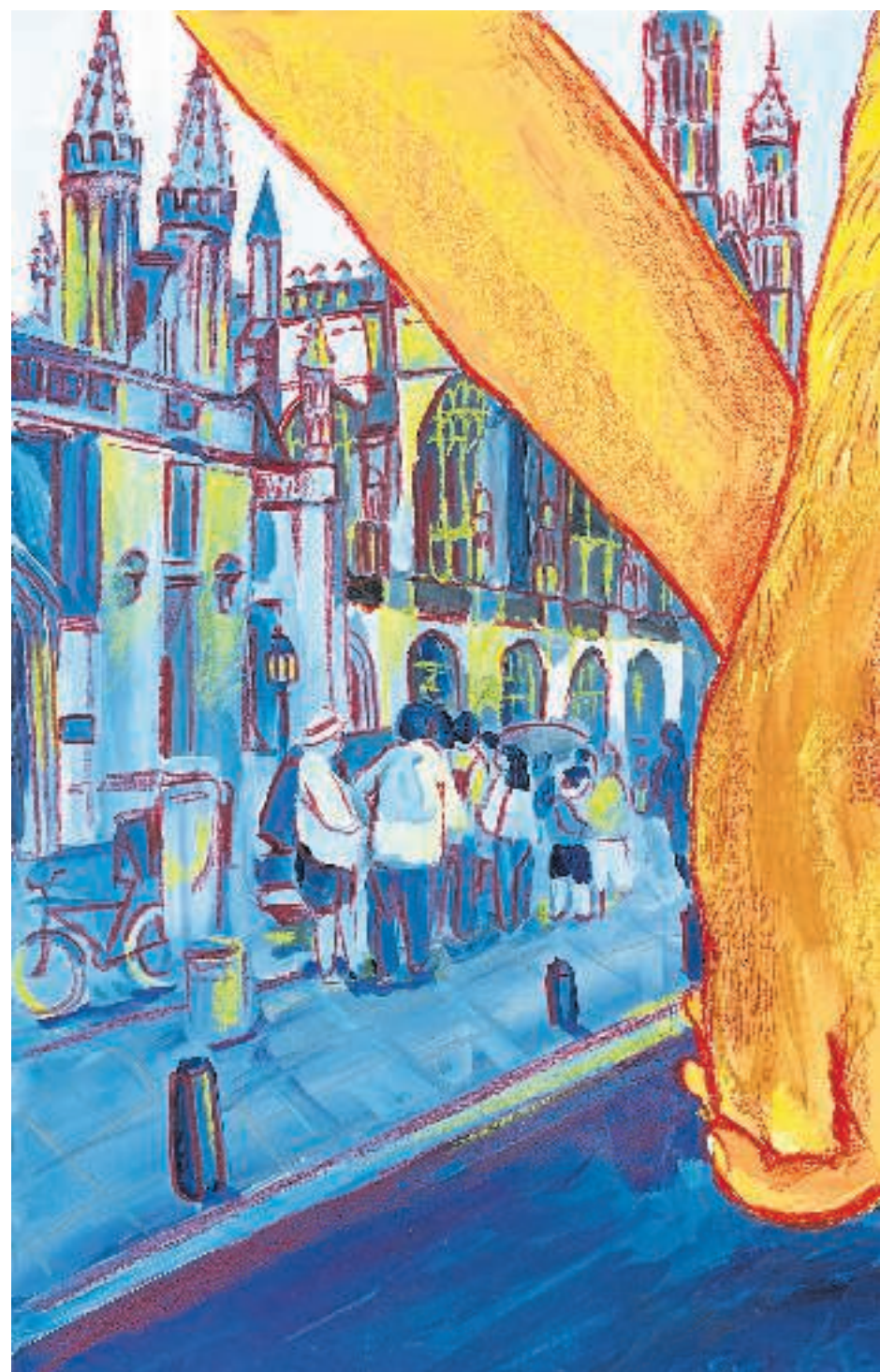
It's fairly easy to keep it a secret from your parents when you've spent a night picking vomit out of your hair after a nasty night out. It's fairly easy to keep it a secret from your parents when you've managed to rack up a library fine that's embarrassingly big. And it's fairly easy not telling your parents you have a boyfriend.

There are some aspects of our

► **When will interracial relationships be seen as normal?**

◄ **"My boyfriend teases my inability to use chopsticks, I tease his inability to eat a spicy curry"**

*"I am increasingly questioning whether it is my responsibility to educate people"*



personalities that we choose to keep separate from our relationships with our parents – this does not make them 'oblivious,' but rather just like any other parent who doesn't know every intimate detail about their child's life. Having to feel like I have to justify this to people who are 'oblivious' to my culture is frustrating and tiresome.

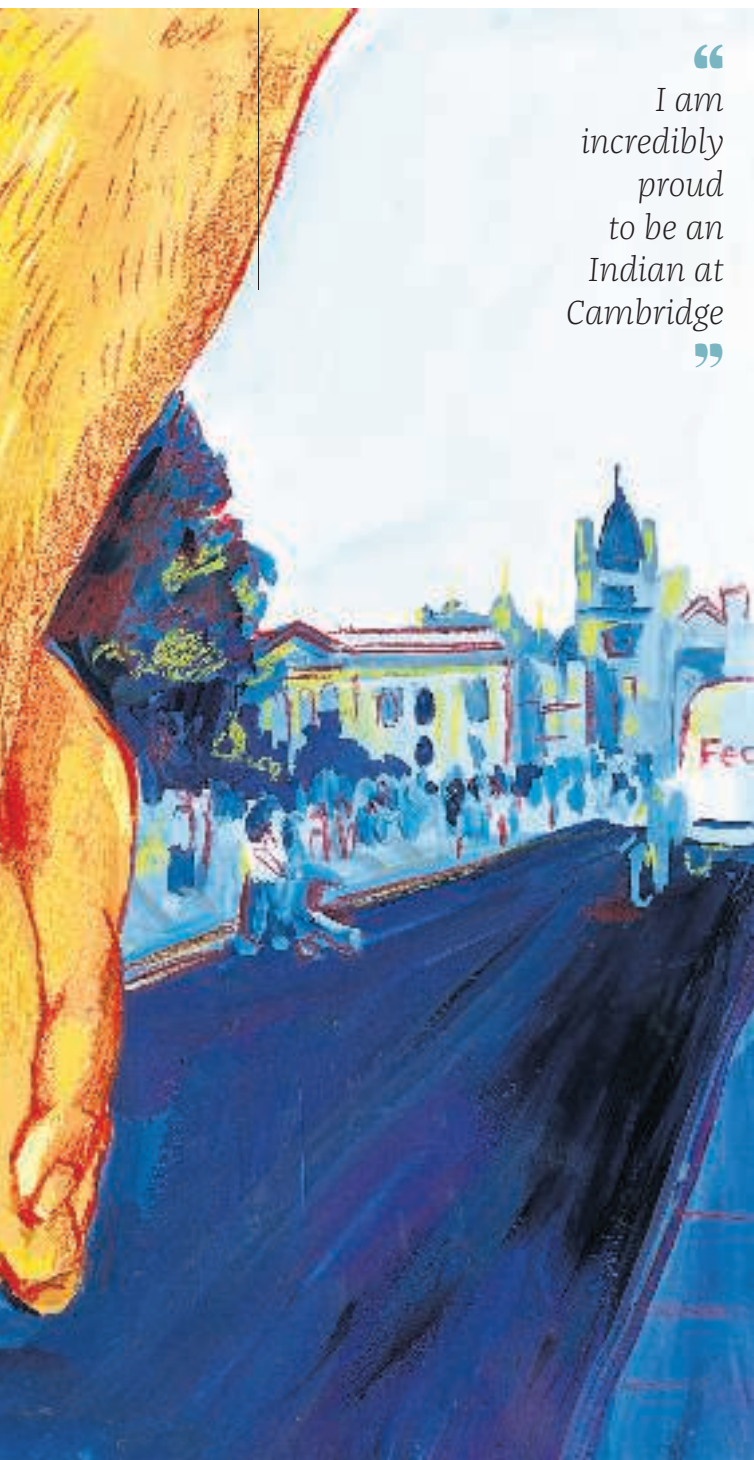
I am incredibly proud to be an Indian at Cambridge – we have great food, a rich culture, and a moving history which I love to talk about when asked about by non-Indian individuals. Indian culture almost parallels Western culture in most senses, and it is unsurprising that those who are not aware of my culture find some aspects of it alien. However, my time at Cambridge has made it explicit that individuals are completely unaware that certain comments they make about different cultures can be highly offensive and unwelcome.

When I talk about how my culture has shaped my experiences, please do not respond with 'That's so strange,' 'Why on earth do you guys do that?' and 'Wow, that makes no sense to me.' Not only do I feel as though you are attacking my culture, you are also attacking my confidence to speak about my identity. As a result, I have increasingly found it much easier





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I am  
incredibly  
proud  
to be an  
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to subdue myself in conversation than try to have to justify my culture to those who do not respect it. You are inadvertently silencing me because I do not conform to your Western conceptions of what a student at Cambridge should be like.

Instead, I hope that you tell me how fascinating it is that my culture differs from yours. Tell me how you love Indian food, and about that kitchen disaster that occurred when you tried to cook a curry. Tell me about how you love that one Indian song they seem to play at every club in Cambridge on a night out. Ask me about India, and all the places there you plan to travel to. But please do not mock my culture because it is different to yours: try to embrace it.

In an environment like Cambridge, which is so diverse and rich in cultures from all around the world, take advantage of your ability to learn about different people and how their skin colour or culture has made their journey to Cambridge unlike yours. Take a little bit of your time to listen to the experience of someone different to you – the things you hear might change your outlook on your time at Cambridge. And who knows, maybe soon enough, interracial relationships like my own might not seem so uncommon ●

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## We need to talk about sex (ed)

How much do you really  
know about sex? Probably  
not enough, says  
**Finley Kidd**

The idea that the quality of sex education is generally inadequate is hardly anything new, but as with so many social issues, it constantly becomes dwarfed by a recurrent wave of topical matters that seem far more pressing.

