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VARSLITY

Students and academics fight back against government

Sophie Penney
Senior News Correspondent

Staff and students at Cambridge have signed an open letter to the University Council and the General Board of Education voicing concerns about its participation in the second year of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), which will raise tuition fees to at least £9,250.

The TEF, described by the government as a "system of recognising excellent teaching in higher education", links the funding of teaching, and therefore fees, to teaching quality.

This will be assessed by a panel of academics, employers and students, using metrics including National Student Survey (NSS) results, student retention rates, and the proportion of graduates in employment or further study.

The open letter, which claims "Cambridge has no obligation to participate in TEF" and "does not need" it, has been signed by 191 members of the University, including lecturers, a Director of Studies, CUSU sabbatical officers, alumni and current students.

The main concerns raised are tuition fee increases and its "spurious metrics" for measuring quality. The letter also claims that TEF encourages "competition" over collaboration and that the framework fails to consider other structural issues that devalue teaching such as low pay, pension cuts and gendered pay gaps.

Fees will increase to £9,250 in 2017,

with the potential for further increases depending on teaching quality. It is not yet known if this increase will apply to current Cambridge students, as will happen at the University of Exeter.

The open letter asks: "How can we expect students to be excited about and lend their voice to a model of excellence which is conditional on greater fees and greater debt?"

It also claims that the rise may alienate potential low-income applicants: "differential fee caps across universities, which TEF allows, will send a clear message to the most disadvantaged students that 'excellence' comes with an additional price tag and is not for them... academic potential, not the ability to pay more should determine who studies here."

The government claims that the assessment process will explicitly take into account outcomes for disadvantaged groups.

The letter also criticises the metrics on which judgements will be based: "Measures like graduate employment outcomes and, to a lesser extent, the blunt NSS student satisfaction scores have absolutely nothing to do with innovative and challenging teaching. For example, we know that graduate destinations are largely informed by a student's social background, race, gender and disability."

Audrey Sebatindira, CUSU Women's Officer and one of the letter's

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Love trumps hate: Cantabs gather for show of solidarity after US election results News 4-5



Revealed: CUSU national award entry filled with exaggerations

Monty Fynn
News Correspondent

CUSU's self-nomination for a National Union of Students award was riddled with factual errors and exaggerations, a Varsity investigation has found.

CUSU was a finalist in the 'Small and Specialist Union' category of the annual NUS Awards, which recognise the achievements of student unions across the country. However, analysis by Varsity showed that CUSU's nomination for the award contained a number of factual

discrepancies.

The nomination was submitted in Lent Term 2016 by CUSU's Chief Executive Officer, Mark McCormack, and aimed to summarise the achievements of the CUSU team led by Priscilla Mensah, last year's president.

At the top of its list of achievements is the "Abolition of 'Class Lists' and removal of the infamous Tompkins Table" which it said "publicly pitch[es] colleges against each other by the number of Firsts students at each college are awarded."

At the time nominations closed in May 2016, not only were Class Lists not

abolished but the Grace proposing their abolition would not be submitted to Regent House for another two months. The Tompkins Table, which ranks Cambridge colleges on how their undergraduates perform in exams, was also published by Varsity this July.

Furthermore, in a referendum earlier this month, students voted to overturn a motion to campaign for the abolition of Class Lists which was previously passed by CUSU Council, with a majority of nearly 11 per cent. CUSU has now been

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EDITORIAL

Don't wish it all away just yet

Deadlines are approaching, yet still seem far away. Week Five is past, but Bridgemas is still a teasing seven days away. Before we know it, undergraduates will be home again, yet the erratic metaphorical loading bar of termly progress still has a small distance left to travel.

For many students, the most intense period is over, and the final academic week of term represents a winding down – a time to consolidate and wrap up ends which were loosened in Freshers', ignored in Week One and more or less totally forgotten by Week Two. Deadlines which in the heady, carefree days of October felt forever away now loom large on the horizon. Now is the winter of our diss content.

It's easy to forget how the end of Michaelmas term feels for first years – the sensation that after the incomparable rush and intensity of a Cambridge term, you are thrust once again into home life, with its inevitable pleasures and frustrations.

At the beginning of the term, *Varsity* wrote in an editorial about Freshers' Fair, and the feelings of FOMO it inevitably produces.

For most undergraduates, quickly doing the maths can feel a little scary – to be a ninth (that's 11.1 per cent recurring!) of the way through your degree already can make it feel like things are moving at a speed beyond your control. It must be even more striking for Master's students.

Especially for those in their final year, it's tempting to constantly begin to produce signposts. You begin to make an unconscious note of every time you're doing something for the last time – the last Michaelmas term, the final Bridgemas formal, the concluding episode of a two-year Cindies' saga... you get the point. This can only increase the sense that Cambridge is running through your fingers – but it isn't without any value.

The fast pace of term makes it difficult for us to relish our experiences, but it's important to take stock at times like this, and realise that, clichéd as it sounds, it's better to be happy things happened at all than to dwell too much on their disappearance.

If you're a final-year student lucky enough to have got tickets to a Bridgemas formal, don't waste your time wallowing in self-pity because it will be your last – instead, take the time to celebrate an experience which you might never have again.

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News

Up to £700 snatched from Cambridge RAG office

● *Police seek witnesses after three charity boxes were taken from 17 Mill Lane over the weekend*

Anna Menin and Louis Ashworth

Police are seeking witnesses after £700 belonging to Cambridge RAG was stolen from their offices on 17 Mill Lane.

The theft of three boxes containing the charity's cash occurred at some point over the weekend, but it is not known exactly when the incident occurred.

The building, which is between Mill Lane and Silver Street, is managed jointly by CUSU and the Graduate Union. It houses both student unions.

RAG (which stands for 'Raising and Giving') is a student society which organises events to raise money for 10 local, national and international charities of students' choosing. According to their Facebook page, the society raises "in the region of £100,000 each year".

It has an Executive Committee of four student volunteers and one full-time paid member of staff, who is elected by the organisation's Administrative Committee.

Their most popular events include 'Jailbreak', in which participants are given 36 hours to get as far away from Cambridge as possible without spending any money, and 'Blind Date', which matches up students from both Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University.

Their most recent event was 'Varsity LOST 2016!' on 5th November, in which 112 Cambridge students were dropped off in Kings Lynn, and given 24 hours to race to Birmingham against a group of Oxford students.

Participants were not allowed to spend any money during their journey, and had to complete a number of challenges on the way. The event raised over £14,000.

Speaking to *Varsity*, Cambridge RAG President Will McDermott confirmed that the theft had taken place, saying:



"We reported the matter to the police and we are working with them." He also appealed: "If anybody has any information please let us know."

A police spokesperson said: "We are investigating a theft which occurred between 7:15pm on 11th November and 9:30am on 14th November in Mill Lane, Cambridge. Three charity boxes containing up to £700 were taken from the premises".

"Anyone with information is asked to call police on 101, or Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111", they added.

Varsity contacted CUSU and the University for comment but had not received a response at the time of publication.

▲ A door leading to RAG's office at 17 Mill Lane (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

PSEUDOSCIENCE

Scientific bullshit is bad for your health

With 'facts' now less true than ever before, it's all too easy for quacks to peddle snake oil. This has many forms, some of which are harmless (astrology, perhaps, or feng shui). It's not always innocent, however – certain forms of 'scientific nonsense' can be damaging to health. **Bethan Clark** and **Zi Ran Shen** take aim at the pseudosciences of homeopathy and diet.

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FEARS FROM THE STATES

Mike Pence, the real threat to LGBT people

Trump is an irrelevance, writes **Miranda Imperial**. It is the Vice President-elect, Indiana Governor Mike Pence, that the LGBT community has to fear. He may have slipped under the radar, beneath his running mate's bravado, but Pence's support for conversion therapy and 'the liberty to discriminate' is sincere and disturbing. Social media provides an exciting opportunity to fight back, though.

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WORLD NUMBER ONE

Andy Murray, the bright spot of 2016

With the world seemingly falling off a cliff as 2016 continues its unrelenting journey of death, destruction and elections, **Nick Chevis** points out that depressed Brits can find some solace in an unexpected place – Andy Murray. Against endless uncertainty, Murray can always be relied upon to serve up something to be proud of – which we shouldn't take for granted.

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VARSlTY

News

Cambridge comes together to stand

● *Students hang messages of hope outside the Alison Richard Building in reaction to US election result*

Ankur Desai
Deputy News Editor

Dozens of brightly coloured tags, carrying messages of hope and solidarity, were hung on trees outside the Alison Richard Building at the Sidgwick Site on Tuesday in a stand against hate and xenophobia.

The display, organised by a group of around 10 students across Cambridge, was arranged in response to recent events, such as the outcome of last week's US presidential election. On what was a grey and overcast morning, the colourful spectacle attracted the attention of many passers-by, who were encouraged to write their own messages.

The mood at the event was cheerful, in defiance of the rise in xenophobia which has been perceived in countries including the UK over the past few

months. In Cambridge, stickers with the slogan 'Refugees not welcome' were spotted in a park in Romsey at the end of September.

Emma Goldberg, a Gender Studies MPhil student at Sidney Sussex, was part of the group of students who came up with the idea. Having become concerned about examples of bigotry and xenophobia around the world, she said that the "the impetus for doing this project was the US election last week, and in response to the wave of hate crimes that emerged, we wanted to signal our support as Cambridge students for the values of love, support and resilience."

Loui Williams, a Newnham student studying for an MPhil in Gender Studies, and also helped organise the event, said: "It's been a great way to start conversations with people about the US election and other events such as the recent arrests of Kurdish politicians, as

"It's been fantastic to have people come together in this way"

well as violence in Syria and the rise of hate crimes.

"We've had messages in a range of languages and it's been fantastic to have people come together in this way," Williams also thanked those who came to write or read the messages, and said the tags would remain on the trees over the coming days for people to view them.

Kerry Mackereth, a Corpus Christi student also studying for an MPhil in Gender Studies, said: "We think there's justifiably a place for anger in the light of recent events, but we also want to encourage unity and love as the answer to hatred."

Megan Jones, a Linguist at Clare College, who wrote a message on a tag, said she liked the idea that the display combined nature with love, and commented: "It's beautiful to see people taking time out of their day to write messages of love to all branches of humanity."



against hatred after Trump victory



The Sidgwick Site was brought alive with colour as students showed solidarity in wake of a perceived rise in bigotry.

(Photographs by Lucas Chebib)



News

Cambridge contingent prepares to head to London protest

Aoife Hogan
News Correspondent

A 'United for Education' demonstration, led by the National Union of Students (NUS) and the University and College Union (UCU), will take place in London tomorrow, with a CUSU-supported Cambridge contingent set to attend.

Alongside other students and staff from across the UK, they will demand improvements in the accessibility of further and higher education, calling for the reversal of recent reforms such as the proposed Higher Education (HE) Bill and an overhaul of current student finance policy.

The NUS has outlined its key policy demands, including: increased investment in FE colleges and sixth forms; halting the rise in tuition fees; a reintroduction of maintenance grants; and an end to private education company profit from student fees. They aim to "send a clear message to Theresa May", while showing solidarity for international students and staff "suffering disproportionately in this post-Brexit climate of heightened xenophobia."

CUSU have provided £540 for the hire of coaches to London, splitting the costs with staff and students from Anglia Ruskin who will also be in attendance.

Representatives from CUSU are also due to attend, including Education Officer Roberta Huldish and CUSU-GU Welfare Officer Sophie Buck, as is Dr Waseem Yaqoob, Branch Representative for Cambridge UCU.

Speaking to *Varsity*, Yaqoob said that the demonstration is critical in "showing the government the breadth and depth of opposition to its education policy," as both students and staff will protest together against the "unprecedented



threat" posed by the proposed HE Bill.

He claimed that almost unanimous opposition to the bill from universities across the UK had been ignored, threatening the introduction of "a system that has already proved disastrous in the US, lowering the overall quality of higher education – think Trump University – and pushing students further and further into debt."

"We are being asked to believe that the decreasing social mobility caused by high tuition fees and indebtedness can be addressed by the entry of poor-quality, deregulated commercial businesses masquerading as 'universities'."

Yaqoob also expressed his concerns regarding the 'Teaching Excellence Framework', a proposed measure of teaching quality reliant on criteria such

▲ Students and staff will protest Higher Education reforms
(ANDREW MOSS)

as graduate salaries, deeming it part of a wider "short-sighted, market-oriented view of education", rather than an understanding of education as a "vital public good".

Buck also expressed her support of the demonstration on behalf of CUSU, raising concerns about the research-proven "negative effect worrying about finances has on mental health."

On Wednesday evening, CUSU and Cambridge Defend Education (CDE) held a banner-making and discussion session in preparation for Saturday.

The NUS aim to prove that dissatisfied students and academic staff alike are a "force too powerful to ignore". Saturday's march is only one part of a series of student-led events occurring globally this month.

Oxford to launch first online 'MOOC' course

Matt Gutteridge
Deputy News Editor

The University of Oxford has announced the launch of its first 'Massive Open Online Course', or MOOC, in collaboration with two Ivy League institutions.

Using edX, the online educational platform established by Harvard University and MIT, the University has begun enrolling students for an economics course entitled 'From Poverty to Prosperity: Understanding Economic Development', due to be launched in February next year.

The course, which will be free to all, will examine the role of governments in the economic growth of developing countries, and will be led by Sir Paul Collier, a Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford, and Professor of Economics and Public Policy at the University's Blavatnik School of Government.

The Dean of Blavatnik, Ngaire Woods, said that she hoped that the online course would be "an effective way to expand access to knowledge beyond the classrooms of Oxford". The six-week course will be aimed primarily at university students, government and NGO employees, and education and business professionals, but will require no prior qualifications. All course materials, including video lectures, case studies, readings, and multiple choice questions, will continue to be available after the course has been completed.

MOOC courses have emerged as a major phenomenon in higher education. As of this year, the edX platform alone boasted more than nine million learners spread across over 900 courses, with many more available on other platforms such as Coursera or the UK-based FutureLearn, which first appeared in 2012. The CEO of edX, Anant Agarwal, praised Oxford for offering "access to an innovative programme that offers insights from a range of academic disciplines and a strong global outlook".

Supporters have praised MOOC for improving access to education, as most courses are free and require no resources other than an internet connection. However, concerns over high dropout rates (estimated at greater than 90 per cent), and doubt over the viability of offering accredited qualifications for online courses have led some to suggest that academia may become "MOOC'd out".

It is hoped that Oxford's involvement will add to the credibility of MOOC courses, which have yet to achieve the popularity in the UK that they have in the US. Professor Sarah Whatmore, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education at Oxford, said: "This collaboration will build capacity for the design and delivery of a range of other online education experiences as the University progresses its Digital Education Strategy. Oxford already has a strong reputation for delivering open educational resources that are used by students, academics and the public worldwide."

CUSU rallies students against Teaching Excellence Framework

► Continued from front page

signatories, has suggested that the metrics may be unfair to some lecturers: "a lot of the data for TEF comes from NSS results. Women and BAME lecturers have been known to receive disproportionately lower rankings due to the implicit biases of their students. If good teaching is going to be centred in a way that won't penalise minority lecturers, a better approach is needed."

The open letter stresses that opposing TEF does not mean that its signatories are not dedicated to "improving and nurturing" teaching: "By turning down TEF we would be saying precisely that we care enough about promoting teaching excellence to do it properly."

Speaking to *Varsity* about Cambridge's response to the TEF, Dr Michael Hrebniak, Admissions Tutor and Director of Studies in English at Wolfson College, said: "I regret this University's denigration of the vocation of teaching through the zero-hours casualisation of staff, a medieval caste system for employees and the instrumentalist prioritising of research 'outputs'."

"The need to reassign value to the process of teaching as a cultural necessity is thus urgent. But the Tory government's response is typically ignorant and incompetent, orbiting as it does around default market philistinism."

"This grotesquely misreads the purpose of a higher education, which is to create critically engaged citizens, not just enhance their personal market worth."

"This grotesquely misreads the purpose of a higher education"

The process is also impossibly Byzantine, proves nothing pedagogically and is unworkable. One lives in the hope that one day Old Schools will exercise moral and intellectual courage, and advocate non-compliance with the destructive policies radiating from SW1", he added.

TEF will be introduced in two stages. In Year One, which will affect students from autumn 2017, all institutions that pass a baseline quality standard will be able to increase fees in line with inflation.

In Year Two, differentiation between universities will be increased: assessments will be carried out and quality judgements of each institution will be made. These 'award ratings' will be published to help students to make better choices about where to study.



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News

CUSU claimed to have abolished Class Lists and exaggerated referendum turnout for national award

► Continued from front page

bound to campaign in favour of keeping the Class Lists with an easier opt-out system. Regent House, the University's top decision-making body, will vote at the end of this month to decide the fate of the Class Lists.

Referenda turnout also featured in the nomination, which reported the "Two-record breaking referendums (30%)" held last year. This refers to the NUS disaffiliation referendum in May, which saw a record turnout, and the vote in January, which implemented the first CUSU Disabled Students' Officer (DSO). It is not specified what the "30%" figure is meant to refer to, but if it is meant to represent turn-out then it is false for both referenda: the NUS and DSO referenda had turnouts of 28.7 per cent and 21.4 per cent respectively.

The nomination also claims to have reached an "Institutional agreement to introduce unconscious bias training to all academic staff from 2017". However, a document produced by CUSU as an 'Unconscious Bias Training Toolkit' suggests that this claim is exaggerated, if not false.

Although the document notes how a proposal to introduce unconscious bias training to all porters was "unanimously passed by the Senior Tutors' Committee", *Varsity* could find no evidence of plans to introduce this training to all academic staff in 2017. This discrepancy is particularly notable, as the NUS judges commended CUSU for this part of their nomination.

As part of a lobbying guide for colleges contained in the document, CUSU said that they were struggling to push the guidance through to colleges, and "urgently" requested "the campaigning support and assistance of individual College JCRs/MCRs" to lobby for the implementation of unconscious bias training. Given that the document was published in July, two months after nominations



for the NUS Awards closed, it seems CUSU could not have believed there was "institutional agreement" to introduce the training to all academic staff.

Other professed achievements offer a similarly exaggerated view of CUSU's accomplishments. The nomination claimed the students' union secured a "reduction of entry tests required of applicants". This is in spite of large press coverage, months before the nominations opened, of the University's decision to introduce pre-interview tests for the 2017 admissions cycle. Though CUSU is understood to have been involved in negotiating over the level of pre-interview testing, the reintroduction of testing was slammed in February by Alan Milburn, Chair of the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, as having the "potential to raise a further barrier to equal access".

A further claim in the nomination that

▲ Several of the claims CUSU made do not stand up to scrutiny (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

"recording lectures is now permitted" is also dubitable for two reasons. The University allows recording of lectures not because of a CUSU campaign, but in compliance with the Equality Act 2010, which imposes a duty to allow recording of lectures to prevent discrimination towards disabled students. Many students have told *Varsity* they are still unable to record many of their lectures.

Some assertions were not demonstrably false but were hard to verify. Among these were a reference to successful "local-to-national press campaigns", but it is not specified which this was intended to refer to. Meanwhile, in its responses to how the students' union guarantees that democratic processes are "open and inclusive", the nomination listed, among other things, "always providing healthy foods".

Although the nomination was submit-

▼ CUSU President Amatey Doku pinned the blame on last year's team (CUSU)



ted by McCormack, CUSU told *Varsity* that he had not written it. Under CUSU's staff guidelines, staff members are shielded from speaking to the press. The current CUSU President, Amatey Doku, said: "A submission of this kind would not have been submitted without input from last year's elected office" and that last year's sabbatical officer team "were ultimately responsible for the submission". Priscilla Mensah, who was CUSU President at the time of the submission, declined to comment when contacted.

While McCormack can "raise issues" with a nomination, Doku said, "sabbatical officers always have the final say".

