

Brexit



McCarthyism, regrets,
and the Brexodus that
never was

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Ridiculous.

"Greer is now just an
old, white woman
who has forced her-
self into exile. She
no longer stands for
what we do"

*Eve Hodgson takes on
the Second Wave*

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King Krule

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Battle of the Sexes

★★★★☆

MIST: Diazepam

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Reviews 28-31

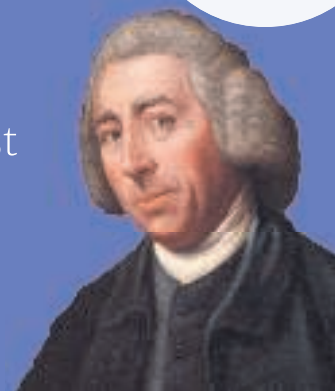
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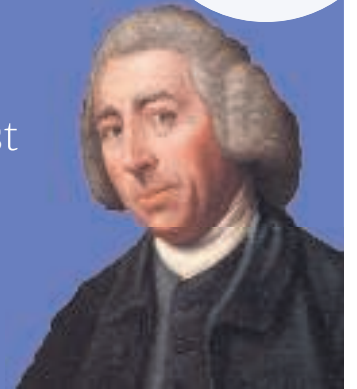
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VARSITY

David Lammy: centralise your admissions

- *MP for Tottenham speaks to Varsity about what reforms Oxbridge should make to widen access*
- *Calls for end to collegiate approach to admissions*

Patrick Wernham Editor
Lydia Day Interviews Editor

David Lammy MP has argued in an interview with *Varsity* that there are a number of concrete reforms Oxbridge should make in order to diversify its student body.

The Labour MP for Tottenham suggested that one of the main problems with the Oxbridge admissions system was the two institutions’ collegiate structure, meaning that there could be significant disparities in how far different colleges are willing to go in order to widen access. The universities should look at moving towards a centralised admissions system to reduce the disparities, argued Lammy.

Lammy also came out in support of a foundational year for students from under-privileged backgrounds, a model that has proved successful at Lady Margaret Hall at Oxford University.

He also said that Oxbridge should follow the lead of Ivy League colleges in America, who take into account a student’s class and local authority rank when making offers.

Lammy finally argued that Oxbridge should be more proactive in approaching talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds, saying that the universities should “actively write to young people in Sunderland, in Rochdale, in Salford, in Tottenham who get straight As and say... we want you to apply.”

The recommendations echo comments in a letter sent from Lammy and signed by 108 MPs on Wednesday to vice-chancellor Stephen Toope and the vice-chancellor of Oxford University, Louise

Richardson, expressing their disappointment that the universities “continue to draw the overwhelming majority of their students from a small minority both in terms of geography and socio-economic background.”

Toope responded to the criticism by saying that while he acknowledged more work needed to be done, “a great deal has already changed in our outreach work”. He said that the University had made “real and sustained progress” in widening access, such as the £5 million it spent last year on access initiatives.

The criticisms come after Lammy released data last week revealing large, and increasing, class and social disparities at Oxford and Cambridge. The findings revealed that between 2010 and 2015, the proportion of Cambridge offers to applicants from the top two social classes rose from 79% to 81%. In the same period, on average a quarter of Cambridge colleges made no offers to black British applicant.

The data also showed that throughout the five year period, Cambridge made more offers to applicants from four of the Home Counties than the whole of the North of England, leading Lammy to label Oxbridge “the last bastions of the old school tie”.

In the interview with *Varsity*, Lammy also responded to criticisms that similar inequalities existed across other British universities, saying that while there were problems at places like Exeter and Bristol, it was right that Oxbridge was the centre of attention as “the two educational institutions in this country that are largely considered to be across the globe second to none”.



Lammy last week spoke out about admissions inequalities

(DAVID LAMMY MP)

Cambridge shows support for Olufemi

Elizabeth Howcroft
Editor

Cambridge has rallied round CUSU women’s officer Lola Olufemi after *The Daily Telegraph* reported on an open letter to the English Faculty with a front-page photo of Olufemi and headline: “Student forces Cambridge to drop white authors”. The University, and numerous groups and individuals within it, have condemned the coverage and expressed support for Olufemi.

The article falsely claimed that “Cambridge University’s English literature professors will be forced to replace white authors with black writers”.

Speaking on *Women’s Hour* on Thursday, Olufemi described her “shock, and general dismay and disbelief” at the media coverage and subsequent personal abuse she received. She discussed the *Telegraph*’s decision to use her photograph, “as if to incite hatred.”

The University condemned the “harassment directed towards our students on social media as a result of the recent coverage” and clarified: “Changes will not lead to any one author being dropped in favour of others – that is not the way the system at works Cambridge.”

Those tweeting in support of Olufemi include CUSU President Daisy Eyre, NUS Women’s Campaign, postcolonial supervisor Dr Priyamvada Gopal, Stephen Fry, and the master of Selwyn, Roger Mosey. FLY issued a statement discussing the media targeting of Olufemi in light of the findings of the Lammy report: “Such media scrutiny will only serve to discourage black students and other students of colour from applying to Cambridge, a place where they already suffer the effects of intensive scrutiny and alienation.”

The Daily Telegraph have since issued a correction, saying: “The proposals were in fact recommendations. Neither they nor the open letter called for the University to replace white authors with black ones and there are no plans to do so.”

EDITORIAL

Making Cambridge's voice heard

Scaremongering is easy. It's easy to distort the efforts of students and create a narrative that falls back on prejudice, fear and xenophobia.

This week, *Varsity* reported on an open letter, co-authored by CUSU women's officer Lola Olufemi, which called for the broadening of the Cambridge English Tripos to include more non-white authors. The letter was discussed by the Teaching Forum, which has no decision-making powers, but simply raises points of discussion to the Faculty.

Yet the front page of Wednesday's *Telegraph* featured a photo of Olufemi, along with the provocative and factually incorrect headline: "Student forces Cambridge to drop white authors". The article falsely claimed that "Cambridge University's English literature professors will be forced to replace white authors with black writers" and included a profile on Olufemi, pinning the entire campaign of decolonising the curriculum on an individual, and even going as far as to quote from an article about charity-tourism she had written for *Varsity* in 2015. Such a personal attack was clearly designed to incite hatred; Olufemi faced much abuse.

Once again, those inside the so-called bubble are left scratching their heads at those outside of it. What hope can we have of effecting real change in the world, when the efforts of Cambridge students are constantly misrepresented and misrepresented?

Although it is no compensation for the onslaught of personal attacks and vitriol, we should feel encouraged by the number of individuals and groups who chose to speak out in support of Olufemi, and the speed with which the University released a statement condemning the harassment she received.

This week also saw the first 'Town Hall' meeting about divestment – the first time the University has gathered information and opinions from its members in this way (pp. 2-3). We can only hope that the voice of the many students who chose to speak on both sides of the debate will be listened to.

Student continue to campaign for positive change. The SolidariTEE campaign is raising money for refugees in Greece and Turkey (p.4). In Comment, Blue Bates Cambridge argues in favour of trigger warnings (p.16), while Eve Hodgson calls for a post-Greer feminism which incorporates trans women (p.19).

When it comes to progress – whether that's in broadening the curriculum, improving access, supporting refugees, or tackling climate change – Cambridge can and should lead the way. Let's show everyone else how it's done.

Cantabs debate divestment at town hall meetings

Members of the University were invited to share their views on the issue with the University Council's divestment working group

Caitlin Smith
Senior News Editor

Members of the University gathered yesterday in a 'town hall' style meeting to discuss the issue of divestment, as part of an information-gathering exercise carried out by the University's divestment working group.

During the ticketed event, which was held at Lady Mitchell Hall on the Sidgwick site, speakers proposed a range of arguments both in opposition to and in support of divestment. 12 speakers, who had submitted speeches to the working group prior to the meeting, were invited to address the audience.

The working group was instigated in May this year, tasked with considering "the different approaches the University might take to issues associated with divestment from fossil fuel industries," and additionally "how those approaches might impact upon the University's mission 'to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence'" The group is due to publish a report next year.

Fossil fuel divestment campaigns call for governments, organisations and individuals to withdraw their assets from oil, coal and gas-related companies. Rather than divesting fully, the University has already committed to 'blacklisting' investments in coal and tar sands companies, which means that it will never invest in these companies again. The University had also retained its investments in oil and gas companies. According to student action group People & Planet, Cambridge invests £377,431,354 in fossil fuels.

Members of the audience at the meeting on Wednesday, which included both undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as teaching and research staff, were welcomed to the meeting by Professor Dame Athene Donald, who chairs the group.

In her opening remarks, Donald said that the meeting marked a "new departure" for the University, which she said had never before used such an approach to gathering opinions from its membership.

Arguments in opposition focused mainly on its potential financial implications for the University. Dr Alex Copley, a lecturer at the Faculty of Earth Sciences, said that, thanks to funding from these companies in which the University is invested, researchers were able to conduct large-scale field investigations into carbon capture initiatives. Government funding, he said, was not available for ventures of this scale. He added that divesting from these companies would "send a clear message that we are not interested in working with them".

Speakers also sought to counter the negative public image of hydrocarbon companies. Copley cited a range of additional research areas in which the companies were involved, including biomedics.

Doubts were also cast about the impact divestment would have in real terms on climate change. According to divestment opponents, after having divested its assets, the University would relinquish its position of influence on the boards of hydrocarbon companies, and would therefore be unable to have a say in shaping the fossil fuel industry

for the future.

Copley added that the decision to divest would be a "placebo", as it would not directly lead to a reduction in the University's carbon emissions. However, pro-divestment speakers, such as PhD student Tobias Müller, who said that such arguments "missed the point" of divestment. Müller argued that the symbolic purpose of divesting was to "bankrupt [fossil fuel companies] morally".

Many speakers stressed the privileged position of the University as an influencer of global discourses. Mia Finamore, environmental officer on Trinity College Students' Union, said that Cambridge University, as an institution which "prides itself on being a world leader," had a responsibility to "lead by example" on the issue.

Several speakers drew on personal experiences of the impact of climate change on their families, recounting the impact of typhoons in Japan and flooding in Bangladesh.

Other speakers included representatives from Cambridge Zero Carbon Society and Cambridge Defend Education, as well as members of Cambridge's BP Institute.

Following the formal submissions, members of the audience were invited to make their own contributions. Dean of Emmanuel College Jeremy Caddick addressed the audience, citing his role as a former member of the University Council and pro-divestment campaigner. Contesting the efficacy of so-called "gradualist" approaches to divestment, he said: "We cannot make a short-lived splash, but we can commit ourselves to the growing list of institutions which have divested. We can commit ourselves



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ABOVE The divestment working group is charied by Dame Athene Donald (NICK SAFELL/ UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE)

RIGHT The banner was put up by Cambridge Zero Carbon Society (CAMBRIDGE ZERO CARBON SOCIETY)

to the future, or we can carry on looking backwards.”

Speaking to *Varsity*, Donald praised what she called the “open spirit” of the meeting. However, she went on to acknowledge that interest in the meeting had been lower than anticipated: “Perhaps I had thought, given the strength of feeling the students who did attend expressed, there would have been a larger audience or more submissions.”

“Indeed, we had asked for the submissions to be sent in advance in case we were overwhelmed.” In the event, the meeting was attended by roughly 15 University members, not including the pre-arranged speakers.

However, in a statement released to *Varsity*, a spokesperson for Cambridge Zero Carbon Society said that the establishment of the working group did not go far enough to acknowledge public support of divestment: “If the opinion of the University community had been taken honestly from the beginning, the Council would have set up a Divestment Working Group to set out a plan for divestment; not extend a well-concluded public debate for another year in the face of the climate crisis emergency.” The group also criticised the “scarce” amount of advertising for the meetings.

The statement also claimed that, prior to the town hall meeting, members of the group had hung a ‘Divest Cambridge’ banner from the Modern Languages Faculty building, only for it to be quickly “torn down” by Sidgwick site staff.

The next and final town hall meeting will be held on 9th November. Tickets can be booked until 2nd November at 5pm. Written submissions for speeches must also be sent in before this time.

“We can commit ourselves to the future, or we can carry on looking backwards”



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INVESTIGATION

First Class: How Cambridge rewards its high achievers

Following the delayed publication of the class lists from the last academic year, *Varsity* investigates the perks of getting the top marks. Sarah Burgess, Nick Chevis, and Lucia Keijer-Palau discover the wide range of bonuses offered to those who get Firsts, from cash prizes to fancy dinners, which cost colleges millions

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SCIENCE

Stephen Hawking’s PhD made available

To commemorate the university’s Open Access Week, Stephen Hawking’s doctoral thesis *The Properties of Expanding Universes* has been made available online. Joseph Krol takes a more detailed look at the issues surrounding access in academic research, and what transparency means for those researching today

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COMMENT

Bringing Oxbridge to the provinces

As new statistics reveal huge regional disparities in Oxbridge admissions, Owen McArdle argues that Oxford and Cambridge need to break free of London-centric attitudes and reach out to the UK’s ‘provinces’

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FILM & TV

VR film previews at Cambridge Film Festival

Alexander Taylor explores the possibilities of the Oculus Rift technology with *Wonderful You*, a new VR film which previewed this week at the Cambridge Film Festival

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FASHION

Adidas’ ‘Superstar’ campaign

Following Adidas’s body-positive advertising campaign, Vivienne Hopley-Jones finds herself “shocked but not surprised” that female body hair is still a source of controversy

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News

T-shirt campaign raises money for refugees

Sophie Shennan
Senior News Correspondent

A Cambridge student has launched a T-shirt campaign aiming to show solidarity with refugees for the second year running, this time selling shirts at universities across the UK.

The SolidariTee campaign encourages students to buy custom made T-shirts, to be worn on a specific day in Michaelmas term. Founder Tiara Ataii explained the movement as “a silent show of solidarity that is achieved by thousands of students across the country wearing one shirt on one day.” £10 from the sale of each T-shirt sale goes to Advocates Abroad, a NGO which provides free legal aid and representation to refugees in Greece and Turkey.

The campaign was officially relaunched at the Refugee Crisis Panel on Saturday evening, hosted by the Cambridge Union Society at a Union + event.

Today marks the launch of the photo campaign attached to the SolidariTee movement, which encourages students to have their photo taken wearing the T-shirts, and share the image on social media in order to raise the profile of the campaign. Caroline Lucas, co-leader of

the Green Party of England and Wales, has already taken part.

As part of an extended programme of events this year, They have also partnered up with Clare Chapel and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants for their exhibition ‘I am a Refugee’. The exhibition will be opened in Clare Chapel on 19th November by Lord Dubs. Lord Dubs gave his name to an amendment of the 2016 Immigration Act which allowed unaccompanied refugee children safe access to the access, before being abandoned by the Home Office earlier this year.

The campaign has grown this year to include participants from universities across the UK, such as Edinburgh, Oxford, Imperial, UCL, Bristol, Liverpool, Leeds, Durham, Exeter and Manchester.

Ataii told *Varsity* that she had established the campaign for two reasons: “The first is in terms of where the money goes. While many NGOs on the field deal with the symptom, I believe that Advocates Abroad deals with the cause. Legal aid is ultimately the only way that a refugee is going to be able to start their new life. This is evidenced by the fact that Advocates Abroad has an 100% success rate for July and August 2017: all the refugees they worked with were granted

international protection and have been able to move out of the camp and onto the mainland.”

She added that “the dramatic decrease in media coverage of the refugee crisis” had also lead her to establish the campaign. “Often people are surprised when I tell them that there are even still refugees on the islands,” she said. “But now, with so many NGOs pulling out, the situation is worse than ever.”

Ataii also cited her own experiences working as an interpreter for Advocates Abroad earlier this year, during which she was exposed to “without a doubt the most misery I’ve ever seen.”

Ataii witnessed a refugee attempt to commit suicide while working on Chios, Greece. “It quickly developed into a situation where I was holding the police off and trying to convince him to come down from the tree. Eventually I managed to, but I don’t like to think what would have happened otherwise. Later it transpired that he had been on the island for eleven months without even having an asylum interview. Two weeks after Advocates Abroad took on his case, his travel restriction was lifted and he was transferred to Athens. When I last saw him, he was showing the new arrivals around the camp. He was a different person.”

“Feminism in this university is racist, it is all about white people”



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Emmanuelites pick up the pieces after laundry outage

Louis Ashworth
Editor-at-Large

Emmanuel students have been adjusting to life after laundry, following the temporary closure of an in-college service which washed and dried clothes for the College's members.

Last Monday, Emma's housekeeping service told students that due to "staff problems which hopefully will be resolved next week when we have a new member of staff", the laundry would close for a day to "catch up a bit".

Nearly two weeks later, students claim the service is still behind schedule, and self-service machines are few in number, Emma is alone in offering to do its students laundry. Its website boasts that Emmanuel "has a free laundry service for students that will wash and dry one 5.5kg bag of clothes each week without charge".

Two Emmanuel finalists spoke about how they have tried to cope with the laundry service issues.

One said on Thursday he had been wearing the same pants for three days, and "no socks today". He said that "a pile

of laundry the size of Kilimanjaro" currently stands next to three already full baskets of dirty clothes in the laundry room, but insisted that the laundry staff are "doing their best".

"It is difficult because there are only two self-service laundry machines," the student said. "Access to these machines is rationed, and there are only a handful of slots each day, allocated to students via a physical sign-up sheet in the Plodge. This has obvious access issues."

"One of the reasons that I applied to Emmanuel was because of the laundry service," another told *Varsity*. "Said laundry service has also enabled my incompetence as a grown woman as I do not know how to do laundry."

"Initially I got around this by wearing slightly dirty clothes (doused in deodorant) and buying new knickers from Topshop. This got a bit expensive so for the last week or so I have been alternating between no knickers and trying to wash them in the sink."

As financial and time pressures take a toll, the finalist said: "This does not feel like a sustainable way to live so I am very close to learning how to clean my own clothes and venturing to a laundrette."



▲ Emmanuel is the only college to offer its students free laundry (SIMON LOCK)

Panel highlights access issues after Lammy report

Owen Robinson
News Correspondent

Jesus College's inaugural Intellectual Forum, chaired by the former MP for Cambridge Julian Huppert, saw top academics and political figures debate the question, 'Does Education Improve Social Mobility?'

Held on Thursday 26th October, the debate came after MP David Lammy's recent criticism of Cambridge and Oxford as "fiefdoms of entrenched privilege" for their underrepresentation of BME students in particular.

The panel consisted of David Laws, former MP and Schools Minister under Michael Gove from 2012-2015; Rachel Snape, Head Teacher at the Spinney School in Cambridge; Ant Bagshaw, deputy director at education think-tank Wonkhe; and Anna Vignoles, Professor of Education and Fellow at Jesus College.

The four speakers concluded that more must be done to make education accessible to greater spread of students, with Ant Bagshaw summarising the panel's overall sentiments in his opening remarks: "the politics of social mobility

is a knotty area".

David Laws commented that despite modern Britain being, in his opinion, a meritocracy, "the chances of acquiring this merit are as hard as ever". He reflected on the inability of many students to reach the top universities as a result of their schooling, in light of a recent report by the Education Policy Institute, of which he is the director. The paper argued that there is little evidence to suggest that Theresa May's proposal to expand grammar schools would improve social mobility.

While the panel generally agreed that more could be done within the education system to aid social mobility, Anna Vignoles also suggested that "family input" and one's learning environment are "absolutely critical in determining one's future education trajectory".

Rachel Snape argued, "cultural capital is the stuff that makes the difference"; "young people need to see whole picture of what Cambridge can offer them".

Ultimately, the panel could come to no unanimous decision, failing to accept or wholly reject Lammy's assertion that Oxbridge represents the "last bastions of the old school tie".

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New statistics show complexity of access efforts

Elizabeth Huang
Senior News Correspondent

Admissions data from 2010-2015 released by Labour MP David Lammy, showing that the proportion of offers made to applicants from the top two social classes rose from 79% to 81%, has stimulated widespread debate over Oxbridge admissions processes and the effectiveness of current outreach programmes. Since publishing his initial findings, Lammy has also written to the vice-chancellors of both the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge in a letter signed by more than 108 MPs, calling for reform of the “highly subjective” admissions process. There were three headline statistics from Lammy’s findings:

- The proportion of Cambridge offers to applicants from the top two social classes (based on NSSEC classifications – covering managerial and professional occupations) rose from 79% in 2010 to 81% in 2015.
- Cambridge made more offers to applicants from four of the home counties than the whole of the North of England.
- During the period 2010-2015, on average a quarter of Cambridge colleges made no offers to black British applicants.

In their letter, MPs criticised the “troubling picture” painted by the statistics, suggesting that college-led admissions processes have created a “patchwork situation, with some colleges working hard to widen access and others lagging far behind”. The statistics released by Lammy reveal notable admissions discrepancies between colleges. Trinity College gave the most offers (49%) to students from independent schools between 2010-2015, with only 30% of offers going to students from state comprehensives. At the opposite end of the scale, King’s made 47% of its offers to students from comps.

Trinity College Student Union (TCSU) Access Officer Seb Millar said, “Trinity may have a more acute problem with access than Cambridge as a whole.” He said that while Trinity had extensive access programmes in place, it was difficult to achieve broad coverage and convey the message to the state-school population. TCSU President, Toby Henley-Smith added, “I would not want anyone to be put off applying to Trinity for fear of ‘entrenched privilege’ and I worry that Mr Lammy’s comments may do more harm than good.”