As a result, the scope of discussion has been largely limited to the online circle-jerk of modern liberals and its full complexity is rarely addressed in the mainstream sphere. The schools that even bother with sex education seem content to reel off some basic information about contraception and STIs, before letting their charges go running off into the adult

world, secure in their newfound knowledge of how to put a condom on a banana. The truth is, the need for better sex education is far more urgent than it appears.

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My experiences with sex education have been amusing and incongruent at best, damaging at worst. I remember being sat down early on in primary school and shown a video (God forbid the teachers actually talk about sex themselves) that involved a montage of some cartoon characters getting it on in various positions with love hearts flashing around them. This was fol-

lowed by a real life recording of a woman giving birth, which was swiftly fast-forwarded, being deemed too ‘graphic’ for children. Despite being years away from any interest in sex or babies, we had been given a whistle stop tour of the key ideas – sex was fun and to do with love, but also babies, and vaginas were scary and not to be looked at unless in animated form. I can’t imagine who signed off on that one.

Again in Year Six, we were all funnelled into a big classroom to experience one of these enlightening videos. This one was question-and-answer style, with the presenter wrinkling his nose as a prepubescent boy asked what ‘wanking’ was, to which the presenter gave a totally androcentric response and asserted that we should instead refer to the act as ‘masturbation’ – a far more pleasant term. This approach was hardly improved upon in high school, where we were subjected to graphic photos of genital warts and other infections,

with students squirming and teachers stressing that if we only bothered to put a condom on, such horrors could be avoided. Not a far cry from the *Mean Girls* ‘Don’t Have Sex, Because You Will Get Pregnant And Die’ position. This kind of thing only serves to perpetuate a culture of fear and shame around sex, stigmatising STIs without offering much practical advice on how to deal with them, only vague prevention methods.

The effects of poor sex education only grow more sinister in relation to queer identities. Schools focus almost exclusively on a heteronormative, cissexist view of intercourse being between a penis and a vagina. This not only compounds the society-wide process of socialising children into compulsory heterosexuality, but can be genuinely dangerous for LGBTQ youth, who are left to grope in the dark for information about how to practice safe sex. Another topic that is shrouded in a troubling silence is consent, which didn’t even get one mention in my few sex education classes. Viewing sex in a vacuum without reference to its emotional implications or the contexts that surround it is to simplify an extremely complex matter into something merely physical. If this were avoided, it might come as less of a shock that the reality of sexual relationships can be confusing and complicated, requiring communication and care. Consent workshops at university are beneficial but come far too late, only after too many teenagers have experienced coercion and assault.

This inadequacy of resources from schools raises the question of where young people get their information about sex, if not in the classroom. Attempts have been made to combat the lack of education through platforms like YouTube and microblogging websites, which can be great for providing more information and creating an ongoing dialogue around sexuality.

However, these sources risk being too inflexible or reductionist, attempting to achieve the impossible feat of laying down rigid rules about healthy relationships without any context. Some young people might turn to pornography to learn about sex and develop their own sexualities. This creates unrealistic expectations around sex and largely divorces the physical act from the emotions.

In the initial stages of adolescence, teenagers might benefit from a bit more guidance than Pornhub and the odd Tumblr post. Arbitrary sex education classes or a one off ‘talk’ from parents is not good enough – it leaves young people without the necessary tools to cultivate healthy sexual practices or sometimes even to talk about sex. We need to shed the outdated taboo and do better ●



# Culture

Celebrating their 50th anniversary this year with an array of exhibitions in different spots across Cambridge while the main gallery is renovated, **Danni White** speaks to the Kettle's Yard director about his vision for the museum

In conversation with

## Andrew Nairne

Entering the temporary offices for Kettle's Yard, I was introduced to the gallery's director, Andrew Nairne, dressed in a grey suit and perched on his assistant's desk, with a huge amount of curiosity in his eyes. After recovering from his lively greeting ("Have you ever been to Morocco? I'm trying to find a house!") I was offered a seat on a chair from the Kettle's Yard museum. The site is undergoing an exciting new extension and the development will leave Kettle's Yard closed over its 50th anniversary.

The first thing I asked Nairne to do was to clarify what Kettle's Yard is. Most students will have heard of it, if not visited the house and gallery, but it is an unusual space: part house, part curated art paradise, where works of art sit alongside objects like carefully arranged pebbles. Nairne describes Jim Ede's vision as a "democracy of display", where each piece is given equal value, be it pebble or painting. He spoke of the house as "an artwork in its own right [...] full of extraordinary juxtapositions", but believes it is more than a display. People seem to love the space and light in the house as much as the art. To sit at a writing desk in the hallway to Ede's bedroom, facing a wall, Nairne describes it as a "place of catharsis, where your senses are sharpened and you can relate even more clearly to the outside world".

From the house, three small galleries were built in the 1970s, which have played host to wide-ranging series of contemporary and modern art, as well as displays from the Kettle's Yard archives. It is these galleries that are being rebuilt, adding a café, an education wing and new gallery space.

"The way we are thinking about our exhibitions programme when it reopens, is not a cosy little world of art appreciation", he tells me over peppermint tea. "We are trying to be connected and relevant through the interests and actions of artists".

I know Nairne worked for Kettle's Yard before leaving to work with big name artists nationwide, and I ask him what made him come back here. "I was working at Arts Council England before this, who fund a lot of public spaces. I was there for three years and discovered I enjoy policy and strategy, but I also need to be close up and involved to make change happen, and this opportunity came along."

I asked what Oxford-born Nairne's con-

nection to the city of Cambridge was. Despite the fact he has no 'real' connections, he loves the city and is "very proud to be part of the University: if you're going to be part of a university, why not one of the best universities in the world?"

He has had plenty of time to get to know the city over the five years he has been director, so we began talking about how Kettle's Yard had evolved in that time. "It's been very focused on the building project. The simple way of putting it is, I'm trying to create the Kettle's Yard that I want, down to the exact design of the door handles, so I'm making it for me, and hopefully other people are going to like it too. The shop, the café, everything should follow Jim Ede's vision, and that's why I'm fighting so hard for these door handles, to make sure the new parts of Kettle's Yard are far from corporate. It needs to feel personal and in keeping and have that level of detail and thought about it. It's William Morris' principles: it has got to be beautiful, or useful, or both."

During the talk of modern design, I was wondering out loud why Kettle's Yard is so important to a university that doesn't typically focus on modern art. "That's a very scientific question", he replied. "I think we need to do more work to make every student aware of Kettle's Yard in the first place. The Fitzwilliam Museum is an extraordinary palace of treasures but Kettle's Yard is something different. It gives Cambridge the edge in a way, because of the nature of the house. You ring a doorbell to be let in, you're greeted, and you can walk around the space, sit in the chairs and relax. It's a very different prospect. Ede loved the atmosphere of Cambridge colleges, but really believed the students needed a retreat, and this would be that space to go with a book. As Ede said: 'Every university should have a Kettle's Yard'."

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▲ Helen Frankenthaler's *Abstract* (1960-61) (Kettle's Yard)

◀ Jim Ede, the gallery's founder (Kettle's Yard)

▶ Christopher Wood's *Cumberland Landscape* (1928) (Kettle's Yard)



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◀ Andrew Nairne's portrait, and the interior of Kettle's Yard (Composite by Jon Cooper, images courtesy of Kettle's Yard)



tle's Yard to go from one site to a city-wide series of exhibits, but Nairne excitedly leant forward in his chair to tell me about the new projects. "When you take the objects out of the carefully created space and put them somewhere else, on one level you break the magic, but on another we have a chance to see those artworks in a very different context. One of the things we are discovering is that Ede had a great eye for art, and it will be great to see that in a traditional white-walled gallery space. It's refreshing. The obvious answer is: people are missing Kettle's Yard, and we didn't want to hide the art in a store in London."

That led me on nicely to ask about the 50th anniversary of Kettle's Yard: the gallery and house will be closed, and the locations of the new exhibits reach far across the city. I

wanted to know how Nairne considered town as well as gown, given the history of tension. "From our point of view on Castle Hill, there's a whole area of the city with a diverse community, that don't automatically come in and wonder around the University museums. We are working with them to give them creative opportunities they wouldn't necessarily have had. In a way, I want both town and gown to gain opportunities from each other, particularly with the new building."

I was very pleased to hear this, as someone that straddles the boundaries between both, but I wondered if he was concerned he wouldn't get the same footfall as he might near the historic centre. "This is very true, we have had to find additional resources and energy to work in North Cambridge, but we are still the Kettle's Yard concept and, at the heart of that, it is about life, art and creativity. We are excited by the thought that new audiences might come to the new building in the future [...] and like the new door handles."

It strikes me that Nairne is interested in keeping the 'conversation' of Kettle's Yard alive, and is participating in something special. My final question to him was to ask him what he thought was the potential for the new additions. "For me, Kettle's Yard as a masterpiece itself is becoming more important every day. I meet so many people who love the place, and they aren't just excited about a single artwork, but the feeling of the space. It seems worth trying to understand that. When we reopen, we can do a wonderful programme around the feeling of the house better than we have been able to in the past. We now have the mechanisms to elevate the gallery to the level of the house" ●

To find out more about Kettle's Yard, and the changes it's undergoing, visit the website at [kettlesyard.co.uk](http://kettlesyard.co.uk)



## Counterpoints: Contemporary Russian Art at Wolfson / Wolfson College

Until 18th December 2016

This exhibition, only open between 3-5pm on weekends, is based on the work of Alexei Lantsev. The title, *Counterpoints*, refers to the artist's aim to find a midway point between the "sensory and the structured; the emotional and the logical and, in this case, the figurative and the abstract", with different levels of abstraction on display. Visit [wolfson.cam.ac.uk/fine-arts](http://wolfson.cam.ac.uk/fine-arts) for more information.



11<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER

## What's on this week?

**REIMAGINING THE CITY** / Combination Room, Wolfson College



TOP PICK

This exhibition, part of the Kettle's Yard's *In New Places and Spaces*, draws together the ways in which different artists have reimagined the concept of a city, and both its real and imagined forms, including works from French, Swiss and German artists. The exhibition is free, but is closed on the 26th of November.

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup>**

### Viennese Greats: Mozart and Beethoven

West Road Concert Hall, 7.30pm

Pianist Toby Hession, the CUMS Concerto Competition winner, performs Beethoven and Mozart, accompanied by vocals. £5 for students.

