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"It makes sense"  
– Jon Snow

**No. 819**  
Friday 25th November 2016  
varsity.co.uk

# VARSITY

## Angry cabbies take aim at Uber

**Sam Harrison**  
Deputy News Editor

Private-hire taxi companies in Cambridge have spoken out following the launch of Uber, the controversial vehicle hire service, in the city earlier this month.

Uber has been praised by enthusiasts of the so-called 'sharing economy', which is based on the principle that services should be purchased on an informal basis from peers rather than professionals.

But critics of the concept argue that, rather than replacing professional work, it simply reduces wages and makes work more casual, scrapping employment protections and rendering work more precarious.

Varsity spoke to CamCab, a private-hire company local to Cambridge, about the arrival of Uber in the city. CamCab's principal concern was for the safety of customers, which it described as "all-important" to them.

They queried Uber's ability to enforce its own safety standards, pointing out that six of its drivers were recently convicted in Denmark for violating the country's taxi laws. Similar cases have been brought up in France, Belgium and Germany.

CamCab stressed its own record on the safety of their passengers and par-

ticularly of local students. Following the murder of an Anglia Ruskin student by a man masquerading as a taxi driver, they told Varsity, they wished to create a taxi firm which would "make safety the number one priority" and so developed a number of precautions for their own firm.

All of their taxis are black, and sport an unremovable sticker bearing their brand on the door, and all of their drivers wear an identifiable uniform. Every CamCab car can be located from their central offices and its entire route traced by computer. The company has also reached out to various JCRs to offer students who find themselves without any money a free ride to safety.

Without identifiable cars and uniforms, they argue, there is no certain way for a customer to confirm the identity of an individual claiming to be an Uber driver.

CamCab also criticised Uber for deciding not to link its fares to the prices set by the City Council, as CamCab does. It suggested that Uber's long-term strategy is "to corner the market in Cambridge" in order to raise its fares when competition subsides.

CamCab also criticised Uber's employment practices. Most private-hire companies request a weekly fixed charge from their drivers for the use of their

**Continued on page 9 ►**



Revd Jeremy Caddick is leading the drive for divestment

(DANIEL GAYNE)

## Academics push for divestment

**Monty Fynn**  
News Correspondent

Regent House members gathered on Tuesday to discuss the University's investment policy, focusing on whether Cambridge should abstain from investments related to fossil fuels.

The Discussion, at Senate House, follows a report from the Working Group for Investment Responsibility, which recommended withdrawal from some carbon-related industries, but stopped short of calling for full divestment.

The report – published in June by the Advisory Committee on Benefactions and External and Legal Affairs (ACBELA) – drew criticism from the Cambridge Zero Carbon Society (ZC), who stated that the recommendations were "progress, but nowhere near enough". 17 members of Regent House requested a Discussion in order to "consider the report of the ACBELA Working Group... and in particular consider a policy of divestment from fossil fuels".

Figures from across the University gave speeches on the topic, including multiple heads of department and representatives from both ZC and Positive Investment Cambridge (PIC). Though student opinion was united, with all six speaking in favour of divesting, the rest

**Continued on page 4 ►**



# EDITORIAL

## The end of the line

For many, Week Eight of Michaelmas feels like a welcome relief after a punishing term of work. Christmas formals replace all-nighters in the library, and the sweet sound of carols oscillates from college chapels. Soon enough, it'll be time to pack up our things and head home, loaded up with reams of holiday work.

Turn to page 20 for Chris Nikolaou's touching reflection on his first Michaelmas term. For those of us who have lived through two, or three (or, if you're lucky enough, several more), I'm sure there will be something to relate to. That said, however intense terms might feel, it's important to remember that our time here is limited.

For the majority of students, the three or so years we spend as members of the University can be the most formative – as Chris writes, “the person who arrived at Cambridge two months ago is gone”. The changes we go through as individuals are often forgotten as we are caught up in our daily routines of essays, labs and supervisions. It's hard not to feel insignificant in the face of long-established university institutions and antiquated traditions.

But students can make a change, as exemplified by this term's cornucopia of referenda, protests and petitions. And, as it looks like Class Lists are to be continued (we'll find out the result of the Regent House vote on Monday 8th), stay tuned for a wealth of heated debate in Lent – not least as a result of a fly-sheet being assembled by the Autonomous Campaigns opposing the move.

And finally, a little plug from your outgoing editors. If you've enjoyed leafing through *Varsity* this term, please do consider getting involved in Lent; we want to help you get your voice heard, and we're only as strong as our contributors. Applications are now open, and more information is available at [varsity.co.uk/get-involved](http://varsity.co.uk/get-involved). If you're not sure what you want to do, or want to find out more about a particular section, feel free to send them an email. Don't be shy: our emails are right below.

Enjoy Bridgemas, and Christmas too, if you celebrate it (when it finally comes around). We'll see you next term.

*Magazine cover and Christmas illustrations by Matthew Seccombe*

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Varsity is published by Varsity Publications Ltd. Varsity Publications also publishes *The Mays*. Printed at Iliffe Print Cambridge – Winship Road, Milton, Cambridge CB24 6PP on 42.5gsm newsprint. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. ISSN 1758-4442.

## News

# Regent House to have decisive say on the future of Class Lists

● *Members of the University's governing body will be able to cast their votes on whether to abolish the Lists from Monday*

**Harry Curtis**  
Senior News Editor

Eighteen months after the issue of Class Lists was catapulted into the spotlight by a petition launched by the Our Grade, Our Choice campaign, the saga may soon be at an end.

Members of Regent House – the University's preeminent governing body – will be able to have their say on whether or not to abolish the publicly-displayed Lists from Monday, and will have until 8th December to cast their votes.

Regent House will be the final hurdle to clear for the proposals to abolish Class Lists, which have already been given the green light by the General Board of the Faculties and the University Council.

Last November, CUSU also backed abolition, with its Council voting 20 to zero in favour of scrapping Class Lists, with four Council members abstaining.

This vote established the policy of campaigning against Class Lists that was overturned by this term's referendum, in which 55.23 per cent of students that voted sided with the Save The Class List campaign and mandated CUSU to instead campaign for an easier opt-out system.

Following the referendum, CUSU Council resolved to produce a fly sheet – a document circulated to members of Regent House before a vote – outlining the student union's new stance and pushing for the retention of Class Lists.

The decision before Regent House, however, is simply whether or not to abolish Class Lists, and in order for the easier opt-out system that students voted for to be enacted, the plans to abolish Class Lists would first have to be rejected before either another vote or a revision of the University's statutes and ordinances.



The latter of these possible scenarios hinges on the wording of a University ordinance that says the students need 'good cause' to opt-out of the Class List. What this currently means in practice is that students wishing to opt out must prove that inclusion on a public Class List would be "likely to seriously endanger their health or well-being". However, the Save The Class List campaign have claimed this definition could be easily relaxed.

Though students voted in favour of retaining Class Lists with a simplified opt-out process earlier this month, it will be senior academics and administrative staff from across the University that will decide the future of Class Lists.

▲ Class Lists displayed outside Senate House could soon be a thing of the past (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

### SCIENTIFIC SUMMARY

## Year in review and tomorrow's challenges

2016 has been a tumultuous year, generating a significant amount of uncertainty as to what 2017 will bring. This is particularly true in the scientific community, with the election of Donald Trump and the vote for Brexit likely to restrict funding and innovation. **Jon Wall** and **Sofia Weiss** recap the year in science and look ahead to the challenges facing science going forward.

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### HOMELESSNESS AT XMAS

## Colleges must be good samaritans

**Martha O'Neil** recounts her chance meeting with a homeless woman and her dog on a trip to the bank, and how it reminded her that, while we look forward to being at home to spend the holidays with our families, others are not so lucky. Politics is about helping the people we see every day – Cambridge colleges and students mustn't just walk on but show some Christmas spirit.

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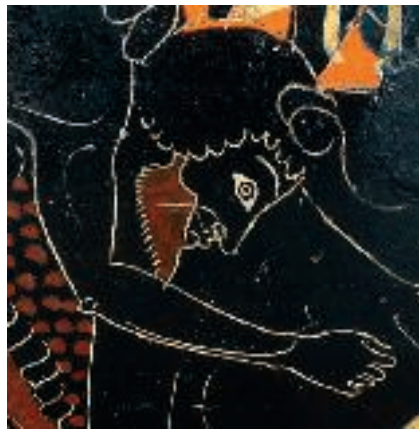
### Varsity FOR DUMMIES

## Survivor's guide to Varsity rugby matches

With the crucial Varsity matches on the horizon, all Oxbridge eyes will be turned on Twickenham to see which team will prevail. But rugby union is confusing, confounding even experienced spectators. So for Cantabs without rugby experience, the 8th December could be a very confusing day. But fear not, because **Ben Cisneros** is on hand with his guide to rugby union for dummies.

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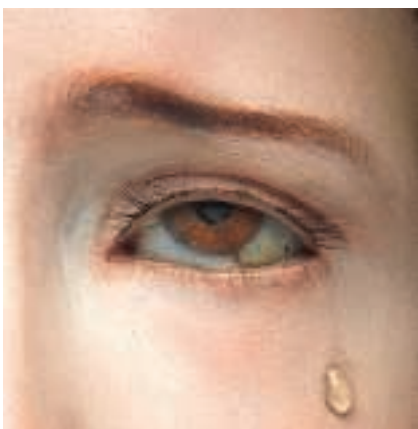
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# VARSITY



## News Divestment

# Divestment vote looming after

## Students push to divest as academics raise concerns about research fallout

► Continued from front page

of Regent House appeared divided. Eight members joined student calls for divestment, seven argued against, and one denied climate change altogether.

A variety of arguments were given in favour, primarily ethical and financial. Chris Galpin, a ZC representative, argued that the “moral argument is undeniable” and that “we need to abandon 80 per cent of our [fossil fuel] reserves” to avoid irreparable environmental damage.

Divestment is “not solely a moral stance”, argued Professor Lawrence King, who stated that fossil fuel investments are becoming “economically unviable”. He cited that the “Bank of England, The World Bank, Standard & Poor’s, Citibank and Goldman Sachs” have all expressed concerns that companies dependent on fossil fuels are overvalued and liable to sudden depreciation.

This is partly because the price of these companies’ shares is calculated under the assumption that all fossil fuel reserves will be consumed, and because the sector is threatened by the growing renewable energy industry.

Revd Jeremy Caddick, Dean of Emmanuel, emphasised that the Working Group found “no evidence that the University held any investments through its fund managers in fossil fuels”, suggesting that Cambridge had little to lose from divesting. It is an occasion “where doing the right thing actually brings us more money”.

However, the Working Group’s claims were contested by a ZC press release, which claimed that “many millions of pounds” were indirectly invested. Cambridge only directly holds four per cent of its investment portfolio, with the rest managed through third parties.

Caddick was one of many to emphasise that the aim of divestment was not financial harm but “to change public perception”. Dr Robert McFarlane, a Fellow at Emmanuel, stressed that Cambridge’s reputation meant “divestment is a hugely powerful way for the University to help shape public opinion”. Cambridge

has been accused of lagging behind, as over 600 major institutions, collectively worth \$3.4 trillion, have already divested, including Trinity College Dublin and SOAS. PIC representative Natalie Jones observed that Cambridge is liable to accusations of hypocrisy as, although “we do research on climate change...as an institution we remain silent”.

However, every head of department, school or division present at the Discussion argued against divestment. Professor Lindsay Greer, Head of the Department of Materials Science and Metallurgy, summarised by criticising divestment as a “blunt instrument”.

Professor Richard Prager, Head of the School of Technology, warned that “disinvestment could damage our relationships across a whole sector”, stating that his opposition to it was “not just a desire to avoid alienating valued sponsors of our research”, but because solutions can only be found by “engaging constructively with the industries”.

Others, such as the Bursar of Murray Edwards, Robert Gardiner, argued that the University should encourage companies to move away from fossil fuels through shareholder engagement. Caddick refuted this, likening it to “asking a lion very politely if he would consider the advantages of vegetarianism”.

Speaking to *Varsity* after the event, Galpin claimed that many of the members speaking against divestment “came from departments with significant financial links to fossil fuel companies” and that there was “no evidence” for divestment negatively affecting either research funding or undergraduate employment. He added that ZC “are hoping that there will be a vote on the University divesting next term”. PIC stated they “will ultimately support a vote if it comes to that”.

Student opinion appears to be strongly in favour of divestment, with CUSU Council previously voting 33-1 in support of ZC and the campaign group’s petition on the issue having gained over 2,300 signatures. This discussion suggests that a vote in Regent House would be far more uncertain.

► Revd Jeremy Caddick is one of those calling for divestment  
(DANIEL GAYNE)



## A short history of the campaign for green investment

**Sophie Penney**  
Senior News Correspondent

The University of Cambridge and its colleges hold a £5.89 billion endowment (split approximately 50:50 between them), which is currently invested in a variety of companies, including fossil-fuel corporations. But some students have campaigned for the University to ‘divest’ from the fossil fuel industry.

In 2015, a Working Group, formally named the Advisory Committee on Benefactions and External and Legal Affairs

(ACBELA), was set up within the University to explore potential changes that can be made to integrate environmental, social and governance concerns into the University’s investment strategy.

Two societies are leading the battle for the University to change its investment strategy: Cambridge Zero Carbon Society (ZC) and Positive Investment Cambridge (PIC). ZC is committed to divestment, which is more political as it will affect the ‘fossil-fuelled’ companies themselves, whereas PIC is involved in a diverse range of projects, considering divestment only one of the many tools

available for ethical investment.

In November 2015, CUSU voted to back ZC’s divestment campaign and, in April 2016, over 250 people took part in a divestment march through Cambridge organised by the campaign group. At the end of the march Angus Satow, then Campaigns Officer for ZC, handed a petition with over 2,100 signatures and an open letter calling for divestment to the University’s Ceremonial Officer.

ZC also released a 75-page report in April 2016, one week before the march, detailing their reasons for calling for divestment from fossil fuels, arguing that





# heated Regent House debate

## Interview Dean of Emmanuel leads divestment push

**Revd Jeremy Caddick** – a member of the University Council and the man behind the movement for divestment – sits down with **Daniel Gayne** to talk about why Regent House members should divest from fossil fuels

### What was the aim of the Discussion on Tuesday?

I think it's important that we have a wide-ranging debate on the issue of fossil fuel divestment, and all sorts of issues about how the University conducts itself. Climate change is the defining issue of our time, so what we're aiming at is a Discussion that will air the issues connecting with that as widely as possible. Divestment in particular is something that the University of Cambridge can do to basically throw its weight behind a transition to a low-carbon economy.

### The University has already taken its position on this. What was wrong with the Working Group's report earlier this year?

That's right, the ACBELA Working Group reported in June and recommended various things. Shareholder engagement was one of them, but the puzzling thing about that is that the way that the University invests – indirectly by giving money to fund managers – makes it difficult to see how the University can [adopt that recommendation]. But, significantly, it falls short of a policy of divestment.

### What do you make of suggestions that divestment would damage research relationships?

For a start, having a policy of not investing in these companies does not preclude research collaborations. If divestment communicates to these companies that they have to change, and move to a way

of working that doesn't involve taking fossil fuels from the ground, then we will have achieved our aim. They will still have to transition to something else, and these research collaborations are one way that might happen. We, as a university, need their expertise and they need us. That being the case, they're not going to walk away. A policy of divestment would help us lead them towards a more sustainable business model.

### What's the next step for the campaign?

Two things. Firstly, the Council automatically has to respond to the remarks that were made. So that will be a way of continuing the debate in the University. And the other thing is that if 50 members of the Regent House force a vote on the issue, then the Council has to put it to the Regent House for a vote. Given there is so much concern about this issue, that is what I would hope will happen.

### When is that likely to happen?

I'd hope that this would happen by the end of this term.

### What pushed you to get involved in the environmental movement?

Since the financial crash of 2008, it has been clear that the financial system we have at the moment is not sustainable. The thought crystallised – I'm not sure exactly when – that the environment is the key issue. Because capitalism requires continuous growth in a finite

world, we cannot accommodate it. So the issue after the crash is how we're going to make the financial system continue to work. And so it's quite clear that we need to change it so that the environment is protected.

### If the Regent House votes for something, is it then policy?

Yes. The governing body of the University is the Regent House. So if the Grace vote is passed, that then becomes University policy. The issue would be that, even though the Regent House are the governing body, the Council are the charity trustees and so there will probably be discussions about how those two roles are married together. There's also an issue here about what a policy of divestment means.

### Does the University Council have any say on the matter?

In terms of holding a vote, that has to be agreed on by the Council. I have known situations where they haven't. But if they choose not to, that itself has to be voted on.

### What's the balance of opinion on the University Council?

It's very difficult to say. The University Council unanimously approved the Working Group report. It was clear from the discussion that there wasn't support for the Council initiating a vote.

## How does Cambridge invest?

**Matt Gutteridge**  
Deputy News Editor

Fossil fuel investments have been some of the shakiest on the market in recent years. The volatile price of oil continues to affect most production sectors, and coal in particular is currently one of the worst investments, with some portfolios collapsing entirely under the weight of substantial losses.

The University's current exposure to fossil fuel investments is a closely held secret. Although the May 2016 report from the University's Working Group on Investment Responsibility reported that, of the University's directly managed securities, there is no exposure to thermal coal or tar sands, and only "negligible" exposure to other fossil fuel industries, more than 96 per cent of the value of the University's investments are operated by autonomous third-party fund managers, whose investments cannot be so rigorously policed.

The University's investment is managed by the Investment Board. However, its internal processes are opaque, and not well understood even by those with access to the full facts. Responsibility ultimately lies with the University Council, whose duty it is to ensure the health of University investments, and who bear legal responsibility. However,



**Over 96 per cent of investments are operated by third-party fund managers**

a senior source told *Varsity* the Council's understanding of the issues surrounding investment was "shocking".

If a divestment Grace were to be successfully passed through Regent House, it would mark the beginning rather than the end of the fight facing divestment campaigners. The process of actually divesting would be a considerable logistical challenge, requiring the untangling of many complicated investment arrangements. Third-party fund managers may also put pressure on Cambridge not to divest, or else to withdraw from these funds altogether, but the financial clout of the University's vast investment portfolio makes this unlikely.

It is important to note, however, that divestment does not impact capital, only ownership. In order to divest, Cambridge must find buyers for the stock they wish to sell, so the level of investment in fossil fuels is not impacted. Likewise, acquiring shares in alternative sectors simply displaces other owners, so there is little scope for Cambridge to make a positive impact through the stock market.

Instead, it has been suggested that Cambridge should make a greater attempt to invest directly, and to acquire private rather than public equity.

◀ Zero Carbon say the University hasn't gone far enough to address their concerns  
(ZERO CARBON)

divestment is a "moral imperative for the University of Cambridge". The report included a foreword from the former Archbishop of Canterbury and Master of Magdalene College, Rowan Williams.

In June 2016, the Working Group published a report guaranteeing that investments in coal and tar sands would be terminated but not committing to full divestment from oil and gas. This spurred the ZC to denounce the group's "lack of focus on climate change".

PIC and ZC wrote an open letter criticising the "lack of transparency" and "lack of student involvement" in

“ZC denounced the Working Group's lack of focus on climate change”

the working group's activities, which they described as "unfair". ZC also complained that they were not granted an opportunity to present the findings of their report to the committee.

Currently, 23 UK universities have made the decision to divest fully from fossil fuels, while 16 others have taken the same decision as Cambridge, to divest from coal and tar sands only. Over the whole country, a total of US\$3.4 trillion has been divested through the commitment of 641 institutions, 15 per cent of which are colleges, universities and schools.



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## Investigation

# Revealed Students left unrepresented as JCRs,

● Focus of CUSU criticism challenged as college representatives fail to attend University-wide policy meetings

Written by Tom Richardson  
Investigations Editor

Additional reporting by Monty Fynn  
and Siyang Wei

Attendance at CUSU Council, the student union's main decision-making body, has proved remarkably low over the last year, a *Varsity* investigation has discovered. Turnout was markedly varied as many college representatives and faculty representatives made almost no appearance, and the head of one autonomous campaign said they were not even aware of the Council's existence until Week Five this Michaelmas, after over half a term in the job. The investigation found:

- Attendance at Council was less than half the targets set by CUSU
- Faculty representatives are almost entirely absent from Council
- An autonomous campaign leader was

unaware of Council's existence

- Many representatives were elected in uncontested, low-turnout votes

Looking at publicly available minutes for 12 Council meetings from Michaelmas 2015 to the second-most-recent meeting, *Varsity* found an average turnout of 35 voting representatives per meeting. This is despite CUSU's 2014-17 *Strategic Plan* stating that "an average attendance of at least 70" at Council would be the measure of success in creating a students' union "in which students have confidence". This revelation comes shortly after the student body rejected in a referendum the decision by CUSU Council, made in a meeting in Michaelmas last year, attended by only 24 voting representatives, to campaign for the abolition of Class Lists.

Overall turnout was dragged down in part by the almost complete absence of faculty representatives, who are entitled to one vote per faculty, and the patchy attendance of the five Autonomous

Campaigns. While the Disabled Students' Campaign attended all 12 meetings, the BME Campaign attended only six and the International Students' Campaign (iCUSU) only three. Henry Zhang, current Chair of iCUSU, told *Varsity*: "I cannot speak for the previous committees, but I was not informed of the CUSU Council only until Week 4/5 this term... I have no idea of the figures of the attendance by previous committee". He also committed to "increasing our presence in CUSU councils later on this academic year".

However, Connor MacDonald, HSPS faculty representative and one of only three faculty representatives to turn up to any of the 12 meetings, denied the absence of the faculties was a problem, saying: "Until CUSU deals with issues more directly related to the Faculties I see no reason why Faculty Reps ought to show up regularly."

"What's more," he continued, "I really don't mind that CUSU Council doesn't deal very much with Faculty issues... they have little power and clout in this area anyway."

The majority of those who did turn up, however, were the representatives of the JCRs and MCRs. Of the 12 meetings examined, the college unions sent on average less than one voting representative each, despite all being entitled to at least two, and the vast



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# MCRs, faculties and campaigns skip CUSU Council



◀ The democracy train has bricks: Robinson's student unions are among the best for representing their students  
(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

majority three. Even this figure concealed huge variation between colleges. Robinson and Pembroke students were most frequently represented, with on average two votes per meeting from each college, while students at nine of the 29 CUSU affiliated colleges were represented by on average less than one vote per meeting.

