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Arts 28

Features 24-25

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Interview 8



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# VARSITY

## Boost for Oxbridge train line in new budget

Jack Conway  
News Correspondent

The government's 2017 Autumn Budget, released on Wednesday, includes "an ambitious integrated programme of infrastructure, housing, business investment and development" in the Cambridge - Milton Keynes - Oxford corridor. The programme comes less than a week after the National Infrastructure Commission released a report calling for such investment in the area.

Chaired by Labour peer Andrew Adonis, the commission called for the construction of several new towns to double the rate of housebuilding in the region. It also called for the acceleration of plans to build a rail link between Cambridge and Oxford, and proposed the construction of an expressway between the two cities.

The area, known as the "brain belt", contributes significantly to the UK economy with its world-class universities and concentration of high-tech and knowledge-based industries. That said, Lord Adonis stressed that its growth is hindered by "a lack of available homes and an infrastructure network that is feeling the strain".

A report by the National Infrastructure Commission found that its proposed solutions to these problems have the potential to substantially increase economic output in the region. "Currently the area generates £90 billion per year towards the national economy. But by taking these steps this could increase to over £250 billion a year."

Lord Adonis also stressed the need for cooperation between the national government and local leaders in order to turn these proposals into reality. He urged "local leaders to seize this opportunity and work together with government,

Continued on page 5 ►



Cambridge MP Daniel Zeichner pledges his support for the student campaign group SolidariTee, in time for today's 'Day of SolidariTee'

(KAYE SONG)

## Academics criticise University's 'heavy-handed' Prevent strategy

Josh Kimblin  
News Correspondent

Members of the University have spoken out against Cambridge's implementation of the government's Prevent legislation, questioning the University's commitment to "light touch" compliance.

The comments follow an intervention made by the University administration in a panel discussion organised by the Palestine Society (PalSoc). The University replaced a planned chairperson with a

"neutral" alternative at the discussion, held in November, about the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, which seeks to pressure Israel into ending the occupation of lands claimed by Palestine.

In response to the replacement, PalSoc published an open letter which condemned the intervention as "an intolerable violation of academic freedom". The letter was signed by over 500 people, including notable American academic, Professor Noam Chomsky.

In a later statement to *Varsity*, Ed Mc-

Nally, co-chair of PalSoc, said that the University had "mistakenly applied the Prevent duty, and in doing so violated basic rights which they have a responsibility to protect".

However, a spokesperson for the University told *Varsity* that the decision to install their own chair was made "following calls from the organisers for extra safety measures".

The statement continued: "The University is fully committed to freedom of speech and expression. We do understand that certain events and issues

invoke strong feelings among people and communities. But we believe it is important that staff, students and visitors to the University can participate fully in legitimate debate."

The intervention has brought long-running concerns about the University's implementation of Prevent legislation to a head. A number of academics have spoken to *Varsity* to express their discontent.

Dr Waseem Yaqoob, branch secre-

Continued on page 6 ►



# EDITORIAL

## Under the spotlight

At times this term, it's seemed like Cambridge students haven't been able to do anything without the national media picking up on it. As one might expect, there's been sensationalism, but it has also taken on a more sinister side with national newspapers (knowingly or not) getting the basic facts of stories wrong. Either way, the University and its students have been in the spotlight more than at any time in recent memory.

All this attention is not necessarily friendly; with extra coverage comes extra scrutiny, as universities are dragged into arguments about Brexit – as in the *Daily Mail*'s 'Our Remainder Universities' campaign – and posited as hotbeds of political correctness, privilege, intergenerational culture wars, and snowflakery.

While the national media are quick to pick up on our reporting, they are also quick to sensationalise. When *Varsity* reported 'Cambridge contemplates typed exams for all as handwriting becomes 'lost art' for students', the *Independent* ran it as 'Cambridge University set to scrap written exams because students' handwriting is so bad'. When *Varsity* reported 'English Faculty discusses decolonisation in wake of open letter' the *Telegraph* chose the headline 'Student forces Cambridge to drop white authors'.

In recent weeks, a tone-deaf letter from a director of studies telling his students that they shouldn't be enjoying themselves too much (if at all) if they wanted to succeed at Cambridge also made national headlines. Though the coverage was rather more even-handed in this case, it still meant yet another opportunity for the nationals to crack out their stock images of the city.

Why all this attention, and why now? It's perhaps easiest to dismiss criticism of Cambridge as symptomatic of political finger-pointing. People are sick of experts, or at least they think they are, and having blamed politicians and business leaders, academics are next on the list. But to dismiss the views and anger of those outside the bubble in this way is not only deeply patronising, it also panders to the educational and social divide.

A more pragmatic argument may take the financial incentives for sensationalised news into account. Regardless, at *Varsity* we are fortunate to have an engaged readership, an endless supply of talented writers, editors, sub-editors, and illustrators giving up their time to make the newspaper a high-quality, rational and inclusive publication for students. Long may it continue.

# Sabbs to the future CUSU plots a new course after missing targets

● *The student union plans a new consultation process to decide on its organisational aims*

**Louis Ashworth**  
Editor-at-Large

CUSU will call on students to devise a "more flexible" organisational approach for the coming years after failing to meet the targets of its current strategic plan, which will lapse at the end of next month.

The student union has convened focus groups and reached out to the wider student body to decide what its main goals and objectives should be, with the aim of delivering a guiding strategy document by the end of Lent term.

Trustee Daniel Dennis told *Varsity* "the strategic direction is one of the most important things that we should pay attention to at the moment", emphasising the importance of solidifying the student union's role.

Overarching new goals for engagement and policy will be intended to complement CUSU's continued efforts to fix its ailing finances. The deadline to apply for expanded funds from the University is just over a week away, and CUSU is seeking to protect itself from large anticipated losses incurred as it disentangled itself from previous commercial activities.

CUSU's previous formalised strategy document, its *Strategic Plan 2014–17*, is due to lapse at the end of next month. It laid out a vision for the student union's role and prominence within student life, and set eight ambitious targets for engagement, structure and finances.

Those goals turned out to be overly optimistic. CUSU has failed to hit any of the eight formal targets it set, according to available information. The most

prominent included:

- The affiliation of all common rooms: this figure has remained unchanged since the *Plan*'s publication, with 50 out of 56 affiliated.

- A 58% satisfaction rating for the student union among finalists taking the National Student Survey (NSS): results for Cambridge were not published this year after it received too few responses, but the year before CUSU scored 37%.

- A target election turnout of 30%: the elections this year received a record high of 22.5%, still short of the target.

- A merger with the Graduate Union (GU): this was rejected in February 2016.

Two of the other goals relate to the



▲ Daisy Eyre, president of CUSU  
(NOAH FROUD)

student union's finances, focused upon a movement away from reliance upon the University for funding. Circumstances have rendered a move towards independence impossible, with CUSU saying students should prepare for further cuts if it cannot improve its financial situation through central support.

Acknowledging these shortfalls, CUSU will opt for a more consultative approach to its new strategic plan, aiming to introduce more student feedback and avoid overly-specific goals.

Speaking to *Varsity* on Thursday, CUSU president Daisy Eyre and Daniel Dennis, one of the student union's trustees, explained the rationale behind the new approach and laid out a vision for a more consultative approach.

Both argued against the idea of setting specific targets, saying that they would only end up limiting CUSU's flexibility.

"If you make it too time bound, then naturally it will feel out of date," Eyre said, adding that she wanted to ensure the new plan, which is overseen by the board of trustees, "isn't a tickbox exercise".

"We're starting from scratch," Eyre said, "it's a more organic process."

Consultations are still being planned, but early ideas include sabbatical officers visiting colleges to conduct meetings with students directly, rather than expecting members to come to CUSU's offices at 17 Mill Lane. They also intend to visit lecture sites, in order to "vox-pop" students about the issues that concern them.

Long-term strategy is difficult for CUSU, given that its core sabbatical officer teams are usually transient, rarely staying at the student union beyond a

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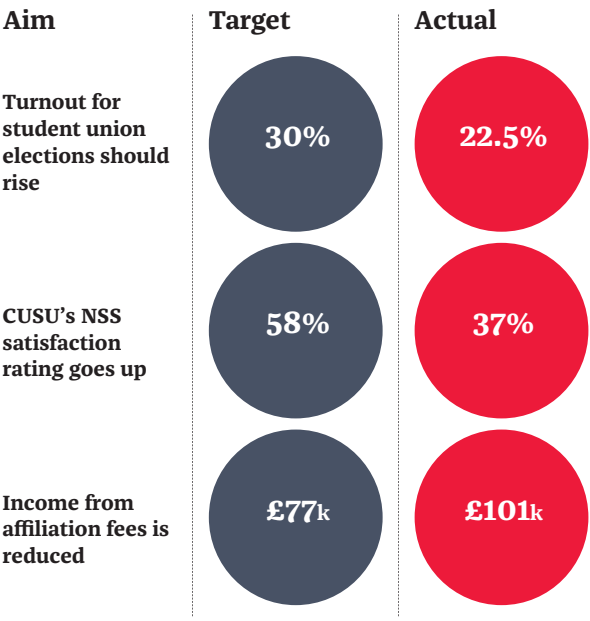


▲ CUSU faces a series of political financial hurdles when student return in the new year (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

single year. Because of this, continuity is usually in the hands of its staff, led by general manager Mark McCormack, and its trustee board. After an influx of new trustees over the summer, only one trustee has been part of CUSU longer than four months. Dennis and Eyre acknowledged that this leads to an accountability problem with long-term strategy. After the previ-

ous *Strategic Plan* was published, it was quickly dropped by newer sabbs: last term, former president Amatey Doku dismissed its goals as no longer relevant to the student union. Eyre echoed this, and said the new plan would be “more about guiding”, aimed to prompt future CUSU officers to ask themselves “Does this contribute to any strategic goals?” before taking new decisions. She said they had received strong support at the latest meeting of the Council Committee for the Supervision of the Student Unions (CCSSU), where they outlined a vision for CUSU’s role in student life. “We’ve already done that core mission pitch,” Eyre said. At this stage, the new plan is still an outline, and Dennis and Eyre emphasised that students would have the final say in what shape it takes. “We are taking seriously every recommendation,” Dennis said. Generalised strategy planning may help CUSU pin down its ‘core services’ – defining which has been a perennial issue. The University has repeatedly emphasised that the student union has to solidly define what its role and aims are. Eyre said she believes representation will remain at the heart of any strategy, with CUSU more visibly acting as a link between students and the upper echelons of Cambridge’s sprawling committee structure. She added that previous aims for CUSU Council attendance could be lowered if the student can show its membership is being engaged in other ways. “There are different ways for students to engage in CUSU,” she said.

Expectation versus reality  
How CUSU fell short of its strategic targets



NEWS  
What’s going on in the Economics fac?