[westroad.org](http://westroad.org)

**Monday 14<sup>th</sup>**

### Looking Away: Inequality, Prejudice and Indifference in New India

Winstanley Lecture Theatre, Trinity College, 5pm

Harsh Mander, a human rights and peace worker, speaks on the challenging subject of inequality, prejudice and indifference in new India.

[s-asian.cam.ac.uk](http://s-asian.cam.ac.uk)

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup>**

### Artist in Focus: Lucie Rie

Gallery 27, Fitzwilliam Museum, 1.15-1.45pm

To accompany Kettle's Yard's *Being Modern* at the Fitzwilliam, student Eloise Donnelly will be speaking on the ceramics of studio potter Lucie Rie, and her innovations and influences.

[kettlesyard.co.uk](http://kettlesyard.co.uk)

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>**

### Open Archives

Education Room, Museum of Cambridge, 6pm

Another talk by Cambridge History of Art students put on by Kettle's Yard, Lili Scott Lintott will be exploring the histories of museums in Cambridge. No booking required.

[kettlesyard.co.uk](http://kettlesyard.co.uk)

**Friday 18<sup>th</sup>**

### Lucy Porter: Consequences

Cambridge Junction, 8pm

Known for her astute cultural observations, Lucy Porter comes to the Cambridge Junction for a stand up routine that has won the praise of critics. Tickets still available, and discounted to students.

[junction.co.uk](http://junction.co.uk)

If you'd like to submit a **listing**, send details to [culture@varsity.co.uk](mailto:culture@varsity.co.uk)



# Kieran Hodgson

## ‘I have to construct funny things; I don’t think I’m very funny’

**Elizabeth Howcroft** meets the comedian and nominee for the 2016 Edinburgh Comedy Award, Kieran Hodgson

**H**aving worked for Kieran Hodgson’s jam-packed venue at the Edinburgh Fringe, crowd-controlling the hoards of people desperate to get their hands on a ticket for his one-man comedy show every night, my first question upon interviewing him was as genuinely curious as it was facetious:

“Are you funny?”  
“In person, rarely.”

I laugh and then point out to him that this can hardly be true; he made me laugh, at least. However, in a manner that is more earnest than self-deprecating, he explains:

“I have to construct funny things; I don’t think I’m very funny. I think I tend to be quite boring in real life, and then I find a way of transforming that boringness into comedy – but it takes a long time and requires a lot of effort.”

This is difficult to believe from somebody who makes comedy look so effortless. Nominated for the Edinburgh Comedy Award for the second year running, as well as being *The Guardian*’s No. 1 Comedy show of 2015, Hodgson’s show – *Maestro* – attracted big players in the comedy scene. Ian Hislop, Dara O’Briain, Mark Watson and Josie Long all attended, not to mention a five-star review from *The Telegraph*.

*Maestro*, following the format of his previous shows *Lance* and *French Exchange*, tells Hodgson’s life story through a mixture of narration, impersonation, anecdote, one-liners, and by sharing personal experiences ranging from the truly heart-wrenching to the downright hilarious. I ask him whether his comic talent, like much of his material, comes from his school days, and he explains how he started off by “doing silly voices and the old cliché of impressions of the teachers.”

“I was the funny voice guy. I wouldn’t say ‘class clown’ because I think ‘class clown’ implies a certain degree of popularity and coolness, and it was just like ‘Oh, Kieran does funny voices’ – that was about as far as my status went.”

His self-effacement, often found in comedians, is softer and more humble than flippant, and makes for an instantly lovable character on stage, with whose mishaps and misfortunes the audience are quick to identify. Yet, during the show, it quickly becomes evident that Hodgson’s life experiences stem from a

level of talent and ambition that makes him quite unlike anybody else in the room. For *Maestro*, he focuses upon his childhood ambition to write a symphony, and punctuates the narrative with live demonstrations of his symphonic composition, on the violin, as well as recordings of the Finchley Orchestra, of which he is now part, playing the final piece.

“The last few shows have always been about my hobbies,” he says, “and music’s something that I cared about,” a statement which belies perhaps the boldness and potential risk involved in the decision to subject a Fringe audience to recordings of classical music and jokes that appear to rely on familiarity with Classic FM’s shortcomings.

“I relish the challenge of trying to put a subject that a lot of people think is quite elitist or quite difficult to get into, to try and make that into an accessible comedy show for everyone,” Hodgson says. “I thought that’d be fun to try and get away with.” It is to his credit that he does get away with it, entirely. When I finally got in to see the show myself, I was left in hysterics, wondering why one doesn’t hear jokes about Rachmaninov more often.

At the age of 28, Hodgson is still at a relatively early stage in his career. Educated at Oxford, he explains how formative his time at university (tactfully absent from his autobiographical narrative) was in his decision to pursue a comic career.

“I was always a massive fan of comedy and comedians and dreamt that I could do it – but didn’t really give it any serious consideration. But I always knew that if I got to go to Oxford or Cambridge, I’d definitely want to get involved and see if I could hack it.”

He describes going to the Freshers’ Fair and signing his name at the Oxford Revue table as quickly as he could, before casually mentioning that, after auditioning, he got in and

became president after six months. Not allowing himself to indulge in the moment of my evident awe, he quickly oscillates back to his self-aware and self-critical commentary. Referring to his early experiences in student comedy, he remembers “so many mistakes, so many awful shows...” But he admits: “I think it was just it picking up really quickly after I got to uni was a really big indicator for me that I could possibly do it.”

Considering that there were over 200 Cambridge students at the Fringe this summer, many trying their luck with comedy in the hopes of making it just as Kieran Hodgson is doing, I ask him what advice he would give to student comedians.

“I think you just have to make the most of it,” he says. “Don’t wish it away – it’s such a safe space to learn so much. You can fail loads and it doesn’t really matter because you’ve got a really great audience there and there

► **Hodgson read History and French at Balliol College, Oxford**

are loads of people to support you.”

He describes it as “mind-boggling” that there are “talented people who are desperate to make like 100 shows a term”, demonstrating his enthusiasm for the creative work of others, which we see also in his show, during impressions of his childhood self, tragically waxing lyrical about Mahler to his unimpressed classmates.

Hodgson concludes by combining thoughtful reflection with the unashamed and self-critical humour which seem to be at the heart of his shows.

“I feel so lucky to have had a couple of years [at Oxford] because if I had come out into the real world and tried to do the stuff that I was doing when I was 18, I would have never gone anywhere near comedy, because the general public would have looked at it and gone...” (he pulls a face and conveys genuine disgust as he draws out the word ) “... eeuurgh” ●



## THE MAYS - 2017 EDITOR WANTED

Applications are now open to edit the 2017 edition of *The Mays*.

Interested volunteers should email [mays-director@varsity.co.uk](mailto:mays-director@varsity.co.uk) by midday on Saturday 19th November, attaching a CV and editorial statement (no more than 1 page). Individual and group applications are both welcome; shortlisted candidates will be interviewed week commencing Monday 21st November.

Published annually by Varsity, this book brings together the best new student writing and artwork from Cambridge and Oxford. This will be its twenty-fifth edition.

The selected student volunteer editor/editors will be responsible for assembling a committee of other students to invite submissions of prose, poetry and drama, as well as illustration and photography. Guest editors will also be appointed and involved in the process. Previous guest editors have included Stephen Fry, Nick Cave, Jarvis Cocker, Patti Smith, Sir Quentin Blake, poet laureate Ted Hughes and Roger McGough CBE.

[www.themaysanthology.co.uk](http://www.themaysanthology.co.uk)





## Varsity Introducing... Phab

*Anna Jennings chats to Tom Compton and Emma Lubel, two members of the team currently setting up a group to run activities for disabled young people in Cambridge*

### What is Phab?

**Tom Compton:** Phab is a national charity that promotes the inclusion of young people with disabilities into society on completely equal terms. Generally Phab clubs host events where guests (young people with disabilities) and hosts (volunteers of similar ages) are able to have fun together doing activities and forming friendships, emphasising ability rather than disability.

**Emma Lubel:** It's a UK charity run with other organisations – so our schools were involved with Phab, and we know people who've set

up clubs in other universities, such as Nottingham. It provides interaction and a social environment for the guests, and respite for their carers.

### How do you want it to work in Cambridge?

**TC:** We're going to host days or afternoons out to interesting places, like zoos or theme parks, and more local sessions such as arts and crafts or sport.

**EL:** Eventually we're planning to have fortnightly outings and we'll aim to have two

hosts per guest. A lot of the people who we are hoping will come to these events will go to day centres or to school anyway, and we don't want to make it too similar to that – we want to make it really fun.

### Why are you doing this?

**EL:** I think when you're involved with Phab you want to carry it on for as long as you can. We both did it at school and it took up a lot of our time, and now we're missing it. It's so much fun: you literally live their highs and lows. But also a lot of the reason why you do Phab isn't for you – knowing that someone else is having an amazing time because of something you're doing is incredible.

**TC:** When we were at school we hosted a group of young adults and children with disabilities for a week-long residential camp, and provided them with 24/7 care. It was really intense and absolutely knacker but amazing, and we gave them the week of a lifetime.

### What was the most embarrassing thing you've done as part of Phab?

**EL:** In my mind nothing that I did at the time was embarrassing, but it would be if I was in any other circumstance. Although I did have to get up and impersonate a seal in front of everyone.

**TC:** I think I went as a gangsta smurf in a morph suit one time to the fancy dress disco.

You can get in touch with Tom and Emma at [cambridgephab@gmail.com](mailto:cambridgephab@gmail.com) and find out more at [www.phab.org.uk](http://www.phab.org.uk).

## COMMERCIAL FEATURE

# The North Pole Cambridge is back!

18th November – 4th January 2017

Set in the heart of vibrant Cambridge, The North Pole Cambridge Ice Rink is back throughout the festive season; come and join us as we open from the 18th November through to 4th January. Skate in style at one of the most stunning open-air ice rinks the UK has to offer in this quintessential English city and the only outdoor ice rink in miles. After you have taken to the 600m rink, take a spin on the traditional funfair and enjoy the multitude of rides & games on offer, then sample delicious food. To explore The North Pole Cambridge, head to [www.thenorthpolecambridge.co.uk](http://www.thenorthpolecambridge.co.uk), adult ice skating tickets are priced at £11.50 and children under 12 – £8.50. If you are planning a family day out check out the Family Skate Ticket (for 4) available for £36.00. We're giving a 10% early bird discount to visitors who book Ice Rink tickets before 18th November 2016.