MPs have called upon the universities to make greater efforts to find the most talented students and “set out exactly what steps you will be taking to

81%

Oxbridge offers made to students from the top two social classes

38%

Cambridge students who were privately educated

4

State educated students from Sunderland who received Oxbridge offers in 2011

address the situation”. In an article for *The Guardian*, Lammy accused colleges of permitting admissions processes which are “dependent on highly subjective interviews and the whims of academics recruiting in their own image”. Speaking to *Varsity* in this week’s issue, he proposed solutions such as introducing a centralised admissions system, lower grade requirements for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and greater individual engagement with students from non-traditional backgrounds who have achieved the required grades.

Writing in response to the letter, new Vice-Chancellor Stephen Toope said: “We recognise that more hard work is required, but a great deal has already changed in our outreach work.” He drew attention to the fact that the University’s latest admissions statistics show the highest proportion of state-educated students in 35 years and said that there had also been a “significant increase” in the proportion of UK students from the “hardest to reach communities”.

The statistics which have made the headlines conceal a multitude of complex factors which influence the demographic makeup of students who go on to gain Oxbridge offers. One way of conceptualising this is in terms of the ‘admissions funnel’: as students progress, a wide range of factors influence their likelihood of being accepted into Oxbridge.

Socio-economic background

The most dramatic statistic presented by Lammy is that four-fifths of offers were made to students from the top two NSSEC social classes. Around 31% of the UK population are currently categorised as part of these two ‘managerial and professional’ classes.

What this misses: these statistics do not take into account recent social mobility. Lammy labelled many Oxbridge colleges “fiefdoms of entrenched privilege” and “last bastions of the old school tie”, failing to take into account the possibility that the parents of some of these top social class students may themselves be first generation university graduates. In a tweet, Lammy claimed “Research (inc by Cambridge) shows that disadvantaged students outperform more privileged peers if they are given the chance and a place”, adding that “So a straight A student from a council estate will outperform (according to the data) a straight A student who had private tutoring etc.”.

School type

Another focal point of the debate has centred around discrepancies between state school and independent school acceptance rates. While around 16% of sixth form pupils in the UK attend independent schools, approximately 38% of Cambridge students are privately educated.



What this misses: within state schools, there are significant differences between the proportion of students accepted from comprehensives, and those accepted from grammars. In the 2016-17 admissions cycle, students from grammar schools had a success rate of 32.8%, comparable to that of students from independent schools (34.4%). In comparison, students from comprehensives had a success rate of only 21.2%. Furthermore, we also lack correlated data about the socio-economic backgrounds of successful students from state schools.

Prior attainment

When approached by *Varsity*, a University spokesperson said: “The greatest barrier to participation at selective universities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds is low attainment at school.” Lower attainment by students from disadvantaged backgrounds narrows the pool of candidates with a realistic chance of being offered a place at Cambridge. Statistics from UCAS suggest that in 2016, only 395 black students achieved 16 UCAS points at A-level (representing both A*AA and A*A*B), grades which match the typical Cambridge grade offer for humanities. Analysis by *Varsity* shows that black applicants are half as likely to be accepted.

What this misses: sustained focus on the application process glosses over earlier con-

ditions which may remove students from the pool of potential candidates.

Application rates

A key issue is that students from under-represented backgrounds are not making as many applications to Cambridge. Lammy noted that in 2011, 103 state-educated students in Sunderland got three A grades or better at A-levels, yet only four received Oxbridge offers.

What this misses: we do not know how many of these 103 students actually made applications to Oxbridge. Typically, students from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to make applications in the first place.

Finally, the admissions process itself: admissions form only one part of a long-term, multi-stage process. Analysis only of offer rates masks the wider context in which applications are made.

While debate continues to rage over if and how Oxbridge admissions processes should be reformed, consideration of other statistics and the wider educational landscape can shed additional light on Oxbridge admissions. In an interview with *Varsity*, the vice-chancellor said that changes to the admissions process would “be matched with very detailed processes to make sure that the people could succeed when here”.





Trinity (above) gave 49% of offers to independent school students between 2010-2015, while King's (left) made 47% of offers to students from comps
(BOTH LOUIS ASHWORTH)



Breaking news,
around the
clock
varsity.co.uk



Phoebe Gargaro
Deputy News Editor

Recent admissions data shows that the University of Cambridge is closing the gender gap on acceptances of males and females onto their chosen courses. In 2015 and 2016, female applicants from the maintained sector – comprehensives, grammar schools, sixth form, further education, and tertiary colleges – bucked the trend and beat their male counterparts on results day. In 2016, 50.1% of successful state school applicants were female; in 2015, this figure was even higher at 51%, with 800 making the cut in comparison to 766 males from the same educational background.

2015 is a notable year for another reason – more state-educated females than males were given offers: 994 females and 970 males. This is particularly interesting when viewing certain trends, which show that women from comprehensives are generally more reticent than men at the application stage. While, in 2016, 1,864 males from comprehensives submitted applications, just 1,389 comprehensive-educated females did the same. This has not generally been the case across the maintained sector; women applying to Cambridge from tertiary and further education colleges seem more willing to take up the challenge, and in 2011, the amount of female applicants from these institutions outnumbered the males.

However, holistically speaking, women from all sectors are less likely to apply to Cambridge than men. Since 2011, hundreds more men than women have chosen to apply to the University (the latest figures from 2016 state that Cambridge received applications from 3,674 males and 2,899 females) and have, with the exception of 2015, generally received more offers across the board than their female counterparts. The most successful groups of males are those from independent schools – who beat females at the application, offer-holder, and acceptance stage – along with those who are educated overseas, regardless of educational background.

Although there have been cases of an increase in female success in individual sectors, there are currently still more men than women in the undergraduate student body at Cambridge. Women were not allowed to attend the institution until 1869, and the last all-male college to go co-education, Magdalene, did so only in 1988. The ratio of male to

female undergraduates in 2016-17 was 53:47. This is the closest Cambridge has ever come to closing its gender gap.

If current trends trend were to continue – an assumed increase by 1% on the female side of the ratio, and 1% drop on the male side every two years, as admissions data demonstrates – Cambridge could potentially have an undergraduate body composed of 50% men and 50% women by 2020. In order for this to happen, the University would have to continue its encouragement of females from the maintained sector, but could also focus on supporting more women from the independent and overseas sectors, as it is here that the narrowed-down figures most clearly show an impact on the overall ratio.

How does Cambridge stack up when compared to other universities and their female acceptance rate? At Durham University, more males than females applied for 2017 entry – 559 males as opposed to 499 females, yet a higher percentage of females overall were accepted at the final stage: 54.7% of those who met their offers on 2017's results day were women. This was similarly the case in 2016, where 55.4% of those successful were female. The University of Bristol, according to data published in 2016/17, had a cohort in which female undergraduates outnumbered male undergraduates – with 13,043 females compared to 10,984 males. However, Bristol's subject-based data reveals another discrepancy: women dominate in arts subjects, social sciences, healthcare and law, but males have the higher percentage in STEM subjects, such as science, and particularly engineering, which is studied by almost one in four male students, but only 5.14% of women. Data from the University of Oxford for 2013 entry shows a similar higher acceptance rate of women among state-educated applicants. Of the 1,463 students accepted by Oxford from the state sector in that year, 746 were female. However, only 498 female students from the independent sector were accepted out of a cohort of 1,114.

Across the board, females seem generally more reticent to apply to the top universities, including Cambridge. The success of female students in the state sector despite this reticence demonstrates that the access schemes, which the University and its student organisations are so rightly proud of, seem to be working. However, if Cambridge truly wants to narrow the gender gap, they will have to target and encourage women from all backgrounds.

BIRD-GLARY

Fake Downing bird takes flight, never to return

One of Downing College's new decoy birds has gone missing! As *Varsity* reported last week, Downing College introduced decoy birds around the college to prevent crows from tearing up its lawns. Crows had flocked to the college to feed on an infestation of insecticide-resistant grubs. According to an email sent from Downing's head porter to the college's students, it is thought that the decoy may have blown away as a result of last weekend's high winds. Unfortunately, it remains AWOL.

PhDREAM JOB

Applications are open for a PhD in play

The Faculty of Education has opened up applications for a PhD studentship "in the topic of the development of play and playfulness in early life" for the first time. The program will be supervised by Professor Paul Ramchandani, who was appointed as the head of the Centre for Research on Play in Education, Development and Learning (PEDAL) in May and will move to Cambridge from Imperial College London in January. PEDAL is funded by a grant from the LEGO Foundation. According to the job description, "the studentship would be suitable for a candidate with a psychology degree or equivalent".

TURING TESTED

Codebreaker's school reports are on show at a new exhibition

A new exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum features one of Alan Turing's school reports, which includes a warning that he would need to improve his work if he wished to get into Cambridge. Turing, who was an undergraduate at King's College from 1931 to 1934, was warned that Cambridge "will want sound knowledge rather than vague ideas". Besides the school report, the Fitzwilliam exhibition, which opened on Tuesday, includes letters from Turing to his mother, a rare 1944 Enigma M4 machine, and other artefacts.

IT'S LIT

Diwali comes to Cambridge Botanic Gardens

The glasshouses at Cambridge Botanic Gardens were lit up on Wednesday in celebration of Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights. The light show was held as part of the 'India Unboxed' programme. The programme comprises a series of events and exhibitions taking place over 2017 as part of the UK/India Year of Culture, which marks 70 years since India's independence. The event on Wednesday also included live Indian music from DJ Talvin Singh and various arts and crafts workshops. It drew an audience of hundreds.

News

David Lammy MP



“How are Ivy League universities more representative than Oxford and Cambridge?”

Lydia Day speaks to the Labour MP about his research on Oxbridge admissions, and why it's fair for the two universities to face such criticism

David Lammy MP has returned to the issue of Oxford and Cambridge admissions for the third time in his political career.

It comes at a time when Lammy has just finished leading a review into disproportionality in the criminal justice system and leading the government's response to the Grenfell Tower incident. Despite now being a backbench MP, Lammy has been able to continue his work spotlighting issues which he cares deeply about.

Lammy emphasises: “when I make contributions in our public life that what I say is driven by the evidence, by the data”. Yet this issue is perhaps also a blurring of the personal and the political. Lammy, who is MP for Tottenham, grew up on the Broadwater Farm Estate there. He won a choral scholarship to the King's School in Peterborough and obtained degrees from SOAS and Harvard. You can't help but notice the difference between Lammy and the establishment figures of Labour who emerged at the same time as him. In an interview with *The Guardian* in 2015 Lammy said: “I wasn't dropping leaflets from the age of four. I experienced the need for the Labour Party, but I wasn't born into the Labour Party.”

The key reforms that Lammy proposes are: centralised admissions, foundation year programmes, Oxbridge to directly contact talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and to give weight to an applicant's class and local authority when making offers.

A criticism of Lammy's proposed reforms is that they are a plaster over a larger wound of inequality in our country. They cannot fix the devastation of Thatcherism in the North, or that children on free school meals are four times more likely to be excluded from school, or the government's cuts to maintenance grants for the poorest students.

These criticisms do not sway Lammy: “I've talked about underachievement in

▼ The collegiate system is a major barrier to fair admissions
(LOUIS ASHWORTH)



our schools for 20 years. I've talked about inequality, I'm one of the members of parliament who is most known for talking about inequality.” It is in this context that Lammy is presenting his findings: “We as politicians are allowed to talk about one issue but obviously these are all occurring at the same time.”

Lammy argues it's untrue to suggest that, because of the divisions in our society, Oxbridge cannot be reformed. Lammy points to the United States “which has got bigger inequalities than our country, which has not got a welfare state so their poverty is so much deeper than our own, which has a racial history of slavery – how is it that the Ivy League universities are more representative than Oxford and Cambridge? How is it that Harvard have said that next year 50% of their intake will be non-white?”

The second branch of criticism Lammy faced came from a different end of the political spectrum. Writers such as Toby Young in *The Spectator* declared that it wasn't the fault of Oxford or Cambridge, the onus was on the individuals to apply. Lammy sounds exasperated that the media are repeating these criticisms: “I've heard these arguments, I heard them seven years ago, I heard them when I was Higher Education Minister, but they're not convincing or powerful arguments.”

For Lammy, incentivising people to apply is helped by his proposed reforms: “Actively write to young people in Sunderland, in Rochdale, in Salford, in Tottenham who get straight As and say, ‘we want you to apply.’” Admissions offices should be chasing up these students: “I

don't hear those conversations happening. I know that they're not happening and I'm very concerned they're not happening.”

Figures from The Sutton Trust have revealed that universities including Bath, Bristol and Exeter accept a lower percentage of students who received free school meals than Oxbridge. Lammy accepts this criticism: “It is definitely the case that the issues are broader than just Oxbridge.” However, for Lammy it is important to recognise that “we are talking about the two educational institutions in this country that are largely considered, across the globe, to be second to none.” The problems of access are much broader than Oxbridge, but given their prominence it is only right that they receive an increased scrutiny.

A thought that appears to have been worrying Lammy is that that he has been pigeonholed; that his efforts to spotlight access have made him a one-trick-pony. “It's important to emphasise that the work I did last weekend was not solely about race, yet again there's an attempt to put me in a box and say I can only talk about race. Many commentators said I called the institutions racist but I did not. I talked about race, about class, about geography and I said that I feel there is a systematic bias.”

There is a kind of useful anger in Lammy's voice at these moments. The outrage of a man who is keen to get things done and cannot understand why others won't. Lammy has to be tough to keep going: “You know I'm a member of parliament who is slated every day of the week with racist abuse on Twitter and I

▲ Lammy served as Minister for Higher Education
(POLICY EXCHANGE)

have to have broad shoulders.” Yet he repeatedly reminds me that he's just “one member of parliament among 650”.

The emphasis on his own limitations as “just one backbench MP” feels like a hangover from his time as a junior minister in government. Consistently tipped to be a future Labour Prime Minister, one disastrous performance at the dispatch box in 2004 and a failed bid to become the mayoral candidate for London seemed to dispel that optimism. Lammy appears to be trying to avoid the fate of so many advocates for change, particularly those from minority groups; promise change you cannot deliver and expect to have your mistakes magnified and mauled apart by the press.

However, the support from Lammy's colleagues seems to have left him less isolated: “It's been a cross-party response. It feels bigger than last time round.” Yet when I ask him whether he's optimistic for change, Lammy backtracks to the work that needs to be done still. There is a sense that Lammy has been here before, close to a change that hasn't come.

The amount of work it will take to reform Oxbridge is a price worth paying for Lammy: “There will be a broader spectrum of people sitting round our cabinet table, a broader spectrum of people being CEOs of our companies, people who are able to lead our inquiries into issues such as Grenfell.” For Lammy, the concern rests with the shape of our institutions – who has a seat at the table: “That is why this is an issue that I will certainly not be leaving alone.”

CUSU and GU close in on securing college block grant

Louis Ashworth
Editor-at-Large

CUSU and the Graduate Union (GU) are closer than ever to successfully changing their college funding streams, after central committees approved a new proposal which would replace per-student fees from affiliated combination rooms with consistent block grants from colleges.

CUSU President Daisy Eyre introduced the new proposal at CUSU Council on Monday. It is broadly similar to another proposal which passed last year, but with a significant cosmetic difference: CUSU and the GU have now said that the money from colleges will go directly to fund staffing the Students' Unions' Advice Service (SUAS), the centralised welfare and support office run by the two students' unions.

The current proposal, which Council approved on Monday, has already passed both the Business Sub-Committee of the Bursars' Committee and the Senior Tutors' Committee in its SUAS-linked form. Eyre said that "a straightforward levy is not popular among the colleges", but that they had been more open-minded once the levy was linked to welfare funding.

At present, combination rooms which are affiliated to CUSU and the GU pay

a set yearly fee per student. The issue is complicated by the patchy state of affiliations: presently, ten MCRs are disaffiliated from either CUSU or the GU, and two JCRs – Corpus Christi JCR and Gonville & Caius Student Union (GCSU) – are disaffiliated from CUSU. Some MCRs are affiliated to only one of the two unions.

Stabilised income would aid CUSU's ability to plan ahead financially, but the potentially increased future income would only go a short way towards addressing the student union's present financial difficulties, which include it running a predicted deficit of £75,000 this year.

Under the existing system, disaffiliation has typically carried both a political and financial weight, as disaffiliated colleges lose their right to vote at Council and access to some training services, but do not have to pay the per-student fee.

The catch is that the individual students from disaffiliated colleges remain full members, with the perks that membership brings. Despite not paying, they can receive free welfare supplies, vote in CUSU elections and access support services.

At the same time, disaffiliated combination rooms have extra money to spend, due to saving on fees. This has led to members of some affiliated JCRs and



▲ Corpus Christi JCR and Gonville & Caius Student Union (GCSU) – are the only JCRs disaffiliated from CUSU (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

MCRs alleging 'freeloading'. At a debate last November, when Selwyn students were preparing to vote on continued affiliation, Caius's then-president said, "We can function without being affiliated because everyone else is affiliated."

If passed, the changes will mean that all colleges pay CUSU a set annual 'levy', proportionate to the size of their student body, which CUSU will then funnel to SUAS. Significantly, it will mean those colleges where the JCR or MCR is disaffiliated will begin to contribute again.

Eyre said the changes would help support CUSU's "unstable funding model", which she said is presently too threatened by the potential of college disaffiliation.

If introduced for 2018-19, the levy would be set so that the total paid by colleges would match projected income under the current system.

In practice, it would mean a large college like Caius, where both the JCR and MCR are disaffiliated from CUSU, would pay over £4,000 a year more to the larger student union.

A final decision on approving the proposal will lie with the Levy Committee, a sub-group of the Bursars' Committee, a decision-making body comprised of college bursars which is operated by the Office of Intercollegiate Services.

If the levy system is introduced, the

possibility remains that bursars at colleges where there is some level of disaffiliation may cut funding to their own JCRs to make up the shortfall. Without the financial bonus of disaffiliation, and politically isolated, those combination rooms may then decide disaffiliation is no longer such a good deal.

The bursars of Corpus and Caius did not reply to requests to comment on whether they had consulted with their JCR presidents.

Following a question from *Varsity* at Monday's council, Eyre said she would attempt to meet with the presidents of Corpus JCR and GCSU to discuss the potential changes. Speaking to *Varsity*, Corpus JCR President Jack Hodgkinson called the proposed funding model "admirable".

"There has always been an air of uncertainty surrounding exactly which CUSU services Corpus students are entitled to. The proposal would essentially put that to bed: we'd be entitled to anything offered by the Students' Unions' Advice Service. This is a step in the right direction for transparency, and would help to clarify the relationship between Corpus and CUSU, which is unique and complex."

Caius student president Nathalie Holloway declined to comment, in line with GCSU's long-standing 'no press' policy.

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Investigation

Differences in monetary awards and benefits granted for students' examination performance



(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

- Significant discrepancies exist in the awards given by different colleges and for different subjects
- JCRs dispute necessity of this expenditure

Nick Chevis and Lucia Keijer-Palau
Investigations Editors

Wide discrepancies exist between the benefits that Cambridge colleges offer to students achieving highly in their exams. While some students receive over £500 from their college if they achieve a First, others receive nothing.

Varsity found that the awards made available to Cambridge students in return for high academic achievements were greatly dependent upon the College. Among the most generous is St John's College, which offers between £400 and £600 to their students that achieve a first. Murray Edwards awards scholarships of £400, with Trinity Hall and King's offering £350.

On the other hand, at Hughes Hall no awards are given for exam attainment. Other colleges offer less than £100 to their academic high-fliers.

College policies on these monetary awards can be complex. They can be awarded as book tokens, cheques or a reduction from college bill. Christ's College offers a £100 reduction from the Lent term accommodation bill whereas at Gonville & Caius, if you get a First in your second or third year, you'll receive £100 in book tokens as well as £170 off the following year's college bill. At many colleges, including Homerton, King's and

Peterhouse, a prize is awarded directly to the student who is free to spend it however they choose.

There are also discrepancies between amounts awarded for specific subject prizes. We found at Magdalene that the prizes for Engineering can be worth as much as twice those for HSPS or Natural Sciences. A student who is successful academically across their degree can earn up to £1500 in subject prizes and college awards. At Selwyn, students who get a First for both of their languages in part 1A of MML are awarded more than those who get a First, but only in one of their languages.

As well as monetary rewards, students who achieve highly may receive preferential treatment in room ballots, be invited to attend scholars' dinners and to read grace at formal. At many colleges, students achieving a First are admitted as scholars of the college. The St John's College website states that "being a Scholar means being part of the Foundation of almost 500 years of excellence and tradition".

At King's, high-achieving students attend an Admission of Scholars ceremony in the chapel followed by a Scholars' dinner hosted by the Provost in the Provost's Lodge. It is Gonville & Caius's policy that only the students who achieve firsts are permitted to read grace at formal hall.

As a previous Varsity Investigation re-

vealed, accommodation perks are often offered to first-class students, although this practice has recently been removed at several colleges. For those colleges that still offer a scholars' ballot, general practice is that the students who achieve a First will be bumped up in their position on a random ballot.

Peterhouse offers free vacation residence, in addition to a cash prize and scholars' dinner.

At Corpus Christi, 16 rooms are reserved as 'prize rooms' for those students who achieve the best results in their exams. The JCR President told Varsity: "All in all, I think our system is pretty fair ... There are 278 rooms on offer by College, and the 16 prize rooms are chosen from many different parts of College, meaning that there are more than enough rooms of all shapes and sizes to go around for everybody else."

