

Vulture

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20-21



17%

of this year's Maths intake were women

Shining a light on Cambridge Mathematics' woman problem

News 2-3

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# VARSITY



Students waved banners and held signs on King's Parade in Tuesday night following abuse directed at CUSU's women's officer

(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

## Exam results show black attainment gap growing

Matt Gutteridge Deputy Editor  
Caitlin Smith Senior News Editor

Statistics from last year's examinations have revealed a wide attainment gap between ethnic groups, analysis by *Varsity* has revealed.

The percentage of black students who achieved a First in their Tripos exams fell this year, against the background of a slight uptick in Firsts across all students.

The figures, which take into account examination results achieved by undergraduates in all years, show that only 10.5% of students who identify as "Black or Black British - African" were awarded a First in 2017, less than half of the overall average of 24.4%, while no students who identify as "Black or Black British - Caribbean" or "Other Black background" received the top grade.

Statistics further show that black African and Caribbean students are collectively twice as likely to receive a Lower Second or a Third than average.

Analysis of the class lists for last year's undergraduate exam results has found marked disparities in the level of academic achievement across different groups and subjects. *Varsity* found:

- The black attainment gap, in terms of percentage point difference in the proportion students achieving Firsts, has grown from 13.0% to 16.2% compared with last year
- The gender attainment gap is also widening, with men receiving 12.2% more Firsts than women
- 37.5% of students studying Education were given a First, while only 11% of Lawyers received the top mark

The lack of samples large enough to give a truly representative picture also

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# Marches and faculty meetings as Cantabs rally for decolonisation

Elizabeth Shaw  
News Correspondent

The movements towards the decolonisation of the Cambridge English Tripos continues to make progress, following a working group meeting on Wednesday 1st November.

The 'Decolonising the Curriculum Faculty Research Initiative', a group established with the intention of catalysing

the decolonisation of curricula across the University, met to discuss ideas to pitch to the English Faculty. The panel featured Lola Olufemi, CUSU women's officer, Dr Chana Morgenstern and Dr Priyamvada Gopal as members of the Faculty responsible for the elective paper in postcolonial literature, and Dr Adam Branch from the Department of Politics and International Studies, who focused on how the initiative could affect other curricula.

The final paragraph of the open letter to the Faculty, which obtained over 100 signatories and was circulated earlier this year, was read to the group. While reactions to the letter have been largely positive, Dr Gopal expressed concern that the positive engagement may "stop at token inclusion". There may become a point, she warned, at which the Faculty deem the changes to be "enough".

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Inside:

Reports on working groups and Senate House rally

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# EDITORIAL

## A 'moment' in student politics?

It's undeniable that student politics has been in the limelight more than usual recently. We've done our bit to contribute towards that, with recent front pages covering David Lammy's proposals to make Oxbridge more representative of the country as a whole, the government's efforts to stop free speech being 'stamped out' at universities, and of course this week, decolonisation.

But here has also been coverage in the national press. It was *The Daily Telegraph's* inaccurate and inflammatory coverage of the open letter to the English Faculty regarding decolonisation that has got more people talking about the issue, while *Newsnight* a few weeks ago dedicated an entire episode to everything vaguely 'student-y': safe spaces, preferred gender pronouns, and content notes.

This does seem like something of a 'moment', then, and it is right for us to give it the due coverage. Not only are the issues being discussed in government and in the national media ones that directly affects us as students, but they're ones that are often misrepresented. We see it as part of our job at *Varsity* to set the record straight, and give the student perspective in a way that no national publication can.

That's what we've tried to do this week with our coverage of the decolonisation movement. We've got an account of the rally held outside of Senate House on Tuesday evening (the first event of its kind on this particular issue), a report on the English Faculty working group held on Wednesday, and a look at what a decolonised curriculum might look like.

Yet it's important to remember, as many of those involved with the decolonisation efforts are at pains to put across, that these debates are not just taking place when they appear on newspaper front pages in the form of public rallies or the announcements of government ministers. Indeed, to paraphrase many who spoke at the rally on Tuesday, the battle surrounding issues like decolonisation is one that takes place more in working groups and faculty boards than it does on King's Parade.

We hope you find *Varsity's* coverage of the decolonisation debate informative, and we will make sure to keep a close eye on events as they progress. Student issues might not always be on the front pages of *The Telegraph* or *The Times*, but that doesn't mean they're any less worthy of scrutiny and debate.

# Women in maths: why the numbers don't add up

*Varsity examines the factors discouraging women from a career in the subject*

**Stephanie Stacey**  
News Correspondent

One hundred and twenty-seven years after Philippa Fawcett became the first woman to top the Mathematical Tripos, women remain largely underrepresented in mathematics, making up only 17% of undergraduates admitted to Cambridge in 2017.

Although Cambridge's admissions statistics may seem particularly shocking, they reflect a broader lack of participation in maths by female students. Even at secondary school level, certain subjects show large gender imbalances, with women making up less than 30% of students taking A-levels in Further Maths, Physics, and Computing.

The low visibility of women in maths "simultaneously reflects and reinforces the stereotype of these being 'male subjects'", according to the Emmy Noether Society, which works to support women studying mathematical sciences.

Professor Julia Gog, director of studies at Queens' College and member of the Maths Undergraduate Admissions Committee, spoke to *Varsity* about the early factors which influence a woman's later career.

She suggested that "gendered interests and roles are shaped by external forces from even the first few months of life, and I firmly believe this is limiting the number of women in STEM subjects in this country.

"While we can and do work hard in our outreach in attracting applicants of all kinds, clearly that can't cut through a lifetime of being implicitly (or occasionally explicitly) told that maths is not for people like you."

The gender imbalance in mathematics is greater at Cambridge than at most other UK universities, with women making up 41% of students achieving an undergraduate qualification in mathematical sciences across the UK in 2013/14, according to figures published by the WISE Campaign.

Over the same period, the proportion of female mathematicians graduating from Cambridge was less than half the national figure.

In response to this disparity, Dr Orsola Rath Spivack, an admissions officer for the Mathematics Faculty, said that "because of the combination of the discouragement for women towards appropriate pre-university qualifications in maths and science, and the high entry level we require, the pool of female candidates that we can address is small compared



to most other UK universities."

She noted, however, that "even when comparing with Oxford who have similar pre-requisites, Cambridge's proportion of female undergraduates is lower."

Statistics show that this difference is mostly due a far lower application rate to Cambridge, with conversion rates of application to acceptance roughly the same for both institutions.

One explanation for the lower number of women applying to Cambridge is the existence of the STEP entrance exams. All prospective maths students at Cambridge are required to sit the exams in order to meet the conditions of their offers. Prospective students at Oxford do not have to sit STEP.

Dr Rath Spivack, who is also a member of the Athena SWAN Charter, which seeks to advance gender equality in higher education, remarked that "there is anecdotal evidence that women are 'put off' by the nature of STEP exams and the higher risk inherent in offers based on STEP grades.

"There is also anecdotal evidence that women are less likely, on average, to have the same level of help with STEP preparation in schools as male students."

Despite these issues, Professor Julia Gog defended the use of STEP, describing it as "the best predictor we have of

## NEWS

Undergrads cost uni double tuition fees

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## COMMENT

Decolonising the English course will only make it richer

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## FEATURES

Can porn be feminist?

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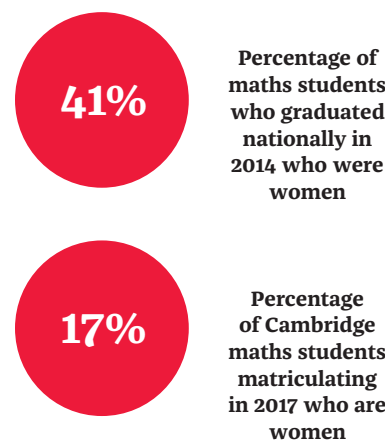


“Because of the discouragement for women towards appropriate qualifications, and the high entry level we require, the pool of female candidates that we can address is small”

**Dr Orsola Rath Spivak**  
Mathematics faculty  
admissions officer

“While we work hard to attract applicants of all kinds, clearly that can’t cut through a lifetime of being implicitly told that maths is not for people like you”

**Professor Julia Gog**  
Director of Studies at Queens’  
College



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▲Concerns have been raised about the low proportion of female maths graduates  
(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

future potential at degree level”. She argued that it therefore “remains an essential part of our admissions process for choosing the very best students, whatever their background”.

Both Professor Gog and Dr Rath Spivack stressed that their faculty is attempting to address problems surrounding STEP, including the disparities in levels of support offered to students.

“We hope that the free online provision of substantial and high-quality help through the recently launched online STEP Support Programme will make a positive difference to any disparity attributable to STEP.”

Some also theorise that the low proportion of women in the course is itself an off-putting factor for potential applicants. Yanni Du, president of the Archimedians, the Cambridge University Mathematical Society, suggests that “some women might be intimidated by being in such a male-dominated environment”, adding that she is “currently the only female mathematician in her college studying for a BA”.

While many other subjects historically dominated by men have now succeeded in achieving a gender balance, perceptions of mathematics are usually still male-dominated.

One of the ways in which the Emmy

Noether Society seeks to support women in mathematics is by “making the ones that are already there visible”, and thereby “hopefully changing everybody’s perception of what a mathematician looks like”.

They are not alone in this work. Recent initiatives such as the *Women of Mathematics* exhibition, on display at various locations around Cambridge earlier this year, and several programmes targeted specifically at women, including the ‘Women in STEM’ summer school hosted by Corpus Christi College, have also sought to provide much needed female role models.

Speaking to *Varsity* about the importance of the summer schools, Corpus Admissions Tutor Dr Michael Sutherland said: “Past delegates have sometimes commented to me that they were the only girl in their further maths or physics classes, and hadn’t realised that pursuing a STEM subject at a university like Cambridge was an option for them.”

Speakers at the summer school have included Professor Gog, who told *Varsity*: “We can’t change the world immediately, but each time we get out there, we can help challenge deep-seated attitudes and maybe one more child realises they are extremely welcome to explore maths further.”

**Corrections and clarifications**

● The article ‘Academics condemn ‘McCarthy-style campaign’ on Brexit teaching’ (27th October 2017, p. 13) misattributed a quotation. “Academics and students are perfectly capable of critical thinking and discussion about policy issues like Brexit. If only we could say the same about Tory ministers.” was said by Angela Rayner MP, not Dr Lorand Bartels. *Varsity* apologises for any confusion caused.

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**VARSLITY**

## News

# Panel discussion explores issues of race

**Rosie Bradbury**  
News Correspondent

Members of the University met on Monday night to consider aspects of the black experience in modern Britain, from mental health to feminism.

Jointly organised by the CUSU BME campaign and Girton College JCR, the event brought together a panel of prominent speakers to share their views on the future of black communities in a post-Brexit Britain.

The event took place Monday night in the Yusuf Hamied Theatre at Christ's College, and was attended by approximately fifty Cambridge students and staff. Panelists included Tobi Oredin, co-founder of the lifestyle media website *Black Ballad*, political activist Lee Jasper, Claude Williams, founder of the personal development company Dream Nation, and Busayo Twins, a member of the Black Students Campaign Committee of the National Union of Students.

The panel discussion occurred amid ongoing debate over calls to decolonise the Cambridge English curriculum, which recently made national headlines. *The Daily Telegraph* issued an apology after their front-page article was widely criticised by Cambridge academics as

“deliberately misleading and racially inflammatory”. The article led to CUSU Women's Officer Lola Olufemi facing abuse from online trolls. The panelists briefly touched upon Olufemi, but the discussion concerned itself primarily with broader questions relating to race and gender beyond Cambridge.

The discussion began with the panel's chair, CUSU BME campaign President Jason Okundaye, asking whether the speakers viewed nationalism in the UK as a fundamentally racist concept. Though the panelists were fairly unanimous in their agreement, each speaker approached the question of race in contemporary British politics differently. Oredin argued that recent political developments in the UK illuminated connections between racism and British nationalism, noting that in the run-up to the EU referendum, “certain political parties [allied with the Leave campaign] rallied on emotions of nationalism to push a racist agenda”.

Jasper approached the question from a more historical perspective, arguing that the recent “explosion of xenophobia and racism,” as well as the “emergence of neo-fascism,” had precedent in Europe. Jasper warned the audience that black people should not “get too comfortable”, and even suggested that

“Black people should plan an escape route”



# University faith leaders unite in push for divestment

**Rachel Loughran**  
Senior News Correspondent

Twenty faith leaders from the Cambridge community have signed an open letter calling for the University of Cambridge to fully divest from fossil fuels.

The ‘Interfaith Statement on Divestment’ aims to bring “faith-based perspective to the table”, and was coordinated by Just Love Cambridge, a student society which seeks to “express Christian faith through campaigning for justice, peace and fairness”.

The open letter stated: “Our faith traditions call for us to live in a way that promotes justice upon the earth, with love and respect for those with whom we share the planet.” It pointed to the “devastation that climate change has caused, to both people and planet” and demanded that the University “take up a place of global leadership” by divesting from fossil fuels.

Many of the signatories are influential figures in the faith community. These include: Dr Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, Master of Magdalene and long-term campaigner for climate justice; Dr Tim Winter, Islamic Chaplain to the university; Dr Rachael Harris, Buddhist Chaplain to the University and Mgr Mark Langham, the University's Roman Catholic Chaplain. The letter was also signed by Chaplains from eight colleges including Rev. Jeremy Caddick of Emmanuel College, who has had a long-term involvement in the divestment campaign.

Speaking to *Varsity*, Rev. Caddick said: “the statement highlights the way that the world's faith traditions have a huge amount to say about how and why we value the natural world,” adding “it isn't just ours to destroy”.

Chaplain of Pembroke College, Rev. James Gardom spoke to *Varsity* about the values of ‘worship and community’ present in faith communities, stating that religion “can enable people to look beyond their private interests to the common good.” He added: “these represent an irreplaceable component and set of perspectives when we consider the sustainable use of our planet.”

The document called on the University to “continue [the] process of shaping the world for the better” by taking a stance of global moral leadership”. This sentiment was expressed by many at the town hall meeting on divestment, hosted last week by the university's divestment working group. As *Varsity* reported, Mia Fynamore, 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.

The open letter criticised the University for “financing companies who are bringing great harm to the planet, and to the most vulnerable living on it.” It stated the “moral imperative” of divestment and said that “engaging with fossil fuel companies on climate change cannot bring the change we need in the time we have.”

They added: “Scientists now agree

“The natural world isn't just ours to destroy”



that unless 80% of current fossil fuels remain in the ground, we are in danger of doing catastrophic damage to the biosphere from large scale dieback of the Amazon rainforest to bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef.”

The complexity of the debate was highlighted by the Rev. Dr David Neaum, chaplain of St Catharine's. He told *Varsity*: “Even when people agree on the desired end of reducing carbon emissions, there are divergent views on what is the best way of achieving that end.”

He emphasised that the University has a “significant role to play in research that will aid reducing emissions” and added, “many companies have different divisions and many kinds of collaborations are possible. Advocating divestment is not designed to inhibit these collaborations.”

“Rather, the interfaith statement on divestment will hopefully apply moral

▲ The open letter is one of many campaigns for divestment across the university  
(ANKUR DESAI)

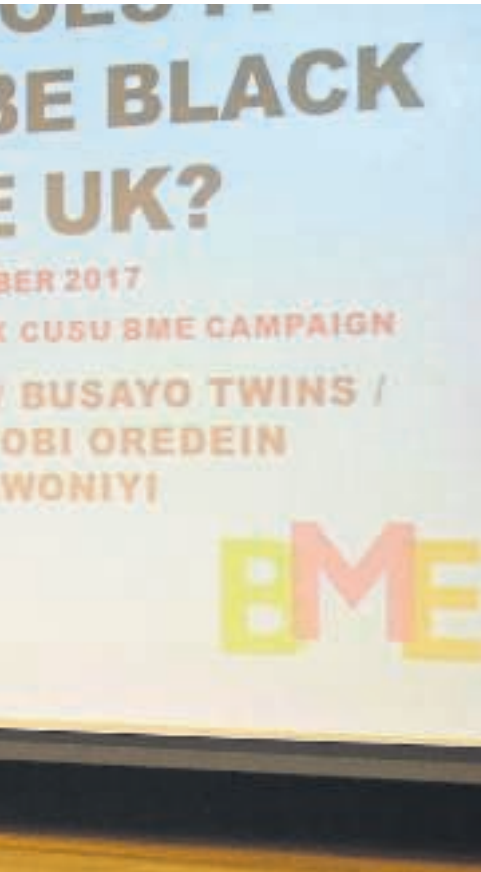
pressure on the University to remember and signal to the world that the ‘contribution to society’ that is at the core of the University of Cambridge's mission is a contribution to the common good of our society.”

Tim Lornie, former campaigns office of Cambridge University's Zero Carbon Society, was quick to praise Cambridge's faith leaders for joining the “wide range of voices” of the “broad-based and dynamic” divestment movement.

Just Love Co-President Neil Gran agreed, stating: “This statement brings together many powerful voices within Cambridge's faith community, urging the University to take a role of global leadership and divest from fossil fuels.”

The faith leaders appeal concluded: “we believe that the University has an opportunity to take a place of global leadership, to be part of bringing in a better world.”

# in modern Britain



◀ From left: Claude Williams, Busayo Twins, Lee Jasper, Bola Awoniyi, and Tobi Oredin (ROSIE BRADBURY)

they should “plan an escape route” in the event that minorities’ citizenships are contested.