This year the North Pole Cambridge has teamed up with Heart to give you the chance to win £10,000 before Christmas. Just take a picture of you and your friends or family enjoying fun on the ice rink and share with @HeartCams on Twitter or Instagram using the hashtag #HeartIce10K. The competition is open to entrants aged 18 or above. Check the rules and further information at [heart.co.uk](http://heart.co.uk).

### 600M OUTDOOR OPEN AIR ICE RINK

Get your skates on this winter and enjoy one of the UK's most stylish open-air ice rinks nestled amongst the trees in Parker's Piece in the heart of Cambridge and the only outdoor ice rinks for miles. There is plenty of space to enjoy a traditional skating experience in a beautiful setting.

### FAIRGROUND RIDES

The North Pole Cambridge will be home to a wide selection of fun entertainment from the traditional to modern – designed to bring out the big kid in all of us. Check out the Bungee Trampolines, Santa's Slay Rides, Penguin Bumper Cars, Ski Slope, Snow Storm, Avalanche, plus a multitude of fair games. Rides start from £2.00.

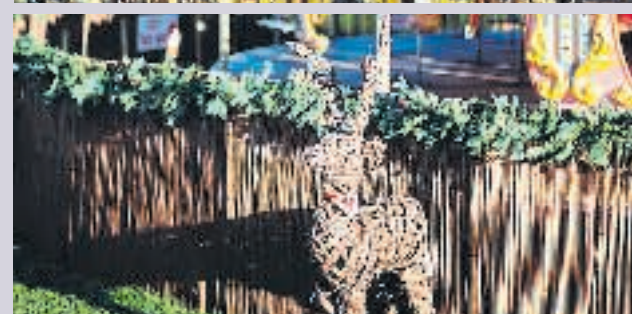
### FESTIVE FOOD

The North Pole will bring you a seasonal array of food and drinks to enjoy throughout the skating season: hot chocolate & marshmallows, mulled wine, warming cider and festive cocktails. Sample the Authentic German Swing Grill, traditional German sausage and bratwurst, speciality gourmet burgers, turkey & chicken stuffing rolls and vegetarian burgers.

### UNDERCOVER ALPINE CABIN BAR

The Alpine Cabin Bar will be open daily serving hot chocolate, mulled wine and seasonal drinks that you can enjoy in the cosy undercover Alpine-style wooden lodge while you watch the skaters take to the ice.

Head down to The North Pole Cambridge to enjoy a festive ice-skating experience with family and friends, great food and all the fun and games of the fair from the 18th November. Head to [www.thenorthpolecambridge.co.uk](http://www.thenorthpolecambridge.co.uk) to get your tickets. Tickets are £11.50 for adults, £8.50 for children and £10 for concessions. The North Pole is open Monday – Sunday: 11am – 8pm (last skate), and closes at 9pm.





# Fashion

## INTERVIEW

# Conversations on costume

**Flora Walsh** talks with costume designer **Alice Brightman** about her work



**What initially brought you into costume design?**

I turned up in Cambridge, went to the Freshers' Fair, went for a look around and thought I'd put my name down for fresher plays. I did a play, and from there came a snowball effect of everyone asking me to do more things.

**How do you think the set interacts with costume?**

With period pieces it is so important to get it right, with meticulous attention to detail. So, for example, for *Grief*, I went to Ebay and made sure I bought a *Woman's Weekly* magazine from 1958, so it could be used as a prop along with an authentic 1940s sofa set to collect the threads of all these individual visual narratives across the scenes. What made the whole piece truly beautiful was working closely with the lighting designer to see how it would look for the performance.

Another thing we did with *Grief* was to fit the colour and mood of the main character within the context of the set. Although the set did not change, she had many different scenes in different clothes. We wanted some of that drab life to be reflected in the colour and shape of the clothes. The detail with which her character was expressed through her costume made this the most intensive and complete understanding I have ever had for a particular character.

**What is the significance of using costumes and sets that are from a completely different era to the original setting of the work?**

The National Theatre is putting on a production of *Amadeus* at the moment, where the actors are clothed in regency dress but with a post-punk aftertaste – and I like that. I love seeing men in velvet breeches and Dr Martens. But I do think that it is very much the director's decision and I would not become involved in a play if I disagreed creatively with the director's vision. I really love the opportunity to play with the abstraction of eras and concepts. When we did *Eugene Onegin* with Agnes Cameron, we dressed the chorus in a rendition of Kazimir Malevich's *Black Square*.

The group of peasants who were in some of the scenes were dressed in mustards and reds as an abstraction of what we assume peasants would wear. I think with opera, the use of incongruous design is especially powerful. The singers can sing the same music, in the same way and with the same gestures, but if they are dressed in a costume that is entirely unexpected it makes you question the designer's motivations for this departure from tradition.

**Where do you look for inspiration?**

Anywhere from drag queens, club kids, and Leigh Bowery to watching blockbuster films and seeing how a huge production design comes together to create a particular mood. The last one that I was so impressed by was *Mad Max*. The costume designer, Jenny Beavan, won an Oscar for her work. Despite the complexities of designing for such a huge project, she made a cohesive aesthetic where every character was both terrifying and exquisite.

Social media has also made it so easy for us to connect creatively. Even looking at Instagram is so useful, because you can come across a stimulus and be able to credit its author. I mean, there is a designer I follow called Domonique Echeverria, who designs a lot of drag queen clothes, but she is a club kid herself.

She goes out in earth mother ensembles using nudity and fabric in a really thought-provoking way with a host of different natural textures. So I get a lot of inspiration from simply discovering new people online ●



“I would not become involved in a play if I disagreed creatively with the director's vision”

▼ **Alice is one of the main costume designers on the Cambridge theatre scene (Alice Brightman)**





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



## The devil is in the detail

The November chill means wrapping up warm, but attention to detail should always take centre stage. With clever layering, sparkles and accessories, we zoom in on the best street style spotted on the streets of Cambridge.

### MODELS

Cleo (Caius), Jackie (Pembroke), Nandini (King's), Archie (John's), Claire (Caius)

### PHOTOGRAPHS

Alina Khakoo  
Kitty Grady



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# Theatre

FEATURE

## Cambridge theatre has a class problem

The lack of awareness about accessibility in Cambridge theatre is shocking and disgusting, writes **Lana Crowe**

When only seven per cent of top British Oscar winners have been to comprehensive schools, how can Cambridge theatre expect to be accessible? All Cambridge students are equal – but some Cambridge students are more equal than others. It is wildly intimidating to discover that even after having wrestled my way into Cambridge against all odds, I fall far short in terms of the non-academic accomplishments that are the fabric of student life here.

There's a preconception that anyone can be involved in theatre – but when you find out that some schools have actual auditoriums, some students have directed plays, and some have been constantly encouraged by role models in the media and closer to home, it's not hard to believe that there's no point in trying. The arts, like many other industries, are subject to the systematic bias towards the middle class. A Sutton Trust report from earlier this year brought to light some concerning statistics regarding the educational background of Britain's leading actors. Of all the British winners of top Oscars (Best Actor, Actress and Director), 67 per cent were privately educated, and only seven per cent attended comprehensive schools.

Our eyes are often drawn to upstanding examples of Cambridge grads done good – recently, our lives have been peppered with the Redmaynes and Hiddlestons that we hope to become. However, this is more unattainable

▲ Performing at the ADC can be tough when you don't fit the stereotype (Louis Ashworth)

▼ Old Etonian Tom Hiddleston starred as Orestes in the 2001 Cambridge Greek Play (Greek Play Committee)

for some than others: being at Cambridge does not eradicate the systematic barriers within the arts that come with being LGBT+, female, a person of colour or working class.

I sat down with Seth Kruger, who has been in more than 30 shows during his time at Cambridge – and strongly identifies as working class. Seth is an example of someone who may appear to conform with the Hiddleston-esque stereotype, but in fact had to overcome a range of practical inadequacies and societal pressures to pursue his interest in acting. He confesses that he never had much opportunity to get involved in theatre in school, but “not because there wasn't a desire for it”. In many state schools, a lack of resources and a cultural disengagement from theatre means that school plays are few and far between.

“The barriers are invisible,” Seth tells me. “Cambridge is good at hiding its prejudices”. The plays that are staged at Cambridge are often those in which “the natural casting would be for ‘white, middle-class’ type actors”,

“The barriers are invisible”

and for those who do not conform to this ideal, “the whole process is ridden with anxiety”. Discrimination is directed more obviously at those “who can fake it less easily” than Seth, who confesses his accent is far removed from his East London origins. One Cambridge actor told me that “the theatre scene and Cambridge as a whole needs to rid itself of the idea that it's just for a certain demographic, and people of colour need to be convinced of this so we can utilise the platforms available and build a stronger community, and slowly remove the anxiety of the process”.

This is no bitter claim that privileged actors don't deserve their roles, but merely a call for acknowledgement that Cambridge theatre, like the arts generally and countless other industries, is not entirely meritocratic. This may sound obvious, but the lack of awareness of the subtleties of systematic discrimination in Cambridge is “shocking and disgusting”. How many people could have performed like Eddie Redmayne if their school had a stage for them to act on? How many people would have embraced the world of theatre if they had seen people like them on stage? How many more comprehensive school students would there be in Cambridge if they were not subject to a culture that tells them that there's no point in trying? ●



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## FEATURE



## Celebrating Teahouse

**Jun Pang** argues that reviews that overlook the cultural significance of *Teahouse* are examples of ethnocentrism

**T**eahouse goes out of its way to show that plays written and performed by people of colour shouldn't have to deserve to be seen. But the fact is that in Cambridge theatre, BME people are constantly fighting for control over their own narratives and experiences.

►►  
**Teahouse on stage**  
 (Johannes Hjorth)

The reviews that ignore *Teahouse's* contexts in a misguided attempt to distance art from politics are doing it a disservice; in their own way, they cast a shadow on students' and the ADC's attempts to promote BME participation in Cambridge theatre.