Students at graduate and mature colleges were the worst represented at the 12 meetings. At the six colleges in question, Clare Hall, Darwin, Hughes Hall, Lucy Cavendish, St Edmund's and Wolfson, each was represented on average at only one in three meetings over the period. Hughes Hall students were best represented of the mature colleges, with on average 0.75 of a vote at each meeting, while only one voting representative from Lucy Cavendish was present in one meeting of the 12. St Edmund's Combination Room sent no voting representatives to any of the meetings looked at, though this would be in part affected by its former president also serving as CUSU chair last year.

Of the non-mature colleges, St John's had the least representation by a significant margin. St John's votes were only used in two of the 11 meetings. Ben Whitby, the College's outgoing JCR president, conceded attendance had been low, blaming it on "the vast

majority" of the JCR committee being medical students, and saying "many of us had supervisions on Monday evening [the time of CUSU council]", as well as on the resignation of the college's External Officer. Whitby told *Varsity*: "if CUSU were to vary the time of their meetings that would undoubtedly be helpful. I did mention this to a past CUSU president". Currently, CUSU Council is held on alternate Mondays.

However, Whitby denied this meant John's students were inadequately represented, suggesting: "we do read carefully over the minutes and agendas" and "send proxies where needed". Indeed in both of the meetings where St John's was represented it was through proxy, one of whom was a student of a different college. While the president did report wishing to present a motion at the last Council, he "then had to attend another unavoidable meeting last minute and so was not able to present the motion".

A parallel investigation by *Varsity* revealed that JCR and MCR representatives are often elected uncontested and with low student turnout. In the same Strategic Plan which set the acceptable level of Council attendance, CUSU said democratic progress would have been achieved when "we'll have supported Common Rooms to achieve an average voter turn-out of

## The room where it happens Who can go to CUSU Council?

Council is defined by CUSU as its "principal representative, policy-making and administering body" with "primacy in all matters pertaining to CUSU". It meets four times in Michaelmas and Lent, and twice in Easter, to debate and vote on motions, which, if passed, can only be overruled if found to be illegal, or by a referendum of the student body. While any student can attend, speak, and propose motions at Council, the right to vote is restricted. Each college can send three elected, voting representatives, split between its JCR and MCR where separate, except graduate colleges, which can send two. The five Autonomous Campaigns within the CUSU umbrella are also entitled to elect a voting representative, as are students of each faculty.

at least 45 per cent". Looking at the 25 colleges which have recorded results on the CUSU online voting system, *Varsity* found that, across each of the recorded colleges' most recent presidential elections, JCR turnout was on average slightly below the CUSU minimum target, at 43.5 per cent. However, at some colleges it was significantly lower, with St John's president elected in a poll in which only 16 per cent of eligible voters took part. The outgoing president pinned this on the fact that the position was uncontested, and that the recent MCR elections had diverted attention. A total of seven of the contests for JCR president examined were uncontested.

Elections for MCR presidents, however, who have the same voting rights at Council, had a significantly lower average turnout. Of the 22 MCRs who used the CUSU system for their most recent presidential election, two-thirds were uncontested and turnout averaged 21 per cent, less than half the target set by CUSU. Asked about the finding, CUSU president Amatey Doku told *Varsity* that CUSU would be "undertaking a governance review [into] all aspects of CUSU Council" in the coming year, adding: "by the end of the academic year we hope to have new governing documents and new processes and procedures".



## GUIDE FOR FIRST YEAR UNDERGRADUATES

ashurst

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### Manage your workload

While this may seem fairly obvious, make sure that you keep on top of your workload and manage your time effectively. Firms will ask for your first year grades when making an application. So although these grades may not count towards your final degree result, they will count towards your career.

*Ashurst's top tip: Look ahead and know what university contact time, exams and other deadlines you have scheduled. This will get you in the habit of planning your time – a useful skill for when you are attending interviews and assessment days.*

### Get involved

Get involved with university life as much as possible. Societies and other clubs are a great way to develop your skills, while meeting new people and broadening your network. Firms are looking for well-rounded candidates that have something to say outside of their studies.

*Ashurst's top tip: If you can hold a position of responsibility in any society or club you join, this will help enhance your application, demonstrating your team work and communication skills.*

### Do your research

Research different law firms and find out which ones you are most interested in applying to in the future and, more importantly, why. Once you have made your shortlist, focus on meeting them when they are on campus and at any open days they may be hosting in their offices. The best way to identify the right law firm for you is to meet their people and experience their culture.

*Ashurst's top tip: Our essential guide to researching law firms provides you with a list of useful questions you could be asking and where to start with finding the answer.*

### Know what to apply for and when

Law firms typically target their vacancies towards students at certain stages in their studies. Check firm websites for information about application deadlines and what you are eligible to apply for.

*Ashurst's top tip: While they may differ from year to year, look at different firm's application forms to familiarise yourself with the types of questions they ask.*

### Network

Although you may not yet be eligible to apply for a vacation scheme or training contract, network as much as you can at this stage. As mentioned above, meeting firm representatives are a good place to start. It may also be beneficial to explore any connections your university may have – there are often mentoring schemes in place with alumni.

*Ashurst's top tip: Law societies are a good source of useful career information. Members who are further along in their studies may be able to pass on knowledge from their own applications.*

### Develop your commercial awareness

Firstly, ensure that you understand what the term 'commercial awareness' means. Once you are confident with this, focus on developing your own commercial knowledge. An understanding of the wider commercial world is a key competency firms look for when reviewing application forms and during interviews.

*Ashurst's top tip: Subscribing to relevant magazines or emails is a great way to receive up to date information on a regular basis.*

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## News

# Kurdish leader blasts University for lack of action on Turkey



**Caitlin Smith**  
News Correspondent

On Monday evening, students, staff and members of the public gathered in the Fisher Building of St John's College to listen to one of the foremost figures in Kurdish and Syrian politics. The visit, hosted by Cambridge University Kurdish Society, took place against a backdrop of increasing tensions between Turkey and its Kurdish population.

Salih Muslim is the co-president of the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) in Northern Syria, an area known by the Kurds as Rojava. Since 2012, its residents have been pioneering a system of 'Democratic Confederalism', a "radical democracy project" based on the grassroots government of secular, multi-ethnic communities.

During his speech, which was also attended by a Senior Proctor of the University, Mr Muslim spoke of his hopes that politicians from his party, and its armed wing, the People's Protection Units (YPG), could "liberate all of Syria from the regime" of Bashar al-Assad. He stressed the need for the "mentality to be changed", and the introduction of a democratic federalist system which Syria's many ethnic groups could peacefully co-habit.

This system could be modelled on many of the traits of Rojava's government, he proposed, including its promotion of gender equality: "women should have the same voice as men," he said, adding that "this democratic system could change everything in the Middle East."

Cambridge has not been untouched by the struggles of the Kurdish nation. In February this year, a Cambridge academic told *Varsity* about how they feared for their own safety after signing a petition which denounced the "atrocities being committed by the Turkish state against the Kurds". The academic received death threats and was forced to cancel their plans to return to Turkey after President Erdoğan vilified the petition's signatories as "traitors".

However, speaking to *Varsity*, Barzan

Sadiq and Dilar Dirik, the event's organisers, explained that Western governments cannot claim moral superiority in such cases. Citing the European Union's recent agreement with Turkey to deal with the refugee crisis, and the use of European weapons by the Turkish military, they said: "the West is complicit in human rights abuses in Turkey, but those who pay the price are primarily the Kurds and the civil society in Turkey."

The experience of the members of Cambridge's own "small Kurdish community" is one of misconception and prejudice. According to Sadiq and Dirik, "students often assume that the individual people they meet in everyday life are Turkish, when in reality these people are Kurdish refugees, often with high levels of education and political histories."

The event is part of a wider push to raise awareness of the Kurdish issue in Cambridge, which also includes a petition to "show our solidarity with the academics in Turkey who raised their voice against the violent treatment of the Kurds by the Turkish state".

Sadiq and Dirik lamented the failure of the University community to engage with the Kurdish question, saying that "[we] have not seen a single action in Cambridge raising concerns about the current war in Turkey, except for demonstrations that we organised... It is outrageous that one of the longest unresolved conflicts... is so marginally or superficially treated in one of the top universities in the world."

The day after he spoke in Cambridge, it was revealed that the Turkish government had released a warrant for the arrest of Mr Muslim. Erdoğan's government alleges that Mr Muslim and other members of his party were involved in the bombing of a military convoy in Ankara in February of this year, which resulted in the deaths of 28 people.

In a statement on Facebook reacting to the news, Dirik said that "[t]hey can try to arrest Kurdish leaders as much as they want, but the reality is that the seed of Democratic Confederalism has been planted and its flowers are flourishing with the colors of women and multiculturalism around the world."

# John's targets £100m

**Ankur Desai**  
Deputy News Editor

St John's College has announced a campaign which seeks to raise money for means-tested bursaries, in order to ensure that students from lower income backgrounds are not disadvantaged by the cost of a university education.

The Free Thinking campaign will count towards the University's wider initiative to raise £2 billion, and aims to gather donations of £100 million from donors including alumni. The funds raised "will be used to expand the College's existing programme of means-tested support for home students, and to provide further assistance to overseas scholars, graduates and researchers", according to the college website.

The Master of St John's College, Professor Christopher Dobson, discussed his experience on being the first in his family to attend Oxbridge, and the second to attend university, stating: "I remember the astonishment that I felt when I realised not only that I had been accepted, but that my education was completely free."

He went on to note that the move away from free tuition had affected school leavers' decisions on university, saying: "Whatever the rights and wrongs of today's funding model, the fact is that many highly talented young people from less well-off backgrounds either go to their local university to keep costs down, or abandon higher education altogether. I believe passionately, as does the College as a whole, that nobody should be denied – or indeed deny themselves – a place at Cambridge because of financial concerns."

When contacted by *Varsity*, a spokesman for the College said that: "The College believes that every student who is capable of making the most of a place at St John's should be able to benefit from a complete educational experience regardless of their ability to pay. At a time when the cost of higher education has risen significantly, we are committed to doing everything we can to enable students to benefit from a Cambridge education in full."

When asked about whether there was a timescale for raising the funding, the spokesman replied that "there is no firm deadline attached to the campaign, but we hope to reach the target within five

► St John's announced a programme for students from low-income households earlier this year  
(LUCAS CHEBIB)



“  
Nobody  
should be  
denied a  
place at  
Cambridge  
because of  
financial  
concerns  
”

years." They also said, on the subject of how many students the campaign aimed to help, that the goal was to "ensure that every student who comes to St John's can do so without having to worry about finances" and that they wanted to extend their existing schemes so that they could offer "every student appropriate support on a case-by-case, and means-tested, basis".

In addition, scholarships for international students are being planned, as are funds for postgraduate studies

## Oxford college introduces 'class liberation' officer

**Angus Parker**  
News Correspondent

St Hilda's College, Oxford, has become the first Oxbridge institution to pass a motion for the creation of a Class Liberation Officer to represent college members from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

The motion, passed last week, spoke of the "microaggressions and classism" that students from working-class backgrounds have to face at Oxford and called for such students to receive appropriate representation and support while they are at university.

Although colleges at Cambridge are yet to consider the position, CUSU Welfare Officer Sophie Buck feels that such a role would be beneficial: "I definitely do think a Class Liberation Officer would be useful in common room committees, as class importantly intersects with the various autonomous campaigns."

Cambridge and Oxford have faced criticism in the past in relation to their admissions process, with approximately two-fifths of their undergraduates coming from public schools, despite only 6.5





# bursary funding



for all students. There is also hope for expansion of the Research Fellowships, to help academics focus on research, as well as Teaching Fellowships for academics who are keen to teach alongside their research.

The initiative follows the announcement of the Studentships campaign earlier this year, which provides undergraduate Home and EU students from households with an annual income of less than £25,000 with money to cover living costs. Students who benefit from

the Studentships will receive up to £9,250 as an annual grant.

The Studentships campaign gained positive coverage in the media, including publication by *The Telegraph* as well as being tweeted by the Labour MP for Cambridge, Daniel Zeichner. Tom Levinson, Head of Widening Participation at Cambridge, also tweeted, saying the scheme showed “Real demonstration of commitment towards low income students from @stjohnscam #wideningparticipation”.



◀ The officer will combat “micro-aggressions and classism” at St Hilda’s (STEVE CADMAN)

per cent of the population being educated at such independent establishments. Cambridge still has to increase their respective undergraduate intake by 18 per cent in order to meet the benchmark for disadvantaged students.

Nevertheless class discrimination within the University has, thus far, not been formally addressed and, although colleges have welfare officers, issues of class discrimination have yet to be tackled. A report by The Sutton Trust released earlier this year found that more than 40 per cent of state school teachers didn’t tell their brightest pupils to apply to either Oxford or Cambridge, believing it may make them unhappy.

However, CUSU’s Access & Funding Officer, Eireann Attridge, believes the issue should be more widely considered

# Uber’s arrival in Cambridge met with mixed reception

► Continued from front page

operations; Uber instead claims a 20 per cent cut of its drivers’ total fares, which critics have asserted results in drivers taking home smaller earnings than they would working for a traditional firm.

Uber drivers cannot accept cash: their fares are directed electronically straight into Uber’s accounts. They are not kept by the driver, who is instead paid his or her 80 per cent share subsequently. CamCab argues that this compromises the independence of Uber drivers, whose revenues can thus be monitored by the company.

Nonetheless, CamCab seemed confident that Uber would not seriously damage its custom: they claimed that their superior safety measures would continue to attract passengers. They also believe that the option of pre-booking – which, unlike a traditional private-hire company, Uber does not offer – will keep them competitive.

A CamCab driver told *Varsity* that he did not believe passengers would flock to Uber because they like the standardisation of CamCab’s services. He added that he himself had no intention of driving for Uber.

A1 Cabco, another Cambridge taxi firm, did not respond to *Varsity*’s request for comment except to stress that, contrary to some reports, Uber is not bringing app technology to Cambridge taxis for the first time: their app, which they describe as “very successful”, has been operating since 2011. CamCab also has an app.

In contrast to the taxi firms’ objections, however, some within the University are enthusiastic about the arrival of Uber. In August Dr Thomas Meany, an Interdisciplinary Fellow at the University, wrote an article describing the arrival of Uber as “a consumer victory”.

He told *Varsity* that, while he recognised the “challenging” issue of employment status in the “gig economy”, nonetheless “the world of work is changing” and such styles of employment are becoming “more common”.

He said that the traditional taxi firms “do not seem to be aware that they need to compete, rather than cling to an outdated structure”.



▲ Cambridge City Council did not consider the effect Uber would have on traditional cabs (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

Dr Meany also defended Uber’s safety standards, arguing: “Since each ride is registered and tracked it becomes very difficult to engage in robbery or extortion.”

Speaking to *Varsity*, a spokesperson for Cambridge City Council said it did not take into consideration the likely effect on traditional private-hire companies when giving Uber a licence.

They explained that the only concern of the Council when deciding whether or not to grant a licence was that the applicant be “a safe and proper business”.

A spokesperson for Uber told *Varsity*: “When you book an Uber you get a picture of your driver, the car type, contact details, and a rating; you also get a live map so that you do not have to wait somewhere for them.

“On the trip a number of safety features are built in: you can share your ETA and a live map with a loved one so they can see where you are going, and can rate your driver and explain why you have given them that rating.”

They added: “the driver you get is a fully-licensed driver who goes through the same DBS check as any other driver. A lot of Uber drivers are former minicab drivers.”

They defended Uber’s employment conditions, contending: “A lot of traditional private-hire companies set shifts, whereas Uber allows its drivers to turn the app on and off wherever they like.”

They argued that their model of electronic payment is safer because it means that the driver does not keep cash in the car where it can be stolen, and is not in danger of losing a fare if a customer leaves without paying.

Responding to a query about the monitoring of drivers’ fares by the company, they said: “Most jurisdictions require that a cab company keep track of the fares paid to their drivers anyway.”

The Cambridge City Council spokesperson informed *Varsity* that this is not a prerequisite for a licence in Cambridge.

Uber insisted that they have no plans to hike fares in future, saying: “We think competition is good, and there are things that you cannot do with an Uber, such as hail them directly or drive in a bus lane, so there will always be competitors keeping Uber’s prices reasonable.”

“These initiatives are coming from working class students”

within the University. “The increasing discussion of class at both universities should be welcomed. Although students may be attending these universities alongside their middle- and upper-class counterparts, the inequality of opportunity remains. Support should be available to these students once they are here.”

St Hilda’s College is not unique in assigning such a role. Representatives with similar class liberation responsibilities have recently been appointed at other universities across the country, including King’s College London, the University of Manchester and the School of Oriental and African Studies.

In Cambridge, groups related to the issues of discrimination are already being established. “We’ve started to see the

introduction of groups centred around class which offer discussion and support for students from working class backgrounds,” said Attridge. “These initiatives are coming from working class students who think that that support should be there – it should be listened to.”

The CUSU Access Officer believes that there are wider considerations for the culture of the University as well. “This should make us think about what the environment here is like, what we can do to target elitism, and how we can support students best.”

Despite the current absence of an official position at Cambridge colleges, it is hoped that increased representation and support through working groups can help address the discrimination associated with socio-economic background.



## Interviews

## Alan Johnson

## ‘It’s about sensible Brexit or stupid Brexit’



● **Anna Jennings and Patrick Wernham** talk to the Labour MP about leaving the EU, the state of the Labour Party and the reintroduction of selective education

“With all the wealth of evidence now, with all the sociological evidence, all the epidemiologists, all the educationists, the idea of going back to selection aged 11 is a bit like a health secretary saying I’m going to go back to applying leeches as a way of restoring health.”

Labour politician Alan Johnson, speaking to us ahead of his appearance at the Cambridge Literary Festival this weekend, is more than happy to share

his opinions. Ranging from the state education system to the Labour Party’s current existential crisis, Johnson is unfraid to offend the big names in British politics.

We begin by discussing his latest memoir, *The Long and Winding Road*, which deals with his struggle to reconcile his working-class upbringing with the hallowed corridors of Westminster. As to the question of whether he still

▲ Johnson served as Home Secretary under Tony Blair (LOUISA HALL)

identifies as working class, Johnson is unequivocal.

“I didn’t go to university. I left school at 15. I lived in social housing until I was 39. I would say that the definition [of your class] is where you come from, and how you feel most comfortable, given that we do live in a very class-dominated society.”

In this regard, Johnson is a refreshing contrast to the Cameron–Osborne public school ‘chum-ocracy’, and even his former party leader Tony Blair. Despite this, Johnson makes clear that he is not into class war. He recounts a revealing anecdote to explain.

“When I was a postman, in those days loads of Christmas casuals used to come in”, he tells us. “When I was 18, there was a kind of mutual incomprehension. For us it was inconceivable that we went to university, and for many of the kids coming in it would have been inconceivable for them not to have gone to university, and there was a kind of feeling of being from different planets, but we got on well and it was fine and the post all got delivered.”

Perhaps it is this spirit of inclusiveness which drives Johnson to be so vocally against grammar schools’ segregation of people at such an early age. He laments “the psychological effect on the kids who failed at aged 11: they carried that burden of failure for the rest of their lives.”

“All those bright kids, much brighter than us some of them”, he muses, “but just on that one day, failed that one test, and were condemned to be second-class citizens as far as education was concerned.”

Johnson goes on to suggest that the plans for the reintroduction of grammar schools would contradict Theresa May’s early rhetoric. “It’s a ludicrous thing for her to suggest, and I think it’s done her some damage actually because I think if she really does believe in the very important words she said on the steps of Number 10 about social mobility, and all of that, then she wouldn’t go anywhere near this.”

Theresa May isn’t the only prime minister to come under fire from Johnson. He has strong words for her predecessor and his decision to hold a referendum. “It was triggered because David Cameron wanted to solve a problem in the Conservative Party. It wasn’t a problem in the 2015 general election.”

“All the feedback from the Right and the Left showed that immigration was an issue, but not having a referendum on the European Union. That came well down people’s lists of priorities.”

Many have seen immigration as representative of the Labour Party’s current crisis. It could be argued that Labour faces an existential crisis in that, while its MPs tend to be outward-looking and Europhile, its more traditional core supporters are generally less pro-immigration.

Johnson does not accept this completely. “On immigration, we’re with the vast majority of the British public,

“*We have to make sure we don’t damage the national interest*”

in that immigration has been good for this country, but the people who come in should learn the language, obey the law, and pay their taxes, and that immigration has to be controlled.

“I believe that free movement is a fair quid pro quo for the single market and the customs union, just like freedom within the United Kingdom works between the four nations of the United Kingdom because we’re one entity.”

However, Brexit changes this. “If we’re not in the European Union, then that’s the end of free movement, and I think we’ll lose a lot else.” How does he think we should proceed? “I don’t think it’s about hard Brexit or soft Brexit, it’s about sensible Brexit or stupid Brexit”.

He elaborates: “I wouldn’t be prepared to vote against leaving the European Union, but I would be willing to vote for amendments that gave the parliament some kind of control over this process”. And yet, he is not necessarily optimistic for our country’s future. “The idea that you just cut off everything,” he tells us, “and everything would be alright because we’d have all these brilliant trade deals with other countries is bizarre and perverse, and I don’t think that’s what Theresa May believes.”

When asked about John McDonnell’s recent claims that resisting Brexit would put Labour on the side of “certain corporate elites”, his response is clear. “It’s a ridiculous thing to say. I mean, there’s hundreds of thousands of trade unionists who worry not just about their jobs and their industry (the car industry, for instance) but also about workers’ rights.”

“No one I’ve spoken to in the Labour Party is trying to overturn it,” he says of the referendum result. But he makes clear that “it didn’t determine how we came out”. He tells us: “we have to make sure we don’t damage the national interest, damage our economy, damage jobs, and damage our future.”

He good-naturedly agrees that Labour as yet have not set out a clear idea of how this could work. “It’s a fair criticism of us, as our Majesty’s official opposition, to say ‘you’re telling the government they have to set out a plan, perhaps you ought to let us into a few of yours as well’. We have to have a more sophisticated idea of where we’re going on this.”