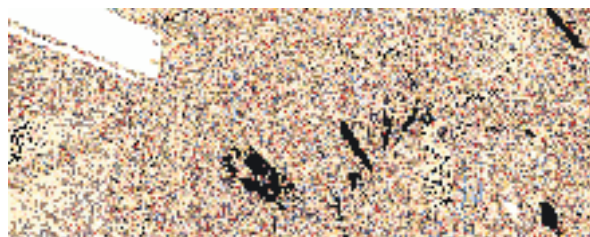
An NUS spokesperson said that the awarding process "begins with self-assessment from students' unions", and the is then "reviewed by NUS staff members" who have "expertise in the membership and the area of interest."

Scientists make breakthrough in nanoparticle observation

Angus Parker
News Correspondent

A team of researchers led by the University of Cambridge have created the "world's smallest magnifying glass" that confines light to volumes smaller than the size of a single atom for the very first time. The results, which were published this week in the journal *Science*, will help to establish greater understanding of the interactions between light and matter.

It had been the long-held belief of scientists that light could not be focused



▲ Professor Jeremy Baumberg lead the research (UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE)

down beyond its wavelength. However, by utilising the highly conductive nature of gold nanoparticles, the researchers were able to concentrate light a billion times more tightly – down to the scale of a single atom.

Working in collaboration with partners from European universities, the research team produced the world's tiniest optical cavities – which they labelled as 'pico-cavities' – large enough to accommodate just a single molecule. These pico-cavities are essentially bumps in the gold nanostructure that confine light down to less than a billionth of a metre and potentially enable scientists to control and watch single atoms in

“This marks a big step in the field of nano-spectroscopy”

real time.

The lead researcher Professor Jeremy Baumberg of the NanoPhotonics Centre at the University of Cambridge's Cavendish Laboratory reiterated the importance of the research in the field of cavity optomechanics, the study of how light interacts with material objects. He explained, "we now understand how it is possible to 'see' single atoms at a molecular scale using light which has a wavelength that is a thousand times larger".

The pioneering research establishes the foundations for further investigations, including into the possibility of observing the mechanisms involved in the formation and breakdown of chemical bonds between atoms. The ability to control single atoms creates the possibility that chemical reactions could be manipulated and catalysed by light, potentially enabling physicists to construct complex molecular structures from single component atoms.

Felix Benz, the experimental lead author of the study, also heralded the benefits. "This marks a big step in the field

of nano-spectroscopy as it demonstrates that we can actually go from merely observing the vibrations of a single molecule to actively influencing them".

The development of 'pico-cavities' could open up a plethora of opportunities. For example, from the construction of opto-mechanical data storage devices to the development of ultra-sensitive sensors – enabling information and data to be stored as molecular vibrations and written and read by light.

Professor Baumberg is also concerned with advancing the research and applying it in a practical sense: "We are interested in just how far we can go. By using the vibrating bonds in single molecules as tiny springs, which can be plucked, we could then make switches with this that work with a very small energy input – this could be significant given that all our information handling through the internet uses enormous amounts of energy across the globe. We also want to watch the proteins involved in the processes of life – how they move and how they flex to select and bind to other molecules."

All roads lead to Addenbrooke's in transport shake-up

Sam Harrison
Deputy News Editor

Multiple transport improvements on routes towards the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, which is home to the University's School of Clinical Medicine and Addenbrooke's Hospital, have been announced by Cambridge City and County Councils and MPs.

A newly approved cycling and walking route, which has been christened the 'Chisholm Trail' after local cycling campaigner Jim Chisholm, will run from Cambridge towards the campus via Coldham's Common, where the first phase of construction will take place in January, if the scheme receives planning permission.

The chosen path is designed to run alongside some of the green spaces of the southern parts of the city, such as Coldham's Common and Ditton Meadows, in order to increase the attraction of cycling over driving.

It will be funded by the Greater Cambridge City Deal, which has caused controversy recently over plans to introduce a busway to Adams Road near Robinson College.

Another welcome improvement for those cycling down to the campus facilities will be the 'Dutch-style' roundabout

“A step-change in the standard of cycling infrastructure”

which has been approved for the junction between Fendon Road and Queen Edith's Way.

The Economy and Environment Committee of Cambridgeshire County Council has approved a new design for the roundabout, which will give priority to walkers and cyclists over cars. The design lays out dedicated cycling space and will create a parallel walking and cycling crossing, at which cars will have to give way. The format is common in the Netherlands, but can currently only be found in the UK at a single site in Bedford.

The existing roundabout has been slated for creating dangers for cyclists, who have complained of not being able to see approaching traffic when crossing. In a council consultation, 39 per cent of respondents said that they felt unsafe cycling on the crossing.

The cycling campaign Camcycle, a proponent of the Dutch-style of roundabout, has praised the decision, writing on its website that it is “a very exciting moment for Cambridge” which “represents a step-change in the standard of cycling infrastructure”.

It may soon also be easier to reach the Biomedical Campus from London, after the announcement this week that a new railway station is being proposed for the area.

The plans for a new station were con-



▲ The Council has been under fire over plans for a busway on Adams Road (LUCAS CHEBIB)

firmed after Cambridge MP and Shadow Minister for Transport Daniel Zeichner asked for an update on the government's plans for better transport links between Cambridge and London.

Concerns have repeatedly been raised about the poor state of current transport links to the capital and their potential impact on the city's growth. In October, the organisation Cambridge Ahead launched an initiative, 'The Case for Cambridge', at the Cambridge Union, addressing the city's transport. Zeichner spoke at the event, alongside the Master of St Edmund's College Matthew Bul-

lock, and Dr Jonathan Nicholls of the University Registry.

Cambridge Ahead identified “inadequate public transport coupled with chronic road congestion” as one of the major problems preventing Cambridge from attaining “its full potential”.

Paul Maynard, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, informed MPs on the 8th November that the government is “working closely with Cambridgeshire County Council” to deliver the station and that a “detailed study of the viability of the new station” is being undertaken by the Council.

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Interviews

Sophie Walker

‘Women are not a homogenous mass’

● **Alice Chilcott** speaks to the leader of the Women's Equality Party about diversity, feminism and being the 'UKIP for women'

Since the foundation of the Women's Equality Party 18 months ago, Sophie Walker has been busy. She's run for Mayor of London, successfully campaigned to keep feminism on the History A Level curriculum, and is preparing for her first party conference. Now she is in Cambridge to speak to the local branch, and to promote the national 'What Women Want' survey.

The first question I ask her is simple: is equality for women achievable?

"Yes," she says instantly. "Otherwise I wouldn't be doing this. The reason it's not happened so far is that there hasn't been the political will – because our political establishments, and indeed all our institutions, have been dominated by men for centuries. That's not to say they're all nasty horrible men that are trying to keep women down, but unfortunately when you don't have a diversity of voices, you don't have an understanding of other people's experiences."

Despite coming from a political family, Walker is not a career politician. She is a former Reuters journalist who went along to the first meeting of the WEP after offering to help put the chairs out.

She started thinking seriously about women's issues, she tells me, when her daughter was diagnosed with autism. "It all sort of came together in a moment where I thought, okay, so I have lived with a certain amount of discrimination

my whole life; my daughter is now going to live with a double discrimination as a young woman with a disability."

"It really opened my eyes to a whole intersectionality of experience that affects women that I had not really seen before. And it also opened my eyes to how really bad we are as a society at understanding and embracing difference."

Perhaps Walker brings that up self-consciously, because a lack of intersectionality is one of the criticisms that has been flung at the WEP from the start – arguably, since before it had been able to do anything to combat those allegations. So whose votes does the WEP envisage getting, and what does she have to offer minority or working-class women who aren't currently engaged with politics?

"Let me be very clear. The Women's Equality Party aims to represent real women, because women are not a homogenous mass. We can't be effective as a political party unless we represent the diversity of all women's experiences."

Walker is keen to emphasise the strides her party have made to embrace diversity. The WEP's policies are crowd-sourced, but particularly notable is its offering of bursaries and childcare support to its candidates, "so that women who typically were not able to come forward have come forward." At the most recent candidate selections, "our list was 30 per



▲ Sophie Walker took over the leadership of the WEP in August 2015

(LOUISA HALL)

cent LGBT+, and 30 per cent BME – it was the most diverse list of candidates of any party."

The party's diversity may once have been a legitimate concern, but it's clearly a question she is tired of hearing. "I have a friend who is a member of the Women's Equality Party, who is white, working-class and gay. When this question gets asked she finds it very difficult, because to her that is erasing her intersectionality."

"A room full of white people is not a room full of white middle-class people, and that [question] makes assumptions about the huge amounts of diversity that we do represent in this party."

As she speaks, I realise how unusual it is to hear 'women's issues' discussed on a political platform, rather than in an aside – and to hear a nuanced, rather than reductive or reactionary, response to these issues. For instance, the unchanging systemic pressures of the fashion industry which leave women vulnerable to poor body image, and sometimes eating disorders: Walker criticises the "tiny little clothes that women can only fit into after weeks of malnutrition."

"But," she adds, "I'm not going to have a go at models, because as soon as we do that it becomes an issue of blaming women for their bodies."

The word 'feminist' is conspicuously absent from her speech, just as it is from the party's home page, and their list of objectives. However, Walker seems offended when I ask if it's a concept from which she wants to dissociate herself.

"We are a party for women. If you choose to call yourself a feminist, that's brilliant – I am a very proud feminist – and one of the things I hope we can do with this party is to reclaim that word from 20 or 30 years' deliberately misogyn-

“
My brand
of feminism
is about
action
”

nistic PR that slowed us all down. It kept us from creating the practical change we might have been able to do because we kept being diverted into conversations about 'are you a feminist or not?'

"Can you wear lipstick and heels and still be a feminist?" I ask.

She doesn't quite roll her eyes. "For me, my brand of feminism is about action, and it is about making change. If you don't feel comfortable calling yourself a feminist, but you want to sign up to the work we are doing and you care very much about diversity and inclusivity, that's great."

Last year, *The Telegraph* ran a piece heralding WEP as "UKIP for women". While this is surely a tag Walker would be keen to reject, her adoption of different political conventions, and her emphasis on a 'new kind of politics', may appeal to disenfranchised women just as Farage was able to with his audience. She and her party are steadily calling attention to the fact that discussion of 'women's issues' still takes place within the proverbial drawing-room.

I, for one, think she might be onto something.

▼ Members of the WEP at Pride in London, 2016 (KATY BLACKWOOD)



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Newnham celebrates network of high-achieving women



▲ Artist Sarah Richardson (left) with Newnham Principal Professor Dame Carol Black and her portrait (NEWNHAM COLLEGE)

Caitlin Smith
News Correspondent

Students, fellows, staff and invited members of the public gathered at Newnham College on Saturday afternoon to enjoy an exhibition of portraits of the world's most inspirational women, including Newnham alumnae.

The *Portrayed! 25 years of inspiring women* exhibition was conceived and put together by the Lots Road Group, an association of artists, in order to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the International Women's Forum (IWF) UK. The exhibition featured portraits of four of IWF UK's founding members, as well as its first 12 Chairs.

IWF is an organisation which aims to promote female leadership by linking high-achieving women through a global network, comprising over 6,500 members in 35 countries. Members join the organisation exclusively by invitation, after which they are encouraged to exchange ideas at discussion groups, seminars and special events.

The portraits, all in the medium of oil or print, showcased a diversity of influential female leaders, including the Baroness of Wakefield Jean Denton, a two-time British Women Racing Drivers' Champion and, as Northern Ireland minister, the first woman to hold a ministerial position at the Northern Ireland Office. Also featured was Barbara Hosking CBE, speechwriter to Harold Wilson.

The event, which has been touring since May 2015 but was open in Cambridge for just five hours on Saturday afternoon, was attended by many of the portraits' creators, all of whom belong to the Lots Road Group. The group was

formed in 2013 by former students of The Heatherley School of Fine Art in Chelsea. The artists hold an annual exhibition, dealing with a different theme every year, which have previously been shown at several university colleges, including Somerville College, Oxford.

According to their website, "the group places special emphasis on narrative to accompany their paintings. The intention is to give the sitters a voice and to inform and further entertain their audience." They add: "The group believe they are unique in combining words and images in this way."

Several of the portraits featured Newnham alumnae, including Rosamund Gilmore, who served as private secretary to five cabinet ministers, and Katharine Whitehorn, a columnist for the *Observer* and a founding member of IWF UK.

Both women attended the exhibition, and described to the audience their experiences of sitting for their portraits. Professor Dame Carol Black, Newnham's principal, also spoke.

Katharine Whitehorn's portrait will now become a feature of the College's permanent collection. In a letter to its artist, Sarah Richardson, the Chair of Newnham's Valuable Possessions Committee wrote that the portrait "captured something of the essence of [Katharine's] personality and humour".

Speaking to *Varsity*, Sarah Richardson said that "she was a gem to paint as she is a legend, of course, in the world of women's journalism."

"She was generous with her time in sitting for me and very amusing to spend

time with," she added.

A portrait of Barbara Mills, which also features in the exhibition, has been accepted into the private collection of her *alma mater*, Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford. Mills held the position of Director of Public Prosecutions, and as such is widely celebrated as the first woman to break into the upper echelons of the legal profession.

A Newnham spokesperson told *Varsity* that the college was "delighted" to host the exhibition, citing the College's long history of empowering students to reach influential positions. "Newnham College offers academic excellence to ambitious women aiming for leading careers, and the IWF aims to connect the world's female leaders to facilitate the

exchange of ideas. The exhibition was a great opportunity for us to work together whilst showcasing the work of the Lots Road Group," she said. The exhibition also coincided with the Annual General Meeting of Newnham Associates.

Sarah Richardson told *Varsity*: "as a group of artists we are particularly concerned with the interest amongst Oxbridge colleges to redress the balance of men's and women's portraits lining the hallowed walls. Too many men to not enough women."

As one of the few remaining Oxbridge colleges to only admit women, Newnham regularly holds events aimed at developing the leadership skills of its students. Recent initiatives include a series of Career Women seminars, the second of which, on 21st November, will feature Alexandra Shulman OBE, the editor-in-chief of *British Vogue*.

ROAD TO NOWHERE Report suggests Oxbridge expressway

The National Infrastructure Commission released its Interim Report this week calling for the government to commit £27 million to fund the next stage of the development work for the improvement of links between Cambridge and Oxford. The report says that an Oxford-Cambridge expressway would provide the "first, high quality road link" between the two university cities and could provide a boost for the entire economy, cutting journey times by up to 40 per cent.

DON'T KILL MY LIBE UL hacker appears in court

A court heard this week that a teenage hacker who, instigated a "significant and sustained" attack on the mobile network provider TalkTalk in October 2015, also broke into the IT systems of some British universities, including a library website belonging to Cambridge. The 17-year-old admitted seven charges of hacking as part of the cyber-attack that cost TalkTalk an estimated £42 million, though the University was principally unaffected. He will be sentenced on 13th December.

A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN? Newnham considers shared rooms

The introduction of shared accommodation has been proposed as a solution to the accommodation shortage that Newnham College could face next year. The College has not offered shared accommodation in the past but concerns about the number of available rooms has prompted suggestions that room sharing could be introduced to alleviate the pressure. The idea was raised at a College Council meeting last week but the College are yet to officially comment.

BIG BOON FOR BIG DATA Hawking launches new research centre

Professor Stephen Hawking has acclaimed the potential of big data at the launch of the Cantab Capital Institute for the Mathematics of Information. The new Institute sits within the Faculty of Mathematics and utilising data analysis to advance understandings in fields from financial markets to healthcare. Hawking said that in order to "enrich a multitude of fields of relevance to us all" we need to develop tools to critically analyse all data at hand.



CHAMBER OF SOCIALISTS Dumbledore spotted in King's College

Sir Michael Gambon was in Cambridge on Thursday as filming got underway for ITV's new legal conspiracy thriller *Fearless*. Gambon will play Cambridge professor 'Sir Alastair McKinnon' and will star alongside *Skyfall* actress Helen McCrory. *Fearless* follows solicitor Emma Banville (McCrory) as she attempts to clear a man who she believes has been wrongly convicted for a schoolgirl's murder. The show is set to air in 2017.

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Science

Dietary fads are pseudoscientific and a distraction from the real causes of obesity



● **Dietary regimes claim to be backed by science. In reality, they ignore the underlying factors behind weight**

Zi Ran Shen
Science Columnist

With the amount of information thrown about on what not to eat, it is hardly surprising that most people have a special diet of some sort. Vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, keto, paleo – the list goes on. Some claim health benefits, weight loss; some even claim to cure cancer.

These claims generally appear to be well founded in science, but most may as well have just materialised out of thin air. As long as a publicly respected – and thin – person endorses the diet, a mass of people will follow. Write a witty book about the faults of the current fad diet, and it will become a Bible. Information about these diets reads uncomfortably like political propaganda, with the prize being the perfect, unattainable body. Our bodies have become a battlefield; eating well has become a war.

One of the newest fads is the gluten-free diet, popularised by the cardiologist William Davis in his *New York Times* bestseller *Wheat Belly*. Commonly used by coeliac sufferers as the only viable treatment plan, this diet has been taken over by people looking for a quick detox or weight-loss solution. Davis called the current generation of wheat – ‘Frankenwheat’ – toxic and addictive, a drug designed to make us eat more junk food. Gluten, a protein found in wheat, has been demonised as the cause of skin rashes, type 1 diabetes, gut inflammation, and dementia, in addition to being responsible for weight gain. As a cardiologist, his words carried a lot of weight, but how scientifically sound are his claims? While Davis states that modern

wheat is nothing like the wheat of the 1950s, independent studies suggest that the nutritional value of wheat has not changed over the past 150 years. Wheat still contains the same macronutrients, as well as potassium, iron and vitamin B. All of his claims are nothing but fear-mongering, trying to create a scapegoat for weight gain, while ignoring nutrition. In an attempt to crucify gluten, Davis has cut a valuable source of nutrients out of many people’s diet.

Many other fad diets have done the same, including the keto diet, which advises eating little to no carbohydrates. The pseudoscientific principle behind this low-carbohydrate diet is the state of ketosis. This occurs naturally during a period of starvation when the body has used up all sugar stores. To survive, the body then starts to burn fat. By not eating any sugar, the body will naturally finish using sugar stores and then turn to fat for energy. In such a sense, on a keto diet the body will become a ‘fat-burning machine’. But if more fat is eaten than metabolised, it will still stay in your body as none other than fat. So, yes, while keto does theoretically turn your body into a ‘fat-burning machine’, eating extraordinary amounts of butter and meat is not going to help anyone’s waistline.

In the search for the diet holy grail, even evolution has become a sacrifice. In the paleo diet – short for Palaeolithic – practitioners believe that humans have not evolved fast enough to digest the food we currently eat. The aim of this fad diet is to eat like a caveman would. Ironically, during the Palaeolithic Era, humans adapted to eat whatever they could find due to the varying climate, while fruits and vegetable looked very different from how they do today. The assumption that modern humans can reproduce the hunter-gatherer diet is absurd. Not only is it physically impossible to find the plants that were eaten thousands of years ago, many humans back then also suffered from malnutrition and often died from starvation. The glorified paleo diet is anything but Palaeolithic,

“There is so much we have yet to learn about our own bodies”

and certainly not scientific.

For weight loss, the only effective strategy is eating less than you expend. The currency of energy expenditure in the body is usually measured in calories (or kcals). To demystify the seemingly complicated ‘calories’, their nomenclature must be explained. In the UK, energy in food is usually measure in kcals, which is one kilocalorie, or one thousand calories. One calorie is the amount of energy required to raise the temperature of water by 1°C at one atmospheric pressure. Translated into food, fibres contain 2kcal/gram of energy, sugar contains 4kcal/gram, ethanol contains 7kcal/gram, and fat contains 9kcal/gram.

As long as energy intake stays below energy expenditure, the body will use whatever energy stores it has – be it sugar, fat, or protein – to maintain basic metabolic functions; in other words, to stay alive. The only reliable way to lose weight is to control calories.

◀ Celebrity nutritionist Gillian McKeith is a prominent promoter of diets with no basis in science (MCKEITH RESEARCH LTD.)