Something we took particular issue with was the repeated use of the word "stilted" with regard to specific actors' speech. While it is a valid criticism to say that certain parts of the play were 'hard to understand' in terms of volume, for example, to say that someone sounds "stilted" is to say that they sound stiff, self-conscious, or even unnatural. It is hard to miss the racialised subtext in this. It is true that many of the actors in *Teahouse* have distinct East Asian accents. But gauging from the laughter that pervaded the theatre throughout the last two performances, it is difficult to see how any of the actors could have been incomprehensible.

East Asian and other BME students who want to break into the Cambridge theatre scene will read these comments and subsequently decide that there is no point auditioning because no one will understand them anyway. It is the reality that many of us have spent years trying to correct our own accents to make them sound more white, or who have even gone so far as to changing our names so to better assimilate

into the Cambridge community, which really matters.

Ultimately, what is most hurtful is the fact that little attention was paid to the play's contextual significance. That *Teahouse*, a masterpiece of Chinese literature, is being performed for the first time in English is historically symbolic because it marks a confluence of two long-standing literary traditions. That it is being performed in Cambridge, an elitist bastion of 'the English canon', by a cast of East Asian students, is important because it asserts that not only

does literary merit beyond the white canon exist, but that such content can be consumed on its own terms, through the voices to whom that heritage belongs. The implication that the play is somehow not deserving of its preeminence, or that its merit was obscured by a bad translation, demonstrates a keen sense of literary ethnocentrism.

Reviews of performances don't always have to bring their contexts into consideration, but when a show bears as much significance as *Teahouse* does, not engaging with its politics obscures the point. When *Teahouse* and its all East Asian cast stepped onto that traditionally white stage, we were not just putting on another play - we were taking up space, and visibly asserting the fact that we exist. And we're not going anywhere ●



## Opening in Week 6

### Tuesday 15th

*Britannia Waves the Rules*  
 Corpus Playroom  
 7:00pm ('til 19th)

*Rules for Living*  
 ADC  
 7:45pm ('til 19th)

*Crazy Walls: A Sketchy Show*  
 Corpus Playroom  
 9:30pm ('til 19th)

### Wednesday 16th

*Bed*  
 ADC  
 11:00pm ('til 19th)

*The Marlowe Showcase 2016*  
 Corpus Playroom  
 4:00pm  
 (one night only)

## PREVIEW



'Dahl's tales induce hilarity at the most absurd things'

**Are You Sitting Comfortably?**  
 Corpus Playroom  
 8th - 12th November, 7:00pm

**A**re You Sitting Comfortably? In an audience with cosy blankets and bars of chocolate, evocative of your own warm living room back at home, I can't imagine that anyone could be uncomfortable!

Eloïse Poulton's recreation of four of Roald Dahl's most kitsch, flesh-creeping but fun stories for adults promises to be an absolutely fantastic production.

With ease she has envisioned a play that moves its audience from light-hearted comedy to sombre tones in a mash-up of emotional responses to various Dahlian dilemmas.

Presented through flashes of film, live music, recorded sound-tracks, multi-rolled characters, and organised by a creative and original team, this play certainly does promise to offer a five-night party on stage while capturing the weird and wonderful visceral life of Dahl and his work.

It is a project that "has wormed its way into

every corner of my mind," says director Eloïse Poulton, as she tells me about her process of adaptation.

I can definitely believe that, for it does offer so many different angles, opinions and scenarios. Yet the cast have reacted well to this vast diversity and have "absolutely sunk their teeth into the weirdness, and amaze me with the inventiveness". Dahl's tales induce hilarity at the most absurd things.

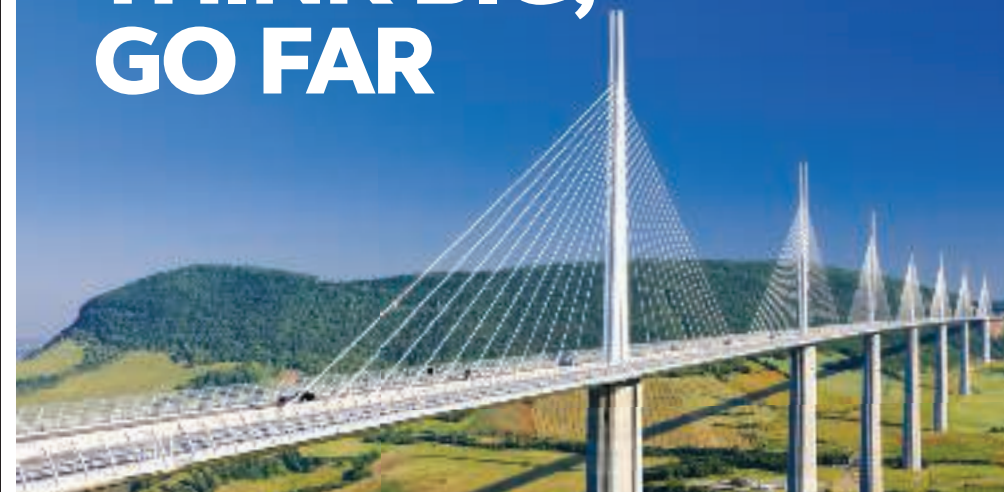
Amiya Nagpal, the creative consultant responsible for the weird and wonderful costumes and the sparkly publicity, says: "this production really does question just how comfortably you should be sitting in the theatre."

With such an intriguing premise, an inventive set, and a fun and creative cast, this show really does promise take you on a whirlwind through Dahl's short stories from the perspective of a young child. The audience is given the opportunity to re-experience the indiscriminate laughter and fun of mixed pleasures and despairs, before stepping out into the cold night air, back into the adult world outside the Playroom ●

Genevieve Cox

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# Music

COLUMN

## A new age for the album

Albums have transformed from a collection of singles to a work of art, writes **Perdi Higgs**



For major music releases in 2016, it is never just about an album – it is an aesthetic. By ‘aesthetic’ I mean a vibe: the music is translated into tangible forms of expression. Kanye’s *Life of Pablo* is an aesthetic. It is a colour palette, a clothing style, and an attitude. The release of an album, mirrored by complementary artistic expressions.

The concept of this is undoubtedly appealing, and appears to counteract an issue of music streaming culture where people only listen to a single song, rather than taking the time to experience the album as a whole. There have been efforts to counteract this: for example, the creation of so-called ‘visual albums’ that encourage the listener to appreciate an album in its full form. Beyoncé’s *Lemonade* short-film is an example of this, releasing an album upon multiple different platforms – developing a musical, visual and wholly artistic presentation. Creating an album aesthetic is another way of encouraging an individual to appreciate an album in its whole form, using creative and thematic elements to present the piece as holding its own unique ‘aesthetic’.

For music releases, it calls the listener to appreciate an album based upon individual tracks, and in a fuller sense. This theory seems to be proving true. For example, *Life of Pablo*: while Kanye released the ‘Famous’ track as a successful single, it is as a whole work that it has been discussed by the media. It appears as more of an art form; a collective piece that can be reflected upon as an ‘era’ of an artist’s career.

At the same time, it’s kind of a starkly obvious marketing strategy. As *Life of Pablo* becomes an aesthetic in its own right, you have teenagers paying \$200 for a t-shirt that says “I feel like Pablo”. So there is something irritating and a bit soulless about it.

This autumn, when Frank Ocean finally released his album *Blond*, it was accompanied by the ‘Boys Don’t Cry’ zine – and once again, an album is given an aesthetic. The zine contains photos of mysterious figures in a colour scheme that matches the album art to perfection. The long-delayed, painstakingly

created album is passionate and moving, but the seeming ‘trendiness’ of its promotional efforts can make you question whether people are buying into the aesthetic or the actual music.

This is not a criticism of marketing or promotion in general; obviously that is an integral part of the industry. The questionability of the so-called ‘album aesthetic’ is that it can make you doubt the centrality of the music within all of this.

That sounds overly cheesy but we can’t deny that it matters. If someone is making a form of ‘immersive cultural experience’, where an album is part of collection with a short film, interpretative dance and an art collection, that’s really cool. But then what happens if you just listen to the music: are you missing out on the true experience if you only take in one platform?

These platforms can work to build one another up. When Andy Warhol first debuted the Velvet Underground band in New York City, they were part of a whole night of Warhol’s own ‘aesthetic’. Graphic films projected on the walls, with screeching guitar music deliberately designed to unsettle the audience. In this, the performers were arguably part of a wider art statement. Yet through this multi-platform performance approach, Nico (under the direction of Warhol) produced one of the most critically acclaimed rock albums of all time. So, perhaps judging the pop-up stores and zines of 2016 is too cynical.

With the effort taken to create an album, in a time where a song is instantly streamed and either ‘saved to library’ or ignored, artists are likely to search for a way for their work to be fully acknowledged. Creating an album is an art, and an artist has a right to want to exhibit their work in the most moving and interesting ways possible. Creating an aesthetic helps to give a real sense of the intentions of the artist.

It is a visible, readable, and wearable manifestation of the album, making it the most powerful ‘cultural’ statement it can be ●



▲ Beyoncé’s *Lemonade* is a visual album which adopts a holistic approach to music (Columbia Records)

“Creating an album is an art”

REVIEW

## ‘Hypnotic and trance-like’

The father of minimalism Steve Reich received a standing ovation at the Corn Exchange, writes **Ben Williams**

For the past few weeks, Cambridge has been buzzing with the news of Steve Reich. The father of modern minimalist music not only came to Cambridge’s Corn Exchange on Tuesday to give a talk, but also later performed as part of a concert with the pre-eminent percussion ensemble, The Colin Currie Group.

And Cambridge had a reason to be excited. Reich’s visit formed a very small part of a trip to Britain that is really about the world premiere of his ballet, *Multiverse*, and the UK premiere of his latest work, *Pulse*.

Reich is now in his 80th year and his conversation with Currie offered a unique insight into the composer’s musical development, as well as the man behind the music.

Over the course of an hour, they talked through Reich’s progression from sampling and tape recording in the 1960s to his writing for more conventional instrumental groups, albeit still mirroring the gradual ‘phasing’ techniques that characterise his early work.