A recurring theme throughout the discussion was the emphasis on history, both as a means for understanding contemporary issues of race, and as a way for black British people to learn and appreciate their community’s past.

Speakers tied this idea of a lost heritage and a legacy of racism to the current mental health crisis among black youth. There was a sense of frustration among all the panellists at a lack of support for black British people with mental health issues; Williams, the founder of the personal development company Dream Nation, lamented that the “the system doesn’t really care” about those suffering from mental health issues whom he knows.

Twins acknowledged the specific difficulties of addressing mental health issues at Cambridge, suggesting that “before people give you sympathy, they’re like, ‘but you’re at Cambridge’”, or that “you’re free from racism because you’re at Cambridge”.

Speaking to *Varsity* after the discussion, Okundaye emphasised that the goal of the CUSU BME campaign was to promote a “long-term vision of Cambridge as inclusive”.

UNFAIR TRADE

## Sainsbury’s call police on Fairtrade protester

Staff at the Sidney Street Sainsbury’s called the police on Sunday after a protester caused ‘drama’ at the checkout. She was part of a group of activists who were protesting the chain’s decision to dump the Fairtrade certification scheme, which certifies products that are bought at a premium to benefit their producers in developing countries. Sainsbury’s sparked outrage when it announced that it would replace its Fairtrade tea with an in-house scheme.

EM-MOON-U-EL

## Emma provide free menstrual cups

The Emmanuel College Students’ Union (ECSU) has announced an initiative to provide free menstrual cups to “all undergraduates who menstruate”. £700 has been dedicated to the scheme, and ECSU will acquire the menstrual cups from ‘Organicup’ at a reduced rate. Menstrual cups, which can be reused for 3 to 10 years, are “far more cost-effective and environmentally friendly than other hygiene products”. So far “over 100 undergraduates have signed up”.

CHEAT SHEET

## Students disciplined for cheating on exams

It has recently come to light that two students were caught cheating on exams last year. One student submitted guilty pleas to the charges of “possession and use of material relevant to the examination without authorization.” A second pleaded guilty to the charge of “possession of material relevant to the examination without authorization.” The first student had their mark reduced to a zero on the paper in question and had their overall grade reduced to a 2.ii. The second student’s mark was reduced to a zero on the paper in question.

BRAINS, BUMPS, BRAWN

## Rowing study shows power of the brain

A group of 62 male Cambridge rowers was involved in a recently published study that sought to ascertain the importance of brains relative to brawn. According to the *Mirror*, “the researchers studied rowers’ metabolic levels to see which the body prefers when both are tested.” The rowers were required to perform a mental and physical task simultaneously. When they did so, their physical performance dropped more than their mental performance did, indicating that the body will prioritise the brain when it competes for energy with muscles.



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# Cantabs back campaign to decolonise

## Hundreds of students take to the streets in solidarity

Patrick Wernham  
Editor

KING'S PARADE – Decolonisation isn't new to Cambridge, but you'd be forgiven if you'd heard that word more times in the past week than in many months previously.

It's certainly never been as loud, or as noisy, as it was at five o'clock on Monday evening outside Senate House, as roughly two hundred people gathered on King's Parade in order to, in the words of co-organiser Safieh Kabir, "express solidarity with Lola, in defiance of racist media".

There is a definite sense that the decolonisation movement has been given greater prominence in the wake of the *Telegraph's* coverage. Ever since they put a photo of CUSU women's officer Lola Olufemi on their front page, alongside the erroneous caption "Student forces Cambridge to drop white authors", students and academics alike have rallied to the defence of both Olufemi and decolonisation as a cause.

Indeed, the rally itself was a response to the coverage in the right-wing media, and the abuse Olufemi has received as a result. Speaking to *Varsity*, Kabir called it a kind of "emergency rally", an event where those wishing to show their support for Lola could make it felt.

"If you're in solidarity with someone, you need to express that solidarity in concrete ways. Sometimes it's necessary to do stuff that's a mass declaration, that's a public spectacle," said Kabir.

The rally certainly attracted the attention of many passers-by on King's Parade, no doubt drawn in by the chants of "Hey, ho, racist theory's got to go" and "Democratise, decolonise". The banners brought along by many of the attendees served as reminders of rallies past; never underestimate the versatility of a poster that reads "This Concerns Everyone".

Yet while it's true that decolonisation might be receiving more publicity than it's used to, those involved in the project are keen to stress that this is something



▲ Organiser Safieh Kabir addresses students (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

*"I've been very frustrated by the efforts of the right-wing media to present this as a clash between students and faculty"*

people have been working on for some time.

One attendee, Matt Kite, argued that the reason that decolonisation was now receiving more of the limelight was not because of the press coverage. "I think the thing that's made the biggest difference is that there is this genuine grassroots movement, there is such a big level of support for it among students in Cambridge," he told *Varsity*.

"I think if that wasn't the case then it wouldn't have got the foothold that it has."

This was a sentiment echoed by Dr Priya Gopal, a long-standing advocate for curriculum reform in the English Faculty, who opened proceedings at the rally by paying tribute to the work of those people who had got the movement to where it is today – presumably, the point at which a rally could draw 200 people on a cold Tuesday evening.

The presence of Dr Gopal, as well as Dr Sarah Franklin, the head of the Department of Sociology, serves as reminder that this is not just a student movement. The narrative pushed by the right-wing press – that this is a bunch of uppity students forcing academics to make changes against their will – isn't an accurate one.

Dr Nicholas Guyatt, who coordinated an open letter signed by over 120 fellows in support of Olufemi, was particularly angered by this point. Speaking to *Varsity*, Guyatt said: "I've been very frustrated by the efforts of the right-wing media to present this as a clash between students and faculty because it isolates the students and that's not right."

"Anyone looking into this, just making a few calls, would know that this has been a student-faculty initiative for the past year, across many faculties."

The coverage of decolonisation in the national press might well have made have raised its profile, then, but it would be wrong to think that this is a recent campaign. And, from the determination of the students and staff who turned up on Tuesday, it doesn't look like it'll be going away anytime soon, either.



▲ Crowds gathered outside Senate House (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

## Working group looks

Continued from front page

Dr Gopal emphasised that, currently, formal exposure to postcolonial and BME writing exists only in the form of an elective paper within Part II: "The English course is not 'prescriptive' in the sense that there is no formal reading list, but tends to be very canonical in actuality. The issue is that there is no culture of questioning why that is." She stated the necessity to "initiate a culture shift, and to think more widely about why common knowledge is what it is".

Several members expressed an interest in focusing on Part I of the Tripos; one audience member suggested reading lists could allow a range of critical literary perspectives to reach a wider audience from the very outset of the degree. Dr Gopal argued the English Faculty uses Part I as a means to define what English literature is, and therefore that English literature is already defined astutely "as English, as white, as Anglophone". This

means students actively have to seek out postcolonial literature.

Examples were cited from Stanford and Harvard Universities, as the former made Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* prescribed preparatory reading for all freshers, while the latter has recently embedded 'diversity courses' into its compulsory curriculum. Although Harvard does allow students to graduate having participated in only one course featuring authors marginalised for historical reasons, Dr Gopal insisted their "minimal start is better than our pretence of openness".

Dr Morgenstern praised students who studied the postcolonial paper last academic year and subsequently composed an open letter to Peter de Bolla. Morgenstern recognised their action as a demonstration of "how real change can come out of educational efforts".

"It is not an option to discard half of the world's history and literature of the last 500 years from our curriculum. We have a responsibility to provide students a rigorous and comprehensive under-



▲ CUSU women's officer Lola Olufemi led some of the chants (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

# the University



## at practical reforms

standing of all of world history, and it is one of which we are all a part.”

Gabrielle McGuinness, a member of the original group who formulated the open letter, told *Varsity*: “The group founded a unique sense of solidarity and validity. We recognised that diversification of the curriculum would only enrich literary criticism and offer a beneficial opportunity for another permutation of the degree.”

Following Dr Morgenstern’s assertion that there had been “no concrete action as yet”, the open floor discussion cultivated some interesting and exciting ideas for advancement of the campaign. Attendees discussed the possibility of establishing a new working group comprising of current undergraduates, which could ensure the continuation of pressure on the administration. Other suggestions included finding ways to connect papers from other faculties, extending the Practical Criticism and Critical Practice course, and training supervisors to promote a variety of postcolonial

or BME perspectives using a “unifying vocabulary”.

Dr Gopal argued that the responsibility for creating new posts in this area should be passed on to the faculty, yet stated there is an enduring problem of “inevitability”; as long as the canon remains prioritised around the Greeks, Shakespeare and Chaucer, the posts are allocated to necessarily meet such demands. Until the canonical definition changes, she added, “circular reasoning” will continue.

An English finalist concluded the session with the suggestion that students establish reading groups, and reiterated the importance of a new network to propel the movement forwards. She summarised the positive outlook and motivations of the group, exerting a hopefulness shared by others: “If the faculty do give us an inch, we might at least try to take a metre”

The working group now turn their focus to the History Faculty, and will meet again on 28th November.

## What would a decolonised English Tripos look like?



**Isobel Bickerseth**  
News Correspondent

At present, set texts are only found within a few papers of the English Tripos. Although the Faculty and individual directors of studies offer reading lists to their students, these are suggestions and not mandatory reading requirements.

Speaking to *Varsity*, Dr Ewan Jones, fellow and Director of Studies at Downing College, expanded upon this: “Neither BME texts nor any other texts are presently ‘excluded’, insofar as students can write about any work from the period that seems appropriate, provided that it meets the requirement of having been written in English.

“The question is: might the Faculty do more to allow them to realise that they can, or guide them towards such texts? I think that the Faculty can do this, in the form of both reading lists and lectures.”

Some have questioned if it would

be possible to offer a decolonised curriculum across the whole time-period of the Cambridge English Tripos, which covers 1300 to the present day. Dr Lucy Allen, director of studies for Part I at Newnham College, used a recent blog post, ‘Decolonising the Canon: Why Medieval Literature is the Place to Start’, to note that “medieval literature also offers a breath-taking diversity of writers, readers, and perspectives”, citing the north African theologian St Augustine as an example. Allen wrote further that “people of colour were not just occasional, exoticised additions to medieval visual images of the world, but commonplace presences”.

In terms of the practicalities of such changes, Dr Chris Warnes, a University lecturer in African Literatures and Cultures, pointed out that “a crucial area of this issue is the question of staffing and decisions about the allocation of new posts”, adding that there are “currently three staff members working on the literatures of the entire world outside Europe and the US”.

Decolonisation could also be approached through examining the contexts of texts. Minutes from an English Faculty Teaching Forum discussion on 5th October, which were emailed to students, suggested that there could be an introductory lecture course in Michaelmas to “offer perspectives on the global contexts and history of English literature”.

### Five great BME books

**The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano** by Olaudah Equiano

**The Lonely Londoners** by Sam Selvon

**The Black Jacobins** by CLR James

**The Emperor’s Babe** by Bernardine Evaristo

**Feminist Fables** by Suniti Namjoshi

AS TOLD TO THE BBC BY DR. GOPAL (PICTURED)

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## Interview

# Michael Penrose



## “There are no humanitarian solutions to political problems”

**Felix Peckham** meets the Executive Director of UNICEF UK to discuss crises across the world today and what it means to be a global citizen



“I’ve been doing this for 24 years and the phrase that I’ve heard the most is, ‘Never again.’”

This is the single most frustrating thing about being the Executive Director of UNICEF, according to Michael Penrose, the man who currently holds this title. Although he’s only been at UNICEF for the past 18 months, he has spent his entire working career at humanitarian organisations.

“I heard it after Rwanda. After Chechnya. After Bosnia. After Kosovo. After the Democratic Republic of Congo. After the 2011-12 famine in East Africa, but we’ve had another one since.”

“This is the result of financing the immediate over the investment we know could prevent the humanitarian crises of tomorrow,” he explains.

“We know that a pound spent today will have a far greater impact in several years’ time, spent strengthening the systems we need in order to prevent disasters and emergencies.”

A further point of frustration, developed over many years and through countless crises, is the perception that political problems should be solved by humanitarian solutions.

Penrose says emphatically: “There are no humanitarian solutions to political problems.”

“The vast majority of displacements and crises are caused by conflict. Conflict is driven by politics. We often look to the humanitarian community to find the solutions to humanitarian crises. We can fix the immediate; we can keep people alive. But the solutions are political.”

This logic does seem to resonate. The Syrian Civil War, for example, is a political crisis which has led to an estimated 470,000 deaths. Surely we should try and achieve political solutions to either

prevent such tragedies or to end them quickly, rather than just using humanitarian organisations to try and marginally alleviate the struggles of those disadvantaged, displaced and killed by these conflicts?

Penrose is unequivocal in his assessment of the principal threat to children’s welfare in the UK: “It’s the growing levels of inequality that we’re facing. It’s enormous and it’s growing.”

He says the problems for children in the UK have changed over the course of his career. “Inequality is causing the disenfranchisement which is creating

and driving some of the political instability we’re seeing at the moment. I think until we address issues such as how children access basic services, how children understand their rights, how they get heard, how they feel like part of a society – as opposed to outside of it – the longer that this slightly tumultuous period will continue.”

On the topic of foreign aid, Penrose tells me that “there’s a big disparity in the amount that different countries are doing. One thing we should be very proud of in the UK is that we are one of very few nations – just a handful – that give 0.7% of GDP to overseas development. A lot of countries aren’t pulling their weight in comparative terms.”

“The global humanitarian appeals that exist today need somewhere around £24-25 billion and we’ve barely raised a quarter of that at the moment. We are nowhere near generous enough globally, but certain countries certainly do pull their weight more than others.”

Pointing to the emerging trend towards isolationism – evidenced by Trump’s election and Brexit – I ask whether this concerns Penrose and what sort of an impact this has on UNICEF.

“Very concerned indeed,” he replies. “I think the more language moves away from ‘our responsibility as global citizens’ towards isolationism and nationalist rhetoric, the more likely we are to become poorer as a society and as a

global community.”

Given Trump’s decision to remove the United States from the Paris agreement on climate change, I ask what sorts of tangible effects climate change is having on children around the world.

“We are seeing increasing desertification in West Africa. We’re seeing the impact of natural disasters growing in the US and in the Caribbean, as well as in states such as the Philippines which regularly face natural disasters. It’s a combination of climate change and increasing urbanisation.

“We are also seeing greater intensity and greater frequency of cyclones and hurricanes. Inevitably, we are going to see more humanitarian needs. I think some of the ones hitting more developed countries will start to drive that message home.”

Clearly engaged on the topic of climate change and children’s welfare, Penrose segues into the topic of the changing nature of migration.

“We are now facing a world with 65 million displaced people – the greatest number since the Second World War. By 2050, the estimated number of people displaced by climate change will be 150 million. Unless we actually start looking at migration caused by climate change, and the population movements at the moment as just the beginning, and stop trying to prevent them, and actually start getting used to dealing with the effects of climate change, we’re trying to hold back the tide with rhetoric. That’s never going to work.”

As Penrose is ushered towards the Union chamber, I ask him a final question: how does he feel about graduates being seduced into the corporate and financial sectors?

“I think it’s great that the brightest and the best go into the corporate sector and do very well. But they should do it with a social conscience. The funding gap will be achieved by business doing the right thing, and also in seeing value in doing the right thing.”

“I think that’s the big challenge now. If we can talk to students, right now, about what it means to be a responsible global citizen, then they go into the corporate sector with that mindset.”

Furthermore, Penrose says businesses “should see value in doing the right thing” and that “when you look at financing, there’s huge benefit both financially and socially. When you look at nutrition: a pound invested today will yield £10-£15 within 10-12 years. In terms of financial returns, that’s pretty good. If we can start convincing businesses to see this as an opportunity, then we are more likely to generate the type of money we need. We need to demonstrate value in social purpose.”

I can’t help but admire and respect the tone of unwavering positivity that Penrose speaks with throughout our interview. I suspect his job necessitates such a sense of optimism, otherwise it would be all too easy to become disheartened by the some of the dire treatment of children and adults around the world.



◀ UNICEF UK runs a number of campaigns, including the Baby Friendly Initiative (UNICEF UK)

▲ Michael Penrose has recently appointed as Executive Director of UNICEF UK (UNICEF UK)



# Undergrad cost to University is double tuition fees

**Elizabeth Huang**  
Senior News Correspondent

Analysis by the University Council has shown that the cost to the University of an undergraduate degree is £18,500, twice as much as new undergraduate students pay in tuition fees.

The data, collected in 2015-16, shows that the average 'cost of education' per undergraduate student remains significantly larger than the amount the University is able to recoup in tuition fees, even after this year's increase in what the University is permitted to charge students. Students who matriculated in 2017 are the first cohort to pay the increased fee of £9,250, after the government introduced plans to allow universities to raise fees according to their performance in the Teaching Excellence Framework. Breakdown of the figures indicates that University expenditure makes up 53.5% of the total cost (£9,900), with the remainder made up by college expenditure (£8,600).

The cost calculated for 2015-16 represents a 2.7% increase on the 2014-15 figure of £18,000. Previous analysis by *Varsity* shows that the cost of Cambridge undergraduate education has risen significantly over the past five years, with jumps of over 7 per cent in both 2012-13

and 2014-15. Between 2010-11 and 2014-15, fees increased by over 21 per cent. At the time, a University spokesperson said that the cost of undergraduate education had been "steadily increasing for some time".