To simplify weight loss down to counting calories may be convenient, but in truth, weight is governed by a more complex system of nerves and hormones. Recent studies have found that the secretion of the ghrelin hormone, which alters the perception of hunger, is usually disrupted in those who suffer from obesity and metabolic diseases. Such studies suggest that obesity may be caused by illness, and not simply gluttony. Leptin is the hormone responsible for feeling full. It tells the body when to stop eating, in order to regulate energy intake. Where mutations in the hormone’s structure have been found, these lead to some form of obesity. Clearly, then, weight is a more complicated matter than just having self-control.

To add fuel to the fire, a mother’s diet during pregnancy can dramatically change the child’s future weight. A study in 2003 found that, by giving pregnant mice certain dietary supplements, their offspring became thinner. Recent studies of a similar kind have been published which suggest that weight is a staggering 75 to 85 per cent genetically determined. These studies have sent only one message: there is so much we have yet to learn about our own bodies. The complexity of the human digestive system should not thwart those who want to better their health. Instead, it should serve as a liberating reminder that failures sometimes happen, and that small setbacks are not always catastrophic. On the most basic level, only counting calories in versus calories out is a fail-safe method.

This equation for energy gives some semblance of order to the chaos that is our appetites. Though we should always aim to better ourselves, be kind on those who lost the genetic lottery, fighting all instincts in order to stay healthy. As the obesity epidemic rises, let’s not forget that we’re all fighting against a disease, not against each other, and not against our bodies.

The 100 per cent scientific horoscope

by Mystic Dave

Aquarius 20th January – 18th February

Just like trying to carry water all the time (*Aqua*, geddit?), you’re putting in some back-breaking work you need to lessen your burden. Try finding a less heavy liquid to carry around.

Pisces 19th February – 20th March

You may think that the only way to feel self-assured and appreciated is by fishing (*Pisces*, geddit?) for compliments. That’s not true of course, unless you’re a thespian...

Aries 21st March – 19th April

If there’s somebody holding you back, put yourself first. This might be the only chance you get to do something new and exciting. Go grab the ram by the horns (*Aries*, geddi- never mind) and do it.

Taurus 20th April – 20th May

If there’s somebody holding you back, put yourself first. This might be the only chance you get to do something new and exciting. Go grab the bull by the horns and do it. (I’ll show myself out.)

Gemini 21st May – 20th June

There seems to be so much going on you need two of you to cope. But that’s not going to happen because you’re probably not actually a twin, and cloning is still illegal.

Cancer 21st June – 22nd July

You’re a mess. You need to stop going backwards. But unfortunately, you’re a crab, so you can only go sideways.



Homeopathy is ineffective and duplicitous, but it's far from harmless



Bethan Clark
Science Correspondent

Homeopathy is one of a plethora of therapies termed 'complementary' by medicine. It is a classic example of pseudoscience – a very broad category encompassing beliefs which claim to be scientific but do not meet the criteria to justify it. Though some pseudosciences are fairly benign, homeopathy can have serious consequences. The practice, and others like it, are common, but in the context of modern society, highly dependent on science and technology, how do these unscientific ideas persist? In the case of homeopathy the driving factor is, perhaps unsurprisingly, money.

The evidence for the medical efficacy of homeopathy is clearly not in its favour: study after study shows it has no more impact than a placebo. In fact, when badly-designed trials are excluded and publication bias is accounted for, there is no statistically significant benefit to homeopathy over the placebo. That's not to say it has no impact: the placebo effect can be powerful. But homeopathy isn't the only way to obtain such benefits. Simple sugar pills will do the same job – and are significantly cheaper. The difference is that homeopaths create an

impression of effective treatment and use this to justify the costs.

So why do people choose homeopathy? Research suggests that disappointing experiences with mainstream medicine have an impact. But it is not about an outright rejection of science: studies indicate that people who use homeopathy still want a therapy backed by evidence. To tap into this need, homeopathic practitioners actively peddle misinformation, cherry-picking poorly controlled trials to support their remedies as well as denigrating mainstream medicine to bring in customers and drive profit. Of course, a capitalist approach is not exclusive to pseudoscience: mainstream medicine is often run on a for-profit model. The difference with homeopathy is that it does not work.

This is a problem, and the fact that some patients delay seeking mainstream treatments, in favour of continuing homeopathic remedies, is a direct consequence. The inefficacy of the treatment would not be so troubling if it weren't for homeopaths convincing people otherwise, at the expense of patients seeking treatment supported by evidence. In this light, the monetary cost to the patient (or even the taxpayer – two hospitals in the UK still provide homeopathy on the NHS) is not justified.

▲ Homeopathy protestors in Bristol (RICHARD CRAIG)

More seriously, a few (admittedly rare) homeopathic remedies have been known to have directly caused harm to patients. A homeopathic teething gel sold in the US was reported by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2010 for containing varying levels of *belladonna*, a highly toxic plant more commonly known as deadly nightshade.

After investigations into the product, prompted by 10 reported infant deaths and over 400 reports of seizures, fever and vomiting, the FDA issued a warning against the gel in September 2016. The cause of this incident was thought to be an improperly controlled manufacturing operation, leading to biologically active levels of the poison contaminating the gel.

Another issue with homeopathy: it is less controlled than mainstream medicine, which can be dangerous, given that the remedies often use poisons and toxic substances in their preparation.

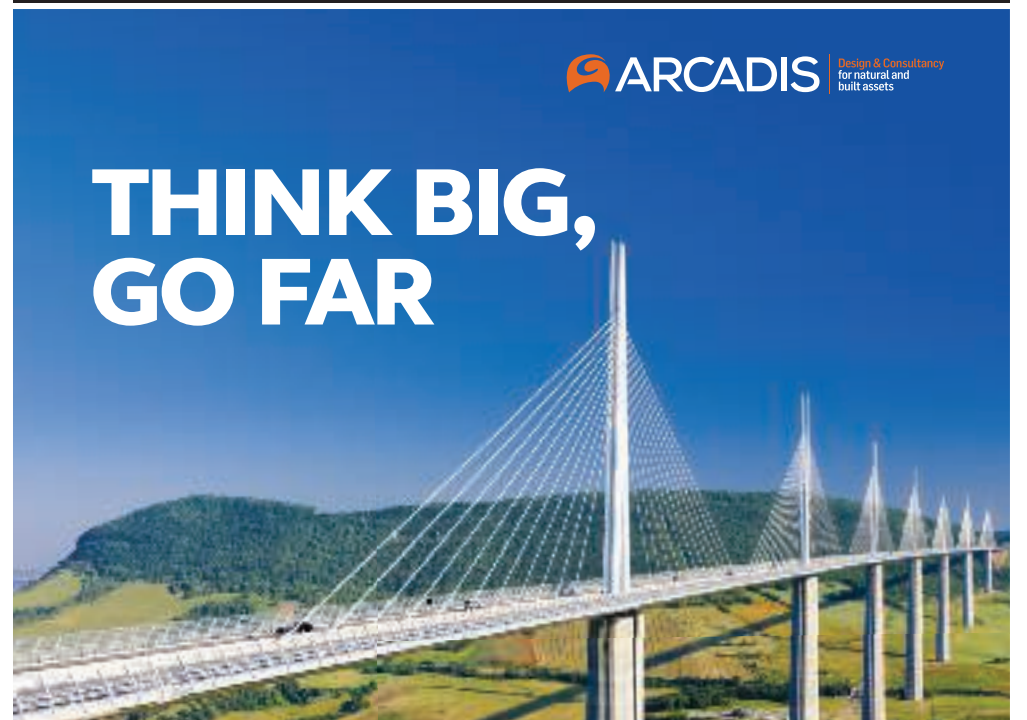
And there are wider consequences too. Medicine isn't perfect, but when pseudoscientists actively damage its credibility as part of their business mod-

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The problems caused do not solely stem from the treatments' inefficacy
”

el, real scientific evidence is devalued. The relationship between science and the public is fragile, but important. Further funding for research depends on the public's opinion of science. Undermining public health campaigns simply for profit puts patients at risk from potentially fatal diseases. One study revealed that half of homeopaths were damaging the vaccination effort by advising patients against the MMR vaccine.

These consequences of the homeopathy business model are too serious to ignore. Solely focusing on the effectiveness of homeopathic remedies, however, may be misguided: the problems do not solely stem from the treatments' inefficacy. Instead, they are a direct consequence of the profit-driven undermining of effective medical treatments.

If these issues were addressed, with tighter regulations and responsible business practice, homeopathy would not be so dangerous – and could even be useful, given its placebo effect. But until this can be harnessed ethically, homeopathy will remain nothing more than a deceitful and harmful pseudoscience.



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Leo 23rd July – 22nd August

You are entering a time when you will feel like the King of the Jungle. But be prepared for disappointment: the monarchy is an outdated concept and you're actually just going to be a drain on taxpayers' money.

Virgo 23rd August – 22nd September

Most people think you look like a virgin. And you probably are, you sad little mathmo.

Libra 23rd September – 22nd October

You live your life by carefully weighing up the safest course of action. But this is the week to break away and do something different. Like crying in public instead of alone.



▲ CHRIS POTTER
▲ PETR KRATOCHVIL

Scorpio 23rd October – 21st November

You seem to be going in the right direction. But be careful not to be too unadaptable, because life tends to have a sting in its tail. It's like trying to be a journalist, then realising you write for *The Tab*.

Sagittarius 22nd November – 21st December

You set yourself targets and you invariably hit them. Even when you don't miss them, you'll make sure you do the next time. But remember: nobody even uses a bow and arrow any more.

Capricorn 22nd December – 19th January

Will everybody please stop trying to grab defenceless animals by the horns?

Comment

Posh or posher? Let's admit that school type matters

We may wish we were all in the same boat, but secondary school privilege stays with us past 18



Anna Jennings
studies English at
Clare College

When my brother came to visit Cambridge earlier this term, someone asked him where he was from. "I go to college in Winchester", was his innocuous reply. True, but he meant the sixth-form comprehensive in the city, not the Winchester College which will spring to mind for most.

"Maybe I want people to think I went to a private school", he replied, half-jokingly. But this got me thinking about the assumptions we make about the private-state divide, and how my perceptions have shifted since arriving at this university. We're all sometimes guilty of playing the school-type judgements game, no matter what our *alma mater* is. It's fun to work out who's posher than they pretend to be, and who is less so. I'd like to assume it's this kind of good-humoured 'fun' at which a recent *Tab* article directed its criticism. "Nobody cares, we're all at Cambridge now", wrote the journalist. But as much as I'd love to agree with the writer that the school you went to before Cambridge is "totally irrelevant", this simply isn't the case.

Like most forms of privilege, this is a divide far easier to perceive when one is in the position of disadvantage. While we all get the same opportunities at Cambridge, are taught in the same way, and graduate with the same degree, this does not mean that once you get to Cambridge past inequalities are ironed away, having reached the same benchmark of securing a place.

Academically, it goes without saying that privately educated students generally receive a broader, more well-rounded education which gives them a head start when it comes to tackling a degree. In an arts degree like mine (English), this becomes obvious the minute classical literature is brought into conversation. It is also a given that students from public schools are usually used to working harder. A few friends from particularly good schools have told me that their first term at Cambridge was less work than they were expected to do at school. For me, and many others, last Michaelmas was a massive culture shock: I was stretched academically, particularly in being expected to cope with such a large volume of work.

But more important are, I believe, the

psychological differences. Those who are privately educated are much more used to the kind of small-group teaching which is central to the Cambridge system. Aside from the differences this makes at the interview stage (a whole other can of worms), it produces students who are much more confident in an academic setting. I spent my first term at Cambridge silent in seminars, preparing one 'good' point to say in a quiet voice while staring at my notes. Those who had been educated to be more comfortable in this environment would say lots more, and this, to me, made them sound cleverer, and so the cycle of silencing was self-perpetuated.

Those who have been to 'good' schools tend to have higher expectations for the education they receive here as they are used to smaller class sizes and the greater levels of participation and attention these provide. I have found my privately educated friends to be better at asking for explanations and further help, which has an academic impact. These subtle factors build to a significant picture: in the 2016 Cambridge exams, 26.4 per cent of those educated at independent schools were awarded a First, compared to only 21.5 per cent of students who went to comprehensive schools.

I do not think most – if any – societies or activities here are inherently biased towards selecting private-school students. But it seems to me that there is an accessibility problem caused by state-school students often lacking the

confidence and the self-assertion to apply for things. A lack of prior experience (of acting, or rowing, etc.) is often cited as a reason for the skew, but I haven't found this to be the case.

Often experience isn't a prerequisite, but rather a willingness to put yourself out there, which isn't so readily taught in schools where apathy is the prevailing attitude to extra-curricular activities. In my first term here, those who went to schools where lots went to Oxbridge knew what was going on, what to get involved with and who to talk to about it. That initial bravado and network translate statistically. In November 2014, *Varsity* reported that one in its previous nine editors had been state-educated, with similar statistics at *The Tab*.

A propensity towards academic and extra-curricular achievement while at Cambridge, combined with more extensive networks, contribute to a skew of graduate job prospects in favour of the privately educated. A 2014 investigation by the Institute of Fiscal Studies found a six per cent pay gap between those who attended a fee-paying school and those who did not, despite having studied the same subject at the same university and getting the same job thereafter.

Clearly there is a problem here, but it is grounded in the subtleties of the attitudes private schools inculcate and nurture, rather than in any sort of conscious bias or discrimination. For that reason, it becomes extremely difficult to disentangle. It may be that these are problems which will always exist while there is any kind of disparity in educational provision but I want to open up this debate rather than close it down.

▼ Wellington College is among the schools which continue to boost students (GRAEME KENNEDY)



Carl Wikeley

Appeasing populism is a slippery slope

Liberals are not to blame for Trump. It's the appeasement of wrongful views, from likeable faces such as Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sanders that has led us to this dark, dark place.

America has not got more racist. Politicians have just been more willing to legitimise or sympathise with misguided opinions. Finding ourselves in Plato's 'late stage democracy', where 'demagogues' like Trump and Corbyn – yes, you heard me – tap into the anger of the people means that even so much as questioning the ideas behind anti-immigration views is a sure-fire vote-killer. Democracy, as I have warned, relies upon a level of elitism: it is not a negative kind of elitism, but the mediation of democracy by a knowledgeable and elected group – in the case of Britain, that means MPs. Is not a more well-read person's perspective on an issue more important? This is not controversial or patronising – it's how society has functioned for thousands of years. No judgement is being made on the character of any one voter, but we must be allowed to criticise.

Once, it was taboo for a politician to tell a racist joke. What loses votes now is calling someone out for being mistaken on issues such as immigration. The Facebook posts telling us that 'we must wake up and see the problems of the working people' are confirming the fact that it has become a sure-fire election-loser to critique the wrongful views of the electorate. Modern demagogue Jeremy Corbyn has shown himself to be a spineless populist in appeasing voters' misinformed opinions about Brexit. In today's politics, it takes real bravery to be the one to stand up for vital systems which keep our democracy in check. Jonathan Pie and Jeremy Corbyn are not martyrs. These appeasers are the real reason that both Brexit and Trump have struck us down. We are entering the darkest period of our living history, and the only way we can prevent a catastrophic disaster is by educating, critiquing, and doing everything possible to uphold the principles of democracy. We will not fight populism with populism.

Anna Jennings

Cartoon by Ben Brown



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Mistletoe and whine: stop the complaining

'It's Christmaaas!', so ignore the neigh-sayers, share in Will Hall's love of a good old festive Yuletide tune



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

Will
Hall

It was December 2011, and around the kitchen table my family were furiously debating the lyrics to The Waitresses' 'Christmas Wrapping' (undoubtedly one of the finest festive numbers ever written). Was the protagonist truly happy about spending this Christmas alone, or was she secretly yearning for the man she'd met in the now-famous Ski Shop encounter? Was the whole 'I've-forgotten-cranberries' subplot a genuine mistake or a cry for help? Did his car really refuse to start on the way to the previous year's Halloween party? Questions abounded, although I do remember always feeling a little sad at the thought of her cooking "the world's smallest turkey". Suffice to say, I have always taken Christmas music very seriously. And here I am, unashamed to confess my love for it.

I say this tentatively, as I am sometimes amazed by the level of animosity people have towards the 'holiday genre'. It's often dismissed as gimmicky, or commercial, or overly sentimental, and not 'real' music. There's a view that releasing a Christmas album makes an artist

a 'sell-out' (such critics tend to point to the likes of Justin Bieber and Michael Bublé, and ignore the fact that Bob Dylan, Ella Fitzgerald and The Beach Boys have all released records of Yuletide standards). As a long-time lover of the genre, I couldn't disagree more.

Over time, I graduated onto my parents' collection of Christmas CDs and tapes. The fact they were physical records (not downloads) was a crucial part of their mystique. Every January they would be dutifully packed up into a corner of a box (alongside a dancing Father Christmas for which we never had the right batteries, and reams of long-since-fused fairy lights which we didn't have the heart to throw away) and as a result they were completely unreachable until we got our decorations out. Each year I would plead with my dad to unpack them earlier, but my parents are very much of the 'Christmas-begins-in-December' school of thought (which is ridiculous, as we all know you should start getting excited in late June), and so I was forced to wait.

My only access to holiday music came

when my father made his annual pilgrimage to the loft – an exciting day for us all. We would stand gathered at the bottom of the ladder waiting to catch any falling boxes, decorations or parents. I would ravage my way through the endless baubles and ribbons and statuettes of reindeer in order to find the discs.

But my efforts were richly rewarded. There I unearthed endless compilation albums with songs which would come to number among my favourites. Obviously there were the classics – the one-hit wonders that must make their creators a pretty penny in royalties (I'm looking at you, Wizzard) – and these became hymns to our yearly decorating ritual. The tree could not be put up unless Cliff Richard was crooning 'Mistletoe and Wine' in the background, nor the turkey cooked unless Chris de Burgh's quirky 'A Space-man Came Travelling' was reverberating around the kitchen. And of course, Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without hearing Noddy Holder scream it at you from your old, dusty Slade vinyl.

I continued to discover more and more of the genre which I came to love. 'Little Saint Nick' (a fine example from The Beach Boys) curiously manages to retain their summer harmonies, while still being resolutely wintry (I credit



▲ "Suffice to say, I have always taken Christmas music very seriously" (MATTHEW SECCOMBE)

the addition of jingling bells for this, a surefire Noël hit). John Lennon's 'Happy Xmas (War Is Over)' was soon added to my list, with its anthemic call for love not hate, along with bandmate Paul's wildly different offering in the form of 'Wonderful Christmastime', during his oft-forgotten synthesiser phase on his 1980 album *McCartney II*.

It was through listening to 'Sleigh Ride' that I first heard The Ronettes, and 'The Little Drummer Boy' introduced me to the country timbre of Johnny Cash. I fell in love with Rufus Wainwright after hearing him sing 'Baby, It's Cold Outside', and for years I was adamant I had discovered 'Fairytale of New York' before it was famous. (I have since resigned myself to the fact that this is unlikely, given I was born in 1996, nine years after its release, and I was listening to it on an album called *50 Christmas Hits*. Oh well.)

So next time you meet someone who claims that the whole festive oeuvre is nothing more than a cynical money-spinner which has never produced a decent tune, prescribe them some of the above, taken twice daily for two weeks, and they'll soon see what they're missing. Even if they are sick of them by January.

Comment

Trump's victory has a silver lining for women

When Obama won, some claimed racism was gone. At least Hillary's loss means sexism cannot be denied



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

Gracelin Baskaran

On the dawn of 5th November 2008, headlines across the United States declared Barack Obama the 44th President of the United States. *The New York Times* headline boasted "Racial Barrier Falls in Decisive Victory", while a *Wall Street Journal* editorial read: "One promise of his victory is that perhaps we can put to rest the myth of racism as a barrier to achievement in this splendid country."

Unless you're a complete hermit, without a grasp of the outside world, it's easy to see that racism in the US doesn't just exist, it's thriving. The Black Lives Matter movement only scratches the surface of it.

In his book *Turning Back: The Retreat from Racial Justice in American Thought and Policy*, Dr Stephen Steinberg offers a powerful historical parallel. Even in the toughest days of racial segregation and the Jim Crow laws, there were a small number of black plantation owners who owned slaves. Although they were held up as poster children by white people, the existence of the black 'elite' did not show an eradication of racism.