▼ Theresa May’s education plans don’t square with her early rhetoric, according to Johnson (YOUTUBE/CONSERVATIVES)





# University school placed into special measures by Ofsted

Danny Wittenberg  
 News Correspondent

A state-of-the-art secondary school run by the University of Cambridge has been placed into special measures just two years after opening.

The University Technology College Cambridge (UTCC) was visited by Ofsted for the first time in September when inspectors raised concerns over its “inadequate” management.

Despite the school’s world-class research support and high-tech £10 million site on Addenbrooke’s Cambridge BioMedical Campus, Ofsted is believed to have highlighted a lack of consistency in the safeguarding procedures and attendance records at the academy.

Jon Green, chair of the board of governors, said: “I am sure this rating will come as a disappointment to many people who are rightly very proud of the progress which the college has made.

“In the last year, our academic results have improved and our record of 100 per cent of pupils progressing to full-time employment or further education is fantastic.

“However, the inspection found areas which were not good enough. We fully

accept these findings and have already taken significant steps to deal with the issues which were highlighted.”

Based in southern Cambridge, the college caters for students aged 14 to 19 considering a career in the local technology industry. Its purpose-built campus was opened in September 2014, when it welcomed its first 180 students.

The college, which teaches biomedical and environmental science and technology, has been led since 2013 by scientist Melanie Radford.

However, a spokesman for the college said she was “not at work at the moment”, but would not confirm whether or not she had been suspended.

It is now being run by acting principal Sian Foreman, with the trust’s executive principal Andrew Hutchinson serving as interim executive principal.

Mr Hutchinson said: “We have already taken a number of steps which we feel address the processes and procedures which were found to be at fault.

The college is non-selective and non-fee-paying. Students can take GCSEs at age 14 and A Levels or BTECs at 16.

Ofsted inspectors will monitor the college’s progress, with a follow-up inspection to take place within the next 15 months.



## LONDON’S BRAIN GAIN Half of Oxbridge graduates move to London for work

52 per cent of Oxbridge graduates going into work after finishing university settle in London, a new report by the thinktank Centre for Cities has found.

Up to 24 per cent of new graduates from UK universities in 2014 and 2015 were found to be working in the capital within six months of graduation, and, in the year 2014-2015, London attracted 38 per cent of recent Russell Group graduates with Firsts and 2:1s who had moved for work.

## BETTER LAKE THAN NEVER Botanic Garden’s lake to be dredged for first time


The lake in the Cambridge University Botanic Garden is to be dredged for the first time in the Garden’s history this winter. Professional analysis has concluded that the 170-year-old lake is heavily silted, making it “hard to sustain pond life adequately”. The Garden’s Director, Beverley Glover, has warned that, without intervention, “the lake would eventually silt over and become a swamp”. It will be the first time the lake has been empty since a drought in 1976.

## LOWLY PLANT POT SHED Jesus has ‘quirky’ 11ft plant pot installed

An 11ft plant pot (left) has been installed in Jesus College’s Fellows’ Gardens. The pot, which was lowered in by crane, is an architect-designed potting shed, complete with a skylight, a door, and a hatch to pass normal-sized plant pots in and out. The metal exterior will appear terracotta-coloured as it weathers over time. The pot was designed by Cambridge architects DPA, who stated they were aiming for “something a little quirky” with its design.

## WALKING FAST Top 24 most violent Cambridge streets listed

*Cambridge News* has listed the “most violent streets in Cambridge”, following a Freedom of Information request. In the list are 24 streets, with a total of 528 crimes recorded this last year between them. St Andrews Street has the highest rate of violent crime, with 168 offences recorded between November 2014 and this month. Corn Exchange Street is second, with 89 offences over the last two years. Sidney Street and Downing Street come third and fourth respectively.



Which law firm guarantees an overseas seat in 13 different locations worldwide

WHITE & CASE



## Science

# The science of 2016 Discovery and difficulty in equal measure



Could life have begun in volcanic pools, such as in Yellowstone?

(HEXEMER)

## Redefining life after suffering a stroke

**Sofia Weiss**  
Science Correspondent

Injecting modified human adult stem cells directly into the brains of chronic stroke patients proves not only safe, but also effective in restoring motor function. This could bring a revolution in neurological treatment.

Their study involved 18 stroke patients who had all passed the critical six-month mark after which further improvements are a rarity, since the brain circuitry affected is thought to be irreparable.

The researchers sought to challenge this conventional medical wisdom by subjecting the patients to a simple but bold treatment: an injection into the brain through a small hole drilled into the skull. The next day, they all went home.

While more than three-quarters suffered transient headaches afterwards

– likely owing to the surgical procedure itself – no meaningful adverse effects attributable to the stem cells themselves, or the procedure used to administer them, were observed. In fact, at the one-, six- and 12-month marks,

210

Approximately how often, in seconds, a stroke occurs in the United Kingdom

a formerly wheelchair-bound patient was walking again, with several others describing that their limbs had somehow awakened post-treatment. Overall, substantial improvements were seen in all of the patients' scores on a number of widely-accepted metrics of stroke recovery, independent of their age or the condition's severity at the beginning of the trial.

Although the research should not be oversold, since it was only a small clinical trial designed primarily to gauge the safety of such a procedure and not its effectiveness, its implications should rightly inspire optimism: it contradicts the long-held central tenet that brain damage is irreversible and that patients are confined to live in its jail cell in perpetuity.

There is the potential, even, to jumpstart the brain's damaged circuits. This is where study will continue in 2017. Indeed, the same researchers have since launched a larger, randomised double-blinded trial using the procedure.

One stroke occurs approximately every three and a half minutes in the UK, and a further array of neurological disorders produce similar losses of motor control, with its associated profound negative effects on a person's existence. It is in this context that we wait on tenterhooks for further results.

## Origins of life become ever clearer

**Jon Wall**  
Science Editor

The concept of a common ancestor is familiar to many since it became a hallmark of Darwin's theory of evolution. What is more interesting, however, is the original common ancestor, the ancient organism from which all life descended.

A study published in July this year was the first to identify several important features of this 'Last Universal Common Ancestor', or LUCA.

The researchers studied the genetic material of around 2,000 modern microbes and found that there were 355 genes common to the vast majority of these microorganisms.

This suggests that these genes were found in LUCA many millions of years ago. Characteristics of LUCA have been identified from analysis of its assumed genetic material.

It seems that LUCA lived in volcanic environments, with hydrogen, carbon dioxide and iron in plentiful supply. The reason that this discovery is particularly significant is that it provides a lot of support for the idea that life first originated in volcanic vents on the sea bed.

This theory suggests that the first behaviours which could be considered alive were metabolic: in other words, that the processes by which an organism sustains itself were the fundamental components of life.

This comes in contrast to the main opposing theory, which suggests that replication (of genetic material) and hence

reproduction were the first features of life to arise.

However, there still exist clear difficulties for each theory. The metabolism-first theory struggles to explain how genetic material like ribonucleic acid (RNA), which is used in making proteins, as well as in gene replication, originally formed: enzymes are needed to construct these molecules, and this is not possible with high amounts of water present.

The idea of vents deep under the sea as the cradle of life is clearly incompatible with this. At the same time, the argument that replication came first suffers from the inability of researchers to create self-replicating RNA, without which the propagation of life is impossible.

Despite this, in recent years the two theories have drawn closer together, with a separate team of researchers finding that it is possible to create an entire cell, based on the idea of lipids (fats and oils) forming blobs in water, in which RNA can be contained.

The conditions for the chemistry behind RNA replicating within these cells, however, is dependent on ultraviolet light, meaning that while the fatty layer could shield any enzymes from water, the depth of these vents is still a problem.

The most commonly proposed solution is that life could have begun in volcanic ponds such as those found in Yellowstone National Park in the USA, or alternatively in meteor impact craters which would also contain the requisite mix of chemicals. Regardless of the problems to overcome, we have never been closer to understanding life on Earth.

## Stormy seas ahead for science

**Jon Wall**  
Science Editor

While there have been numerous breakthroughs and discoveries over the past year, including those profiled in this week's issue, perhaps the most significant events for science are those which have caused shockwaves on the political scene.

Regardless of your opinion on whether Brexit or Trump were predictable, inevitable, positive or cataclysmic, it is clear that the scientific community was not expecting these developments. The scientific community arguably has more to lose from these political developments than many other sectors.

Science has become an inherently globalised field of human activity over the last 50 years, largely because, since the Second World War, the field has become

bigger in all aspects. New universities sprung up and generated many new trained scientists; the scale of equipment needed to do scientific research increased exponentially, and of course the new sprawling scale of this so-called big science required more substantial financial investment. The way in which science has progressed has largely depended on this financial investment coming from governments and industry, across national borders. The most oft-cited example of this is CERN, the pan-European centre for nuclear research. It was the CERN-built Large Hadron Collider that discovered evidence for the Higgs boson particle, perhaps the most profound discovery of this century so far. This was only possible because of the co-operation between scientists across European nations (as well as some further abroad). However, this is still not the full story. Over the past few decades, a scien-

“The language of science is universal. Closing off only serves to slow progress”

tific infrastructure has grown up which is essentially international. In the case of European science, much funding is allocated at the continental level, which generally favours research groups comprising staff across different European institutions. Internationally, collaborations extending around the world are often more successful than those based solely in one nation. For example, the international connections of the High-Z team (Chile, Australia, America and Europe) enabled them to gain time using powerful telescopes based in these locations in order to find supernovas, leading to profound discoveries about dark matter, the fabric of the universe.

What is clear is that this international infrastructure is threatened by the anti-globalisation trends seen over the last year. Donald Trump has gained support by attacking scientific progress, including through his well-established positions denying climate change and opposing vaccinations. In the weeks since his election win he has already appointed an anti-science lobbyist, Myron Ebell, to head his transition team for the En-



▲ The election of Donald Trump, a climate change denier, presents issues for scientists (DONKEYHOTERY)

vironmental Protection Agency, as well as threatening to cut NASA's funding for climate science.

These positions are misinformed and dangerous, preventing scientists from making progress and disseminating it to the world. Closer to home, Brexit carries a number of threats for science, as *Varsity* suggested in the lead-up to the vote. The nature of European science funding means that UK institutions receive substantial funding from the EU. This is likely to be lost.

More pressingly, the numbers of foreign scientists working in the United Kingdom are likely to plummet as visa rules are tightened and free movement is curbed or abolished. The language of science is universal, and the trend towards closing nations off can only serve to slow progress through decreased collaboration and the potential duplication of research.

The growing globalisation of science, which has generated faster progress in scientific research than ever before, faces challenges in light of the political results of 2016. Stormy seas lie ahead indeed.



# ...and a partridge in a petri The science of Christmas

● **Mariana Alves** explains the surprising science behind some of our Christmas traditions

## Sprucing up

Decorating the Christmas tree is a frequent family tradition. Some will adorn it gradually; others dedicate one special afternoon to it. Ribbons, embellishments, stars and angels: there are many ways to decorate a Christmas tree.

But were you ever discontented with your Christmas tree: was it asymmetrical, too full, or too strange-looking?

Two maths students found the solution in 2012, calling it 'Treegonometry'. Nicole Wrightham and Alex Craig, members of the University of Sheffield Maths Society, created a formula to decorate the perfect Christmas tree:

- To calculate the number of baubles to use, do the square root of 17, divide the result by 20 and multiply by the height of the tree in centimetres
- For the length of the tinsel, multiply 13 by Pi, then divide the result by eight and multiply by the height of the tree in centimetres
- For the length of the lights, Pi must be multiplied by the height of the tree in centimetres
- For the size, in centimetres, of the star or angel to top the tree, just divide the height of the tree by 10.

And now there is no chance of buying too many Christmas decorations!

## Stuffing yourself

Besides the Christmas tree in the room, many dinner tables will have a turkey on Christmas Day. And since Christmas only happens once a year, many eat too much food at once. Consequently, at the end of the night they become sleepy and tired. Many believe that it is the turkey which gives us this sleepy feeling, but why?

The turkey's proteins contain tryptophan, an essential amino acid for the human body. Our body does not synthesise tryptophan, instead needing to ingest it from our food. Tryptophan is used to make serotonin, a neurotransmitter responsible for feelings of relaxation and well-being and also, weirdly, pain (in the case of some bites). Serotonin is used to make melatonin, a hormone that helps control sleep cycles. Hence it is thought that the tryptophan of the turkey is responsible for drowsiness after the holiday meal, or any meal with a lot of meat.

However, according to the American Chemical Society, this is probably a myth

since tryptophan levels in turkey are too low to cause drowsiness, with 64mg per 33g serving.

At certain doses, the ingestion of tryptophan on an empty stomach can make you sleep, but not in this case. One of the more likely explanations for drowsiness is that when we eat too much, the blood is directed to the stomach, leaving the blood flow and oxygenation of the brain impaired, hence we feel tired and sleepy.

## Let it snow



Everyone loves a white Christmas. Think no two snowflakes are alike? Yes, the large ones are unique, but this is not true of the simplest crystals which fall before they develop.

A snowflake begins by being a grain of dust floating in a cloud. The water vapour surrounds the grain of dust and, from that particle, a tiny drop is formed which soon turns to ice due to the low temperatures.

First, the small ice crystal becomes hexagonal. This form originates from the chemistry of the water molecule, which consists of two hydrogen atoms attached to an oxygen atom.

Because of the angle of the water molecule and its hydrogen bonds, the water molecules in an ice flake bind chemically to form a six-sided flake.

After the drop crystallises, a small cavity arises on each face, because the ice forms faster at its ends. Thus, the cavities make the corners of each face increase in size more quickly, giving rise to the traditional six arms of the snowflakes. Each of these arms grows to form laterals in a direction and shape influenced by minute changes in temperature as the flake falls from the clouds. Thus, each snowflake looks unique.

Scientists' interest in snowflakes lies in what these ice crystals may mean for global climate change.

Researchers believe that ice crystals also play a role in ozone degradation. In the atmosphere, these crystals contribute to the electric charge of clouds and are believed to influence lightning production, although the mechanism is still unclear.

## Snow business

One may also wonder why snow is white if solid water and ice are transparent. Snowflakes have many surfaces reflecting the light which disperse it multiple times in all directions and colours, making the snow appear white. It's same process that make milk and powdered



sugar look like they do.

Typical Christmas snow globes can be made with benzoic acid crystals in water. The benzoic acid does not dissolve readily in water, but because its solubility increases with temperature, crystals similar to snowflakes form when the solution cools.

If you are unlucky and wit does not snow where you spend your Christmas, you just need to do a quick search on

▲ People playing in hexagonal dust-based ice crystals, also known as snow  
(DAN NGUYEN)

YouTube to find the many ways of making fake snow. For example, simply add water to sodium polyacrylate, a superabsorbent polymer found in disposable nappies.

For coloured snow, just add a dye. But beware, if you play with fake snow for too long, your hands may dry out due to the absorbant properties of the polymer. It should not be dangerous, but of course, try at your own risk!

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# Comment

## Beware the dart-throwing chimp (and other animals)

*We shouldn't settle for easy answers to the big questions of 2016*



Theo Demolder  
is Senior Comment  
Editor and studies  
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Selwyn College

Theo Demolder

Scrolling through Twitter last Sunday afternoon, willing away a collection of end-of-term essays, one tweet stood out. A news organisation posted: “Shopkeeper’s monkey pulls off girl’s head scarf in Libya, sparking violent clashes; at least 16 people killed and 50 others injured”. Four days of fighting had followed, with tanks and mortars involved from the second day. The monkey was, sadly, also killed. For not the first time in a strange year, it felt like reality had outdone parody.

Commentators – be they on the pages of newspapers or on Andrew Marr’s sofa – have been uniquely challenged by the events of 2016. Famously, in their book *Superforecasting*, Tetlock and Gardner used experimental data to show that the average ‘expert’ is no better at predicting political and economic events than a dart-throwing chimp; in fact, often the chimp comes off better – and that has never been easier to believe than now. Just this last month, ‘psychic’ monkeys, dogs and sharks all did what Cambridge’s Professor David Runciman, Head of the Department of Politics and International Studies, and so many others failed to: predict Trump’s win.

Worse still, commentators’ explanations – often offered within hours of the occurrence of events they had hitherto said would never happen – seem, to me at least, to be severely wanting. If I had a pound for every time I have read ‘left behind by globalisation’, ‘tide of populism’ or ‘post-truth politics’ recently, my student debt wouldn’t seem nearly so bad. What do these phrases, bandied about the national comment pages and echoing onto Facebook news feeds and Twitter timelines, actually mean?

Take, for example, ‘tide of populism’. What is populism other than a name we give democracy when we don’t like its result? How does the image of populism conjured by the rhetoric of some embittered Remain-ers – of the hoodwinked working classes who didn’t understand what they were voting for – reconcile with American populism, where Trump won among voters earning over \$50,000, and Clinton among those earning under? And what of the fact that Marine Le Pen’s National Front is now the top choice of France’s 18-30-year-olds, while young people in Britain overwhelmingly voted



to remain in the EU? Suddenly, the story doesn’t seem so simple.

In uncertain times, it is tempting to seek comfort in the grand narratives commentators offer in punchy op-eds – giving us an easy explanation from our political perspective of choice. But these will only leave us likely to be shocked again. As Anna Jennings wrote in *Varsity* two weeks ago, central to many of these grand narratives is vilification. That pejorative term ‘populism’ thrives on the creation of a belief that there are a mass of people to whom you are morally and/or intellectually superior – treating voters, as Anna says, as an abstract entity rather than people living among us.

Indeed, this is something I felt keenly in Cambridge ahead of 23rd June. Even those with the thickest of skins would struggle not to feel insecure when openly one of a very small minority here voting to leave – part of a vilified wider group. I didn’t encounter anyone who didn’t respect my views when I explained them, but when someone you don’t know well hears you’re voting Leave, and you see their troubled, awkward surprise, wondering if you’re a racist, the power of the political stereotype becomes clear.

I don’t suggest that the ‘dart-throwing chimps’ in the press should go the way of the unfortunate monkey in Libya, but we do need to widen the sources from which we synthesise our own opinion. We should be suspicious of anyone claiming to have a perfect answer to huge questions in their short newspaper piece. (Don’t worry, I do see the irony...) For one thing, the case Tetlock and Gardner make for ‘superforecasting’ (the use of big data) is a compelling one,

“  
If I had a  
pound for  
every time  
I have read  
‘post-truth  
politics’  
”

which provides an antidote to blowing individual events out of proportion and context. In fact, celebrate or lament it, central to Vote Leave’s victory was this method of getting to know the electorate, using sophisticated software run by physicists to decide whom to target.

Surely, though, algorithms can only get us so far. Apart from anything else, they aren’t overly accessible to the casual follower of politics. Perhaps we could also do with paying greater attention to people themselves – the real life constituents of the abstract entity – and not only the ones who we allow into our social media. Something we have tried to do in *Varsity* this term is to bring your opinions on events from people who are also participants in some way: Joanna Banasik’s piece on attempts to ban abortion in Poland, Gracelin Baskaran’s on race in America, or Jenny Young’s on Scottish independence would all have been much different were they not written with the benefit of lived experience.

So I hope we get to hear more in the media from the ordinary people whose opinions are changing the world, especially when they seem incomprehensible to us. Let’s start with the 62 million who voted for Trump. And I hope that more and more people – especially international and Year Abroad students – will be willing to share their stories in *Varsity*. If we only listen to an elite commentariat and our friends, we risk retreating into a world of false binaries, easy answers, and self-satisfied superiority. Despite the hysterics, the election of people we don’t like won’t kill democracy. But giving up on trusting and understanding our fellow citizens might.

▲ Spain’s Podemos is among the parties lumped under the ‘populist’ banner (BARCEX)



Noella Chye

## Trump won. Now we fight

It was the greyest day Cambridge had seen in a while, but this was no deterrence for the cluster of 40 raincoat-clad protesters huddled around a black banner plastered with the words, “THIS CONCERNS EVERYONE” on King’s Parade on Monday afternoon. Their fervent shouts of “Hey hey ho ho Donald Trump has got to go!”, among others, were a stirring contrast to the gloomy rain all around them.

In a political year characterised by hatred, which has challenged expectations of human decency, we need to continue asking ourselves: what else can we do to spotlight the people who are against it, to remind others that these attitudes are not the norm? It is now more important than ever to stop condemning public displays of solidarity for reasons other than what they stand for. Yet there continues to exist a stigma around student protests: many hold the opinion that they are naive and self-validating.

It’s one thing to say we are naive, however, but another to say we don’t want to do anything to change that. The former claim has some credibility – there is a limit to how much we can know with our 18-to-20-plus years. But the latter does not. Student protests should be thought of as stepping stones to the understanding we are criticised for not having.

And then people complain about the indulgent self-satisfaction we supposedly get from public protests. But to believe that equality is right and to actively seek it is naturally a source of pride.

The messages of love at the Sidgwick Site last week and the walkout on Monday were part of a growing number of demonstrations happening around the UK. There are people who feel they have to be ‘a good Muslim’, ‘a good woman’, a ‘good’ anything; who have dealt with discrimination for so long they don’t know what it is to live without it; who have now been sent a message that it isn’t about to stop. These people may see our acts and be moved in ways that we cannot imagine.

Those who find themselves with this judgement, make an effort to abandon it. Those who are afraid of it, know that you have no reason to be, and keep fighting the good fight. The rain didn’t stop you; don’t let anything else either.



Cartoon by **Ben Brown**



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## So this is New Year? It was better in 2005

*As 2016 draws to an end, Will Hall gets sentimental about the excitement of staying up for New Year*



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

Will Hall

I remember there being more fuss than usual that year. We'd had the cousins round for Christmas Day (it was our turn, 2005 – they'd be on again next year, as is our family tradition), and we'd had, by all accounts, a brilliant day. I remember being especially happy as I'd been given the bike I'd desperately wanted, despite my mother's solemn announcement on Christmas Eve that they'd spoken to all the bike shops in England (and some in Wales) and they'd totally run out, sadly. I fully believed this – being nine – along with my mother's assertion that Father Christmas couldn't make bikes as they were too big for his sleigh. (Bulletproof logic, mother – 10/10 for credibility.) (And, yes, I did still believe in Santa when I was nine. I was late to that particular party – I felt a fool when I eventually did find out; apparently, the rest of Year 11 had known for years.)