Some of the colleges do offer awards to students who achieve highly, but perhaps not achieving a First. This is often called an exhibition rather than a scholarship and the monetary award is smaller. At Selwyn, a student who narrowly misses a First can be nominated by their Director of Studies for a £30 award. Churchill also offers those who achieve a 2:i, but fall in the top 25% of their cohort, a cash prize of half the value offered to those who achieve a First.

Sidney Sussex employs a slightly different system. Those with results in the top 25% of the cohort are awarded £300, and students who rank between 26% and 35% receive £100.

Colleges' annual spending on these benefits for scholars can push up into the millions. In 2016, Trinity spent £4.5 million on scholarships and awards, of which £2.8 million was funded through the College's general funds.

In contrast, Downing spent £501,000 on scholarships and awards in 2016. It is important to note that included within scholarships and awards are payments under the Cambridge Bursary scheme, which amounted to £253,120 in 2016.

The JCR President at Magdalene commented that, "It seems odd to me that a college which claims it has little money can inject so much into high achieving students, yet is so bureaucratic when offering financial aid to those who need it."

At Medwards, the JCR commented: "We like the fact that students are rewarded for achieving highly in their subject. However, we also feel that getting a First is not the only representative of hard work, and we'd like to see a rewards system that reflected this."

Additional reporting by Sarah Burgess

£4.5
million

Amount of
money spent by
Trinity College
on scholarships
and awards in
2016

£501
thousand

Amount of
money spent by
Downing College
on scholarships
and awards in
2016



Sarah Burgess
News
Correspondent

Analysis: Can the cost of academic prizes be justified?

It seems most students in Cambridge accept that financial awards may incentivise high academic attainment, but it could equally be argued that benefits given to scholars are excessive. The question this begs is whether or not grants to high achievers can be justified.

For many, this is a no, since scholarships and bursaries often come out of the same fund, and it may be the case that the money granted to scholars takes away essential subsidies for students experiencing hardship. These sums are not insignificant – at Trinity it runs into the millions. However, for many colleges scholarship funds do not impinge on bursary spending, and the awards distributed appear more moderate, with some offering no reward at all.

That said, in some respects, the system of scholar privileges can have another function; primarily as a method of exclusion and punishment. We see this especially in

colleges such as Peterhouse, where attendance at an annual benefactors' dinner is open to everyone except those who receive lower than a 2:i, or in colleges where accommodation ballots reflect performance. A common theme throughout this investigation has been the apparent arbitrariness between college policies regarding high achievement, which may have a lot to do with college wealth disparities.

Numerous JCR presidents expressed concerns that their college's policy is not representative of hard-work, since it doesn't take into account the conditions under which students received their grades, or the varying thresholds at which firsts can be obtained across subjects. Ultimately, the question remains: will the University ever be willing to dispense with its obsession with academic perfection, and commit to a policy which works in the interests of all students?



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Brexit While EU applications rebound, uncertainty remains for those already here

EU applications to Oxbridge up on 2016

Daniel Gayne
Associate Editor

The number of non-UK EU citizens applying for places at Oxford and Cambridge has rebounded, according to statistics released today by UCAS.

The figures, which also include applications to study medicine, veterinary medicine, and dentistry, show an increase of 7% on last year for non-UK EU applicants, reversing a 9% fall in last year's statistics.

The 2016 cycle showed a particularly harsh decline for Cambridge, which saw a 14% fall in non-UK EU applications. Nicola Dandridge, chief executive of Universities UK, suggested at the time that "uncertainty" over fees and financial support may have contributed to the decline.

Since then, the University has clarified that EU students applying in 2017 would not be subject to the overseas fee at any point during the course of their study. The government has also issued more detailed information on the residency rights of non-UK EU citizens living in the EU after Brexit.

Robert Halfon, chair of the Commons education committee, said that the rise in application demonstrated that universities' "gloomy" predictions did not reflect the reality.

Last year, Cambridge made a submission to the committee, drawn up by pro-vice-chancellors Chris Abell, Eilís Ferran and Graham Virgo, which said that the University was "currently modelling a two-third reduction in admissions from the non-UK EU".

Dr Christopher Bickerton, fellow of Queens' College and POLIS lecturer, said that "it was always absurd to predict some sort of post-EU referendum armageddon were the No vote to win.

"The demand for places at Oxbridge is always so high. Combined with a weak pound and perhaps a desire to get in before fees for EU nationals go up post-Brexit (if indeed they do) then the jump isn't surprising."

However, Bickerton, who was a strong advocate of the No vote, also noted that "we need to be very wary of jumping to any conclusions". Pointing out that "if there is a Brexit effect, it is most likely to be seen in lower or middle tier institutions", Bickerton said that the important figures would come in February, when applications for the rest of the country are published.

The rise in EU applications matches rises across the board, with a record 61,440 applications to study at the country's two leading universities or take top degree courses in 2018, as well as a surge of 12% among international students.

The University of Cambridge was approached for comment.



▲ EU students worry for their future in the UK
(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

'I think it would have scared me.' Cambridge's EU students reflect on life after Brexit.

Daniel Gayne
Associate Editor

The release of this year's UCAS application statistics will no doubt be a moment of relief for many at the University who have maintained a near hysterical fear over Brexit. But with distinctly mixed messaging from the government on the rights of EU citizens after Brexit – a leaked Home Office document from September indicated a much harsher approach than the default acceptance of applications promised by Amber Rudd earlier this month – the picture of what Brexit will look like for the University and its students is far from settled.

For EU students at Cambridge caught up in this mess, this can be a deeply disorientating experience. Leo Paillard is a French third year at King's College, studying HSPS. He also chairs CUSU's International Students campaign, which is currently working on a broad survey of how current EU Cambridge students feel. "It's important to get to know what students think about it", says Leo.

Undoubtedly, iCUSU's survey will reveal in full detail that EU students are no monolithic entity. But in talking to a number of EU students, a consensus seems to exist around certain points. The first is how attractive British higher education is, or at least has been. Romanian national Simina Dragoș, a second year Education and German student at Emmanuel College, emphasised "the image the UK has abroad as being a very academically successful country", along with "the advantage of the fact that I could get a student loan", unlike in the United States.

Joanna Banasik, a Polish finalist studying HSPS at Emmanuel was similarly attracted to the UK. Joanna did her A-Levels in the UK after being awarded a

scholarship. After applying to a number of universities in England and the United States, and gaining an offer from Columbia University, she accepted a place at Cambridge. Joanna lists the UK's access to Europe, as well as more affordable fees, as reasons for staying in the UK: "One of the reasons I didn't go to America was that I ended up thinking that if I finished university here I could go back to Europe."

With the UK approaching its exit from the European Union, the terms of which remain unclear, some of these attractive qualities appear in danger. It seems likely that future applicants will have to apply for visas, and may have to pay the overseas tuition rate, which currently ranges from £19,197 to £50,130.

Naturally, students already in the UK will be unaffected by this, and have had their situation clarified somewhat by recent statements from the Home Office on the status of EU citizens residing in the UK at the time of Brexit.

Indeed, for the most part, the students I talked to did not seem too concerned about their status. "I never feel like I'm in danger of being expelled out of the country," Simina told me, "because I'm a student at Cambridge". Much greater concern was raised for working class Europeans, particularly Eastern Europeans, who could be used as scapegoats. "I've actually found it difficult being Polish. We get a very bad rap", says Joanna, who blames British xenophobia on the nation's class based society. "If you have a class society you have to find an under-class", she argues.

Yet despite these assurances of the government, and the relative safe space that is Cambridge life, the students I spoke to still feel that the transition makes the country a less attractive place to seek employment after graduation.

Citing purely material factors, Leo

Rights of EU citizens

- People who have been continuously living here for five years will be able to apply to stay indefinitely by getting 'settled status', with rights to government services.
- People who arrived before the cut-off date but have not been in the UK for five years at the cut off will be able to apply to stay until they have reached the five year threshold and can also apply for settled status. Most current students will likely fall into this category.
- People who arrived before the cut-off date but have not been in the UK for five years at the cut off will be able to apply to stay until they have reached the five year threshold and can also apply for settled status.
- Cut off date will be no earlier than 29 March 2017 or later than the date the UK leaves the EU.

suggested that Brexit would lead to a decline in prosperity which would make the UK less attractive for students. For Joanna, however, the disruption was more specific. "I was maybe thinking of doing a law conversion and working as a lawyer, but that is so constricted to the country where you do your law conversion", she says, "I'm probably not going to do a law conversion unless I know that I can stay here and work here."

Many of the students noted that the mobility of continental Europeans made it very easy to find employment elsewhere in Europe. Simina, who went to nursery in Hungary and lived in Germany for a year when she was 16 said, "I think I've become more aware of being a cosmopolitan citizen."

And while today's figures give hope to Europhiles throughout the UK academy, the European students I talked to were hesitant when I asked them what they would do if applying today. "No I don't think so, I think it would have scared me," said Simina, "I think I would have gone somewhere else, Germany or the Netherlands."

Joanna is less sure. She says "it depends on the day, you go right and you don't know what would have happened if you'd gone left".

Many stories have been told about Brexit, by people with many different intentions. One of the most prominent stories in the debate is the one admonishing low-skilled immigrants for 'taking our jobs'. The EU students I spoke to may be right that the burden of post-Brexit immigration controls will fall on these less powerful groups, but one feels that the more we alienate these marginalised groups, the quicker high-skilled intelligent labour will take flight of its own accord. *Additional Reporting by Todd Gillespie*



“
I think
I've be-
come more
aware of
being a cos-
mopolitan
citizen
”

Academics condemn 'McCarthy-style campaign' on Brexit teaching



Rachel Loughran
Senior News Correspondent

Cambridge University academics have responded to Conservative Party whip and MP Chris Heaton-Harris for what one Cambridge fellow deemed as a 'McCarthy-style campaign.'

The MP for Daventry faced criticism earlier this week for writing to vice-chancellors of several universities, asking for the names of academics "involved with

the teaching of European affairs, with particular reference to Brexit." Downing Street have distanced themselves from Heaton-Harris's actions, saying that he was not acting "as a representative of the government".

The letter comes after Universities Minister Jo Johnson announced new measures to protect 'free speech' at universities earlier this month, including a consultation aiming to "ensure students are exposed to a wide range of issues and ideas in a safe environment without fear

▲ Clockwise from left: Dr. Chris Bickerton, Dr. Julie Smith, Professor Catherine Barnard, and Dr. Victoria Bateman (POLIS, OXFORD GERMAN FORUM, VARITY, VICTORIA BATEMAN)

of censorship, rebuke or reprisal".

Several Cambridge academics expressed their opposition to the MP's letter. Speaking to *Varsity*, Economics lecturer Dr Victoria Bateman criticised Heaton-Harris's "McCarthy-style campaign," which she said was an attempt at "rooting out those who disagree with his pro-Brexit stance."

Dr Chris Bickerton, a lecturer in modern European politics who spoke in support of Brexit, took a more moderate stance, saying that the comparison of Heaton-Harris's actions to McCarthyism amounted to "a hysterical counter-reaction". However, he was clear to point out that, if asked, he "would not comply" with Heaton-Harris's demands.

According to a YouGov survey commissioned by the University and College Union in January, less than 20% of academics voted in favour of Brexit. Speaking specifically of Cambridge, Bickerton said: "I have never felt that academic freedom was undermined even though the vast majority of its academics voted Remain." He said that the "problems faced in implementing Brexit" were unrelated to university teaching, adding that "blaming university lecturers is pretty pathetic and desperate."

His sentiments were echoed by Dr. Lorand Bartels, who teaches international, World Trade Organisation and EU

“*Academic freedom should not be curbed by political interference*”

law at the University, and said that "In principle, I think there is no difficulty in publicising our research. It's paid for by the public, after all. But the clear intent of this request was sinister, and rightly rejected by the government. Above all, freedom of speech, and of research, is a core value that must be protected."

Dr. Julie Smith, director of the European Centre in POLIS, emphasised academic independence. Commenting on Heaton-Harris's "deeply troubling" actions, she said: "Academic freedom should not be curbed by political interference. The corollary is that whatever our personal views on an issue might be, academics know that our job is to impart information and to encourage critical thinking, analysis, and debate. In a free country, this should all go without saying."

Catherine Barnard, professor of EU Law at the University, expressed her opposition to the letter. In May, a study conducted by Barnard and her colleague Dr Amy Ludlow found a "striking degree of consensus" in public opposition to a 'hard Brexit'.

She told *Varsity* that, if the letter was simply a "request information of EU teaching," it was "unnecessary". However, she continued, "the fact that the letter has been sent to all vice-chancellors suggests a less benign intent."

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Science



All the (blue) light we cannot see

● **Sofia Weiss** in conversation with **Beverley Glover**, professor of Plant Sciences and director of Cambridge University Botanic Garden

Sofia Weiss

Flowers at first, may seem like little more than one of life's simple pleasures; however, new research from Cambridge's own Department of Plant Sciences reveals that there is more to them than meets the eye – the human eye, at least. Professor Beverley Glover's latest paper, published this month in the journal *Nature*, details how some common varieties of flower have evolved to display a 'blue halo' of shimmering light that lies largely beyond the range of human vision, but proves immensely attractive to bees.

Essentially hidden in plain view, the effect is created by spaghetti-like ridges a few millionths of a centimetre in diameter that appear on various blooms including a peony, a tulip and a kind of hibiscus. In fact, it was stumbling across this latter plant – the *Hibiscus trionum*, known to gardeners as 'the flower-of-the-hour' – in the University's Botanic Gardens that spurred on Professor Glover's study into structural colour in the first place. About ten years ago, she recounts, one of her post-doc students (Heather Whitney) returned to the lab clutching a hibiscus; she had noticed that despite the petals initially appearing white and red, when the flower was twisted shades of blue and green came into view. Additionally, under certain angles the flower appeared to have a peculiar iridescent sheen on top of the more readily-visible red pigment. "What

we wanted to know," Professor Glover says, "was whether this was a weird one-off, or whether other flowers might play the same trick with light". Having looked at their flower under the electron microscope, they knew that the cells underneath the surface of the petal – the cuticle – would have to be approximately flat to produce a colour-effect like the one observed; that is, one dependent on the angle. So, they went back into the living collection of the Botanic Gardens, to find more samples of flowers known to have flat surface cells for comparison. What they found would prove to be potentially one of the greatest examples of convergent evolution in botany of our time: at least 11 families of flowers had not only the same iridescent blue halos, but also the same microscopic ridges capable of generating different colours depending on the angle from which the flower was observed (an effect known as diffraction grating).

This is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, true blue flowers are exceedingly rare, and not for lack of effort. "The chemistry is simply very difficult," Professor Glover states, adding that "you will never get a naturally blue rose, for example," because tweaking the pigments to make them bluer necessi-



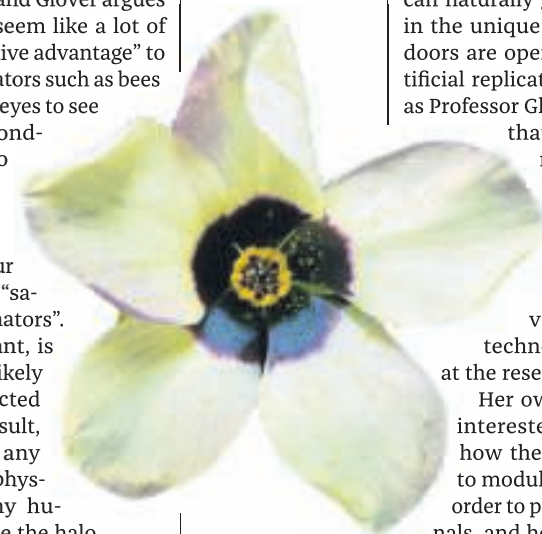
“The chemistry is very difficult. You will never get a naturally blue rose, for example”

◀ Base of the *H. trionum* petal, showing iridescence overlying the red pigment (GLOVER LAB)

tates special chemical tricks like adding alcohol groups, or making the pH more alkaline, and most of the time these simply require too much energy, or enzymes that aren't naturally present in the flower. The majority of flowers instead get their colours from pigments called anthocyanins, which typically look pink or red; when you try to tweak these, the results are essentially purple. But a handful of flowers, like cornflowers and Himalayan blue poppies, have managed to achieve "true blue" and Glover argues that, whilst it might seem like a lot of effort, there is a "selective advantage" to this. Ubiquitous pollinators such as bees have pigments in their eyes to see wavelengths corresponding from ultraviolet to green. Blue lies right in the middle of these. So, it makes "functional sense" that this colour would be selected as a "salient marker for pollinators". The benefit to the plant, is that it is hence more likely to have its pollen collected and reproduce as a result, the ultimate goal of any biological being. The physics also explains why humans cannot easily see the halo described: our vision is right-shifted towards slightly higher wavelengths of light, and so will miss out on the scattered blue most of the time.

Secondly – and incredibly – the microscopic ridges responsible for diffracting the light in the manner observed all exhibit the same degree of disorder, even though they have evolved independently. The maths of the microscopic structure for all the plants studied lies within 'the Goldilocks zone', a range which, as Glover explains, is where the ridges are "disordered, but not too disordered". The variation may be in the heights, widths or spacing of the peaks and troughs, but

▲ Bee pollinating a hibiscus flower (MARTIN FALBISONER)
▼ *Hibiscus trionum* flower (GLOVER LAB)



so long as the overall pattern contains the same degree of chaos, the blue signal produced is consistent. "It's a different way of making blue," Professor Glover says, "one that focuses on structure, and the scattering patterns that this will generate."

The implications of this photonic signature are likely to be far-reaching. For the physicists with which the team worked, biomimicry is the name of the game. In understanding how flowers can naturally generate the colour blue in the unique fashion discovered, the doors are opened for scientists for artificial replication. The benefits of this, as Professor Glover describes, would be

that "unlike chemical pigments, structural colour doesn't fade". She amusingly cites the example of bleached Camcards, which could be replaced with iridescent versions if this natural technology can be harnessed at the research bench.

Her own lab, however, is more interested in the mechanics of how the relevant plants are able to modulate their cuticle ridges in order to produce specific colour signals, and hence hypnotise their pollinators. The next steps for her research, she highlights, are in the developmental biology of the system, and pinning down the genes involved.

The "blue halo" is a hugely exciting finding for the department. Professor Glover stresses, however, that it would not have been possible without the Botanic Gardens: "It's a fantastic resource not only for research, but also for teaching and learning."

Most importantly, she reminds me, it's free for students – "so you should be going lots!" Given the potential for discovery and delight alike, perhaps we should all follow her suggestion.

The importance of being accessed: Hawking's PhD made available

● With Stephen Hawking making his thesis public, **Joseph Krol** looks at the importance of access to scientific research

"We have been demoted to a medium-sized planet going round a medium-sized star somewhere near the edge of a fairly average galaxy. We are now so humble that we would not claim to occupy any special position."

So wrote Stephen Hawking in the introduction to his PhD thesis, over fifty years ago. The first major work of the world-famous Cantabrigian physicist, *Properties of Expanding Universes*, has this week been made publicly available by the University. It is a snapshot of the brilliant young scientist as he grappled with the most basic questions of human existence: where do we come from? Where are we going? And is humankind in any sense 'special'?

The University's decision comes as a part of its annual Open Access Week, which also includes a series of lectures on increasing the "openness and reproducibility" of scientific research. Furthermore, this comes after a recent policy change which ensures that PhD students, from this month onwards, will be required to submit their theses online to aid future preservation. Indeed, the University Library has agreed to digitise the dissertations of any alumni who wish to make their work open access. Given the major copyright issues currently surrounding the release of academic research, these developments will no doubt be welcomed.

One imagines, however, that few theses today are as gloriously ambitious as Hawking's was. In scarcely more than a

hundred loosely-typeset pages, Hawking pretty much demolished the then-mainstream Hoyle-Narlikar theory of gravity, which predicted a 'steady-state' universe that could exist indefinitely. He then went on to derive the expected properties of gravitational waves (which were, broadly speaking, recently confirmed in the results of the LIGO experiment), and he finished off by showing that under fairly general conditions, singularities in spacetime necessarily had to exist.

The upshot of this is that at the age of 24, he had proved that the universe almost certainly had a beginning, and that, in time, it

would have to come to an end. It was as philosophically epoch-making as it was scientifically visionary. All this becomes yet more impressive considering he was already suffering from the debilitating ALS disorder that would eventually leave him wheelchair-bound (his handwritten candidate declaration on the

thesis is little more than a scrawl). It is not just a work of profound scientific accomplishment, but a monument to the possibilities of human tenacity.

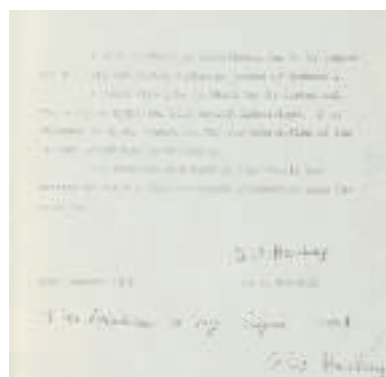
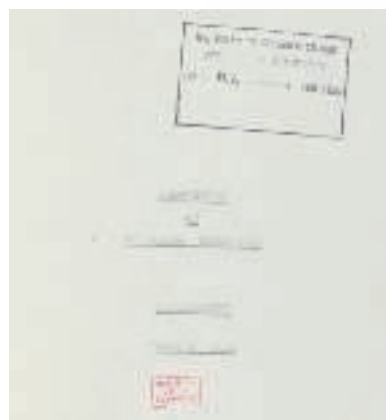
Hawking improved upon the conjectures of Hoyle, as indubitably

future thinkers will improve upon the ideas of Hawking. Yet this is all contingent on these advances being open, on papers being free from paywalls. Indeed, modern scientific progress is built on transparency. It is essential that we can critique obsolescent theories, that we can try to reproduce experiments, that we can take inspiration from those that have gone before us, if we are to continue our intellectual development as a species.