Fees for international students have also risen. For most arts and humanities subjects, the fee for 2017-2018 has been set at £16,608, an increase of 5% on the previous year, and is set to rise further to £19,197 in 2018-19. While the University has acknowledged that the cost of teaching international students does not differ significantly from that of Home or EU students, it says that there are "different additional support costs". Furthermore, unlike Home and EU students, there are no funds available from the Higher Education Funding Council for England to support the teaching of international students.

The University Council also proposed that fees for students who matriculated prior to 2017 would have their fees fixed for the 2018-19 academic year. After the fee increase was announced, there was speculation that it could also affect students who were then currently studying at University, and paying the £9,000 rate. The existence of separate fee regimes for students exacerbates the problem of the funding gap, which PRAO documents suggest stands at £7,800 per student.

► Students who matriculated this year face increased tuition fees  
(CAITLIN SMITH)



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## News

# Disparities among groups receiving top exam grades

Continued from front page

complicates this issue. A total of 1,180 Chinese students are recorded as having sat an exam last year; the number of Bangladeshi students was just 49.

The widening of the black attainment gap comes after criticism of Oxbridge's admissions statistics by David Lammy MP, who called the universities "fiefdoms of entrenched privilege," with a majority population of well-off white students.

His analysis of admissions statistics showed that a quarter of Cambridge colleges made no offers to black students from 2010-2015.

Analysis by higher education blog and think-tank Wonkhe of national statistics for grades obtained during the 2015-16 academic year suggests that Cambridge's black attainment gap is not a statistical anomaly, but an issue that is present across the higher education sector.

Six universities, including the Russell Group universities of Oxford and Exeter, awarded no firsts to black undergraduates, and at no university did the grades awarded to black home undergraduates exceed those of their white peers.

A smaller, but still noticeable, gap exists in the awarding of 2.i grades, but Wonkhe suggests that this is simply indicative of the wider attainment gap at

First class level.

Last year's statistics for Cambridge, however, show that, proportionally, more black students achieved 2.i grades than the average across the cohort. 50.3% of black students achieved a 2.i grade, whereas 45.9% of all Cambridge students achieved the same.

The underlying reasons the attainment gap for black students are difficult to identify, and are likely to be influenced by a variety of factors.

A study conducted by the Department for Education in 2007 found that a significant gap remained, even after adjustments were made for things like the type of university attended, prior attainment and poverty.

Former CUSU president, and current NUS vice-president for Higher Education Amatey Doku ran for his latest position on a manifesto aimed at "tackling institutional racism in campuses with specific focus on the black attainment gap and encouraging the higher education sector as a whole to face up to it".

In a series of tweets following Lammy's announcement, Doku said that "right from early years, the whole system is stacked against black people".

He continued, "Before Oxbridge can point the finger further down the pipeline, they must demonstrate that they have done everything they can."

► Class lists are published outside Senate House every June  
(LOUIS ASHWORTH)



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## Access concerns raised over new Ivy restaurant on Trinity Street

Phoebe Gargaro  
Deputy News Editor

Access arrangements for a new restaurant in Cambridge have been criticised, after Cambridge City Council approved planning permission for the restaurant last Friday.

The Ivy restaurant chain, which also has locations in Covent Garden, Kensington and Chelsea, applied for planning permission to open a new restaurant on Trinity Street. Concerns were raised at the time about access arrangements at the restaurant. Opponents said that a step at the entrance to the restaurant made the premises inaccessible to wheelchair users.

Despite these concerns, the planning permission application was passed by the City Council on Friday 27th October. Among those who have expressed disappointment at the acceptance of the proposals are Mark Taylor, the Council's access officer. Taylor told *Cambridge News* that he believed the step should be removed and replaced by either a stair climbing platform or a lift. He also said that "if as access officer, I had any enforcement powers, I would refuse the application without any hesitation."

Councillor Gerri Bird, who focuses on disability issues, offered a similar opinion: "It was very disappointing to see this application go through without even being put before the planning committee to decide."

She also suggested that the project's



► The Ivy brasserie in Cobham (PAUL WINCH FURNESS)

financial priorities should be reconsidered, saying: "More than one in 10 people across Cambridgeshire have a disability of some kind and it's shocking that the application boasted how much money it would be spending on Farrow & Ball paints, but then couldn't fund wheelchair access or an appropriate disabled toilet."

However, a spokesperson for the Ivy chain has defended the access arrangement, stating that the Grade II Listed status of the building prevents the removal of steps in favour of a ramp, and that "management policies would be stringently reviewed" to ensure equal access wherever possible.

The spokesperson continued: "The Ivy Collection has appointed an independent access consultant to appraise and support the design of both the external and internal restaurant space, including the disabled toilet, ensuring good design and accessibility is adequately considered not only within this restaurant, but across the entirety of the Ivy Collection estate."

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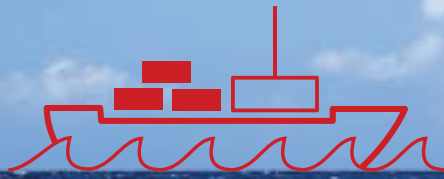
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## Science

# Naughty numbers and shabby statistics:

● In conversation with David Spiegelhalter, Winton Professor for the Public Understanding of Risk

Jake Cornwall-Scoones  
Science Editor

It seems like there isn't a day that goes by without the tabloid press releasing an article proclaiming that one lifestyle choice or another leads to cancer, Alzheimer's, or diabetes. Only some of these risks, however, are real. I spoke to David Spiegelhalter, Winton Professor for the Public Understanding of Risk in the Cambridge Statistical Laboratory, to discuss how we can better understand



this beguilingly simple topic.

Spiegelhalter suggests that in order to understand the "dodgy data, naughty numbers, shabby statistics" that litter headlines, we must look at their process of generation. "It's a complex chain that comes from scientific studies. Those tend to be selectively published, and then they are selectively given a press release, often exaggerating the findings. And then it's picked up by a journalist, and often the journalist runs quite a good story, but then the sub-editor sticks a ghastly, really manipulative headline, because they're going for clicks."

Risk, explains Spiegelhalter, means the fact that "good or bad things might happen and you don't know what they're going to be .... I regard this as anything to do with: you don't know what's going to happen. Which is everything!

Risk applies to everything we do in our daily lives and the lives of society, the lives of the world." For such a central concept to the human condition, risk is extremely poorly understood: "We know from psychological studies that people find this extremely difficult because there's so much of an emotional engagement to threats." Due to these emotional responses, risk can

“*Risk applies to everything we do in our daily lives and the lives of society*”

◀ Professor David Spiegelhalter  
(DAVID SPIEGELHALTER)

be seen as a dual concept – “risk as feeling and risk as analysis” – which Spiegelhalter likens to Daniel Kahneman's idea of thinking fast, thinking slow. We need to move from the former to the latter to analyse risk more efficiently.

Key to this transition is conceptualising the magnitude of risk because every decision has an associated risk – “nothing is safe”. “There's nothing that irritates me more than reading a headline saying that 'Talcum powder increases the risk of breast cancer', 'Bacon increases the risk of bowel cancer', the last one I saw was 'Going to university increases the risk of a brain tumour' from the *Daily Mirror*, which I think is a classic of its time. I love it, I use it all the time.”

Spiegelhalter gives an example of this, alluding to a report that suggests that “if you have a bacon sandwich a day, it increases your risk of getting bowel cancer by 18%.” This, he explains, is called *relative risk* – “it doesn't say from what to what” – which is “a highly emotionally manipulative way of communicating risk”. Interpretation is impossible, Spiegelhalter explains, unless you know the *baseline risk*. About 6 in 100 people will end up getting bowel cancer anyway, meaning “an 18% increase over 6 in 100: it's 7 in 100”. Knowing this, you “can turn the whole story around and tell it in a different way – that 100 people have to eat



▲ “Bacon increases the risk of bowel cancer”  
(JEREMY KEITH)

a great, big, greasy, three rasher bacon sandwich every single day of their lives and one of them will get bowel cancer because of it. And you tell it like that and people say: ‘Oh is that all? Well, pass the brown sauce! Do I care?’ My reaction to that is that I'm not going to stop eating bacon ... but bacon is carcinogenic. Start the day with a carcinogen I say, but don't do too much of it.”

Coupled with this notion of magnitude is the distinction between hazard and risk. “Risky is to do with the actual, practical importance, the magnitude of something. The hazard is the fact that it

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**NEWTON**

# understanding risk in a post-truth world

could potentially be dangerous. Flying in an aeroplane, six miles up in a tin can, is highly hazardous: there's an enormous number of horrible things that can happen. But it's not risky, because so many precautions are in place."

It is evident that humans are naturally very bad at evaluating risk, yet in an age of "two important movements - data science and fake news" it has never been so crucial to understand this concept. "The education system needs to adjust" suggests Spiegelhalter, promoting "data literacy, ... [which] is of fundamental importance to be a citizen today. If you're not data literate, you are illiterate in the sense of not understanding what's going on."

This is very distinct from maths: "Maths as you learn it in school ... is really highly abstract ideas: how to do geometry, trigonometry and everything else, applied in very simple circumstances. And many people find it very difficult indeed. What I'm talking about is actually very simple ideas being applied in quite complex, realistic situations, where you have to take apart an argument ... Critiquing a story about a bacon sandwich is not really mathematical."

Governance in recent years has been driving increasingly towards so-called 'evidence-based policy', yet with this comes several associated challenges.

Spiegelhalter objects to the terminology, saying it "makes it sound too much as though it is mechanical: you collect the evidence and it tells you what to do, and therefore that's what should be done. That would be both untrue and undemocratic. In the end, people largely have to make decisions on our behalf and we should be able to vote them out if we don't like what they're doing." He is instead in favour of "evidence-informed policy". On the other hand, rejection of the experts is an equally harmful outlook: "If they don't take [evidence] into account, then I think they should be accountable for that."

Spiegelhalter also notes that we must ask "Who are the experts? Where does this evidence come from? Whose evidence?" Many contentious areas - climate change, fracking, GM foods, vaccines, e-cigarettes - have many experts "that will tell you all sorts of things, many of which will be contradictory. So it's difficult to resolve those." We must thus evaluate each expert's advice: "Not every bit of evidence is as good as everybody else's. In other words, some people's opinions are worth a lot more than other people's opinions. It's not an evidence free-for-all out there."

Impartial assessments of the quality of evidence, suggests Spiegelhalter, are key to this final dilemma, and he feels

“*Bacon is carcinogenic. Start the day with a carcinogen I say, but don't do too much of it*”



like the NHS is the template example that other fields, such as "education, policing, energy provision," should follow. "Health has really got itself quite sorted, in terms of accumulating evidence, weighing it up, looking at the harms and benefits. I think it's an extraordinary achievement - the envy of the whole world - but it's taken decades of work." One key area Spiegelhalter feels lacks this impartial assessment is nuclear waste disposal, which he feels is an "absolutely absurd attention to microscopic, I would say almost non-existent, risks. Everyone's obsessed with the dangers of nuclear waste disposal. Spending billions of pounds on

▲ March for Science, Washington DC (WIKI: BECKER1999)

it, where that money could save so many lives if it were better used."

Given that risk pervades every decision we make, and indeed the decisions made in the houses of power, it is striking to see that risk is so poorly understood, that we think fast, being immersed in our initial emotional response, rather than thinking slow, impartially analysing risk. This dual nature of risk conceptualisation is an inherent, unavoidable facet of our psychology, and as a consequence, we must acknowledge our emotional responses and temper them with cooler analysis. This is just as important in our day to day lives as it is in governance.

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# Comment

## We're enthralled by Apple but its golden fruit is rotten at its core



Felix Peckham  
studies HSPS at  
St Catharine's  
College

Beneath the elegant aluminium and glass façade of every iPhone and MacBook is a company which epitomises modern-day corporate skullduggery.

Apple – the trendy, progressive and responsible tech giant – is the ultimate sinister corporation. The hypocrisy that it preaches is repulsive; worse still is the fact that this has zero bearing on its success. As I angrily tap away at my MacBook Pro (while listening to music on my iPhone), students are walking around Cambridge, plugged into their Apple devices, white earphone cables dancing in the wind. We are oblivious to the true nature of the tech giant that we are all besotted to.

It's not just Cambridge, or the UK, or Europe, or North America. Apple is the poster-child for globalisation. It is ubiquitous. Apple products are everywhere: the most remote Amazon rainforests, the sunniest Cuban beaches, you can even watch American and Chinese tourists hold aloft their iPhones as they take selfies in Pyongyang, North Korea.

Globalisation – specifically, the ubiquity of products – is not a bad thing *per se*. Indeed, the spread of technology, and with it the ease of access to knowledge and information, should be commended. It has facilitated communication and understanding and is consistently used to hold structures of power to account. Just look at WikiLeaks (its terrible founder aside).

However, Apple has surfed the wave of globalisation in the worst possible way. Off-shore hiding of profits and the use

of ultra low-cost labour with atrocious working conditions are the two practices that I take a particular and visceral dislike to. For this purpose, I must draw attention to Foxconn, the little-known manufacturer of many Apple products (indeed, it's the largest technology manufacturer in the world, and the largest private employer in China).

Apple's shimmering new circular office in Cupertino, California seems a great monument to irony, when we consider the working practices the company encourages abroad. The Pacific Ocean is all that separates Apple's California headquarters from Foxconn's largest factories on the Eastern Chinese seaboard. And while that ocean is vast, it doesn't suffice as a representation of the epic chasm between the American executives and Chinese workers who both kneel at the altar of the iPhone.

Apple executives in California work in the most comfortable conditions conceivable: gardens, catering, welfare and exercise are all accommodated. In stark contrast, the men, women and children who actually manufacture the products we so adore work in the most pitiful circumstances, seven days a week. Suicide is rife. Pay is atrocious. Living conditions are inhumane. Where is the accountability for this? Why are young, typically socially conscious, Apple consumers not enraged? Why don't we boycott Apple?

Apple's success has been so momentarily staggering that it has a cash surplus of \$215bn. That's right. \$215bn which is sitting in various international banks and across numerous financial products accruing interest.

Perhaps this is naïve of me, but in a world of such bitter poverty and destitution, where entire regions are engulfed by famine and drought, I think it is morally indefensible that a single corporation should have accumulated such epic profits on the basis of exploitation of developing countries' labour, and find no need to distribute at least a portion of it to some of those at the other end of the wealth spectrum. They could at least start by paying the people who have built their success a fair wage, or perhaps reducing their working week to give them a single day off.

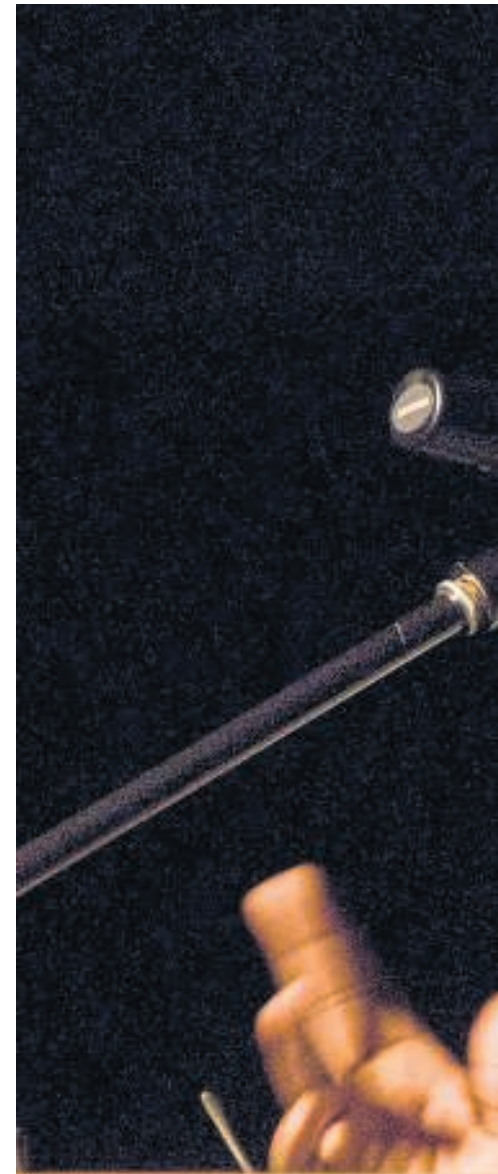
The recent announcement that Apple will rename their shops 'Town Squares' is as depressing as it is deceitful. Apple is pioneering this rebrand to enshrine itself as a necessity and a community leader – somebody you're meant to trust and rely upon like you would a government. Except it's not a government. There is no community in Apple's ethos – maybe on its advertising campaigns, but not in its corporate soul. Apple seeks to profit; the welfare of its employees and customers is irrelevant. It does this by extorting labour from an oppressed modern proletariat abroad to sell to a wealthy, burgeoning diaspora of middle-class consumers across the world. This is Apple's community ethos: deceit.

This is not an anti-capitalist article. For various reasons, Apple's success is commendable. Its attitude towards social responsibility, however, is reprehensible. This is a pro-humanity, pro-social justice article. It's time for Apple to be called out. And it should be us, the young, who do the calling.