Ten years and one course reform movement later, strong divides remain within the Cambridge economics faculty. Daniel Gayne explores the debate between the pluralists and the neoclassicals, asks why the reform movement has failed, and ponders the future of the Cambridge Society for Economic Pluralism’s fight for a more diverse curriculum.
 Page 10 ►

COMMENT  
Debunking the myth of the student snowflake

Roger Mosey, master of Selwyn College and former head of BBC News, skewers the snowflake myth. Defending the ‘charm and rationality’ of Cambridge students under fire from the national press, Mosey turns on the government for its own crackdown on free speech in the form of the Prevent programme.
 Page 16 ►

SCIENCE  
Social inequality is killing people

We all know that health outcomes are different across the country, but what is a government’s responsibility when inequality itself corrodes mental and physical health?
 Page 12 ►

SPORT  
The Varsity interviews

Lawrence Hopkins sits down to speak with Cambridge Rugby Captains, Lara Gibson and Charlie Amesbury, ahead of Varsity to chat South Africa tour, playing Durham, and the big day itself.
 Page 34-35 ►

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## News

# Cantabs show 'defiant love' on Transgender Day of

Stephanie Stacey  
News Correspondent

On Monday, Cambridge marked the Transgender Day of Remembrance with two vigils, organised by Ali Hyde, former CUSU transgender representative and incoming CUSU LGBT+ committee president, and Mariah Hickman, incoming CUSU transgender representative.

The Transgender Day of Remembrance is observed internationally on the 20th November each year to honour the people killed as a result of transphobia worldwide and to draw attention to the continued violence facing the transgender community.

The first vigil was open only to transgender people, and took place by candlelight on Jesus Green, while the second took place in Emmanuel College Chapel and was open to anyone who wished to mark the day.

Speakers read out the names of those killed and several minutes of silence were observed, followed by the lighting of candles.

People were also invited to write messages of support and solidarity on a transgender pride flag.

The Trans Murder Monitoring project revealed that there were 325 reported murders of trans and gender-diverse

people between 1st October 2016 and 30th September 2017.

Mariah Hickman said: "Of course, any list of names can only scratch the surface. Some violence goes unreported, and some deaths are reported but using the wrong names, pronouns and genders, or with the motive left out."

The importance of honouring those who took their own lives – often "due to the physical and verbal violence that trans people are bombarded with" – was also emphasised.

Hickman told vigil attendees, "This day is a necessary act of defiant love, defiant compassion, and defiant remembrance."

Last month, Murray Edwards College revised their application requirements for transgender and transitioning applicants, no longer requiring transgender women to have their gender legally recognised in order to apply to the College.

This week, Lucy Cavendish Student and Union president Ida Svenonius told Varsity: "Policy changes must be thoroughly discussed and evaluated as part of a bureaucratic process before they may be approved. Many internal discussions are therefore currently being had, including a recent panel discussion open to all members and fellows of the College."



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# Remembrance Cambridge-Oxford rail link gets go-ahead



◀ Attendees wrote messages of solidarity on a transgender flag, lit candles and read poetry  
(STEPHANIE STACEY)

Continued from front page:

both for the benefit of their residents and of the country as a whole”.

James Palmer, the mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, echoed these sentiments: “The Greater Cambridge economy over the next decade is predicted to create approximately 44,000 new jobs, [sic] it’s only through the Government and local leaders working together collaboratively and in a creative way that we could put in place the housing and transport infrastructure to support this growth.”

More specifically to Cambridge, the plan also includes the construction of an additional train station near Addenbrooke’s Hospital to the south of the city. This will partially be funded by a £5 million grant from the government, which “is starting a study on the enhancements needed to accommodate future rail growth across Cambridgeshire”.

Such a rail link would also pass through numerous towns that have not yet been built. According to the plan, these would contain one million new homes by 2050 and would be the first new towns built in half a century. Such new towns would play a crucial role in alleviating Cambridge’s housing shortage.

According to Hometrack, Cambridge

▶ Labour peer Andrew Adonis, chair of the National Infrastructure Commission  
(MAARTEN)



has the second-highest house prices in the UK, after London. Oxford is third. “The ratio of median house prices to earnings is 13:1 in Cambridge and 12:1 in Oxford making them two of the least affordable cities in the UK.”

According to the report, this is a problem because “workers are being priced out of local housing markets, restricting firms’ access to labour and impacting on their competitiveness”.

Bridget Rosewell OBE, one of the commissioners of the National Infrastructure Commission, argued that the lack of affordable housing in Cambridge’s means that the city’s “long-term future is under threat”.

The construction of new homes in nearby new towns should help alleviate this housing crisis, which could have

a significant positive impact on Cambridge’s future.

The transportation links proposed in the report would also affect Cambridge by facilitating transportation to the other major cities in the ‘brain belt’. Currently, Oxford can only be reached by a three-and-a-half hour coach ride or a train ride via London. If these transportation times could be cut, Cambridge could develop stronger economic connections with other cities in the region.

These transportation links would be built in parts, with a rail link between Bedford and Cambridge planned as the third and final phase. Plans for an expressway link between Cambridge and Milton Keynes is already underway, and will be expanded to Oxford later. The report calls for these links to be finished by 2030.

The ambitious vision laid out by the commission’s report was merely a recommendation. Since it has been included in the national budget, however, this vision is now one that is endorsed by the government. The budget referenced the Commission’s report numerous times and backs its conclusions and suggestions.

As a result, the next steps should include increased cooperation between national and local authorities to begin implementing the recommendations set forth in the report.

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## News

# Prevent strategy attracts scrutiny

Continued from front page

-tary of Cambridge University and College Union, told *Varsity* that “the way in which the University administration is choosing to comply with the Prevent duty is leading to increasingly heavy-handed policing of speech on campus,” and that interventions like that affecting the PalSoc have “above all affected Palestinian voices, but others too.”

He continued, “A joint monitoring initiative launched last year by CUSU and UCU shows that other student societies – the Kurdish Society and Islamic Society, for example – have been affected. The distribution of these incidents raises serious issues around equality and fairness.”

In October 2016, the University produced a “Prevent explainer”, which stated that implementation of the policy would be “light touch” and its “impact on the University community [would] therefore be negligible.” However, this description was contested by both Dr Yaqoob and CUSU President Daisy Eyre.

Speaking to *Varsity*, Eyre said: “Currently, the way Prevent is being rolled out makes some Cambridge students feel unsafe. Efforts of being ‘light touch’ are clearly falling short and this is leading to certain voices within the institution being privileged and others silenced.”

Dr Yaqoob also criticised the University’s “lack of transparency” in implementing Prevent, saying that their approach left “much of the decision-making to the discretion of administrators.”

“Staff but especially students have often been given administrative fiats that alter the running of events at short notice: the debacle with the Palestine Society a fortnight ago is only the latest example.”

When *Varsity* took these criticisms to the University for comment, a spokesperson said: “The University’s response to the Prevent duty has sought at all times to be transparent, consultative and proportionate. The Prevent Committee, which reports to the General Board and Council, includes representation from students, the Colleges, the Proctors and relevant University officers.”



While the University has its own policy on the Prevent legislation, the collegiate system means that individual colleges are able to make autonomous decision about how to implement Prevent with regard to events happening on their own property. Cambridge colleges have statutory obligations under Prevent but are collectively advised by the Head of Intercollegiate Services and the Chair of the Senior Tutors’ Committee, both of whom attend the Prevent Committee.

As part of the University’s Prevent implementation, it has established a training programme for staff and students. The programme, completed through an online platform, aims to make staff “aware of the process of radicalisation and definitions of extremism”. All staff are expected to complete the initial module.

The programme has attracted negative comments from University academics. Dr Priyamvada Gopal, a Teaching Fellow in English at Churchill College, tweeted a screenshot of one of the questions posed in the online training, which asked participants to identify extremist views from a list which included: “Anti-immigration”, “Pro-life”, “Vocal support

▲ Prevent is part of the government’s anti-terrorism programme  
(CAITLIN SMITH)

for the creation of a Palestinian state?”, and “Opposition to Israeli West Bank settlements”.

Speaking to *Varsity*, Dr Gopal said that the training “explicitly targets” pro-Palestinian views. She said the University’s definition of extremism was “selective and specious”.

When *Varsity* conducted the online training, after answering the question to which Dr Gopal was referring, we were redirected to “feedback” that said it had been a “trick question”. The views listed could not necessarily be considered extremist in themselves, it said, because “holding these views may be legitimate provided that they are not expressed or furthered by statements, deeds or actions which result in harassment, intimidation or threats of violence”.

Dr Yaqoob told *Varsity* that, while the University’s definition of extremism was “vague”, the training did not “directly state” that opposition to Israeli settlement in Gaza, for example, could be considered “extremist”.

He continued, “This approach must not be entrenched, and must not become the new status quo at Cambridge, or other universities.”

## Varsity takes the Prevent training

Todd Gillespie  
Senior News Correspondent

The Prevent course, available freely online as well as on Moodle for staff and students, includes sections covering awareness of potential extremism, guidance on actions to take, and how to balance Prevent duty with academic and individual liberty. Example scenarios are also included to show how to respond to possibly compromising situations.

The course starts by making it quite clear that “Prevent is only about identifying potentially vulnerable individuals and offering support,” and is not an attempt “to snoop on students” or “to limit academic freedom and freedom of expression”.

At one point, the course asks the trainee to identify extremist views from a list including “Opposition to Israeli West Bank settlements”, “Belief in the rise of terrorism as a result of foreign policy”, and “Antivivisection”. However, upon answering, the trainee is told that this was in fact a “trick question,” as none of these views are in themselves dangerous, if they do not lead to violent or threatening action.

The course goes on to describe paths of action to take if someone is suspected of being vulnerable to extremism (normally to alert a relevant Prevent ‘lead’, which at Cambridge are almost always College senior tutors).

While Prevent has been heavily criticised for enabling the targeting of Muslim students, the training also includes awareness of far-right extremism, violent animal-rights groups, and religious organisations with a ‘pro-life’ agenda.

On referring individuals to authorities, the guidance says that although referrals have included “extreme Christians,” most “relate to the on-going conflict in the Middle East”.

▼ One of the questions asked during the training  
(UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE/TODD GILLESPIE)

## The bigger picture A brief history of the Prevent programme

Nick Harris  
News Correspondent

Prevent is one strand of Contest, the Government’s counter-terrorism strategy, which aims to support those at risk of joining terrorist groups or carrying out terrorist activities.

Prevent has three components: by challenging the ideological roots of extremism; providing practical help and guidance to those at risk of carrying out terrorist activities; and ensuring that radicalism is not given a voice by anyone representing a government institution.

Prevent has in fact existed since 2003, when it was introduced by the then Labour government, but its powers, remit and resources were vastly expanded by the Coalition govern-

ment in 2011. Prevent has attracted criticism from several quarters, including the Muslim Council of Britain, which claims that Prevent policies promote the isolation of Muslims in Britain, rather than their integration.