Christmas came and went. However, rather than the usual post-Noël come-down, our house was abuzz with ever-encroaching plans for a New Year's Eve party. I was familiar with the concept of

the 'New Year' (having seen off a whole nine of them in my hitherto-short life) and knew that it was the done thing to throw a party to mark it. My parents had hosted them before, with me asleep upstairs, occasionally woken by some revelrous shouting, or laughter, or the chorus of 'Come on Eileen' drifting into my room. However, the party to summon in 2006 was shaping up to be, altogether, a bigger affair. This was predominantly marked by the fact that invitations were being sent by post. After all: it is a truth universally acknowledged that nothing says fancy like RSVPing to a number printed on 200gsm card.

In a frantic planning summit held in the kitchen-cum-boardroom, I overheard my father talking in an apparently foreign language about whether or not we'd be doing "ordlangzine". I inquired further, whereupon he explained to me that that it was traditional to link arms and sing an old Scottish folk song called 'Auld Lang Syne'. "Depending on the mood," he continued, "people may run into the middle at the chorus." (I later realised that he had confused the word

'mood' with 'how many glasses of wine they've had'.)

All this talk of choruses and choreography worried little me, and I decided I would need to do my research to find the lyrics and avoid being made a fool of. (I had recently become Google-literate after my father had decided to let me use the family computer. The only rule was I wasn't to sign up for anything using my dad's work email address. Unfortunately, however, 2005 was the year of the mailing list, and my father was now spending most of his time in the office deleting correspondence from the Busted official fanpage.)

Eventually, the night came, and before I knew it, it was almost 9pm. I was more tired than I'd ever been before, plus I had lipstick all over me (the last time that ever happened at a New Year's Eve party) and red wine in my hair (I was the perfect height to soak up spillages). We were gathered round the TV, and my sister being older than me got the remote (in that unspoken law of the sofa). New Year's Eve television is programmed fundamentally for the lonely, and apparently, they enjoy watching marathon compilation programmes called things like 'Most Awkward Hilarious Celeb Moments We Love To Hate To



▲ (MATTHEW SECCOMBE)

Love Of [Insert-Year-Here]'. It turns out watching these televisual epics is one of two things I have in common with the lonely (along with loneliness). At some point during the twelfth hour of the programme, just as I was finding out what Justin Timberlake had really done at that after-party, our mother burst in and told us to come quick: "it's nearly 2006!" I appreciate now this doesn't seem very exciting, given we've had 2006 and can't remember most of it, but back then, in the dying minutes of 2005, this was mad-deniably exciting.

My sister snapped shut her Motorola Razr with effortless cool, and we ran into the sitting room where the assembled crowd had formed what I can only describe as a shameful attempt at a circle. I was disappointed to find that, far from rehearsed, the crowd slurred their way blearily through 'Auld Lang Syne', and absolutely nobody joined me for the third verse, as I pluckily started to sing "We twa hae run about the braes" in Rab-bie Burns' original dialect.

At some point after that, I must have fallen asleep, because I remember my father carrying me upstairs, trying not to wake me up. "Happy New Year," he whispered as he put me to bed. And looking back, you know, it was.



## Comment

# £20 a month: too high a price for mental health

*The NHS is still failing in its treatment of mental health problems, as one student discovered*



Anonymous

In a scathing letter sent last week, nine former UK health secretaries – every one from the last 20 years – jointly decried the “enduring injustice” faced by mental health patients and accused the government of neglecting pledges to help.

The situation has become dire: children affected by eating disorders are denied treatment until they become severely thin or suicidal. The self-harm rate for young women has tripled over the last seven years. The number of young men committing suicide is rapidly increasing. The injustice has dehumanised those affected, leaving them to fight a system that seems insurmountable at times. In the UK, 75 per cent of those affected, do not receive treatment. Within the academic community, an estimated 53 per cent are affected by mental health issues. I fall within that statistic: I’m a PhD student here at Cambridge and the last 15 years of depression have taken me through tough days. Attempted suicide by pill overdose, waking up in a hospital room with an easily fatal 0.38 blood alcohol content, becoming a university dropout, and experimenting with drugs.

I’ve taken nearly every antidepressant on the market, with little success. I spent the past year in Cambridge on sertraline, one of the most commonly prescribed medications, and saw zero improvement. If anything, I became lethargic and regressed. I finally returned to the US over the summer, and went to visit my home town doctor as a last

ditch effort.

Nothing was working. My doctor felt my desperation and he offered me a path we hadn’t tried. Bupropion was outside of the standard class of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors.

I was willing to try anything at this point. I wasn’t naive: I knew it would take three weeks for any impact to show. So I waited. They were long days. Slowly – but surely – my rhythmic clock returned. Instead of sleeping 15 hours a day and having no appetite, I was sleeping for seven hours and eating three meals. My motivation gradually increased, and I began working part-time. About eight weeks after I started, I was functioning fully and boarded a plane back to Cambridge.

I settled in and went to my GP in Cambridge to get a bupropion refill. But I was denied. The doctor informed me it was a controlled substance. Knowing the consequences of stopping, I refused to leave without a prescription in hand. She grudgingly wrote me a 30-day prescription, but informed me that I would need a note from my doctor in the US stating the purpose and duration of my treatment. I got the note and returned a few weeks later. The new doctor seeing me informed me that it wasn’t a note that they needed, but that the practice had made a decision not to prescribe it.

Why? After running in circles for five minutes, she finally simplified it: it’s too expensive. I asked her a couple of questions: if I had a heart condition, would I

get medicine? Yes. If I had a neurological disorder, would I get medicine? Yes. A psychiatric condition? Not exactly. Per NHS rules, the treatment was too expensive for depression. I was losing hope quickly. As a last ditch effort, I asked if I could see a specialist. Without hesitation, she told me no: they don’t send cases of depression to the psychiatrist.

“I’m not depressed,” I muttered. “I’m bipolar II.”

It’s a severely under-diagnosed condition, marked by repeat bouts of severe depression alternating with only slightly elevated highs. I was misdiagnosed for 11 years as being clinically depressed. She looked up and asked me if I had attempted suicide. I confirmed, grudgingly. She informed me that I now met the qualifications of meeting a mental health specialist. But she still couldn’t prescribe me bupropion because it was expensive. I finally asked the million dollar question: how much is too expensive? The answer: £20 for a one-month supply.

I felt marginalised in a way I have never felt before. I thought back to the nights when I’d toyed with committing suicide; the months at a time that I didn’t want to get out of bed; the many years of on-and-off substance abuse; and the desperation that led me to drop out of university, settle into emotionally destructive relationships, and lose any semblance of joy. It wasn’t worth £20 to NHS. But there was a silver lining to growing up with a mom who didn’t believe depression existed: I learnt how to advocate for myself at an early age. I finally asked my doctor if I could pay for my own medication. The answer was yes.

However, one of the bright spots in

“Discussing these issues is still seen as a sign of weakness”

▼ Jeremy Hunt is the UK’s current health secretary (NHS CONFEDERATION)



Cambridge is the University Counselling Service. I’ve gained immeasurably from my sessions there: how to develop mechanisms to withstand depression, handle toxic family situations, build an accountability system, etc. Nevertheless, because they are funded (or indeed underfunded) by the colleges, they are only able to provide short-term care, typically one term or less.

The transition to private counselling is expensive – between £45-60 per session. Reduced rates are available, but they are limited, require long waiting lists, and are provided by significantly less experienced counsellors. I’m fortunate, that I have the income and savings to support my medication and therapy costs. But for the many who cannot afford it, the NHS has damned them.

Beyond this, discussing these issues is still seen as a sign of weakness, and as result, we keep quiet. But given the statistics, it’s likely that one of the two people you’re sitting next to is also battling their own mental health challenges. And they should expect to be treated just as they would if their illness were physical.

# Cryogenic freezing? Try life before death instead

*Cryogenics seem to simply offer an empty promise of immortality. We need to live our lives for the here and now*



Anna Jennings studies English at Clare College

Anna Jennings

Disclaimer: I am not remotely qualified to write this article. I’m not even entirely sure how to pronounce cryogenic freezing, let alone comprehend it. But I’m not writing this piece as a scientist – rather writing about what it says about us as humans, and the way in which we interact with our bodies, our brains, and the very idea of living.

So, cryogenic freezing. ‘Cryo’ means cold, the Wikipedia page tells me, and what this refers to is the freezing of a patient’s body after they have become legally dead, and preserving that body in the hope that one day humankind will possess the technical knowledge to restore the body to life and cure its illness so that the person can live again. At the moment, we don’t have this scientific ability, and a large number of experts believe we never will. But there is a vocal minority who advocate the practice. In 2014 there were already 250 bodies preserved in the US, and over 1,000 people on waiting lists to be cryogenically frozen when they die.

This is an idea that has been around since the 1960s, but it reared its head again recently in the ugly court case of

a 14-year-old girl who won the right to have her body preserved after death. A lot of people were deeply uncomfortable with this, including her father. This in itself is interesting because, at the moment, nothing is happening. The bodies remain dead, just prevented from decomposing.

Why, then, are we so uncomfortable? There is the inevitable ‘Frankenstein’ effect: the idea of ‘messing with’ nature, and the process’s striking similarity to an episode of *Doctor Who* doesn’t help. Although vast swathes of today’s society are atheists, we still have a somewhat fixed idea of what is natural and unnatural. For the majority of us, blood transfusions, organ transplants and even defibrillation do not cross this line, but cryogenic freezing does. There is something sacred about death itself, in which we do not want to intervene.

The second question I cannot help but ask is: how do we define death? Medically, legally, it is when the heart stops beating, because these fields require an exact meaning. The rhetoric surrounding cryogenics is keen to stress that death is not an event but a process, beginning perhaps before the heart stops beating

▼ Those opposed to cryogenic freezing worry about the ‘Frankenstein’ effect (DR MACRO)



and ending when the body is no longer able to sustain life. This narrative, then, tells us that the process can be paused.

But for many of us, there is some need to cling onto the idea of death as something fixed, something definite, something absolute. We need that closure to grieve the deaths of our loved ones. We also need this idea to live our lives. YOLO works as a neat catchphrase for a broadly post-religious society: most of us operate on the assumption that ‘you only live once’ – that this, whatever this is, is it. Living in the belief that there is something more, that we will live again, requires a fundamental paradigm shift.

But there are others who struggle to cope with this concept, and arguably it is this primal inability to comprehend everything just ending that religion is a response to – from Ancient Egyptian mummification, to the Christian Heaven and Hindu reincarnation, we could choose to see cryogenic freezing as the latest belief which avoids coming to terms with death. Most are capable of conceptualising not existing before we are born, but there is something about ceasing to exist after we have lived which is so much harder to understand.

We could also choose to be cynical, and view cryogenic freezing as merely a form of exploitative capitalism. The father in the court case said, “I believe they are selling false hope to those who are

frightened of dying”, and it is the “selling” here that is key. Institutions charge between US\$80,000 and \$200,000 for a process which may or may not work. Yes, this is no price at all to pay for a second life, but ultimately, as it exists today, cryogenics is a business.

Even if the cryogenic freezing process works, there is no guarantee that the bodies, once woken, will retain their memories. We do not know enough about the brain and how memory is stored to know whether the bodies will simply be clones of the people who once existed. Our bodies and our memories are not one. The idea of just the body and not our self living again is uncanny.

Finally, what happens if the process actually works, and the patients are reawoken in 100, 200 years’ time, body and memories intact? The country, the world we know would no longer exist. We would have no property or money. Our knowledge and skills would be irrelevant in a world capable of resurrecting the dead. We would have to return to school and build a new life for ourselves in an alien world. Do we want this?

Cryogenic freezing, even if it works, seems to do nothing apart from resolve our fear of death. The other solution? To live our lives, here, now, to the full, as if there is nothing more. It’s cliché and it’s trite, but there is only one solution. *Carpe diem.*



# As we go home, we leave the homeless behind

*It's time Cambridge confronted the poverty around us, and colleges did their bit to help the homeless*



Martha O'Neil  
studies HSPS at  
Trinity College

I want to go home. I want to sleep in my own bed. I want to drink my Mum's tea. I want to smell my dog. (If you don't own a dog, I promise, this is not weird.) I want to lounge on a sofa, my head no longer slightly stooped as a result of brain fog and overuse of iDiscovery. I want to sit at a table – an actual table, with chairs, not benches. I want to stay up late and waste time with my brother watching random YouTube videos (pandas, cats, I care not). I want to use a dishwasher. It's been seven long, long weeks, and I want to go home.

But what does it actually mean to be 'home'?

Last week, I met a young woman – three or four years older than me. She was confident, bright and kind. We met in the bank – lots of men in fancy ties, tiled floors gleaming with opulence (and most likely floor polish), and then this young woman slumped in the corner, charging her phone, averting people's gaze.

Beside her lay a puppy, a husky with soft grey-white fur, prominent ribs, and pale-blue eyes. The young woman

stroked her, taking her time to transfer every last bit of affection to the dog. I found it so moving that I had to speak to the woman.

I sat on the floor with her, and we spoke for a while about her dog, whose name was Snowflake. The name was fitting, for the puppy seemed delicate and fragile. In contrast, the young woman was dressed in dark layers of clothing, had a backpack on her shoulders, her expression comprising both love towards her dog, and an unshakable sadness. A friend of mine bought us all hot chocolate and the young woman something to eat. We chatted about her life.

She'd been homeless for the best part of two years. She'd grown up in Cambridge – she liked it here, and felt as if she belonged here, so when things got tough she stayed. But she wanted to go travelling. She wanted to see the sea, to feel the sea air on her face and to eat fish and chips with her dog on the beach. She didn't need her family, she had Snowflake – and Snowflake had her, and they clung to each other like they were the last beings on earth.

It was quite a striking dichotomy: the grandeur of the bank and the poverty of the young woman. The streets of Cambridge were her home, the comfort being provided not by the objects that I had so long craved for, but by her dog. Cambridge has a duty to help.

Homelessness in Cambridge is heartbreaking, harrowing but also deeply, deeply unnecessary. Despite the fantas-

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Charities  
to help the  
homeless  
need more  
from us  
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tic work of the likes of Streetbite and other schemes whose aim is to help homeless people, the issue does not seem to be going away. I do not know what the solution is, only that the cold winter months will cause greater suffering. With students now preparing to go home, and the infrastructure provided by student-run organisations being temporarily suspended until the new year, I wonder what will happen to the young woman and Snowflake. Where will they spend Christmas? One can but hope that the local charity sector will be able to bridge the gap – the young woman seemed sceptical of the help being offered to her by the Council.

Last May, *Cambridge News* reported a 41 per cent increase in homelessness compared with the previous year. We were told at the beginning of term not to offer money to the homeless – we should contact the police or homeless charities instead. I can't say that I've stuck to this rule. But surely the University – or even the colleges, with their vast pools of wealth and investment – have a responsibility to do something too? It's wonderful to see so many students engaged with the issue – perhaps the University will one day follow their lead or show their Christmas spirit to make sure that everyone feels they have a home for Christmas.

But, for now, I know that I am not the only one who wants to be home. I do, I want to go home. And such a feeling, in my mind, is as human as it gets.

◀ Homelessness  
is on the rise in  
Cambridge  
(GARY KNIGHT)

# Creative careers are available only to the rich

*The young McCartneys and Lennons had a chance to succeed that many today can't afford*



Sarah Wilson  
studies English at  
King's College

Earlier this week, sitting in a Mill Lane lecture room at a careers talk, I listened to a frustrating hour of advice. The talk was about getting into the television industry and the speaker opened by telling us he was going to be brutally honest. It may have been the bad mood I was already in, but as his talk went on I couldn't help but get increasingly irritated.

He flogged his company's "extremely useful" networking events, which took place in London, moving onto their tailored CV workshops, which were also in London, and came with a price tag. He then sheepishly commented that we should "expect to work long hours... unpaid". He added that we might anticipate doing this for 18 months on average before moving up.

I am a student from York, a city with one local radio station and one or two small magazines. Experience is scarce and often only available to those studying journalism courses. It costs me around £50-£70 (with a railcard) to get to London. I am on a full bursary at Cambridge. There are no trust funds waiting for me, no rich benefactor who can pay for me to live in one of the world's most expensive cities while I complete work experience.

And as I sat in the uncomfortable rows of Lecture Room 9, I felt like shouting out at this man: 'But what about money?

What if you don't live in London?' I was dejected, but really, I wasn't surprised. This man was only telling the truth, regurgitating the unfortunate reality I have encountered time and time again, in many different conversations.

This moment of realisation had already dawned on me just a few weeks before, as I was talking on the phone to a man who worked on a BBC drama and paused awkwardly when I told him I lived up north. And it dawned again when I was reading Laura Bates' new book this week, in which she asks a successful magazine journalist how she arrived at her position. Her response? That she was lucky enough to have a friend support her financially while she did unpaid work to get her foot in the door.

The young Paul McCartneys and John Lennons once had the opportunity to reach the dizzying heights of musical fame in spite of their working-class backgrounds. In her youth, my mother was given money by Hull City Council to attend a National Youth Theatre summer course in London. Such things seem barely conceivable in 2016, when half of British Oscar winners and more than half of the leading print journalists are privately educated, when those who want to attend drama schools face fees just to audition – often only to be rejected – and when we'll turn over to the BBC drama *The Night Manager* and not think it un-



◀ Disadvantaged  
young people  
no longer have  
the chance to  
succeed like  
the Beatles did  
(UNITED PRESS)

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What about  
money?  
What if you  
don't live in  
London?  
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sual that three of the leading actors all went to the same prep school.

The fault falls largely with those companies who run unpaid schemes, but also the Conservative-led government, which has ruthlessly slashed student support, reduced funding opportunities in the arts, and promoted a cold, monetised vision of education in which, if something has no obvious fiscal value, it has no value at all.

Young people from less affluent backgrounds are increasingly faced with a huge gamble – which may not pay off when choosing to study or work in the arts and humanities. Their well-heeled, more fortunate counterparts, however, are able to chase up any studies or work that they so desire, confident in the knowledge that, should they be unsuccessful, they have a safety net to fall

back upon.

The exploitative nature of unpaid work is deeply unfair but perhaps even worse is that it closes the doors to so many who simply don't have the means to undertake it, barring them from ever making their first steps.

I don't mean to say that I expect opportunities to be handed to me on a silver platter. I'm well aware that simply going to Cambridge lends me privileges others don't get. But it is deeply frustrating to find that many of the roads into the creative industry have hefty tolls.

For the poorer young person living outside of London, it increasingly seems that the pursuit of theatre, journalism, and the arts frequently lies out of reach, sold instead to those with deep enough pockets, and undoubtedly leaving a wealth of talent out in the cold.

Sarah  
Wilson



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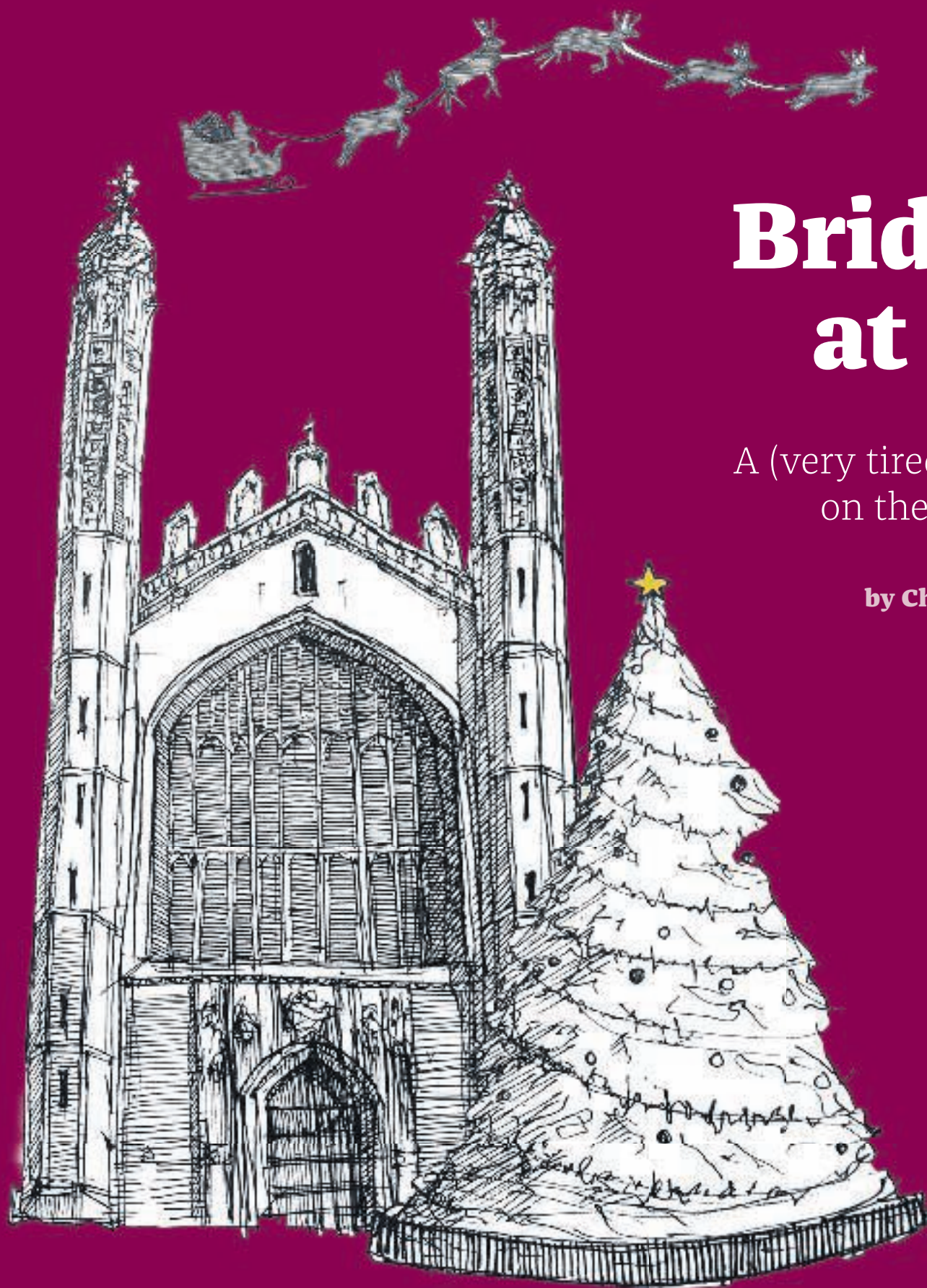
**Oh yes it is!**  
*Footlight's Panto preview*

**Still in Vogue**  
*Alexandra Shulman interviewed*

**Scandi Rouge**  
*Christmas in Finland*

**A Bridgemas Carol**  
*Xmas music picks*

**Glitter and Gowns**  
*Party season dressing*



# Bridgemas at last!

A (very tired) Fresher reflects  
on their first term.

by **Chris Nikolaou**

# Vulture

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## Completing your first term at Cambridge can feel like finishing a marathon. Fresher **Chris Nikolaou** looks back at the highs and the lows, and explains how he has changed as a person in just eight short weeks

Illustrations by **Tara Lee**

**A**s I finally reach a point in term when I can have thirty minutes without having an essay to write, I sit and engage in retrospect. It is a quiet day, good for thinking. I find it difficult to believe, but soon, I'll be back home. The term is almost over. When did that happen? It feels so long ago that I arrived in a new country to study.