The University's recent move to increase the availability of past research extends beyond this single work, as Hawking has acknowledged: "Anyone, anywhere in the world should have free, unhindered access to not just my research, but to the research of every great and enquiring mind across the spectrum of human understanding." In a world where political narratives seem to be increasingly questioning the

importance of collaboration, these words ring especially true. As Hawking has said, in our scientific endeavours "each generation stands on the shoulders of those who have gone before them". These efforts to make data public are a key first step in letting scientific progress reach its potential, allowing future generations to effectively deal with the technological issues of our rapidly evolving society.

Hawking is pessimistic about the future of mankind; he has expressed scepticism that humanity can survive even another century, as the threats of nuclear weapons, climate change and biowarfare loom ever larger. Yet there is still much to admire about the human race; our capacity for discovery and co-operation, as shown, if in some small way, by these new commitments to openness, is one of our noblest traits. If there is a way humankind can strive towards a special position in the universe, it is, no doubt, through science.



▲The title page and acknowledgements of Hawking's PhD
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Comment

Trigger warnings are everywhere, so why not here?

Trigger warnings are not the tool to stifle academic discussion the media makes them out to be



Blue Bates
Cambridge is in her
first year studying
Linguistics at
Newnham

Blue Bates
Cambridge

In the wake of the shocking #MeToo social media campaign, it's difficult to fathom how anyone could still maintain a state of ignorance towards the victims of traumatic experiences like sexual harassment and abuse, many of whom have remained silent until now. It has attempted to expose the magnitude of the problem, with women and men from all backgrounds using the hashtag as a rallying cry in the wake of the Harvey Weinstein scandal. It has shown that everyone, from Björk to nice Becky from the office, has a personal history which cannot be assumed or taken for granted.

And yet the latest scandal rocking the sensationalist boat over at *The Sun* is the content warnings issued on a 'Notes on Lectures' document circulated by Cambridge's English faculty. Outrage has been expressed by various news outlets, branding the action an affront to free speech and yet another nail in the coffin for pedagogical institutions. Even academics in and around the Cambridge sphere, such as Mary Beard and Stephen Fry, have expressed disapproval, with Fry remarking in 2016 that students should "just grow up" and "get rid of it".

The current discourse around trigger warnings seems to overlook the fact that those requesting such warnings are not doing so because they need coddling; these are people who are clearly aware that "life does not come with trigger

“Those requesting such warnings are not doing so because they need coddling”



▲ Content warnings are ubiquitous (WESTPORT WIKI)

warnings", as their appeal for inclusivity stems from past experiences with trauma. They are forced to cope every day with the lifelong ramifications of traumatic experiences, and yet many in the media seem eager to frame students as "hyper-sensitive" children, desperate to be shielded from the outside world.

Women under 30 are still experiencing staggering levels of sexual harassment and abuse, normalised at universities through 'sharking' and 'lad culture'. Male suicide rates are shocking. One in five children are exposed to domestic violence. But a university department making adequate provisions for students potentially affected by these prevalent societal issues? That's the hill which many choose to die on.

The greatest fear, then, may be that trigger warnings will impede academic freedom, as lecturers will feel unable to present controversial topics to their students, and eventually the liberal echo-chamber will engulf the last of conservatism in Cambridge, reducing students to *Guardian*-reading Green-voting vegans. They seem to forget that many of those proffering these views were young people in the Seventies, and likely had their very own 'green' parties.

This terrifying dystopia, depicted by right wing news outlets, frames trigger warnings as a tool to stifle academic discussion and curtail the freedoms of pedagogues everywhere. This is nothing but a straw man, propped up by false logic and sensationalism and attacked by the media so that they don't have to confront their blatant bias and mock indignation which panders to middle-aged

conservatives who likely look back fondly on colonialism with their friends at the country club. Their arguments against trigger warnings could be equated with the provision of ingredient lists on food items: shouldn't we axe these patronising lists and let students just tough it out against their peanut allergy? Anaphylaxis is good for teaching resilience.

Ridiculous? Maybe. But the analogy helps to give a different view on trigger warnings; just as a list of ingredients on the back of a chocolate bar will tell a student whether the Yorkie they're about to chow down will send them to A&E, so too do trigger warnings help students recognise which environments might be harmful to their emotional and mental wellbeing. This doesn't, as Mary Beard suggests, give all students a blanket excuse to shy away from "awkward and difficult" topics, but rather it gives affected students a chance to utilise coping mechanisms which they would have acquired through years of dealing with unpredictable triggers.

The Cambridge English faculty is not singlehandedly destroying free speech. Their decision to put a trigger warning, informing students of the sexual and physical violence at the forefront of *Titus Andronicus* and *The Comedy of Errors*, will not usher in a new age of academic Newspeak, like the media seems to think it will. And it's frankly unpalatable to see so many respected figures in academic and cultural fields putting forward condescending and detrimental messages to students, framing their experiences with trauma as a character flaw of the youth.

The #MeToo campaign highlights the changes we must make

Anna Cardoso reflects on the media movement and draws a worrying conclusion about the treatment of sexual assault at US universities

Until my final year of school, I had seriously considered returning to America for university. However, two things made me change my mind. Firstly, the SAT was a slog that I was unwilling to put myself through. Secondly, I watched a documentary called *The Hunting Ground*. In stark and exhaustive detail, the documentary exposed the way universities in America have worked against sexual assault victims to protect their institutional integrity by silencing them and fostering a culture in which the perpetrators of these crimes could act with impunity. This frightened me; it contributed to my decision to apply to Cambridge instead.

Then I got to Cambridge and I quickly became cynical. I have more than one friend who has survived the

very things that drove me away from those American schools. I have been a victim of sexual harassment myself, as have countless others. Last week, with thousands and thousands of women posting online about their experiences using the #MeToo hashtag, forcefully demonstrated the extent of the problem.

At Cambridge I quickly discovered that the University policy was positively archaic. Accusations were dealt with within college and you were left at the mercy of your tutor – they decided what should be done. That is why I have been so encouraged by the new Breaking the Silence platform. I've navigated it myself: it is simple and clear, showing you all the options available to you should you wish to take action.

Sadly, it looks as though America is moving in the opposite direction.

Anna Cardoso
is a columnist
and second year
History student at
Trinity



In September, Betsy DeVos, Trump's billionaire, privately-educated Secretary of Education announced that she would overhaul Obama-era efforts to more seriously tackle sexual assault on campus.

For some context, the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network released a report estimating that among undergraduate students, 23.1% of females and 5.4% of males experience rape or sexual assault, while only 7% of victims of sexual violence reported their assault to a school official. The testimony of survivors who did come forward can be even more harrowing than the statistics. Universities in the United States are profit making machines; they have no incentive to damage their reputations, risk lower enrolment and withdrawal of alumni support by admitting that they have a serious sexual assault problem. Yet #MeToo shows that they do. Without

“Without being forced to take action, they simply won't”

being forced to take action, they simply won't.

This is why I feel so lucky to go to a university that is actively trying to improve its policies and help its students. My own experience with sexual harassment is that it is a totally isolating experience. You blame yourself. The hashtag #MeToo was so helpful for me precisely because I didn't feel so alone – and that is why policy change on campus is more important than ever before. If the government won't force universities to tackle these problems, students can at least shame them by exposing how widespread they are.

When it looks like your government and the university that you worked so hard to get into are against you, one of the few tools we have is being able to shock society into accepting that we have a problem.

Cliff-edge politics: why talk of a no-deal Brexit is so dangerous

The government's brinksmanship with the Brexit process is bound to cause chaos



Tom Nixon is our Brexit columnist and studies at St. Catharine's

Tom Nixon

Recent statements by some Conservative MPs suggest that sections of the party are totally willing to leave the EU with no Brexit deal at all. Crashing out of the EU with no deal would be a disaster for Britain in almost every conceivable way, and this dangerous talk is a reflection of the impetuous, gung-ho attitude that has always characterised the Brexit movement.

In a recent letter to the Prime Minister, four ex-cabinet ministers, including Owen Paterson, John Redwood, Lord Lawson and Peter Lilley, all called upon the Prime Minister to make preparations for leaving the EU without any deal. They have argued that we should default to WTO (World Trade Organisation) tariffs, saying that this would "crystallise the economic opportunities" of Brexit and give "absolute certainty" to businesses.

In many ways they are right. Leaving with no deal would indeed "crystallise the economic opportunities" of Brexit: it would fully demonstrate the void left by tariff-free access to our largest and closest market. It would also give "absolute certainty" to businesses. They can expect higher tariffs and more red tape rather than less, as was illogically claimed by Brexiteers. Defaulting to WTO rules would mean significant hikes in tariffs

"This childish impatience shows a lack of foresight and a disregard for the dramatic impact of the no-deal cliff edge"



▲ The no-deal Brexiteer, Liam Fox (CHATHAM HOUSE)

for almost all trade with the EU. This would be a massive hit to the economy, especially as the WTO deals solely with tariffs on goods and not agreements on services companies. There would be no provision for the services industry to function in the EU. This is especially bad for Britain, a country whose service sector is almost 80% of its GDP.

This demand to leave without a deal seems partly due to frustration with the Brexit process itself. It is as if Brexiteers are only just discovering how complex a task they have embarked on. The childish impatience with a process that they argued for shows a lack of foresight and a disregard for the potential dramatic impact of the no-deal cliff edge. These MPs are in the contradictory position of arguing both that the EU wants a deal because without one their economies would be damaged, but also that the UK could leave without one and be unaffected. Worryingly, it is not just groups of backbench MPs but current senior ministers who are suggesting leaving with no deal is a genuine option.

In response to Emmanuel Macron's claim that the UK government was bluffing by talking about a no-deal exit, Liam Fox, the international trade secretary, insisted that it was an option under real consideration. He said that he would prefer to reach a deal with the EU but that he was not scared of leaving without one. Philip Hammond, the Chancellor, has even been pushed to set aside more money to prepare for a no deal, but has

resisted these attempts publicly. The cabinet is paralytically split on this issue.

This push to the cliff edge comes at a time when business and industry leaders are deeply concerned by lack of progress towards a transition agreement. Britain's five biggest business lobby groups have warned that with continued uncertainty the UK risks jobs and investment. The director-general of the Confederation of British Industry, Carolyn Fairbairn, told the BBC, "This is real, this is urgent and a transition agreement by the end of the year would help enormously to keep investment and jobs in the country." Businesses not only need a transition period, but they also need certainty on that deal as soon as possible. The claim that a no-deal Brexit would be an acceptable choice clearly goes against the interests of UK businesses, a group that the Tories have always claimed to represent.

The government should prioritise ensuring that the Brexit negotiation's cogs keep turning and that a transition period is secured. The claim from government ministers that the UK could, and perhaps even should, leave the EU with no deal is dangerous. It is either an attempted bluff to persuade the EU that we could walk out at any time, or simple pandering to the frustrated Brexiteers who hold so much sway in the Tory party since the loss of the majority. Either way, this kind of talk is at best destabilising and at worst potentially disastrous. The idea that we could leave the EU without a deal is a perilous thought indeed.

Illustration by Ciaran Walsh



Comment

Oxbridge's geographical skew is a problem, but hardly surprising

Owen McArdle responds to recently released admissions reports, asking whether students can be blamed for desiring the London lifestyle post-graduation, and whether there is more Oxbridge could be doing to increase their 'provincial' presence



Oxbridge Colleges: finishing schools for the south-eastern elite? (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

One of the few good things to have so far resulted from the Brexit vote is a newfound understanding that there are profound geographical and cultural differences within Britain. Some differences are national – England seems to now be realising that the UK consists of four distinct nations – but there are also significant differences within each country. In this context, the recently-released Oxbridge admissions statistics, while disheartening, are hardly surprising.

But to what extent does this disparity have its roots in Oxbridge itself? Does the blame lie primarily in college admissions offices, or is it a symptom of the growing problem of London-centrism in Britain? We should maybe look at the maps and ask ourselves where Oxbridge graduates go after their degrees to live and work. Is that distribution also skewed towards London and south-east England? Almost certainly. After all, that is where the jobs are.

Post-industrial Rochdale and rural Gwynedd, though the experiences of locals are different, have certain things in common: low pay, limited local economies, a lack of graduate jobs. Can Oxbridge really claim to be as relevant in these communities as it is in south-east England? It is surely less clear, especially to someone at school-leaving age, what benefits an Oxbridge education can provide in these kind of economies.

One needs only to look at some of our Cambridge parlance – 'coming up' and 'going down' – to see how London-

centrism sits at the heart of our university. Often it feels as if most students leave London to have a few brief years' education 'in the provinces', before they return to the capital to begin their working life. It is foolish to believe that this perception does not extend beyond the university community.

One thing that 'provincial' Britain is not, however, is insecure in its identity. The lack of applications from some communities is not just a product of naïveté and lack of ambition, but of perceived Oxbridge arrogance. Here it seems that 'provincial' is bad, and this attitude is understood outside Oxbridge, meaning many of the highest-achieving pupils opt not to apply.

When Stephen Kinnock joined the clamour and criticised Welsh underrepresentation at Oxbridge, I scrolled through Twitter to see the reaction. Much of it was along the lines that Wales' brightest students should apply to Welsh universities rather than Oxbridge. The opinion that Welsh students should be actively discouraged from applying to Oxbridge is fairly mainstream, usually placed in the context of an undeniable national brain drain.

But looming large is the trope of Dic Siôn Dafydd, the fictional Welshman who spends some time amongst the English establishment before returning to Wales with a newfound attitude of superiority and refusing to speak Welsh. At my bilingual Welsh comprehensive, whenever someone applied to Oxbridge the first thing people would talk about was what would happen to their personality. What



Owen McArdle is in his third year studying MML at St. Catharine's

sort of person would Oxbridge turn them into? I am sure that, language aside, fear of Dic Siôn Dafydd exists in 'provincial' communities all over Britain.

There are a lot of people in Cambridge and Oxford who work hard to try to redress these imbalances, and we should pay tribute to their effort. But I cannot help but feel that this work will always be somewhat hampered by a London-centric economy and the geographical location of Oxford and Cambridge in the London commuter belt. They are genuinely a long way from many parts of Britain, especially by public transport.

Outside of my dreams, Cambridge University is never going to relocate to a Lancashire market town or the Heads of the Valleys, helpful though that might be to addressing the geography problem. But equally, when universities chase the money with a presence abroad, why not have some presence in these areas?

Some action might be simpler still. Varsity Matches and Boat Races attract genuine interest from far beyond the Oxbridge bubble. Therefore we should question whether there's an overwhelming reason (beyond 'tradition') to have them in London every year. Here's an example: a couple of years ago there was a debate over the venue for the football Varsity matches. One of the areas named as having one of the lowest numbers of Cambridge offers was the Black Country borough of Sandwell, home to West Bromwich Albion FC. Did anyone consider playing them at The Hawthorns before settling on a venue in boringly predictable North London?

“London-centrism sits at the heart of our university”



In their second column on welfare and disability, Micha Frazer-Carroll and Florence Oulds argue that Cambridge's rigid definitions of success do students, and the University, a disavour

The University's Equality & Diversity Strategy opens with a quote from former Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz: “The University's diversity plays a key role in sustaining its academic excellence.”

While Borysiewicz was invested in equality as vice-chancellor, his statement also points towards more problematic elements of the University's approach to diversity, in that it must be advantageous to be permitted – in other words, that minority groups have to be ‘useful’, to be included at all.

Cambridge views itself as epitomising success – being the home of the ‘brightest and the best’, all the way from its faculty heads, to its researchers, down to its annual fresher intake. This summer we saw a viral celebration of the first admissions cycle in which the University took more black men than Etonians. But this shouldn't distract from the fact that when marginalised students arrive, they're often confronted with the stark realisation that this isn't a space originally built with them in mind. How can we succeed in an environment in which the generally-accepted, blanket vision of ‘success’ wasn't created for us?

This plays out differently for different marginalised people. Take disabled students, who are usually given ‘reasonable adjustments’ – procedures like extra time, extended library loans, breaks, or

Don't let Cambridge fool you – there's more than one way to succeed



a separate room to sit exams in. As students, we both often had our reasonable adjustments ignored, disregarded, or misunderstood. One example was being allowed to submit plans instead of essays, but being told the adjustment could be made “just this once”, as if disability conforms to a termly schedule.

While reasonable adjustments are – as is in their name – reasonable changes to teaching and learning, we’re still prone to viewing them as ‘allowances’, mechanisms helping students up to a bar for success that they couldn’t reach alone. Disabled students are pitied and pushed to the standards of success of their non-disabled peers, rather than being allowed to be assessed alternatively. Even then, the idea of ‘alternative’ assessment tells us something about the institution’s supposed gold standard of education, its commitment to reputation above practice, and how this hinders its own capability for real progress or excellence. What’s so special about the three-hour exam format anyway?

Spaces within the University that don’t conform to written examination format still see similar problems. Postgraduate students with few contact hours often find that, unlike at undergraduate level, their own voices are quashed in favour of a ‘Cambridge style’. In a conversation with our colleague Ellie Chan, vice-president of the Graduate Union, she explained that there is a more “rigid idea” of what academic success looks like for grads, and an increased pressure to fit the stereotype of the chinoclad, upper-

▲ Class lists outside the Senate House (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

class Cambridge student. This persists as an issue within student culture rather than the University, but still is a problem that the University as a whole should be addressing. She noted that even for postgrads, the same insecurity prevails: no matter how intelligent we are, we have to be the *right* kind of intelligent.

Specific academic interventions, like reasonable adjustments, and wider cultural problems, like conceptions of success, ultimately unload the problem on the person who doesn’t fit rather than the system itself. Looking at the system, we should work to reimagine what success can be, or going further, come to terms with the fact that multiple images of success can happily exist alongside each other.

Following Murray Edwards’ recent decision to alter their admission policy to more easily admit transgender women, their President Dame Barbara Stocking responded to criticism with a letter in the Financial Times: “I also believe that transgender women can be our allies in this mission. They are able to spot the inequalities women face very quickly, because they have experienced something different as a man.” Besides being misguided and borderline transphobic, Stocking’s quote again reveals a core problem with the University’s diversity ethos. Trans women, as a marginalised group, cannot just be admitted on behalf of their being intelligent women, their inclusion must somehow benefit the Cambridge elite. Why?

“We should work to reimagine what success can be”



Germaine Greer can no longer be called a feminist

Eve Hodgson argues that the exclusionary views of a once-prolific voice of second-wave radical feminism should result in her exclusion from the movement



Eve Hodgson is in her second year studying History at Magdalene

“Ridiculous.” That was Germaine Greer’s assessment of Murray Edwards’ new, widely applauded policy to allow students who identify as female into their single-sex college. In light of the fact she is considered a pioneer of second-wave radical feminism, she is doing little to identify herself with the movement now.

Her theories about transgender people have always been problematic, giving voice to an incredibly harmful, complex strand of modern feminism: what’s become known as TERF (trans-exclusionary radical feminism). She refuses to discuss trans people using their proper pronouns. She says that “just because you lop off your dick ... doesn’t make you a fucking woman”, and that any “man” who does that is “inflicting an extraordinary act of violence on himself”.

She also claims to know the minds of people whom she clearly has no sympathy with, and no desire to understand. In *The Whole Woman*, she claims that the demand for male to female sex change operations would change overnight if a uterus and ovary transplant was made a compulsory element of the procedure. These comments are morally wrong. They are socially exclusive, and they rail against what modern radical feminism should, and mostly does, look like.

Any feminist who claims relevance now has to believe in intersectionality. To ignore the compounded struggle that non-white women, or poor women, or LGBTQ+ women face is to discredit your feminism. If you are willing to drown out those voices with your own privilege, you cannot genuinely claim to care about the advancement of women.

By incorporating and even amplifying such discriminatory voices in a movement that is (at least currently) centred on inclusivity and understanding, feminism itself suffers. Greer is hurting what she dedicated her academic life to because of her own bigoted beliefs.

Radical feminism sprang up because women on the left hated the misogyny of their male peers, being relegated to administrative work as well as suffering sexual harassment. They split and started a movement for themselves. Do we really want to drive LGBTQ+ women

away from feminism because they do not believe they are truly wanted and respected here? Obviously, the answer to that is no. But it’s not so obvious when ‘TERFs’ – feminists like Greer – say what they say from platforms of power.

Greer cannot be seen as a force for progressive good any longer. Second-wave feminism was all about changing attitudes. Society needed to look at the way it treated women, but LGBTQ+ women were not an accepted public presence then. They are more so now. Greer is utterly stubborn in her refusal to admit that society might be progressing to a point well beyond her comfort zone. The sad fact is that feminism has outgrown one of its pivotal thinkers.

Feminism that excludes any women – including those who have not lived their whole lives as women – cannot be genuinely progressive. It is prioritising the wants and comfort of some women over the needs of others, and that defeats the whole purpose. All women’s experiences are valid. All women’s experiences deserve a voice. Germaine Greer was that voice for a time, and, if she wanted to, she could continue to be. If she interrogated herself and her values as she rightly demanded the patriarchy be interrogated, perhaps she would.

Trans women have enough to deal with without the people who are supposed to be standing with them, making space for them, spewing bigotry. In the US, trans women are 4.3 times more likely to be murdered than cis women (those whose gender matches the sex they were given at birth). This is not academics: it’s a matter of life and death.