The effects of Prevent have become more significant since September 2015, when the passing of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act which gave it new powers in relation to student campuses. Its expansion was resisted by the National Union of Students which passed a motion to ‘publicly oppose’ this new angle to the counter-terrorism agenda and declared that NUS officers ‘will not engage with the Prevent strategy’.

Under the Act, the University has a duty to “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. According to the University website, the

structures required to comply with this duty are “currently being considered”. The debate within Cambridge over the implementation of Prevent has been mirrored in other universities across the UK:

**February 2017** The University of Central Lancashire cancelled a talk organised by the Friends of Palestine Society, entitled ‘Debunking misconceptions on Palestine and the importance of BDS’.

**March 2017** A protest organised by the University College London Friends of Palestine Society “encountered opposition from UCL management” and was rescheduled.

**November 2017** An LSE academic was replaced by her colleague at a panel discussion about the BDS movement.







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**How to apply:** Visit <http://www.bestbeerjob.com/en/programs/global-management.aspx>

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## Interview

# Shami Chakrabarti



## “This is self-evidently a radical moment in politics”

*The human rights lawyer discusses austerity, the rise of Trump, and the feminist fightback with Lydia Day*

In her new book, *Of Women*, Shami Chakrabarti tells a story about a girl called Akhona, who has grown up in a township in Cape Town, South Africa.

Like a lot of the girls in her class, Akhona misses school when she has her period because she cannot afford sanitary products. If she has a test, she has to use a sock.

*Of Women* is a comprehensive analysis of global gender inequality. For Chakrabarti, Akhona's story shows you cannot separate the struggle for women's education from reproductive rights and economic liberation.

“Every year a woman spends in education for her and her children it adds something like 15% to her lifetime wealth. She has better health and fewer children and those children are better educated and healthier. And that makes sense to me.”

“Like I say in the book, my mother taught me to read before I went to school and how could she have done that if she hadn't been educated herself? So it really is the gift that keeps on giving.”

She grew up in suburban north London, the daughter of working-class Bengali immigrants. She went on to study law at the London School of Economics before becoming an in-house lawyer at the Home Office in her 20s.

She was just 34 when she took charge of the human rights organisation Liberty before leaving 14 years later to become the shadow attorney general for the Labour Party.

Once dubbed ‘The Most Dangerous Woman in Britain’ by *The Sun* for her fierce advocacy for human rights and civil liberties, it is perhaps no surprise Chakrabarti has taken a different angle to gender inequality than mainstream, liberal feminists.

A consistent criticism of the feminist movement is that it focuses solely on the



concerns of white, middle class women in the West. Chakrabarti's book is an antidote to this problem.

“For Western women, even with all our considerable struggles in the UK, if you focus only on the UK, people will quite rightly say: ‘That's all very well, but what are you doing about the women in Saudi Arabia, and girls in the townships of South Africa who can't go to school because of the lack of sanitary products. Do you not know how lucky you are?’”

“You can look like you're narrow and bourgeois and self-interested by not showing your solidarity with your sisters all over the world. That is a real danger.

“But conversely, if you and me, as relatively privileged women... if we don't talk about what's happening under our noses or in our backyard in Britain, and we deign just to talk about Saudi Arabia and South Sudan, then it's kind of ‘Who the hell are we?’”

“We're pretending we're superior and ignoring the profound sexism and misogyny in the Palace of Westminster and we're pontificating about the rest of the world.”

In a world which is increasingly shutting its borders, confining its refugees to detention centres, and witnessing a resurgence of the far right, Chakrabarti's insistence on a global, radical feminism is refreshing.

She says: “Well, it's an anti-Trump statement in a way. I don't want to say this is just an anti-Trump statement because Trump isn't just Trump; Trump represents a whole way of thinking, and

we have our own Trumps in our own backyard.

“I do think it was interesting that one of the responses to his election was the worldwide demonstrations of women. I went on the demonstration in London. And, yes, for the most part it was a women's demonstration.

“But there were banners in support of Mexicans, and not building walls, and banners in support of refugees and all the people that Trump would condemn. I think these things are obviously interconnected.”

The urgency for Chakrabarti to write this book came, in part, out of recognition that “this is self-evidently a radical moment in politics”. This radical moment, however, could go one way or another: “To put it bluntly, it's a Trump moment or it's a Corbyn moment and I know which side I'm on.

“But, that said, it's incredibly important to me that the cause of gender justice and women's equality does not get left out of the radical thinking and the progressive movement. It cannot become sidelined or niche or a single issue, because I don't see it that way.

“I see the woman's cause as something that cannot possibly be separated from your whole world view or foreign policy, home policy, health policy, and, in particular, economic policy.”

For Chakrabarti, on account of the pivotal nature of this moment in politics, it is necessary to pick a political side in the fight.

The solutions that *Of Women* offers

are political ones: a reassessment of the value of women's labour; redistribution of wealth; and investment in public services.

Chakrabarti's feminism is unapologetically partisan. “To put it bluntly, we're having this interview on Budget day, so to give you just one of many examples of this argument, austerity is a feminist issue.

“Women are at the bottom of the pile economically. Women need those public services more and women work in those public services more. We now live in the sixth wealthiest country in the world with nurses – working nurses, professionally trained people – and they're going to food banks.

“Now, I don't think we can address that without addressing austerity, which is obviously a party political issue. It's certainly a cut/spend, traditionally left/right issue. This is at the heart of what we think of as conventional politics, which is: who do you tax? How much do you tax them? And what do you do with that money?”

“I don't think you can have gender budgeting and lift women not just out of poverty but into equal pay, affirmative action and universal childcare and all the things I think are vital to the lot of women worldwide and in the UK without being, I'm afraid, quite partisan.”

Exactly researched and well-furnished with statistics, *Of Women* is a defiant statement of evidence in a post-truth age. This is another rejection of a ‘Trump ideology’. “I don't believe in post-fact. I know there are lots of things that are matters of opinion but I do think there's nothing like hard evidence for making an argument.

“I did originally train as a lawyer and you know there's nothing like a beautiful argument and a beautiful pleading. But there's also nothing like evidence and I think when you put some of those startling statistics about inequality before people – and also the consequences of inequality in terms of women's health and so on – I challenge anybody not to sit up and notice, if not be positively moved by it.”

Yet despite this unfaltering faith in statistics, the political is inevitably inspired by the personal.

Chakrabarti identifies some of her motivation as coming from her own life: “I'm in my late forties, I lost my mother about six years ago now, and it caused a moment of reflection – the middle aged moment to put it bluntly – being at the top of the escalator when your Mum's not around anymore.”

“These are moments of reflection and in particular I think about her generation and her struggles and think about my generation and wonder if we've done enough. I think we haven't, my generation of feminists.

“Your generation of feminists is already putting us to shame and you start thinking that way when you are, I'm afraid, middle aged.”

From the global to the personal, this is an issue that Shami Chakrabarti refuses to leave alone.



◀ Chakrabarti's book is “a powerful, urgent and timely polemic on why women still need equality” (PENGUIN BOOKS)

▲ Chakrabarti is speaking at the Cambridge Literary Festival on Sunday 26th November (SOUTHBANK CENTRE)

“I don't believe in post-fact”



# Protestors seek to clear the air around divestment

**Todd Gillespie**  
Senior News Correspondent

Cambridge Zero Carbon Society staged a protest on Wednesday in front of King's College Chapel, with around a dozen protesters calling on the University to withdraw its investments in fossil fuel companies.

Campaigners dressed in black set off smoke grenades and shouted through megaphones.

The protest was part of a coordinated 'National Day of Action', alongside similar societies at other universities including East Anglia, Leeds, Manchester, Oxford, UCL, Bristol and Plymouth.

Speaking at the protest, graduate student and Zero Carbon Society campaigns officer Marcel Llaverio Pasquina read out a manifesto, which stated: "We want a fossil free future. We want a future of respect and brotherhood. Amongst ourselves and with Mother Earth. We want the rich to have less, so that everyone can have."

"We want that in the next two decades all fossil fuel extraction is phased out and renewable energies power our daily simple lives. And we are all united in this transition. No one is left behind. We have no leaders. Our dreams guide us."

"Let's start with our University. Let's be the first ones."

Protesters also expressed their objections to the "xenophobia and colonialism" of the fossil fuel industry, and accused the University of being "complicit in this injustice from the very beginning".

The action comes in the wake of analysis of the Paradise Papers which show that the University and several of its colleges have invested millions of pounds in fossil fuel companies through offshore funds.

The past month has seen a flurry of activity from Zero Carbon Society. In recent weeks it has staged a march through the town, and handed out soap to members of the University Council outside Senate House as part of their drive for the University to 'come clean'.

It also interrupted an engineering, science and technology careers event hosted by the Careers Service, where protesters, dressed in black and with black paint on their hands, lay down between the Shell and BP stalls.

Today's action also follows CUSU Council's unanimous vote on Monday to reaffirm support for divestment. Opponents of the movement, including those present at the University town hall debate in October, have argued for engagement with energy companies



▲Protestors gathered on King's Parade (LEFTERIS PAPAOUNAS)

rather than divestment, pointing to the financial benefit from the investments to the University as a whole.

A group of 21 academics has called for a discussion in Regent House, the governing body of the University, to discuss "the University's investments, as a topic of concern to the University". This will take place on Tuesday 5th December.



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## News

# The forward march of pluralists halted

Ten years on from the crash, **Daniel Gayne** looks back at the course reform movement and asks why it failed to make its mark on economics

**Daniel Gayne**  
Associate Editor

You wouldn't take the Austin Robinson Building for a battlefield. Home to Cambridge's storied Faculty of Economics, it's a rather charmless building humbly situated amongst the University's social science faculties. Yet it's the site of a ten-year revolt by students and faculty members who believe it is dominated by an out-of-touch intellectual monoculture, intolerant of innovative ideas.

"If you had a similar disaster like the 2008 financial crisis in any other subject, people who used to be the mainstream of the subject would all have been purged," Ha-Joon Chang tells me emphatically. Chang is the doyen of heterodox economics, and is the faculty member perhaps most closely associated with the Cambridge Society for Economic Pluralism. One of a swathe of societies set up in UK universities after the crash, CSEP has been at the forefront of a movement for curriculum change. In June 2014, it surveyed over 250 Cambridge Economics alumni, MPs, and undergraduates, gaining empirical evidence to present to the faculty. What they found was widespread hunger for change. 60% of students felt that they had gained zero or negative improvement in verbal communication, between a third and a half of students demonstrated interest in new optional modules (including Alternative Schools of Thought, History and Philosophy of Economics, Experiment Based Approaches to Economics, and Theories of Economics and Financial Crises). Their criticisms found support outside of Cambridge, too. Employers have complained of an inability of graduates to "relate economics to the real world and why it matters".