On the contrary, he writes that the black 'elite' itself was a critical part of the system of status quo racial oppression, serving as a buffer between the elite white oppressor and the 'truly' black oppressed. It strengthened the illusion that black people could overcome their struggles if only they had the superior qualities of the black 'elite'.

A parallel of sorts, Hillary Clinton's

loss was heartbreaking for many women. But perhaps Trump's win was a blessing in disguise for them. The shattering of the glass ceiling would have been synonymous with the declaration that sexism was over. The areas where improvement is drastically needed – maternity leave, equal wages, and increased opportunities for women to enter corporate board rooms, political office, and science and technology fields – could be shortchanged if sexism was considered 'over'.

But maybe second best – the President's daughter and closest adviser – is exactly what women need: far enough away from the presidency to remind us that women still haven't made it to the Oval Office, but close enough to be a key driver of policy and change.

Ivanka Trump made her desires clear in an interview with Leslie Stahl on 60 Minutes – she hopes to advise her father on issues surrounding female empowerment. She has been key to shaping a new maternity leave policy which guarantees six weeks of paid leave for new mothers and is set to release her second book: *Women who Work: Rewriting the Rules of Success*.

One of the lowest moments of the Trump campaign was when an auto recording surfaced, where he was recorded bragging using his fame to try and "fuck" women, groping them without consent. He goes on to say that, "When you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything." He called this 'locker room talk'.

The last thing America – or the rest of

the world needs – is an affirmation that workplace harassment, let alone groping, is acceptable. As a young woman in the workplace, I've heard the comments and seen the inappropriate advances, particularly by men who feel entitled because they're giving you an "opportunity" to get your foot in the door. And I've seen the consistent and pervasive nature of this behaviour.

I've seen young women bear the burden of harassment, rather than calling their perpetrators out on it, because they fear backlash, which will be destructive to their early-stage careers.

Donald and Ivanka can pass equal pay, paid maternity leave, and affordable child care, but as long as he continues to set an example that using power and fame to forcibly achieve his sexual desires with young women, the rest is all in vain. Trump's campaign disempowered and marginalised women. To fellow Republican presidential candidate and former Hewlett Packard CEO Carly Fiorina, he quipped: "Look at that face! Would anyone vote for that? Can you imagine that, the face of our next president?!"

The fact that a woman still has not served as president of the United States is an undeniable reminder that sexism is palpable. Despite this, more positively, it was a good year in Congress for women. Although the number of women in Congress didn't increase, remaining at an unrepresentative 20 per cent, many milestones were achieved, despite Trump's rhetoric that women should be aesthetically pleasing rather than intellectually substantive.

A whole 96 years after women gained



▲ Ivanka Trump could be a voice of reason in the White House (MICHAEL VADON)

the right to vote, Catherine Cortez Masto became the first Latina senator. Kamala Harris became the first Indian-American woman to serve in Congress. Stephanie Murphy became the first Vietnamese-American female in Congress, knocking out a 12-term male GOP incumbent. Ilhan Omar, a proud hijab-wearing Muslim and former refugee, was elected the first Somali-American legislator.

But the journey is not over. Although there are glimmers of hope, women continue to be vastly under-represented in politics, business and STEM fields.

No matter how dark the days may currently feel, there is a silver lining for women in Clinton's loss. No one can tell us that sexism is over. We are bearing a torch, to create a world where the strength and success of our daughters will not lie in their sex appeal, but in their willingness to be independent, hardworking and persistent; it lies in their ability to live a life that exudes integrity, confidence and respect. Ivanka, please help us bear our touch.

“
I've seen
young
women
bear the
burden of
harassment
”

I fear Mike Pence, the enemy of LGBT rights

From conversion therapy to 'license to discriminate', the Vice President-elect is a disturbing new threat



Miranda Imperial studies HSPS at Queens' College

Miranda Imperial

I can still remember, quite vividly, the first time I learned about the American Dream: it was as a 12-year-old student in the Midwest. A refinery's smoky vapours oozed into the summer sky as our teacher read Steinbeck to us, and spoke about the values upon which the American republic had been founded.

Despite all of the problems pervading American society, I have always come to think of this country as embodying a certain promise of opportunity. After all, my parents, both Spaniards by birth and upbringing, met in Madison, Wisconsin, in the winter of 1988. Although they moved back to Spain, their connection, and my connection, with the United States never really went away.

That's why last week's American election has deeply affected me. We all thought that with the days of established democracy came the time where none of the population would ever feel explicitly threatened by the political establishment again. I guess we were wrong. Donald Trump is truly irrelevant in my eyes. But

▼ Pence is a less well known but equally concerning part of the new Republican administration (GAGE SKIDMORE)



the fact that his presidency is enveloped in a veil of uncertainty is not what scares me the most. True, his inconsistency, when it comes to policy-making, is alarming to those of us who know how intricate the affairs of state truly are. After declaring that he would "strongly consider" appointing a Supreme Court justice to overturn its landmark decision on same-sex marriage in January, he went on to express his support for transgender people's right to use whichever bathroom they felt comfortable with in April, and completely changed his mind by supporting North Carolina's HB2 – a bill enforcing single-sex bathrooms – in July. Uncertainty looms for LGBT+ people like myself.

We have no idea how Trump's presidency, as a completely inexperienced politician, will unfold. But there is no doubt that the establishment governing the country as part of his administration will be unwaveringly constant. The radical Tea Party wing of the GOP has not had a say in government for years. Now they're back, vindictive as ever, energised to overturn Obama's legislation, especially when it comes to LGBT+ issues and marriage equality. Thus, it is Mike Pence, Vice President-elect and now the most powerful politician in the nation, who really scares me. He has actively sought to crack down on many people's individual rights, having passed his "li-

cense to discriminate" law in Indiana. He's also a firm advocate of gay conversion therapy. With such power, this is terrifying for the LGBT+ community.

I was looking forward to returning to Madison this summer: a town that has truly made me grow as an individual and given me hope of achieving my dream of getting a PhD at an American university. Now, I don't know what to think anymore. As a politics student, this is discouraging. I will not admit defeat, for I, as much as anyone else who believes in equal rights for all, know that we will keep achieving and 'Make Society Good for Everyone'. But at this point in time, what I've dedicated my life to – this in-depth study of human political life – seems a bit pointless. There is definitely a rational political explanation for this catastrophe, one that I, though with difficulty, can comprehend. Economic anxieties will always lie above the common good in importance for certain individuals. This is the crude reality we have learnt to stomach in politics.

But this 'victory', to my mind, is fundamentally irrational. Political irrationality shines through when a misogynist, a racist, a demagogue, an inexperienced character, a criminal comes to power above a prepared, capable, educated woman. I shared others' concerns about Hillary Clinton's candidacy. But never will I understand the situation which

drove such a man to power when faced with, in comparison, such competent opposition.

Now, do I continue with a study of these irrational power dynamics that we call politics? Or do I move onto something new? I do not know. The future is bleak when the LGBT+ community is threatened with conversion therapy, when women are harassed with sexual assault talk, and when immigrants and people of colour are openly designated as targets of hate, all within the framework of a political campaign. All of these people's efforts to be treated as equals will now suffer decades of regression – and there is little that can be done now.

Wisconsin was called red late on election night, at that point in the late hours when one is too frustrated and mentally drained to carry on without some sleep. It happens regularly in Cambridge, but never had a moment of uncertainty felt so bittersweet. There was still a chance for the Democrats.

I have never been this clueless, tired, ill, depressed, and truly speechless about an election. When an American Dream of hope, happiness and promise is distorted into one of rage, how do we react? There's a beauty to today's world which will enable us to fight back: the internet, handheld cameras, phones... We are watching you, Mr Trump. We are judging you, Mr Pence.

Consent is vital to dispel myths about assault

It's time we recognise that good people can be rapists. I knew my attacker: he was my boyfriend



Anonymous

In May Week of my first year at Cambridge I was raped. I was pinned down, against my will, and told that, despite my objections, I felt ready, and so “what else matters?” Like 90 per cent of other victims of sexual assault, I knew my attacker. I continued to go out with him for over a year after the assault, and I love and trust him to this day.

For female UK university students, there is a one in three chance you will be sexually assaulted on campus. Let that sink in. A third of the women you know in this university have been, or will be, assaulted. There is a two-sided implication to this: for people to be assaulted, others need to do the assaulting. With such a high proportion of students being victims, it is likely that we all know at least one person who has committed sexually assault, or who will do.

There are undoubtedly assaulters who have malicious intent – those who think they are justified in actively exerting power over a vulnerable person. I believe, however, that part of the reason for such a high occurrence of university assault is the grey area: the fact that “good” people are capable of rape.

My assaulter is a good person. He is well-liked by my friends. He was an attentive and caring boyfriend. And yet, he raped me. On that night, he prioritised

his pleasure, at the expense of my pain. And let me tell you, it is a crushing pain, that lingers to this day. I can feel fine, and then read something, or hear a conversation, and a feeling of worthlessness consumes me again. I feel guilty for receiving compliments on my appearance, and for enjoying sex. I feel ashamed in front of my parents, despite not having told them. In my darkest moments, the memory is there, telling me that I do not deserve a space in the world.

I still struggle to reconcile that a person I knew to be wonderful and kind could have done something so terrible. How do you begin to tell your friends that the reason you keep crying is because the boyfriend they all like just raped you? How do you tell your father that the guy who stayed over in the holidays, the one that played with your younger brother and cooked dinner for you all, is also responsible for your worst memory of university?

I still come across that horrible corner of my mind trying to convince me that I was at fault. I have heard from victims who have dismissed their own incidents of sexual assault because the assaulter was not “nasty” enough. I have friends who have been assaulted, only to then be shunned because their assaulter is a popular person who “couldn’t possibly” have done something so cruel.

I am not here to speak on behalf of every victim. I may have chosen to forgive my rapist, but any way a victim reacts to their own assault is valid. I am not suggesting that all rapists are good people, and I am definitely not implying that sexual assault should be viewed with anything but the utmost severity. What I am trying to do is acknowledge that we all have the potential to assault, and by doing so, encourage us all to take responsibility for consent.

People become extremely defensive



“He ‘couldn’t possibly’ have done something so cruel”

◀ Consent must be mandatory to keep students safe (GARY KNIGHT)

in matters of consent. Waves of undergraduates saying that they do not need consent workshops because they understand the difference between ‘yes’ and ‘no’ is not productive. There will be those on whom discussions of consent may make no difference.

But there will also be those who, maybe just the one time, ignore the fact that their partner doesn’t seem enthusiastic. There will be those who kiss someone and immediately put their hands down their partner’s underwear. There will be those who may be aware, weeks after, that there was a situation they engaged in where they were not responsive enough to their partner’s feelings.

As difficult as it is to own up to, there is nothing wrong with admitting that you have behaved badly in the past, if you use that awareness to improve yourself. Make consent a prerequisite for all your sexual activities. Take pleasure out of hearing your partner tell you what they want, and respond to any indications that they are not enjoying themselves.

And if someone tells you they have been assaulted, no matter who by, support them. If the rapist was a friend or someone you know, I promise you that the pain the victim is feeling is far greater than the awkwardness of working out how to address them when you see them in the corridor. We need to squash the myth that there is just one ‘type’ of rapist: rape is done by, and done to, the people we love.

Burnt toast, split knickers: still better than May

My first term has been... interesting. But at least I can say that Theresa has achieved less than me



Martha O'Neil
studies HSPS at
Trinity College

Martha
O'Neil

As a result of Week Five blues, I am currently sitting on my bedroom floor eating Reese’s Peanut Butter Cups, listening to Snow Patrol and contemplating all of my life choices.

It’s some of the best procrastinating I have ever done. Last week I had four essays to write, it was my 19th birthday and I still managed to spend time lamenting the EU referendum result (it hurts, it actually physically pains me). And to top it all off – Trump (hereafter known as ‘He Who Shall Not Be Named’) won the election. People actually voted for him. So I sit here. Trying to ignore the stresses of Cambridge, savouring every second before the bubble swallows me up once again, and reality descends upon me like an ocean wave, dampening my spirit; drowning my soul.

The past term as a fresher has been... interesting. Especially in terms of my personal development. For example: I had to skulk back from Lola’s on the first night of Freshers’ because my dress split to expose my M&S comfy knickers. I set the fire alarm off by burning Weight Watchers’ extra thin toast (tastes exactly how you’d expect, never again). I managed to tip two litres of milk over my bedroom floor. My lovely next-door



neighbour voted for Brexit. Last night, I passed someone doing a work-out in his room, stopped for a little too long to observe his ab crunches, lost concentration and fell down a small flight of stairs.

I’ve phoned my mum at least four times a day since I’ve arrived. I miss my dog. I dressed up as a witch for Halloween and a stranger outside John’s told me I could ‘turn him into a frog, anytime’. (What does this mean?) I didn’t sleep at all on the night of the election, and cried to my mum about ‘Hillary’s time’ being stolen. I’ve sat on my windowsill,

◀ She May be in the pink, but my first days were still better (UK HOME OFFICE)

attempting to reassure myself that there hasn’t been some massive mistake, and that Cambridge actually wanted me.

Yes, my first few of weeks at Cambridge have provided an opportunity for me to discover ‘who I am’. On this clichéd, metaphorical journey, I’ve discovered that I am deeply disorganised, incapable of going to sleep before 1am, incredibly lazy (see: spending loads of money on a lifetime Union membership, yet to pick up Union card a month later), and that I’m generally just awful at adulting.

It’s like having a new job. I’m excited and eager to work, but at the same time I just want to watch Netflix all day, because there is a tiny little something about unemployment that seems appealing when you know you have a mammoth two-hour Sociology lecture to attend. I wonder if Theresa May feels the same way?

Both myself and Theresa (pronounced ‘trees’) have had to adjust to a new kind of life over the past months. We’ve both had to face our demons, laugh at the jokes of posh boys from posh schools at said receptions and dinners and reassure ourselves that there is a place for us within this ‘Establishment’.

I suppose this is the time where both of us must prove ourselves – to discover the kind of student, or prime minister, we will become. Week Five was my judgement day. After Theresa’s first 100 or so days in Number 10, following her miraculous and opportunistic ascent to the zenith of British politics, it is perhaps

pertinent to reflect upon her PM Fresher experience. It’s difficult to pinpoint exactly what she has achieved. She has reminded Britain that it is possible for a female to rise to the top, but she hasn’t done anything inspirational per se. Has she been procrastinating too?

But with such an ineffective opposition leader, it could be said that Theresa has not had to prove anything. I feel that we freshers of Cambridge have been tested and scrutinised far more than she has. From our fellow students, to Directors of Studies and supervisors, we are under constant pressure to prove ourselves, to impress, to connect, to think and remember and to ‘be ourselves’.

So, as Week Five becomes a distant memory and you attempt to recover from the pressures of Cambridge life, you must remember that Cambridge wants you. Average you. Glorious, disorganised, passionate you.

Because you do have something to contribute to this little place. It’s so easy to feel that you don’t belong and that everyone else around you is dancing effortlessly through life while you’re sat eating Reese’s and feeling frumpy. But eat the goddamn Reese’s, split your skirt on the way to a nightclub, tip two litres of milk over your bedroom floor. Just embrace it, because if He Who Shall Not Be Named can win, you can for sure write this essay or solve this maths problem.

Just storm through the rest of term with the knowledge that you, unlike Theresa, were chosen to be here.

You – 1; Theresa – nil.

“You have something to contribute to this little place”



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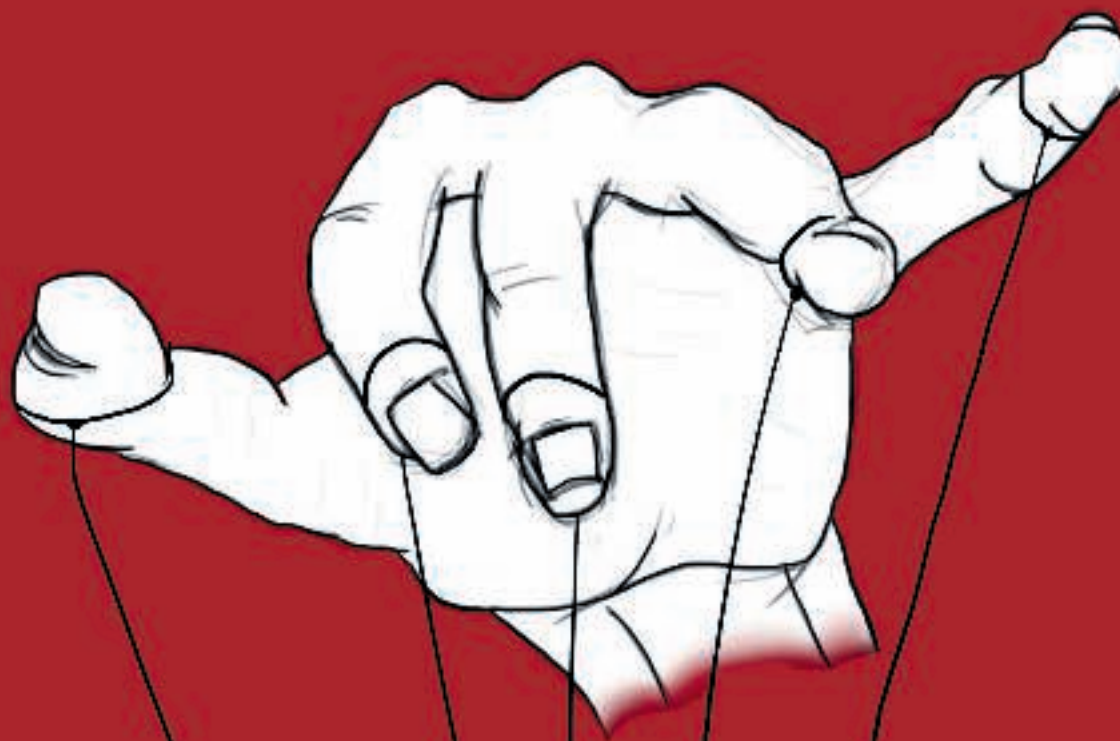
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‘I’m nothing like my mother... ...am I?’

How controlling parents shape us as adults

by **Nicole Rossides and Moriyo Aiyeola**

Vulture

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We are nothing but the sum of our childhood experiences. **Moriyo Aieyola** and **Nicole Rossides** explore how difficult mothers have had a long-lasting impact upon them today.

Illustrations by **Saskia Ross**

When you come to university, you may say goodbye to your parents, but you don't say goodbye to all the lessons, attitudes, thoughts and feelings they've transferred to you. The type of parenting you receive impacts you well into your adult life, in ways which we likely never understand. Even one's early years spent crawling and crying have been proven to have a monumental effect on the structure of the adult brain.

We draw upon and re-enact our childhood experiences every single day: whether it's an offhand thought or jokey comment, you probably owe it to your parents. Parental influence can be impossible to escape, even when you've moved hundreds of miles away. For some people, this means carrying into their daily life the burden of unhappy childhoods and difficult relationships.

We hear two students' experiences of how their tricky and turbulent mother-daughter relationships impact upon their daily life at university today.

Nicole's story:

While my mother and I were eating dinner, I decided to carry out an experiment. I had learnt in a lecture about the extent to which others perceive us differently from how we perceive ourselves, so I was curious to see how my mother's perception of me differed from my own. After all, don't mothers know their daughters better than anyone?

I asked her to describe me in three words. She said: 'straightforward, hard-working, and strong-minded'. On the contrary, I described myself as 'emotional, optimistic, and spontaneous'. She was surprised and said: 'I didn't expect you to say any of those words. You have a heart of stone'.

“My mother is what I'd call an anti-role model”



This comes from a person who dislikes affection. From someone who would beat me harder when I cried out in pain because she was disgusted by my act of 'weakness'. This came from someone who was wrought by perfectionism and wouldn't accept anything less than excellence. Whenever I burst into tears in front of my classmates after having received a mark lower than 90 per cent, my teacher would dismiss my reaction as 'perfectionism, as usual'. Little did they know that I was crying out of pure fear.