The change was so sudden and extremely daunting. Time went by incredibly fast. Formal, bops, lectures and supervisions. They're almost done for the term. I realise that I hadn't noticed. Then a thought crosses my mind. No one steps into the same river twice. That's what Heraclitus said. I always thought that wasn't true. I suddenly realised that not only was this statement true, but that I wasn't even the man in question – I was the river.

Because I remember that two months ago, someone arrived in Cambridge for matriculation. That person is vaguely familiar, but seems different somehow. Similar face, similar mannerisms even. But the mindset is different. Not entirely. But still, significantly different. That person was me. But I am that person no longer.

The person who arrived at Cambridge two months ago is gone. It is rather chilling in some respects, to have become more than what you were two months ago. This experience has changed me. Before coming here, all this seemed so distant, so implausible. You don't really realise it until you're there. And you find something very different than what you expected.

For an international student, the change of lingua franca and norms

“Leaving your entire family behind is not easy”



can be very much an extra shock. And when the university that you never believed would even think to consider you accepts you, you feel very stressed. I remember myself saying goodbye to my dad and being very sombre afterwards. You could wait for this moment all your life. You can enrol in your dream university or even go beyond your wildest dreams and come to Oxbridge. But leaving your family is not easy. Not by a long shot. To live on your own for the very first time is a new and unknown experience that can seem very daunting at first.

But the experience is not at all unpleasant. I realise that I could not change the experience. I realise that I was foolish. I shouldn't have been afraid. Life brings us many sudden changes. Why be scared when you can embrace them? The thought crosses my mind and I realised that the fact that I changed was not bad at all.

None of my close friends was here with me when I arrived. That was slightly terrifying, but now it doesn't matter. I felt so stressed when I received my first essay. It seemed so difficult, so beyond my capabilities. Now, every time I receive a new essay, I sit back, and make a plan. Even cooking seemed difficult. I kept rushing to close the gyp room door every time someone opened it, because I didn't know if I would set the fire alarm and incur the wrath of the rest of the college.

Stoicism slowly started to overtake the scared little guy that arrived here. I joined societies, I started to write again (as this article can attest to). It was very unconscious, but it did happen. And I found the effects to be very positive.

Supervisions became more relaxed as I learnt to not be afraid. I also learned that no obstacle is too high to overcome. Picture a maths problem that seems completely incomprehensible. You don't understand how the heck that x ended up on the opposite part of all the rest of the unknown values. Then you finally get that golden vibe and you realise that you've been looking at it all wrong.

I felt the same way with language. It isn't my first language, and I thought I may have some issues. People seemed to talk too fast at the beginning, some of the slang seemed nonsensical. Then, slowly, I adapted. I realised one day that I understood what the word 'quid' meant without having to think for two seconds. And I realised that all this pressure and uncertainty that I felt had withered away.

My college mates, my supervisors, virtually anyone that I had to talk to were very open. Not once did I have any difficulty when I made a mistake during essay writing. All I got was a small note that said that I should fix that. It was exactly like solving a maths problem. All I needed was to catch that golden vibe.

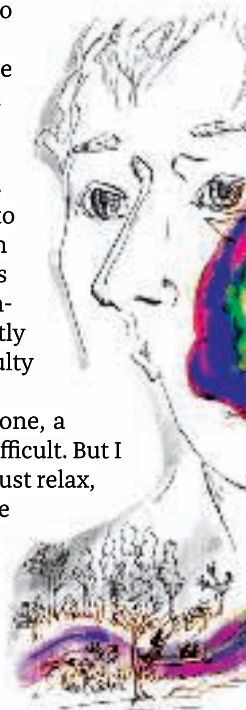
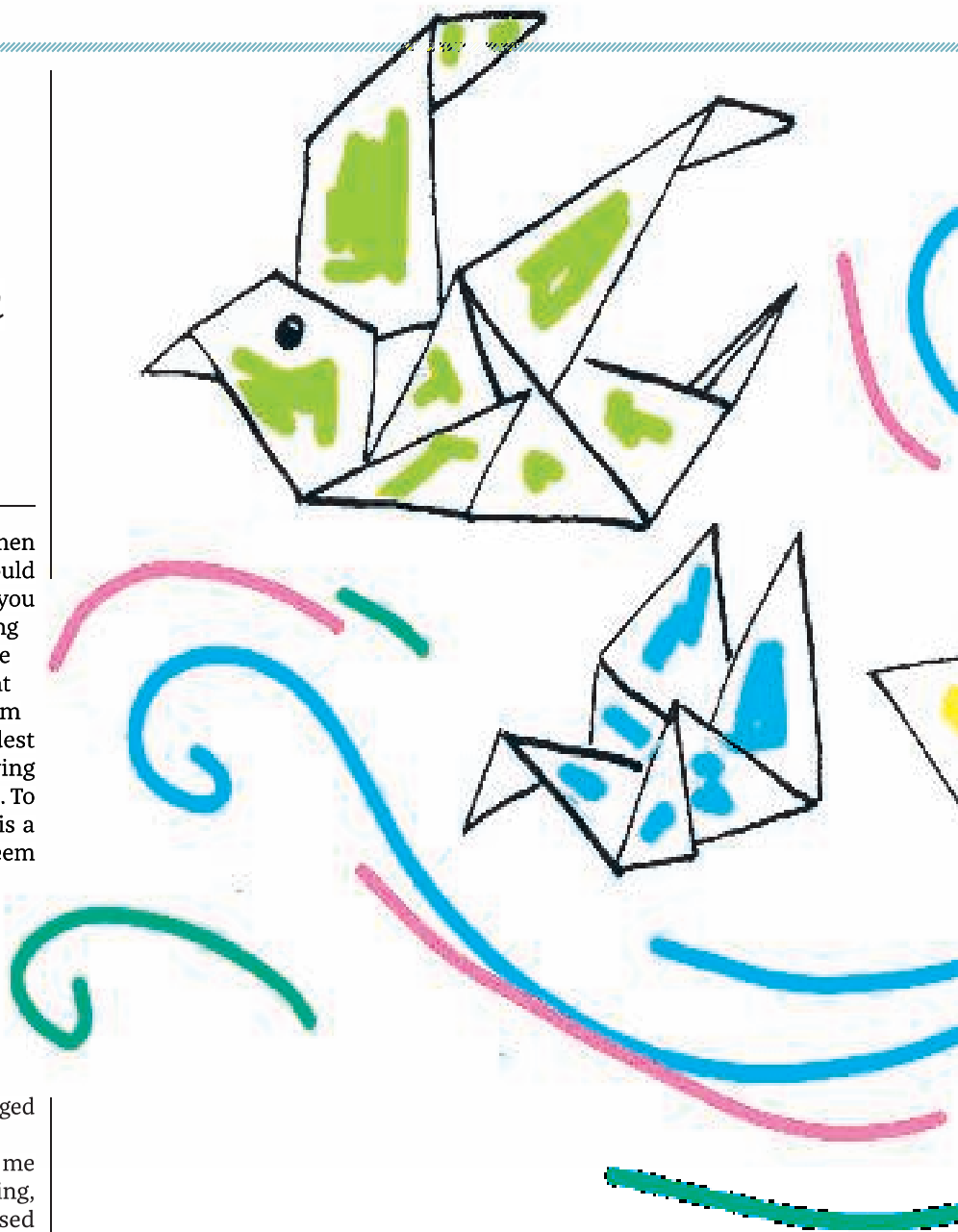
▲ **How much did you change over your first term?**

◀▶ **“I've learnt not to be afraid of supervisions”**

It is not easy changing environments. Environments are what define you, and changing them inevitably changes you as well. Fellow international students will know the culture shock of changing a country. British students too will empathise due to leaving their hometowns to come here, to Cambridge of all places.

We all have gone through the culture shock to some extent. Your favourite food is nowhere to be found, or it exists as a crude supplement of your grandma's cooking. Your favourite places to hang out are not here. How can they possibly be replaced? It does indeed seem difficult. I remember coming here and being slightly afraid that I would have difficulty in making friends.

When you hardly know anyone, a new environment seems very difficult. But I found that all you need to do is just relax, because there is always someone to talk to and something to do. For me, that meant going to the Model United Nations sessions and turning them into stand-up comedy stunts. For some of my friends, it was waking up at the crack of dawn to go rowing. For others still, it was Fez. I took up a hobby with a Nietzschean passion and I found a way to let off steam. All these sudden changes happened without my noticing, within a mere two months.





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It's part of university life to  
change fundamentally as a  
person  
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As I sit down in front of my laptop and I reflect on all the changes I wrote down, I understand that everything changes. The fact that a 2,500-year-old statement by a Greek philosopher not only made sense, but that I

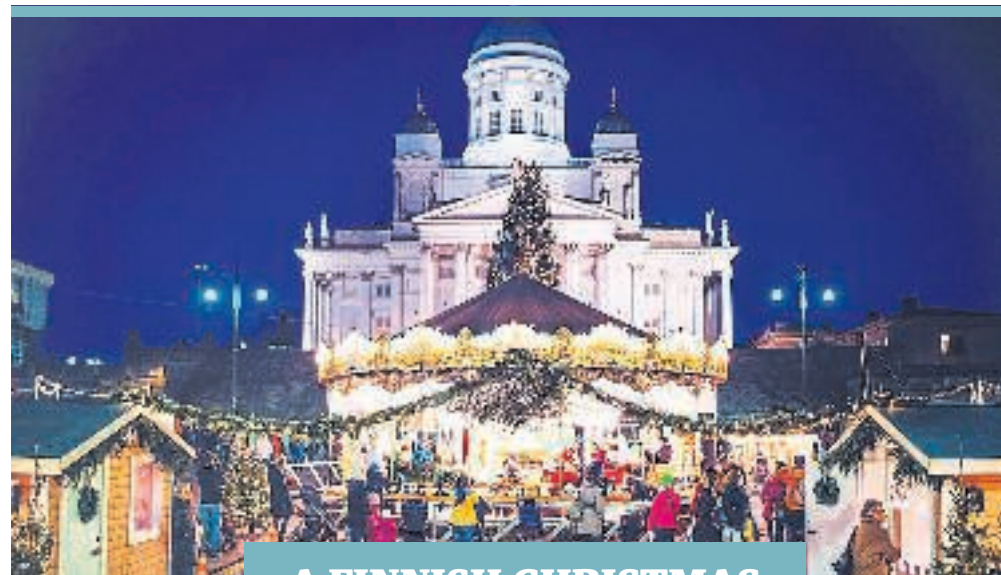
had been looking at it wrong all along.

My life was the river. It changes constantly, and coming to Cambridge was the greatest change of them all.

Truly, there was someone here that thought that I, like everyone else here, could cope with the dramatic change. I find myself unable to disagree. For me or for my friends. We could go through this. Even at times when all your essays are crammed into the same week because your schedule got messed up. These things would come anyway.

Why should anyone of us be afraid? We can always find time to enjoy ourselves, always pull all-nighters to finish overdue essays. It's only a matter of perception. That's what this very first term taught me. That I can always change my perception and go through this. That change is not something to be afraid of. I couldn't do anything about the changes that happened to me. And I find myself to be fool for having been afraid. But it is part of leaving home, to be afraid. It is part of university life, to change fundamentally as a person. I learned to be stoic, and to just go with it. I may have changed, but my attitudes towards that change have become more mature. And I find myself looking forward to the next term (after a much-needed break, of course). Because if such changes happened in just one term, the next few years will be very interesting indeed ●

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## A FINNISH CHRISTMAS

*Anna Hollingsworth talks gingerbread, patriotic hymns and Santa as she compares Britain and Finland's Yuletide traditions*

Every year when Bridgemas is over, I pack up a stash of mince pies and Christmas puddings and export as much British Christmas food to Finland as customs will allow me to get away with.

This is the burden of growing up in two cultures. Although both countries' Christmas is focused around food consumption and I'm not saying I'm juggling between, say, doing Hanukkah and Ramadan, but the differences are very real, and go beyond the fact that Christmas jumpers just aren't a thing in Finland.

The two countries differ in their approaches to Father Christmas. My Finnish childhood was spent frowning upon my infidel friends who believed that Korvatunturi, a fell in Lapland, was the home to Father Christmas.

What most Finns don't realise is that their beloved Korvatunturi is actually on the Russian side of the border. The winter wonderland tourists are flown to is hundreds of miles away from where Father Christmas is alleged to live.

Finns can't be blamed for misplacing Father Christmas from the North Pole into their country: while in England Father Christmas makes his rounds at night when no one can see him, in Finland he visits every home in person when everyone is still awake. Children will practice songs to perform for when Father Christmas comes around, and try to be on their very best behaviour.

The Finnish are known as solemn and silent and depressive and suicidally inclined at worst. Anyone who knows anything about Nordic jokes will have witnessed the gloomy Finns being poked fun at by their more flamboyant Nordic neighbours. Christmas is no exception. Ho bloody ho.

Finnish Christmas officially starts at noon on Christmas Eve with a municipality official of the former capital Turku reading out the declaration of Christmas Peace. A tradition

based on a piece of 13th century legislation, the declaration encourages people to behave in a respectful and peaceful manner, threatening them with extra harsh punishments for breaking the peace. The reading is then followed by a hymn and then a patriotic march, topped off with the national anthem.

My Christmas wouldn't feel like Christmas without the declaration, but watching it on TV does feel like watching a stately funeral. Carols are no different.

A national favourite is the incredibly mournful Sparrow on Christmas Morning, which is often performed with backing up violins for the full tragic effect and tells the story of a starving sparrow in search of food on Christmas Eve.

What the Finnish lack in general merriment, they make up for in food. Whereas in the UK the preponderance of Christmas treats consisting almost entirely of dried fruit excludes a sizeable proportion of the population, in Finland, Christmas bakes don't dare dabble with these sorts of semi-healthy ingredients.

Finnish Christmas ham is a national tradition - there's no point cooking any other meat. But apart from that and a selection of fish, vegetarians, rejoice, for the rest is a veggie feast. There are potatoes, swede, and the magical combination of carrot and rice pudding. Each version is baked to perfection in the oven and left to rest overnight, while beetroot makes an appearance mixed with pear and apples.

Whenever I go home for Christmas, I'm always a bit sad when I have to cherish my imported mince pies rather than binging on them as I would in England, and as my Christmas jumper attracts weird looks rather than the appreciation its Primark-provided cheesiness deserves.

Even so, Finnish Christmas is still one of my favourite things about the country, ranging from depressing carols to culinary quirks and misinformed Father Christmas traditions. Above all, it's just a shame there's no hope of finding a reindeer jumper-clad Finnish Colin Firth at a family gathering ●



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What the  
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for in food  
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# Culture



**Kate Little** delves into the history and artistry of the artwork on display in the Heong Gallery's new exhibition

As I enter Downing College's Heong Gallery I am struck by its resemblance to Kettle's Yard. A crisp, unencumbered space with cavernous windows that betray the boundary between interior and exterior, it is serene; sparse yet intimate, just like Kettle's Yard. Moving through the entrance, I am first met with Downing's own John Constable piece, *View from Golding Constable's House at East Bergholt*, c. 1800, a sweeping panoramic view of the landscape surrounding his place of birth. Heong Gallery curator Rachel Rose Smith explains: "his oeuvre, like his life, connects different places through the lens of experience".

This statement holds true for the exhibition as a whole, each of the works exploring the notion of place and space from a collection of artists comprising Winifred Nicholson, her husband Ben Nicholson, and Christopher 'Kit' Wood.

This collective was to grow and become inspired by Naïve artist Alfred Wallis. In the summer of 1928, Ben Nicholson and Christopher Wood took a day trip to St Ives and Nicholson recalls stumbling across "an open door in Back Road West and through it saw some paintings of ships and houses on odd pieces of paper and cardboard nailed up all over the wall, with particularly large nails through the smallest ones. We knocked on the door and inside found Wallis". This unexpected meeting soon flourished into budding relationships: Wood stayed with Wallis until the end of that year, diligently studying the ex-mariner's technique, a man who was to become an invaluable source of inspiration for the young Wood. Nicholson took a few of Wallis' paintings to London, which garnered interest early on and soon led to his correspondence with Kettle's Yard's Jim Ede.

Ede describes how Wallis painted "with a living rather than an intellectual experience". His works were painted directly onto cardboard, rendered flat and with a childlike simplicity, using house or boat paint. Accordingly his subject, most frequently the boat as seen in *Two Ships and Steamer Sailing Past a Port - Falmouth and St. Anthony lighthouse*, (c. 1931), become integrated within the artwork through his choice in paint. He brings his location - to the painting, imbuing it with a sense of the Cornish coastline. The display's inclusion of handwritten letters from Wallis to Ede, of which over 40 survive, allow some insight into Wallis' approach to his work: "What I do mosley is what use to be out of my own memory what we may never see again". Not often painting his subjects first hand, but instead from memory, Wallis attempts to salvage the past 'place' while simultaneously rendering it his own as he funnels it through recollection, and onto the painted surface.

Ben Nicholson's *Banks Head - Cumbrian Landscape*, 1928, similarly shows a childlike aesthetic and relationship to place; pointy-eared ponies stand awkwardly at angles to the flattened landscape, surrounded by three-



▲ **Ben Nicholson, 1928, Banks Head - Cumbrian Landscape** (Angela Verren Taunt)

► **Christopher Wood, 1928 Cumbrian Landscape** (Kettle's Yard)

pointed trees scattered across the scene in evident brushstrokes, depicting the surrounding countryside of his home. Known for carrying their easels and paints, Ben and Winifred could not travel far encumbered with such tools of their trade.

Instead, the Cumbrian farmlands provided the inspiration for the spontaneous, flat and fresh works they were to produce, within and of their space. Yet Ian Hamilton Finlay's inscribed pebble *KETTLE'S YARD / CAMBRIDGE / ENGLAND IS THE / LOUVRE OF THE PEBBLE*, 1995, subverts this motionless perception of space. The pebble itself is inscribed with place, and yet by nature has no fixed foundation, breaking the boundaries of place. Richard Long's 'textwork' *With No Direction Known Like a Rolling Stone*, 2013, was an exploration into the walking that was the formulation of his prior piece, *A Line made for Walking* (1967), which probes this very command we have over a space and the need to reconstitute it as our own.

And sitting at the midway-point of the exhibition, at the end of the capacious, corridor-like space, it simultaneously divides the movement of the exhibition, and threads them together.

Poet Holly Corfield Carr, whose words were created in response to the artworks on display, repurposes the visuals in order to gain her own understanding and sense of 'place'.

Hauntingly evocative, Corfield Carr exposes the temporal nature of man in space as one that cannot

be possessed or preserved. Winifred Nicholson wrote to a friend describing the setting for her work *Roman Road (Landscape with Two Houses)* (1926), as a place where '[t]he wind blows right through your body', uncontrollable, yet providing a form of whimsical freedom.

The landscapes are then re-experienced by the viewer who implements their own life onto the visuals, rendering a diverse collection of significance. *Portraits of Place* finally becomes not solely a 'portrait' of the place illustrated in the artworks, but within each piece also lies a

portrait of the artist behind it, one who is entwined in their landscape. Restored from its original state as an Edwardian stable, Heong Gallery has become a new place within which the works may interact, as the space becomes infused by the paintings themselves. Of Winifred Nicholson's *Seascape* (1926), Ede remarked that he had "never seen sea treated in this way, so loose, so bold, so unconcerned with detail", yet the

exhibition itself appears highly concerned with detail, and to great effect. Elegantly balanced between Naïve and Primitive artworks, juxtaposed against the 'moveable' artwork of Ian Hamilton Finlay, the exhibition invokes a sense of relief and isolation. It forces one into silence and captures that intrinsic quality of Kettle's Yard: the need to just sit, and then go back for more ●

*Portraits of Place* is on display at the Heong Gallery from 5th November 2016 - 15th January 2017, Wednesdays 10am-8pm, weekends and Bank Holidays 10am-6pm



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## 'Creativity with no means to an end'

**Kitty Grady** talks jeans, collages and friendship with the two Magdalene History of Art students behind the art project *Aydua*

I met India and Amy on a grey Sunday in Michaelmas. Bouncingly coming to meet me at the entrance to Magdalene's Cripps Court in their socks, the pair certainly injected some sunshine into an otherwise dreary evening.

History of Art students at Magdalene, they bonded over a shared love for arts and crafts, spending free evenings painting and sewing in each other's bedrooms. "People can be dismissive of art in Cambridge. Last year we were living with three boys. They were into their DJ-ing. We would sit there sewing".

Their hobby turned into a business when they started decorating denim pieces for friends with Keith Haring-inspired shapes and Matisse-like outlines of the female body.

Named after India's eccentric aunt, their style is irreverent and iconographic while also unintimidating and current. Although every other item in Topshop now seems to involve Gucci-imitation embroidery, India and Amy's penchant for textiles was ahead of the curve: "Not that we like set the trend! [...] We saw denim as a material to work with - it wasn't fashion, just wearable art".

Now in their finals and with less time to spare they are focusing on painting, drawing and collage. They no longer live together and felt-tips are the easiest thing to ferry to and fro. *Aydua* has become a general artistic outlet: "It can

be hard anything outside of your There's set and costume design, but we wanted to be creative with no means to an end. Just for the sake of it", Amy explains, "By giving it a name it motivates us. It makes it a thing and gives us a coherent vision."