In the concert that followed, which also served as the opening event of this year’s Cambridge Music Festival, Reich offered the perfect illustration of this musical process.

‘Clapping Music’, performed by Currie and Reich himself, demonstrates phasing in its simplest form, with four hands clapping out

the rhythms. ‘Music for Pieces of Wood’ then extends this out to five musical lines, while ‘Mallet Quartet’ introduces a harmonic element, written for two marimbas and two vibraphones.

The Currie Group are a truly exceptional ensemble and, by the time the lights came up for the interval, the audience was already deep in conversation about the group’s mesmerising focus and the almost trance-like effect of hearing Reich’s familiar music live.

The highlight of the evening was, however, Reich’s ‘Music for 18 Musicians’, a work that extends over an hour, combining his typically percussive sound-world with strings, clarinets and voices.

While Reich’s techniques had been thoughtfully set out in the first half, the wall of sound presented in this larger work, combined with the immediacy of a live performance, offered a hypnotic, occasionally overwhelming and truly unique musical experience.

At the start of his talk earlier that evening, Reich had said that there was nothing greater for a composer than to have their works performed.

This may be true, but something makes me think that the standing ovation that swept the Corn Exchange on Tuesday evening, and rapturous applause that continued long after the composer had left the stage, might just go one step further ●



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

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

To listen to Varsity's Spotify playlist, go to:  
[goo.gl/psEVsJ](https://goo.gl/psEVsJ)



## Choirs in conversation

Following 26 years at Eton, Ralph Allwood joined the University of Cambridge as Director of Chapel Music. **Karl Schwonik** caught up with one of the most influential 'voices' in the choir world

### Why are choirs so important to Cambridge?

Choirs and music have been at the centre of Cambridge life for centuries. Thriving communities often have music at their heart. The magic of good music is that, if it can be experienced, it will be preserved.

### What do you look for in young singers?

Much like rowing, when a choir group is in sync with

each other it pings, it works. In auditions, I look for good voice, good musicianship, reliability, sheer niceness, willingness to do more and, most importantly, enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is not the only quality a singer needs, but it is becoming so very important for the young musician.

**The world is changing rapidly. How does this affect your work in music?**

If all this change means anything, it's education. Firstly, we need to take full advantage of learning online. Music is not exempt from this, we need to do more of it as well. Secondly, we need to watch how children develop and give them more directed, personal choices. Why do we have Maths at 9am, Science at 9:40am and so on until we get to music after school? Education should be tailored for each child.

### What's it like to be allowed to walk on the lawn?

I absolutely love it! Eton and John's are partner institutions so I would come visit Cambridge over the years. But only senior members could walk on the lawn. The first time was pure bliss, but a Porter abruptly came over and summarily threw me out. I was speechless! ●

“Education should be tailored for each child”

11<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER

## Highlights of the week

### Friday 11th Cosmic Soup

Portland Arms, 8pm

Unwind from a stressful week with a dance-party featuring DJs from the popular Open Deck nights at the Arms.  
**£5 (door)**

### Saturday 12th Magdalene Music Society:

Alex Coutts, Organ

Magdalene Chapel, 9pm

Alex Coutts plays Bach

Toccata, Adagio

and Fugue in C,

BWV 564 in

this recital at

Magdalene

College.

**FREE**

### Monday 14th Slaves

Cambridge Corn Exchange, 7pm

This gritty, primal punk duo from Kent is on tour to support their recently released album.  
**£17.60 (standing)**

### Wednesday 16th Endellion String Quartet

West Road Concert Hall, 7.30pm

Cambridge's current quartet-in-residence plays a diverse evening concert of Bartók, Beethoven and Haydn. **£6 (students)**



# MEE and I

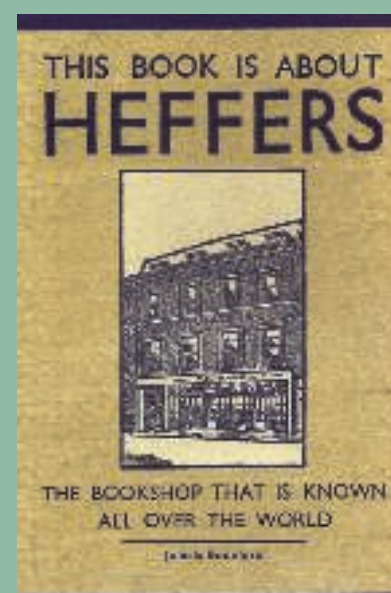
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# Reviews

## THE TOP 5

### Trump Cameos



#### **Sex and the City (1999)**

Carrie Bradshaw knows good....Trump. The property mogul appeared on the New York sitcom way-back in 1999, seducing Samantha at a bar with his blonde toupé and stacks of cash.



#### **Home Alone 2: Lost in New York (1992)**

Maybe the weirdest of all of his cinematic roles, Trump helps a lost Macaulay Culkin find his way in this seasonal classic. Ahhh, Christmas.



#### **The Simpsons (2000)**

The American cartoon eerily predicted Trump's rise to power 16 years ago, with Lisa, the first female US president "inheriting quite a budget crunch from President Trump." Don't say we weren't warned.



#### **Zoolander (2001)**

Trump, so hot right now. The businessman appeared as himself alongside his supermodel wife Melania in this 2001 cult classic starring Ben Stiller and Owen Wilson about the wacky world of male modelling.



#### **The Apprentice (2004-2015)**

You're hired! With these words, the President-elect came to the forefront of public consciousness with his role as the infamous main judge of the business TV game show.

Got your own **Top 5** List?  
Email it to [reviews@varsity.co.uk](mailto:reviews@varsity.co.uk)

## FILM

### 'A film haunted by ghosts'

A restoration of epic romance cinema, writes  
**Pany Heliotis**

**The Light Between Oceans**  
Dir. Derek Cianfrance  
Opened 1st November

★★★★☆

**T**he *Light Between Oceans* is a film haunted by ghosts: the ghosts of war, the ghosts of lost loves, lost children and of conscience. Derek Cianfrance has abandoned the semi-improvised stylings of *Blue Valentine* and *The Place Beyond the Pines* and produced a Merchant Ivory Gothic romance that swings from the heights of a Douglas Sirk melodrama to the depths of a Jimmy McGovern morality play.

Cianfrance's camera alerts you first to his newfound maturity. The loss of the 'naturalistic' shaking camera of cinéma-vérité welcomes in its place the placid calm of measured camera pans and aerial shots of the Australian isles. The visual formality captures the desolation of a society rebuilding itself from the ruins of war, shots of bucolic vistas peopled by no one. Adam Arkapaw, Cianfrance's cinematographer, holds the camera on the performers, their moral compromises and burgeoning love playing out on the fleshy terrain of their faces. As much as Cianfrance wants to capture the initially alluring isolation of the lighthouse his characters inhabit, he also wants to show its capacity for horror. One bravura set-piece shows the lighthouse caught in an epic storm as Vikander's character is suffering her first miscarriage, with the island smothered in sea mist, the staircase that will

“This is not naturalism but cinematic theatricalism”

the performers, their moral compromises and burgeoning love playing out on the fleshy terrain of their faces. As much as Cianfrance wants to capture the initially alluring isolation of the lighthouse his characters inhabit, he also wants to show its capacity for horror. One bravura set-piece shows the lighthouse caught in an epic storm as Vikander's character is suffering her first miscarriage, with the island smothered in sea mist, the staircase that will

▲ **Fassbender and Vikander are captivating in their portrayal of love and loss (Dream-works Pictures)**

lead her to her husband growing ever-longer in Hitchcockian fashion.

The ghosts of war are captured in Michael Fassbender's restrained performance. He catches the stoic repression of a man haunted by battle. His perennially clenched jaw, through a rigour mortis grin, makes each smile a tiny agony. As the façade disintegrates, one feels like they're watching a statue cry. Alicia Vikander, sprightly and forceful, fleshes out a character that could have been a shambling of tears into an uncompromising woman chased by grief. Her former skittish ebullience manifesting into twitchy mania as the film's events takes their toll on her person.

Sound is utilised like spirits in a room. The asynchronous use of the voices from proceeding scenes disrupting the present feels like the echoes of the characters' conscience slowly weighing in on their decisions. The narration of their letters fills the soundtrack with their romance, even as it is threatened and becomes a whisper of what it once was.

*The Light Between Oceans* is overlaid with allegory. The eponymous light between oceans is not only a beacon but also the love between Fassbender and Vikander, whose growing distance in the film's latter half is saved by its glow. The use of the discordant thumps of a piano as Vikander's character loses her first child mid-recital show the disruption of the pair's harmonious idyll and foreshadows the horror that is soon to come. Such symbols might sound portentous, but it is to misunderstand how the film should be appreciated. This is not naturalism but cinematic theatricalism. The objective is to eviscerate you emotionally through any means possible: visual, aural and performative, not through self-identification and the distillation of a genuine moment. Cianfrance wants to capture the spectacle of love and the horror of its destruction – subtlety won't do.

The film is not a total success. The pacing is ponderous and occasionally the shots of the swooning couple can grow tedious. But Cianfrance, and the cast, should be praised for aiming for something grander than his earlier 'grittily authentic' cinema. *The Light Between Oceans* is a throwback, following in the footsteps of revivalists like Anthony Minghella and Joe Wright in restoring the splendour of epic romantic cinema ●

▼ **Vikander adds depth to a character who could simply be a shambling of tears (Dream-works Pictures)**





★★★★★ = AMAZING  
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★★☆☆☆ = BAD  
☆☆☆☆ = ABYSMAL

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# Recent releases



◀ **Amy Adams' Susan feels trapped within her hollow art life (Universal Pictures)**

▼ **Sarah Hadlan's Miss Clack is a highlight of the series (BBC)**

## FILM

### Nocturnal Animals

Dir. Tom Ford  
Opened 4<sup>th</sup> November  
★★★★★

Soap opera of the rich and heartless? Eulogy for the squandered creative self? A treatise on the misappropriation of masculinity by toxic values? Tom Ford's *Nocturnal Animals* is all three, the plots swirling around each other in a myriad of collapsing narratives.

The central story concerns Amy Adams' art dealer, Susan, as she reflects on her successful, if hollow, life. The second, a novel, sent to Susan by her ex-husband, novelist Edward (Jake Gyllenhaal), is a revenge story set on the Texan border.