For a time, the movement seemed to be gaining momentum. Students joined forces with academics to create the nationwide movement *Rethinking Economics*, thousand-page books condemning greed became bestsellers, and heads of university societies received flattering profiles in the pages of *The Financial Times* and *The Economist*. Yet after ten years, what progress has been made in reforming the discipline? When I ask Ha-Joon Chang, he scoffs, "not a lot". He concedes that Cambridge has changed more than most, introducing three new optional papers, including his own History and Philosophy of Economic Thought paper. But beyond this, the basic substance of the curriculum remains much the same, and the source of this failure seems to come from the fact that CSEP and the faculty mainstream have completely different ideas about how economics should operate as a discipline.

Pontus Rendahl, new director of teaching in the faculty, is exemplary of the economics mainstream, a term he is loath to use. "When you say mainstream it just means scrutinised", he tells me. Rendahl dismisses the 'schools of thought' notion of economics as fundamentally dated, arguing that economics is now a positive science like any other, and that there is



60%

of Cambridge economics students felt they gained zero or negative improvement in verbal communication through their degree

simply 'good' and 'bad' economic work. On the basis of this worldview, Rendahl and his predecessor, Alexey Onatskiy, have focused their efforts on student experience much more than content – which changes as the mainstream textbooks do. The story he tells about curriculum reform starts not in 2008, but 2014, when a Teaching and Learning Review by the University demanded reform in order to address lagging student satisfaction rates. The changes made were subtle, relying less on temporary lecturers and reducing the number of lecturers on each module, and streamlining courses which had become overweight with lecturers adding material and not removing anything. They did not however, make changes to address CSEP's 2014 report, and meetings with the society yielded no results. "We have to keep a programme that keeps some intellectual integrity... we cannot be held hostage by what students want," he tells me, saying that the prior demands to include Marxist, feminist and ecological economics as compulsory would "put Cambridge off the fringe". Rendahl sees the entire notion of pluralism as unscientific, arguing that a discipline where different parallel schools of thought operate politicises the science, opening it up to special interests. He points out that so-called neoclassical economics is by no means incapable of revolutionary change and that a lot of what used to be heterodox is now orthodox, but that paradigm shifts must overcome high barriers before they are accepted.

When I put this argument to Ha-Joon Chang he seems irritated. "Yeah, but who sets the barriers?" he retorted. "My main problem with the mainstream school is that they think there is only one type of economic theory." It's Chang's belief that economics is dominated by a small cartel of journals and universities (mostly American) which set the agenda for everyone else. This monoculture privileges

▲ Ha-Joon Chang, Cambridge's most famous economic dissident (INES MEDEM)

econometrics and empirical evidence over single-country historical studies and comparative analysis. While this approach might work in physics, Chang believes that economics is completely different, because people, unlike atoms, "have imagination and free will and ethical values", rendering them unpredictable.

Chang's three proposals for reform reflect his 'let a hundred flowers bloom' attitude but also indicate a political bent that goes beyond even-handed pluralism. First, the department needs to "hire more diverse people", with an emphasis on hiring post-Keynesians and old institutional economists (both are schools of thought associated with an interventionist state). Secondly, the course needs to be more related to the real world. This is something that Chang is actively working on at the moment with *Rethinking Economics's* 'Curriculum Project', which will include a lecture series by Chang titled 'Unsettled Issues In Economics'. Lastly, Chang thinks that less focus should be put on econometrics content, which he calls only "one very useful tool".

Chang is pessimistic about this wish list, with every sentence hinting at the total dominance neoclassical economists hold on powerful positions. Many cite the Research Excellence Framework (REF), which forms the basis of public university funding based on journal rankings that are alleged to be biased in favour of orthodoxy, as the source of the problem. But for Chang the rot goes deeper. "You need some research assessment; what is wrong is the nature of the professional community rather than REF itself." For him the discipline needs an attitude change: "The whole point of having universities is to create an environment in which different people can experiment with different ideas."

Rendahl is naturally keen to express that this is already the case. He points out

that Thomas Piketty – the rockstar economist famed for railing against inequality – is considered to be in the mainstream and publishes in supposedly neoclassical journals. While he admits that the faculty receives more funds if it publishes work of high quality according to the REF's measures, he says that the faculty agrees with REF regarding what are considered good journals. This is not to say Rendahl is a reactionary, but his ideas for reform are piecemeal tweaking.

When I speak to CSEP, there is little of the sense of militancy that Rendahl had described. They are positive about what society's goals are, but while they talk the talk on pluralism, their attitude towards reform seems much closer to Rendahl's tinkering than Chang's bonfire of the neoclassicals. Perhaps this is simply an acknowledgement that they are not a majority. Timothy Tan, curriculum reform officer, noted "I get why a lot of students might object to it [pluralism] because there is a large volume of work we have to face, and adding things above that would be quite difficult to manage." Indeed, while their survey in 2014 showed desire for change, it did not show a student body overwhelmingly committed to CSEP's vision of reform, with some demanding greater access to social sciences and alternative perspectives, and other bemoaning the fact that they had to read history in first year and demanding more empirics.

CSEP has carved itself a niche, hosting diverse guest lecturers and making economics accessible to students outside the Tripos, but its radical goals of curriculum reform have been reduced to pluralism as a side-order. They don't have any concrete proposals as they feel that "the faculty might not see us as representative of the whole student body". Instead, the society is working on a follow-up survey in 2018, hoping that empirical evidence of student perspectives might trigger another wave of reform. When they do venture to suggest some changes, it is with some modesty. Tan suggests a change of style rather than a structural change; "if you're teaching the neoclassical models, why not mention, just as a caveat, why this model might not work, and what do certain other schools have to say about it". He also remembers positively a suggestion Rendahl had made after a supervision that more computer skills could be worked into the Tripos. Anna Valyogos, the society's president, noted that marking schemes are very straight-forwardly true or false "which doesn't really give space to students to think critically".

It's conceivable that these concrete, palatable, non-divisive proposals will be well-received by the faculty, but one wonders if it might push the heterodox movement back into the cold. Chang himself seems pessimistic about his task. I ask him if he can see something like his *Rethinking Economics* course being picked up by the University. "In my dreams" he says. "People have criticised the Vatican for the last 2,000 years and it's still there. But I live in hope, otherwise I would have committed suicide".

“We can't be held hostage by what students want”



# Strikes loom over academic pension dispute

**Rosie Bradbury**  
News Correspondent

The UK's largest higher education trade union will ballot academics next week over whether to take industrial action over pay disputes, it has been announced.

The University and College Union (UCU) launched the ballot in response to proposed changes to the university sector's largest pension scheme, the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). It was announced on Friday 17th November that the fund may convert to an entirely 'defined contribution' fund, which the UCU believes is a less secure form of investment.

The action proposed by the UCU includes a series of strikes by lecturers, as well as refusals to reschedule classes or substitute for sick colleagues, to be held in February 2018. The UCU has warned of potential "chaos" across 50 UK higher education institutions, including the University of Cambridge, if the pension dispute is not resolved.

The trade union has called on the support of its 40,000 members in universities across Britain.

The university advocacy group Universities UK (UUK) revealed plans for the USS to eliminate its 'defined benefit' and

become an entirely 'defined contribution' fund, affecting 190,000 members actively saving in the plan. 'Defined contribution' pensions are considered riskier, as retirement incomes depend on returns from money invested in the stock market and offer no guaranteed income.

Analysis by financial planning firm Tilney Bestinvest found that the best 'defined benefit' schemes are five times more generous than 'defined contribution' schemes.

According to UCU general secretary Sally Hunt, the plans would leave academics "facing years of stress about whether their pension investments are returning enough income to live on". She said that the plans are also likely to affect younger university staff just beginning their careers most severely.

The plans are in light of the increasingly precarious financial position of the USS, which currently has an estimated £12.6bn financial deficit and anticipates rising future costs.

The £60bn fund estimates that between an additional £480m to £560m is needed annually to maintain retirement benefits, meaning that employers and members would need to increase contributions by 7%.

The UCU suggests that most employers can afford to pay more to secure ex-

“  
*Academics  
are facing  
years of  
stress*  
”



isting benefits, but many simply refuse to do so. However, according to UUK chief executive Alistair Jarvis: "Most universities can't afford to pay more in pensions without diverting money from other central areas, such as teaching or research."

The UUK called the threat of industrial action by UCU "premature and disappointing", pointing to plans to hold a series of meetings to discuss USS pen-

▲ Sally Hunt speaking at this year's NUS conference ((YOUTUBE/ NUS UK))

sion reform.

A spokesperson from the University of Cambridge told *Varsity* that "proposals for benefit reform will be discussed between employers and members shortly through the Joint Negotiating Committee," and that "a consultation with affected employees is scheduled for spring 2018".

The ballot will be open between 27 November and 19 January.

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## News

# Student Minds launches new website to support mental health

**Sophie Shennan**  
Senior News Correspondent

Student-run mental health charity Student Minds Cambridge (SMC) has launched its new Student Support Guide website, created to produce an accessible guide to the mental health services available to Cambridge students.

Produced by SMC's College Representative Coordinator Carolyn Irvine and University Liaison Officer Jonny Hart, the website contains pages on all the support services available in Cambridge, at both the college and University level. Student initiatives and external charities, both those that work nationally and those based in Cambridge, are also featured.

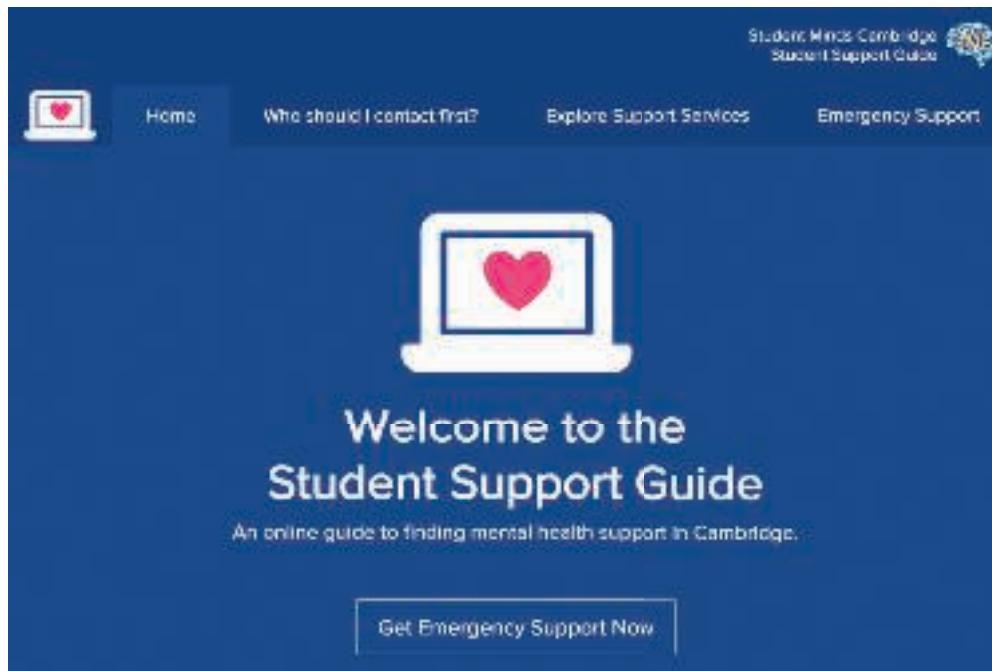
The website was created over four months by members of the charity, with input from the University Counselling Service and Disability Resource Centre.