They're currently working on a tapestry: "We've each got a piece and we'll swap it around. We sew about anything to do with life. It seems banal but when we look back at it it's a massive, visual diary entry" and recently created soft, "tactile and smelly" hanging sculptures in strange ball shapes for a friend's exhibition.

"Maybe we should all dig out the Caran d'Ache crayons"

I'm starting to think maybe all of us should dig out the Caran d'Ache crayons. Whereas a diary can be a laborious writing exercise, sewing and art is mindful and meditative: "You catch yourself thinking about the most mundane rubbish".

Their inspirations include Niki de Saint Phalle, Sonia Delaunay and the German Expressionists. However, they cite Instagram as one of their biggest idea sources:

"There are lots of young artists that we follow". It's a wonderful cyber network where a new generation of 'bedroom artists' can network and share ideas.

Social media aside, *Aydua* is testament to an arts and crafts revival. We chat about how our mothers, in a time gone by, would have made their own clothes: "What ever happened all that - making your own curtains?!"

Friendship comes first for *Aydua*. and they share that uniquely female and best, best friend kind of bond that is the key to their creative success.

"In the future we'd like to work together. To create big wall hangings, murals and sculptures. But the easiest thing right now is just to get some felt-tips" ●



Read the full version of this article at [varsity.co.uk/culture](http://varsity.co.uk/culture)

16<sup>th</sup> NOV - 2<sup>nd</sup> DEC

## What's on this week?

**CAMBRIDGE LITERARY FESTIVAL /**  
Various venues



**TOP PICK**

From Midge Gillies' 'Army Wives' and Gareth Stedman Jones' 'Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion' on the Saturday, to Christopher Davidson's novel on the rise of extremism and an interview between Peter Hennessey and former Labour MP Charles Clarke, the Cambridge Literary Festival features chaired discussions and interviews revolving around literature and its subjects. Prices vary per event. Visit: [cambridgeliteraryfestival.com](http://cambridgeliteraryfestival.com)

**Saturday 26th**  
**Lady Chatterley's Lover**

**Cambridge Arts Theatre, 2:30pm or 7:45pm**

D. H. Lawrence's controversial novel is given a stage adaptation, produced by the same company that premiered *Brideshead Revisited* on the stage. The closing night of the production, tickets range from £18 to £33. Visit: [cambridgeartstheatre.com](http://cambridgeartstheatre.com)

**Monday 28<sup>th</sup>**  
**Artist in Focus: Mario Sironi**

**The Combination Room, Wolfson College, 12:30pm**

Coinciding with Kettle's Yard's *Reimagining the City*, this talk focus on artist Mario Sironi, and his connections with Italian fascism, futurism and metaphysical art. Visit: [kettlesyard.co.uk](http://kettlesyard.co.uk)

**Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup>**  
**goat: Christmas Gifts Pop-Up Craft Stall**

**Hot Numbers Coffee, Gwydir Street, 7pm**

Local pop-up home and lifestyle shop 'goat' will be offering a selection of ceramics, textiles, and items for the home and kitchen. Other companies will also be selling their wares, alongside live music, food and Christmas tipples. Visit: [hotnumberscoffee.co.uk](http://hotnumberscoffee.co.uk)

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**Newnham Smoker**

**Darwin College, 8pm**

With headline act Grainne Maguire, the feminist comedy night offers a platform for students to perform their very own sets. The perfect way to bid farewell to the cares of Michaelmas term. Visit: [facebook.com](http://facebook.com)

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**Jimmy Carr**

**Corn Exchange, 8pm**

Tickets are at limited availability for the comedian, who has become a mainstay on British television and is offering an evening of his most popular jokes alongside new material. £30, including a £2.50 booking fee. Visit [cambridgelivetrust.co.uk](http://cambridgelivetrust.co.uk)

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

**Mumford Theatre /**  
**Frankenstein**

**30th November, 7:30pm**

The closing night of this production of Mary Shelley's classic novel is the perfect alternative to the various Christmas pantomimes that are dominating the theatre calendar. Features ensemble storytelling, live music and "stunning theatricality". £12.50, or £8.50 for students. Visit: [angila.ac.uk](http://angila.ac.uk)



◀ **Frankenstein**  
**(Mumford Theatre)**

◀ **Stutterer**  
**(Thomson & Craigshead)**



### How and when did you get involved with film?

It probably started properly when I got to university. I hadn't made a film before I came to university – apart from the Twilight parody I made on my phone when I was 13! My parents have always had an interest in watching different films so I'd be exposed to all these movies when I was little, like Werner Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo* or Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire* – these slightly strange art house films that my parents enjoyed. But I've always also had a huge love for fully commercial mainstream things as well. I love Baz Luhrmann's *Strictly Ballroom* and big over-the-top camp musicals.

For a bit I wanted to be a fashion designer or a costume designer, I wanted to be an actress for a bit, or an artist, but I was always thinking about worlds and different characters and different situations that these characters could be put in. I'd write down a bit and then never get very far. But I was always watching films throughout.

At Cambridge, I've played a jack-of-all trades kind of role. I got to know a couple of people through working on a film called *Tachyon* and then I worked on another called *Prelude*. I started going to writers' meetings and it enabled me to get motivated in writing scripts, so I've been trying to churn stuff out pretty regularly since then.

### What is *Dinner Out* about and what inspired you to make it?

*Dinner Out* is about a young woman attending a surreal dinner party with her aunt and is set



## Varsity Introducing...

# Becky Guthrie

**Elizabeth Howcroft** talks to filmmaker Becky Guthrie about her experience of making short films in Cambridge, and her current project: *Dinner Out*

in on a dark secret – I'm not going to say any more than that!

The aesthetic is very important. It's influenced by the 80s-style over-saturated colours that come up in films, it's influenced by the technicolor films that were coming out in the 50s; it's got hints of Monty Python-esque kind of thing...

A lot of the aesthetic is guided by one cookbook called *The Romance of Food* by Barbara

Cartland. We did some filming at the weekend and managed to get the shots looking like that, which I'm really excited about.

It may sound at the moment like it's much more style over substance and I would agree with that in a way. It's a film that doesn't necessarily have to make a huge amount of sense but I want the audience to be excited and interested in the way that it appears on the screen.

### Tell me about your unusual approach to hiring a crew.

For this film, the applications were open to female and non-binary people exclusively. I just wanted to do that because, when I was on a film last year, I was sitting with a couple of girls on it and we were wondering why we'd taken on the more secretarial roles – such as producer and script supervisor – why are we not the ones having the creative vision and doing all the creative things? To an extent, on a basic level and within the wider industry, film can seem like more of a boys' club. There's this bullshitauteur thing about the 'auteur' and how everything comes from their mind, and if you look up 'auteur' on Google, it's just a long list of guys.

I thought it would be nice to have something that would be this anti-boys' club thing – because girls are just as capable. It's a really positive environment to be in.

### Would you take this approach to hiring a crew in the future?

Yes, definitely! I do believe in having a diversity of voices when collaborating on something creative, though, so maybe for my next project I won't impose that rule. But, yes, from the time we've spent filming on set so far it's felt really good to be an all-female set, it's had a positive and chill vibe and I think the general aesthetic that I was going for has something about it – something very 'camp' – that the production designers really picked up on. In terms of comparing it to other student shoots I've done there haven't been any on-set memes, which is a huge relief ●

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"Nicely loving and ironic without being cloying" – Mary Beard



# Fashion

## Alexandra Shulman

### ‘I’ve never felt in my job that everything is controlled by men’

**Kitty Grady** speaks with the editor of British Vogue, who has built a reputation as the ‘normal’ editor of the fashion world

In fashion, the editor has become a cult figure as important as the magazines themselves. This year Alexandra Shulman not only invited TV cameras into her office to film a BBC2 documentary *Absolutely Fashion* but also published her diary, *Inside Vogue: A Diary of My 100th Year*. I ask her whether she feels uncomfortable with this level of attention: “I’m not someone who thinks of myself as a particularly public persona. Although, by default I seem to have become one – I’ve been allocated the role of the ‘normal’ editor but I’m really no more normal than anyone else.”

Indeed, as I talk to Shulman, sat on a plush armchair in Newnham Principal’s Lodge and pristinely dressed in an on-trend inky velvet jacket and ivory shirt with perfectly blow-dried hair, she looks positively regal. She appears far from the anti-fashion, fusty, mid-heel-wearing image the media has created for her. But can a woman who wears Prada to feed her cat really be considered normal? The morning of the talk she posted an Instagram of her Louis Vuitton valise poised at the bottom of her leafy London pathway. So far, so *Vogue*.

Despite all the glamour, Shulman is keen to point out she is an underdog. Speaking as part of a panel, ‘Career Women: Business, Journalism and Fashion’ at Newnham College, the most powerful woman in British fashion described how as a child she was a “relentlessly low flyer”. She was told at a parents’ evening that she should become a nursery

school teacher and was pressured by her parents to go to the University of Sussex, where she got a 2:2 in Social Anthropology, “which is pretty well a miracle because I wasn’t there for most of the time”.

Interestingly, Newnham graduate Felicia Brocklebank, ex-Goldman Sachs executive and director of Papouelli shoes, who spoke alongside Shulman, had a corporate sheen that was far more intimidating. “You can tell which one of us is a Cambridge graduate”, comparing her scrappy piece of paper to Brocklebank’s perfectly bullet-pointed notes.

Shulman never wanted to be the editor of *Vogue*. “All my jobs have come about by default”. Fired from various jobs in the music industry in her 20s, she found a temporary job as a secretary to the editor of *Over 21* magazine. She sat at the end of her desk and “watched everything she did for a year and a half.” It was this sort of “dogsbody” work that put her in good stead when she went on to pitch her own ideas to magazines, and a successful stint at *Tatler* followed.

In 1990 and at the age of 32 she became the first female editor of *GQ*: “They couldn’t find a man who wanted to do the job at a glossy magazine. All the decent journalists didn’t want to write about aftershave. All the fashion guys who loved Armani tailoring had no editing ability. I could do both.” Later, she became editor of *British Vogue* when Suzy Menkes turned the position down. She has now held the role for “an incredibly long time”. 25 years to be precise: a quarter of the magazine’s existence.

As an editor, she describes herself as a “conductor” to an orchestra of people, and her challenge is to spot other people’s talents and nurture them. She spends her days making decisions, from budgets for Mario Testino shoots to what food they have at special lunches. Although the documentary seemed to show the final decisions being made by old white men at the top of Condé Nast, Shulman insists that she wears the trousers: “I’ve never felt in my job that everything is controlled by men.”

In her time as editor Shulman has overseen huge change in an already fast-moving industry. “Fashion has exploded in the last 20 years. We didn’t use to have half the high street brands that we have now.” There is now a newfound “fashion literacy” to contend with; fashion isn’t niche anymore and the public know who designers are. People who think fashion is trivial “are just wrong” says Shulman “We’re one of the biggest industries in this country.”

And as with all of the UK’s biggest industries, there is the very pressing matter of how to go about business in a post-Brexit world. “It’s important when you look back at *Vogue* that you can see the major things that have happened but I don’t see any point in writing stories about how worried and ghastly



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



“Despite all the glamour, Shulman is keen to point out that she is an underdog”

it all seems to be. People buy *Vogue* because they want to feel good, they don’t buy it to read something negative. “I have a gut feeling that we might find ourselves British-focused and with an emphasis on homegrown talents, brands and stories. Our job will be to find the interesting cultural things that will come out of it. It will be a fantastic well of inspiration. There’s nothing better for the arts than to have something to grind against.”

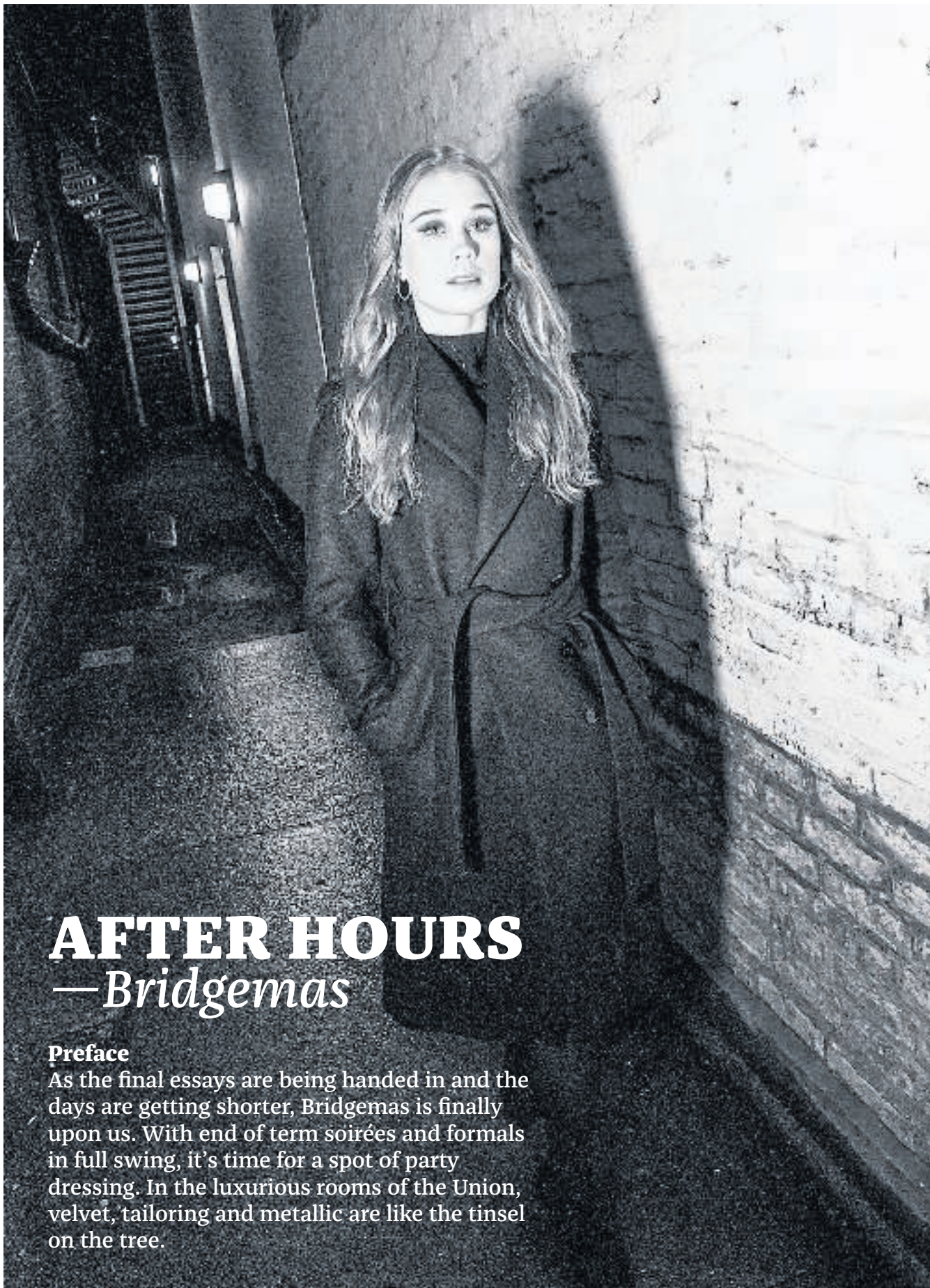
Business as usual, then. Indeed, the existential purpose of the magazine is to keep its finger on the heart of the pulse: ‘Buy nothing until you buy *Vogue*’, as the tagline goes. Rather than seeing a new digitalised era as a threat to the print publication, Shulman seems excited by the future: “I think that this is a real opportunity for us to look at the magazine differently and carve up territory in a new way.” But can the luxury high polish of a glossy fashion magazine really be translated into the lowly realms of clickbait culture?

“It’s a juggling act. The high and the low have to work together. Our Alexa Chung documentary series was the golden egg. It merged Alexa’s clickbait appeal using somebody very intelligent and of the world of *Vogue* but not totally entrenched in it.”

This kind of realistic pragmatism is undoubtedly the key to Shulman’s longevity as editor. She has a real human touch, advising students to “remain true to yourself, never change yourself for a career”, and she emphasised the importance of nurturing everything outside your job. Personally, Shulman thinks ‘career’ is a “bland, uncharming word”, and prefers to see herself as having “lived and living a life”. And isn’t that fabulous? ●







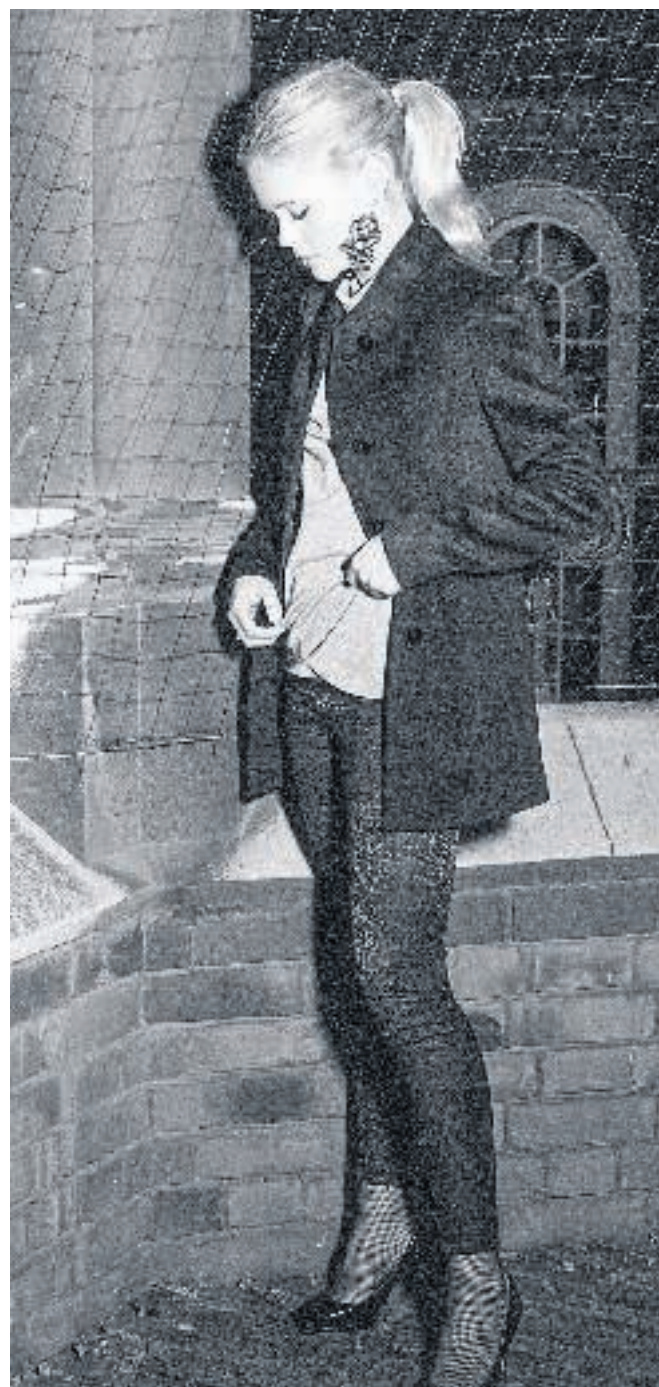
## AFTER HOURS —*Bridgemas*

### Preface

As the final essays are being handed in and the days are getting shorter, Bridgemas is finally upon us. With end of term soirées and formals in full swing, it's time for a spot of party dressing. In the luxurious rooms of the Union, velvet, tailoring and metallic are like the tinsel on the tree.







PHOTOGRAPHER  
*Qiuying Giulia Lai*

MODELS  
Jack Lewy  
Jade Cuttle  
Fosca Majnoni  
d'Intignano  
Sophia Luu  
Stéphanie Childress  
Kieran Tam

*Oliver Lyer  
Flora Walsh  
Esme O'Keefe*

STYLING  
Agustin Ferrari Braun  
Flora Walsh

CLOTHES  
Reiss  
Petrus



# Theatre



## PREVIEW

**This year's CUADC/Footlights Panto, *Rumpelstiltskin*, is set to be better than ever, writes Miranda Imperial**



'The Cambridge panto does everything big'

*Rumpelstiltskin*  
ADC Theatre  
23rd November - 3rd December

Ask anyone in Cambridge and they'll be bound to agree: there is no niftier, glitzier show in Cambridge theatre than the CUADC/Footlights Michaelmas pantomime. It's true, the Cambridge panto does everything big. Its budget is significantly larger than any other ADC main show's and it is also scheduled for a two-week run. 15 performances in total, including matinées, of the best that Cambridge comedy and musical theatre can offer: this is what can be expected of *Rumpelstiltskin*, this year's instalment.

The intensity and professionalism required from every single member of the cast and crew is known to students and locals alike, who flock en masse to experience this very unique event. No one understands the kind of commitment demanded by such a production better than its directorial team, Lucy Moss (Director) and Lily Lindon (Assistant Director).

It is up to them to meet the soaring expectations and outdo last year's spectacular *Robin Hood* – a show they both worked on. I had the pleasure of speaking to them after witnessing part of a rehearsal to get their take on the intricate process of the making of *Rumpelstiltskin*.

Both of them exuded enthusiasm for the duration of the rehearsal, never hesitating to improve minor details and striving for perfection at all times. At my question of what, for them, is the most important aspect of putting on a successful pantomime, both stared at me in disbelief. Of course, a large part of this relies on the writing: Declan Amphlett, Mark Bittlestone and Haydn Jenkins' script is, according to Moss, the backbone of the show.

However, it is only by harnessing the talent and effort of everyone and bringing everything together, be it acting, music, lights, sound and set design, that panto can provide the audience with such a fun, carefree and cheerful atmosphere. The copious amounts of time and effort put into *Rumpelstiltskin* are clearly

▲ **This year the Footlights Panto is directed by Lucy Moss and Lily Lindon (Charlie Scott)**

discernible. From the close collaboration of the writers and composer (Oliver Vibrans) in pre-production, to the four long days of auditions, to an intensive month-long period of rehearsals and preparation, no details have been overlooked in the play's conception.

But still, how is it possible to create something new, vibrant and different from previous pantos? Moss insisted that the writing has much to do with this, given that the story itself is not traditionally panto material. *Rumpelstiltskin* introduces a main villain who is ironically the most likeable of all characters, and presents an intriguing narrative where nothing is black and white and everything is changeable.