Felix  
Peckham



FLIKR: JORGE LASCAR

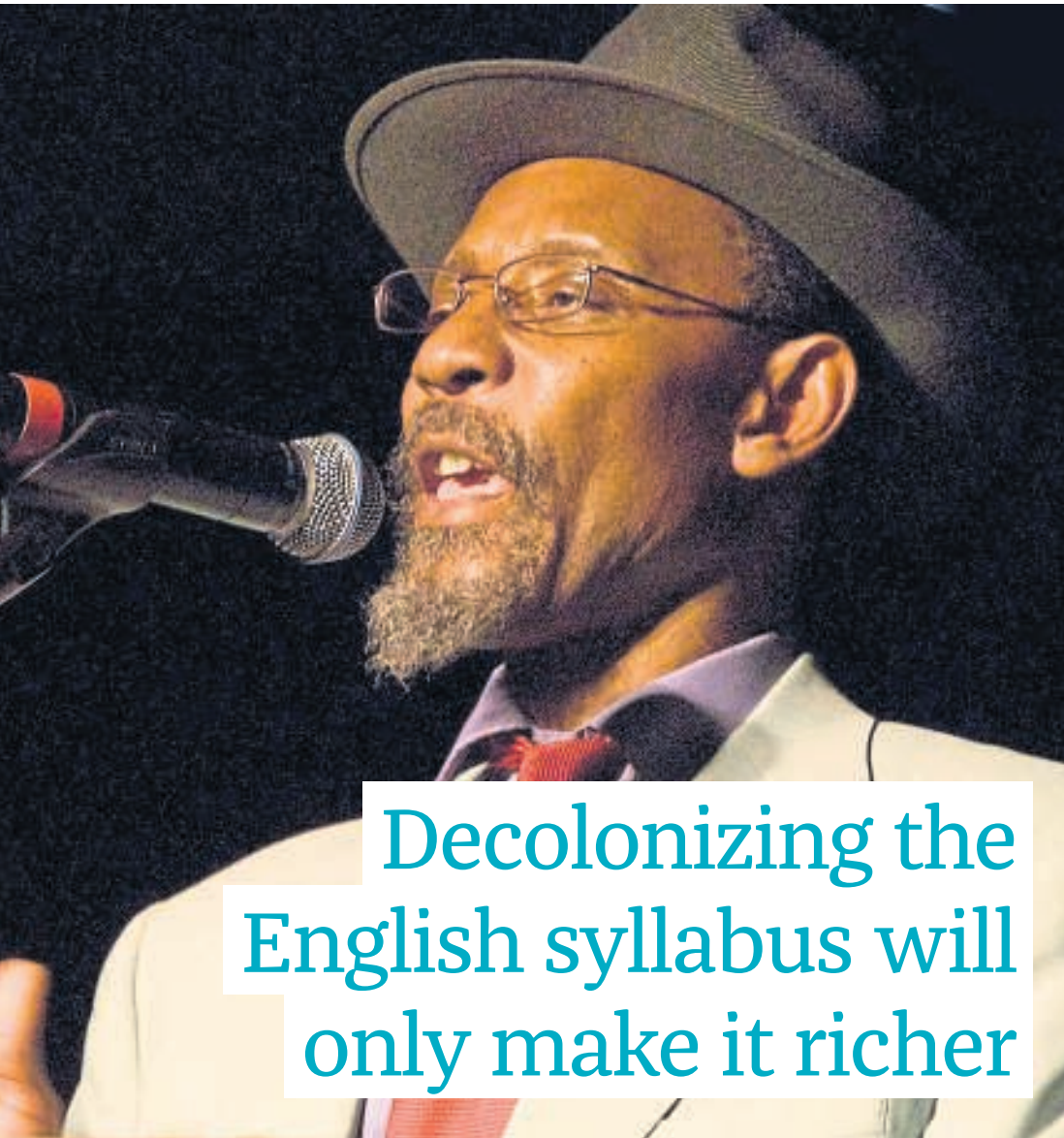


Stephanie  
McMorran is a  
third year English  
student at King's

*Britishness in literature equates to whiteness, but adding none-white authors to the syllabus could change these perspectives*

I am proud, as a black woman and as one of the few people of colour in the English faculty, to support the valiant efforts made by Lola Olufemi and the English Faculty to begin introducing black and minority ethnic authors into the curriculum. We should all condemn the dishonest reporting in *The Daily Telegraph* that led to the abuse of her on Twitter by internet trolls. The decolonisation movement is vitally important, formally expanding upon work that many professors around Cambridge have already been doing.

In my first year, I had the great pleasure of being taught by Dr Malachi McIntosh, one of the few black fellows in Cambridge and, I believe, one of the few black fellows in the English faculty. He placed an emphasis – especially in the more contemporary period – on looking at different voices within Britain, and we had our eyes widened learning about authors such as Trinidadian-born Sam Selvon, who used creolised English, and Linton Kwesi Johnson, the second living poet, and only black poet, to be published in the vaunted Penguin Modern



## Decolonizing the English syllabus will only make it richer

Classics series. There is still so much more work to do, but decolonising will help students better understand different cultures and let us better learn our history. For example I have discovered that the 'spectre' of non-whiteness even overshadows Jane Austen, whose uncle had a share in the slave trade.

The movement is getting the reaction that it does – such as an indefensible and inaccurate attack on a young black woman who dared to speak up against an oppressive status quo – because the introduction of black and non-white authors calls into question a notion of Britishness that has been cultivated for centuries. Writers such as Shakespeare and Tennyson are held up in the literary canon as the very essence of Britishness. The creation of a (problematic) British identity is something that Shakespeare was very much interested in, and contributed to: lots of work has been done by critics to analyse his portrayal of the expansion of the British empire and the slavery within it.

Moving on from our obsession with the narrow Britishness that these writers represent will be massively enriching. It will allow us to study authors such as eighteenth-century freed slave and abolitionist Olaudah Equiano and the black presence in, and contribution to, the Renaissance. Learning about non-whiteness in the Medieval period could contribute so much to our literary and historical understanding. For instance, we should think critically about the crusades and their contribution to a distinct English or European identity. They pitted white crusaders against non-white Muslims, and the European narrative has historically framed this as good vs. evil; this can be seen in George Bush's evocation of crusading language when launching his 'war on terror'.

▲ Jamaican-British poet Linton Kwesi Johnson  
(WIKI: BRIAN LEDGARD)

“An indefensible and inaccurate attack on a young black woman who dared to speak up against the oppressive status quo”

Many of the problems that we face today – i.e. with the idea of 'Britishness' as white – stem from deep in our past. These examples not only to try and explain the reaction to the decolonise movement, but also to show that it is difficult not to incorporate a discussion of colonialism and racial violence in any period of British literature. The drive to decolonise, which has picked up so attention recently, focuses on these important elements of our past and brings into clearer perspective why things currently are how they are.

The Faculty should actively encourage these debates. It would be neat, for instance, to read Medieval Islamic philosophers in conjunction with early medieval literature. The whole twelfth-century Renaissance could not have taken place if the Middle Eastern philosophers had not saved and copied down texts of ancient philosophers such as Aristotle. And what about the influence of slave narratives in the writing of contemporary authors?

The decolonisation of the English Tripos opens up new possibilities both for new research and a renewed interest in parts of the subject considered 'too white', inaccessible or just plain irrelevant to minority students by looking at things from a new angle. In my mind, the movement could perhaps more fruitfully be thought of as further renewing the relevance of 'traditional' texts by making them relevant to the multicultural world in which we find ourselves, adding more depth to a definition of what it means to be British. Though there will perhaps be more resistance, down the road Lola will be remembered for encouraging the future thinkers and academics of the twenty first century to consider and cherish the voices of others as a crucial part of what we call 'Britishness'.

## Our American peers are better prepared for the changing world



Alex Paturel is a third year HSPS student at Jesus

Witnessing Harvard's thriving entrepreneurial and skilled community made Alex Paturel realise that we're lagging behind in the UK

It was the decision to answer an oddly inconspicuous email in Michaelmas of last year that led the four of us to sign up to the Jesus-Harvard exchange programme. On 1st September, plane on the runway of Boston Logan International Airport, we were wide-eyed at the thought of dorms in redbrick, H baseball caps and shirts, and meeting Boston's best and brightest. That night, we went to a place the students called *Nocchi's* (short for Pinocchio's) – a pizza joint whose nearest equivalent would probably be *Gardies*. Blue-framed pictures and posters of Mark Zuckerberg crowded the white walls.

One bizarre difference with Cambridge was that many wore shirts and jumpers with the code numbers of the classes they were taking (the equivalent of someone wearing a 'POL4' round-neck). In particular, the code *CS50* – an introductory class to computer science – was one we kept seeing. But we quickly noted that there was more to it than just what they were wearing.

I knew that Harvard life revolved around the extra-curricular: so much was revealed by their application process. But what I hadn't anticipated was how this translated itself into an entrepreneurialism that I hadn't seen before. Students of all disciplines took an interest in computer coding classes. And even students I met at the Rhode Island School of Design – who were majoring in graphic design, shoe design and interior architecture – talked to me about the importance of taking hold of the digital imperative. Far from setting themselves up for a bohemian lifestyle, these arts students seemed fully committed to serious and engaged careers. And from the number I met who were either active in online selling, website production, or applying to graduate schemes for Facebook and Instagram, I could sense the students of Harvard thought they knew where the economy was headed.

I couldn't help but think of the stark contrast with Cambridge life. The most forward-thinking I myself had been was in worrying about the weekly essays. I didn't know where the economy was heading, and what implications it could have on the price of different skills in the job market. And I certainly didn't know how to code. I suspect a lot of students at Cambridge do think about these things,

and can code.

But I would also suspect that those students tend to be from certain Triposes, or perhaps a particular type of person. In any case, I've rarely heard much about the importance of computer and coding-based skills outside of the musings of people in the "startup" scene. Cambridge students with valuable skills outside of the career orthodoxy – students who can contribute meaningfully to the creative, intellectual and technological industries – are much less common, and more restricted from doing these things relative to their peers around the world.

As a result, too many Cambridge students are narrowing their vision of the job market from the outset. A good friend of mine at MIT jested that even his 'career-oriented' friends in London were stuck in a time-lag, thinking that the future of British jobs still revolved around a narrow band of financial sector opportunities. New forms of technology mean that this is increasingly less likely to be so. Indeed, on the first day of a summer vacation scheme at a law-firm this summer, I myself was given a presentation on how artificial intelligence would mean that the firm would be looking to cut-down on its legal personnel.

Cambridge needs to develop an entrepreneurial culture which is diverse enough to include the breadth of its talents – creative, commercial, and otherwise. The delay in such a culture becoming mainstream can only be at its students' severe disadvantage as they grapple with a changing job market. The story is, however, more complicated. I think that the career-focused, forward-looking attitudes I saw in Harvard came at the price of a certain warmth in the student community. I sometimes got the sense, in the introduction-cum-CV-briefings or the disconcerting looks that perch over your shoulder, that this entrepreneurialism had produced a lack of sociability that was slightly disheartening.

But maybe being clued up and living your life as though you're stuck in LinkedIn do not have to come hand-in-hand. The task for British students is to inform themselves on economic developments and equip themselves with the skills so as to broaden their options coming out of university, but to do so without the kind of perpetual networking that such an attitude could encourage.



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WIKI: JOSEPH WILLIAMS

## Comment

# Cambridge is making progress in admissions – schools aren't

*We should commend Cambridge for the steps forward it has made in admissions, and focus more on schools, which are letting potential applicants down*



Matt Jefford is in his third year studying History at Selwyn

Matt Jefford

How far can a university founded on selecting academically-gifted students be expected to reflect a society where disparities of wealth and achievement remain inextricably linked? This is the question which critics of the Cambridge University admissions process – most recently Labour MP David Lammy – often fail to consider. So much media attention laments the lack of student diversity in Cambridge. Too many good students are deterred from application in schools lacking any familiarity with the process. We rarely hear the positive side of the story: faced with this obstacle, the Cambridge selection system continues to reduce gender and ethnic disparities.

Every year, Cambridge University spends £5 million to widen outreach schemes, while £8 million is distributed to 2,600 students on bursaries. From the first female students at Girton in 1869, 2016 statistics show that rough gender parity (52:48 pro-male) has been achieved. The educational divide between state and privately-educated students is narrowing such that Oxford, St Andrews, Durham and Bristol are now among those with lower proportions of state admissions than Cambridge. Of course, a 62.5% to 37.5% split is still lopsided, but appreciably more than the 58.8% of state acceptances in 2011, or 53% in 1999. This differs by college from 46% at St. John's in 2016 to 74.1%

“We rarely hear the positive side of the story”



WIKI: CHRIS MCANDREW

at King's – not all colleges deserve equal condemnation.

The University targets the access divide through the Area Links and Connect to Cambridge schemes, assigning institutions across the country with a Cambridge college liaison. Selwyn, my college, has a responsibility to build ties with West Yorkshire, Berkshire and Scottish schools, and recently hosted a Year 11 BME open day.

Diversification requires more secondary level teachers to encourage students to fulfil their academic potential by applying here, as well as progress in the success of disadvantaged groups at this stage of education. Schools should be more concerned that in 2016, only 282 black British students chose to apply. It is no fault of Cambridge if schools fail to produce students who achieve the grades required at A-level. From the use of contextual flagging and extenuating circumstances forms, colleges can still highlight where performance may not reflect aptitude. The pace of change can be criticised – it is indefensible that a quarter (on average) of all colleges failed to make a single offer to a black student between 2010-15. But the University should not take such a significant share of the blame as our secondary education system.

David Lammy's condemnation of Oxbridge exclusivity will only deter bright students that are wavering and reinforce a media representation of Cambridge as innately malicious. As long as the *Mail* or *Telegraph* feel obliged to situate the most selective universities in an elitist paradigm, the genuine receptivity of University staff to concerns will go over-

looked. It's indicative that in one week, Cambridge can both be castigated for its disproportionately small ethnic minority intake, and yet the same sources can persecute BME student Lola Olufemi for “demanding” the English Faculty shifts away from the Anglocentrism in its syllabus. Sensationalism sells, but we rarely hear celebrations of the world-class teaching, research, and calibre of students of all backgrounds which our university produces.

Cambridge students should assert their pride at having the opportunity to study in such an enriching environment. While a class divide still exists, the financially exclusive aspects of student life are exaggerated. ‘Secret societies’ like the Pitt Club remain the preserve of a tiny minority. Efforts at inclusivity such as the Cambridge Union+ initiative, freshers' or BME plays, or even Caius's ‘informal formals’ demystify unfamiliar societies and traditions. The breadth of opportunities in drama, music, literature, student politics, sports and other extra-curricular interests allows students from diverse circumstances to work together to achieve great things.

Current students should feel no burden of guilt for the University's past failures of accessibility. Their energies can be turned positively to lobbying university officials for the benefit of future students. MPs must accept their own responsibility to promote educational attainment below university level. Cambridge has done well to maintain its academic standards while diversifying its intake, as well as fostering an environment where students from all backgrounds can pursue diverse interests and thrive.

## Regrettably, a second Brexit referendum is no longer a realistic option

*Despite the misleading Leave campaign and turbulent negotiations, another referendum is not only no longer feasible, but a problematic cause to support, writes Tom Nixon*



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

Tom Nixon

Politicians and commentators alike have repeatedly suggested that we should have a second Brexit referendum. They argue that the Leave campaign lied to and misled the British public leading up to the referendum. They claim that having seen the difficulties in the current negotiations people can see the error of their ways and that they are prepared to reconsider the choice they made on the 23rd June. However the evidence suggests that since the result, support for leaving the EU has only increased. A second referendum would remove any confidence that broad sections of society have in our political system. Although many of us don't like it, we have to respect the original result. We should instead concentrate our efforts on arguing for a softer Brexit.

The push for a second referendum on Brexit emerged soon after the result of the first. It first came about as an online petition from a Brexit supporter who demanded that if less than 60% voted for the winning side this would trigger a second referendum. It was only after the shock result that it gained any noteworthy support, presumably from disappointed remain voters. Over just a few weeks 4.1 million people signed

the online form. I was one of them. It was the action of someone desperate to avoid Brexit at all costs and was based on a hope that people would change their minds. I now realise that a second referendum is no longer a credible suggestion and that despite the way I voted, leaving the EU is almost inevitable at this stage.

“But why?” you may well ask. It is true that the result of the referendum was very close. The mantra “we are the 48%” was used by remain supporters to highlight how the country was split right down the middle. However, there is no longer any such 48%. Part of the reason why we cannot go back on the original vote is simply because there is no public appetite. The Liberal Democrats' underwhelming performance at the last election was a rebuke of their case for a second referendum. Polls have repeatedly shown that since the referendum a large proportion of Remain voters have accepted the result and believe that the Brexit process should go ahead. An increased majority now favour Brexit; a second referendum result would be a waste of time.

More important than this is the fact that a second referendum would further fray the (already lacking) trust the

“An increased majority now favour Brexit; a second referendum result would be a waste of time”

public have in our political system. Disillusionment with politics is a serious issue and if the government returns to the public with another referendum and says “wrong answer, try again”, any respect for politicians and any belief in our democracy would be irreparably undermined. People expect politicians to follow the results of national decisions and if the government was seen to be reneging then the consequences could be very serious. Another referendum would make a mockery of democracy and would be especially unwise when there is no overwhelming public support to remain.