Discussing her aims for the project, Irvine told *Varsity* that she and Hart hoped the website would go some way to solve "some crucial issues" around mental health support in Cambridge.

"We find that students are not given enough information about their options when it comes to finding support, and most students just don't know where to go to get help.

"Of course, the personal tutors are on the whole very useful for this, but going through the tutors requires students to be comfortable talking about their mental health with someone they may not know very well."

She said the website would allow students to access the support they needed "in the privacy of their own rooms, at their own pace, and without having to explain themselves". There are also resources to help students learn how best



to support their peers.

This month, as part of a year-long investigation, *Varsity* found that a spate of staff leaving the University Counselling Service resulted in increased waiting times for students seeking counselling in 2015-16 and a significant reduction in the number of counselling hours that could be offered during the past academic year.

A University spokesperson last week denied both that waiting times for counselling have risen during recent years, and that the UCS has ever imposed limits on the number of sessions offered to students.

SMC Vice-President Shadab Ahmed, who helped to finalise the project, told *Varsity* that the website was an "extremely helpful resource to students",

▲ The new website features SMC's Student Support Guide (CAROLYN IRVINE)

and emphasised its particular usefulness to freshers who were "new to the bubble".

He continued: "It helps to clarify all the support avenues that are in place in the University, and soon specifically in college. I hope that it will help make it easier for students to seek support should they or their friends need it, and I am very glad to have been a part of it."

Student Minds Cambridge is part of national charity Student Minds, which campaigns for better awareness about mental health. They have already run a number of events this term, including a comedy night with the Impronauts, and puppy therapy, which was held at the Cambridge Union.

The website can be found at [www.findsupportcam.com](http://www.findsupportcam.com)

## David Miliband speaks out on refugee crisis

**Rachel Loughran**  
Senior News Correspondent

Former Foreign Secretary David Miliband spoke earlier this week to the head of the University's Department of Politics and International Studies, David Runciman, on the *Talking Politics* podcast.

The podcast, hosted by Runciman, is released every Thursday and features a regular panel of experts and invited guests discussing pressing political issues at a time where "politics has never been more unpredictable, more alarming or more interesting".

In this week's episode, Miliband, who is currently president and CEO of the International Rescue Committee, discusses his new book, *Rescue: Refugees and the Political Crisis of Our Time*. In addition to conversation about climate change, Brexit, and the failures of the Blair government, Miliband explains what the refugee crisis can reveal about the state of world politics, and comments on the difficulties of social democracy in an "age of extremes".

Miliband stresses the importance of distinguishing between the politics of immigration and the refugee crisis, stating that the rights of refugees are "completely different" to the rights of immigrants and the state's responsibility towards them, adding: "A refugee is someone who can't safely be sent home."

He continues later in the podcast: "The reason we've got a global refugee crisis is because we've got a set of civil wars around the world that are not being resolved...because we've got a global diplomatic crisis."

He added: "Until we can see a rebirth of peace-making, peace-building and peace-keeping then the refugee crisis and displacement crisis is going to grow and grow."

Miliband also answered questions directly from *Varsity*.

In light of Miliband's statement in a TED Talk earlier this year, where the ex-Labour politician stressed the importance of voting for politicians who would put into practice solutions to aid the refugee crisis, *Varsity* asked: if the current Labour opposition were in power, do you think that they would help solve this problem?

David Miliband responded, "I think there is a good deal of confidence they want to move in another direction" from the Conservative government. Miliband remarked upon the current administration's handling of the refugee crisis and pointed to Theresa May's decision to cancel the commitment made by David Cameron to take 3000 unaccompanied children from the Middle East, calling it "incredibly mean-minded."

Miliband added: "At the moment only six refugees per parliamentary constituency are allowed to come in from Syria. That seems to me to be completely nugatory." He stressed, "I'm hopeful that Britain will not take the status quo as being the best it can do."

# Keeping hope alive: Cambridge students unite to show solidarity with refugees

**Isobel Bickersteth**  
News Correspondent

On Wednesday evening, students in Cambridge gathered to discuss the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe and learn about the charities working to resolve the issue.

'Keeping Hope Alive: Refugee Relief in Greece', organised by Student Life Cambridge for members of both Anglia Ruskin and Cambridge Universities, hosted speaker Sarah Patel, who shared her experience of administering aid within Greece as part of her work with the charity Global Aid Network (GAIN). As a worldwide humanitarian relief and development organisation, GAIN operates in 50 countries from 11 different offices.

Patel explained that the charity's

fundamental purpose was to "help with heart and hand". She stressed the importance of the network of charities of which GAIN is a part, which enables the charity to benefit from the help of experts who have been there "much longer than them".

Focusing on her recent trip with GAIN to a camp in Greece, Patel stressed the need for continued awareness and public interest in the arrival of refugees to Europe, despite the issue "not being in the news headlines anymore". Patel cited the findings of the International Organisation for Migration, which showed that 140,538 migrants had arrived into Europe by sea so far in 2017 - one in six of whom were children. Between January to August 2017, 2,410 of these arrivals had been reported dead or missing.

The talk went on to consider how the increasing number of refugees has

“Today it is easier to be a lot less hopeful”

impacted humanitarian relief. Patel described the condition of refugee camps in which she had volunteered, which are currently suffering from a shortage of humanitarian funding. Of primary concern is the condition of the reception centres, which Patel said were experiencing significant overcrowding. She continued to say that accommodation was often very basic, with families housed in tents or large marquees divided by blankets.

Running throughout the talk was a consideration of what hope meant for refugees. Patel was volunteering near the Greek border in 2016 when it became apparent that European borders would be closing, or restricting, access to refugees. She spoke of the "hope that [the refugees] held on to". She compared these experiences to the present-day situation, when it was easier to "become a lot less hopeful".



## COLD CASH

### Alumnus donates £1 million for ice rink

Work will soon begin on the Cambridge Ice Arena, a new world-class ice rink that will become the home-ice for Cambridge University's ice hockey teams. The construction of the facility was made possible by a major donation from David Gattiker, captain of the university team in 1931, uranium smuggler during WWII, and later a successful agricultural chemist. The ice rink, which will open next autumn, will also be open to the public.

## RAISING THE ROOF

### ADC Theatre to be renovated

Further details have emerged in the Cambridge University Reporter about proposed building works at the ADC Theatre, last renovated in 2008. The University Council has approved proposed renovation works to introduce better ventilation, renew the ceiling and improve the overall safety of the building. The project is estimated to cost around £750,000 and scheduled to begin in March next year. As a result of the renovations, the theatre will be closed for six months, with productions moving to other venues around Cambridge.



SIMON LOCKE

## MAGDA-LACKING

### Magdalene library goes manual

Magdalene College students have been instructed to use manual borrowing forms in order to have new books issued. Technological issues with self-issuing services have forced the library to resort to manual means of processing books. A student told *Varsity*: "Although inconvenient, it's a satisfying return to Magdalene's traditional roots and makes the student experience of borrowing books feel that much more authentic."



JORGE ROYAN

## INFLATED HOPES

### Water park to open near Cambridge

Cambridge residents can look forward to the arrival of a *Total Wipeout* aquatic experience next summer. Cambridge Aqua Park, which will be constructed on a lake twelve miles north of the city, will offer a family-friendly inflatable obstacle course suitable for anyone over the age of eight. The organisers are gauging interest for facilities on their Facebook page.

## BUILDING BRIDGES

### Grudgebridge likers vote to keep page

Grudgebridge readers voted to continue the page's existence in a poll last week. 70% voted 'No' to the question 'should Grudgebridge be deleted?' The page was recently deleted (thus blowing apart the '-bridge' triumvirate composed of Crushbridge, Memebbridge and itself), primarily due to controversy about the subject matter and tone of its posts.

## QUANTUM LEAP

### Testing grasshopper-friendly lawns

Cambridge quantum physics researchers found the optimal lawn shapes to maximise the chance of a grasshopper continually jumping on it cogwheels, fans and stripes. This sheds light upon the differences between quantum and classical physics and may assist the development of quantum systems for computing and finance.