My mother was what I call an 'anti-role model'. Instead of resulting in me being pessimistic about people's intentions and what the world had in store, I chose to be optimistic and see the good in every person and every situation. Instead of being hurtful towards loved ones and using 'tough love' as an excuse, I chose to be as affectionate and understanding as I could be towards the people I cared about. Although I didn't develop very well socially, I developed empathy from a young age because I understood what it felt like to be miserable, terrified and pain-ridden.

However, within my own home I had to protect myself by being stone cold in the face of her vitriol. I had to shrug her off. I had to follow her orders, no questions asked. I had to always be on my guard in case she would strike me out of annoyance. I gave up affection – I had to distance myself from her toxicity to protect my own sanity.

This would perhaps explain why I tend to be level-headed in difficult situations. Rather than bursting out in anger, I remain calm and try to analyse what's happening before making a decision.

Although my mother has played a huge role in my development, my personality is not totally defined by my family circumstances.

It doesn't explain why I communicate my feelings so openly. It doesn't explain my passion for writing and dance. It doesn't explain why I have difficulty concentrating, or why I laugh at the dumbest of memes. My mother's actions and failings as a parent do not define me. Studies tend to show that abusive parents increase the risk of their children manifesting negative characteristics such as aggressive behaviour, internalising problems (such as anxiety, depression, self-harm), decreased academic performance and even an increased risk of becoming abusive parents themselves. This is of course based on statistical probabilities. I happened to be one of the lucky ones. Context is everything.

Nevertheless, I would be remiss if I didn't mention at least one good thing that my mother instilled in me. That is to never give up on anything you do. So with that, despite her flaws, I'd like to thank my mother for shaping me to become someone my younger self would certainly be proud of.



▲ How much of your own personality can you trace to your parent's influence?

Moriyo's story:

Amy Adams' character in the new film, *Nocturnal Animals*, sits opposite her conservative and cynical mother, looking dejected.

Her mother is attempting to persuade her not to elope with her writer fiancé. It is an unrealistic dream. Amy Adams' character stresses that she is not like her mother. Her mother's response is that all daughters eventually turn into their mothers – Amy will realise her mistake later.

Watching this scene play out in the cinema unleashed within me a whirling series of thoughts. While I have a great deal of admiration for my mother, the prospect of my future following a similar trajectory is disheartening. I have been lucky enough to have loving parents, but my mother's upbringing was not as easy. Forced to move from a rural village in Jamaica to North London initiated a fight for self-sufficiency and a desire not to impart the same struggle onto her own children.

Since then, she has carried with her anxiety and the burden of a job she exchanged her happiness for in order to provide for a family. She promised herself not to be like her own mother, who worked tirelessly in a North London factory, just scraping by and living in fear under the tyrannical presence of my own grandfather.

My mum is cynical about life. Her message to me since I was young has been that the path ahead will be filled with struggle. As a black woman, she has had to overcome immense obstacles and has always told me that I would experience the same upward climb. I

◀ “My mother's failings as a parent do not define me”

“
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can view her desire to fight as strength with a suggestion of optimism.

Yet, there is a sense that hers is a continuous fight for something never quite within reach – as if her goal continuously hovers at the edge of her fingertips. But in trying so hard to avoid her own mother’s path, my mum has suffered to a similar extent with disappointment, just by trying to achieve such a difference.

I have tried to convince myself that I can break this cycle. The insecurities of my mother that were ingrained in me have to be suppressed in all that I do and yet, the anxiety, periods of depression and issues of self-esteem have passed down to me. My opportunities have outshined what my mother had, and yet, why do I seem to constantly aim for a future of security rather than strive, take a risk and chance that I could actually be more than content?

The various ways in which we are raised can profoundly impact our own self-realisation. We may want to swerve well away and seek our influences from elsewhere, and many women have ended up on a different positive path from the one on which they were raised. Parenting expert Sue Atkins referred to “a balancing act of learning what your parents did and then using the bits you liked.”

The risk, however, is making sure that, in seeking to differentiate, you do not succumb to the pressure of this itself. The drive behind wanting to depart from what you fear can certainly be channelled into aspiring for what you want to be – the courage just needs to be realised ●



On Empathy

Martha Saunders

discusses the reality of living student life with Asperger’s

“
A

killer with autism. How has it taken Hollywood so long to glom on to such an awesome concept? Consider: an efficient, ruthless assassin who’s Asperger-ish condition guarantees he won’t empathise with his target no matter how much they beg. A stoic, largely immune to crippling emotions like guilt... That’s a movie I’d pay to see”

In a previous column I referred to a total absence of characters with Asperger syndrome in the media. On reading the above passage, a review of *The Accountant* by Robert Butler, I remembered I was wrong. Popular culture is laced with one type of autistic character: killers. From *Dexter* to *Luther*’s Alice Morgan, they are rarely specifically labelled but possess a particular constellation of traits which code them as stereotypically autistic; hyper intelligence, extreme and unusual obsessions, social isolation, and most crucially, a complete absence of empathy which allows them to remorselessly cause physical or emotional pain for our cinematic pleasure.

This perception of autistic people as being inherently unempathetic and cruelly indifferent is one of the most entrenched and toxic ones I come across and arguably the most stigmatised aspect of the disorder. It’s definitely the one which makes me least comfortable disclosing my diagnosis, worrying that people

I love will assume I am unable or unwilling to care about them. The reality couldn’t be further from the truth. The problem stems from the fact that our understanding of the concept of empathy is at odds with the neurological processes scientists describe autistic people as struggling with. In general use, empathy is simply the ability to understand the feelings of another from their perspective. Empathy is not just one single character trait, but a composition of two different

processes. The first kind, cognitive empathy, is about being able to understand and relate to another person’s mental state; the second, affective or emotional empathy, is whether we actually care about the other person’s distress and are driven to respond. Whilst Asperger syndrome is associated with difficulties in cognitive empathy, affective empathy is generally intact. A significant amount of research has actually suggested that people with Asperger’s are actually a lot more distressed by other people’s pain than neurotypical people; we experience something known as hyper-empathy.

The idea of hyper-empathy is related to the

‘intense world theory’ of autism. The fact that people on the spectrum are often visibly less moved or affected by things has usually been interpreted as a lack of emotions, but the intense world theory suggests that we are actually so overwhelmed by how deeply we feel that we struggle to express it.

Hyper-empathy provided me with a model I could relate to after many years of feeling that the most stereotypical part of Asperger syndrome didn’t quite fit me. Some of my most vivid memories from early childhood are of people crying; the memories are tinged with great distress.

A diary entry from when I was nine years old is focused entirely around how distraught I was about a boy in my class grazing his knee and bursting into tears.

I have never found empathy a particularly useful concept when I’m talking about how autism affects my interactions with others. As long as the affective empathy is there I am perfectly capable of improvising the cognitive part myself. Where others have an immediate response to seeing someone in distress, I will analyse what I know about the person, why they might be upset and what might help them, drawing from all my previous interactions with them and other similar situations in my life, films, books or the news in a matter of seconds. Whilst the cognitive processes we’re using are different, the outcome is the same. Approaching empathy in a detached and analytical way can arguably be more empathetic than having an innate response. It’s incredibly difficult to judge people harshly when you’re constantly analysing them as complex products of their experiences, as a network of psychology and biological and chemical reactions.

It can make boundaries incredibly difficult; it’s painful to understand people’s actions to the point where it’s impossible to just dismiss them as ‘bad’ and cut them off when they’re hurting you. This is particularly complicated in situations like abuse or bullying where firm black and white moral lines have to be drawn for your own mental wellbeing. It’s probably part of the reason autistic people are very vulnerable to both of these things.

Sometimes I wish I was one of the stone cold assassins I see sharing my neurotype on the screen. It would probably be an easy life, but it’s not mine, and while autistic people are as varied and unique as neurotypical ones, it’s safe to say it represents very few of us. The idea of killing someone without remorse is laughable – I was once inconsolable for hours after a character in a comedy film fired her gardener. Autistic people do not lack empathy, but our conceptualisation of what empathy should look like is ●

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Culture

REVIEW

Elisabeth Vellacott: Figures in the Landscape

Ruby Reding explores the work of the Cambridge-bred artist as part of the exhibition Kettle's Yard in New Places and Spaces

Murray Edwards College is an interesting exhibition space. The hallways are long and quiet. They benefit from modern architecture, meaning that light pours in from everywhere and the sound of the fountain delicately echoes through the glass walls.

When I first learned that the entire New Hall Art Collection is not located in a specific and allocated space, I thought that this was slightly underwhelming. Viewing glorified and amazing works of art in a corridor or dining hall rather than a room labelled 'gallery' could seem to invalidate the importance of the work: it becomes both 'art' and 'decoration'. But, as one porter told me, the entire college is an exhibition – and I think the artwork is also illuminated by these spaces; it exists inside and is a part of college life.

Space is essential to the works by Elisabeth Vellacott on display in the New Hall Collection, as part of *Kettle's Yard in New Places and Spaces*. A brief glimpse at her paintings might make it easy to describe her work as whimsical and ethereal, but the newly commissioned text in the exhibition by William J. Simmons rightly reiterates that this kind of 'gender-based provincialism' has been adopted by male critics and termed 'feminine sensibility'.

This way of thinking would be both sexist and narrow-minded to brilliant work that radically flattens the depth perspective of figures and landscape, bringing together historical, religious and modern subjects in a dimension of spaces that are domestic, natural and architectural.

One of the paintings displayed is *Lazarus*, which pictures a religious, Christ-like figure on a moor with his arms raised so that his body hangs in a cross shape. He is faceless and exists in white, adverse to the various figures gathered around him who stand out in brightly coloured, modern clothes. Their backs are turned, disrupting the relationship to the dominant religious, masculine figure.

Many of Vellacott's paintings feature settings like this, which resemble a dream landscape or imagined natural space. In the extract provided at the exhibition, Simmons draws on this ambiguity, that "we do not know where these scenes take place; they seem to be everywhere and nowhere". This, paired with the

facelessness and flatness of her figures, is what is so great about Vellacott's work. It radiates an uncertainty, providing the viewer with both familiar and strange images.

The complementary essay by Simmons is an insightful and useful addition to the exhibition. Also accompanying three paintings are some graphite studies and a small archive of artefacts. One of the studies for 'Christ Driving Photographers out from the King's College Chapel' is witty and in keeping with the Cambridge-focused attention and sensibility of the exhibition. There are some small black and white photographs of Vellacott's unique triangular house, which provide a thought-provoking parallel domestic interior to the private spaces which she explores in her work.

This is more apparent as the Kettle's Yard exhibition is in a 'new space'. In the same way that Vellacott warps and re-shapes a masculine-dominated art tradition, the exhibition takes place in a space that gives an important voice to female artists. The college collection is one of the largest women's art collections in Europe, and therefore takes on the important role of providing female artists with a platform – a 'room of one's own'.

Although the featured work by Vellacott is limited and only gives us a small insight into the depth and body of her art, it is important as part of a wider discourse.

Part of this contemporary dialogue of which New Hall Art Collection is a partner is the project 'A Woman's Place' by Day+Gluckman, which "aims to question and address the contemporary position of women in our creative, historical and cultural landscape" – specifically in the South East of England. It positions the issue of female representation in art in terms of "woman's interaction with space".

In the same way, the disruption and combination of figures in nameless or unknown space in Vellacott's art is reconfiguring the pre-existing representations of historical and religious figures with modern ones, compressing both depth perception and time. Now that this exhibition has placed her artwork within this 'new space', it serves to be an even more

ingrained reclamation.

Vellacott's work can be seen through the glass walls opposite to that of Eileen Cooper, Julie Held and Maggi Hamburg. The *Guerrilla Girls* piece greets visitors in the Porters' Lodge and is also part of the collection. Though the statistics have improved since the 1980s, when their posters were made, still less than 25 per cent of solo exhibitions at the Tate Modern, Hayward and Serpentine galleries were by women between 2007 and 2014.

There are many more statistics like this. An article by Maura Reilly in *ARTNews* has an excellent analysis of how representation remains an economic and social issue in the contemporary art world. This is just some of the evidence of why this exhibition is important, but more specifically this exhibition allows Cambridge to become part of the conversation.

Kettle's Yard's in New Places and Spaces is not just intellectually and visually stimulating, but it is also a kind of action. It's interesting for those interested in the issue of women's representation in art and the role that Cambridge has played within it. No other exhibition I have visited has allowed such a strong, distinctive voice for women's art. It is this sense of political relevance and female solidarity that makes this exhibition unique ●

Elisabeth Vellacott's work is on display from 2nd November 2016 – 15th January 2017, 10am-5pm at Murray Edwards College



Don't miss »

Exhibitions finishing soon that you can't afford to forget

Inside the Macclesfield Psalter / Fitzwilliam Museum

Until 27th November

Closing next Sunday, this exhibition is inspired by the eponymous Macclesfield Psalter, a 14th-century prayer book that was saved by public appeal for its display in the Fitzwilliam Museum in 2005. Created by artist Emil Siemeister, the installation features a "dream-like room" where visitors can surround themselves by the images and riotous illustrations of the prayer book.



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varsity.co.uk/culture



◀ Chesil Beach (left); Lazarus (right) (Kettle's Yard)

The decision will have catastrophic consequences, warns **Charlie Stone**

The abolition of A Level History of Art cannot be ignored

Of all the controversial goings on in 2016, perhaps the abolition of History of Art at A Level has gone under the radar. Brexit and Trump have rightly been dominating our headlines, for both will have a lasting impact on politics, society and our own lives. But AQA's decision to drop the History of Art in schools, the last exam board to do so, represents a cultural shift in the government's attitude towards education, and a cultural shift for the worse.

The decision is part of a number of changes to the curriculum set by former education secretary, Michael Gove, in a bid to cut more creative subjects to pave the way for those supposedly more challenging.

Top academics have condemned the decision, and hundreds, among them world leading experts such as the University of Oxford's Prof. Craig Clunas and Christina Prescott-Walker, senior vice-president of Sotheby's, New York, have signed an open letter to the exam board lamenting that "a subject of profound social, cultural and economic importance [is] disappearing from the UK A-Level landscape."

The University of Cambridge's History of Art department responded too, its head, Dr Rosalind P. Blakesley, remarking that the abolition of this A Level is "incomprehensible", for "any development which results in a lessening of choice for school students is to be deplored". While the University – along with most others – does not require prospective students to have taken History of Art A Level in order to pursue it here, the loss of such an option will reduce awareness of the subject area.

The decision, it seems, represents a total lack of government awareness over the value of studying History of Art. As Blakesley points out, the creative and cultural industries, which require many skills that art historians acquire, play a significant part in the UK's economy and are part of the reason its culture is so well-known and attractive around the world. We live in a world that is full of artefacts of human history in painting, sculpture, architecture as well as in all of the new visual arts

of television, cinema and social media, and to study History of Art allows an insight into the interpretation and contextualisation of visual objects, allowing us to understand the past and therefore the present.

Art History is far more than the discussion of a painting on a wall. The skills of interpretation and insight taught by a degree in History of Art are so fundamental in so many spheres of work in the professional world that the government's trivialisation of it in schools is unforgivable.

Perhaps even more worrying, though, is the impact this decision could have on the divisions between private and state schools. Simon Schama, presenter of BBC's *The Face of Britain*, tweeted in response to the decision: "So basically the idea is to eliminate the deep wisdom of the past (and present) altogether for anyone not in private school. Heinous". And it is hard not to agree with him.

Independent schools will be free to offer History of Art in their curriculum (this is because the Pre-U, an alternative to A Level which is only taken in independent schools, still has History of Art in its curriculum) whereas the A Level's abolition will limit options for state schools. Not only, then, does this decision deal a blow to the creative capital of Britain, but it seems to fuel elitism.

History of Art, though, has long been branded an elitist subject by its critics. Only a handful of state schools currently offer it, and it has become an expensive course for exam boards to maintain, with only 839 students sitting the A Level exam earlier this year. The government's response, to ease it out of the curriculum, was the easy decision: and the wrong one. If something that is an undeniably valuable option is struggling for popularity, it makes far more sense to increase awareness and promote interest in its area rather than speed up its decline.

Our government does of course have many things on its mind, this year perhaps trumping any other in recent memory, but it can't neglect issues like these. Culturally, the loss of History of Art at A Level is catastrophic, and something we should not take lightly ●

◀ Figures under a Tree (Kettle's Yard)

◀ Detail from Bare Trees and Hills (Kettle's Yard)

COLOUR: The Art and Science of Illuminated Manuscripts / Fitzwilliam Museum Until 2nd January 2017

One of your last chances to see this celebratory exhibition before it finishes during the Christmas break, 150 illuminated manuscripts are displayed, ranging from prayerbooks of European royalty to the Macclesfield Psalter to the alphabet used to teach a young princess. The exhibition also takes visitors through the technologies used to discover the materials used, as well as the art of modern forgeries.



19th – 25th NOVEMBER

What's on this week?

DAVID KEFFORD – POCKET SCULPTURES
 / Alison Richard Building



Kefford, who is based in Cambridge, uses everyday objects, materials and images to produce sculptural scenes that point to "elusive, emotional and psychological narratives". The material used within his sculptures is often waste he has found on his walks around Cambridge, which he reassembles at his studio.

From Monday 21st November.

Saturday 19th **Syrian Supper Club**

Hot Numbers Coffee, Trumpington Street, 7pm

The club's launch night, this evening offers Syrian-inspired food in order to raise money for the Hands Up Foundation. The dining price for students is £28.
billetto.co.uk

Sunday 20th **Stile Antico**

Selwyn College, 8:30pm

Offering an engaging introduction to Renaissance vocal music, the evening features works by Thomas Tallis as well as William Byrd's 'Vigilate'. £5 for students
stileantico.co.uk

Tuesday 22nd **Artist in Focus: William Scott**

Fitzwilliam Museum, 1:15pm

William Scott, who features in the Being Modern display, is the focus of this free talk, a collaboration between Kettle's Yard and the University's Department of History of Art.
kettlesyard.co.uk

Wednesday 23rd **CUADC/Footlights Pantomime 2016: Rumpelstiltskin**

ADC Thetare, 7:45pm

The opening night of CUADC/Footlight's annual pantomime promises to be "a snow-capped, gold-plated, schnitzel-covered tale of revenge, greed and love". £9 for concessions on Wednesday 23rd only.
adctheatre.com

Friday 25th **Portland Comedy Club**

The Portland Arms, 8:30pm

Their last comedy club night of the year hosts Mark Felgate, whose performances consist of a "slew of silly voices, noises, vocal acrobatics, twisted songs and guitar histrionics". £7.50 otd.
theportlandarms.co.uk

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

History re-told through the Gweagal Shield

Louis Klee explores the British Museum artefact's battle for repatriation, and the tale of colonial violence and dispossession it tells

In the Maudslay Hall of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, it is easy to miss the two grass-wood spears. Yet, these weapons are the material testimony from an afternoon in April, 1770, when Cooman and his companions witnessed Lieutenant Cook land at what is now called Botany Bay – the first encounter between indigenous Australians and the British Empire.

The story of this event – and the calamitous history that followed – can be told through the journey of these objects. Cook, and several members of his crew, wrote about them in his journals. Passages reveal that Cook and his crew took 50 spears as well as other items from the shore that day. But a far more interesting approach to this history is now

unfolding. Rodney Kelly, a Djiringanj Dharawal knowledge-holder and a direct descendent from the Gweagal warrior Cooman, learnt of these events through an oral history passed down through generations. As he puts it: “they can never tell our stories and they do not know our stories... Our stories are in our minds and are passed down thousands of years.” Although Kelly has fought for and achieved the endorsement of both the New South Wales Parliament and the Australian Senate, they have given him neither diplomatic nor financial support. Of all the artefacts from the first encounter, the Gweagal shield is, in the words of Michael Ingrey, “the one all the elders talk about” – and it’s not hard to understand why. At around a metre in length, this rough-hewn red mangrove-wood shield bares a single conspicuous hole at its centre.