There is now almost total political consensus that Brexit has to be carried through. The referendum was promised as a once-in-a-generation decision and with acceptance of the result, the political scene has moved on. Activists who point out that if 16-year-olds were able to vote, the result may have been different are missing the point. By demanding another round of voting on Brexit, these people are only helping the case of the hard Brexiters. As they call for another referendum, the Brexit process is still very much ongoing. Without challenging current developments towards Brexit we are simply giving reactionaries a blank cheque. Those rehashing the debates of the referendum are destined for the side-

lines in a political landscape where the question is no longer “should we leave?” but “how should we leave?”

Committed Remainers should instead be making the case for a soft Brexit. The kind of deal we leave with is still up for debate and this is where efforts should be concentrated. This is especially important in the light of recent comments from Conservative MPs suggesting that we should leave with no deal. It is vital that we do not get distracted by this second referendum debate and that we ensure that the deal we leave with safeguards our economy and retains our human rights.

Calls for a second referendum are, at least for the foreseeable future, untenable. Perhaps in five, ten years' time, if Brexit follows the way of the doomsayers then public opinion will have shifted enough for a re-entry. What is more important for the moment though, is that we hold the government to account over their negotiations and get the best deal possible. Remainers should not be flogging a dead horse, but looking to the future and trying to ensure that we remain close to the EU and avoid a hard Brexit. It is more important that we are pragmatic and pressure for a softer Brexit, rather than relive the battles of the referendum whilst we slide off the hard Brexit cliff edge.





Illustration by Ciaran Walsh

## Trump is dividing us, but cooperation is the way forward

*Anna Cardoso says that the commander-in-chief's rhetoric is best met by returning to bipartisanship*

I've been writing a column about America for almost a term now and I have somehow managed to avoid writing about Donald Trump. This is quite the feat, given the amount of time I spend reading about him and his catastrophic government. I have avoided writing about him simply because it seems like half of all column inches nowadays are taken by the best political minds dissecting his every action and tweet. But I can't resist it any longer. Let's talk about Trump's impact on Generation Y.

I have been following American politics since the age of 12, so I grew up watching its schisms develop before my own eyes. There's no doubt in my mind that cracks in the civility of our discourse have become chasms since Trump took up the presidency – and that American democracy is at risk because of it.

University is the time in our lives where we develop our worldviews and move away from thinking like our parents do. It is where we become individuals. To be going through the process of reaching intellectual adulthood whilst a race-baiting xenophobe is running your home country is a very difficult experience.

My entire outlook has shifted. Before 2016, I had total faith in democracy. I was tempted to buy in to Obama's Whig-ish pronouncement, taken from Martin Luther King, that "the arc of history is long, but it bends towards justice". It seemed just. Gay marriage had become legal in a fundamentally conservative country, we had our first black president, and America had finally entered into a meaningful climate change agreement. It seemed like America was moving in a more progressive direction.

First came Brexit. Then came Trump. Both sides of the Atlantic – both of my homes – seemed to be bending away from the liberal world that Obama represented. Instead, we descended into an age where a man can 'grab' a woman 'by the pussy' or have suspicious connections to our most powerful enemy and still be deemed fit for office. The year 2016 made me really begin to hate 'the right', an entity that seemed to be intent on damaging any liberal aspirations for society. I am not alone in this feeling.

Campuses have always been deeply political places; there is, of course, truth in conservative claims that they are bastions of the liberal elite. One of the major effects of Trump's election has been the growing alienation of highly-educated liberals. It

was an event that has helped to widen the psychological gap between college-educated, liberal people and rural, high-school educated people. I have heard more than one friend comment, only semi-joking, about the pressing need for Plato's 'philosopher kings'.

Yet the snarls of disdain and the bitter mocking of Trump's base by this 'elite' only helps feed the growing gap in the American population. A whole swathe of the US has become distinctly 'other' to many liberals – Republicans are not totally unjustified when they accuse liberals of having a superiority complex. The compassion and empathy that helps bipartisan cooperation has collapsed under the weight of each political side's mutual hatred.

I can't pretend I'm immune from this impulse. When someone mentions that they are a Republican, my lip tends to curl in disgust. I have come to see Republicans not as people I have disagreements with, but as the enemy.

However, I recognise just how toxic this feeling can be. America's political system only functions when both sides collaborate and when we see our opposition as human beings. I'm not advocating tolerance of racism, sexism, homophobia, or xenophobia. I do not think there is any justifica-

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



“The only way we will solve America's problems is by working together”

tion for the normalisation of Trump: almost all of what he says is unjustifiable. The same goes for some of his supporters. But the left's tendency to treat Trump voters with supercilious scorn is not doing us any favours in winning back the votes that swung from Barack to Donald.

Trump's presidency has made me cynical about our capacity to tackle the serious problems American society faces today. America has faced seven years of legislative stagnation caused by the total break-down in bipartisanship. Trump has only fed this divide, radicalising factions on both sides of the political spectrum. We are all watching America form into two camps with little in common.

We don't even share facts anymore: your political persuasion will determine what your Facebook feed looks like, what news you watch, and who you believe. If we want to make progress, Generation Y needs to resist the all-too-tempting impulse towards treating their opponents with dismissive disdain. When we are scornful, we play into Fox News' narrative of the left. There won't be a revolution, so the only way we will solve America's problems is by working together.



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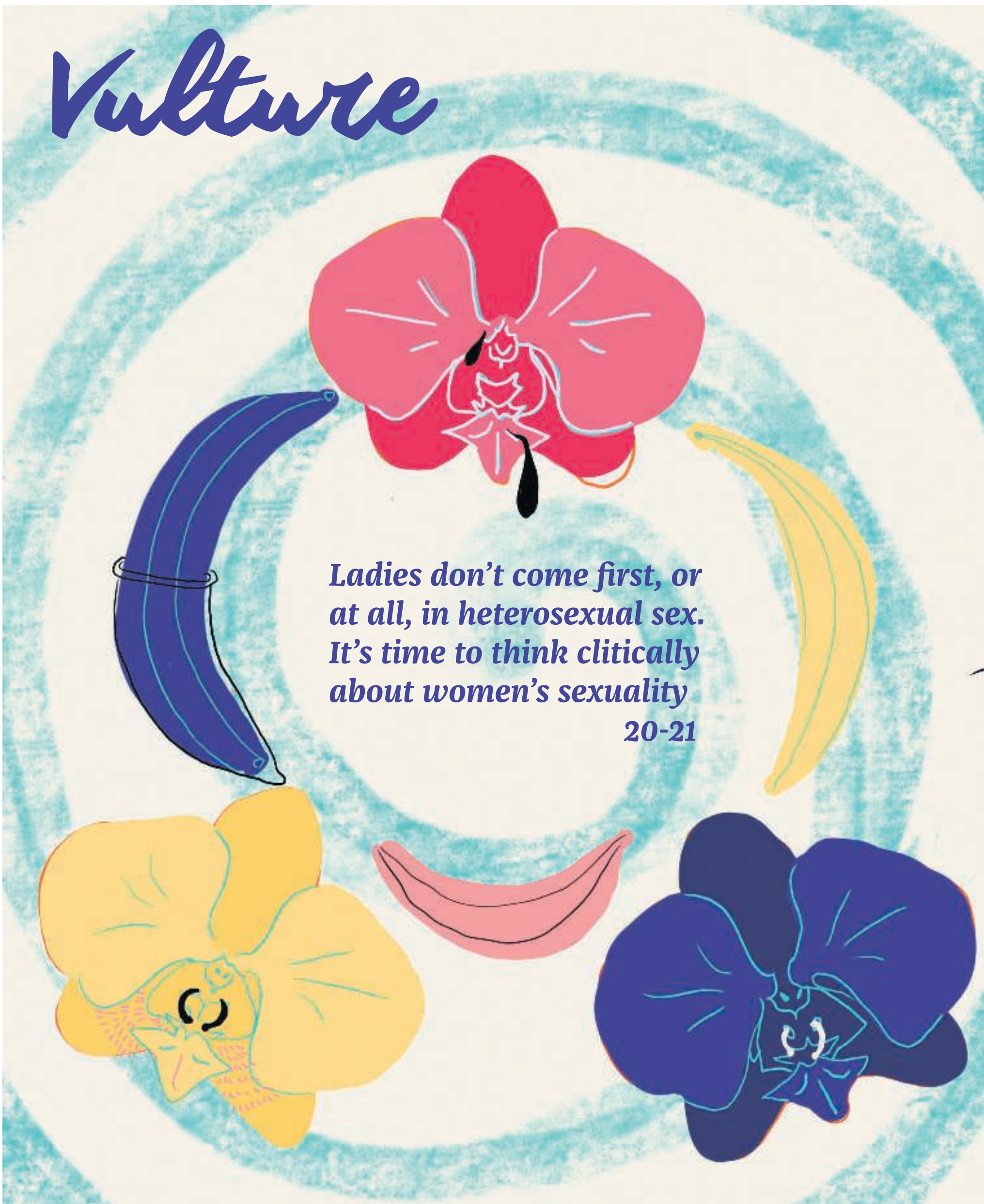
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*Outside the Old Building*

# Vulture



*Ladies don't come first, or  
at all, in heterosexual sex.  
It's time to think critically  
about women's sexuality*

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# Clitical thinking

*The personal is political: Eve Hodgson and Micaela Solis discuss the repression of women's sexuality*

*'Ladies first'? Not in heterosexual sex. Eve Hodgson explores the orgasm gap and what we can do to close it*

When compared to the male orgasm, the fact that women come is a well-kept secret. While jokes about boys masturbating are ten a penny on shows like *The Inbetweeners*, we don't see similar, frank, or even funny representations of female sexuality anywhere near as often.

There's a bit of a vicious circle here. We think of women orgasming as obscene, so we suppress it, so it seems like it should be secret. As a result, the female orgasm is hidden - not only in popular culture, but in the lives of women and their partners.

*The Journal of Sexual Medicine* found that, in a casual sex scenario, women orgasmed around half the number of times that men did. Significantly, they orgasm a lot more with other women, with around 75% reporting orgasm compared to 40% in sex with men. I think this is the result of lack of communication in sex, especially in the case of women who don't come as much as they'd like.

Our culture of sex is built on male pleasure - the porn industry capitalises on what the male gaze wants to see. Women's orgasms in porn are often for the men who make up the majority of viewers. They're unrealistically

“Making women come a lot of the time is just about asking what they want”

portrayed as something that can be attained through penetrative, violent sex.

Some women might be able to come this way, and porn can be a good way to see kinks normalised and accepted when they can sometimes feel wrong or perverse. However, it's also not representative of women's sexuality as active; needing to be treated independently rather than as a receptacle for male desire.

Even porn that shows women enjoying sex in a women-controlled environment, such as 'lesbian' porn, creates a passive female sexuality, one that is for men to watch. When women are shown to orgasm in porn like that, it is just as unrealistic as when they perform heteronormative scenes. Hugh Hefner is said to have made his 'playmates' act out lesbian porn scenes while he had sex. Clearly, this was not in aid of their sexual desire or fulfilment - it was in aid of his.

Porn creates the image that women can and do come wildly through what one of my friends delicately refers to as 'basic ploughing'. We perhaps see this as the 'easy' way to have sex because we are so centred on male pleasure - getting women off is just too difficult, too much of a faff.

But it isn't. Making women come a lot of

Illustrations  
by *Anna  
Palma Balint*



the time is just about asking what they want. I think of it like a game of Bop It - if you twist it without being told, the results aren't going to be great.

And if it doesn't work, it doesn't work. That's fine. Men can have problems orgasming too, so this runs both ways - orgasm does not have to be the end goal of every sexual encounter. When orgasm stops being the end goal - especially for women having sex with men, - its attainment will stop being a subject of intense pressure. Sex becomes simpler. Reaching orgasm becomes easier when people are relaxed. This is why heteronormative porn can be so problematic, as it creates a sense of expectation around orgasm that isn't realistic or helpful.

That isn't to say we should stop caring about women orgasming less than men. I am a strong believer in the Nicki Minaj mantra of demanding orgasm, because if men are going to come all the time and their female partners significantly less so, that isn't right.

That being said, I can count on one hand (well, one finger) the number of times I've orgasmed with a partner. I would have to use all my fingers and toes to tot up how many times the (male) people I've been sleeping with came. That doesn't mean I've been having purely bad sex, but it does mean I've been subscribing to the narrative that it's too much work to make women orgasm.

That women come less than men in heterosexual sex is a sad fact. What is especially tragic about this is that things don't have to be this way. Men of the world, I urge you: watch or read some feminist porn, go on OMGYes.com, ask your girlfriend/wife/new friend from Cindies what *they* want to happen. Let's close the orgasm gap together ●





## Can porn be feminist? Micaela Solis asks who pornography is made for, and why this matters

When did you last have sex? When did you last watch porn? What kind of porn was it? Despite the well-trodden feminist slogan that 'the personal is political', these kinds of questions might seem far too invasive. It's tempting to try to cordon off sex-talk as 'strictly-not-to-be-subjected-to-feminist-critique'. But granting sex immunity from feminist critique like this is a mistake. It might be uncomfortable, but being unwilling to subject our sexual habits and tastes to scrutiny is a huge barrier to gender equality. We can't just cleave matters of sex from matters of equality. Recent allegations against Harvey Weinstein, and the #MeToo campaign that followed, are clear indicators of this. How we think about sex seeps into our other behaviour; it affects how we treat people in the bedroom, the boardroom, and on the streets.

In turning a critical eye to sex, porn is an obvious place to start. Increasingly, porn functions as sex education for young boys and girls. A 2013 report of the UK Children's Commissioner surveyed students, aged 14 to 18, about their attitudes to sex. Young men commented that porn was a key source of information for them about 'the way people have sex', and that they used it to learn 'new moves'. In principle, there's no problem with porn being a source of sex education – sex

“In porn, the culmination of most scenes is male ejaculation. Women's pleasure is depicted as a means to that end.”



education in schools is notoriously bad, particularly in schools with religious affiliation. In practice, though, mainstream porn isn't an accurate or positive representation of how people do have sex, or should be having sex. This is the heart of the problem.

Porn – that is, internet, mainstream porn – is unrealistic about people's bodies. The lack of diversity is stark. The women in porn are generally slim, white, with perfectly even labia and a lack of pubic hair. It's unrealistic about orgasms. Men sustain erections for long periods of time and ejaculate on demand; women have multiple screaming orgasms through little-to-no stimulation. It's unrealistic about safe sex, too. How often do you see a condom in porn?

Not to shatter any illusions, but this isn't what sex, real sex, is like. 'Porn sex' is a carefully constructed myth. Then there are the more explicitly gendered and racial issues. In porn, the culmination of most scenes is male ejaculation. Women's pleasure is depicted primarily as a means to that end. Men in porn ejaculate on women's faces, breasts and bodies; they call them 'sluts', 'bitches' and 'whores'. Porn also fetishises people of colour, subjecting them to stereotypes by which they are categorised.

Creators of feminist porn seek to create a new kind of porn, which distances itself from the misogynistic, racist and inaccurate practices of current mainstream porn. Multiple production companies of this kind of content exist (Dane Jones, Pink and White Productions, Bright Desire), and are appreciated by their consumers. But their success thus far has been limited to certain groups. This stems partially from reluctance to change, which in turn stems from reluctance to admit that there's a problem. Paradigmatic here is the claim that porn is 'just a fantasy'. Well – that may be true, but I doubt that it's any real vindication of mainstream porn. Isn't it a problem, at least to some degree, if our fantasies consistently include seeing women slapped, dressed as schoolgirls, ejaculated on, and called 'sluts'? If we're turned off by the prospect of masturbating to a woman with pubic hair?

A larger part of the problem, though, are misconceptions about what feminist porn really is. A key move in popularising feminist

porn will be to set the record straight. According to feminist magazine *Unbound*, feminist porn is about 'promoting a sex-positive sphere for women to reclaim the narrative around female sexuality'. In feminist porn, actors are paid fairly and female directors are heavily featured. Female pleasure and orgasms are central points of focus, and diversity is not just shown, but celebrated. Feminist porn features women of different body types, sexual orientations, ethnicities and ages. It doesn't adhere to gender roles – men can be submissive and women dominant without falling into the 'dominatrix' trope. The women depicted in feminist porn display sexual desires, and play active roles in leading and initiating sexual interactions. Scenes of non-consensual sex, gratuitous violence or degrading language are omitted, though there is a place for (consensual) BDSM in feminist porn.

Described like this, feminist porn doesn't seem that revolutionary at all. Why should women's pleasure not be central? Why should a range of actors not be featured? Why should women not play active roles in sex, and why shouldn't we find this sexy? Feminist porn is a much better, more accurate depiction of how real, healthy sexual encounters go. The irony of it being characterised as 'niche' porn would be laughable, if it weren't so wounding.

Not all feminists are on board with feminist porn. Some worry that gender inequalities will only be further entrenched, this time under the guise of being 'feminist'. This may be a valid worry, but I think a dose of pragmatism is healthy. People aren't going to stop watching porn, any more than they stop having sex. And while that's true, feminist porn is a far better alternative to the kind of porn that dominates the Internet currently, both as a tool for sex education and as content that we implicitly sanction as sexually arousing. Of course, the hope is that one day we won't need these kinds of labels, and porn that centralises women's pleasure alongside men's will be the norm and not a niche. A more intermediate goal is motivating this change – as with any 'recovery', the first step is admitting there's a problem. Once this step is successfully taken, and other misconceptions cleared, I think feminist porn stands a better chance of wider success ●



Read more online at [varsity.co.uk/features](http://varsity.co.uk/features)

# What's on

By *Georgie Kemsley-Pein*



**Dame Elizabeth Frink:  
Larger than Life**  
**Heong Gallery**  
4 November – 6  
February

Running until February, the new exhibition at the Heong Gallery on Dame Elizabeth Frink will showcase pieces from a leading private collection of the artist's work. Frink was an English sculptor and printmaker of the 20th century who is characterized by her monumental bronze figural sculptures, embodying themes of "the nature of Man; the 'horseness' of horses; and the divine in human form".