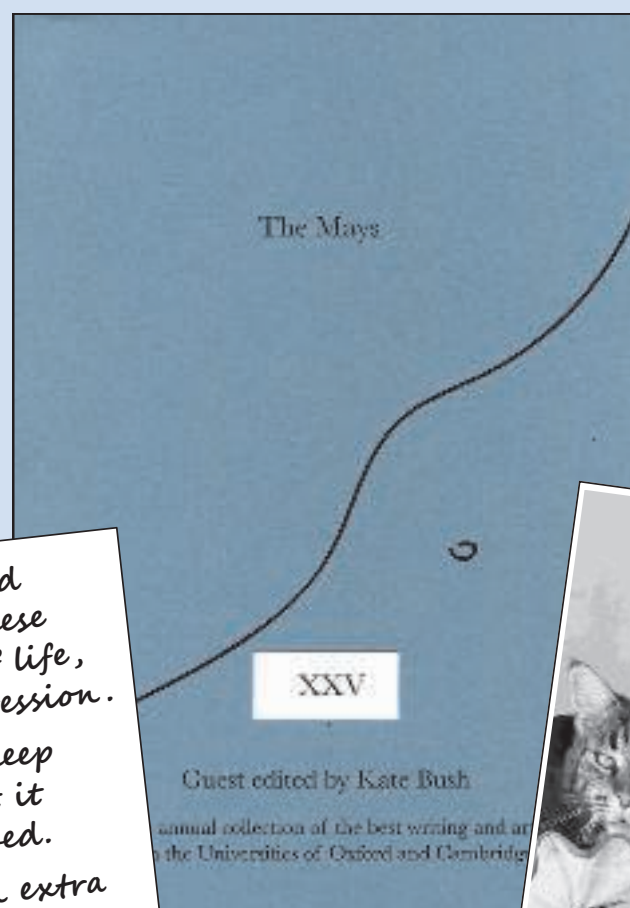


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Guest edited by Kate Bush



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Kate Bush

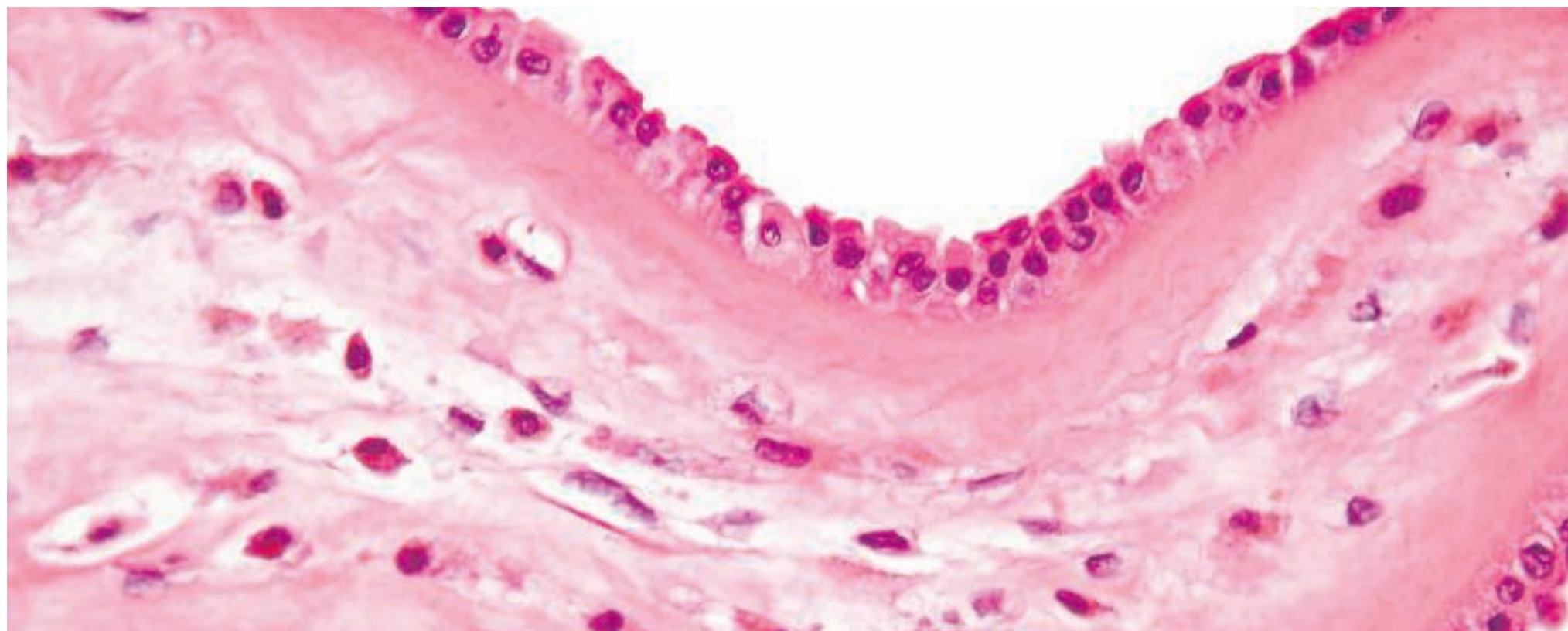


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## Science

# Regenerative medicine: magic bullet or mirage?



● In conversation with Anna Philpott, Professor of Cancer and Developmental Biology, and member of the Cambridge Stem Cell Institute

**Jake Cornwall-Scoones**  
Science Editor

The field of regenerative medicine has been viewed by many as a magic bullet in treating degenerative diseases, yet 25 years on from when the term was first used by Leland Kaiser in a publication about the future of healthcare, there have been virtually no instances of effective translation into the clinic. I spoke to Professor Anna Philpott to discuss the advantages of the technology and the stumbling blocks of the field.

Philpott suggests that the field of regenerative medicine has two interpretations. One is “simulating your own endogenous ability to repair your tissues by understanding the normal mechanisms that contribute to repair” as well as “re-activating developmental processes.” The other more widely known approach is “producing cells or tissues outside the body and somehow managing to graft them into the appropriate place and integrate within your tissues.”

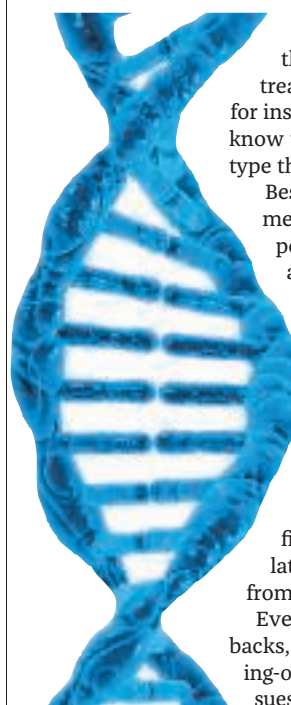
Discussions about the future of health increasingly use ‘regenerative medicine’ as a buzzword. Philpott proposes that people underestimate the difficulty of the procedure: “You imagine I’ll be able to make some pancreatic beta cells and put them back in someone who has diabetes, and I’ll be able to cure their diabetes.” Yet the procedure faces many technical challenges: “You have to get cells plumbed into the appropriate place... [and] protect them from immune attack.” Additionally, she proposes that

many misconceive claims about the external production of certain cell types: “The things you make outside the body never function in exactly the same ways as the things you make inside the body. So I think there’s a lot of hype that has yet to be realised.” Philpott reckons the former interpretation of regenerative medicine may be more effective, yet this faces its own set of problems when you “regenerate too much,” including producing “tumours or chronic inflammation...the last thing you want to do if you’re ageing.”

Translation into the clinic has seldom been achieved, even with many labs across the world working to provide novel treatments. Philpott says that “we don’t know enough about normal biology to be able to bring about effective regenerative therapy.” This she attributes in part to the fact that “developmental biology has fallen out of fashion over the last 30 years,” proposing that people don’t recognise that regenerative medicine is just “developmental biology in action.” Without a knowledge of how normal cells develop, while you can “superficially produce cells that look like the cells you want, they won’t behave like cells that you want.” This neglect of understanding normal biology she attributes to the genesis of the regenerative medicine field about 20 years ago, where researchers would “get some cells and would put a bit of this and a bit of that and a bit of the other growth factors and they’d find cells that beat, and they’d go ‘great I’ve made cardiac muscle.’” Now, people have started to add factors as they appear in the embryo and are getting much more “physiologically relevant” results. Yet these protocols face another challenge, namely the fact that they only produce immature cells: “It’s that final process of maturation that is missing from most protocols, and that really is a developmental process that we have yet to understand even at a fundamental level.”

Philpott proposes that the field needs to “see the bigger picture” in order to make progress. Developmental biology sees repeated patterns in regulation

“It won’t be available on the NHS or in other countries, it would only be available to the super-rich”



across seemingly disparate tissues. “In my lab, we work in neuroscience, we work in the pancreas, and we work in the gut, because we see that there are analogous mechanisms going on. It’s like nature re-uses the same module in different circumstances, because of course that’s the most evolutionarily efficient thing to do.” She attributes siloing into disciplines as one of the factors driving tunnel vision, suggesting that “physical scientists, or mathematicians, or people like that, are actually able to step back and look at the systems as a whole, as opposed to focusing too much on the molecular detail.” While proposing that a focus on molecular detail has its place, Philpott says: “Maybe we’ve become side-tracked in the last few years because we’ve put too much emphasis on sequencing things.” So absorbed in the excitement around sequencing, people neglect the importance of the phenotype, she proposes. “The phenotype of cells depends on the sequence of the genes but also on how all of those things interact at the systems level, and you can’t get that information just by sequencing alone.” At the end of the day, it’s the phenotype that matters when treating disease: “In cancer biology for instance, it’s of course important to know the genotype, but it’s the phenotype that kills you.”

Besides technical issues, Philpott laments bad science in the field. She points to the case of Paolo Macchiarini at the Karolinska Institute who was widely reported to have undertaken risky first-in-human experiments using artificial tracheae to replace damaged organs without adequate pre-clinical studies to back up his approach. These lacklustre efforts can “set the field back by 10, 20, 30 years if there’s not sufficient regulation. And what regulation there is can vary enormously from country to country.”

Even though the field has had setbacks, Philpott envisages a gradual rolling-out of the procedure in selected tissues. She wouldn’t put a date on when

▲ Stem cells: the future of health?

(ERIC ERBE, CHRISTOPHER POOLEY)

we could all expect it — “it’s like saying when are we going to cure cancer” — but points to pigmented retinal epithelial regenerative therapy being carried out in London as a case of translation to the clinic already occurring. While reducing the need for individualisation of the procedure, for example by having a “bank of enough cells with a good enough genetic match to do transplants” may reduce costs, the main challenge in transplantation is still economics. “At least initially, it won’t be available on the NHS or in other countries, it would only be available to the super-rich, because it would cost so much.” Regenerating tissues within the body may cut costs further, she suggests, “but it may be less high-profile and take longer to develop.”

The issue of cost brings into question whether this magic bullet is really worth it: “If you use a lot of money on regenerative medicine then you won’t be using it in other areas.” In some cases, there may be cost savings: for example, inserting “immuno-privileged devices” with beta-cells into diabetics will be cheaper than present options, as “it costs such a lot of money over a lifetime to monitor and treat people with diabetes.” Yet for most cases, when, or indeed if, such treatments arrive, they may only be available to the rich with private healthcare. Further, Philpott suggests, there is a disconnect between the target market of the therapy and the optimal patient in which to use it: “Regeneration is going to work better in young people, but the biggest market is going to be old people who want to live much longer.”

Regenerative medicine, despite its hype, faces numerous developmental, regulatory and economic challenges before it can be translated into the clinic. And even if regenerative medicine procedures are discovered that could be used in the clinic, it then raises the question for public health officials and governments as to whether they should be used. In the glare of the optimism of this field, we often forget that other, simpler procedures, or even basic public health, may be a much more ethical and effective use of resources.

◀ Thinking past the genome in post-genome science (PUBLIC DOMAIN PICTURES)



# The government is killing its citizens. But what can be done?

● **Andre Lo**  
investigates the  
epidemiology  
of 21st-century  
Britain

I would not blame you if you immediately thought this article to be some anti-establishment, sensationalist 'fake news' – conjured from a construed amalgamation of conspiracy and dystopian fantasy. Yet on 9th November, Sir Michael Marmot, director of the University College London Institute of Health Equity, presented his vision of *Making health fairer in the year 2027* as part of Imagine2027's series of talks. Why? Because as the 2008 World Health Organisation Commission on Social Determinants of Health report chaired by Marmot reasons: "Social injustice is killing people on a grand scale."

Amid remarkable wit and humour, Marmot narrated the life of Jimmy, a man from Calton – one of the most socially deprived districts in Glasgow. When Jimmy was a child, he was raised by a single mother who was perpetually ensnared in abusive relationships. When Jimmy started school, he already possessed behavioural problems and soon

became registered with the police as a delinquent. When Jimmy left school, he could never find a proper job and funnelled all his earnings into drugs, alcohol, and fast food. Jimmy's life expectancy is 54 – almost three decades lower than the male average in Lenzie which lies a mere 15 minutes' drive away. Jimmy may only be a personification of the average Calton man, and the statistics Marmot references may be over a decade old. Yet many inequalities are still growing and form the dystopian reality of numerous individuals across the world.