Sir Joseph Banks, one of Cook’s crew, attributes the hole to a “single pointed lance” – an explanation that Neil MacGregor, the former director of the British Museum where the shield is held today, not only adopts, but takes it as a sign of the prevalent “conflict” in indigenous Australian society as it shows how “the shield had seen action before it came up against Cook’s musket

▼ **The original Gweagal shield remains in the British Museum**



shot”. But Kelly has a different perspective – the hole is the consequence of the first musket shot fired in what would become the conquest of Indigenous Australia. As Vincent Forrester put it in London this November: “The hole in that shield is the symbol of our dispossession. The first moment of violence in a history of violence. If you look through that hole to now, to where Australia is today, you will see that dispossession.” To look through that hole is to see not just the destruction wrought by a brutal colonial legacy but the disgrace of contemporary Australia; it is to see the wretched catalogue of crimes and grievances; to see a country where indigenous Australians die 10 years younger than their non-indigenous compatriots; where an indigenous child is more likely to be locked in prison than to finish high school. In Kelly’s words it offers “concise, poetic and irrefutable proof” that Cook did not ‘discover’ Australia as *terra nullius* – Australia was settled by British fusillade from the very start. Cook knew this well at that moment when he fired three volleys from his ship to symbolise the annexation of the eastern coast for King George III. On 4th November, Kelly received a reply from the British Museum – that the artefacts are part of a universal patrimony; millions of people can visit them in London. “The Museum is happy to consider lending the shield subject to all our normal loan considerations.” Underlying this naked display of archival power – we will decide the terms under which you access the shield of your ancestors – is perhaps an anxious acknowledgement of the truth to that old quip: there’s nothing British in the British Museum. To admit, as Kelly puts it, that “they have no title over it... it was taken by gunfire”, is to concede also to the decolonisation of a vast collection of artefacts obtained under similar circumstances. While repatriation will not right all the wrongs of the colonial past, it will, at the very least, open a vantage from which to view this history – one in which indigenous resistance is, as it should be, in the foreground ●



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 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

Whatever happened to Bohemia?

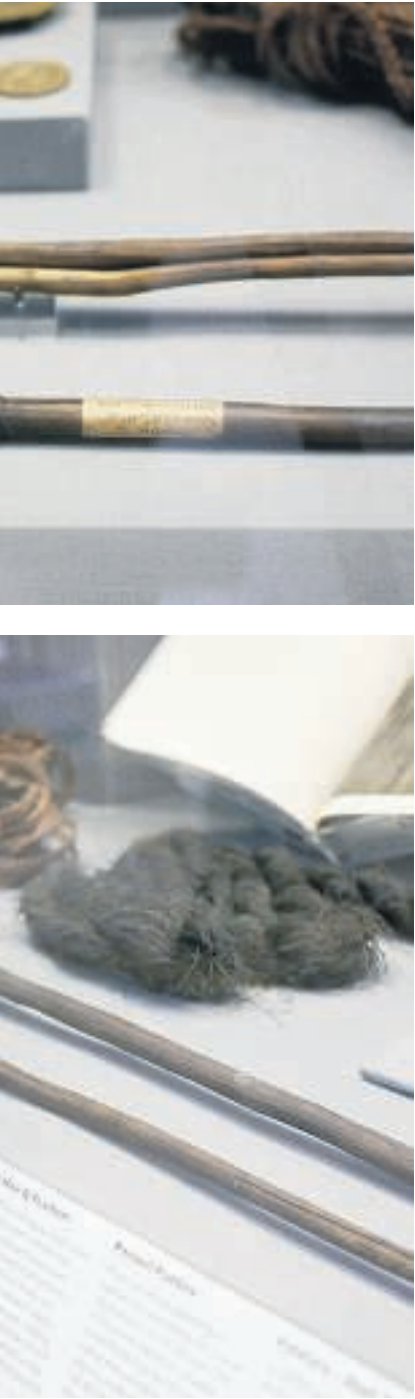
Bea Hannay-Young explores the romanticisation and the disjunction of bohemianism in the 21st century.

A liberal and arty utopia, occupied by a semi-mythical race of ‘bohemians’. Bohemianism has popped up in different centres and at different times. Within it, generations of artists have been united by ideals of eccentricity, amorality and rebellion. France has historically been Bohemia’s home: it gave us *La bohème*, and it sold us a vision of the 1920s’ gin-soaked existentialists, sharing ideas, and drinks, and beds. The beatniks tore up San Francisco (and its anti-obscenity laws) in the 1950s. London’s Soho and New York’s Greenwich Village accommodated artists, sex workers and a growing gay community through the 1980s and 1990s. But where are the bohemians now? Bohemianism is born of two tenets: first, poverty. You can’t call your-

self a bohemian if you haven’t got tuberculosis, or incinerated your own art to heat your home. Secondly, a bohemian rejects cultural norms. In the musical *RENT*, the song ‘La vie bohème’ spends two verses listing these subversive, bohemian pastimes: bisexuality, free choice, masturbation, marijuana, and “anything taboo”. The majority of these practices are (thank God) no longer violations of the norm – I can happily report that with regards to accepting attitudes towards gender and sexuality, most of us are now at least a little bohemian. Meanwhile, political and intellectual agendas have been adopted by the new bourgeoisie. Angelou, Kerouac and Orwell are just as likely to adorn the bookshelves of bankers in Chelsea as roach-infested student bedrooms. Art is violently de-radicalised when it’s adorning the walls of a penthouse or a parlour. Andy Warhol’s factory started off as a very clever commentary on mass-consumerism and commerciality in art, but it wasn’t supposed to be trendy.

Bohemian fashion has likewise suffered, with glossies like *Elle* and *Vogue* promising us that we can look exactly like Sienna Miller if we buy a flower crown and don’t brush our hair for a week. Nowhere is this nouveaux-riche appropriation of bohemia clearer than at the ‘Bohemian grove retreat’, a 2,700-acre reserve in California where rich and powerful men go to play. It is billed as a rule-free escape from the harsh realities of civilised living,





Patrick Wernham talks to the Corn Exchange's new Composer in Residence

Can you tell us a little about your musical career to date?

I started singing at Jesus when I was seven: that was basically my musical training. I did some stuff after that at Junior Guildhall, and a place called Aldeburgh Young Musicians. So that exposed me to more stuff: jazz fusion, improvisation, quite a lot of Indian music. My technical musical training comes from being a chorister, but my main instrument is now piano. I did a piano recital last year, and I wanted to play some of my own stuff, but the faculty wouldn't let me, of course.

Was composition something you were always interested in?

To some extent it's something that everyone is interested in. I mean, increasingly now, people are pointing out that there's as much a compositional aspect to playing as there is

to actually composing. So when you play a piece you basically make it your own. The idea that a composer puts a piece out there, and after that it doesn't belong to the composer, it belongs to whoever plays it, is gaining traction in the modern music world.

Is that something you're comfortable with as a composer yourself?

I'm much more comfortable with that than feeling like I have to control every aspect of the piece all the time. You do obviously have to take the responsibility for some things, but it also means that whoever plays your piece can contribute things to it that you haven't thought of. There's a school of composers that think the sign of a good composer is that he knows precisely what he wants in every way,

and I have no problem with knowing what you want, but enforcing that on everyone else is a completely different matter.

Why was it that you chose to come to university to study music rather than a conservatoire?

Well, conservatoires already have a reputation for being very traditional, and one of the largest problems in contemporary classical music is that people don't play it! People are still playing Beethoven, and Beethoven [Symphony No.] Five is good, but it doesn't deserve 8,500 performances over the past 150 years. That's just not something we need. The only stuff that I've heard that's been written in the past year, for example, has been either stuff that I've written, or stuff that I've commissioned for my own groups.

To my mind, people have lost sight of their priorities. And they've subsumed the ideal of moving forward with music, and taking advantage of the current extremely exciting social climate in Europe, they've subsumed that beneath the very ivory-tower, narrow-minded aim of producing an alternative version of Beethoven Five.

I just think there needs to be much more of a balance; at the moment it's about 95 to five percent, old to new. And I think until that ratio changes, people won't get used to the idea of classical music in general being exciting. Most of my friends who don't study music would not be interested in going to see Beethoven Five, other than for the novelty value of sitting in a concert hall for an hour and a half in silence which is a totally outdated social convention in the 21st century ●



▲ Paris is the historical home of Bohemian culture (wiki commons)

where the booze flows freely and bedroom doors are left open. Their selective poverty is deeply offensive – you cannot pay to enjoy the benefits of liberated living and denying its harsher realities. The Burning Man festival is little better: rebellion is reserved for the rich.

Meanwhile, the trope of the poor artist is an everlasting reality. Mass gentrification and astronomical living costs in areas like Soho are pushing out creatives (the very groups that made such areas desirable in the first place). It is hard to blame some of our more celebrated artists for their boring bourgeois lifestyles when the alternative is considered. It's romantic to imagine life as a bohemian, less so to die as one – alcoholism, drug abuse, as well as crime and unsanitary living conditions are not eventualities many of us would willingly subscribe to. The idea of working long and hard only to become an aspiring novelist with 12 roommates and no running water has lost its romance. I'm not sure that being able to live without inherited money or a boring white-collar job, while making art, making love, and challenging the bourgeois capitalist heteropatriarchy has ever been possible, and I don't think it ever will. Most millennials are more concerned with escaping crippling debt and paying for prescriptions. So, rest in peace Bohemia. You were a lovely idea, but for the most of us management consultancy awaits ●

“The trope of the poor artist is an everlasting reality”

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VARSITY



Fashion

FEATURE

Comme des Garçons MET the expectations

Robyn Schaffer
explains why
the MET Gala
decided to pay
homage to Rei
Kawakubo



The Metropolitan Museum of Art's annual Costume Institute Gala (better known as the Met Gala), which marks the opening of the museum's fashion exhibit for that year, is arguably the biggest night in fashion.

The exhibit's theme also serves as the theme of the Gala, with guests expected to dress accordingly. Each year, celebrities and fashion's finest attend the world-renowned event, which has recently been the subject of a documentary entitled *The First Monday on May* (alluding to the tradition of the Gala being held on this day each year), which followed the creative process in the run-up to the 2015 Gala. Past themes have included 'AngloMania: Tradition and Transgression in British Fashion', 'Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty' and 'Punk: Chaos to Couture'. Recently, however, it was announced that the 2017 theme would be 'Rei Kawakubo/Comme des Garçons'. So, what can we expect?

Comme des Garçons is a globally recognised and boundary-breaking French label, yet the woman behind the brand, Rei Kawakubo, is far more clandestine. The Japanese-born designer, who set up her label in Tokyo in 1973, has always chosen to remain under the radar and out of the limelight, instead letting her clothes and brand speak for themselves.

Comme des Garçons has often been described as an 'anti-fashion' label, with Kawakubo having frequently adopted minimalist colour palettes and silhouettes, yet also indulging in theatrical, abstract and conceptual ideas in her collections akin to those of Alexander McQueen and Gareth Pugh, making her creations the perfect subject for a museum exhibition.

Kawakubo's latest collection, for the Spring/Summer 2017 season, demonstrated these qualities perfectly. Admittedly, despite being largely unwearable, the theatrical, artistic approach taken by Kawakubo is something rare and unique in the fashion industry these days. Amid a throng of labels whose designs bear many resemblances, Kawakubo is one who chooses rather to explore and manifest concepts through her clothes, keeping her audience constantly wondering and in awe.



The collection was centred primarily around oversized, structural pieces in blacks, reds and whites which swathed the body and distorted the female silhouette, taking ordinary ideas and pieces of clothing and transforming them into mutant versions of themselves as if from a parallel world. It is evident from this collection and many others of Kawakubo's that she is a designer who has never desired to play by the rules, opting instead to pursue her own ideas and inadvertently creating her own trends which influence the rest of the industry.

Thus, the marriage of Comme des Garçons with the Met Gala appears to be a match made in heaven. The performance-art-inspired nature of Kawakubo's designs make her clothes ideal for museum viewing; unlike the more 'ordinary' clothes of other brands, Kawakubo allows her clothes to tell a story while simultaneously inviting the viewer to interpret this story for themselves.

As for the Gala, we may expect (if the guests abide by and pay tribute to the theme, which is not always the case) more structurally interesting and boundary-pushing costumes, which will force celebrities to jump out of their comfort zones and experiment with fashion as they never have before – which is perhaps precisely the point ●

“
Comme
des
Garçons
has often
been
described
as an
“anti-
fashion”
label
”

◀ Comme
des Garçons
designs
are often
closer to
works of art
rather than
fashionable
outfits
(Instagram:
comme-
desgarçons)

◀ Rei
Kawakubo
has
expended
the last 43
years rev-
olutionising
the fashion
world
(Instagram:
@fashion-
weekmx)



What we wore this week

As we quickly approach the end of term, we decided to indulge in a clearly narcissistic exercise. Inspired by *The Guardian's* columnist Jess Cartner-Morley, in this photoshoot we present to you what we, the *Varsity* fashion team, usually wear on a daily basis. These are the faces and the styles behind the articles of this term.

MODELS
Agustin Ferrari-Braun
Robyn Schaffer
Elizabeth Huang
Miriam Balanescu

PHOTOGRAPHS
Qiuying Giulia Lai

Check out Varsity Fashion's Instagram photos:
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COLUMN

Ageless Style

Flora Walsh thinks about the relationship between fashion and our elders



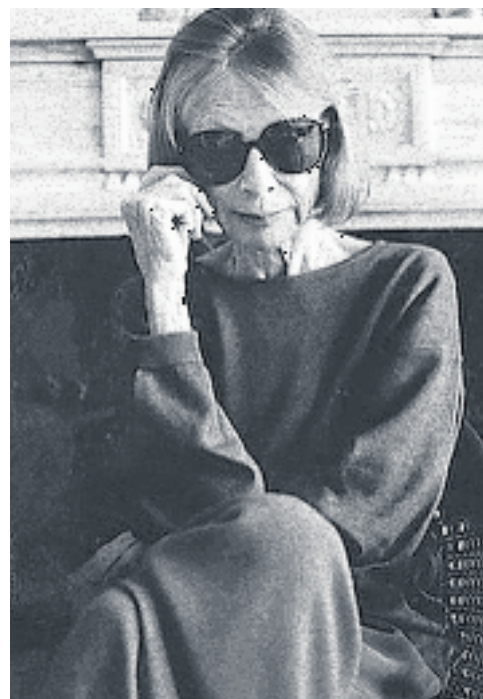
The difficulties faced by the silver segment of the population may not be the most pressing issue for an undergraduate. Old age seems so far away, and is becoming ever more distant thanks to improved medicine and quality of life. Society dictates that ageing involves only negative experiences.

However, as the quality of our twilight years is ever improving, there is no reason why we cannot be active, healthy and, dare I say it, stylish in our 60s, 70s and 80s. We are living longer and increasingly wealth is focused in the older portion of the population. So, how has fashion adapted to meet this changing demographic environment and how will it continue to evolve?

This topic is particularly provocative from the female perspective. There's a fundamental tension between the traditional concept of feminine beauty and the biological reality of the body. Women's fertility, in essence, 'expires' to a certain extent, and their aesthetic relevance is extinguished with it. Nonetheless, as the fashion world has had to adapt to the fact that we are living longer, there appears to be a seismic shift blossoming in the way we considered the 'payoff' between beauty and age. A study conducted by Abbey, the building society and mortgage lender, found that, in the UK, 34 per cent of the over-50s population accounts for nearly 75 per cent of the country's total wealth. This trend is mimicked across the developed world. So, the key to the longevity of the fashion industry in this turbulent economic period lies in, well, the increasing longevity of the population.

For the past few years, Selfridges has marked the beginning of a new year with the 'Bright Young Things' campaign, where 14 up-and-coming young designers are commissioned to create an individual window display. In 2015, however, the department store ushered in the start of the year with an initiative dubbed 'Bright Old Things', which will highlight the likes of Molly Parkin, then aged 82, previous fashion editor of *The Sunday Times*; actor and painter William Forbes-Hamilton; and designer Nick Wooster.

The American writer Joan Didion, was chosen as the face of Céline for SS15, alongside French ballet dancer and choreographer Marie-Agnès Gillot and British model Freya Lawrence. The definition of graceful ageing, Didion (born in 1934) was photographed by



▲ Despite being 80, Joan Didion continues to be a fashion icon (Instagram: didiondoc)

Juergen Teller sporting a pair of sunglasses from the brand's iconic collection. She also acted as the inspiration for Céline's 'resort' campaign, where the model Daria Werbowy is depicted leaning out of the window of a Corvette Stingray, echoing a portrait of Didion

in Life magazine.

Another high fashion house that has extolled the grace and reverence of growing older has been Lanvin. For their AW12 campaign they used 'real-life' models over the age of 60, including Tziporah Salamon and Jacqueline Murdock.

Both women were discovered on the popular street-style blog Advanced Style, which was created by Ari Seth Cohen to celebrate the street style of older women and men. She is determined to show that people over a certain age can be just as relevant and creative as the fresh faces on the fashion scene.

One of the greatest misconceptions about ageing consumers is their discomfort in digital channels and unwillingness to engage online. In a study conducted by AT Kearney, it was found that, up until the age of 75, people were comfortable in using the internet.

Tapping into this technologically minded portion of the over-65 age group could unlock the potential for massive growth in fashion, where online shopping outlets are leading the sales figures.

Once the fashion world comes to embrace age rather than attempting to avoid it, there will be unlimited opportunity for retailers to engage with older consumers in a way that reflects their style and aspirations, rather than the stereotypes that come with age.

As Mark Twain once said: "Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter" ●



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Theatre

PREVIEW

‘It’s still seen as contentious’

Strong reactions to this play go to show that its work – to make these stories heard – isn’t over yet, writes **Kritarth Jha**

The Vagina Monologues

ADC Theatre

24th - 26th November, 11:00pm

As I walk into the Larkum studio, only Eva O’Flynn (Director) and Katurah Morrish (Kat) are present. I interrupt them, and we exchange pleasantries. I take a seat a little way from the door, facing Eva and adjacent to Kat, who is sitting with a copy of *The Vagina Monologues* in her hand.

They’re in the middle of the monologue titled ‘The Flood’. I ask them to not mind me, and for the next 45 minutes, they don’t. I am lost in the background, much like the stacked chairs beside me, but at the same time compelled by the scenes that I am witnessing them rehearse.

Eva offers very specific and crisp suggestions to Kat, who quickly incorporates these into the next run of her speech. She is playing an elderly woman in this monologue, a character amalgamated from interviews with women aged 65-75, who’d never before had any interview where they talked about their vaginas. You get the feeling the word ‘poignant’ was created for works like ‘The Flood’.

This is a play that has attracted controversy in the past. I remember the Indian adaptation of the play being banned by the Chennai police in 2004 because it was considered a threat to public order (Jane Fonda and Marisa Tomei on stage at the same time must have been too much to handle).

The first thing I wanted to find out was how receptive to the play the Cambridge community has been. Eva tells me about her experience: “I think I’ve had one of two responses: either it’s been a slightly awkward laugh, kind of respectful but at the same time saying ‘don’t tell me any more about that’. Or saying, ‘Oh My God! Yeah, that’s so good!’ I

▲ Katurah Morrish as ‘The Flood’ (Charlie Scott)

▼ The fame of this notorious play does not stop it from being considered contentious in Cambridge (Charlie Scott)

think we’re really lucky that people are really excited about it.”

Kat adds: “Another thing that I’ve heard people say is like ‘ooh, *The Vagina Monologues*’ quite like, ‘oh, I know what’s that about... Oh, well, Have a go then...’ I know it’s a big play, I know it’s been done.” Eva feels that the reaction to this play says a lot about Cambridge: “even though it’s known that it’s been done a lot of times and it’s so famous and the concept is largely well-known, it’s still seen as contentious.”

Eva also adds how at the end of their rehearsal last week, the cast played two

“These raw and real monologues portray women as human beings”

truths and a lie, not about themselves but about their vaginas. “There were people in the cast at the beginning who would have done it but wouldn’t have been comfortable saying it. But now ... we were cracking up and it was so much fun.”

They mention how there’s no space in dialogue or society where women can talk about their vaginas in the same way as they would being ill, for example, or about stories from their childhood.

I wondered how they felt about this 20-year-old play still being so relevant in Cambridge today. They tell me that it just goes to show that the work of the play – which is to make these stories heard – isn’t over yet.

These raw and real monologues portray women as human beings, and that’s where its real charm lies.