Gustav Holst's operatic work is on at the ADC this week, based on an episode from the ancient Sanskrit epic, the Mahābhārata, and is a tale of human compassion and determination, as Sāvitrī challenges the ominous figure of Death in order to save her husband's existence.

**Sāvitrī**  
**ADC Theatre**  
8-11 November,  
11pm

**Women Artists:  
Models of  
Collecting**  
**Murray Edwards  
College**  
8 November,  
6-7:30pm

Four prominent women including Anthea Hamilton will be seated on a panel to discuss women artists, art collections and patronage. The evening includes a free tour of the New Hall Art Collection beforehand - the largest collection of modern and contemporary art by women artists in Europe. The event has now sold out so arrive early to get a ticket.



THE DOROTHY DAYS BLOGSPOT.CO.UK

Returning for its fourth year, Speakeasy is back at the ADC bar, promising Fay Roberts as feature performance artist, as well as an additional student poet and eight slam pieces to be performed on the night. Tickets are £5 for students.

**Speakeasy: Week V**  
**ADC Theatre**  
5 November,  
8-9:30pm

**The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui**  
**ADC Theatre**  
7-11 November, 7:45pms

The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui is the Week 5 ADC Mainshow, where mall time crook Arturo Ui is seeking to establish himself in Chicago. Written by Bertolt Brecht in exile in the 1940s, the play is a satire on the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party prior to WWII.



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# Arts

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## Arts and craft: Sumi-e

Spencer Cunningham

discusses his often tortuous, yet always worthwhile, experience of learning sumi-e



FLICKR: RON FISHER

I have always wondered what it would be like to be an artist. For most of my life, this was an idle daydream. It took me an embarrassingly long time as a child to understand that the legs and arms of my stick figures were not supposed to come directly out of their heads, and afterwards, I avoided all visual arts education as a matter of principle.

But I was always secretly attracted to the beret, the oblong palette with the little thumb hole, Venetian sunrises, etc. Usually, I was content to smile about these ideas and continue with my day, but about a year ago, that changed. I came across a haunting, multi-panelled ink-wash landscape in the Japanese wing of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. The black mountains and pines on the paper screen faded away into mist. I marvelled at the delicacy of their execution, the simplicity of the palette, the streaks of grey and black that hinted at forms, and the casual, almost

improvisational style of the brush stroke. I decided I would learn sumi-e.

It was once the case that impulse would have been difficult to realise. I'd nurse the idea for a bit and then forget about it after something more pressing came along. Not so with the internet: instantly, without even properly considering it, I ordered the materials, found YouTube videos, and uncovered more information than I could ever read on the subject. I learned, from the comfort of a bedroom, how to hold the brush, grind the ink from the ashen pigment stick, dilute it with water, and layer different shades onto the brush so that one stroke would produce a spectrum of greys. I researched types of specially textured paper and the philosophy of the ink wash tradition – all before the equipment arrived.

The foundational subject of sumi-e, I learned, is bamboo. Producing the plant's leaves requires delicate brush techniques. It is the discipline's training ground: rela-

tively easy to paint but allowing for limitless improvement. This is where I decided to start. After my materials arrived, I selected a video. The instructor mixed her ink to just the right shade, and I followed. She drew her hand across the paper. The bamboo leaves seemed to spring alive from her brush. A single stroke produced a single leaf effortlessly. They bent and twisted in an imagined wind. The composition, with its generous use of blank space, seemed both accidental and harmonious.

I attempted to follow along. My first leaf emerged as a formless blob. I tried again. This time it was another misbegotten mass that bled into its neighbour. I put the paper aside and got another sheet. By the time I looked up again, my room was filled with wet sheets of paper, each with amorphous smears of ink. I felt like Dr Rorschach's unpaid intern, and in the dark blots, I saw frustration. Confound the internet for making me do this!

But for some reason I didn't stop. Something

about the simplicity of sumi-e kept me going. They were just leaves, after all. And there was only one colour to paint with: black. The task was clear. I was drawn into the great paradox of sumi-e; the simplest materials and subjects created the subtlest challenges. Over time, I improved – not rapidly, not even much at all, but I began to take an unexpected joy in my artistic mediocrity. Every minor improvement was satisfying. The knowledge that I would never actually be that good at sumi-e meant that I was free from any hunger for recognition. A pursuit that began as an attempt to vindicate my idle dreams of artistry became a case of simply doing something I enjoyed. The latter was much more rewarding.

Sumi-e privileges spontaneity and impression. It requires suggestion rather than exhaustive detail. As a student, I had come to view work, mostly writing, as an almost endless series of edits and refinements, deletions and insertions. The idea that whatever came off my brush could be valuable because of its connection to a unique moment of action was strangely enthralling. I would sometimes try to insert my obsessiveness into the process, but each effort to alter the original brushstrokes made the painting worse. Despite my best efforts, I had to be natural, to live happily with the flow of ink and water on paper.

Our world is dominated by a professional system where we are made to choose one thing we can do well and jettison the rest. Much of this newspaper's readership participates in a rarefied subsection of that world that is concerned with its own conception of excellence and distinction. But specialisation can be stultifying. Vocations can weigh heavy. There is, I think, room for amateurism, for folly. It can inform the more focused parts of our lives in unexpected ways, and even if it doesn't, it carries us briefly from our small spheres of proficiency to a wider world of unknowable complexity and talent. So let's try something new, and if at all possible, let's be unremarkable at it ●

## Expressible: The way the world works

Sneha Sen explores the hidden perspectives of language



It seems only yesterday that I was writing last week's column about how the world's languages express beauty. On another scale, the view that starting university feels like just last week, is popular among second, third and fourth years. The fact that in a couple of months I'll be halfway through my degree is terrifying – while freshers will be interested, or perhaps depressed, to

discover that by the end of this week, they'll officially be halfway through their first term. Going back even further, I know it definitely doesn't feel like eight whole years since my first day at secondary school.

There's a word that describes this strange ability that the world, and time, seem to possess – the Sanskrit word 'कल्प' (written as 'kalpa' in English). It describes the idea of time passing on a cosmic scale – and although it tends to refer to larger time scale, like the period of time between the creation of a world, and its recreation in traditional Buddhist ideas, I'm sure a little artistic license can be employed for our purposes.

Another classic scenario which people of all languages and cultures are doubtless familiar with, is that described by the word 'verschlimmbessern' in German; it is the action of trying to make something better, but ending up making it worse instead. It's something that we all experience at some point in our lives – whether it's accidentally making your essay make even less sense in an attempt to edit it, or trying to justify something you said without thinking and ending up making it even worse for yourself. It's when you dig yourself into a hole, and any attempt to extricate yourself only ends in you digging deeper.

The next situation we're going to look at is, again, a familiar one. It comes this time

from the Austronesian language of Kilivila, spoken in the Trobriand Islands of Papua New Guinea. The word 'mokita' refers to the truth that we all know, but silently agree not to speak of.

It is related to the idea of the 'elephant in the room', though the two are slightly different – the elephant in the room tends to refer more to a problem or risk which is obvious to everyone, but which nobody wants to discuss. 'Mokita' (as I understand it) tends to refer instead to a secret or truth that everyone is aware of, and that everyone knows everyone else is aware of, but that it is not necessary to discuss. Moving on to other social situations that can only be described as convention, we come to Japanese, and its delightful '有り難迷惑', transcribed in English as 'arigata meiwaku', which depicts a very specific social situation.

It refers to an act that someone does for you that you didn't want them to have to do and tried to avoid making them do, but they went ahead anyway in their determination to do you favour, and then things went wrong and caused you a lot of trouble, but in the end you were forced to express gratitude to them anyway due to social conventions. This situation is definitely one I find myself in a lot, but whether I'm the annoying person who insists on helping out, or the one who gets helped out despite my protests, is unfortu-

nately unclear.

Lastly, another social convention – or at least, close to one. This word comes from Yagán, one of the indigenous languages of Tierra del Fuego. Yagán is regarded as a language isolate, due to the fact that it doesn't seem to be related to any other language being spoken today – just like Korean from my first column on specifics. The word 'mamihlapinatapei' captures the look that passes between two people who both want something to happen between them that is more than friendship, but are both reluctant to start this.

This look is far too familiar – people in movies and real life alike all too often describe knowing that someone likes them from 'the look in their eyes' and liking them back, but nothing ever ends up happening due to their reluctance to actually start it. If this isn't a characteristic of the way society and the world work in the most mysterious ways, I honestly don't know what is.

So, what has this week's collection of words from all over the world shown us? That it's normal for time to pass you by on a cosmic scale – that making things worse while trying to make things better is something that happens to all of us – and that social conventions really do dominate our very existence ●

# Film & TV

## CFF 2017: A *Loveless* Debate

Dir. Andrey Zvyagintsev  
In cinemas 9th February 2018

**Lillian Crawford** – A miserable heap of shit

★

At the start, a character plays Solitaire on their computer in the corner of the screen. It might be presumed that, bored by the mundanities of life, they decided to amuse themselves with this menial game. The viewer of *Loveless* soon comes to sympathise with this anonymous worker as it becomes apparent that the film has no intention to challenge or stimulate in even the remotest sense. When young Alexey runs out of the picture early on, the audience might be well-advised to follow suit.

The plot is understatedly simple, and remains so throughout the two-hour runtime: parents fight, child leaves home. The fact that it takes half the film for his mother and father to even notice he is gone is only the pinnacle of reasons one comes to loathe them. The former is a vulgar narcissist, snapping photos of her lobster and wine waiter while holding conversation that might have been written hurriedly on a used napkin by Oleg Negi and director Andrey Zvyagintsev. She remains impregnable as a protagonist, reveal-



ing little beyond irritability. The latter is her double – obtuse and dry, the camera finds two extended shots of his luncheon tray moving along a buffet more interesting. Indeed, some of the most exciting moments are attempting to contrast the meals he eats, swapping potatoes for broccoli in what might tenuously be described as the film's 'highlight'.

It is testament to *Loveless*'s bloated weariness that the subtitle writer loses the will to continue – a visual pun of "wrapped" sees the 'r' entangled with the 'w', and in an inconsequential scene, lines are simply dubbed "[speaking Tajik]". This provides one of several laugh-out-loud moments of unintended comedy (on balance, regrettably, this does not

make for a case of 'so-bad-it's-good'), especially jarring following the ambiguous climax, featuring an outpour of sudden emotion woe-fully absent in preceding scenes. Nevertheless, the sickening imagery, albeit brief, fails to pack the gut-wrenching stab for which it gives itself credit.

Another drawn out sequence sees the boy's parents drive out to his grandmother's house, despite her living three hours away and having no information to give regarding his whereabouts. Here Zvyagintsev actually seems to desire to inflict pain on his audience, filling the auditorium with pounding rock music and further droll dialogue remarkably self-aware of the film's condition – "A miserable heap of shit." It contrasts Evgueni and Sacha Galperine's minimalist, yammering score that plucks and pounds alongside the lack of action, creating a sinister atmosphere otherwise inexplicable.

Zvyagintsev seems to want to make *Loveless* say something about Russian society, the placement of a forest in the middle of the brutal urban landscape warning of the dangers of industrialisation, the obsession Alexey's parents have with phones and work distracting them from the love they should show to their unwanted son. One particularly pretentious shot sees a gargantuan satellite dish through the trees, and in its overtness any much-needed subtlety is lost. At least it is more thought-provoking than unnamed teachers cleaning blackboards and a man dropping a forkful of rice.

There are striking cinematic parallels – the dashboard POV shots are reminiscent of *Birdemic*'s incessant opening, and the bizarre furnishings make for as much fun as the framed spoons in *The Room* (including a dead tree standing next to an unused extension plug). The random and explicit sex scenes pop up repeatedly, as in the latter, depicting heavily-pregnant anal and erotic apple-munching. But, unlike either of these films, there are no laughs here. Indeed, on a purely cinematic level, *Loveless* is a fine work, but it is depressingly hollow, its namesake absence extending to all forms of human emotion. To say that this was a disappointment from Zvyagintsev following *Leviathan* is then as gross an understatement as its title ●

**Hugh Oxlade** – The great divorce

★★★★★

*Loveless* caused me to do something which I have not done in a cinema for a very long time: think. Not think about whether I needed to pick up some orange juice on the way home, or about the article on religious art in post-Reformation Britain I was meant to be reading for a class. Goodness knows there have been plenty of films released this year which have provoked those kinds of thoughts.

Instead, I was thinking about the characters: the dilemmas they faced, how happy they were, what the consequences of *Loveless*'s central event would be for them. This was a sure sign of highly competent filmmaking. Later, however, mere thinking found itself transformed into the truly heady stuff that is contemplation: How far is our society responsible for these characters' actions? Who are we at home, and who are we at work? Which tragedies are the most important? Why do we behave as we do? What is love? Can, or should, love conquer all?

Perhaps, then, the greatest of *Loveless*'s many merits as a work of art was that it provided the time and space for this divine rumination. The pace of the 'action', what little there was, did indeed vary between the slow and the practically stationary. Any faster, however, and the opportunity to probe, examine, analyse, reflect, and marvel, would have been denied. As a result, the sensation of watching it was just as exhilarating as any high-octane explosion-fest; there were no releases of adrenaline, certainly, but I found my mind constantly being directed to unexpected and fascinating places. Instead of white knuckles, a sense of freedom from everyday existence's narrow intellectual bounds, and instead of gasps, moments of the profoundest insight.

As well as this distinctive and delectable quality, *Loveless* was replete with all the conventional facets of excellence. The cinematography was consistently impressive, the shots of the search and rescue teams striding through the briar and the woods being nothing short of virtuosic, while the mirror shot at the end was among the finest examples of its kind. There was intensity, occasionally brutal, and humour as well, the outbreaks of deadpan farce preventing the film from becoming an unrelenting exercise in mordancy.

The characters in *Loveless* were certainly flawed. Yet they were flawed in intriguing, and ultimately understandable, ways, and at no point did these flaws preclude one from wishing the characters well. The film was constructed in so deft a manner that revelations about the characters were essentially unceasing. The sex scenes, above all, were of the choicest tenderness, and the intimacy displayed by the characters when in bed proved the crucial means of appreciating their behaviour outside of their cosy cocoons.

While watching *Loveless*, for sure, the mind wanders. It wanders along paths laid down, in exquisite fashion, by the film. This is the point of *Loveless*. Those seeking a thrill-a-minute, edge-of-your-seat rollercoaster ride should look elsewhere ●

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# Harrowing sublimity in *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*

**Pany Heliotis** attempts to unpack this resolutely difficult drama shown during the Cambridge Film Festival

Dir. Yorgos Lanthimos  
In cinemas now  
★★★★

The boundary between childhood and adulthood is tall and transparent; the moment one climbs over to the other side, one is but a glance away from going back. The slipperiness of this divide confronts all our affectations of maturity: our jobs, relationships, and families. It instils us with a painfully acknowledged childish nihilism – none of these things really matter. Yorgos Lanthimos's *The Lobster* showed the extent to which our desires for real, adult love are merely childish yearnings for which we build systems to manage, endowed with dire (and fantastical) consequences. *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* continues this thread by asking how easily a child can tear apart these systems so earnestly built by their adult peers.

Like in *The Lobster* before it, Lanthimos's characters speak in the innocent monotone of people discovering speech for the first time. The impact here is to expose the utter artifice of

their attempt at normalcy, and to expose the pettiness of adult discourse. A scene in a hospital corridor entails two doctors (Colin Farrell and Bill Camp) comparing their preferences for leather or metal watchstraps, but their eerie flatness strips the exchange of all feeling, like bad actors reading from an atrocious script. To some extent, the characters are automata, merely going through the daily procedure of social interaction but with little existential reward.

We might think that the introduction of a despotic youth would bring some vigour to these otherwise stale exchanges, and the introduction of Barry Keoghan's Martin certainly, initially at least,



makes true on that promise. But after a short while in both his and Farrell's company, we recognise the same shared flatness; these are man-boys, trapped in the transitional stages of maturity; all that separates them is body hair, and those aforementioned affectations of adulthood.

To reveal too much about *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* would be to lessen its impact.

The jump in genres it makes to its cataclysmic ending are rewards for what can feel like a meandering beginning.

This is not to say the first half of the film is boring, but simply to say it aims to cover a lot of tonal ground which at times feels like a clueless sprawl: a visit

to Martin's mother's house, a barbecue, an awkward dinner; all feel only minutely

related to the plot.

However, all episodes contribute to what is the film's, for lack of better words, humdrum ominousness, crucial in preparing us for the film's violent narrative shift, suggesting that all the eruptions of agony were merely latent beneath the surface. Adulthood is just a carapace over pain. To this end, let this short review act as an invite to break through that tough layer into Lanthimos's maelstrom of ethical despair.