According to Professor Ian Buchan's research in the *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, compared to the South, northern England's excess mortality has risen among aged 25-44 since the mid-1990s. In the United States, widening health disparities that accompany economic inequality have been illustrated by Dr Samuel Dickman's recent article in *The Lancet*. So, if we and our governments merely stand aside and observe as such health gaps continue to rise, are we not intentionally severing lives short, killing through the poison of social disadvantage?

So even though the politics of health reform may be a hateful chasm of despair, what else can we morally do but brave its depths? Some, no doubt, will argue that our government is doing their best. But Marmot begs to differ. "It's so easy, conceptually, to address these problems,"

reasoned Marmot, who is ex-president of the World Medical Association. According to his 2015 viewpoint published in *The Lancet*: "The poor of Glasgow are rich compared with the average in India, for example, but their health is worse... It is not what you have that is important for health, but what you can do with what you have." How else can a community with less resources attain comparatively better health outcomes? What can we learn from the overperformers to improve our underperforming areas?

Lack of healthcare access is not the problem here. Marmot claims instead that it is the disempowering social gradient – in education, in employment, in living, working and social conditions – that corrodes mental and physical health starting from childhood: "Intervention at any stage of the life course can make a difference." Marmot therefore proposes six solutions. Firstly, give all children the best start in life and alleviate child poverty. Secondly, maximise the potential of all individuals through skills training and whole school approaches. Thirdly, create fair employment and work – for example through improving active labour market policies. Fourthly, ensure healthy standards of living for everyone by tackling minimum income standards, minimum wages and benefit caps. Fifthly, develop healthy communities through environmental and housing policies, preventing social isolation. Lastly, strengthen the



▲ "The comfort of our privilege is killing real human lives" (LUKE ELLIOT)

impact of preventative health priorities by addressing cost inflation, resource allocation and demographic pressures.

I understand that health equity may never truly be achievable. I understand that our governments do contribute towards healthcare – mortality is decreasing overall, and weeks ago I even reported a breakthrough in artificial cornea research that is funded by the British government. I understand that our governments have innumerable priorities, from preserving our safety

and freedoms, to allowing the rich to grow richer through a paradise of tax loopholes even while the poor grow poorer. Nevertheless, we must ask ourselves whether we are doing all we can for these unfortunate individuals and families and communities. We must understand that every piece of neglect and inaction we offer from the comfort of our privilege is ending human lives. Only then I believe, can we ensure that in ten years, we will not live in 1984. But you tell me.

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# Comment

## Busting the 'snowflake' myth: students are as engaged as ever



Roger Mosey is master of Selwyn College and former head of BBC News

Roger Mosey

Sometimes friends from outside the academic world ask me for an update on the culture wars they read about in their newspapers. Has an army of snowflakes encircled Cambridge? Are we college heads now enrolled in re-education camps? And what's it like coping with the chasm between generations?

The answer is that I seldom recognise the portrait of universities that the media loves – particularly, the 'barmy Oxbridge' with its alleged combination of privilege and political correctness. In reality, this seems to me to be a lively and appropriately disputatious place in which students do what students have always done: they seize on ideas, they test them and they come to their own conclusions. Talk of an 'intellectual monoculture' is ludicrous.

I'm also struck by the charm and rationality of most of our students compared with older generations. Every time I look at Twitter, there are politicians and commentators from two sides of an argument screaming at each other, particularly about Brexit. The bile and the verbal violence in the national debate are unsettling, and they're emitted by people who should know better. By contrast, I've had numerous conversations with students about Brexit which are measured and focused on how we can find the best outcome for the UK and the EU. And it's reassuring that there is a diversity of opinion too: a number of prominent Selwynites were unabashed advocates of the Leave campaign, even

though a majority of the college and the University were supporters of Remain.

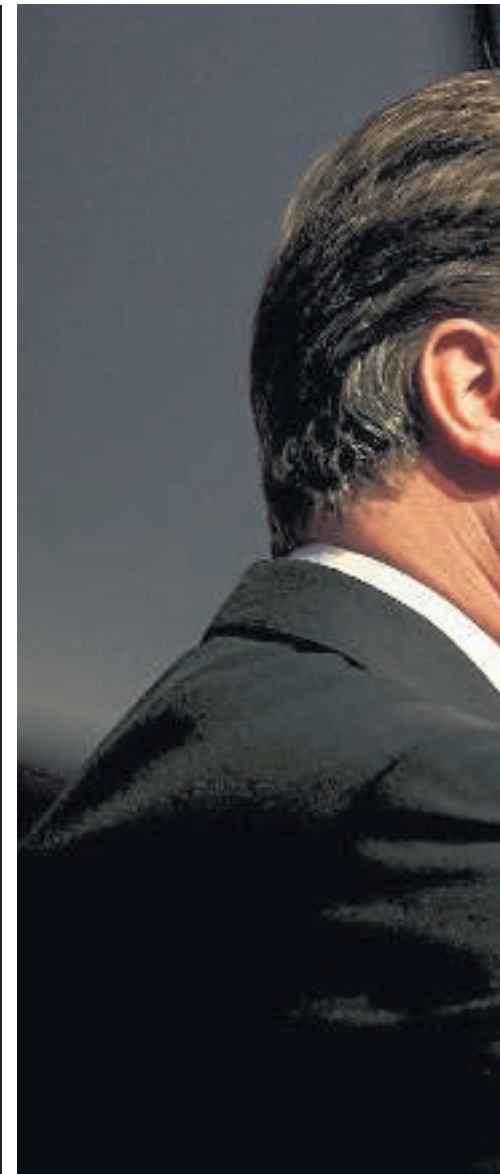
I feel particularly strongly about the right to have your own opinion and to speak freely because I'm a former journalist; and my job, as editor of the *Today* programme or head of BBC television news, was to bring a wide range of views to our audiences. There should be a quest in public service media for analysis, certainly, and respect for experts. But our political discourse is best served by enabling people of all persuasions to have access to the airwaves. At times this can be uncomfortable, especially when you seek guests from across the world; and they can range from deniers of democracy to extremist nationalists. But the nastiest views shrivel under public scrutiny – as the BNP's Nick Griffin found on the BBC's *Question Time* programme in 2009, when he debated with, amongst others, a Labour minister. Griffin's party has now, thankfully, almost vanished. I'm with the *Washington Post*'s slogan that 'democracy dies in darkness'; and when there is the spotlight of accountability, it's extremism that perishes.

It's a similar case with universities. Free speech matters, and as long as it's legal I'm in favour of that freedom being exercised. I regret any sense in which the Prevent legislation risks inhibiting that, and we should defend the traditional rights of academics and of citizens to say what they believe – and to have those views scrutinised. That is overwhelmingly what happens in Cambridge. I've hosted speakers from the

left and the right in the events we hold at the Selwyn's Master's Lodge; and it was particularly interesting to witness a vigorous debate last year between our students and the *Daily Mail*'s Richard Littlejohn. I hold no brief for the *Mail*: it has roasted me on many occasions, including recently as one of the alleged lefties running Cambridge. But it reaches millions of voters in Britain and you can't challenge them effectively, if that is your choice, without at least knowing what they think and why.

There's an important point here about the progress there has been in bringing people who were previously on the margins of society fully into our national life. There's more to be done, but on gender and sexuality and race some important battles have been won. It would be perverse now to seek to shut down the voices that were formerly the majority but are losing the war. We have gone from homosexuality being illegal at the start of 1967 to same-sex marriage by 2014. So feel free to tackle homophobia, just as we may take on the misogynists and the racists and totalitarians of all hues – but don't imagine they will ever win, and consider that it might be the threat of martyrdom that would give them a flicker of life.

Most students get this. I continue to be impressed by their intelligence and their readiness to engage with the complexity of the modern world. Cambridge's strength remains its commitment to the rational and to the long-term, and I've every hope that will continue.



Connor MacDonald is a third year HSPS student at Emmanuel

*We should spend less time feeling sorry for ourselves and persuade others with policy ideas*

On the London radio channel LBC recently, Maajid Nawaz lamented the fact that conservative students felt 'embarrassed' or 'ostracised' on university campuses. More widely, there appears to be a belief that universities have become hostile to conservative modes of thought, from Brexit to tuition fees to 'safe spaces'. We are becoming an ever smaller minority in a sea of 'group-think'.

I'm a Conservative, and I see the point somewhat. But the news of our demise has been greatly exaggerated.

Let me put it this way: as a Conservative student, I know I'm going to be in the minority. We are by no means the 'centre' of student politics – there is no credible party to our right – and the Labour Party has, despite every ounce of economic sense being against the policy, decided to bet the farm on eliminating tuition fees and debt. In terms of both natural ideological fit and pure economic self-interest, we're losing.

This can make us a bit defensive, and not without good reason. I can't count the number of times I've been asked in a rather patronising and insincere tone "why are you a Conservative?", as if there



▲ A Free Education protest outside Parliament (BILLYH)





## Conservatives should offer solutions, then people may like us

must be some pathological reason for my predilection. They're usually trying to figure out whether I'm immoral, stupid, or both. I usually respond by simply saying "because I'm not an idiot", at which point the concerned inquisitor usually blinks and doesn't know whether to be offended or to laugh. I usually smile and laugh first, setting their liberal heart at ease.

Wrapped up in this is a serious point, however. It gets quite annoying to be viewed as a quaint intellectual curiosity, rather than a supporter of the party that has governed this country for most of the last 100 years.

However, we must not overstate our case, which I fear some of the current navel-gazing has done. What I mean by this is that we cannot instantly assume that every time we're loud or brash with our beliefs the rejection comes from the fact we're Tories. Sometimes people are just annoyed because we're loud and brash. What is more, we can't expect everyone to be constantly up for an ideological debate every time we want one.

Let's reverse the logic here. I was recently elected as an NUS delegate. In response, one of the other delegates wrote what could generously be called a diatribe against me and another candidate on their (fully public) Facebook profile. I continue to be surprised at how many of my left-wing friends – and some acquaintances – have offered words of reassurance, despite not having asked for them. I've also happily noted the fact that the vast majority of those I've spoken to thought the Facebook post was rather out of line. Instead of meaningful and profound, it came across as strident and partisan.

Similarly, Conservative students, I find, often have a need to publicly challenge every lefty thing that goes on at

▲ David Cameron probably never felt that ostracised at university, though

(DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

“People would like to hear about how you want to lower their rents or reduce college charges”

this university, which does precisely nothing to endear us to anyone or, more importantly, win us allies. Outside of a meaningful intellectual discussion, people aren't really that interested in hearing your views on how all taxation is theft. But, they probably would like to hear about how you want to lower their rents or reduce college charges. Again, think of it the other way around: students' eyes often glaze over when left-wing activists talk to them about 'structural oppression', 'modes of discipline' or 'emancipation of the University', not least because these words are thrown around as meaningless intellectual peacocking. However, students will rightly get up in arms about ill-thought-out DoS letters, poorly enforced sexual harassment regulations and the rather shocking lack of black students at our university.