Their challenge is making a dark and gloomy storyline amusing and audience-friendly, catering to a varied public. It seems like the directorial and production design decisions are very interesting indeed: Moss and Lindon, along with Production Designer Alice Attlee, are attempting to portray the crookedness and wonkiness of a fairytale-like, surreal land, making everything on stage slightly askew. This will even be displayed throughout the musical score, which is "more Sondheim than Schwartz", according to Lindon. Expect to be in for a treat listening to Oliver Vibrans' tunes, very different to the ones in previous pantos.

But after being shown around *Rumpel-*

"I was convinced panto couldn't get any better; it turns out I was wrong"

*stiltskin*'s set in the ADC Workshop by Attlee and Producer Jack Rowan, I must say that what promises to be the highlight of this production is the set itself. And, though I don't intend to give too much away, I can't go on without mentioning what looks to be one of the most significant innovations in ADC set design history: a revolving stage built on an inner and outer set of steel rings, controlled electronically.

Their production design appears to be very exciting. In our conversation, Attlee emphasized how even details such as colour schemes have been conceived with the utmost care, to convey this skewed, unrealistic image. These nuances in the design, accompanied by a technically laden performance brandishing a snow machine and even various theatrical devices such as shadow puppetry, cannot but satisfy Cambridge's demanding audiences and exceed expectations.

It is almost time for us to meet the villagers of Alpenberg in their adventures. I shall end with a point that Jack Rowan reiterated several times: despite the fact that more than 120 people are involved in the staging of the show, everybody in the team plays an important part. This collaborative approach to the production of panto is key.

The commitment and attachment of every individual I have spoken to is unquestionable. After witnessing and working in last year's *Robin Hood* myself, I was convinced that the panto couldn't get any better. It turns out I was wrong ●

▼ **The production team have picked *Rumpelstiltskin* to adapt this year (Charlie Scott)**



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## PREVIEW

**Love in a Maze**

ADC Theatre

30th November - 2nd December, 11:00pm

►► This adaptation sheds new light on sexual politics (Anna Jennings)

When Eliza Haywood's novella *Fantomina: Or, Love in a Maze* was first unleashed upon the readership of the 18th century, there was a moderate chance that English society would never quite recover. Presenting women as active sexual beings was – and still often is – a very confounding matter to the poor European psyche. Risky business, that one. In subverting the conventional 'damsel in distress', Haywood establishes her protagonist in terms of sexual desire rather than modesty;

agency instead of objecthood.

These matters are secondary, however, in this comedic adaptation of *Love in a Maze*. "I just thought the book would make a funny play", explains Director Ella Godfrey.

The other half of the writer-director duo, Simon West, expands on the subject: "Men get to do crude sexual humour all the time and no one gives a monkey's. Is it a political statement when it's the other way around? Maybe. I don't know. We just wanted to be funny".

Hammering emphasis on the word funny, *Love in a Maze* strives above all to be lighthearted and silly. The rehearsal room has the energy of a bottle of soda that's been shaken one too many times in the depths of the shopping bag on the way home from Sainsbury's. After some general enthusiastic banter, fitting on a veil, and a warming-up game which involves Simon commanding the cast to recite their favourite line "like you are a sexy nun", the team finally settles to rehearse a scene.

Centring around *Fantomina* (Kathryn Cussons), the play opens with the nuns of a convent receiving an eager novice. Inquiries are made.

Proceeding to tell the autobiography of *Fantomina*, the nuns recreate everything in front of their newest member – well, almost everything. Ella sheds light on the

process behind the show: "this is a comedy about sex, and balancing those two things can be a bit tricky. We didn't want to shy away from the subject matter, and the comic potential therein, but we also didn't want the show to become graphic or creepy. Our compromise has been gratuitous euphemisms and sensual violin music". It is evidently a fine line.

The solution is an abundance of bawdy talk, while all the actual action is only flirted with and ultimately taken off stage – a choice made to preserve the fragile Cambridge audience,

I think. Between throwing around ideas and debating the application of a Bristolian accent, the cast discusses the importance of gender.

Jasmin questions whether comedic characters even need a clearly defined gender, a point specifically interesting as there is some appropriate ambiguity hanging around the narrative.

However, the title suggests that love plays a role, too. "In the play a dreamy young lady 'falls in love' with a chauvinist idiot; it's up to our audience to decide just how cynical we are being, because we have no idea", says Simon.

Replacing the importance of fidelity with constancy, the play's tae on love defies definition. "Our ending, bizarre as it is, is designed to avoid reaching any conclusion whatsoever" ●

Julia Salonen



## PREVIEW



'This play actively seeks to unnerve'

**Joseph K**

Corpus Playroom

29th November - 3rd December, 7:00pm

"Brilliant! That was horrible!" grins Daniel Emery, the director behind *Joseph K*, after a scene in which, Leni (Beth Hindhaugh), seeks to seduce a stuttering and rather unwilling Joseph K. Not a comment that you'd expect in the context of a production edging ever more closely towards its opening night, but as I learn, this play actively seeks to unnerve.

Life is going well for banker Joseph K. A promotion is on the horizon and he is in control of his life – or so he thinks. On his 30th birthday, a takeaway order of sushi arrives, rather unexpectedly, with two men who have not only helped themselves to his California roll, but who also insist on arresting him. Joseph is thrown into a convoluted and disjointed maze of bureaucracy from which there is no escape. His phone has stopped working and, more importantly, the 1,900 points on his Boots card have disappeared.

Emery tells me the play is inspired by Kafka's *The Trial* rather than a direct adaptation of it, relocating the action to 21st-century London. For those who rest safe in the knowledge that the dystopian future or totalitarian

state that Kafka concocts is far removed from our own world, Emery's direction of *Joseph K* shatters this illusion, offering an uncanny reflection of the absurdities and befuddlements of contemporary life and "collapsing the boundary between K's world and our own" through an astute manipulation of theatrical space.

"In *Joseph K*, I wanted to transfer this sense of unease by drawing attention to its status as [a] play." Watching the cast rehearse, I notice that the characters are in a state of flux as Emery has intended, constantly lurching between naturalism and a startling absurdity. As the cast transition from character to character, there is always a sense that something just isn't quite right. When I ask the cast how they create this disquieting effect, Jamie Robson, the play's lead, explains that "there are lots of moments that are not quite fitting with the mood already established, but without disrupting the overall logic of the scene".

Indeed, the cast deliberately break character; bursting into song, intermitting conversation to offer Latin proverbs, or watching in the background. There is unmistakable meta-theatricality, and Joseph is frenetic as the supporting cast of four work tirelessly around him to conceive the jarring, self-conscious atmosphere Emery envisions "tapping into the fear that our lives are not our own" ●

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# Music

FEATURE

## Looking back on 2016

Columnists **Miikka Jaarte** and **Perdi Higgs** reflect on an eventful year for music

**T**he end of the year in Cambridge is slightly surreal. You blitz through a term of desperately attempting to pretend you know what you are doing, academically, socially, and mentally. But you've made it. And as everything begins to slow down as so-called 'Bridgemas' approaches, it's time to return your books, do your laundry and force yourself into premature festivity. Time in Cambridge passes so incredibly quickly, and it is often difficult to remember further back than a week, let alone to look retrospectively back at the entire year.

But in terms of music, 2016 was a memorable year – and if you can stretch your mind back that far, you will find a diverse and exciting 12 months of releases and performances. It was the year of the digital album, of 'Becky with the good hair'. Drake sang Taylor Swift; a meme gave Rae Sremmurd their first number one single. There was the return of Adele. And, apparently, Rick Astley is still making music.

Musical releases this year have been a broad variety of returning veterans and exciting debuts. Iggy Pop released *Post Pop Depression*, which is the singer's 17th album to date – an awe-inspiring feat considering the amount of drugs consumed by one person. Devonté Hynes, under his moniker of Blood Orange, also released the poignant *Freetown Sound*, an album that combined new-wave with funk for his grooviest sound to date. The album was proudly uninhibited, and, as Devonté Hynes stated, it was "for everyone told they're not black enough, too black, too queer, not queer the right way". The album reflects this sense of liberation, and 2016 has seen music as a powerful channel for social messages; Solange's *Seat at the Table* created a poignant channel for discussion of race in America.

The death of David Bowie in early January marked a solemn return to Cambridge, where my friends and I had spent last term's pre-drinks practising a choreographed routine to 'Life on Mars'. Bowie's final album, released only a few days before his death, serves as a succinct and poignant indication of his unique talent. *Blackstar* is an undoubtedly iconic album of 2016.

Another pop icon was lost in the form of Prince, another pioneer that pushed the boundary of gender, fashion and music. These figures paved the way for creativity in exciting unknown forms,

▲ ▼ **Bowie (above) and Chance the Rapper both released powerful albums this year**

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



performing as exciting, almost alien, figures. Much more recently, Leonard Cohen's passing has brought 'Hallelujah' into the popular charts for the first time in its history. Cohen was a man who did not start writing music until his middle age, or start touring until his 60s. Charting for the first time posthumously, this is a poignant milestone for Cohen's understated but incredible career.

Anyone who's seen the classic 1990 TV show *Twin Peaks* will have noted that Angelo Badalamenti's original score is one of the most unforgettable soundtracks of all time. Badalamenti's delicate balance of darkness and beauty has been notoriously difficult to recapture. The California-based experimental pop group Xiu Xiu manages just this balance. Xiu Xiu captures the special duality of Badalamenti's original score while adding flair with blaring instrumentation and frontman Jamie Stewart's haunting vocal performance. It's the year's best soundtrack, shoegaze, experimental pop and noise record.

It is a mystery how other alternative rock bands find the power to go on when they know Radiohead exists. There simply is no other group which so consistently produces albums that sound like nothing they've previously recorded, and still immediately reach classic status with fans, critics and newcomers alike. With *A Moon Shaped Pool*, Radiohead channel a more quiet and introspective spirit than before. The result is a record that isn't immediately attention-grabbing or catchy, but which, with repeat listens, reveals its intricacies and simply doesn't let you go. It's an immersive and mature album about pain and heartbreak. While officially a mixtape and not a commercial album, Chance The Rapper's *Coloring Book* should be enough to prove that that line, if it ever existed, is obsolete. *Coloring Book* is simply the best hip hop project to come out all year. It draws from a disparate collection of sounds, from early Kanye to gospel, and Chance shows himself to be one of the most charismatic and positive voices in rap. It's primarily about God, but that shouldn't turn anyone off. The almost political joy Chance expresses through his Christianity in the face of hardship is something that should resonate with anyone, regardless of religion.

There might have been no other album with such meme-like hype around it than Frank Ocean's second and endlessly delayed album. This makes it all the more surprising that the subdued and introspective *Blonde* is quite universally considered to have redeemed this hype. What's clear from the first song onwards is that Frank is not especially concerned with what people expect. The production is much more stripped down than on *Channel Orange*, providing more of a focus on his singing and lyrics – both of which show Frank as a new, mature and introspective artist. Meditating on race, love, sexuality and drugs, *Blonde* is a poetic masterpiece. Beyoncé's *Lemonade* seems to command a rarely found critical and commercial consensus of its excellence. It's hard to say anything new about an album that has already inspired a substantive literature analysing its personal, political and musical qualities. Possibly one of the best albums of the decade so far, it was also a sign that the album as an art form is still a worthwhile convention. As a whole, it is an emotional gut-punch. It is the right thing for the right time – a personally political voice of protest against oppression from one of the most iconic artists of our time ●

FEATURE

## Christmas time means music

Our Music Editor **Karl Schwonik** gives tips for finding festive musical joy

**C**ambridge is a wonderful place for music. From its rich history in choir and classical music to its festivals and cutting-edge live music venues, the city offers something for every taste. And for those who crave something more, or just a bigger concert

▲ ► Spend your Christmas with Louis Armstrong and Charlie Brown (Schulz)

### Playlist »

#### What to listen to this Bridgemas

**'Gabriel's Message'**

**The King's Men**

The impressive men of King's College in action

**'All I Want for Christmas is You'**

**Mariah Carey**

A personal love song, wrapped in Christmas

**'Linus and Lucy'**

**Vince Guaraldi Trio**

From the classic *Peanuts* gang

**'Happy Xmas (War Is Over)'**

**John Lennon**

Sentimental journey through a post-war world

**'Zat You, Santa Claus?'**

**Louis Armstrong**

A little jazz for the holidays

**'Step Into Christmas'**

**Elton John**

A classic piece from a timeless artist

**The Nutcracker Suite**

**Duke Ellington**

Festive big band music from a jazz legend







To listen to Varsity's special festive playlist, Spotify playlist, go to: [goo.gl/7R1yTy](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/7R1yTy)



hall (or stadium), London is just a short trip down the road.

It has been a true pleasure to edit the Music Section this term as we looked to turn the spotlight on local events, University music personalities and, most importantly, students.

From childhood memories to musical journeys to experiences as a part of a University ensemble, we covered a wide gamete in a short few weeks.

As we enter the Christmas season (one of the most fruitful for memorable musical motifs) Cambridge is full of wonderful live musical experiences. From the Highlights this week (see the box on the right), we point to Handel's 'Messiah', possibly the best known large-scale festive piece that involves voices and instruments.

Most colleges are embracing the holidays with their own offerings and I encourage everyone to partake and make a new lasting musical memory. The season is also awash with new and old albums from obscure and famous artists alike.

Several of the iconic pieces by John Lennon,

Louis Armstrong, Bing Crosby, Joni Mitchell and Elton John are worth taking a listen to now before they will no doubt be overplayed in the shops. On the recorded front, I would be remiss to leave out the classic music from the original Charlie Brown.

I may be biased as several musicians on this recording were of Canadian origin, but the music is lasting and often the go-to for Christmas parties and school plays.

Don't waste your time with the latest well-known artists who merely make these kinds

of records for a cash-grab. Find something that is classic, or good, or both. Music can have a lasting impact on our lives. In fact, the

arts taken as a whole have been shown to have substantial economic, social and intrinsic benefits in communities of all sizes. Music is an integral part of this. From films to football matches to elevators, music is there and offers a constant narration for several aspects of life. Embrace music in Cambridge, shape your own life's playlist, and for

Pete's sake, get out there and actually do some carolling this festive season! ●



“  
Classic,  
or good,  
or both  
”

25<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER – 1<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER

## Highlights of the week

### Friday 25th Cambridge University String Ensemble

Queens' College Chapel, 8:30pm

Maestro Kavi Pau leads the ensemble in works by Bach, Vivaldi, Grieg and others

**Free for students**

### Saturday 26th CUJO and Soweto Kinch

Mumford Theatre, Anglia  
Ruskin University, 7:30pm

The Jazz Festival's final weekend is punctuated by Soweto Kinch's fabulous sax sounds

**£16 (non-ARU  
concession,  
advance)**

### Tuesday 29th Handel's Messiah (St John's Voices & Cambridge Baroque Camerata)

St John's College Chapel, 8:15pm

This iconic piece is a must each holiday season

**£5 (students)**

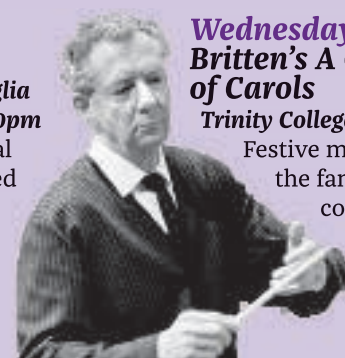
### Wednesday 30th Britten's A Ceremony of Carols

Trinity College Chapel, 9pm

Festive music from the famed British composer,

performed by Choral Scholars

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# Reviews



## THE TOP 5

### Christmas Films



#### Nativity (2009)

Martin Freeman stars in this brilliant British comedy. Teacher Mr Maddens has to adjust to a new school, new class, and new, childish teaching assistant – all while trying to plan a Hollywood-worthy school nativity.



#### Elf (2003)

Will Ferrell is Buddy, a human raised as an elf in the North Pole. In an attempt to find his true self and discover his lost family, Buddy returns to the United States to find things are rather different to the North Pole...



#### The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992)

Michael Caine stars as Scrooge, in Dickens's story brought to life by puppets, or well, 'Muppets', with great comic effect and brilliant musical numbers.



#### Love Actually (2003)

The iconic Christmas romance film, Richard Curtis' Love Actually boasts a hugely impressive cast, following the very different lives of eight couples in the lead up to Christmas.

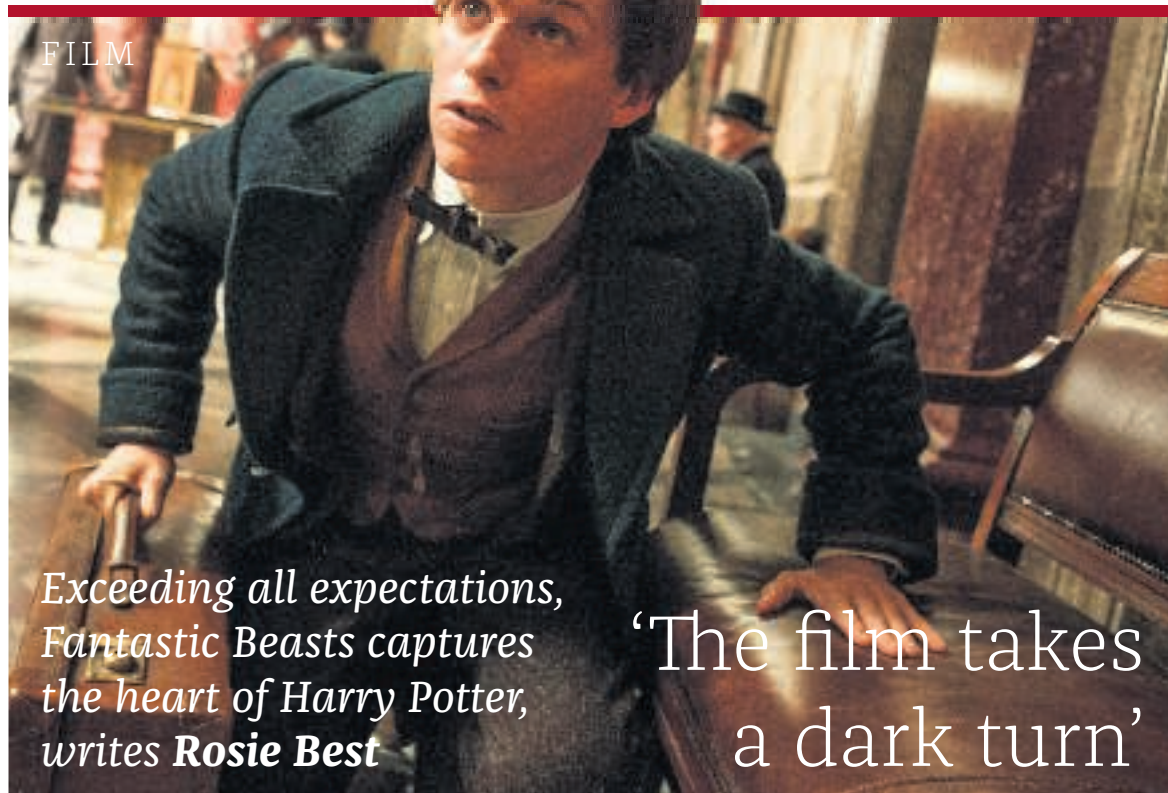


#### It's A Wonderful Life (1946)

Unlucky businessman George Bailey wishes to end his life, but an angel-in-training is sent to show him his good deeds. In this Christmas classic, he is shown a world in which he never existed.

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

## FILM



Exceeding all expectations, *Fantastic Beasts* captures the heart of Harry Potter, writes **Rosie Best**

'The film takes a dark turn'

*Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*  
Dir. David Yates  
Opened 18th November

★★★★★

Set in New York, 1926, *Fantastic Beasts* begins with a flurry of frantic Daily Prophet headlines which submerge the viewer in the context of the film: Gellert Grindelwald, the infamous dark wizard, is at large and suspected of engineering the strange attacks which are destroying New York and prompting some suspicious no-majs (muggles) to begin a 'Second Salem'. Meanwhile, Newt Scamander (Eddie Redmayne) arrives with a broken suitcase full of magical creatures, including a kleptomaniac niffler, a rhinoceros-like erumpent and a half-bird, half-dragon occamy, which produces valuable silver eggs.

“Reminiscent of reading one of Rowling's full-length novels”

The escaped niffler leads to no-maj Jacob (Dan Fogler) mistaking Newt's case for his own during a chaotic incident in one of the city's banks, and the two are apprehended by demoted auror Tina Goldstein (Katherine Waterston). The trio embark on a quest to recapture Newt's beasts, but when one of his creatures is mistakenly accused of causing the death of

a muggle senator, the film takes a dark turn and we see the lengths to which the magical president is willing to go in order to keep her society hidden. I would be doing this film an injustice to say it lived up to my hopes: it exceeded them in virtually every way. *Fantastic Beasts* reminded me of why I was initially captivated by the Harry Potter universe and it was Rowling's screenplay which achieved the same effect again.

Despite having been based on a simplistic spin-off, the film was reminiscent of reading one of Rowling's full-length novels – complete with carefully-structured internal logic and shocking plot twists. While the final reveal of the film (no spoilers!) and the insights into the American wizarding community are, alone, enough to draw in a viewer, one gets the feeling that this is only the beginning of an intri-

▲ **Eddie Redmayne as awkward and passionate Newt Scamander (Warner Bros)**

▼ **Newt isn't afraid of the creatures perceived as dangerous by the wizarding community (Warner Bros)**

cate and complex plot. There are loose ends which will surely be tied up, or perhaps further entangled, in the next four films. Clearly there's a lot more to look forward to.

In terms of casting, Eddie Redmayne was a perfect Newt. His body language and lack of eye contact with other actors suggested an intelligent but awkward character, eccentric and misunderstood in his enthusiasm for the creatures which others view as threatening. Indeed, we are told that Newt was expelled from Hogwarts for endangering a fellow student's life with a magical creature and Redmayne had clearly considered the background of his character in his portrayal of him. Ezra Miller also gave an outstanding performance as the isolated and abused son of 'Second-Salemer' Mary Lou Barebone (Samantha Morton), capturing perfectly the character's desperation for approval and freedom in his interactions with Colin Farrell, who played an auror – Percival Graves.