*The Killing of a Sacred Deer* continues Lanthimos's excursions into the fallacies of adulthood, tackling his subject matter with clinical aplomb and exposing the moral and emotional compromises we make in our transition to 'maturity'. Watch with a friend ●



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# Call Me By Your Name is a seductive treat

**Madeleine Pulman-Jones** is left overwhelmed by this tender masterpiece

Dir. Luca Guadagnino  
In cinemas now  
★★★★★

The final instalment in Luca Guadagnino's *Desire* trilogy, following *Io Sono L'Amore* (2009) and *A Bigger Splash* (2016), this is beyond doubt one of the most exceptional works of cinema to have been released over the past decade (this opinion is by no means controversial – the film received a ten-minute standing ovation at the New York Film Festival).

An adaptation of the

novel of the same name by André Aciman, the film sensuously captures a sun-drenched summer in the 1980s in northern Italy, and a uniquely passionate encounter between two young men that revolutionises their lives. Elio (Timothée Chalamet), a precociously cultured seventeen-year-old, is spending the summer in his family's villa, when an American graduate student, Oliver (Armie Hammer), comes to intern with his archaeologist father for six weeks. After an initial period of tension and competition, a strong mutual attraction surfaces and swiftly becomes all-consuming.

Guadagnino has noted that the film marks a departure for him, moving towards a "calmer" way of filmmaking than he is accustomed to, and the result is revelatory. Though his previous films are brilliant in their own ways, each probes at something which only *Call Me By Your Name* manages to arrive at – an unaffected, un-stylised depiction of a tender, awkward love affair. The operatic heights of *Io Sono L'Amore* and the Fellini-esque emotional games of *A Bigger Splash* are here exchanged for a subtler, more personal cinematic register, which is incredibly affecting.

Luca Guadagnino's genius lies in what he does not show us. In a Guadagnino film, it is not uncommon for a fly crawling over the creases of a shirt to be given just as much poetic significance as the words the man is

saying. No other director working today so relishes this intimacy the camera affords. As such, the expressions of love between his characters take place more abstractly than conventionally.

The first love scene in the sumptuous *Io Sono L'Amore* takes place between Swinton and a plate of prawns cooked by Gabbriellini, a scene which Swinton has since playfully referred to as "prawnography". However, the first Guadagnino-ian love scene between Oliver and Elio is perhaps harder to locate, since the ambiguous fluidity of their physical context is apparent from the first scene and remains so well before any true romance is established. Cigarettes are passed from hand to hand, tense muscles are massaged during a volleyball game, hands are held just a little too long when 'friendly' pulling one another out of bed to go swimming.

In the middle of the film, Guadagnino takes the idea of touch to even more abstract heights in a particularly memorable scene. Elio asks for a truce after an argument with Oliver, who is holding the arm of an ancient sculpture that his father has dredged up from the sea. He offers the sculpture's hand instead of his own. Of course, when the couple eventually do make love, we get nothing less than we have come to expect from Guadagnino, who has proved himself a true poet of cinematic

intimacy.

As in most of his films, the rhythmic orchestral works of John Adams gracefully punctuate the drama. However, in place of frequent collaborator Yorick Le Saux, Guadagnino chose this time to work with Apichatpong Weerasethakul's director of photography, Sayombhu Mukdeeprom, in whose dreamlike silhouettes people resemble the classical sculptures that so fascinate the academics in the film.

Both Armie Hammer and Timothée Chalamet, surrounded by an artfully curated cast of character actors, give outstandingly nuanced and natural performances – they share a rare physical rapport which is only enriched by the emotional intensity of both performances. The film also features an extraordinarily moving exchange between Elio and his father (Michael Stuhlbarg) which must be one of the most tender father and son moments in cinema history.

Following Barry Jenkins's stunning *Moonlight* last year, *Call Me By Your Name* is a still more passionate and genuine portrayal of queer love on-screen, signalling hope for a future of more portrayals of similar stories not defined by difficulty and unhappiness, but as real, romantic tales ●



# Fashion

## Autumn's best trends: tried and tested

**Vivienne Hopley-Jones** dissects the biggest autumnal trends both from the catwalk and our very own students in Cambridge

The quarterly change in British seasons, marked primarily by a slight change in rain density and a minor shift in the exact grey hue of the ever-present clouds, is mitigated somewhat by a much more vibrant aspect: a new season of style. Autumn is perhaps the most rich season of all; cocoa browns, velvety maroons, silky honey-hues, the colours of the season are rooted in the changing natural environment of a British autumn.

Diversity in depth and colour is rivalled only by the wide array of fabrics and materials, making autumn the season to layer textures and fabrics to your heart's content. Incorporating both the well-loved seasonal classics and a creative flare derived fresh from the runway, four fashion conscious Cambridge students share with *Varsity* their own personal takes on this season's styling.

Red is undoubtedly the colour of the season, and if you're not brave enough for fully colour-blocking, there is definitely still room to incorporate this universally flattering colour into your wardrobe.

Olivia Miller: "The raincoat is a necessity in England. To brighten up a rainy day I like to go with a bright red; I think it really goes with anything!"

Olivia Sewell also channels this season's essential colour in a red off-the-shoulder jumper; "a bright colour" can turn a "low effort look" into something more dynamic and on-trend. Bringing the off-the-shoulder trend which defined runway looks for SS17 into Autumn illustrates the diversity of transitional styling.

Colour-blocking is not just limited to the array of red-hued pieces from designers throughout fashion month. Olivia M cites "colour coordination" as an effective way to create complimentary outfits and achieve a "city-sophistication" inspired look. Colour blocking is also easily achievable with an all-black ensemble.

Layering is a must in autumnal fashion; building texture by pulling in rich fabrics and on-trend pieces to create a natural, chic and effortless style. Layering is an easy way to create a more interesting and dynamic look.

Corduroy was unavoidable on the catwalk for AW17. An array of cord-centred pieces were prominent in shows throughout fashion month, from Marc Jacobs to Margaret Howell. The layering of corduroy with other chunky fabrics and its combination with other key seasonal trends such as the suit was beautifully displayed in the Prada collection, and this look is easily transferable to street style. Olivia M's rusty wide-leg cords are reminiscent of the Mulberry looks this season, a subtle take on English heritage, while Olivia S shows how diverse the fabric can be: a black cordu-



roy skirt is ideal for a stylish yet casual look, a "staple" at this time of year. Sewell pairs it with a classic pair of black boots, which are "perfect" for the student in a rush.

Combining the best of old and new is an influence on Eleanor Swire's look which has a vintage and eclectic feel to it; the shearling coat is thrifted and she values the "functional" feel of her boots. Functionality, with a military edge, has been a key trend on the runway for Autumn in recent years and AW17 is no different. From the tailored suits and jackets, to Miu Miu's defined broad shouldered figures in Milan, substantiality is integral to the season's styling.

The typical binary notion about fashion, epitomised by the text-book BuzzFeed quiz question, 'style or comfort?', is shown by these Cambridge students to be a complete delusion. The four models emphasise the importance of "comfort" in their wardrobes, without sacrificing style: feeling confident is key. University is a time to embrace new styles and wear clothes that reflect your identity, and these students show how even within the busy environment of university life, style doesn't have to be sacrificed, especially in the richest season which is full of opportunities for creativity and expression through fashion ●



▶▶ Olivia M channels the colour of the season through this statement red raincoat, while Olivia S incorporates red into the classic autumnal wardrobe

▶ Olivia M layers some of this season's trends, including cord and chunky knitwear

▼ These four Cambridge students chose to draw inspiration from the natural environment





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



▼ Eleanor shows off her eclectic and more relaxed style with this thrifted coat, charity shop top and layered accessories

▲ Seema takes a more classic approach to her autumn style, choosing this versatile camel coat, layered over a yellow slip dress, playing with both colour and fabric



**PHOTOGRAPHER**  
 Emma Cavell

**CLOTHES**  
 All models' own

**LOCATION**  
 Trinity College Gardens

**MODELS**  
 Olivia Miller, Seema Nath, Olivia Sewell, Eleanor Swire

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# Music



## Interview: The Horrors

**Peter Chappell** catches up with the band on tour for their fifth album, *V*

**F**aris Badwin, lead singer of The Horrors, opened the door to the dimly lit tour bus. “Come in, man”. He turns around to the others in the back of the bus; “I’m just going out to Sainsbury’s, lads. Anyone want anything?” A throaty call from the back: “Could you pick me up some bagels please, man?” Baldwin mumbles a “yeah, no worries” and leaves, all shaggy hair and skinny jeans.

I was with my friend Bethany, who seemed far more confident about all this than me. The lead guitarist offers her, then me, a glass of

red wine. “Sorry we don’t have any glasses.” I notice its Campo Rioja, the same stuff my Mum buys from the shop on a Friday, as he hands me a plastic cup.

I first came across The Horrors in the pages of *NME* when they released their third record *Skying* in 2011. The band have their roots in garage punk and goth fashion (check out their performance of ‘Sammy the Crab’ on *The Mighty Boosh* circa 2007, then called The Black Tubes), but by then had moved into more exciting psychedelic rock. Now on their fifth album, *V*, the band were in Cambridge to play the Junction. Paul Epworth, charismatic producer to Adele, Rihanna and Paul McCartney, has come on board and the album has been met with rave reviews from critics.

I asked Josh, lead guitarist, about the reviews; some of them have noted how a lot of the bands from around 2006/7 have since dropped off. Arctic Monkeys are massive but they’re in America, Razorlight aren’t what

they were... “Are Razorlight still together?!” says one member, feigning surprise.

“I think they’re playing some obscure festival in Kent and stuff...”

“Oh yeah sorry, isn’t it Johnny Borrell on his own?”

After this top indie banter had died down, I returned to the question: “I just wanted to know what has kept The Horrors together through it all?”

“I think it’s just been a general approach; you had bands like the Maccabees who we were on tour together with fairly early on, and they seemed to have done a kind of music and just got better at it, and I guess you just get to a point where you are kind of doing the same thing, and you have nothing more to say. We, however, have constantly gone on tangents, and done something completely new, and never really repeated ourselves”. The Horrors’ tendency for going on tangents is pretty evident from our conversation; topics include postmodernism, UCL and David Gray.

Attempting to bring the conversation back to the new album, I asked what Epworth as producer had brought to the mix. “He stopped us talking. Honestly! He was like stop chatting about things all the time... we would just be sitting around a lot chatting about what an idea means, and he was like, fuck that, you’re not saying no to anything. We would spend like two weeks on a synth part before, man”.

The Horrors emerged in 2007, a time when The Kooks, Bloc Party and The Pigeon Detectives were grabbing headlines in *The Observer*. Most of the band were aged between 19 and

21. What was it like being that age and hitting the big time?

“Quite crazy. It happened so quickly; we started a band, rehearsed twice, played a show, got booked for three shows off the back of that, then we got booked for three shows off of each. Then it just spiralled out of control. I was at UCL at the time!” He laughed, shaking his head, “a fine institution indeed”.

Something which has kept The Horrors’ sound fresh is their obvious love for all sorts of obscure music. I’d heard that each member had a large record collection. “It’s crazy how many bands just don’t seem to care about music” said Josh, “or don’t really like music. They like Bowie, maybe. That just seems fucking crazy”. Bethany asked if that was what kept them experimenting. “I think it’s just a hatred of being bored! I just don’t want to redo anything”.

They’ve been lucky; Paul Epworth, it seems, took them under his wing. “Our relationship with the record label is great, because it’s his fucking record label. That’s one of the great things, he was like, “I wanna do a fucking mad, experimental record! It’s my fucking label! I don’t have to fucking answer to anyone, we can do whatever the fuck we want!” And it was that feeling, everyone just being excited like that”.

It’s better to burn out than to fade away, Neil Young once sang. The Horrors never really lived up to early fuss, and can’t compete with audience of some other bands of their generation. But *V* is their best work yet, and you get the sense they don’t give a shit ●

## ...& Me: Laura Marling

Exploring the identity and power of female artistry, **Genie Harrison** discusses how Laura Marling’s creativity helps fuel and inspire her own life

**I** first came to discover Laura Marling when I was 11 and she 19 – the age at which I now come to reflect on what her music has given me, both in an emotional and practical sense. Perhaps it is the unbelievable body of work she has produced as I have grown older, but I have found that her music holds the same significance to me now as it did upon my initial discovery, and I imagine will, for many more years to follow.

It was Marling’s writing that made its mark on my pre-adolescent self. *Alas I Cannot Swim* (2008) exposed me to a new musical world – drawing on folklore and spiritualism, Marling’s wisdom beyond her years helped me to develop a new way of thinking. It provided the reassurance that music for young women was not totally reliant upon the existence of men, provocative dancing and relative insipidness, but could encompass matters of far greater sincerity and importance – even at a young age. Marling’s world was one totally alien from my own: there were ghosts, captains

and sailors, a struggle between darkness and light. But it was the maturity and rawness of the music that left me both fascinated and totally bewildered, as it still does today.

Listening to Marling’s work, song-writing became a task far less unattainable; tools as simple as a voice and a guitar were suddenly enough to communicate emotional difficulties to a wider audience. The authenticity of Marling’s music allowed it to speak so clearly, and her writing in a manner so expressive, I found myself keen to do the same. Particularly as I got older, I found that songwriting became an incredibly productive emotional outlet. Even the act of simply writing music, without ever sharing or having anything come of it, generated a feeling of accomplishment within me and helped me to process

whatever I found myself struggling with.

Often an intense and self-exposing task, the intimacy I felt generated by Marling’s music pushed me to write honestly; to look at things within me that are embarrassing, difficult, and channel that energy into something productive and joyful. The 2011 album, *A Creature I Don’t Know* considers through song the existence of The Beast, a track that Marling claims “I still can’t believe I wrote”. She appears both entirely connected and disconnected with her work: it stems from deep within her, and yet is permitted to be born into something of its own accord.

Her music also became a source of practical importance to me when I first looked at producing and recording music. The existence of female producers within the music industry is scarce; even in 2016, no female producer was found on the Grammy nominees for producer of the year. The concept of self-producing holds great importance when we come to consider the sincerity of music; there is no one to dictate your sound but yourself, something I think incredibly important. Marling’s 2015 album *Short Movie* – self-composed and produced – provided evidence to me of the ability of women to take control of their

own sound, and thus further the relationship between the artist and listener.

As I began exploring recording and production, it became more clear to me how important this step is in communicating with a listener. A field far less documented than that of composing, I found the decision-making process one of a very abstract quality; with no concrete formula of how production should be done, it is only through listening and sense that the task can really be completed. *Short Movie* provides an example of the effectiveness of successful production. Marling’s ability to communicate seamlessly inspired me to attempt to do the same; reflecting your own musical feeling onto the listener in such an impactful manner.

Watching Marling perform her most recent work, *Semper Femina*, last March was a particularly significant moment for me. Despite her rather shy and humble demeanour off-stage, the almost ethereal atmosphere generated by Marling’s performance awakened a feeling of such admiration that I have experienced with no other artist. Hers is a music of hope, of honesty – the music I can turn to whether I find myself happy, sad, or nervous. And while music will probably always hold great importance in my life, I think it’s the music of Marling that I shall always consider the most essential – and as she continues to write, I have no doubt that I will too ●



# Theatre

More reviews are available online at:  
[varsity.co.uk/theatre](http://varsity.co.uk/theatre)



It is hard to assess student talent responsibly in the wake of formally-trained stars, writes **Sian Bradshaw**

During Freshers' Week, having been burdened with the task of organising college events, I found myself marshalling a group of keen students to the ADC theatre to see the *Footlights International Tour Show* as part of their obligatory integration into the cultural agglomerate that is the Cambridge theatre scene. I popped it on the schedule as I thought it was a failsafe choice: a surefire way of keeping everybody, including myself (it had been a long week), happy.

School-teacher rallying aside, for me, it had been a bit of a night off. We might've had to sprint to the box office for the last five minutes of our journey after a couple of meandering students had taken their time walking, but once I had sunk into my seat, I relaxed. I enjoyed the show a lot: it was much better than the previous year's, I had thought.

You can imagine my surprise that when the curtains went back down, I overheard one of the new cohort expressing quite the contrary opinion: "I expected a lot more - it was all a bit underwhelming".

I think it's fair to say that with the *Footlights* name in particular, comes quite a lofty reputation, and one that begs the talent and performative gusto to match. And while this year's cohort have it in abundance, having considered what the student in question might have meant, I can see precisely why they were so disappointed.

In the shadow of industry bigwigs like Emma Thompson, Richard Ayoade and John Cleese, and attached so irrevocably to the Cambridge 'brand' of theatre, it is hard to assess new talent responsibly.

It becomes increasingly difficult when the troupe market themselves against the gregarious endorsement of their repute: "the most renowned sketch troupe of them all". But the



JOHANNES HJORTH

## Stop holding student performers to impossible standards

truth is, they are standing in the impossibly large shoes of their, often formally-trained antecedents, and this is not fair.

This is not to say that we should stop holding student performers to high standards. We should - there are plenty of incredibly talented performers. But on numerous occasions, even I have been guilty of the way of thinking that I have outlined previously. I have had many a post-show debate lamenting the lack of an Olivia Colman-esque virtuoso performance, when I had failed to take into account that the people I was watching on-stage had probably not yet had the benefit of some of the Old Vic's polish.

We should contextualise both the suc-

cesses and the shortfalls of our student theatre community. I very much doubt that Tom Hiddleston emerged from the womb reciting 'To be, or not to be' with perfect poise and intonation. The stress of the *Tripods* might've helped with the fervent angst of the role, but not much otherwise - he had RADA to thank for that.