If you’ve heard about *The Vagina Monologues* and know a friend who could benefit from having their mind expanded, bring them along.

There’s a small chance they’ll never come to the theatre with you again, but there’s also the possibility that you’ve just increased the sum total of the world’s tolerance by just that little bit. And that’s always a good thing ●



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PREVIEW



‘Camp, sensuous,
wracked by crisis’

Antony and Cleopatra
 Pembroke New Cellars
 22nd - 26th November, 7:30pm

Alex Strouts and Caitlin Carr sat at a folding table in Clare College’s Blythe Room on Tuesday morning, calmly conducting a troupe of actors milling around purposefully to 80s music.

I asked the pair, co-directors of the Pembroke Players’ upcoming *Antony and Cleopatra*, what this was all about. Caitlin explained they were getting into character; Alex, tapping at her laptop, put on New Order’s ‘Blue

▶▶ A
**dark and
 cathartic
 80s theme**
 (Anna
 Jennings)

Monday’. “Okay guys”, she said to the whirling mass of thespians: “Blue Monday – this is war music!”

Alex and Caitlin have gone whole-hog with the 80s theme in their production of the 17th-century tragedy. Rome is, in a sense, midtown New York: fat-cat, supply-side, and conformist – the 80s as the decade of Reagan and Thatcher. Egypt seems somewhere further downtown: camp, sensuous, wracked by crisis. The play will be staged at Pembroke New Cellars, where extensive use of music, lights, and projection will amplify the pop-culture motifs.

Caitlin noted that her co-director first came up with the idea of an 80s Shakespeare after reading Julius Caesar: “it was reminding her of certain 80s power ballads”, said Carr, “I think there’s that kind of buildup of emotion, and the drama of it, and that ‘over-topness’ – there’s so much 80s media that’s kind of really dark, but that also really builds, and it’s kind of cathartic”.

“New wave,” interjected Alex. The directors painted their Octavius Caesar as a Margaret Thatcher, while Antony, according to Alex, “has a fluidity between a rock star and a politician”.

Seth Kruger, who’s playing Antony, sees the character as a go-between for the play’s two very different worlds. “Aside from dyeing

my hair for the first time in my life, I’ve been walking around Cambridge and even going clubbing in some of the androgynous makeup we’re using for Antony. It’s very important for me to get comfortable with Antony’s easy gender fluidity and with the feeling of having people looking at you, with this striking hair and makeup, and trying to work you out”.

Beatriz Santos, as Cleopatra, moons over Antony for one second, and rails against him the next. Cagey, cornered, she is a powerful sovereign on whom the detachment of rule weighs heavily.

Playing up to expectations is a key theme all around; Alex and Caitlin point out that “cheesy music” comes on when a Roman delegation gets plastered “playing up to this idea of Egypt,” and suggested their model for the marriage between Antony and Octavia was “Lady Diana and Prince Charles – the ephemerality and the fact that it’s over in a second”.

At a time when the 80s seem to be coming back with a vengeance – not just in pop culture, but with the election of that iconic 80s New York personality, Donald Trump, as leader of the (hitherto) free world – a retro *Antony and Cleopatra*, embracing not just the cheesiness of that decade’s music but also the dark cultural forces lurking within, seems poignant, and maybe even necessary

Nolan Lindquist



PREVIEW



‘A deconstruction
of orientalism’

Jiwoo Joo as
 Song Liling
 (Johannes Hjorth)

M. Butterfly
 Corpus Playroom
 22nd - 26th November, 7:00pm

“Your mouth says no but your eyes say yes.” Jiwoo Yoo and Daniel Blick are locked in a power struggle. This line marks a pivotal moment in their characters’ development and the once clear lines between victim and aggressor, male and female, and East and West are now completely blurred. It is this power play that lies at the very centre of David Henry Hwang’s *M. Butterfly*. Based on the true story of a Chinese opera singer who deceives a French diplomat into believing he is a woman, Hwang’s Tony award-winning play confronts imperialist attitudes towards race, gender roles and authority. As suggested by the title, the play is filled with references to Puccini’s opera, *Madame Butterfly*, in which a Western man falls in love with a Japanese woman only to abandon her and return home.

But, as director Claire Takami Siljedahl explains, the play is not simply a modern retelling of Puccini’s nineteenth-century opera

Madame Butterfly. “This is a traditional device,” she says, “to tie contemporary issues back to older stories. But Hwang confronts these ideas and expectations. The play presents a deconstruction of orientalism, tackling imperialist attitudes, the fetishisation of Asian women and the emasculation of Asian men.”

It is sure to be Yoo’s performance as opera singer Song Liling that will make this production. With subtle, nuanced choices in his approach to body language and speech pattern, the contrast between the male and female sides of his character is both shocking and remarkably convincing. His seduction of Dan Blick’s Gallimard is played brilliantly and he exercises incredible control and restraint in a role that, like Gallimard, could easily have collapsed into a crude stereotype.

The play’s title, *M. Butterfly*, notably and famously leaves the gender of its ‘butterfly’ character open. But, as shown by Hwang’s brilliant writing, combined with promising early performances in the show from Yoo and Blick, the central question might not only be ones about gender identity, but also about which character is the butterfly in the net

Ben Williams

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Dr. Sam Chamberlain is directing this study at the
 University of Cambridge.

(camimpulsivity@gmail.com)

Music

FEATURE

Childhood Memories of Leonard Cohen

Nell Whitaker reminisces about the music of a great Canadian musician

Leonard Cohen came to me in my dad's small black car about 10 years ago. The car in which my sister had written her first name and the first initial of our surname (in the crabby handwriting of an eight-year-old) in the grey felt above the door on the inside. My parents were freshly divorced and we were doing the sad every-other-weekend-and-Wednesday-night thing. This involved a lot of driving to and from school from what had been home to a house called Home Farm, which was very cold and had bare, exposed walls. The only things in it were my dad's things.

We listened to CDs like *The Best of Simon and Garfunkel*, *The Best of Leonard Cohen*, *Rubber Soul*, and an Andrew Lloyd Webber CD. We loved this too and held it in the same estimation as the other three.

My memories of this period are hazy, which is unsurprising given that I so young and because this period was jagged around the edges by pain. The feeling of wrongness that the immediate aftermath of a divorce inflicts is, I think, universally felt by the children of the divorce. The confusion as to what is going on; the sudden need to understand complicated adult grievances and irrationalities; the need to show my sister that everything was actually much the same and alright while suppressing the feeling that everything is actually new and much worse than what we had before.

Parents, I came to quickly understand, are not only capable of being hurt, but also of hurting you. I remember all this, and long walks over uneven frost-hardened fields to the River Severn. Sheep in the garden, losing over and over to my sister at Monopoly, pulling a book out of the bookshelf in my dad's room (*Filth* by Irvine Welsh) and being so scared of the pig face on the front that I burst into tears. Most of all, it was hours in the car, listening to music. Leonard Cohen was the background for all of this.

While I was being lurched forward into the adult world it was his music that took me in and showed it to me more gently. Pointing out the places where things were different and strange and richer. 'Suzanne' was the song I remember really listening to first and finding so much in – the strange intersections of love and desire and the peculiar fluidity of both

▲ **Leonard Cohen** showed us how to live in the world (Rama)

of those things, the way in which the brown river falls behind the movement of the players in the song like a stage set, the Canadian 'o' rising and falling in the word "oranges" in a way I'd never heard before. Then other songs – I remember the gentle thrill of 'Chelsea Hotel No. 2' and its way of just saying what it means:

"I remember you well in the Chelsea Hotel/ You were talking so brave and so sweet/Giving me head on the unmade bed/While the limousines wait in the street".

Sex, the song was saying, is something that can be given, gently, by those who love each other – or at least, by those who love something in the other person. When I got older and found out it was about Janis Joplin, who died young, it became a eulogy not only for the shared moments of youth and fame in the same hotel, but for someone who never got old enough to look back as the song does. And then this controlled look back at love and specialness ends with a sort of heartbroken lie:

"I remember you well in the Chelsea Hotel/That's all, I don't even think of you that often".

I am no Leonard Cohen purist. I am not familiar with his whole oeuvre and I don't own a book of his poetry. But I have been thinking about and anticipating his death for some time. When I woke up to the news I cried not only because the world has lost a beautiful poet but because I felt I had lost someone I knew. This was someone who had sat next to me in the car that smelled of home and not-home, speaking poems to me that I didn't know were poems and making me feel that the world was alright. And there are things adults can do that are deserving of poetry – being in love, having sex, a glass of wine, a city made up of people you don't know, getting older and knowing more and more. It is frightening, but it is lovely. In his letter to Marianne Ihlen on her deathbed, his muse for the song 'So Long, Marianne', Cohen tells her to "know that I am so close behind you that if you stretch out your hand, I think you can reach mine". From accounts given by her friends and family, she did know, and it is a feeling I find familiar. I never knew him and he was never mine, but for a while there was a sad and frightened 10-year-old in a car, in rural Shropshire, feeling the presence and comfort of the hand of a 70-year-old Canadian man, through poetry and music and a scratched CD from Oxfam.

Rest in peace Leonard Cohen. Thank you for being there with us. To end with his own words, which are much better than mine: "Endless love. See you down the road" ●

“There are things adults can do that are deserving of poetry”

COLUMN

You probably think this song is about you

Perdi Higgs on this unique claim to fame



To have a song written about you is the ultimate compliment. To have your energy and personality inspire someone, you become a part of the creative process. And in being the inspiration, you become immortalised in song. We see many iconic pop songs that have their own muses and inspirations. The nature of pop culture sparks our intrigue in these songs and the truth behind their creation. In terms of musical inspiration, Pattie Boyd is an undisputed winning figure. Across two marriages, George Harrison and Eric Clapton were both moved to write songs about the model. Not only were these songs both dedicated to Boyd, they were both massive hits and are now a part of musical history. George Harrison's 'Something' was released in 1969 when he was married to Boyd.

It is a beautiful song, and it is unimaginable to imagine a gesture quite as romantic as making 'Something' for you. Yet their marriage ended, and in 1977, Eric Clapton's 'Wonderful Tonight' was next written for Boyd. Both songs show how music can provide a perfect freeze frame of a moment in life, keeping a certain point frozen in memory. Plus, being the inspiration for both these great artists undoubtedly makes Pattie Boyd an iconic figure in music herself.

Being a 'muse' of some kind to an artist seems like an appealing career path. Looking at Edie Sedgwick to Andy Warhol for example, there seems to be a lot of lounging around and being beautiful – which is definitely appealing. But muses are not just to inspire general creativity; they often inspire music based upon their own lives. Billy Joel's 'She's Always a

Woman' paints the picture of a ruthless and slightly terrifying female figure. It is inspired by Joel's wife, Elizabeth Weber Small, who was also managing his career at that point. It's a great song to have written about you, marvelling at your formidable nature. He warns of how she will "carelessly cut you and laugh while you're bleeding", but it's still a love song, something that makes it a sincere song of dedication. Obviously there are musical dedications that take a more aggressive approach. Carly Simon's 1972, 'You're So Vain' is an example of this. Simon has always left a cloud of ambiguity surrounding the inspiration for the song, and it is effectively the musical example of an indirect tweet. Here we see the fun behind a personal story inspiring a song. Simon's

own experiences are opened up: you are invited to relate to it and reminisce to yourself about that guy you dated who wouldn't stop staring at his own reflection. So it is inclusive storytelling, and a satisfying one for the artist. There is something undoubtedly pleasing about writing a song about someone's narcissism, and they 'probably think the song is about them'.

They rarely directly name or shame their inspirations, but provide just enough clues to keep the listener guessing. The interest in those behind the lyrics shows how celebrity culture develops our interest to uncover hidden relationships and drama. These songs are often endearing and simple. Their ambiguity is what makes it both intriguing and endearingly relatable to the listener. Songs of dedication can be both romantic and critical. Regardless if you are being praised or condemned, it is definitely a rather unique claim to fame ●

“Muses often inspire music based upon their own lives”

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

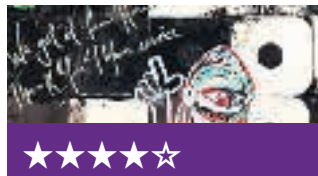
★★☆☆☆ = OK
 ★☆☆☆☆ = BAD
 ☆☆☆☆☆ = ABYSMAL

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[goo.gl/psEVsJ](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/goo.gl/psEVsJ)



New releases

ALBUM



★★★★★
**We got It From Here...
 Thank You 4 Your
 Service.**
 A Tribe Called Quest

Two things I'm sceptical of: calls to the 'good old days' of hip-hop and comeback albums. There is no one quite like Nas in '92, but there really is no shortage of contemporary clever lyricists and talented producers. While it can be interesting to hear groups reunite after decades of silence, the products are at best throwbacks, and at worst simple cash-grabs. A

Tribe Called Quest's *We Got It From Here... Thank You 4 Your Service*, a comeback album from the good old days, is one of the best hip-hop albums this year; focusing on American politics, they prove they haven't lost their radical edge. A work so full of lyricism, political commentary and banging beats that I'm wishing it was 1992 again ● **Mikka Jaarte**

ALBUM



★★★★★
**Twelve Days of
 Christmas**
 The King's Men

As Christmas recordings go, most are only valid for a few shorts weeks at the end of the Western calendar. In fact, serious musicians often see this genre in one of two ways: cringe-worthy or a truly great way to make a lot of money by selling albums. Exceptions to these artist clichés can be found in some of the finest singers in the world: the

King's Men (of King's College, Cambridge). This repertoire has the ability to feature the group in its usual configuration but offering music that is neither esoteric nor egocentric (as many see the classical genre traditionally). *Twelve Days of Christmas* shows the King's Men at their finest, an immensely talented group beautifully ushering in the festive season ● **Karl Schwonik**

REVIEW



Cohen's majestic final musical outing

You Want it Darker
 Leonard Cohen
 Columbia Records, 21 October
 ★★★★★

Forty-five seconds into the title track of his final album, *You Want It Darker*, Leonard Cohen plays his grand trick.

Up until this point, the song has sounded exactly as we'd expect it to; the defeated lament of a dying, octogenarian crooner. "If you are the healer it means I'm broken and lame", he sings. Cohen's protagonist isn't dead yet, but his wounded sigh to God isn't a million miles from David Bowie's "look up here, I'm in heaven."

But the defeatism is a red herring; an act. Cohen indulges our assumptions, letting us smugly make our judgement of the album before the first song has even run its course. Then, 45 seconds into the track, he smashes those assumptions aside.

"You want it darker. We kill the flame".

"You" is God, and Cohen begins to viciously attack him for allowing death and allowing suffering; for his constant inaction in the face of atrocity. Humanity, he says, is God's instrument, bringing cruelty into the world to fulfil his black-hearted desires. We kill the flame when God wants it darker. The album, particularly the furious first song, wouldn't have been the same had Cohen not recorded it while "ready to die" and smoking medical marijuana to ease the pain of his cancer. But it wouldn't have been profoundly different either, because Cohen ended his life more interested in continuing to examine the themes which preoccupied his art for over 50 years than in simply transcribing his own death. *You Want It Darker* is not a last will or the full stop and the end of a sentence; it is a gorgeous exploration of the human soul, littered with love, loss, belief, heartbreak, anger, humour and, of course, mortality. The album is beautiful, and it is a terrible shame that Cohen's exploration must now come to an end ● **Ben Haigh**

18th - 24th NOVEMBER

Highlights of the week

Friday 18th Cambridge Americana

Portland Arms, 7.30pm
 Get a taste of Americana music with four different groups performing at the Arms
 £8

Saturday 20th Phronesis (Cambridge Jazz Festival)

Mumford Theatre, Anglia Ruskin University, 8pm
 The headline act of the weekend promises to be an energetic and groove-filled show
 £16 (non-ARU concession, advance)

Wednesday 22nd Cambridge University Opera Society Fundraising Gala

Emmanuel College, 7pm
 An event to celebrate and support the university's Opera scene
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Tuesday 22nd Soweto Kinch (Cambridge Jazz Festival)

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Reviews

THE TOP 5

Political Films



The Ides of March (2011)

Mike Morris (George Clooney) is a candidate for President. Stephen Meyers (Ryan Gosling) is his junior campaign manager who is forced to question the morality of the campaign and his own actions.



Election (1999)

Reese Witherspoon plays Tracy Flick, an over-achieving student who runs a rigorous campaign to become the student president. But teacher Jim McAllister talks a popular football player into running too.



The Iron Lady (2011)

As Thatcher (Meryl Streep) struggles with dementia and discusses these events with her deceased husband, we are given an insight into the price she paid for her rise and fall from power.



J. Edgar (2011)

An elderly J. Edgar Hoover (played by Leonardo DiCaprio) tells Agent Smith (Ed Westwick) about his founding of the FBI. However, we are also given an exclusive insight into the personal secrets and scandals of his life.



The Butler (2013)

Cecil Gaines (Forest Whitaker) has served eight presidents during his time as a butler. From his escape from a cotton farm to his position as a hotel valet, we look back on Cecil's life and his family's struggles.

Got your own **Top 5** List?
Email it to reviews@varsity.co.uk

FILM

A film not afraid to make the audience question themselves, writes Pany Heliotis

'Crucial is the idea of mystery'

Arrival
Dir. Denis Villeneuve
Opened 10th November

★★★★★

So crucial is the idea of mystery, or rather the impossibility of communication, to Denis Villeneuve's *Arrival*, reviewing it proves similarly impossible to do without undermining the film's efforts to obfuscate. In some reviews, one might place a spoiler warning at the beginning and then launch into a critique extolling its secrets and set-pieces. But so integral is the 'withheld fact' in *Arrival*, to do that even would be to render seeing the film pointless. Forgive this review then, essay-addled reader, for sounding elliptical.

Who are we to be more afraid of and amazed by – the aliens or ourselves?

Sonically, Villeneuve populates the soundtrack with discordant tones and screeches, flat notes and abrupt musical interjections, creating a soundscape that deems the familiar settings of the film – a university lecture room, rolling fields, a living room – foreign to us. By the time we have adjusted to the soundtrack, the jarring picture of the monolithic alien

sanctum the scientists enter seems less circumspect to us.

Villeneuve is reinforcing the notion that humanity and these aliens are as alien to the other as the other is to them. The audience, similarly, is to remain unclear whose side they are on until the very end.

This alludes to the film's most commendable characteristic – its insistence on ambiguity. Eric Heisserer's script isn't scared to alienate (pardon the pun) his audience, rather, he basks in the uncertainty. The importance of linguistic theory in the film's plot is not shied away from or simplified, the characters explain the importance of language in a way that is sensical, but by no means straightforward. Meanwhile, dreams and flashbacks are often melded into the plot without a delineation in visual style so that we are forced into a kind of fugue state,

▲ **Amy Adams as expert linguistic Louise and Jeremy Renner as physicist Ian (21 Laps Entertainment)**

as disoriented by the events of the film as its inhabitants. This deliberate non-pandering to the easy and tangible serves to allegorically maintain a sense of the inestimable when considering life beyond this earth.

Villeneuve captures this mystery through the visual, showing a deft hand in demonstrating the magnificent via the minute. His camera stays in close up, hinting at the spectacle that is occurring outside the shot; the majesty registered in the twitch of an eye or a pursed lip. The audience is not fed information but rather has to infer it.

When the camera does open up the field of vision, it follows a Malick-like trajectory, following behind the characters as though the audience is experiencing the wonder for the first time with them. At one point, when the aliens' arrival is announced on the news, Villeneuve places the camera from the perspective of the television, looking at the stunned faces of its viewers as they stare directly at us, the audience.

It doesn't take a visual culture student to acknowledge the message being transmitted here: who are we to be more afraid of and amazed by? The aliens or ourselves?