And thirdly, the story of Susan and Edward's courtship and divorce. Each story elides into the other, challenging the audience to identify what connects them. Ford's skill in this diegetic juggling act is notable. He connects each story through motif and theme, with

visual echoes such as naked redheads or pouring showers gently nudging the viewer into understanding.

This is a step up from Ford's debut, *A Single Man*. Where *A Single Man*'s ornateness veered dangerously into superficiality; given critical grace by the sheer force of its beauty, *Nocturnal Animals* utilises Ford's aesthetic sensibilities for something far more sinister.

The competing plots are given their own specific light and colour palette: the humdrum Texan backwaters given a postcard neon glow reminiscent of Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas*; the austere art world shot with an unremarkable steely grey and blue as though Amy Adams' art dealer is trapped in a metal box.

Adams and Gyllenhaal are fine in their respective parts. Adams, expanding on the icy reserve she cultivated in *The Master*, carries the film but her role is a cipher. The various plots actualise within her mind and through her interpretation. Gyllenhaal does a good line in whimpering sensitivity, but is underserved by a part that requires little more than anguished screaming and his stock-in-trade – pleading Bambi eyes.

*Nocturnal Animals* plays like a Chanel advert via David Lynch; Ford finds visual beauty within a nightmare ● *Pany Heliotis*

## TV

### The Moonstone

Dir. Lisa Mulcahy  
Available on BBC iPlayer  
★★★★★

Unless you are either retired or an arts student, chances are you missed this week's BBC adaption of *The Moonstone*, which was shown at the ungodly hour of 2:15 in the afternoon.

This was a shame: not being on prime time meant that the show was decidedly low budget, and therefore missing some of the scale and lavishness which it calls for. It's not visually stunning, but it is a valiant effort, and includes at least three moments of seriously good acting.

*The Moonstone* is one of those books that begs to be adapted for the TV – because it's all about the plot. Wilkie Collins' classic is celebrated as the first detective novel: it's a thrilling mystery that unfurls around the theft of the Moonstone, a priceless diamond plundered from India.

This adaption attempted to capture something of the fragmentary nature of the novel by making a different character the focus of each episode, and framing the story somewhat awkwardly with the hero, Franklin Blake, attempting to unravel the mystery a year after the theft occurs.

The first episode felt like a series of frustrating false starts. First we meet Franklin on a generic gravel pathway, which is apparently meant to be Italy, then we're back in England and he's being cold-shouldered by the beautiful yet slightly dull heiress Rachel Verinder, and then (finally) a series of flashbacks begin which tell the tale of the theft of the Moonstone.



It's all over the place – and the only distinction between past and present is the dark blue filter which all the present scenes are filmed in, presumably to show how upset Franklin is.

It picks up a bit around episode three, with the arrival of Miss Clack, Rachel's self-righteous and deeply hypocritical cousin, acted hilariously by *Miranda's* Sarah Hadland. But it is episode four that truly captures the essence of *The Moonstone* with the beautifully sorrowful story of Rosanna Spearman, who, hopelessly pining away in unrequited love, eventually commits suicide in the Shivering Sands. Jane McGrath steals the show, mingling desperate delusion with a kind of nobility in her portrayal of Rosanna.

What's really missing in this adaption is India: that sense of 'otherness' which pervades the novel, that the real thieves in this story are the British Empire. A book like *The Moonstone* is really too big to do justice to on a small budget – and this is where it falls short of reaching its potential. That said, it provides an intriguing mystery and some excellent facial hair – a necessary feature of every successful period drama ● *Ellie Sanderson*



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## Sport

# Double joy for Jesus at Queens' Ergs

**Keir Baker**  
Sports Editor

Rowers from Jesus College Boat Club (JCBC) enjoyed a fine night at Queens' Ergs 2016 on Tuesday evening at Queens' College's Fitzpatrick Hall, as the Jesuans' Novice NW1 crew and Mixed Senior crew secured first place in their respective categories.

Elsewhere, there was success for the Gonville & Caius NM1 crew as they finished top in their category and for Robinson's NM2 crew and Lucy Cavendish's NW2 crew, who each finished as the fastest novice Seconds boats in their respective competitions.

Queens' Ergs is an intercollegiate rowing competition in which both novice and senior rowers from across the University's 31 colleges race in an 8 x 500-metre indoor relay on an ergometer, in what has become the second-largest indoor rowing event in Europe.

The 2016 event saw over 1,000 rowers compete and it is JCBC who will be best pleased with their performance, having emerged victorious in two divisions and only missing out on a clean sweep of all three main divisions by two seconds.

The night began with a number of preliminary heats, in which all the competing crews looked to secure their place in the 12-crew finals at the end of the night. A strong start in the opening heat from the hosts saw their NM1 crew top the table, pushing a strong Anglia Ruskin boat into second place.

Following suit in winning their heats were Downing NM1 and Murray Edwards NW1, while Jesus NM1 also prevailed in their preliminary race, leaving the rest of their competitors for dead.

A clash between Darwin NW1, St Catharine's NW1 and Jesus NW1 produced one of the most exciting heats of

the evening, with the Jesuans edging out their rivals.

And in the next heat, featuring crews of both genders, Caius' NM1 laid down a marker with a convincing victory while Homerton's NW1 held off their two rivals to take the top spot.

A 15-boat heat followed, which Newnham's NW1 won comfortably. But the effort put in by the rowers throughout the heats had begun to take its toll on the equipment: a technical hitch meant the performance of six crews required manual recording. This did little to detract from the excitement, however, as Downing NM2 came out of nowhere in the last 500 metres to edge past Trinity's NM3 crew and Churchill's NM2 crew.

And the lower boats continued to entertain in the final heat of the night, with all eyes focused on watching Darwin's NM2 crew fail to prevent Trinity Hall's NM2 and Wolfson's NM1 crews from catching them after they took an early boat-length lead in dramatic fashion.

The Mixed Senior boats got the first of the evening's finals underway, as 12 crews of experienced college rowers battled it out for the title. There were a number of fierce performances: a lightning-quick opening leg of 1:19:17 from Jesus saw them take an early lead, with Darwin, Anglia Ruskin and Selwyn ever-present threats.

But the Selwynites had too much to do and the Darwinians, recording two slow legs in the final part of the race, allowed the Jesuans to pull through to claim the first title of the competition, with an average time of 1:35:3 seconds per leg.

The Novice Women's final was a similarly exciting affair. As every one of the 12 teams put in a major shift, it was anyone's race to win early on but, as the legs passed by, Darwin and Caius were neck and neck out in front, with Trinity

running them a close third.

But, out of nowhere, JCBC emerged as the main threat after a massive seventh leg that saw them outstrip Darwin and Caius, who had to settle with second and third respectively.

Going into the Men's Novice final, the last race of Queens' Ergs 2016, the Jesuans were gunning for a clean sweep, with confidence high after their comprehensive victory in the heat. In the early few legs of the race, however, they were virtually anonymous, as Caius took an early lead, with Queens' and Anglia Ruskin battling to keep up.

And it was not until the closing stages of the race that JCBC began to threaten, moving into third place. But they had left themselves too much to do, and a calm final-leg performance from Caius took them over the line to victory.

**Novice Men's Winner:** Caius  
**Novice Women's Winner:** Jesus  
**Mixed Senior Winner:** Jesus  
**Fastest NM2 Crew:** Robinson  
**Fastest NW2 Crew:** Lucy Cavendish



▲ Over 1,000 rowers were in action at the second-largest indoor rowing event in Europe (KEIR BAKER)

## Defending football's poppy love



▲ West Brom's Irish winger, James McClean, caused controversy by refusing to wear a poppy at matches

(HOT NEWS)

► Continued from back page

on the 25th March, Republic of Ireland players wore a political symbol on their shirts in a friendly against Switzerland to mark 100 years since the Easter Rising. In 2011, too, the English FA managed to reach an amicable compromise with FIFA that allowed the England team to wear a poppy printed on an armband for a friendly match against Spain.

Understandably, Damian Collins MP, chairman of the House of Commons' Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, has called on FIFA to "clarify the issue". In response, however, FIFA commenced disciplinary proceedings against the Irish FA for their act of remembrance in March.

Clearly, then, the governing body of world football is guilty of double standards – but FIFA has never exactly been the bastion of justice and morality.

In light of what the rules say, though, it is worth examining whether the poppy nowadays is really a political symbol. Indeed, a spokeswoman for the Royal

British Legion – the founders of the Poppy Appeal – insists that it is not a "sign of support for war" but rather one of "remembrance and hope".

Not everyone considers the poppy apolitical, however. While it was certainly not introduced for political purposes, there have been movements against it since as early as the 1930s, when the Peace Pledge Union introduced the white poppy, arguing its red counterpart was associated with "military power and the justification of war".

Furthermore, some World War Two veterans have rejected the red poppy, arguing that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq took away the spirit of their generation. Others, though, maintain that it is a sign of respect for Britain's fallen soldiers.

Therefore, it must be concluded that the reason why FIFA considers it a problem for British football teams to wear a poppy is a precautionary one, based on the fact that it means different things to different people.

But they are wrong to intervene: a total ban is far too extreme. Some

people refuse to wear poppies for very valid reasons, and should of course not be lambasted for their choice. Others, though, deserve equal respect for choosing to wear one. It is highly probable that the great majority of those who wear poppies are not doing so in order to glorify war, but to remember the dead, just as those who choose not to wear one are not slandering the fallen but making a political point. Indeed, it is ultimately a matter of autonomy and choice, which FIFA cannot deny anyone.

Secondly, and more importantly, FIFA's intervention has diverted focus from where it should really be. It has become a story of the conflict between FIFA and the English and Scottish FAs, and not about remembering those who have lost their lives.

Thus, instead of focusing on the controversy, debating what sanctions may be imposed on the FAs for their act of defiance, football fans and the media alike should remember the real meaning of today: paying their respects to the sacrifices made by soldiers who have died fighting for Britain.

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# Charlie Amesbury ‘I’m playing in something that could be part of history’



**Paul Hyland**  
Chief Sports Reporter

For the second time in as many years, Cambridge University Rugby Union Football Club (CURUFC) have a professional player in their ranks.