She is refusing to let trans people get on with their lives, including the opportunity to come to this university and feel safe. To pick on trans women because they interfere with a gender theory that was developed more than forty years ago is to be incredibly arrogant, not to mention ignorant about social change.

Greer is now just an old, white woman who has forced herself into exile. Her comments are irreparably damaging, reflecting a total lack of regard for trans lives. Thinking what she thinks, she cannot be a prominent feminist any longer. She no longer stands for the same things we do.



FLIKR: HELEN MORGAN



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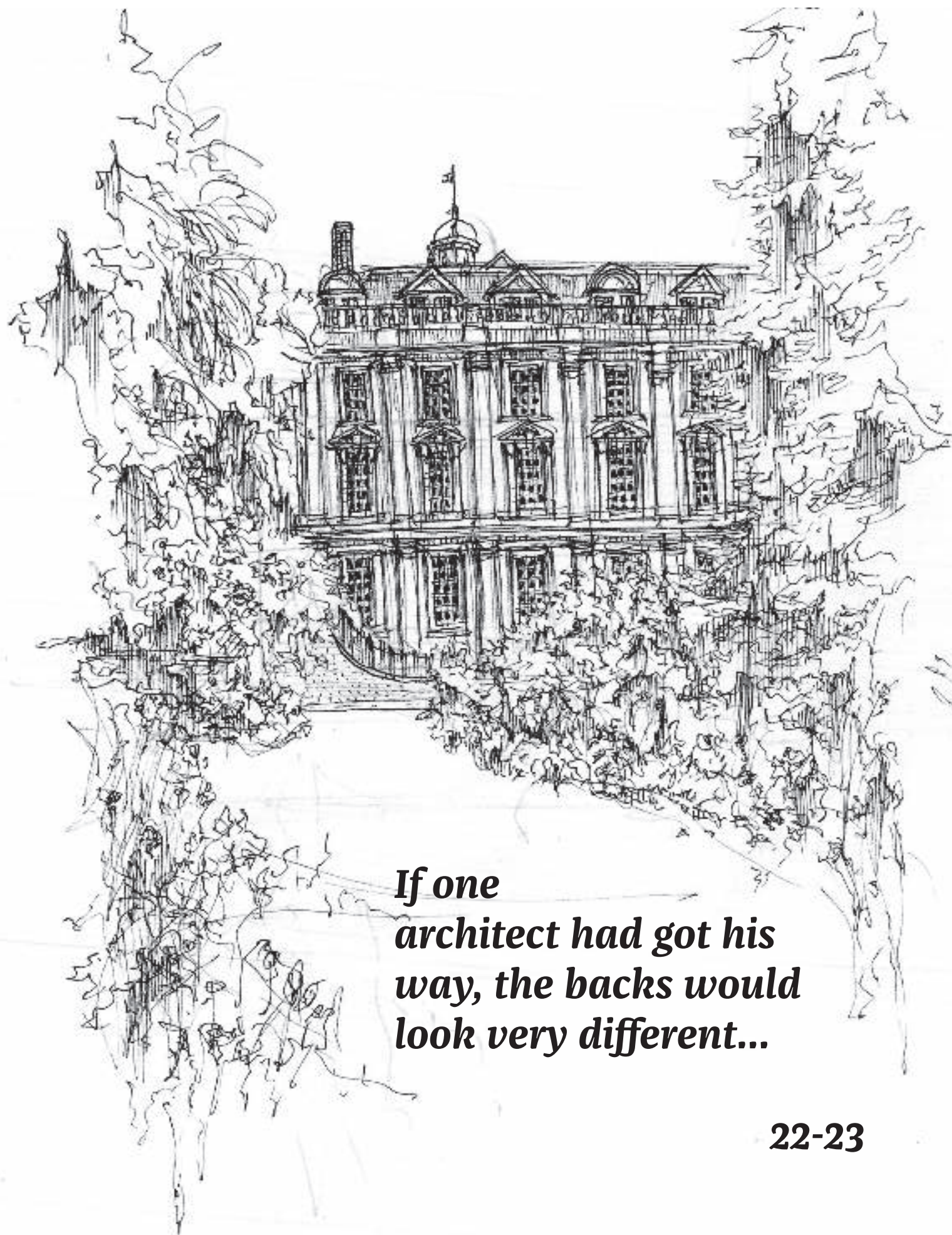
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Vulture



***If one
architect had got his
way, the backs would
look very different...***

22-23

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‘Wonders on a plane surface’

In 1779, Britain’s foremost landscape architect presented plans for ‘some alterations’ to the backs. **Daniel Gayne** imagines what the backs could have been if the ‘Shakespeare of gardening’ had had his way.

It’s hard to imagine the backs as anything other than the mess of collegiate personalities that we see today. The parade of bridges, gardens, and magnificent architectural showpieces embodies the rivalrous spirit that has defined Cambridge’s entire history. But things could have been very different. Tucked away in the University’s archives is a plan for a radical restructuring of the area which would have rendered it completely unrecognisable from its current form.

Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown is by no means a household name today, but in the 18th century, he was one of the country’s leading landscape architects, designing many of England’s great country estates and mansions. His work focused on coherence and elegance, and he was renowned for his seamless designs which made use of the sunk fence or ‘ha-ha’ to confuse the eye into believing that different pieces of parkland, separately managed, were a unity. No wonder, then, that after working on St John’s fellows’ garden his eye was drawn to the fragmented area behind Cambridge’s river colleges, known as the backs. It is thought that Brown outlined his thoughts to influential friends, such as Dr Powell and Professor Mainwaring, who in turn persuaded the Senate in 1776 to commission him to make a plan for ‘some alterations’.

The backs had come to be between the 11th and 13th century, when what had been marshland in Roman times dried out with the canalisation and straightening of the river. Since that point, the colleges had slowly come to dominate the small town of Cambridge, turbing the floodplain in the 1760s and 70s to create the lawns we are now familiar with.

However, each college developed their segments along different formal gardening principals, and Brown was tasked with creating a unified approach. The result was a plan for an open, tree-speckled parkland space, with four paddocks stretching from St John’s to the Mill Pond. At the centre would be King’s College’s Gibbs Building, recently built by Brown’s friend James Gibbs, which would play the country house in this aristocratic scene. Attention was drawn to the building by blocking off direct view of other features with strategic placement of trees.

Perhaps more radically, the Cam was to be widened substantially into a lake with two

long islands. What’s more, a number of avenues and bridges were to be removed and the river by St John’s would be straightened. For his efforts, Brown was praised by Emmanuel fellow George Dyer for doing “wonders on a plain surface” at an expense “scarce wirth mentioning” – specifically a piece of plate to the value of £50. But perhaps due to the scale of the changes, or perhaps because of the colleges’ jealously guarded independence, the plans were not adopted, and the backs continued to let a multitude of landscapes bloom.

It’s interesting to imagine how Cambridge’s most iconic landscape would have developed if the ‘Shakespeare of gardening’ had had his way. The magisterial, neo-gothic St John’s New Court, a favourite source of tall tales for punters, simply would not exist in the same form if the river’s kink had been ironed out. Contemporary oddities like Trinity Hall’s Jerwood Library are also difficult to imagine in such a carefully managed parkland, only making sense in the hodgepodge of real Cambridge.

The backs are still changing today, though plans are much more modest. In Robert Myers’s 2007 plan for the next 50 years of the landscape, the focus is not on grandiose feats of engineering, but on the removal and replanting of trees with the aim of protecting the collective health of the land ●

Illustrations
by **Matthew
Seccombe**

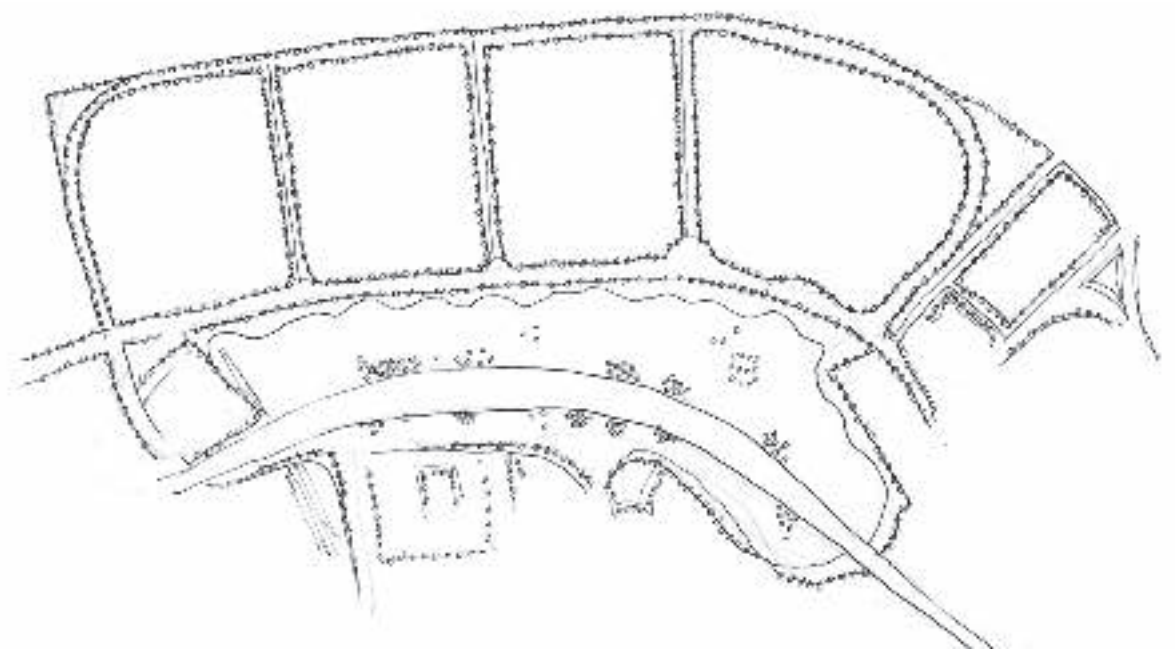


A cross-section of the backs as they are today, featuring St John’s New Court



Our mock-up of what the backs might have looked like

A sketch of Capability Brown’s plan for ‘some alterations’, presented to the University Council in 1779 ►



Lawns, culture, and solarpunk



India Stronach looks at an architectural movement that promises to transcend the wasteful history of landscaping

In medieval Europe, lawns were a product of the aristocracy. Not only did the early treeless expanses of land make the duties of the watchmen easier and more reliable, but the lavish expanses of grass and floral arrangements they eventually spawned became a boast and symbol of wealth and prosperity – only the rich could afford to waste the land. Only the rich could afford to pay men to care for it. Only the rich could spare the water to tend it. By the time the low-growing perennials described in 12th century literature evolved into the fountain-speckled expanses of Versailles, lawns were a universal sign of power and frivolity.

In 20th century America, everyone had a lawn. Proud little green squares of perfect uniformity, hemmed by box hedges and Homeowners' Associations. And then came the Italians. A fresh wave of European migrants arrived in these little boxy homes with their perfect green squares and had a better idea. Household after household tore up their ornamental lawn and flowerbeds, and replaced it with something they could use. Herb gardens, vegetable gardens, little square bedded kitchen gardens with rows of beets and carrots, divided by neat dirt of gravel pathways, not a scrap of land wasted.

Today, the aristocratic origins of lawn culture are mostly forgotten; an aristocratic garden is now more likely to be filled with bright exotics and dainty water features. But family after family continue to cultivate their perfect, uniform green squares. Perhaps a more obvious source of waste are the rolling lush expanses of golf courses. In the UK, this is at worst a vast usage of land and lawnmowers. Golf course owners arrive with all the pomp and ceremony of those one-time French no-

▲ Cornwall's Eden Project emulates a natural biome (Zero1752)

bles, carving out great swathes of verdant growth for their own amusement and that of their paying peers.

But when does the manicured lawn become too much? The average Scot might not particularly delight in Trump International Golf Links, but what harm it does is through the same means as any other large expanse of cultivated grass – habitat destruction, the spraying of noxious chemicals. There are 1,126 golf courses in California alone, a state currently celebrating an all-new low of 10,293,045 inhabitants in drought areas. The golf courses, naturally, have remained verdant throughout.

In England, kitchen gardens and allotments are becoming a more commonplace sight, but trimmed lawns are nowhere near falling from grace. The courts in Cambridge colleges are too perfectly manicured to even be walked on. Most kitchen gardens are relegated to a bedraggled corner where a flower bed can hide them from the lavish lawn. But the wastage of land is going down. Allotment groups are now reclaiming strips of land, abandoned building sites and long stretches beside railways, for community kitchen gardens. Midnight raids of 'guerrilla gardeners' are now planting ed-

ible herbs and fruits in public flower beds and corners of land, free for the taking. Several councils have taken it upon themselves to let the bedraggled patches of roadside grass blossom into wildflower meadows.

Whilst individual movements vary wildly in form and function, the current swell of sustainable gardening owes its backbone of support to the solarpunk movement. Independent researcher Adam Flynn calls solarpunk a system of "infrastructure as a form of resistance" in his 2014 manifesto, an optimistic futurism dedicated to the design and construction of eco-sustainable cities. A hybrid philosophy of aesthetics and politics, solarpunk artists and designers create images of vast, lush settlements filled with natural green spaces and practical living solutions. Solarpunk takes the bitter rage of pure punk and the artistic dalliance of steampunk and cyberpunk to create a system of ecological activism and a brand of futuristic design that wins over idealists and realists alike. The vision relies on a sense of community and development, a willingness to share technology and resources to create a new kind of utopia.

A quick search on Google Images reveals the diverse beauty of the solarpunk ideal: vivid green vines draped over a Shanghai skyline or an Italian villa, the soft bubble shapes popular with American architects and the bright geometric patterns inspired by Afrofuturism. Believers in solarpunk practise stunning handicrafts and preach new technological developments, bringing the best of old and new technologies together. Rather than focus on single strands of development as the salvation of the planet, solarpunk blends ideas from dozens of sources into a vision of practical utopianism.

But visions very rarely lend themselves to practical action today, and the aspiring solarpunk internet dweller who happens *not* to be a billionaire philanthropist, ground-breaking energy developer or renowned architect might find themselves at a loss for what to do. And this brings us back to the matter of lawns. We can tear up our pathetic miniature golf courses and build something worth having. Install state-of-the-art transparent solar cells in our double glazing. Join the growing economy of repair cafes and makerspaces. Find neglected stretches of land and build our kitchen gardens, or join the ones already running here in Cambridge. The call has already gone out, to create a new era of green spaces ●



► Concept art from ecological architect Vincent Callebaut (Flickr: Forgemind Webuse)



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'It's just a phase': dispelling the myth



Columnist *Joel Lucyszyn* challenges the lazy stereotype that bisexuality is just something you'll grow out of

Of all the tacky 'words of wisdom' directed at bisexuality, 'it's just a phase' has to be the worst. Whether it be because of the onset of hormones, an exploration of one's sexuality, or a rebellion against parents, 'it's just a phase' is justified with deploring explanations. Being the most commonplace of biphobic catchphrases, it's worth looking at why this particular conviction has polluted our discussions of bisexual identity for generations.

The most obvious reason for 'it's just a phase' is homophobia. It's what heterosexual couples often say and hope for when their child comes out (or is outed) as having same-sex attraction. This is true of gay men and lesbians as it is true of bisexuals – though the case is different with bisexual people. Believing, as many people do, in the false binary of hetero- and homosexuality, many parents

fall back on the false 'assurance' that their bisexual child will one day choose one path or the other – more than likely, they hope for it to be a straight one. Until they reach that end goal they are uncertain: condescended to as floundering and confused, unable to make up their mind or potentially misled by 'dangerous' (queer) individuals.

The rhetoric of 'it's just of phase' presents bisexuality as immature. The bisexual experience is falsely aligned with a teenage emotional and hormonal imbalance: easily influenced by the flux of nasty TV-shows, celebrities, friends and music into a mercurial state of mind that is subject to change. Often, this leads to a deeply ingrained sense of uncertainty in bisexual people which persists well into their adult lives, with bisexuals struggling to express their identities because they've been told that this indecisive stage would

eventually develop into a state of comfortable monosexuality.

However, the persistence of 'it's just a phase' is not wholly due to it being forced on unwilling subjects. The phrase has opened up a middle-ground for homosexual men and women, something they can appropriate and use before 'fully coming out' to soften the blow. This is most often the case in schools, where bisexuality is used a stepping stone before identifying as lesbian or gay. When many of these individuals – gradually or suddenly – come out as monosexuals at a later date, it reinforces and perpetuates the stereotype that bisexuality is just a temporary state.

This is damaging to bisexual people, but the onus isn't completely on gay and lesbian people. Many factors have to be considered, including the obvious fact that feeling the need to 'soften the blow' is a product of the homophobic institutions in which queer people have to survive. Additionally, and equally as valid, is the fact that *some* people genuinely are 'confused' or exploratory of their sexuality, and it takes them time to approach a definition which suites them. The other is more radical: that sexuality shouldn't have to be considered in a binary of 'you're this or you're that', and that often an individual's sexual preference changes over time.

The rise in the use of 'queer' as an identifier for sexual orientation (and gender) is partially a product of this recognition: many people rightly refuse the unfair assumption that one

has to disclose a precise definition of their sexuality, preferring to identify in opposition to straightness without 'specifying' their preference in romantic or sexual partners. The choice is with the individual, and must come with a mutual and mature agreement to respect the validity of any LGBT+ person without reserve.

Unfortunately, this respect is often not afforded to bisexual people on the same level as lesbians and gay men, who along with heterosexuals, continue to denigrate bisexuality as a phase. New discourses and understandings of sexual identification must be considered with an unreserved recognition of bisexuality as a valid orientation, not as a preceding stage to monosexuality. Statistics foreground the urgency of this recognition: of those who responded to the Office of National Statistics 2015 survey, over a third of LGBT+ individuals in the United Kingdom identified as bisexual. There are more (publicly) bisexual identifying British people than there are lesbians or gay men: it certainly doesn't look like a phase.

The important element to be gleaned from these surveys and uses of the identifier 'bisexual' is that although bisexuality may be appropriated by homosexuals growing up in hostile environments, or that it may be 'replaced' on a personal level with the use of 'queer', this is not because bisexuality is less stable than other sexual identities – and it is certainly not because bisexuality is 'just a phase' ●

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What's on

By **Georgie Kemsley-Pein**
Illustrations by **Anna Palma Balint**



Blue Planet II
St Catharine's College
29 October,
9:30-10:30pm

Narrated and presented by one of the nation's heroes, Sir David Attenborough, *Blue Planet II* is being screened at the McGrath Centre at Catz this Sunday. Featuring spectacular cinematography of the natural world and musical collaborations between Hans Zimmer and Radiohead, *Blue Planet II* accompanies a seven-part series on BBC1, and reveals a massive development in our understanding of ocean life over recent decades.

Gypsy
ADC Theatre
31 October - 4 November

Based on the memoirs of the famous striptease artist Gypsy Rose Lee from the 1950s, *Gypsy* presents the audience with the harsh realities of a mother's ambition for her children, as Lee attempts to pursue her dream in the show business world whilst grappling with disillusionment and the growing tension between herself and her mother.

Blade Runner at ArcSoc Film Club

Department of Architecture

1 November, 2:30pm

Free of charge, ArcSoc are inaugurating their Film Club with the new release of *Blade Runner*, where they hope to screen avant-garde cinema on a weekly basis in a relaxed, work-friendly environment.



Beethoven's Ninth Symphony

St John's College

27 October, 8pm-9:30pm

Travel back to 19th-century classicism by gracing your ears with what is generally thought to be one of Beethoven's greatest works. This is the opening Chapel concert of SJCMS, featuring players from St John's and other university musicians. Buy tickets on the door or book online.

Kettle's Yard Clearance Sale
Old Development Office, Emmanuel College
28 October, 11am-3pm

Prior to their reopening, Kettle's Yard are hosting a clearance sale of stock from their shop at Emmanuel. Spice up your room and pencil case with items ranging from archive posters to stationery.



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Arts

Illustration and imagination

Katy Darwent explores whether book illustrations enhance the reader's experience, or impose needless limits on their imagination

If the old cliché that a picture paints a thousand words is true, then why the need for any verbal explanation of whatever is actually being shown to us? Illustrations and aesthetic tweaks are an often under-appreciated part of writing, generally reduced to the cover. But why does the focus need to be on the images, with words as superfluous garnish, for the book to be taken seriously? After all, who doesn't love an excuse to look at the pretty pictures?

One answer could be that in any good book, the illustrations, rather than the words, are superfluous; when Charlotte Brontë has just spent two pages describing the physical attributes, style and mannerisms of the guests at Rochester's, do we really need a sketch to give us details we already know – or worse, depict the same information we've heard in a way that's slightly different from how we imagined it ourselves. Reading is the deeply personal act of building an internal world of senses, the easiest of which to trick ourselves into believing is sight; undermine the image and the whole imaginary world seems flat, and made of paper.

Or is it better to have our assumptions challenged, and our eyes opened to the possibility of the text beyond what we already imagined ourselves? Jane Austen was famously extremely vague about what kind of figure, beyond a dashing one, Mr Darcy actually cut, with readers' expectations venturing in directions wildly different enough to make each version of the protagonist their own; most illustrated versions of classic novels resort to similar vagueness in artistic form. Rapid pencil sketches, soft, stylised lines, with slightly bleeding colours, and illustrations where the focus of detail seems to lay more heavily on, say, a dress than on the wearer's face, are all useful ways of keeping the magic alive.