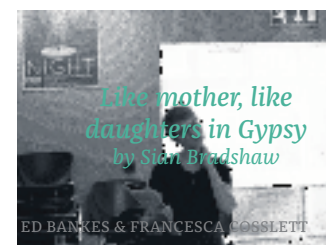
While I am certain that many of the actors and comedians you see perform here today will have wonderfully bright futures ahead of them, all that I ask is that we stop holding student performers to impossible standards ●

“ I very much doubt that Tom Hiddleston emerged from the womb reciting 'To be, or not to be' with perfect poise and intonation ”



GAGE SKIDMORE

### Online



ED BANKES &amp; FRANCESCA BOSSLETT

### REVIEW

*Shot in the Dark*



Set amid the Cold War in the 1950s, *Shot in the Dark* is a slapstick spy comedy with a side helping of ridiculousness and a large dose of silly.

A pair of NKVD agents send the actress Irene to Britain as a double agent while, five years later, a group of top MI4 agents celebrate Irene's eventual assassination. As the champagne corks pop, talk turns to one very obvious topic - just which one of them was it who killed Irene, and how did they do it? What follows is a zany foray between past and present, as we dive into flashback sequences in which each of the agents describes their encounters with Irene and their (uniformly disastrous) attempts to assassinate her.

Ella Godfrey and Simon West's

script is tight and punchy, and feels nicely polished in the way that the story moves at a fast pace and joke follows joke - some puns, some surreal, some downright silly. There's also something mature and assured about *Shot in the Dark* - one can sense Godfrey and West's confidence in their style of writing, and the result is a one hour play that feels very neat and controlled, in the way that all good comedy should.

This calm confidence in the writing is only helped along by the cast, who were excellent across the board and gave performances which were highly enjoyable and watchable. The cast of MI4 spies (Thea Arch, Evie Butcher, Luke Baines and Adam Reeves) played off each other very well, conveying in a short amount of time the wonderful sense of a team who by necessity had to work with each other a lot and who in reality all got on each other's nerves. Anna Wright went down very well as the elderly secretary Penny, and Will Harvey-Powell and Simon West (playing the

conveniently-named Comrade Fukqov) also enjoyed a fun turn as the NKVD spies who recruited comrades based on muscles and chiselled jaws over any kind of army experience. Perhaps the actor with the toughest job was Kathryn Cussons who (as Irene) flitted in and out of flashbacks and therefore didn't get to play off the main characters so much. This is not a criticism, however - one of the best scenes in the play is the part where Irene enthusiastically mistakes a dead body for an exciting new modern art installation, waffling on about it in a way which should be familiar to any humanities student trying to blag their way through an essay.

In terms of production, *Shot in the Dark* went for a cluttered set in which all the props were onstage from the beginning, and this certainly helped things to run smoothly. In transitions between the present day and flashbacks, the show alternated between a series of saxophone solos and old-time-style increasingly surreal radio reports (the latter

of which were extremely enjoyable).

Sometimes it feels much more difficult to convey in a review what makes a comedy, rather than something more serious, work. Discussing something like comic timing or energy between the players can reduce comedy to a set of sterile formulae, things we all know are important in a comic performance but which are perhaps not as interesting to read about as magnificent set-pieces or new interpretations of already-familiar characters. This feels like the case with *Shot in the Dark*. Sometimes simply saying that everything worked as it should have seems like faint praise, but in the case of comedy, it's so crucial. It is a fun, silly, zany hour in the familiar world of Cold War spies which doesn't pretend to be saying anything of more serious consequence - often, that feels like just what we need, and that's why *Shot in the Dark* was such a joy to watch ●

Emer O'Hanlon

## Sport

# In conversation with: Ed Sides

### Lawrence Hopkins

speaks to the captain of Cambridge's Hockey Club, **Ed Sides**

Ed Sides, president of Cambridge University Hockey Club (CUHC), heads one of the largest sports clubs in Cambridge. On any given weekend over 80 players can be found donning the light blue of CUHC: a post-war record of 83 players was set in the first few weekends of term. CUHC is a happening club, and although Sides heads a large committee, with players incentivised to share responsibility, the burden of continuing to grow the already large club is ultimately with the third-year Emmanuel undergraduate.

"We are in a great position in terms of numbers. We have three men's and three women's sides playing regularly, and the top two play in BUCS every Wednesday."

Is Sides lucky then, to head a club with such interest, or are CUHC going out of their way to make themselves known: "A lot of interest starts to appear in pre-season. From then, we get some progressing from the college level: we run a very successful college academy that will be starting in the next few



▲ Sides was a part of the 2nd team that beat Oxford 5-2 last year  
(DANIEL MEHLIG)

weeks."

The 4th team, which exists only on the men's side at present, was one of five teams that got the better of their Oxford counterparts on what Sides describes as the "best day of the year", the

2s/3s Varsity Match. Over the course of one day, five Varsity Matches are now contested against Oxford, and in 2017 the day delivered CUHC five victories. Both Blues teams, by contrast, were defeated, though for the president this is of little concern: "The men played against Oxford just over a week ago now, and though they lost, come Varsity we know we will have a great chance to win, every team will."

One could accuse CUHC and OUHC of selling out, given that the Varsity Match is now the JMAN Group Varsity Hockey Match. That being said, however, times are tight for all clubs and Sides is grateful for the support his club commands: "JMAN Group are one of our sub-sponsors, sponsoring Cuppers and Varsity, but we are also grateful to have a number of other sponsors on board, Herbert Smith Freehills and our main sponsor Oliver Wyman, the latter sponsor the College League."

One of the greatest responsibilities that lies with the president, at present, is the development of the Wilberforce Road site. Planning permission has been granted for the construction of a further two floodlit hockey pitches on land surrounding the Wilberforce Road Athletics Ground.

CUHC, as Sides presents it, seems to be very much a family atmosphere:

older, more experienced players volunteer to coach some of the sides lower down in the pecking order, for instance. The committee itself is one of the largest sports club committees, and with good reason, hockey is not for the frugal: "Subs are £100 per term for the two terms that we play hockey. But for that we subsidise travel to a degree. What is more, the subs are reduced for those on the committee: I know personally that I want to give back to a club that has given me so much, but this just helps push people in the same direction."

Plying his trade mainly with the second team in his year as president, Sides merely asks that his teams remain competitive: "The women's seconds have started strongly, and are looking for promotion; the men's Blues have won three of five. The signs are certainly positive at this early stage in the year."

One moment sticks out for Sides above all others: "Winning 5-2 last year as the last match on the 2s/3s day really was quite special."

The JMAN Group Varsity Hockey Match takes place at Southgate Hockey Club, in March 2018. Asked if he believes the CUHC representatives in the fixtures have a chance of success, Sides gives a definitive "yes".

“  
We are in  
a great  
position in  
terms of  
numbers  
”

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# High tackling: rugby's cocaine problem

**Ben Cisneros**  
Rugby Columnist

Last week, Edinburgh and Scotland Rugby Union player John Hardie was internally suspended amid allegations of cocaine use. No official accusation has been made, and it is understood Hardie has not failed a drugs test, but, in the same week Edinburgh captain, Magnus Bradbury, was suspended after suffering a head injury on a night out, questions have arisen about the culture within the club.

If the allegations are true, this would not be the first time a top club has been undermined by such a culture. In 2009, Bath were hit by a cocaine scandal which saw five players banned. England's Matt Stevens received a two-year ban after failing an in-competition test, while four others were sanctioned internally by the RFU after various altercations saw the truth emerge.

Hardie, then, would not be alone. In February this year, World Cup-winning former All Black Ali Williams, and Australia's James O'Connor were arrested and charged with cocaine offences, as Queensland Reds star Karmichael Hunt was whilst playing AFL (Aussie Rules) in 2014. In the RFU's anti-doping report, two unnamed Premiership players were recorded as having tested positive for the drug last season (out-of-competition).

However, the problem is not limited to rugby union. Three players in as many months have been suspended after testing positive for cocaine in rugby league matches. England's Zak Hardaker missed out on the current World Cup after being provisionally suspended by the Rugby Football League, whilst Wakefield's Adam Walker and Widnes' Rangy Chase received the same fate in August.

In March, Tim Simona was handed an "effective life-ban" after testing positive in Australia's NRL and, even more worryingly, implicated "six or seven" other players at his former club - Wests Tigers. Indeed, the Australian press reported last week that a police investigation into match-fixing in the NRL found cocaine, gambling and prostitution are "rife", with links to organised crime.

All this begs the question; does rugby have a cocaine problem?

Commenting on Hardaker's suspension, England assistant coach, Denis Betts, said it is a problem in wider society and not exclusive to rugby league, but rugby league legend Garry Schofield has expressed a franker view:

"The game is rife with cocaine. I know of players, including some very high-profile ones, who've taken it and anyone who says it's not a problem in rugby league is telling lies.

"It's a big social problem, it's not just in rugby league, lots of sportsmen have taken it - but it's a massive problem in our sport.

Yet, since 2011, more athletes in rugby union and football have served suspensions relating to cocaine than in rugby league. In fact, more rugby union players are currently banned for doping in Britain than competitors in any other sport, accounting for a third of the overall total.

After the Williams/O'Connor story broke, Mourad Boudjellal, the Toulon owner said, "It's only my opinion, but I

have the impression that in certain clubs and among many players, coke is very popular. We've had the alcohol stage, now we're at another one. We can't support that. That needs to stop."

However, back in 2009, Matt Stevens dispelled the idea that "All rugby players are coke-heads", emphasising "This is my issue". Of course, as we now know, it wasn't just his issue.

Nonetheless, he made the important point that, "If you look at society as a whole, there is a massive drug culture among all of it, so why wouldn't there be in rugby. Rugby players aren't immune to drug abuse, just like they aren't immune to anything else."

Though we must recognise that cocaine abuse exists throughout society, within the zero-tolerance rugby context,



**Fine for first drugs offence under RFU rules**

it is far too prevalent.

Both forms of the game subscribe to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Code which lists cocaine as a prohibited substance in-competition. "In-competition" is defined as "the period commencing twelve hours before a competition in which the athlete is scheduled to participate, through the end of such competition and the sample collection process related to such competition". Therefore, if a rugby player in the UK tests positive for cocaine 12 hours before, or shortly after, a game, they will be charged by UKAD with an Anti-Doping Rule Violation. If the player does not dispute the finding, or unsuccessfully appeals, they will face a ban; most likely of two years.

Out-of-competition, unlike many doping substances, cocaine is not banned. Yet, as it is a Class A drug, the possession, sale, transport and cultivation of which is illegal in England and Wales, the RFU has developed its own policy on 'Illicit Drugs', informed by AFL and NRL models.

The policy sets out the consequences of a positive out-of-competition test for cocaine, cannabis, amphetamines or MDMA. If it is a player's first violation, a fine of £5000 will be imposed, and the player will be sent for counselling and/or a treatment programme, but the player's identity will not be made public. For subsequent violations, there is no such confidentiality obligation, and the player will face further fines as well as a playing ban, the entry point for which is 12 months. Counselling and treatment will again be compulsory. The RFL has no such policy.

But why cocaine?

French Olympic swimming champion Amaury Leveaux, who wrote a book about the performance benefits professional swimmers sought by snorting cocaine, described how it "stimulates the nervous system, stops you from being hungry, being tired, helps you overcome exhaustion. It gives an athlete the feeling of being invincible, of being a superman. It is a feeling you cannot resist."

In a sport like rugby, in which the mental and physical attrition rate continues to rise, it is not hard to see why



the drug might appeal to some. Christian Bagate, a former head of the French Rugby Federation medical commission, recently spoke of the "Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday corticosteroid-cocaine cocktail", which can help a player get through training early in the week, but leave their system before any in-competition tests.

Experts have also suggested that cocaine could help sudden explosive movements, rapid decision-making, and improve endurance during games. However, Xavier Bigard, scientific adviser to the French Anti-Doping Agency, has also

warned of its dangers, stating athletes under the influence of cocaine are 20 times more likely to suffer sudden death than the average consumer.

Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest professional sport players have something in common with addicts: low dopamine activity. This means they crave intensity and need more stimulation than most to feel 'normal'. Many elite athletes have been known for their obsessive or 'addictive personalities', famously, rugby union's Jonny Wilkinson. Competitive sport is one way of achieving this stimulation, but cocaine may

be another.

In 2009, Matt Stevens openly admitted he was addicted to cocaine. It is likely, for the reasons discussed, that he is not alone.

"At the time, you are asking yourself, 'Why?' - but you are doing it anyway," he said. "I wish I'd had the willpower to just not do it any more."

On the problem in rugby league, Schofield commented: "anyone caught taking it should be banned for life, there's no excuses. They know exactly what they are doing."

But this would be to overlook the mental health concerns of the players involved. Cocaine use may be contrary to the values of fair play in sport, but addiction is a matter which must be treated sensitively. The RFU's policy seems to strike an appropriate balance, and the RFL should follow their lead.

For this reason, there is some debate over whether recreational drugs should be classed as prohibited substances at all. Yet for drugs like cocaine, whose performance-enhancing effects are well-documented, there can be no question. For sport to retain its integrity, it must remain fair and clean: it must be played on an even playing field.

Likewise, given the dangers of cocaine, and the fact players are role models for young people today, the no-tolerance policy in competition must continue.

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## Hockey In conversation with Ed Sides, captain of CUHC 30



# Sport

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UBLHC 5

**BUCS South A, Wilberforce Road Sports Grounds**

Bristol gave Cambridge a lesson in finishing by romping to a 5-2 victory on a bitter November evening at Wilberforce Road. In doing so the visitors leap-frogged the Light Blues at the bottom of the BUCS South A division, leaving the home team still seeking their first league win of the season. The result belied the closely-fought nature of the match; Cambridge were the better team for long stretches. But they failed to convert their pressure into goals, whereas their opponents were ruthlessly efficient, storming to a 5-0 lead early in the second half which the Light Blues were unable to recover from.

It was a night of what-might-have-been for Cambridge. Particularly in the first 15 minutes, they dominated both territory and possession. Bristol seemed taken aback by their hosts' defensive tenacity. Harried and hurried, they rushed into ill-advised passes, invariably picked off by lurking Cambridge defenders. The Light Blues, by contrast, were patient

and assured in attack, zipping precise passes down the wings to fashion several good opportunities. Most notably, they won three short corners resulting from a foul inside the 'D'. Hurling towards the attacker, attempting to close them down before they can swat the ball into the goal is a difficult prospect from a defensive perspective, but brave defending helped Bristol to see off all three early Light Blue short corners.

Cambridge were quickly made to rue their wastefulness. At the 15-minute mark, a speculative 'aerial' – a long, lofted pass – was brought down by a Bristol attacker, and a foul inside the D won them a short corner. It was Bristol's first attack of the match, but they took full advantage, lashing the ball home via a couple of deflections to take the lead.

The Light Blues responded by redoubling their efforts. A mazy, slaloming run down the right wing set up a one-on-one for attacker Georgie Burrows, but the Bristol keeper made a good save with her left knee to preserve the visitors' lead. From the resulting corner Cambridge flashed a shot just wide of the right hand post. An equaliser felt imminent but instead, it was Bristol who struck next: a fine run down the left wing finished with an emphatic slap shot from the edge of the D.

Then, on the stroke of half-time, the visitors added a third; a well-placed through ball setting an attacker through one-on-one with Light Blue keeper Freddie Briscoe. A well hit reverse sweep gave her no chance, thumping against the backboard just inside the far post and sending Bristol's players into wild celebrations.

In retrospect, this was really the crushing blow that consigned Cambridge to defeat. Having dominated for most of the half, they went into the interval trailing 3-0, and captain Hatty Darling admitted that 'heads began to go down'. When play resumed, Bristol were brimming with confidence, adding two quick goals. The first was bundled in after a goal-mouth scramble from a short corner, but the second was a thing of beauty. Receiving the ball closely marked around the 25 yard line, the Bristol attacker used a reverse spin to wheel past two Cambridge defenders, before slaloming past several more using an 'Indian dribble' – spinning the stick from one side of the ball to the other. From the middle of the D she slammed a shot towards the right hand post, where it was deflected in by an alert team-mate.

The game then, ten minutes into the second half, was effectively over, but Cambridge refused to go down quietly

▲▼CUWHC lost 2-0 to Oxford in their previous fixture  
(HARRY NORMANTON)



and put up a brave fight to restore some pride at the end. Five minutes later they finally made it onto the scoresheet, a neat exchange of passes down the left wing culminated in a rasping cross deflected in at the back post by Bella Padt. Rejuvenated, they added a second. Having gifted Cambridge the ball inside their own 25 yard line, Bristol managed to survive the ensuing goal-mouth scramble, but they could only clear it as far as Sophia Padt on the left hand side of the D, who swept the ball in off the far post.

It was too little, too late from the Light Blues, though, and after the game captain Hatty Darling expressed her frustration at the result: "The scoreline didn't reflect us as a side but we played ourselves out of the game early on'. She was not despondent, though, insisting that, 'the talent's there, we just have to pull together as a team to get the results in'.

Bristol, meanwhile, revelled in their first win of the season. Captain Catherine Round summed up the mood, 'We've travelled four-and-a-half hours and we've finally got some points on the board! We're ecstatic.' Cambridge will look to get their season back on track and secure their first win of the season when they travel to second-place Bath.