What is, perhaps, most moving about *Fantastic Beasts* is its theme of power. While the CGI and the Potter references are all impressive and very satisfying for a fan, the issues Rowling touches upon are incredibly contemporary and, in the film, the notion of abused power and the oppression of minorities seems particularly poignant.

While it is dangerous to start comparing this film with the Potter series, *Fantastic Beasts* is certainly a film more than worthy of following it. I look forward to the next four films with great anticipation ●





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

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

To read more of the latest reviews, go to:  
[varsity.co.uk/reviews](http://varsity.co.uk/reviews)



## Recent releases



◀ **Mathilde is thrust into the insular world of the nuns (France 2 Cinema)**

▼ **Bwaya Medhaffer gives a stand out performance as Farah (Kino Lorber)**

### FILM

#### **The Innocents**

Dir. Anne Fontaine  
 Opened 11<sup>th</sup> November  
 ★★★★★

The Innocents is a film of contrasts, contradictions and complexities. The chilling narration, directed by Anne Fontaine as part of a French-Polish creative alliance, is based on true events. The rape of nuns, who hide their advanced pregnancies beneath their robes of chastity, becomes a turbulent and moving catalyst of perplexing irony and paradox.

Daring to risk shame at the discovery of the abbey's secret, one of the Polish nuns seeks the help of French medical student Mathilde Beaulieu (Lou de Laâge). Mathilde, who works for the French Red Cross, is a communist and an atheist. Her life and loves contrast greatly with those of the nuns, but one of the great virtues of the script is the writers' ability to harmoniously intertwine differing perspectives in a way that portrays a gentler, warmer

side of humanity in the face of tragedy.

As we watch Mathilde secretly deliver each child conceived through crime and terror, we witness the nuns' attempt to reconcile their spiritual beliefs with their physical experiences – such as feelings of repulsion at motherly love and sensations of misplaced guilt with their pledge of innocence, as the audience is beckoned into the labyrinth of the human conscience. The world of the innocent victims is turned on its head. The melodious swell of voices singing morning praises is pierced with agonised screams, and the death of children haunts the secluded Polish abbey.

A haunting exposé of faith, humanity and motherhood, *The Innocents* glitters with beauty and pain. Its only weakness, perhaps, lies in its conclusion, where a lack of nuance and layering between extreme pathos and a 'happy ending' makes the finale seem somewhat stilted and abrupt, as the cold, eerie atmosphere melts into sunlight and tea parties in an overly saccharine fashion.

*The Innocents* appeared to be about contradictions and contrast, yet as the film progresses, we realise it is a story about unity, regardless of faith, creed, or circumstance: unity through suffering, human compassion, and love ●

Sara Popa

### FILM

#### **As I Open My Eyes**

Dir. Leyla Bouzid  
 Opened 6<sup>th</sup> October  
 ★★★★★

As *I Open My Eyes* has a real and powerful story to tell. It is the story of young people trying to create art in the face of political, social and parental adversity. The context is pre-revolutionary Tunisia, and the main character is Farah, an 18-year-old musically-gifted student. The film follows a few months of her life, as she struggles to live, love and create in a family trying to protect her and under a political regime where social commentary is not just discouraged, but actively punished.

After some recent political developments, Tunisia has once again taken a turn for the repressive and the fact that the young and dynamic cast, like the characters they play, are struggling against an unfriendly regime gives the film, Leyla Bouzid's first feature-length work, a very realistic touch. Baya Medhaffer, who plays the lead character, deserves a special mention as it is her remarkable acting that saves some scenes which might have otherwise appeared affected and gives the film an authentic and real feel.

The film's soundtrack is worth a few remarks, as music plays a very important role in the experience of watching the film. Even though this might be expected in a film whose plot features music in such an important way, Bouzid deserves praise for the masterful way in which she builds tension among the characters before resolving it through the power of a song. As a result, even though translation inevitably erodes some of the directness of the lyrics, the songs remain moving and



powerful.

Despite the film's excellent music and cast, the script and plot are often lacking. The characters' reactions generally seem a bit exaggerated and arguments between them escalate much quicker (and more often) than would seem natural. After a very promising first half, the second half of the film seems repetitive and lacking substance in comparison. Luckily, this is almost saved at the very end by a few scenes in which raw realism comes through to the viewer in a chilling directness, making the film's ambivalent ending more effective than it would otherwise have been.

As *I Open My Eyes* is a promising debut and makes us expect even more, but mainly from the cast. Many parts feel repetitive and overly dramatic and most audiences will find that the film's auspicious start did not lead on to an equally impressive finish. Despite these imperfections, the film's message remains powerful. With a better script and better direction, it would also have been convincing. Nevertheless, Medhaffer's prizes for her acting are certainly well deserved, and as she sets out in her career in the international scene, we shall be awaiting her next role with eager attention ●

Georgios Topaloglou

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Sports Rugby Varsity Preview

# Alice Middleton

## ‘I reckon there’ll be tries, and I hope they’ll be Light Blue tries’



The breakout star of last year’s Varsity match gives her prediction ahead of next month’s match

Paul Hyland  
Chief Sports Reporter

It is 70 minutes into the first ever Women’s Varsity match at Twickenham Stadium between Cambridge University Rugby Union Football Club’s Women (CURUFCW) and their Oxford rivals.

The Light Blues are ahead 40–0, while their opponents are shattered. Alice Middleton collects the ball 50 metres from the Oxford try line. In the blink of an eye, she has surged past all fifteen Dark Blues and slammed the ball under the posts for an historic hat-trick. Where on earth did that come from?

“I always just go for it,” she says. “It was off the back of a move that I knew we were about to do, so I knew I was going to get the ball in a position where there might be a gap, but obviously I knew there might be a fullback or a forward I’d need to beat still. I knew I’d gain some ground, so I just went for it. Then I scored it and I just thought – cool!”

“I remember in all of our league matches I had scored tries – generally speaking I was in the position near the line – and we’d made the break or the cut that meant we got a try. I thought, ‘Do you know, if we’re going to score any tries, the chances I’ll get a try are quite high! How cool would that be if I scored a try at Twickenham?’”

In the end she scored three. The post-graduate medical student, who will be captaining the Light Blues in two weeks’ time, was responsible for more than half of her team’s points in a 52–0 drubbing of Oxford last December – the greatest ever margin in the fixture. Did CURUFCW really see that coming?

“I felt confident going into it, just because I felt like I really backed all of our players, so it’s still a bit of an unknown. I didn’t really know what was happening at the Other Place. And then once we started, after ten minutes or so I felt more relaxed, because I felt like I could feel that we had it in the bag if we just carried on. But yeah, I didn’t ever know we’d ever win by that much!”

The teams have met since. The first

clash between the sides since last year’s Twickenham bout was a surprise 3–0 win for Oxford on their home turf, a game which Middleton remembers for being disjointed, as well as for a series of decisions which seemed to go against the away side. But this month brought the opportunity to settle the score. “We played them at Grange Road three weeks ago,” she says, “and we beat them 22–0, so we took confidence from that and we’re working from there.”

From Grange Road in November to Twickenham in December. Surely that cannot have worn off? “No!” she insists, “It’s still ridiculous. So it’s two weeks away now, and I was watching the Autumn internationals at the weekend, and I was just thinking it’s so insane. We’re so lucky to be in that position that we can go to Twickenham, and it definitely doesn’t wear off. And I don’t think it ever will, because for however many years you do it, it’s still Twickenham.”

“Last year I was excited because I love playing rugby, but I was still nervous because of the occasion and where we were playing. But as I ran out of the tunnel, I just couldn’t stop smiling. It was just such an amazing experience, and even though I was half-crapping myself, I was also half-beaming. It just felt like, ‘Wow!’”

Last year’s talismanic try-scorer has also become this year’s captain, taking up the mantle from teammate Nikki Weckman, and it is a role she is relishing: “It’s exciting because the squad is in a really good position. We’re a really tight squad – we’re all really good mates and spend so much time together. All put together we know each other pretty well. So it’s nice and I feel honoured to be almost a leader amongst that.”

“People at the hospital will ask if I do any sport, and I’ll tell them I do rugby, and they’ll say ‘Oh, ok, what position do you play?’ Anyway it comes around to the fact that I’m captain and they’re like, ‘Oh, wow, that’s pretty big!’ And I’ll think, ok it’s big but on the other hand it’s just what I do. It feels like it’s what I do, and I love doing it. I feel like I’m doing a decent job, but it’s really difficult



▲ Middleton after last year’s triumphant match (WILL LYON-TUPMAN)

to tell. Nikki did such an amazing job last year, I feel like we’re a slightly different sort of captain, so I don’t think I’d ever try and match her, but I do my own things my way and hopefully it’s still a positive thing. And our vice captain is Jess Charlton, who was fantastic last year. She’s previously been captain as well, and she’s just cracking on the pitch. And we’ve still got Nikki, so it’s just a

“As I ran out of the tunnel, I just couldn’t stop smiling”

really good squad to be part of because we’ve got all these leaders.”

With last year being Middleton’s first appearance in the fixture, it’s fair to say she was a bit of an unknown quantity. Not anymore, however. If Oxford want to come away from Twickenham with a victory, they’ll have to find a way to keep her quiet. Middleton though, is well prepared. She thinks back to that narrow defeat away to the Dark Blues this February, and recalls how she and Anna Wilson, who also scored a hat-trick at Varsity, were marked much more tightly than normal. “But they should have done that anyway!” she says. “You always expect to be tackled, no matter what. I don’t expect them to think, ‘Oh, we don’t know who she is, we’ll let her go past.’ That’s never a thing in rugby. Their fullback was looking for where I might make my run, and they were starting to mark that. But if we execute our moves well, it’s very hard to tackle a well-timed run anyway. And if they leave players to mark me or Jess [Charlton], it’ll suck in players and leave space for the rest of the team.”

I recall meeting the CURUFCW team just weeks before their first Varsity appearance last year, and their optimism that it would help increase the profile of the sport. One year on, that optimism has been rewarded. “People are just more and more aware of women’s teams in various sports,” she explains, “so we’ve found that people are getting more interested in rugby. We’ve had big numbers at all of our development days for freshers to come and try rugby. And I think some of that is because people now will think of it as a sport. People are now thinking, ‘hey, maybe rugby!’ And especially if you’ve got the chance to play at Twickenham on the horizon, if you train hard for the next three years. So it’s definitely helped. It’s really exciting, and hopefully it’ll continue to grow.”

There’s even time for predictions. “I back my vice captain Jess Charlton to have a cracking match. She’s been training so positively and playing really well in all our matches, so I back her to make her mark. Nikki will have a smashing game as well – she’s such a consistent player. I think it’ll be an exciting game again. I reckon there’ll be tries, and I hope they’ll be Light Blue tries.”

### Five-match form guide Cambridge men end Varsity preparations on a high

CURUFCW		CURUFC	
Won	Cambridge 47–0 Shelford RFC	Won	Cambridge 52–26 Steele-Bodger’s XV
Lost	Cambridge 19–24 University of Gloucester	Won	Cambridge 26–17 Durham University
Won	Cambridge 22–0 Oxford	Won	Cambridge 33–21 Coventry
Lost	Cambridge 0–92 University of Exeter	Won	Cambridge 30–19 Crawshay’s Welsh XV
Lost	Cambridge 0–72 Cardiff Metropolitan	Lost	Cambridge 7–61 Northampton Saints

OURFCW		OURFC	
Won	Oxford 21–14 Bristol University	Lost	Oxford 10–39 Worcester
Won	Oxford 15–12 University of Gloucester	Won	Oxford 39–5 Major Stanley’s XV
Won	Oxford 37–0 University of Exeter	Lost	Oxford 14–24 Gloucester
Lost	Oxford 0–22 Cambridge	Lost	Oxford 19–27 British Police
Lost	Oxford 6–82 Cardiff Metropolitan	Won	Croatia 7–45 Oxford



# Dummies A bluffer's guide to Rugby Union

*Rugby can be complicated. Our in-house expert, Ben Cisneros, explains how to blend in with the rest of the Cambridge fans at the Varsity match*

Rugby union is set to take centre-stage in the consciousness of the Oxbridge sporting world, with the all-important Varsity matches at Twickenham just under a fortnight away.

Many of a Light Blue persuasion will be cheering on the Cambridge teams, but there are many technical rules, often geared towards protecting the safety of the players, that even referees tend to forget. Indeed, even the basics, for the untrained eye, can be hard to fathom.

Therefore, *Varsity* has produced a guide for those wanting to cheer on the Light Blues without looking lost.

Each team has 15 players. Their overall aim is to score more points than their opponents, through tries, conversions, penalties and drop-goals, over 80 minutes of play (two 40-minute halves). Each team has two sets of players: the forwards – numbered 1 to 8 (usually the big lads) – and the backs, numbered 9 to 15 (usually the more skillful players).

The main aim of the game is to score tries, worth five points. These are scored by touching the ball down over the other team's try line. Tries can also be converted for an additional two points, by kicking the ball off a tee through the posts from in line with where the try was scored. Teams can also score points from penalties that are awarded following an infringement, whether it be a technical offence (such as collapsing a scrum) or foul play (such as dangerous tackles). Typically, this will involve the specialist kicker kicking the ball off a tee through the posts to score three points. The final way of scoring points is from drop-goals, which are also worth three points. These can be scored at any time during the game.

Perhaps the most important rule in the whole game is that the ball must always be passed backwards. It can be kicked forward, but if the ball is dropped forward, or passed forward, the ball will be given to the other team to put into a scrum.

Scrum is the first of the two set-pieces, and the most difficult to understand. Indeed, while some props may claim to be experts in the field, even they seem fairly clueless, as a lot of penalties are awarded during the scrum for a multitude of vague or complicated offences. In essence, a scrum sees all the forwards pack down against their opposite numbers. The front rows of each team lock together and, once the scrum-half has rolled the ball into the middle, each side pushes. The hooker will try to hook the ball back with their foot quickly. The ball will then reach the feet of the number 8, who can release the ball from the scrum by themselves or via their scrum-half.

When the ball goes into touch, there will be a line-out. The ball can only be kicked into touch 'on the full' (without bouncing) from inside your own 22m line or from a penalty: otherwise the line-out will be from in-line with where the kick was made.

The ball will be thrown into the line-out by the team who has not just kicked it out (except for penalties). The hooker

► Moss and Roy from *The I.T. Crowd* understood the importance of knowing a few stock phrases at matches

(YOUTUBE: THE I.T. CROWD)

will throw the ball in and another player (often a lock) will be lifted into the air to catch and secure the ball for his team. The ball must be thrown in straight.

While the ultimate aim of the game is to score tries, each team also has to defend their own try line. Any player who has the ball in their possession can be tackled. Tackles must be made below the neck and cannot lift the player beyond the line of horizontal.

Dangerous or high tackles will lead to a penalty and, if sufficiently serious, a yellow or even red card. A yellow card in rugby leads to a 10-minute stint in sin bin, while red cards see the player is sent off for the rest of the match.

There is no injury time in rugby – the clock can be stopped by the referee throughout the game – so the match ends as soon as the ball goes out of play after 80 minutes have passed.



## What to say if you don't know what to say

- Whenever a tackle looks a bit dangerous, or if there's a mid-air collision, make sure to shout "Send him off, ref!" As a nice alternative, "off, off, off, off, off, off, off" also goes down well too.

- Whenever the defending team rushes up to make a tackle, shout "offside, ref!" He probably won't listen, but it's worth a shot.

- Whenever an opposition player drops the ball, you might as well make them feel bad with jeers of "wheeeeee!"

- If the ball is a bit slow coming out of a ruck, go for a cheeky call of "holding on, ref!" It might even win your team a penalty.

- Whenever the big lads are pushing, it is absolutely mandatory and compulsory to shout "heeeaaaavveee!"

- Whenever there is a hint of a forward pass, you must make the call by bellowing "forwaarrdd!"

- When the biggest lad on your team gets the ball, urge him on with calls of "beeeaaaaasssttt!"

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## Who's who? Player Positions

There are the forwards ('the Big Lads') and the backs ('the Skilful Ones').

- *Prop* – Plays in the front row of the scrum, where they provide stability and act as a conduit to their team's pushing. They are generally a chunky and strong player who pushes their weight about.

- *Hooker* – The hooker is in the middle of the front row at the scrum, and seek to 'hook' the ball back to their side. They also throw the ball into the line-out and tend to be a similar build to the props.

- *Locks* – Locks are usually very tall players -who have the principal job of catching the ball in the line-out.

- *Flankers* – As their name suggests, flankers find themselves on either side of the scrum. They are typically the most athletic of the forward pack: they will often be seen charging down kicks and trying to win the ball in rucks.

- *No. 8* – Located at the back of the scrum, No. 8s are usually one of the biggest and strongest players on the pitch. They are usually tasked with carrying the ball hard and making dents in defences.

- *Scrum-Half* – Scrum-halves are normally one of the smaller players, who typically act as the link-man between forwards and backs by passing the ball away from the base of scrums, rucks and mauls.

- *Fly-Half* – Fly-halves are invariably the poster-boy of a rugby team. They act as the main distributor and kicker of the ball, dictating play and orchestrating their teams' attacks.

- *Wingers* – Usually the quickest players of a team, wingers tend to hug the touchline and are usually the biggest attacking threat.

- *Inside-Centre* – A key position in midfield in both defence and attack, the inside-centre will usually be delivering and receiving a high number of crunching tackles.

- *Outside-Centre* – The outside-centre is a key attacking man, requiring the speed and power to get on the outside of an opposing defence, but will often play an essential role in defence too.

- *Full-Back* – Acting as a 'sweeper' to field kicks, the full-back is the last man in defence that doubles up as an (often pacey) attacker.

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# Sport

Ben Cisneros

How to watch the Varsity matches when you don't know rugby

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## Clinical fencing squads put their Oxford rivals to the sword

Keir Baker  
Sport Editor

Cambridge University Fencing Club (CUFC) enjoyed a successful BUCS weekend last week, with fine performances across the board from the men's and women's Light Blues setting down promising markers for next term's Varsity matches against Oxford.

CUFC men fenced on home turf, as five teams converged on Cambridge to contest their opening matches of the Premier League South season. And while teams from Bath, UCL, Bristol and Surrey faced off elsewhere, it was to be an intense beginning to the morning for the Light Blues as they kicked off with a grudge match against their Oxford rivals.

Yet CUFC men were to put Oxford to the sword, as they recorded a comprehensive 123-110 overall victory against the Dark Blues. Fresh from a silver medal at the Manchester Junior Open, Ethan Ren blew apart Oxford's middle order with an explosive 17-1 victory, propelling the Light Blues to a narrow sabre win. Meanwhile, drawing on lessons from a recent training session with Olympian Richard Kruse, CUFC men's foil team dominated an Oxford side that – on paper – should have been their match. And these fine performances left the épée team with a target that they exceeded with ease, confirming the Light Blues' confidence-boosting victory that represents a positive sign in the lead-up to the fencing Varsity match on 12th March.

CUFC men continued to maintain their fine performances throughout the subsequent matches. The afternoon saw the Light Blues' strength help them overcome a Bristol team centred on an unusually strong sabre line up, while the next morning, CUFC men summarily dispatched an under-strength Surrey side.

The final match brought together the two undefeated sides, CUFC men and UCL. But again, the Light Blues were to prevail: the foilists set the tone for the encounter early on as recent Welsh Open bronze medallist Alex Schlindwein thrashed the UCL anchor 5-0 to win the weapon 45-15. Meanwhile, in the sabre, Ren was again on top form, scoring 10 crucial hits in the final bout to keep the Light Blues comfortably in the lead. And the weekend was finished off with a beautifully disciplined performance from CUFC men's épéeists against strong opposition: twice, former Yale captain Cornelius Saunders – in his Light Blue



debut – overturned a deficit, before Hugo Smith held his nerve to win the weapon 45-44 and the match 125-104.

It was yet another weekend to savour for CUFC men, who are now undefeated for two years in all competitions. Indeed, speaking exclusively to Varsity, CUFC men's captain Daniel Summerbell was quick to praise his team, saying: "I'm so impressed that we keep getting results against teams with such quality fencers in their ranks. Every member of the team knows, however hard the fight they're in, that if they give it everything, and don't lose their nerve, their teammates will have the chance to win the match in the subsequent bouts. And in the next match, those roles might well be reversed. It's a testament to the way our previous captains have worked hard to instil that discipline, and how the team have upheld that spirit."

Varsity is always a special case. The pressure is intense, and margins are always tighter. But if we can pull together

▲ CUFC extended their unbeaten run in all competitions to two years  
(TOM HARVEY)

► CUFC's foilists made good use of their recent training session with Olympian Richard Kruse  
(DAVID BRADLEY)

the way we have this weekend, I have every confidence in this team. We're at home, and a big crowd in the Guildhall on 12th of March will be a huge help. It's a great event, and I encourage everyone, especially if you've not watched much fencing before, to come down and support the Light Blues."

Looking to mirror the feats of CUFC men, an extraordinarily international CUFC women's team, comprising fencers from 11 countries, travelled to Oxford, alongside teams from Surrey, Imperial, UCL and Cardiff, to get their Premier League South season underway. And there was yet more Light Blue success, as some great fencing saw CUFC women record three impressive wins, sweeping aside Cardiff by 134-87, dominating UCL to win 119-88, before edging past Imperial by 120-111.

CUFC women continued in this rich vein of form as they finished the weekend up against the home side, their perennial Oxford rivals, and grabbed a spec-



tacular 45-39 sabre victory thanks to the efforts of captain Thorbjorg Agustsdottir alongside Esther Tan, Joyce Yeung and Alisha Cramer.

However, the Dark Blues rallied and, despite the best efforts of Marianna Lanza, Esther Delignat-Lavaud, Kirsten Beggs and Gioia Casale, Oxford's strength in foil allowed them to grab a crucial 45-43 victory, which they repeated in the épée shortly after. Indeed, even a sterling attempt from Giovanna Dimitri, Elena Gelzinyte, and Lucy Miller could not deny the home side recording a 45-26 win in the weapon to claim a tight 129-114 overall victory.

CUFC men: Saunders, Lan, Dawson, Pfitzner, Smith, Robinson, Summerbell (c), Harvey, Schlindwein, Ghosh, Juhasz, Ren, Wallace, Ng

CUFC women: Tan, Yeung, Cramer, Lanza, Agustsdottir (c), Delignat-Lavaud, Beggs, Casale, Dimitri, Gelzinyte, Miller