Silhouettes and abstract art can often convey, rather than the details given in the text, a sense of something that many find much harder to gain from a dense novel: the emotions. Characters' interactions are caught mid-flow; their environment laid out often more precisely than in the writing, where it may be ignored almost entirely; their sketched profiles and faces tell more of movement and emotion than exact proportion or physiognomy – in short, illustrations often, even when accompanying the most detailed of novels, give the reader the information they are missing from the novel's words themselves.

► **Tenniel's famous Alice**

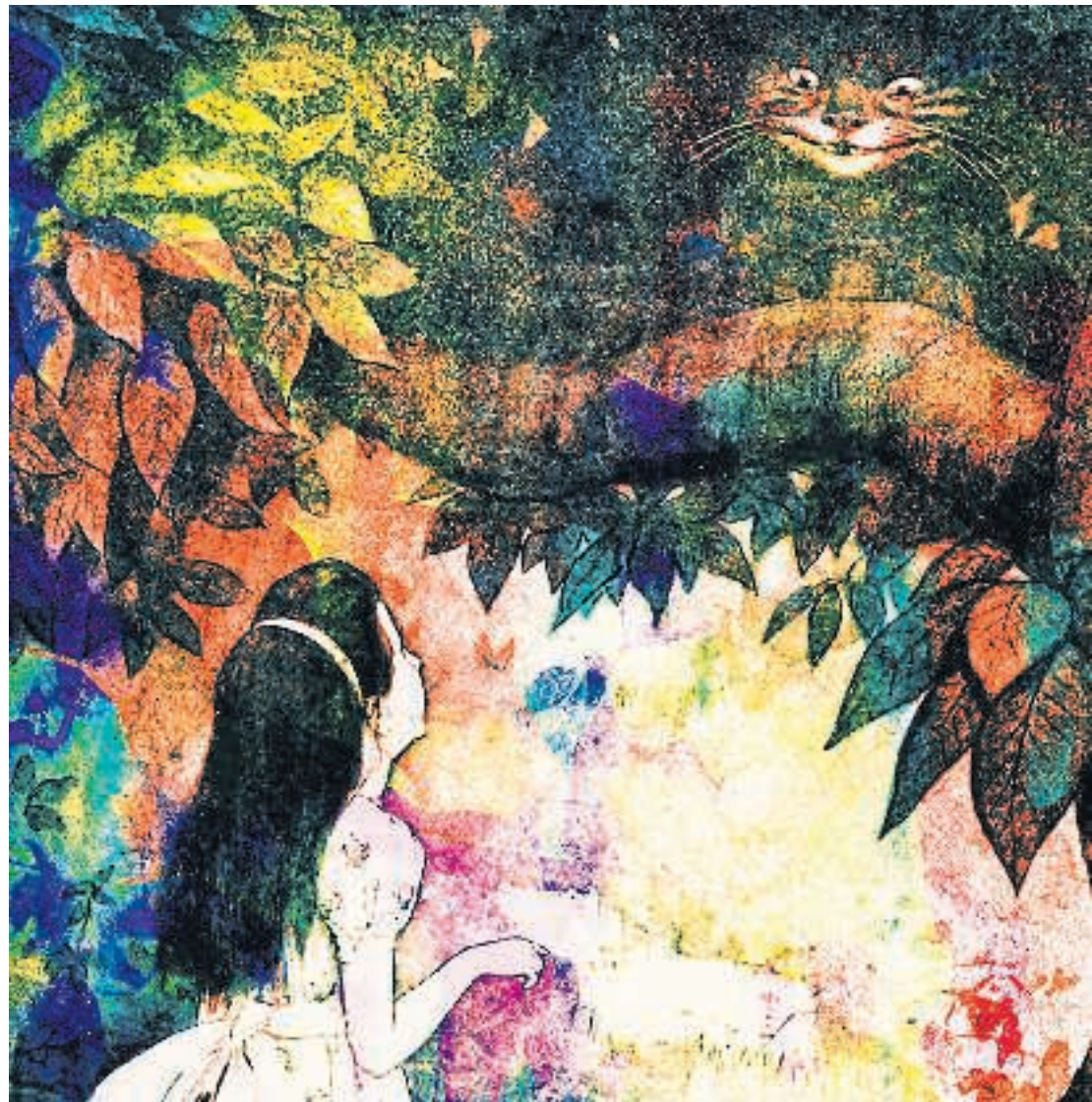
(WIKICOMMONS: JOHN TENNIEL)



Alice in Wonderland is the prime example of illustrations really making the book what it is, as a key part of the work that's impossible to separate in our minds from the whole. Intriguingly enough for someone who had a very specific picture of who "Alice" was, and what she looked like, Carroll not once mentions her physical appearance. The vagueness gives us all the ability to be Alice, in a sense, as we assume her role and become the protagonist and heroine wandering through Wonderland – but Tenniel's illustrations give us an Alice who, while separate to ourselves, we can really root for. Her physiognomy marks her out as the perfect heroine: her high, intelligent forehead; a clever, interesting face with a determined set of the mouth and expressive eyes; her long, loose hair, lending her the innocence and softness of a sweet young girl, albeit one who dresses in pinafores over her bustle skirts, ready for action.

Alice's look is so distinctive, not least the blue dress and striped socks (although there are many variations of her outfits shown throughout the book, including her in yellow), that it exists beyond the page in myriad mutations which, however far removed from the characters herself, are still easily recognisable as "Alice": Fashion shoots based on the premise (with Karl Lagerfeld as the Mad Hatter!); fancy dress costumes which it's hard to imagine a Victorian girl wearing, or even an adult who isn't either a) an exhibitionist or b) around someone they know very... well; numerous manga spinoffs from and mutations on the *Alice in Wonderland* theme (including one where Alice is a murderer, or a boy who transforms into a girl called Alice when he enters Wonderland, or – my personal favourite – "Kuro Bara Alice", in which a 28-year-old teacher's soul is saved by vampires and put in the body of a 16-year-old long-dead Polish noblewoman, then seemingly faces a dilemma over which one of the supernaturally hot vampires she should breed with) – they are all linked by the 'Alice' aesthetic, however tenuously they stick to it.

Tenniel's illustrations, those iconic images, prove that illustrations can give a story real weight – instead of clever nonsense rhymes and riddles, we have a heroine whose bewilderment and fascination at those same absurdities we can mirror and sympathise with. And, like any well-drawn character (pun intended), she lives, through her image, beyond the world in which she was originally conceived. Carroll's words make her story real, but Tenniel's drawings make her so ●



▲ A colourful representation of Alice and the Cheshire Cat (PUBLICDOMAINPICTURES: DAWN HUDSON)

EXPRESSIBLE

Sneha Sen discusses how untranslatable words can show us the world's beauty



The onset of freshers' flu seems to have characterised the last week for me and too many of the people I've spoken to (regardless, sadly, of whether they were freshers or not). I thought it would be welcome relief to revisit happier, prettier times in this week's column, with a tribute to how the world's languages express beauty.

I hope that lots of you manage to visit beaches over summer and when you're on holiday at other times – because there's just something irresistible about feeling sand beneath your feet and watching waves weave across the rocks. I happen to live in Cornwall, so beach trips become some-

thing of a habit during summer for me. The Kwangali language, spoken in Namibia by only 85,000 people, expresses the appeal of beaches perfectly with its word 'hanyaku'. Hanyaku describes the act of walking on your tiptoes across warm sand – something which I hope everyone has experienced, or will get to experience, at some point during their lives.

Languages other than English also seem to find ways to express some of the more beautiful things that nature offers us. The Japanese word '木漏れ日', which would be transcribed in English as 'komorebi', is made up of the grammatical particle 木 and three distinct characters with meanings. 木 means 'tree(s)', 漏 means 'escape', and 日 means 'light' or 'sun'. The term together refers to the sunlight that filters, or escapes, through the leaves of the trees – next time you're standing under a tree on a sunny day, look up – and you'll see what that really means.

Apparently, we humans seem to like describing all things tree- and leaf-related, because English/Greek and Russian also have words for specific tree- and leaf-related phenomena. The rare English word 'psithurism' is an adaptation of the Greek 'ψιθύρισμα' or 'ψιθυρισμός', meaning 'whisper'. It refers to the sound that leaves make when the wind rustles through the trees, or simply to the rustling noise of leaves when you brush against them. Russian, on the other hand, happens to contain the

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“What feeds me, destroys me”

Joseph Krol muses on time, legacy and artistic representation

Time is at once both a beautiful and a sickening thing. It is moving ever forwards, without respite, yet so often it seems to come back on itself, ploughing anew the furrows of centuries past. All these heart-strings at the centre of time's nature seem to me to have interweaved hauntingly in one chance discovery, some seventy-five years ago.

In 1952, Corpus Christi was in the throngs of a college-wide renovation, just as it is today. It must have resembled a building-site; a large skip had been left in the middle of Old Court. A passing student heading back to his room saw a couple of pieces of wood sticking out of the top; he took them both with him, thinking them useful for putting together a stand for his new hi-fi system.

What he held in his hands was, in fact, much more important. These two oak planks turned out to be two halves of a broken, blackened portrait, about eighteen by twenty-four inches, depicting a dimly foppish figure in Elizabethan attire.

The chap does look a lot like Christopher Marlowe; but then, I suppose, it would, it being the only putative likeness of him to have

survived. Despite any real documentary evidence, it is indeed almost universally said to show the Corpus-educated playwright.

There are, to be fair, decent grounds for this. The following restoration uncovered a scribbled note on the portrait, saying that the subject was 21 when the work was painted in 1585, as Marlowe was. Additionally, it was apparently found stuck under an ancient fireplace in a room that was formerly part of the Master's Lodge, where a number of portraits of Elizabethan luminaries had once hanged. Beyond this, we are reduced to making educated guesses based on the man's appearance: does he not look dramaturgically rakish? Does he not seem the sort of dandy to get involved in theatrics?

There is, however, one more clue to work with, even if it seems submerged in a mire of writhing ambiguity. It is the sitter's motto, painted onto the canvas: *'Quod me nutruit, me destruit'* - 'What nourishes me, destroys me'.

The aphorism seems to plead with time itself. Time courses through our lives as blood through our veins, yet it must stop the noblest heart at the end of it all. It reduces great people

▼ The supposed portrait of Marlowe

(WIKIMEDIA: ARTIST UNKNOWN)



to a questionable daubing on a hearth-stand; it shreds the works and days of man, and scatters the remnants in the autumn winds.

It seems a quintessentially Cantabrigian attitude to focus so much on the man behind his works, to cling desperately to the coat-tails of the past long after any relevance has passed. It is easy to forget in an environment such as this that facts erode as readily as does a riverbank.

As one signs one's name into the matricu-

lation books, one attains countless presidencies, and one discovers the idiosyncrasies of Cambridge life, it can feel like these actions are linked unfailingly to history; indeed, it can feel as if real history is being made by our actions.

But even the greatest luminaries of our time may soon be recalled only in a strange, warped manner; their works may last, but their souls cannot. Of the sweeping majority, even in a place such as this, scarcely a mark will be left on the future. Perhaps this is pessimistic; perhaps modern times will prove different. It is disheartening to note, however, that the name of that very undergraduate who first found the portrait has since been forgotten.

As we try to memorialise a man whom none of us can remember, we must recall that our lives are as fragile as those that have gone before us. Within a decade, this man's personality was barely a dozen flickering candle-lights in the memories of those who could still recall him. Within a century, it was a shadow skulking in the twilight of reality. By now, it is but fading ink on collegiate records. Nothing beside remains; no portrait can really change this.

We are left with little more than strange caricatures spun from impersonal records - shaky sketches of a violent death, smoky depictions of a tempestuous writing career - that are scarcely more credible than the alleged portrait itself. If this is how time treats those who are remembered, one might prefer to be forgotten ●

word 'листопад', transcribed in English as 'listopad', which means the falling of the leaves, and presumably refers to the glorious change of seasons that takes place around this time every year, as summer turns to autumn and autumn turns to winter.

Japanese seems to be the language that best expresses ideas about beauty, because the next two words about beauty in more philosophical sense also come from there. '侘寂', transcribed as 'wabi sabi', is the intuitive way of living that emphasises finding beauty in imperfections, and accepting that everything is transient in the natural cycle of growth and decay. Perhaps it's not something any of us are capable of understanding to its full extent yet, as young, healthy people with our whole lives ahead of us, but we can certainly grasp the concept. It's the acceptance that no matter how hard you try, you're never going to live up to this idea of perfection that you have in your head, or live what you deem 'the perfect life'. It's the realisation that life is more enjoyable when you learn to take pleasure in the little things instead - those evenings spent talking and laughing with only your closest friends, the power that a simple mug of hot tea or coffee has to brighten your day, the feeling of triumph when a supervisor seems to only be able to find positive things to say about your essay.

The Japanese '幽玄', transcribed in English as 'yugen', describes a deep, mysterious sense of the universe and its beauty, which triggers an emotional response that is too powerful to

put into words. It's how you feel when you realise that the Earth has been around for four and a half billion years, that it will continue to exist long after our small, insignificant lives have reached their conclusion, and that it is simply one small sphere rotating around one average-sized star, out of the two billion (at least) which exist in the Milky Way galaxy alone. The latest estimates assume that there are at least one hundred billion in the observable universe as we know it - if those facts combined don't provoke '幽玄', I don't know what else could.

Finally, it's time to circle back to Europe for a classic Romance language: Spanish. Its word 'duende' refers to the strange power of a work of art to affect you deeply. Perhaps it's when you stumble across a painting and realise that it seems to perfectly represent the current state of affairs in your life. Perhaps it's when you hear a song that reminds you of your favourite childhood memory. Perhaps it's a book or film that causes you to question your entire worldview when it ends.

What, you might ask, has this week's particular smattering of words that express beauty taught us? Not much, on the surface. But when 'wabi sabi' forces you to look below it, to find the beauty in the imperfections, you see that there are so many different kinds of beauty - whether natural, or philosophical, or about the universe, or art. And of course, there's something about feeling warm sand under your toes that can't quite be put into words - or at least, not English ones ●

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Film & TV



Opening films: *Wonderful You* (VR) & *A Taste of Ink*

Alexander Taylor enters the realm of virtual reality cinema in one of several short pieces being showcased

Dir. John Durrant

BDH

One, it seems, are the days when virtual reality (VR) promised some sort of transcendental cyber-freedom from the meatspace of the human body. The interactive VR film, *Wonderful You* that previewed at this year's Cambridge Film Festival reveals the body as a site ripe for exploration through this nascent technology. The *Wonderful You* screenings were run by Limina Immersive and took place in Emmanuel College. The sessions were limited to five people and the screening room consisted of five computers with Oculus Rift headsets attached. We each took a seat and after some health and safety announcements strapped the headsets on.

Created by BDH Immersive, *Wonderful You* takes participants on what is billed as an 'epic' journey through their sensory development in the womb. The experience is orientated around an image of a baby in various developmental stages, floating in amniotic serenity. Surrounding the baby are five clickable lunar-like spheres with the words 'taste', 'touch', 'smell', 'sight' and 'sound' written on them.

Users move their heads to navigate between these categories and click a small handheld remote to select the sense they want to learn more about. The film is part educational, part spiritual self-actualisation, made so by Academy Award nominee Samantha Morton's dulcet New Agey narration.

Throughout the film, the womb is represented as a seemingly endless black void, filled with small, white bubbles reminiscent

of stars. An auroral-red mist floats ethereally among the bubbles, like a galactic gas cloud. The bloody, membranous mess of the body is distinctly absent. Instead, womb life is staged as a sanitary, celestial experience imbuing human life with cosmic significance (I guess this is where the 'epic' comes in).

Participants find themselves drifting through tunnels of fibrous tissue, flying over pink fungal forests of taste buds, and journeying down the dark spongy passageways of ear canals. In this nano-world, cell structures look like alien vegetables growing in other-worldly gardens.

There is something incomprehensibility vast about the human body this close up. At the microscopic level, the molecular becomes cosmological: particles become planets, embryos become galaxies of living cells and the womb becomes a universe. One imagines what someone like Terrence Malick could do with this medium. Drifting through the alien space-worlds of the human body we find ourselves far from the techno-fantasies of digital disembodiment and the science-fiction 'outer spaces' typically associated with VR.

After 20 minutes of inner-world exploration, a Limina representative tapped our shoulders, signalling time's up. Removing our headsets, we found ourselves washed up on the arid shore of our adult lives. In our group, there were four students including myself who had gone to the screening together, and one elderly man in his seventies who had gone on his own.

There was something moving about the anachronism not of an old man and an Oculus Rift headset, but of an old man quietly re-experiencing his first months of life in his mother's womb. His mother had most likely passed away long ago, but through this special technology he encountered her again in a small way, and perhaps for a moment even thought she might pick him up and carry him upstairs to his bedroom.

Wonderful You did not only demonstrate the potential of the body as a new frontier for virtual reality, but said something almost fragile about what being alive is like ●

Uninspired by the impression left by this new drama, **Hugh Oxlade** would rather stick to honey in the future

Dir. Morgan Simon
★★

The character at the centre of *A Taste of Ink* is certainly not one-dimensional. He sings in a heavy metal band, has recently lost his mother, is attracted to his father's new girlfriend, is reading Charles Patterson's *Eternal Treblinka*, has a *Ghostbusters* poster on the wall of his room, and owns a copy of FIFA 14 for the PlayStation 4 to boot.

In many ways it was remarkable how a character with such varied proclivities could be so very boring. Never during the film is one either convinced or intrigued by the liberally tattooed protagonist, which is something of a snag as he appears in every scene.

A Taste of Ink opens with a very fine comic set piece, but quickly sets out its stall as a serious character study.

Or at least I think that is what it does, because occasionally in the midst of the angst, distemper and lust there

is what appears to be an attempt at making the audience laugh. These attempts were jarring and off-putting, and certainly anything but funny.

The really rather baffling ending, meanwhile, certainly was not amusing, and I rather hope that it was meant to be a metaphor for something or other, because if it truly was intended to be appreciated as it was presented, it failed by a distance, considerably exceeding the fabled country mile.

The protagonist's father was an unlikely fishmonger with a character that was tricky to pin down, and not worth the effort of trying. From time to time he would converse with his similarly elusive son and something resembling chemistry would be demonstrated, and one could feel one's dormant sense of empathy stirring from its stupor.

The core of *A Taste of Ink* was not rotten, but one was permitted to look into it only in a few isolated scenes. At least it taught me how to fillet a mackerel ●



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REZO FILMS

Courting controversy in *Battle of the Sexes*

Lillian Crawford reflects on a moving sports drama she did not think she would witness with a smile on her face and a tear in her eye

Dir. Jonathan Dayton & Valerie Faris
In cinemas 24th November
★★★★

This is a film with a lot of balls. Works in the sports genre often need them – it takes a high level of skill to make the televisual truly cinematic. The final act of *Battle of the Sexes* delivers this with spectacular effectiveness, hooking its audience with every orgasmic gasp in the climactic match. None of its achievements would have been possible without the preceding hour-and-a-half, however, which is where the importance of this film lies. It is unlike anything seen before, and its meaning for LGBT+ cinema should not be understated.

Lesbian romances in film have started coming to the fore in cinema of late, albeit with often hideous sexualisation and gratuitously explicit intercourse. *Carol* was lauded for its approach to a romance between two women, but the extended shots of Rooney Mara's breasts and its staunchly indie tone prevented the film from obtaining any wider

appeal. If LGBT+ audiences want representation, it has to be in mainstream cinema where viewership is at its largest. It has to move beyond mere sexuality to deft and touching humanity – to love.

“Hooking its audience with every orgasmic gasp”

When Emma Stone last graced the silver screen with her dazzling presence, the world fell for *La La Land* and its heart-breaking romantic tale. She returns now, almost unrecognisably, as Billie-Jean King with a matured sensitivity, and the forbidden affair with Andrea Riseborough's Marilyn is consistently beautiful, especially in the closeness of a stunningly sensual haircut scene. There is a striking awkwardness to their interactions, and while both Stone and Riseborough have already given remarkable performances this year, this may well be the pinnacle of their careers. What *Battle of the Sexes* does is it appeals to the same audience as any other Oscar-bait hit, but for the first time it dares to place a gay romance at its centre. And, shockingly, the world does not crash and burn.

The 12A age rating means that children as young as eight will be able to see this film, thus this will probably be one of the first predominant homosexual relationships a generation will watch in the cinema. It

is also a heroic and empowering representation of women, far more so than any of the populist Amazonian twaddle seen earlier in *Wonder Woman*. The title itself takes gender equality as its target, and the constant anachronisms of 1970s political incorrectness will strike a nerve. Yet even in this context, King, along with her cohort, refuse to give in to the gasp-inducing male chauvinism on display. Steve Carell masters this, playing Bobby Riggs not merely as the outdated antagonist, but also as a man corrupted with whom the audience ultimately sympathises. While at first the dual biographical nature of the film may appear confused, both strands prove essential to the ultimate punch at the climax, and the emotional investment viewers have in it.

The rest of the ensemble support the key players superbly throughout. While the team's fashion designer might at first seem unnecessary comic relief, and a potential detriment to the nuanced subtlety of homosexual representation, only Alan Cumming could maintain the perfect level of flamboyance

to not do so. Indeed, in the film's final moments, it is his movingly prophetic words that leave the film on a reflective note that resonates in the auditorium. Sarah Silverman also stands out for keeping not only the players, but also the plot in check when proceedings seem to drag. Their interactions provide necessary foreplay to the enthralling showstopper between Stone and Carell, and to the overall cohesive nature of the piece.