A year after Welsh legend Jamie Roberts took up an MPhil in Medical Sciences at Queens’, CURUFC have been bolstered by the arrival of Charlie Amesbury, a winger for Aviva Premiership team Bristol Rugby.

The 30-year-old winger-cum-full back, who has also represented clubs as distinguished as Harlequins, Sale Sharks and Newcastle Falcons, is half-way through his first term at Queens’, where he is studying for a MSt in Social Innovation.

But, in some ways, it is surprising that Amesbury is even here: having played an instrumental role in helping Bristol Rugby win promotion to the Premiership last season, it is surprising that he has decided that now is the time to take a break from professional rugby and come to Cambridge.

“I’ve had a career of over 10 years in rugby,” he explains, “and I’ve always had an eye on educating myself alongside rugby. I’ve actually had my eye on Cambridge for a number of years, too, but I’ve always had a contract that stopped me from leaving rugby. This year, though, I felt that I’d spent enough time in rugby, so I could take a two-month break just to refresh myself and experience Cambridge before, dare I say it, I get a bit too old,” he laughs.

But the life of a professional rugby player is a busy one, and it must be a Herculean task to find the time to take up a course here at Cambridge. “I play better rugby if I’ve got something else going on elsewhere,” he says.

“If I’ve got a bit of structure in my outside life it helps me get structure in my rugby life. And rugby has a lot of highs and lows, and for me having something outside helps even out those highs and lows. Okay, the emphasis has gone on the academic work this time, but it’s something I’m enjoying.”

That said, rugby never manages to escape Amesbury’s attention for too long. Indeed, his part-time Master’s is aimed at looking for ways of using the



▲ Charlie Amesbury (front) is studying for a MSt in Social Innovation (KEIR BAKER)

me and him,” he says, apparently surprised that anyone would make the connection. “He’s a world-class player and I’m a good Premiership player: there’s a clear difference between those two. All I want to do is get my head down and get my studies in order and enjoy what Cambridge has to offer.”

But the prospect of representing CURUFC and being tipped as the key to the Light Blues bringing home their first title in seven years appears to genuinely humble him: “Considering that Cambridge haven’t won it since 2009, it’d be a huge achievement for Cambridge and a huge achievement for me if I was to play in it.”

“This is one of the best amateur traditions left in rugby. It’s one of the reasons I left Premiership rugby, to come and experience what this game’s all about. But also to do that in an environment where you’re being mentally challenged every day on your academic studies, it’s a real juggling act. So if the boys were to get the win it’d be a huge achievement for me and one that I’d definitely cherish for the rest of my life.”

But, with CURUFC still without a Varsity win this decade, it is clear that something must be done differently this time out. Amesbury regards the problem as a mental one: “Maybe Oxford have just got the mental edge after six years,” he observes.

“It can’t be that they’ve had six years’ worth of better players, so maybe there’s something in that. Maybe there’s something in being able to relax on the big occasion, and that’s something I’d like to be able to bring. I have played at Twickenham before and I have played in front of a big crowd before, and hopefully I’ll be able to bring a settling edge to the team if I can play, which I think would be needed because I’ve watched the last few games and they’ve been a real joy to watch. Just sometimes maybe to take control of the game, to control the tem-

po, you need someone to put their foot on the ball and calm things down.”

The transition from the heights of professional rugby with big-spending Bristol to a purely amateur set-up at Cambridge must be a major jolt. When asked how those two worlds compare, Amesbury is drawn into a big smile. “If I’m honest the pitch is amazing, but there are other aspects that are still old school,” he laughs.

“There are certain aspects which are still quite amateur, which is a good thing. It adds character to it, let’s say. And the romance of it is that it’s still an amateur sport. It’s played by students who study first and play rugby second, and I don’t want it to lose that spirit because that’s what really sets it apart from the professional game.

“And the Varsity match has been played on the same pitch between the same two teams for however many years, so I do feel like I’m playing in something that could be a part of history, which you only get maybe in professional rugby if you get to the final of the Premiership or a European final. If I can get into the Varsity team then that’ll be a big final for me.”

Securing a place in the Varsity team might bring with it a number of risks and challenges, namely a danger that he might be targeted by both the Oxford fans and members of the Oxford team. Yet, as far as Amesbury is concerned, they can target him all they like. “I’ve been playing at Bristol for the last two years, who’ve been the big spenders and who are a big team,” he says.

“They were the team that everyone wanted to knock off their block in the Championship, and teams would sometimes just turn out great performances when they have a shared desire to beat a big team like Bristol. So I’m taking my experiences from that into this run of games and hope that it’ll stand me in good stead.

“But again, if I was to play, I’m only one of 15. There are 14 others out there, if I can take a bit of pressure off them and let them flourish and play their best game, then I’m happy to do that. I like to think that I’ll suck in one or two defenders, and if I don’t get through, hopefully there’ll be space somewhere else to break through. If I put in a quiet game and the boys bring home the win, then that’s perfect.”

**100** Amesbury’s total points tally for Bristol Rugby after 45 appearances for the club

sport to help people from disadvantaged backgrounds get ahead in life.

A relaxed but never blasé attitude shines through when comparisons are made to Jamie Roberts, who was forced off with injury at half time as Cambridge were beaten 12-6 in the men’s Varsity Match at Twickenham. Indeed, Light Blue supporters looking for the second coming of Jamie Roberts ought to look again.

“There’s just no comparison between

“Hopefully I’ll be able to bring a settling edge to the team”

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# Sport

## CURUFC find that winning mentality

Cambridge

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Coventry

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Keir Baker  
Sports Editor

Cambridge University Rugby Union Football Club (CURUFC) put in a superb attacking display to secure a second consecutive win on Wednesday night, as they triumphed 33-21 against Coventry Rugby Football Club at Grange Road. Against opposition from the SSE National League 1 - English rugby's third tier - the Light Blues' scintillating play, spearheaded by Fraser Gillies at fly-half, saw the home side record what proved an unassailable lead.

The home side began the match on the front foot, with Rory Triniman's break through the Midlanders' line stopped just yards from the whitewash. But then Gillies fired the ball out to Charlie Amesbury, who beat his man with ease and handed Lare Erogbogbo with a chance he could not miss in the right corner. Gillies extended CURUFC's lead to 7-0 with a sublime conversion from right on the touchline: his first in what would be a virtuoso display of goal-kicking.

Throughout the opening period, the Light Blues confined the away side to their own half thanks to strong defensive play and high line speed, forcing the Midlanders into unforced errors. But CURUFC remained a threat, particularly in the deceptively quick Tim Bond. It was skipper Daniel Dass who grabbed the Light Blues' second try: on 18 minutes, he showed the elusiveness of a winger to beat two men and touch down in the right corner. Gillies added the conversion again to take the score to 14-0.

Moments later, CURUFC crossed the whitewash again to take a 21-0 lead. A quick tap from Sebastian Tullie fed Richard Bartholomew to charge towards the line and, despite the flanker being pulled down, the ball reached Triniman who fed Erogbogbo to score his second try.

The Light Blues were dominating across all areas of the park: two huge

hits from Erogbogbo and superb ripping work in contact from Fionn Dillon Kelly nullified any Coventry threats. On the 33rd minute mark, the home side found yet another score as a cheeky chip into the left corner was caught by Henry King. His try was converted by Gillies to see the scoreboard read 28-0.

As the clock entered the red, however, Coventry grabbed a foothold in the game. Intense attacking play from the away side kept the CURUFC defence on its toes, but the Light Blue resistance was to eventually crumble as Jay Heath crossed and scored. And the first half had still more drama to come: as Hollingsworth's conversion took the score to 28-7, CURUFC flanker Tom Stanley was sent to the sin bin for 10 minutes for an unknown transgression.

The Light Blues thus began the second half with 14 men, and Coventry took advantage. They forced CURUFC into conceding a number of penalties close to their try line, eventually forcing referee Ryan Fraser into awarding the Midlanders a penalty try.

Rattled, CURUFC were committing unforced mistakes all over the park, and it took fantastic work at the breakdown from Dass and Lola Erogbogbo and a try-saving tackle from King to keep Coventry at bay. But, at the midway stage of the second half, the away side edged closer to getting equal as Hollingsworth crashed over the CURUFC whitewash to take the score to 28-21.

Dass had spoken pre-match about the need for CURUFC to develop a "winning mentality" and, heeding their captain's words, the Light Blues began to re-establish themselves. With five minutes left, Michael Phillips' miss pass fed King in the left corner for his second try, taking the score to 33-21.

And there was still time for more drama: a scuffle saw the referee delve into his pocket yet again to show a yellow card to Coventry's Steve Hipwell, and a red to CURUFC's Stanley for his second sin-binnable offence of the game.

But this was to be a mere blemish on a fine CURUFC performance which showed great promise for the much-anticipated Varsity match. The Light Blues will be hoping that their current attacking edge will end Oxford's six-year domination of the fixture.



*Interview:*  
CURUFC's Charlie Amesbury on next month's Varsity match  
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CURUFC kept Coventry's line-out under pressure throughout

(KEIR BAKER)



*Charlie Stone*  
Poppies have a place on British pitches

At tonight's World Cup qualifier, the England and Scotland football teams are set to defy a FIFA ban on wearing black armbands featuring poppies.

The 11th November is the day when the UK traditionally remembers its war dead, with the poppy representing the immeasurable sacrifices made by those soldiers who have died for Britain since the Royal British Legion adopted the flower as a symbol after its formation in 1921. And through the decades, in the weeks leading up to and around the 11th November, many British sporting teams have had the poppy emblazoned upon their chests and held minutes of silence before matches to pay their respects to the fallen.



BROOKLYN PERALNTO

FIFA, though, have inexplicably stepped in and banned the poppy for both the English and Scottish teams, citing the organisation's long-standing prohibition of political, religious or commercial messages on shirts.

Never, however, has the governing body of world football specified the punishment that would be exerted upon the football associations of countries not complying with this ban. FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samba Diouf Samoura warned that "any kind of sanction could follow". She reiterated FIFA's reasoning, remarking that "Britain is not the only country that has been suffering from the result of war".

This is undeniably true, but contrasts markedly with FIFA's stance in previous years. Indeed, it emerged soon after the announcement of the poppy ban that

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