With *Arrival*, Villeneuve enters the pantheon of Kubrick and Tarkovsky in offering an alternative vision of the galactic unknown, unafraid to confuse and disturb his audience in the name of mystery ●

▼ **Adams makes contact with the mysterious aliens (21 Laps Entertainment)**



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

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

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Recent releases



◀ **McGregor and Connelly struggle raising their rebellious daughter** (Lionsgate)

▼ **Sam Neill and Max Irons as Lord Carnarvon and archaeologist Howard Carter** (ITV)

FILM

American Pastoral

Dir. Ewan McGregor
 Opened 11th November
 ★★★★★

American Pastoral concerns itself with the life of Seymour 'Swede' Levov, something of an all-American hero. After a legendary sporting career in high school and a spell in the Marines, he seems to have it all: a former beauty queen for a wife, and an idyllic homestead in the New Jersey suburbs. But this all changes with the arrival of the Vietnam War, and the turbulence that accompanied it in the late 1960s. Dealing with an increasingly radicalised daughter, Swede struggles to hold firm as the world changes around him.

The film does well to convey the general sense of anxiety felt by much of middle America. Contemporary footage of street violence and student radicals is used to good effect, and the prolonged scene where Swede and one of his workers hold fort in their factory

more than pays its way in tension.

McGregor gives a strong performance – in turns sympathetic and pathetic. His smile always feels forced, just hinting at the turmoil he is trying to cover-up. Jennifer Connelly, too, does a good job as wife Dawn, a woman both celebrated and oppressed by her status as former Miss New Jersey. Early on the film goes to pains to set out its thematic concerns. While providing essential context, it feels a little too 'on the nose'. Footage of returning GIs and a long, drawn-out shot of the flag: American! Bright, expansive shots of fields and cows: Pastoral! Indeed, subtlety is not one of the film's strengths. Nowhere is this truer than in the choice of music. When Swede's daughter Merry starts to get caught up in the anti-war movement, Buffalo Springfield's 'For What It's Worth' strikes up. One can't help thinking it would have been more effective had that same song not been used to convey the upheavals of the Vietnam War countless times before. *American Pastoral* is not a bad film; it almost serves a purpose in providing a useful précis of the novel. But faced with the challenge of trying to cram so much into what is a relatively brief film, it inevitably ends up being heavy-handed and a little superficial

● Patrick Wernham

TV

Tutankhamun

Dir. Peter Webber
 Available on ITV Player
 ★★★★★

1905, Valley of the Kings. The golden age of archaeology is over: the valley is all dug up, its secrets uncovered, its tombs raided.

Or so we thought! Cue Howard Carter, the impressively moustached archaeological genius who has a wild hunch: what if the valley isn't empty after all? What if, for example, it still conceals the tomb of the forgotten boy-king, Tutankhamun? It's a hunch that pays off – although it's actually Lord Carnarvon (played by *Jurassic Park*'s Sam Neill) who does the paying – bankrupting his estate while funding the dig. Meanwhile, Carter starts an affair with Carnarvon's daughter, Evelyn...

Carter comes into conflict with pretty much everyone he meets – but that doesn't stop him finding the tomb in a dramatic sequence and delivering his catchphrase as he looks on the "wonderful things" which fill the burial chamber. It was amusingly tense: I felt stressed, as if I was uncovering the lost tomb of Tutankhamun myself (rather than watching ITV Player and ignoring all my deadlines).

Apart from sporting some very fine fezzes, the Egyptian Antiquities Department also introduces the interesting wider questions of the series: to whom does this treasure belong? Are Carter and Carnarvon pioneers or plunderers? And what makes them any better than grave robbers? Because, at the heart of all the swashbuckling adventure, the glamour of imperial Egypt and the sweeping shots of starlit deserts is the troubling question of whether the British should be interfering there at all.

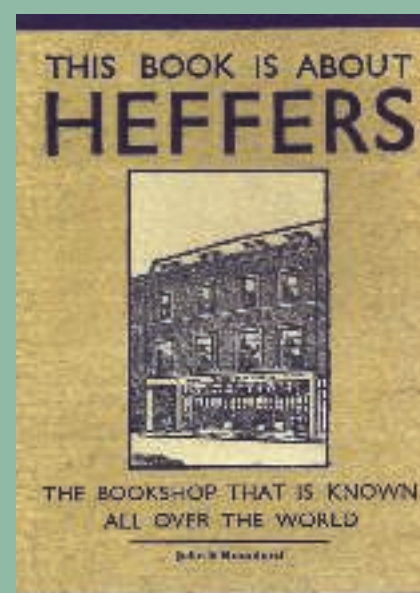


The antithesis between the antiquities department and Team Carnarvon becomes a symbol for the larger-scale rebellion brewing against the British forces, who have long outstayed their welcome in Egypt. Carter and Evelyn, angry and defiant, argue that they should get to keep some of Tutankhamun's artefacts as a kind of 'finders' fee'. But I'm inclined to agree with the antiquities department – Egypt's historical and cultural heritage isn't a free-for-all to be pillaged by wealthy Westerners. True, without those Westerners the tomb would perhaps have remained undiscovered for another century, but that may not have been such a bad thing.

For Carter, treasure is precious because it does not – and cannot – belong to him. The final scene depicts Carter lingering in the now empty tomb of Tutankhamun, alone with the echoes of the buried gold, and the memory of Evelyn. It's beautifully nostalgic: for the hopes and spark of his idea, for the thrill of the search, and for a time which has already gone. It may not be historically accurate, but then again, if you want historical accuracy, you should read the encyclopaedia instead of watching period dramas on Sunday evenings... ●

Ellie Sanderson

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Sport

CUKC have a belter at Student Nationals



Ellen Weaver
Sports Correspondent

Cambridge University Karate Club (CUKC) made a golden start to their competitive season on Saturday, as all eight competing members returned from the Karate Union of Great Britain (KUGB) Student National Championships in Chesterfield with medals.

After a successful season last year – culminating in CUKC's 10th consecutive Varsity triumph against Oxford – the Light Blues succeeded in establishing some winning form to carry them into

the rest of the season.

The tournament began with eliminations for the kata (performance) competition. In the female kyu-grade kata, Mara Graziani took the first medal of the day for the Light Blues, securing silver after being narrowly beaten to gold by two tenths of a point. Meanwhile, Philip Rupp reached the male kyu-grade finals and, as a purple belt outranked by many of his brown-belt competitors, defied the odds to secure third place. And there was yet more success for CUKC in female black-belt grade kata, as Lis Kerr performed exceptionally in the finals to overcome national-standard competitors

and claim a bronze medal.

Overcoming the disappointment of a defeat in the first round of male black belt kata eliminations, Heng Xen went on to win gold for the Light Blues in the team kata, accompanied by Vlad Soltuz and Jamie Lowenthal.

Following great success in the kata competitions, the Light Blues continued their domination of the tournament on the mats, with six competitors representing the club in all four kumite (competition fighting) categories.

In the male kyu-grade kumite, Rupp and Patrick Swain both won their elimination fights to make it an exciting CUKC vs. CUKC final. With the two fighting at the same time as the female kyu-grade final, their CUKC teammates were left spoilt for choice as to who to watch.

In the men's final, after Swain received a contact warning and Rupp a warning for going out of the area, the fight ended a nil-nil tie. Put to the judges' decision, it was to be Swain who was awarded the match, the gold medal and the CUKC bragging rights.

Meanwhile, in the women's competition – buoyed by her earlier silver medal – Graziani won both of her elimination matches, staying light on her feet and sharp with her attacks. And in the final, it was the Italian's sneaky body punches that took her straight to gold.

Elsewhere, co-captains Vlad Soltuz and Ellen Weaver were on display in their respective black belt kumite events.

◀ CUKC came home from the Student National Championships with eight medals (ELLEN WEAVER)

Having been automatically moved on to the second round after his first opponent failed to turn up, the Romanian's first fight saw him take a solid blow from a punch to the head as he went in for an attack. Despite this, Soltuz persevered and brought it back with two subsequent body punches to progress through to the final round of eliminations.

Up against a member of the KUGB England Squad, underdog Soltuz fought long and hard to secure an impressive tie after the first two minutes, and repeated his feat after extra time. B

ut luck was not with the CUKC skipper: the fight was eventually put to judges' decision where his opponent was awarded the match.

In the female black-belt kumite, Weaver won her eliminations fight with relative ease and, in her semi-final, progressed with a punch to the body and to the head. She carried this form into the final, scoring her first point early.

But the technique that ultimately clinched the win came towards the end of the fight: with height working in her favour, Weaver scored the winning point with a head punch to secure a gold medal and go two better than last year, having had to settle for bronze in 2015.

Returning to Cambridge with a total of four gold, two silver and two bronze medals, CUKC made a confident and promising start to the season.

CUKC: Weaver (c), Soltuz (c), Graziani, Rupp, Swain, Kerr, Lowenthal, Xen

After Brexit and Trump, Murray is just what we need

► Continued from back page

top of men's tennis for 237 consecutive weeks between February 2004 and August 2008. Nadal has won nine of the last 12 French Open tournaments in Paris. This year, Djokovic held all four Grand Slam titles simultaneously for the first time since Rod Laver achieved the feat in the 1960s.

For too long Murray had been pushed around the court by these titans of the sport. He has faced them in 10 Grand Slam finals, coming out on top only twice. The 2016 Wimbledon final was the first time Murray had played someone other than these big three in the last stage of a Grand Slam tournament.

Having first ranked number two in the world in August 2009, Andy Murray has been made to work harder than most for the top spot: the seven years and two months since then are the longest any player has ever had to wait before reaching number one. At 29, Murray is the second-oldest player – behind John Newcombe in 1974 – to become the best-ranked player in the world.

And after spending 76 weeks as the world number two, there was never any guarantee – given the quality of Murray's peers – that he would ever go on to achieve the tennis player's ultimate dream.

Indeed, seven very good players, including Wimbledon champion Goran

► Novak Djokovic has been knocked off the top spot (YANN CARADEC)

Ivanisevic, were never able to make the final step from second to first.

Murray, however, made sure not to have his name added to that list by finally grinding his way to the top after an utterly dominant conclusion to the 2016 season. Djokovic graciously commended his long-time rival, commenting: "he has had an incredible run and definitely is a well-deserving number one player."

Murray was equally gracious, recognising "how good the guys around me have been".

The quality of the era, coupled with the long journey the Scot has had to undertake, makes the achievement all the more impressive. In his words, the "many years of work to get here, especially at this stage of my career" make it "more satisfying in some ways".

Where can he go from here? Perhaps, we are entering an era of Murray dominance at the top of the game. In a recent Telegraph poll, 49 per cent predicted that he will go on to win two majors in 2017, with a further 22 per cent predicting three or four majors. He has some work to do if he intends to catch Novak's 12, Rafa's 14 or Roger's 17 majors before he hangs up the tennis racket.

While Murray has already written himself into the tennis history books – thanks



◀ Andy Murray is now world number one (CARINE06)

partly to last week's achievement – his three Grand Slams do not yet match up to the greats of the game.

However, with both Rafa and Roger sidelined with injuries and Djokovic struggling with form, the stage seems primed for Murray to reap some well-earned rewards in 2017.

That said, Djokovic will not be put down without a fight. This time last year, the Serbian seemed unbeatable on his way to a fourth consecutive title at the World Tour finals.

If he is victorious at the World Tour finals in London this week, he will quickly wrench back the number one spot. The 34-match-strong Murray and Djokovic rivalry is surely set, therefore, to be more interesting than ever in 2017.

But in the meantime, just take a moment to revel in Andy Murray's outstanding achievement. His rise to number one is a good thing for tennis and – in the emotionally charged wake of Brexit, Trump and Harambe – a great story in an otherwise bleak 2016.

Don't put non-League football on the bench



Alfie Denness
Sports Correspondent

Hastings, my hometown, has a rich history. That this year marks the 950th anniversary of our eponymous battle should be proof enough of that. What we do not boast, however, is a similarly impressive tradition of footballing success.

Despite being a reasonably sized town – around the same as Wigan and considerably larger than Burnley, both of which host football clubs with recent top-flight experience – as I write, Hastings United lie in 13th position in the Ryman League Division One South, the eighth tier of the English football pyramid. Their last home game was watched by a crowd of 322, a respectable attendance at this level.

Throughout my childhood and teenage years, if asked what football team I supported, I would always promptly reply, “Hastings United”. This, though, proved not to be a socially acceptable response and would be met with confusion, then derision, and usually the question: “yeah, but what proper team?”

As it happens, I do also follow a Premier League team, but my best experiences of watching football haven't involved Özil, Sánchez, and co. They have been at The Pilot Field, home of Hastings United, a club I feel far more intimately attached to. I maintain that as Premier League football becomes more and more distant from and dismissive of the ordinary fan, as transfer fees and wages continue to balloon to obscene levels, the non-League game becomes an ever more enticing alternative.

I can imagine the main objection is that ‘the standard is so poor’. There is, of course, some truth in this. Semi-professional footballers who only train together a couple of times a week are not going to produce the beautiful passing of Barcelona. But when you go and watch football – and I mean at the ground, not on TV with Gary Neville, Jamie Carragher and a high-tech whiteboard – the standard of play is not the most important thing. It is a football cliché, but at the end of the day there is only one stat that matters, and it is not the pass completion rate of your deep-lying playmaker.

No matter how beautifully your team has played, walking out of the ground

after a defeat feels terrible. Conversely, if your team have had 10 men behind the ball for 90 minutes and sneaked a scrappy goal, you will leave with a spring in your step. Watching your team is about losing yourself in the game's big moments, in the injury-time winners and last-ditch tackles. This is true regardless of what league your club plays in.

If that is the case, then why watch non-League over top-flight football? One standout reason is the cost. Premier League football is prohibitively expensive. This February, around 10,000 Liverpool fans left their match against Sunderland after 77 minutes to protest proposed pricing changes that would see some tickets sold at £77. By contrast, a student ticket to watch Hastings United is just £6, with under-18s going free.

And once you are through the turnstile, you can expect a good matchday experience. You would be surprised by the atmosphere a few hundred supporters can create. All it takes is a couple dozen enthusiasts behind the goal – preferably armed with a drum – and the usual assortment of chants will ring out throughout the game.

This is facilitated by the presence of terraces, which provide the rare opportunity to stand up throughout the entire 90 minutes of a match without an irate steward motioning for you to sit down. And besides, if you've ever been to the Emirates, you will know that a large crowd does not necessarily lead to a good atmosphere.

There is a community feel to the non-League game that you just do not get at a Premier League club. You are watching players that you've played football with in the past, that you know personally. At one time, it seemed that the entire P.E. department at my old school turned out for United at the weekend. Contrast this to the Premier League, where the players are far removed from the often working-class communities they represent, with the average Premier League salary reaching £1.7 million last season.

Since 1992, when the Premier League broke away from the Football League to negotiate its own commercial deals, money in football has become more and more concentrated at the top, leaving non-League and lower-league clubs behind. This season has seen the intro-

▲ At Hastings United, a student ticket costs just £6 (JAMES BOYES)

duction of some Premier League clubs' Under-21 teams into the Football League Trophy, an ominous sign of what the future could hold for the lower leagues, relegated to the status of training grounds for future stars. Supporting your local non-League team is a show of defiance against this process, against the extor-

tionate ticket prices and impersonal character of the top clubs.

Ultimately, for those of us in the footballing wilderness – whether that be the South of England outside London, North Wales or (increasingly) the North-East – non-League football is a gem waiting to be discovered.

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Sport

Alfie Denness
Football fans
should embrace the
non-League game

Page 35



Commanding Pythons show their venom in season opener

Cambridge

35

Royal Holloway

8

Harry Richer
Sports Correspondent

Cambridge University Pythons American Football Club (the Pythons) made a confident start to the season, taking a 35-8 away win over the Royal Holloway Bears in the BUCS Division 1 South East Conference.

While the Pythons have been buoyed by the return of experienced former Light Blues Tom Carr and Rob Brewster, as well as the strong new players, they have not been without their losses too, a number of key figures having graduated.

But there were no noticeable holes in the Pythons' squad, as their dominant performance justified the long trip to Surrey on Sunday afternoon and saw them claim a well-earned victory.

The match began with the Bears taking the first offensive drive, beginning on their own 46-yard line. But a fine strip-sack by Ethan Brown on the third play of the drive, which was matched by Richard Alloway's lightning-fast recovery of the ball, gave the Pythons their turn.

Indeed, this excellent defensive work would set the tone for the Pythons. Led

▲ The Pythons celebrate Phil Knott's 38-yard interception touchdown run
(ROBERT GUY)

by returning linebackers, and current Pythons President and Vice-President, Ned Bransden and Harry Richer, the Light Blues got into the Bears' backfield, disrupted plays and shut down players, thanks in part to superb defensive tackles from new Python Ethan Dalton, alongside Ethan Cox at Safety, playing his first match in over eight years.

Offensively, the Light Blues' experience, with long-time Pythons like Joe Moore, was well complemented by new and raw talent from players such as Offensive Lineman Carlos Val Mas. Led superbly by Quarterback and overall captain Tom Carr, the Pythons proved themselves clinical from the start: an 11-play scoring drive saw Carr force the ball into the end zone with a four-yard rush to give the Pythons an early touchdown. A two-point conversion from Moore gave the Pythons an 8-0 lead.

The rest of the first quarter was marked by non-scoring drives for both sides, but the Pythons were very much on top. And they continued to dominate in the second quarter: more commanding defence forced the Bears back to their own 13-yard line, and moments later, Cox pulled off a sublime 41-yard interception return before a safety on an attempted Bears punt added to the Pythons' lead.

Though 10-0 ahead, the Light Blues were far from comfortable and, as they regrouped on the sidelines to prepare for the second half, there was a sense that they needed to create the moment that would break the Bears' hearts.

And break their hearts they did. Beginning the second half on their own 25-yard line, on the very first play, the Pythons fumbled the ball, give the Bears a potential opportunity for redemption.

But it was not to be, as the bullish Pythons' defence forced a fumble that was well recovered by Dalton. And two plays later, to rub salt in the home side's wound, Moore ran 66 yards for a touchdown, putting the Pythons up 17-0 and destroying any lacy hope for the Bears.

The Light Blues then began to pile on their lead in clinical fashion: a 38-yard interception touchdown by Phil Knott saw the score increase to 24-0, while yet more terrific defensive work saw the away side force another safety.

Rookie Quarterback and Tight-End Ollie Hayes took the reins from Carr in the fourth quarter with style, as he rushed the ball in to give the Pythons a 33-0 lead.

After another forced safety, the Bears added a touchdown of their own, late in the fourth quarter, to end the game 35-8. But this was to be but a consolation score, the Londoners having succumbed to a dominant performance from the away side, which they will hope will set the tone for the rest of the season.

The Pythons: Carr (c), Bransden, Richer, Moore, Choksey, Calocane, Rae, Brewster, Alloway, Brown, Adeosun, Stockdale, Benham, Knott, Val Mas, Amin Said, Haidar, Bennett, Dalton, Hayes, Balletine, Chan, Cox, Venner, Gamble, Liu, Comb, Muzani



Nick Chevis

Andy Murray
is here to save
2016 for us all

In all the drama and disruption of America's presidential election last week, it was all too easy to look past a piece of honestly good and gratifying news this month: Andy Murray became the tennis world number one for the first time in his career. After more than a decade on the Tour, in which he has played 799 Tour-level matches and recorded 43 tournament victories, he has muscled his way to the pinnacle of men's tennis.

In short, the imperious 12-and-a-half-year Federer/Nadal/Djokovic dynasty at the top of men's tennis seems to be no more: a new face – a British face – has assumed the mantle.

It is difficult to overstate the magnitude of Andy Murray's achievements in 2016. In May, following Novak Djokovic's fourth consecutive Grand Slam triumph,



Murray celebrates winning the Japan Open in 2011 (CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON)

Murray was over 8,000 ranking points behind the Serbian. Pundits were talking about the 'Djokovic Slam', predicting a whitewash of victories for Novak in 2016.

Yet Murray went on to glory at Wimbledon, Olympic gold in Rio and – for the first time in his career – a string of four consecutive titles in Beijing, Shanghai, Vienna and Paris. And he carries his 21-match winning streak into this week's ATP World Tour finals as the newly-crowned world number one.

It hardly needs to be mentioned that Murray has played in one of the greatest eras in the history of men's tennis. Over the course of more than a decade, Federer, Nadal and Djokovic have amassed a staggering 43 grand slam titles between them. Federer reigned at the

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