Following up *Little Miss Sunshine* with a tennis dual-biopic has proved directors Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris are filmmakers refusing to yet be defined, and they recreate 1970s America beautifully, complete with a delicate grainy filter. Nevertheless, they have undoubtedly made a film of the times – for all its apparent present anachronisms, the *Battle of the Sexes*, and sexualities, is far from over. Having served their first shot in the realm of mainstream representation, only time will tell who will be next to take up the racket and the ball flying ●



FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

Flitting through clippings at Cambridge Shorts

Emma Lubega & Ada Barume return to review this year's evening of cinematic brevity

Once again, we find ourselves settled into our seats at the ADC ready for another night of Cambridge students' best short films. Along with the predictably artsy crowds, we were eased in with deafening music and disturbing videos of sheep-shearing and dissection, creating an atmosphere more befitting of ARCSOC than an ADC late show.

After the music had subsided and the smoke had cleared from Ania Magliano-Wright's theatrical entrance, we felt more at home in the centre of Cambridge's thespy heartland. As the new presenter, Ania was everything the evening needed, providing humour, self-deprecation, and inclusivity, all in a sharp suit.

Lucy Cole's *Chair* was a great start to the evening, setting the tone with a funny, lighthearted, and ultimately relatable depiction of a typical Cambridge house party. Martha Cook's portrayal of the timid outsider was perfectly executed. The film also

featured good camerawork, and the attention to detail was not lost on the audience; laughs were elicited by touches such as a talking chair's disappearing drink and the toilet paper credits. Considering the overall success of the concept, it is a shame it fell short in diversity, with the only non-white character being the blue chair, expertly voiced by Christof Epaminondas.

Up next was *Monty*, a standout short of the evening, showcasing how successful thinking outside the box can be. Presented as a mock trailer, complete with directors' commentary, Noah Geelan and Jacob Blewett's concept of 'double-casting' the character of Monty was novel and thoroughly enjoyable, procuring the loudest laughs of the night. The acting, costumes, and comedic timing worked together to deliver an impressive parody, playing off clichés which the whole audience instantly recognised.

Following two well-received comedic films, *The Girl in the Woods* (Emily Burgoyne) suffered somewhat from the lack of appropriate atmos-

phere in the room. The setting, camerawork, and music built a sense of eeriness, with an especially well-composed driving scene; however, the lack of narrative and slightly clichéd characterisation stunted the film's ability to reach and maintain a genuine fear factor.

One Last Chance (Stephen Goss) provided a more introspective narrative exploring the hidden power of the frequently overlooked. The uninspiring setting and relatively simple plot were offset by the high quality of acting, with a subtly compelling performance from Chris Born as 'The Everyman'. A few shots failed to adequately frame the actors, subsequently sidelining some of the characters, a shame considering the well-written, sincere dialogue.

Pondering A Wall by Johnny King delivered a similarly simple premise against which the imaginative writing and impressive voice work from Will Bishop was allowed to shine. Overall, the film lacked the energy felt at the beginning of the night, with the various visual and auditory elements seeming at times

disconnected and lacking in a sense of cohesion.

Finally, we came to Kate Collins' *Some Flowers*. Finishing a night of such high-quality film is no easy task, and unfortunately the technical glitches, which featured intermittently throughout the evening, hindered our ability to fully engage with the plot from the beginning. The film provided witty dialogue and two interesting ideas; however, the inevitable restrictions of the short film format meant that the connection between these themes was not sufficiently explored, leading to a sense of detachment from the characters and events.

Ultimately, the evening proved an enjoyable one, with the shorts showing an impressive assortment of themes and concepts. Although some films experienced technical glitches, it was still easy to see the obvious talent and creativity of the cast and crew involved. Thanks partly to Ania's presenting, the night felt much less exclusive in comparison to last year's event. Nevertheless, Cambridge Shorts' problem with diversity unfortunately persists, a shortcoming we hope to see tackled in the next showcasing of our students' undoubtable filmmaking talent ●



JOHNNY KING

Music

When I was given the opportunity to interview Clean Bandit I knew that it was too good to be true. Was I really going to get the chance to meet the chart-topping band and get the ultimate Instagram selfie? No. Embarrassingly, having already bragged to all my friends that I had virtually become the band's fourth member, I discovered I would be conducting the interview over email. However I was still excited to pose some questions to Grace Chatto, cellist and singer from Clean Bandit, who I imagined, based on her Twitter feed, would provide some lively and controversial answers.

I began with talking about the impact of her huge success on her lifestyle, and the experience of collaborating with famous artists like Zara Larsson and Sean Paul. I ask her about adjusting from living as a normal student to becoming a worldwide star. She disputes my suggestion that Cambridge is a "normal university experience," stating that for her "it was totally heaven living in Cambridge and being in that environment. The years after that were really difficult: we lived in one tiny room and Jack built a bed that was high up so we could live underneath it in the day, with all our keyboards and mini studio. We did all kinds of random jobs to try to make ends meet, because we really wanted to make our career as musicians. Having success with our recent songs, especially this last year, has been absolutely amazing and we've had no problem at all adjusting to the lifestyle! It's a gift."

The leads me to wonder about the difficult choice Chatto and her fellow members had to make on graduating from Cambridge and pursuing music over a conventional career path. I ask how the band possibly managed to balance their commitment to creative music with the daunting Cambridge workload? Chatto replied that ultimately students should always follow their heart over their head: "I think you always have to pursue what you love," she states, "otherwise you won't be good at it and you won't enjoy your life. Life is so short, so it's never a good idea to not do what you love. If you don't know what you love at the time you leave university, that's fine and you can just try stuff out and see where it takes you, but if you do know, then you have to do everything you can to make it happen. I never felt any pressure to do something more reliable (our parents were very supportive of the music idea) and I was never scared that this might not work out: *if you think you can, you can.*"

Interestingly, she challenges my assumption that a Cambridge workload is a barrier to the pursuit of creativity and passion – she raves about Cambridge. "Being at Cambridge was such a huge part of the band history," she explains – "there are so many incredible opportunities for musicians to develop alongside academic studies, and actually, so many more performance opportunities than at music college! The May Balls were an invaluable experience: being able to do our first gigs



Interview: Clean Bandit's Grace Chatto



Sarah Collins
speaks to Cambridge
alumnus on her musical
and political drive

on big high-tech stages supporting people like Calvin Harris and Dizzee Rascal as opposed to most bands who have to go round pubs and stuff – I am so grateful for all of this."

Finally, we get political. Chatto was recently in the news when the BBC blotted out a 'Corbyn' slogan from her t-shirt in their coverage of the One Love Manchester concert. I ask her about how her Corbynista politics interact with her music and her public persona. Chatto feels that "we are at a critical moment for the country and the world. Politics is not separate to any of our lives: it IS life. Before Jeremy Corbyn was elected as leader of the party, I was always fairly apathetic towards party politics because we were all born into the Britain that Margaret Thatcher built and in our life time the general elections have not meant much more than an argument about a 3% change in tax and spend priorities between the two main parties. But now that has all changed... we are in an emergency situation after hitting the rock bottom of six years of Conservative austerity that resulted in the shocking Brexit result."

When asked if her politics influences her music, she highlights that "'Rockabye' is the only political song we've made, and it is probably my favourite! Particularly in the current climate, it felt important to draw attention to women who struggle to make ends meet and are forced to take desperate measures in order to give their children a shot at life."

Chatto spares no punches for the Conservative government, and feels that it's important for public figures to engage in the debate, "especially as so much of the mainstream media are mates of the Tories and are used by them to deflect blame away from their government for the dreadful state the country is in.

People need to look elsewhere to gain a more rounded opinion."

Throughout the interview Chatto is honest and passionate about both her music and her politics.

As I begin my final academic year in Cambridge and begin planning for my future, Chatto is an example that sometimes, the road less travelled leads to the greatest success ●

Clean Bandit return to Cambridge at the Corn Exchange on the 30th October. Visit cleanbandit.co.uk for tickets

REVIEW

King Krule
The OOO
True Panther Sounds
★★★★★

The cover of *The OOO* looks up at a lonely plane leaving a pastel pink trail of gas across an blank blue sky. The image is paradoxical: is King Krule flying away or is he stuck down here on earth? Archy Marshall's (his real name) preoccupation with floating and sinking, of separation from the world, has appeared throughout his musical career. He was *6 Feet Under the Moon* on his debut and finding *A New Place 2 Drown* in 2015. Never satisfied, never belonging, *The OOO* continues this odyssey of stifling loneliness. At just over an hour, the record is a meandering walk through the dark recesses of a solitary mind, channeling a brilliant mix of the alienation of depression and the everyday mundanity of the Bermondsey streets where Marshall grew up.

The opener, 'Biscuit Town', expresses this fusion straight away. Jazzy and mysterious synth chords float on top of a shuffling beat, over which Krule sings about his Motorola and a young Gianfranco Zola. His ability to turn a 'city of parasites' into art was something he displayed with gusto on his debut, yet this time it feels more and more like we are being pulled into his own mind. The songs, more often than not, feel like trips through thought spirals and depressive episodes. Conventional structure doesn't need to apply and the album, with much success, glides from idea to idea in a twisting, turning haze.

Sonically, it's woozy mix of free jazz, ethereal ambience, punk rock and stuttering, trippy beats, colliding to create a profoundly alien pallet of sounds. Whines, screeches and buzzes fill the background throughout. Even on the album's most punchy song, 'Emergency Blimp', a robotic wail begins at the 1:30 mark, keeping the foreign feel and stopping the music ever reaching the accessibility of earlier hits on *6 Feet Beneath the Moon*. The most bizarre of the instrumental choices is perhaps on 'Cadet Limbo' as he mixes honky tonk piano and klezmer-style clarinet, a marriage that is much more harmonious than one



would expect. There are moments like this all through the record, Okay Kaya's pitched down, Anohni-like vocals on 'Slush Puppy' mixing well with Krule's deep voice and the baritone sax solo in 'Dum Surfer' adding an amazing new element to the driving punk. These sections often feel like bonus cuts from David Bowie's swan song *Blackstar*, the winding and hypnotic jazz creating an other-worldly atmosphere.

The nebulous nature of the song writing means some moments feel like they could take different paths. On 'The Locomotive' it seems the track is always about to gain momentum but constantly drifts away, and on 'Lonely Blue' it almost becomes a lilting waltz but draws back to a shuffling tempo. While these songs retain integrity and mostly fit with the meandering nature of the record, it's other ones that veer a little into self-indulgence. Shorter tracks like 'Sublunary' and 'A Slide In (New Drugs)' don't add much to the overall experience and, with the last quarter of an hour devoted to (very) slow burners, the title track (17th out of 19 songs) really should have been the final one. Before the album, King Krule expressed his nightmare scenario of being 'just a fucking pop artist' and, with the mainstream success of tracks like 'Easy Easy' (it was covered by Willow Smith for God's sake), these occasional misfires are his most obtuse moments of pushback.

Despite this slightly flabby track list, Marshall is able to achieve a uniform sense of isolation across the album. All the musical wizardry and creative flair, even when it doesn't quite hit the mark, drops the listener into textured dark worlds of loneliness and paranoia, insomnia and lost love, distance and alienation. It's an unsettling ride, but a thrilling one ●

Seth Jordan

Theatre

More reviews are available online at:
varsity.co.uk/theatre



REVIEW



JOHANNES HJORTH

MIST: *Diazepam*

★★★★☆

Johnny King and Carine Valarché have produced a strange creature. Lying somewhere between immersive theatre and performance art, *MIST: Diazepam* offers audiences a night of surreal cabaret performances interspersed with increasingly disturbing glimpses into the psyches of its motley cast. *MIST* thrusts us into a dystopian future in which we peer into the last bar in town, ‘floating around in an ocean of broken dreams and lonely corners’. This is certainly not a comforting trip to your local pub.

In many ways, this is a difficult show to review. Part of the issue is that there is little discernible narrative and at times, characters and context feel frustratingly fragmentary.

This is not entirely a criticism. One gets the sense that this is the point. As the audience, we play the role of transient observers, stepping through the doors of Mist to experience a snapshot of the world within.

King and Valarché should be commended for the rich world-building effect they achieve, as key details tantalise from hidden histories beyond those on stage. We may begin however, with the more straightforward elements: the production was slick, with excellent use of emotive lighting. As violence seeps into the second half, the stage is plunged into a disturbing primal red, at other times, bright technicolour tones bathe the characters in psychedelic hues.

Also fantastic are the various cabaret performances – eerie and powerful, they are a great showcase of the range and depth of talent in Cambridge. Of particular note was the unsettling crooning of Elfine Obscura

(Amber Reeves Pigott) and the truly impressive Shadow Dynamo (Sharla Petterson and Auréliane Pierret), whose gymnastic routine is alone worth the price of admission.

The rest of the cast was also impressive. Harry Burke, as the volatile Sidney Diazepam has a physical dynamism and superb emotional range, bringing complexity and all-important ambiguity to an otherwise potentially cardboard character. Of the triad of downbeat bar regulars, the monotonous Saliva Simone (Valarché) is a standout, providing moments of comedy and horror in equal measure.

But after all the hype, the brilliant marketing and the mysterious preview – what is the bloody play actually about? This is a question I have been wrestling with for some time. The notes I dutifully made at the time prove to be as puzzling as the play. A sample: “jenga... wailing dissonance explosions and collapse – a TRAIN?” In the spirit of the shattered, multifaceted nature of the play itself, which

divides the stage in two and recombines it, divides audience from performers and merges them together again, your reviewer proposes two analyses.

Analysis A: *MIST: Diazepam* is a play about confronting the self. We are presented with a series of figures in an amorphous psychic landscape. They are slivers of identities, externalised and projected into odd, unsettling characters. Perhaps the bar regulars are really the Id, Ego and Super-Ego in disguise. Sidney and Viscera Skye (played with convincing realism by Annabel Bolton) engage in a therapeutic ritual, leaving us with half-hints at histories of sexual violence, betrayal and other such light-hearted personal sagas. As the ritual repeats, the smooth mask of performance begins to slip. Violence erupts into the play – the characters threaten to crumble before our eyes. The play however, does not coax tears – instead it teases us to laughter with the provocation of increasingly shocking violence before whirling its critical eye upon the audience itself. Locked in a dialogic process between performance and reflective observation, the characters struggle to make sense of their purpose in a world in which shadowy hands are pulling at the strings.

Analysis B: *MIST: Diazepam* is a play about...well, let’s just say (and one must be delicate here) that it is a product of the ironic post-modern (dare I say even post-postmodern) times we live in. Disjointed and fickle, with a short attention span and willing to blag its way through, the play is all of us (i.e. Cambridge students), or at least remarkably similar to your reviewer during supervisions. How much are the audience being played? Verdict unclear. Self-aware, frustrating but also oddly fascinating – *MIST: Diazepam* is not one to be missed (hold on...). The play is over alas, but surely the performance continues ●

Elizabeth Huang

Art with an agenda

Theatre can often be a very passive medium. You sit, you watch, you enjoy. It makes you feel, but it takes a lot to make you continue to feel after the production ends.

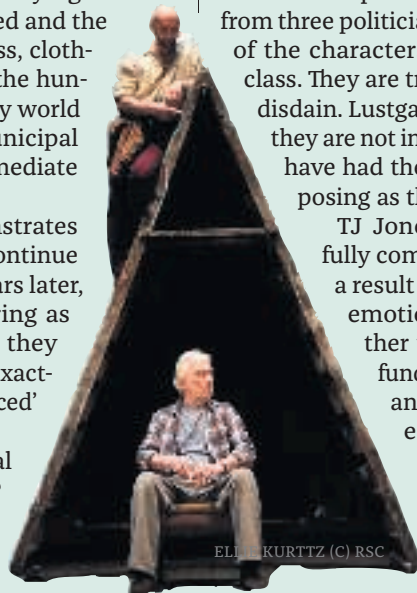
Anders Lustgarten’s *The Seven Acts of Mercy* kept me thinking for months after I saw it in the Christmas vacation. It appears to be Caravaggio’s story – a tortured genius learning compassion in a world severely wanting for it. However, the play cuts between Caravaggio’s world and modern day Liverpool, where decency is also in apparently short supply.

The comparisons with the contemporary world shown parallel to Caravaggio’s are striking. There are clear references to our current political culture, more concerned with slickness and soundbites than distressing, pressing realities. There is a particularly biting criticism of life under an austerity regime, with people very like us and the people we know sacrificing their pride to survive.

Caravaggio’s painting depicts the seven Catholic corporal works of mercy – what we might call human rights. Burying the dead, visiting the imprisoned and the sick, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked and feeding the hungry. In a seventeenth century world lacking a sophisticated municipal system, these are very immediate concerns.

What Lustgarten demonstrates in his writing is that they continue to be real. Four hundred years later, people are depicted suffering as they are deprived of what they need – but now, they suffer exactly because there is an ‘advanced’ administrative system.

Lustgarten’s fundamental question is: what is life worth? Is it worth a threat to your values or moral system? Is it worth a growing national debt? By putting us inside the life of a grandfather, Leon, and his preteen grandson Mickey, this confrontation is uncomfortable in the extreme. Watching an old man lose his house as a result of it being sold on – a house he lived in for decades, that he raised his children and grandchildren in – is heart-breaking. Emotional logic is shown



ELFINE KURTZ (C) RSC

to be worthless in a system more concerned, distastefully so, with money.

What is especially striking is that, aside from three politicians and social workers, all of the characters are obviously working-class. They are treated with dismissal and disdain. Lustgarten forcefully shows that they are not inherently undignified. They have had their dignity taken by those posing as their social superiors.

TJ Jones’ Mickey is a wonderfully complex child – aggressive as a result of his difficult upbringing, emotionally attached to the father who abandoned him, but fundamentally incredibly kind, and ambitious with his generosity. As we watch Caravaggio paint, we watch Mickey enact the acts of mercy.

His visit to the food bank is especially poignant. We see the shame that ordinary people feel over having to scrape and scramble for the absolute fundamentals of life. Now, in the wake of Jacob Rees-Mogg’s comment on the pride we should feel at increasing use of food banks, this seems an especially thoughtful criticism of a government that can often fail to reflect

on the lives of the downtrodden. It is not interested in picking them back up.

There is an overt viciousness about the world of seventeenth century Naples, where Caravaggio has fled after killing a man in Rome. It might be expected that life had become softer: that we have progressed. Lustgarten’s writing shows that we have not. The bad things are just more adeptly hidden, often by the people who are there to protect us.

The overlap between the two worlds was especially well-demonstrated in one, beautiful frame. Patrick O’Kane as Caravaggio stands on his ladder, looking down at Tom Georgeson’s Leon. Both characters dedicated their lives, in different ways, to art – and it got them both nowhere. Compassion cannot be exchanged for kindness, and this difficult lesson took them each a lifetime to learn.

It is a painful play to watch because there is no redemption. Life goes on when people have no houses or food or dignity – and we know it does, because our lives go on while our peers are deprived of these things. Lustgarten’s writing strikes a chord – it shines a light on our frequently wilful ignorance of others’ misfortune because it suits us. It cannot suit us anymore ●

Eve Hodgson

Fashion

Is female body hair still revolutionary?

Vivienne Hopley-Jones discusses Adidas' latest campaign which sparked uproar after featuring a model with unshaven legs

“I can't believe I still have to protest this fucking shit” was the quote bandished in the viral image shared on social media of one of many women in Poland protesting proposed strict laws surrounding abortion in October 2016, a sentiment that resonated worldwide with the still-fresh election of businessman-turned-politician Donald Trump. This phrase has become a watchword for feminism more generally; it perfectly sums up the constant barriers, both obvious and subtle, women are still faced with daily.

From women's rights to the everyday sexism which is embedded in our culture, it can often feel that with every Doc Marten-clad foot forward, there's yet another old white man to push you ten steps back. The response to Adidas' latest Superstar campaign is yet another addition to the tirelessly amassing contemporary cases of the disrespect and misunderstanding of women enmeshed in our society.

Adidas' latest marketing venture focuses on inclusivity, featuring a variety of artists and influencers who challenge societal norms in various ways through sexuality, body image, and gender stereotypes and boundaries. And yet, the denotation SBNS (shocked but not surprised), which I have frequently borrowed from Liberty ex-director Shami Chakrabarti, especially in the tumultuous political climate of recent years, is an alarmingly apt description to my general feelings about the reaction one particular model from Adidas's footwear campaign has received.

The image which has garnered the most attention is that of 26-year-old Swedish artist, Arvida Byström. Petite, white and blonde, Byström is the archetypal 'female' that social media loves, which is what makes the campaign shot more emphatic. With a short blonde bob and a reminiscently Austen-esque lacy dress, Byström is powerful and remarkably 'unfeminine'; her power stance not only reveals the Adidas originals, but more controversially to the mass of public opinion, her hair-covered legs.

Byström received a torrent of hate, ranging from woefully uneducated comments of “disgusting” and “unhygienic”, to Byström's account of receiving personal rape threats. Comments on Adidas's YouTube video included “there should be no reason to be proud for being disgusting” and the model was accused of “rejecting all modern definitions of beauty and hygiene”. Whilst Adidas and Byström have also



received much love and admiration for this stance in the face of such gender-based hatred, it is deeply depressing that the image of a female with body hair is seen as so revolutionary in modern society.

Some have argued that Adidas are commercialising the current social climate with its focus on the fluctuation of boundaries of sex and gender, yet I think that it can be superficial to discredit brands on such reasons. Big names like Adidas have the power to both reflect and influence the society they are part of, and let's be honest, I'd much rather have them use their muscular advertising prowess to promote progressive and inclusive ideas than to reaffirm current stereotypes surrounding gender. Is it not naive to reject a brand's power socially in fear of it 'corrupting' the original message?

In a post on Instagram, the ever-political Byström added to the conversation in her acknowledgment of herself as “such an abled,

►► **Barbie Ferreira, an activist for plus-size models and body positivity, and Rachelle Vinberg, founding member of The Skate Kitchen, also featured in the campaign.**



white, cis body with its only nonconforming feature being a lil leg hair”, recognising how much harder it is for individuals who “do not possess all these privileges”. To some extent, it is Byström's inherent femininity that I think is the root of the aggressive reaction.

Feminists are still stereotypically seen as ugly man-haters, but for this young woman, who looks like everything society wants, to reject and play with gender so absolutely, that it in itself seems forbidden. It is one thing

for a woman who society already considers outside of the normative image to have body hair, but there must be a choice; a choice between femininity and masculinity, 'girlishness' and strength, intelligence and beauty. Anything beyond this still seems too much for the binary-minded patriarchy to take ●



VIVIENNE HOPLEY-JONES



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



A guide to shopping in Cambridge

At first glance, Cambridge doesn't seem like the fashion capital of the academic world. I'm not claiming that Milan's Via Montenapoleone pales in comparison to King's Parade, but Cambridge does in fact offer a real treasure-trove of independent boutiques, vintage shops and a surprising variety of high-street chains.

After a few weeks we've all noticed the sartorial flexibility required to keep up with the varied social events here, but with these tips and tricks you can nail every occasion from Turf to formal.

Formals/Black Tie Events

If you trust stereotypes, they're a staple of Cambridge life and in any case, a fun thing to dress up for. High-street wise, hit

up Topshop for 90s silhouettes and glitzy wrap dresses, then wander over to Zara for your embroidered culottes and tailored trousers needs.

If you're after something unique and have never heard the word 'budget' before, head to my personal heaven, Bowns, next to Magdalene. According to their web-

site, it's a 'cornucopia' of contemporary fashion from Vivienne Westwood to obscure but brilliant French labels, and even if out of most students' price points, it's a feast for the eyes and fashion inspiration. For black tie balls, Topshop again is your friend or, alternatively, Phase Eight's dresses in the Grand Arcade are beautifully made.

Clubbing

Clubbing in Cambridge is casual; anything but 'jeans and a nice top' is apparently shaking it up. For the lazy fashion fans out there like me, this is a relief; you can go to the Grand Arcade and head to just about any high-street

brand for those mesh bodysuits and velvet bandeaus.

If you're a vintage fan and want to stand out, a personal favourite of mine among Cambridge's vintage shops is Jemporium Vintage, with an incredible range of authentic pieces to give any outfit an edge. Vintage fairs in Cambridge are also usually fantastic, so keep an eye out for Judy's Affordable Vintage Fair in the Guildhall in November or the upcoming 'Weigh and Pay' vintage fairs.

Library/Lectures

In case you actually want to work on your degree, you need something comfortable enough for those essay crises, but eye-catching enough for your library crush. My

fix-all answer to this is: charity shops! You're spoilt for choice at Cambridge - perfect to build a wardrobe of unique pieces that come with a backstory.

Cancer Research next to Downing College has a great range of shirts, and Sally Ann's on Mill Road is another excellent option to get yourself a bargain before stopping at the nearby Seoul Plaza for kimchi and Yuzu tea. For the Sidgwick Site fashion parade, Oasis by Market Square consistently has gorgeous patterns. While you're there, hit up the market stalls for unique jewellery and scarves, as well as second-hand books if you really want to nail that intellectual style.

As winter approaches, a good coat is a must to keep warm on your way to lectures. Finding the right coat can seem like an impossible task at times, but a good place to start is wandering down the cobbled streets of Trinity Street and Rose Crescent on a crisp autumn morning. It's a dangerous game, because while Toast, Jigsaw or Comptoir des Cotonniers may have the best aesthetics, they're definitely an indulgence.

But if the garment that's going to keep you from getting pneumonia on the walk back from Life isn't worth an investment, what is? If you find yourself there on a high after acing a supervision, follow the immortal advice of the iconic Donna Meagle and treat yo'self ●

Carlotta Wright-de-la-Cal



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Sport

How to resolve the Pacific Islands player drain?

Ben Cisneros

Rugby Columnist

The past two weekends have seen some scintillating European rugby played. Among the many players who have set the tournament alight, there is a significant crop of Pacific Islands players. The likes of Nemani Nadolo, Leone Nakarawa, Virimi Vakatawa, Alivereti Raka, Telusa Veianu, Joshua Tuisova, Nathan Hughes and Taulupe Faletau have all made their considerable presence felt. This weekend alone, there were approximately 30 Pacific Island-born players representing clubs in the Champions Cup. If you look across all of Europe's professional leagues, that number jumps up to nearly 700.

The talent of Pacific Island rugby is irrefutable – especially that of Fiji, the Olympic Sevens gold medallists – yet the national teams continue to struggle. Fiji have crept into the top 10 in the world rankings, but Tonga lie in 13th and Samoa 16th, with the latter struggling to qualify for the 2019 World Cup. The last time any of them made it beyond the World Cup group stages was in 2007.

There are many reasons for their plight, not least the increase in market forces in the last decade. They are under-resourced, their governing bodies poorly structured and arguably corrupt, their



▲ Samoa last reached the quarter-final of the World Cup in 1995

(JOLON PENNA)

players represent clubs across the world which, on a low budget, makes training together difficult, and some of their most talented athletes are choosing to play for other countries. On one weekend last autumn, five teams named Fijian wingers in their matchday squads; only one of those teams was Fiji.

Samoa's problems have been particularly well-documented of late. It has been reported that they are close to filing for bankruptcy ahead of next month's Test against England, and they have requested a £150,000 cut of the estimated £10

million Twickenham revenue. At present, home unions keep 100% of their gate takings and though, in theory, this would be reciprocated when Samoa play host, can you remember when England last played in Samoa? Oh wait, they never have. What's more, while England's players will take home £22,000 per game this autumn, the Samoans will earn a mere £650. The inequality is staggering. Perhaps the most disappointing thing is that this is not the first time this issue has reared its ugly head. When England last faced Samoa at Twickenham, in 2014, there was talk of strike action by the Pacific Islanders.

Then there is the issue of player exploitation. Pacific Rugby Welfare – an organisation set up by ex-players to support Pacific Islanders – has branded the French academies in Fiji 'illegal'. World Rugby regulations state that you are not allowed to have any academies outside of the physical boundaries of your nation, and yet Clermont Auvergne do just that. The latest flying Fijian to burst onto the French scene is Alivereti Raka. He trained at the Nadroga academy in Fiji, which is tied to that of Clermont, and is where his team-mates Peceli Yato and Noa Nakaitaci also started out. However, while Yato proudly represents Fiji, Nakaitaci is a regular member of the French national team and, having been omitted from Fiji's squad for the autumn internationals, speculation is growing that Raka may be following his path, with the French squad to be announced this week.

In truth, player 'poaching' has become something of French speciality – think Rory Kockott, Scott Spedding and Virimi Vakatawa (all the more amusing when pronounced in French). Raka could be their next victim. He is eligible under World Rugby's regulations, having lived in France for three years now, but FFR president Bernard Laporte announced earlier this year that they would only pick French citizens. Citizenship normally takes five years to acquire but as Raka is married to a French citizen, it would take him only four years. It will be interesting to see if they stick to their word.

With the system as it is at present, you cannot blame the players for these choices. The economic model is such that the northern hemisphere nations are significantly richer than the rest and, with families or even whole villages to support back home, players must prioritise money over national allegiance a lot of the time. With rugby being a time-limited career, it is not hard to see why these players want to make as much of a living as they can, while they can. It is a matter of need.

The difficulty is that this creates a player drain. More and more players are leaving the Pacific Islands, some abandoning their allegiance altogether. This makes rugby in the islands unsustainable at a high level.

So what can be done?

Firstly, there must be improved governance. Historically, their unions have been corrupt and mismanaged. Indeed, there is speculation that the existence of Clermont's academy in Fiji may be due to financial 'back-handers'. It is all well and good asking for generosity from the rugby world, but there is no guarantee at present that any money given would be well spent. World Rugby would be far

better off lending these unions administrators, to go in and establish proper institutions. As the saying goes, give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

Next, the players of each country should unionise. The Rugby Players' Association in England is particularly ac-

The last time a Pacific island nation made it to the World Cup quarter-final (Fiji)

2007

tive, and has recently spoken out against the extended season proposals. In places like Fiji, where their gold medal-winning Sevens players are not even being paid, a players' union could make a real difference.

It was over this issue that Fijian rugby and Sevens mastermind Ben Ryan parted company after the Rio Olympics. Ryan has been outspoken about the state of the game in the Pacific, and has been a strong proponent for a Fijian Super Rugby team. World Rugby Vice-Chairman Agustín Pichot has backed calls for reform, and has advocated a system like Argentina's where, to be selected internationally, you must play for their Super Rugby side, *Los Jaguares*.



"The Argentinian system is the way forward," said Pichot. "Our guys are living in Argentina and making good money relative to our economy. Yes, they can make more money in Europe but at least they have the option to stay at home. There is no revenue share there." A Fijian team has made a huge impact in their first season in the National Rugby Championship in Australia this year, whilst existing Super Rugby teams have staged matches in the Fijian capital, Suva. I would advocate restructuring Super Rugby – perhaps introducing promotion/relegation – and adding two Pacific Islands teams.

For World Rugby, there are other avenues which could be explored. Revising further the international eligibility criteria as advocated here before would be one way, while I would equally support a worldwide minimum match fee at international level. For poorer unions, this could be subsidised by World Rugby.

Most importantly, there needs to be serious discussion about the redistribution of wealth in international rugby: this isn't just a problem for the Pacific Islands. England and France are by far the richest unions, leaving even the likes of New Zealand a long way behind.

Some form of revenue sharing would provide a way forward, and has proved highly successful in the NFL, though the RFU for one will not warm to the idea.

In an increasingly commercial context, it is very easy to allow capitalist values to drive the sporting world forward. But for high-level competition in international rugby to be sustainable, these must give way to pragmatic thinking.

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In conversation with: Adam Parkes

Lawrence Hopkins

speaks to the captain of Cambridge's Golf Club, **Adam Parkes**

For all intents and purposes, CUGC is run by fourth year Johnian Adam Parkes. Though the club has a President, Mr Roger Mosey, Master of Selwyn College, the role held by Parkes is one that is far from ceremonial. Though he clocks up in excess of eight thousand miles a year ferrying himself to and from fixtures around the country, the enthusiasm Parkes has for the game of golf, one sometimes described as just a good walk ruined, is unwavering.

Though fresh from a humbling defeat at Hankley Common Golf Club at the weekend, Parkes has no fear for the state of his men's side: "fixtures are funny things. There is always a massive home advantage. We took eight guys to Hankley Common, only two had seen the course before, and with 40mph gusts this was always going to be a tricky fixture. There is a fixture every year we play at Sunningdale; I don't think we have won in around 70 years. It's part and parcel of the game.

"There is certainly no sense of frustration; we know we will lose a lot of matches, but that's just the way things go. And so when we play well and win,



it is very rewarding: recently we beat the Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society (The Society) for the first time in about five years."

The fixture slate for CUGC is hectic, and golf is not a sport that takes little time, rounds can easily exceed four hours. So how does the University's premier golfer find balancing time, even now in his fourth year?

"The time commitment is a lot; I find the sleep most difficult. For some fixtures we are up at 4:30 in the morning, then we have to travel for two hours. And then we have to play so many holes of golf; I find that I am more tired after a weekend than before it. In Michaelmas, particularly, we, as a club, make things as flexible as possible, and of course work has to come first."

The Society, Parkes tells me, is one for the Old Blues of Oxford and Cambridge Golf Clubs. As part of the funding arrangement both clubs cannot accept outside sponsorship, something not lost on Parkes who is aware that the game of golf is "massively expensive"; however, The Society funds a trust which keeps the university game "within the realms of what a student can afford."

"The cost can sometimes be a barrier. A few players, in my experience, have not been able to do everything, but I have never come across a player who cannot play purely because of financial reasons."

With all this in mind I ask the captain if golf at Cambridge is an elite, even aloof sport: "We don't take beginners, because we don't have the funding and because there would be no chance of them getting into a team for Varsity so that can skew the demographic. But, in my time the club has increasingly come to be the preserve of undergraduates; gone are the days when, as it was in my first year, eight of the ten guys would be international and/or postgraduates."



The number of years since Cambridge last won the golf Varsity match

CUGC have not won a men's Varsity Match against their Oxford counterparts in eight years, a lengthy losing streak, though this is not something that weighs on the mind of the captain: "I know that six of those eight losses were in no way my responsibility. We had an opportunity to snap the streak a few years back but we didn't take it; since then, Oxford's squad depth has helped them over the line. Being a young team too there is no scar tissue either; we have every chance."

The world of golf is an old one; the

rules are administered by The Royal & Ancient, an offshoot of the members club of St Andrews in Scotland. It is a world facing its own challenges when it comes to diversity and inclusivity: The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, better known as the members of Muirfield, only last year voted against admitting women. Muirfield has played host to the men's Varsity Match in recent years.

"I am certainly aware that there are some clubs that we go to where the atmosphere is not one we would like to see. Some clubs are certainly stuck in their ways, but we are always polite. Some clubs have become a bit of a refuge for this supposedly traditional thinking but there are hundreds of clubs that are very progressive; I grew up playing mixed foursomes, and it is only the minority that cling to what they view as tradition."

The 129th Varsity Match at Royal Porthcawl is a long way off, being contested in late March. There are certainly a vast array of fixtures to be navigated by the Blues squad before then. Parkes tells me there is a fixture every weekend – he proclaims that CUGC have "the best fixture list of any club in the country" between now and then.

But, with victory over The Society under his belt, the Captain is quietly confident about his team's chances: "We are in the best place we can be; it is still anyone's game".



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Golf In conversation with Adam Parkes, captain of CUGC 35



Clinical Cambridge notch statement win

Harry Normanton
Senior Sports Reporter

CULNC 48
OUNC 43

BUCS Midlands 1A, University of Cambridge Sports Centre

A ferocious defensive effort helped Cambridge to a comprehensive 48-43 victory over Oxford at the University Sports Centre on Wednesday evening. This BUCS league victory, the Light Blues' third in a row to start the season, had the feeling of a statement of intent ahead of the Varsity match in February.

Cambridge more or less dominated the match from start to finish. After the game, Light Blue captain and wing defender Chloe Merrell was quick to highlight her team's defensive intensity as the source of their dominance: "I think that was what probably won us the match." Throughout the 40 minutes the Light Blues showed a tenacity that their visitors could not match, swatting, deflecting and intercepting passes to prevent Oxford developing any rhythm in their 'through court' game – the phase when a team shifts from attack to defence.

Despite their dominance early on, Cambridge were initially unable to make

their superiority show. A series of penalties and missed shots kept them off the scoreboard for the first three minutes, suggesting a degree of nervousness from a relatively inexperienced team featuring just four members of last year's victorious Varsity squad. Captain Merrell admitted that "playing Oxford is a big psychological test for us", and felt that the "sticky" start was a product of that. But any nerves were quickly settled as confident shooting from goal attacker Frances Lee-Barber propelled Cambridge to a 9-4 lead.

Netball is a game that can be broken down into distinct phases. The through court game is a breakneck flurry of movement as the attacking team attempts to move the ball towards the shooting arc as quickly as possible, while scrambling defenders attempt to tip the ball away. Attackers use a range of ploys to evade the attention of their opponents, from subtle bounce passes to fizzing one-handed shoulder passes that often travel up to twenty metres. Often the ball is launched into empty spaces, anticipating the movement of teammates, who leap to make fingertip catches. They then have only three seconds to move the ball on. The result is a wild geometric swirl of structured chaos.

When the ball reaches either the goal

attacker or goal shooter inside the shooting arc, though, and they decide to shoot, the tempo of the game changes. For a moment, time is suspended. The rest of the teams are stilled as the action crystallises into a contest between attacker and defender. The latter is not allowed within three feet of the former, though, so in practice, it is a question of resolve on the part of the shooter. While the defender leans over on tiptoes, waves their arms and does everything they can to block or at least distract the attacker, they must retain their composure in propelling the ball into the ten foot high hoop. And Cambridge's attacking duo of Frances Lee-Barber and Zoë Starbuck outshone their Oxford counterparts in this throughout the match.

In spite of the Light Blues' defensive intensity and attacking focus, Oxford, to their credit, were able to cling onto their coattails, rallying whenever their hosts threatened to run away with it. They trimmed a nine-point deficit with seven minutes to play to just four points, and although they were unable to snatch an unlikely victory, captain Elsa Wakeman felt there was cause for optimism in that strong finish. After the game, she played down the notion that the game had any significant ramifications for the Varsity match in February, emphasising

▲▼CULNC beat Oxford 47-41 in last year's Varsity match
(HARRY NORMANTON)



that Oxford's inferiority in the league rarely had any effect on the result in the Varsity match: "We have a reputation for losing in the league but pulling out the win at Varsity". That fixture, she suggested, brought with it extra motivation: "where we finish in the league matters to us, but everyone's heart is really in the Varsity match". Cambridge captain Chloe Merrell was also wary of making too much of the win beyond the three points for the Light Blues, acknowledging that "Varsity is its own occasion".

There was, nevertheless, undisguised delight on Merrell's part to have won this first encounter of the season. In doing so, she thought, the new-look Blues had broken an important psychological barrier ahead of the game that will do most to define their season: "We know we can do it".

Next up for CULNC is a trip to the Midlands to take on Nottingham Trent.

Teams:

Cambridge: S. Godlee, L. Gumbiti-Zimuto, R. Hurst, S. Maitland, C. Cunningham, C. Merrell (c), F. Lee-Barber, R. Haggie, Z. Starbuck

Oxford: E.M. Wakeman, C. Lavender, I. Cooper, E. Ostridge, C. Ellis, L. Hindley, I. Picton-Turberville, H. Danbury, K. McCann, B. Annells

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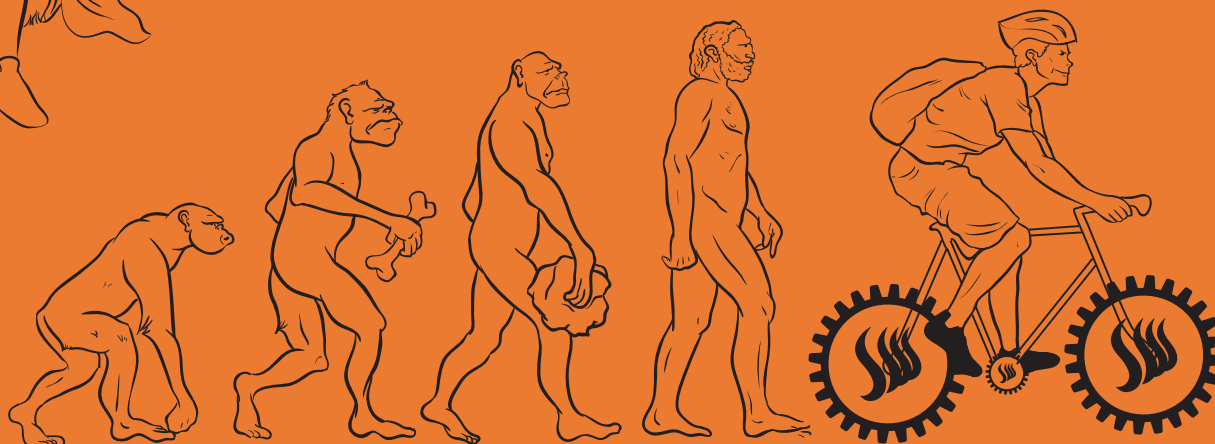
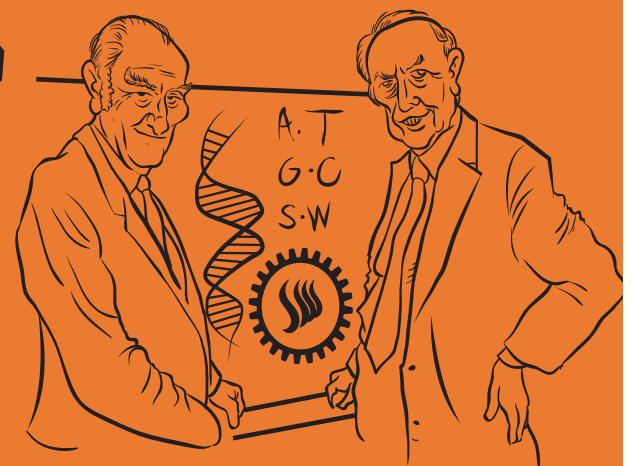
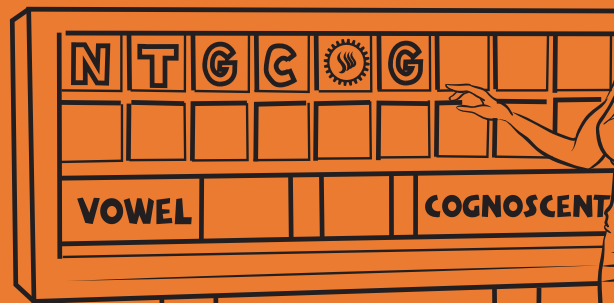
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