Conservative students need to learn the same lessons. Instead of whining at how our intellectual ideas aren't making us any friends, let's turn those ideas into practical solutions. We care about running efficient budgets, lowering costs and making sure that everyone has equal access to opportunity – aren't these the things that university student unions desperately need?

In closing, I'm reminded of how Harvey Milk first got elected in San Francisco. In his first campaign, he ran as an unabashed gay rights activist, and got nowhere. The next time around, he focused on the excess dog poop in the neighbourhood park and won. By the same token, if any political cause wants to be taken seriously, it needs to focus on what matters to people in everyday life, not just the great intellectual causes of the time. When student conservatives get to that point, and craft a vision for better universities, we won't be embarrassed any longer.

## Allowing women into the Pitt Club should not be celebrated

*Eve Hodgson argues that the Pitt Club's recent admittance of women has done little to combat its exclusionary and out-dated image*



Women should be allowed where men are. That is a very basic tenet of equality that we demand of most of our institutions. When the Pitt Club announced its decision to allow women to be elected, I wasn't impressed, and I don't really think anybody else should be either.

Exclusion from space on the grounds of gender is a complicated discourse, especially when we still have all-women's colleges. However, women-only spaces like colleges or discussion groups can be and often are defended on the grounds of safety and even necessity for women.

Women did not have the right to a full university education for a long time after men, therefore colleges that cater to that deficit are defensible. Women are often silenced in public discussion about their lives and experiences, so creating a space in which only they speak – and cannot be shouted over or drowned out – can be explained very legitimately.

However, men's only spaces, especially when founded in the principles of leisure that the Pitt Club is, more often serve to be exclusionary – working to the negative purpose of being anti-woman where female-only spaces tend not to be anti-man. The Pitt Club allowing women to be elected, therefore, is not a victory of the political correctness brigade, as some of its old members believe it to be.

Just to say, I don't hate these sorts of clubs, as the same commentator claims people will regardless of whether women are included. I don't like what they represent, but if people choose to spend their time and money at them, that's really none of my business.

But to even have alumni make this complaint highlights the immense privilege and even naivety intrinsic to the institution. Complaints about political correctness always seem to fall into this trap of fundamental ignorance. Whether it's complaining about diversity quotas in the media or not being able to inappropriately touch your colleagues at work, there is a failure of realisation. The penny never drops that change is happening because the complainer or complainers have unjustly benefitted from a system that has coddled them and their wants for so long that everyone else is fed up.

Regardless of what genders are permitted, the Pitt Club is a members' club, made up of already-

formed networks of people. Allowing women to enter this boys' club does not make it any less of a marker of the economic and social privilege we know to be endemic in Cambridge.

Certainly, we should applaud anything that looks like a step forward for equality, and some people might think that's what this is. I don't. It might be equality in a very small space, but the space itself is a symptom of wider inequalities – not very many people are going to benefit from a very small number of women being allowed to join a very small number of men.

Organisations like the Pitt Club, often compared to Oxford's Bullingdon Club, are emblematic of exclusionary privilege. That's really what they're for, to create the sense of an inner circle to which one is not only fortunate, but worthy, to be elected to. If other people aren't there, it's because they didn't deserve it.

Environments like this create exclusivity based on nothing but social circles and financial privilege, and make that kind of exclusivity acceptable. Cambridge in itself is already an exclusive environment to the point of detriment – clubs like these only add to our combined public image of poshness, wealth, and snobbery.

Although the Pitt Club is often defended by its past members, claiming it is nowhere near as riotous as the Bullingdon Club, the culture of private clubs is what makes them harmful.

The film *The Riot Club* is often derided as a ridiculous presentation of Oxbridge students, often by Oxbridge students. This is problematic in two ways. Firstly, these presentations are a reflection of the way people see us, and the way they continue to see us. Secondly, I'd say they aren't all that ridiculous. I watched *The Riot Club* after two terms at Cambridge, and while, obviously, the behaviours aren't comparable, the underlying sentiments – entitlement, superiority, segregation – are.

I'm not saying don't be intrigued, or don't join. But we need to be aware of the culture we perpetuate. Women or not, members of the Pitt Club are part of something special – on the grounds that so few are let in, and so many excluded.



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## Comment

# Let's change this institution for the better, not rip it apart

If we want to reimagine Cambridge, and benefit those who will follow us here, we should get serious in our suggestions, argues **Theo Demolder**



Theo Demolder is in his third year studying HSPS at Selwyn

Theo Demolder

It seems like nowadays we do too much talking about talking. Debate itself has become the focus of debate recently, particularly in relation to this newspaper and how fully it represents students' views. That's important, of course. But I worry that those whose views differ from the 'Varsity Comment consensus' spend too much time complaining and not enough getting stuck into the debate themselves.

That debate has been at its most colourful and impassioned, recently, with the 'Reimagining Cambridge' column. Its author, Angus Satow, is a key figure in Cambridge student politics: the runner up in the 2016 CUSU presidential election, and this year elected as one of our five NUS delegates. What's admirable about Angus's column is that he's willing to offer solutions; solutions which should get each of us thinking about our own ideas.

Some passages really do stand out. Here is an excerpt from his vision in his second column, entitled 'Everything for everyone': "The categories of student, fellow and worker would be abolished. We should also re-evaluate what we value, so that academia is just one strand of knowledge, and the pursuit of knowledge just one strand of life ... some of us would cook more, some of us would read more ... We would all learn and all teach, if we wanted to."

Where to start? This isn't satire. Perhaps it is fairer to look at the broader

“Those who claim to be most aware of their privilege deny what a privilege it is to be here”



▲ Cambridge's Pitt Building (ANDREW DUNN)

arguments he is making. What that passage does capture is an underlying sense – which I've heard elsewhere too – that Cambridge would be a better place if people didn't work so hard. It might, for many, be more enjoyable. All of us struggle with a year's worth of teaching being crammed into as few as 16 weeks, and many are fighting their own battles besides.

But no, I'm sorry, it would not be a better place. Yes, more should be done on mental health, access, intermission – absolutely. But ultimately a heavy workload is what we signed up for.

At this time of year, I often get an email from a Year 13 at my school who is applying – asking for advice. It's a reminder that things could quite easily have been different: unlucky with interview questions, missing a few marks in an exam, not having had quite so many opportunities in life. And so it's a crying shame to see people complaining quite so stridently about a place at which so many others would give so much to be. It always seems a great irony that those who claim to be most aware of their privileges are often also quickest to deny what a privilege it is to be here.

Of course, the University is not perfect. But in many cases Satow's solutions are incoherent. He complains, for example, about property prices in Cambridge and then advocates opening up University membership to all residents – with no acknowledgement of what that would do to house prices. More importantly, in his proposed “end to all exclusivity” what Satow seems to want to end is merit, with his idea of no longer having fellows, and membership and teaching having no preconditions.

The question Satow and others ask is 'who is our university for?' Thinking about this might raise important areas in which Cambridge needs to improve, but the answer is not that it is ours. 800 years of history have not been just one long prelude to this cohort's time here. It is a staggering arrogance, worthy of the worst Oxbridge-student stereotype, to believe we have the right to rip apart the fabric of this great institution to indulge an ill-advised flirtation with reheated Marxism.

Each of us in our few short years here does, however, have the chance to help shape it for the better; to ensure that those who follow have a better student experience, and that the benefits of the thinking that is done here spread further than they ever have done before.

In some respects, Satow is on the right track. Why shouldn't the staff who clean our bathrooms and cook our meals be allowed to join us in lectures which interest them, where there is space? We could certainly do more to break down the 'town/gown' divide. My own college, Selwyn, has admirably started hosting talks to which both students and local retirees are invited, for example. Indeed, the story of Geoff Edwards – who went from sleeping rough and selling *The Big Issue* on the streets of Cambridge to gaining a place at Hughes Hall this year – should prompt us to ask what more the University can do to help the most vulnerable in our society.

Whilst it may not quite be 'our' university, we do all have a stake in it. And with that, a responsibility. But we need to think – and debate – more seriously if we are to have any hope of living up to it.

# Student influence on politics is greater than you think

The media has always vilified campus politics, but the recent hysteria is a reaction to the rise of the left here and in mainstream politics



Anna Cardoso is a columnist and second year Historian at Trinity

Anna Cardoso

The media is with us everywhere nowadays; every major paper, on both sides of the Atlantic, seems fixated on students. Whether it's our safe spaces, our stamping out of free speech, our crazed protests, or our trigger warnings that threaten to turn the nation's next generation of leaders into snowflakes – campus life is always in the news. What's going on?

It seems student politics represents one of the sides in the 'culture wars' raging in both America and the UK. Both Brexit and the election of Donald Trump empowered previously dormant fringes of the right wing. It seemed that candidates and figures in mainstream politics were finally speaking out on behalf of their interests, unconstrained by 'political correctness' (or common decency).

Where the hard-right had emerged, the left has risen to meet it. The left has safe spaces while the right has filter-free speech (that frequently spills into racism or sexism). The left has the Antifa while the right has (frequently ethno) nationalist agitators. Student politics seems to provide an enemy for the diametrically opposite alt-right. There is no denying that the political left dominates our campus, alongside almost every campus in the country.

Campus politics has always been left-

leaning and political activism has always played a role in university life. Just as Harvard students occupied the student centre in protest of continued racism at the school, students in the 1960s sat in university buildings to protest against the war in Vietnam. The 1960s are heralded as the zenith of student activism; there are many books devoted to these protests' impact on American history. But in the 1950s there were anti-McCarthy and anti-nuclear protests. In the 1980s it was divestment from South Africa and racism that prompted a student at Harvard to comment that "The U.S. is experiencing an unprecedented rise in student activism". In the 1990s, newspapers decried "the university of the 1990s" for being "besieged by students who have replaced dispassionate and objective pursuit of knowledge with political correctness and identity politics". Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

The media has not radically changed its coverage of campus life in seven decades. 'Juvenioia' – the fear or hostility directed by an older generation toward a younger one, or toward youth culture in general – helps to explain why the coverage has stayed so consistent over such a long period of time. When older journalists and politicians observe the debate about safe spaces or trigger warn-

“When older journalists observe the debate about safe spaces, they see the growing 'weakness' of our society”

ings, they see the growing 'weakness' of our society. Just like journalists in the 1960s saw the disintegration of the moral fabric of society in the anti-war protests. Or academics in the 1990s saw students as being part of a "broadside attack on modern institutions" (in the words of Peter Sacks) for protesting racism on campus. Whilst some students have gone too far in their demands, every movement has radicals, and journalists ought to consider whether their fears are as rational as they may seem. Western society has yet to come crashing down at the hands of university students.

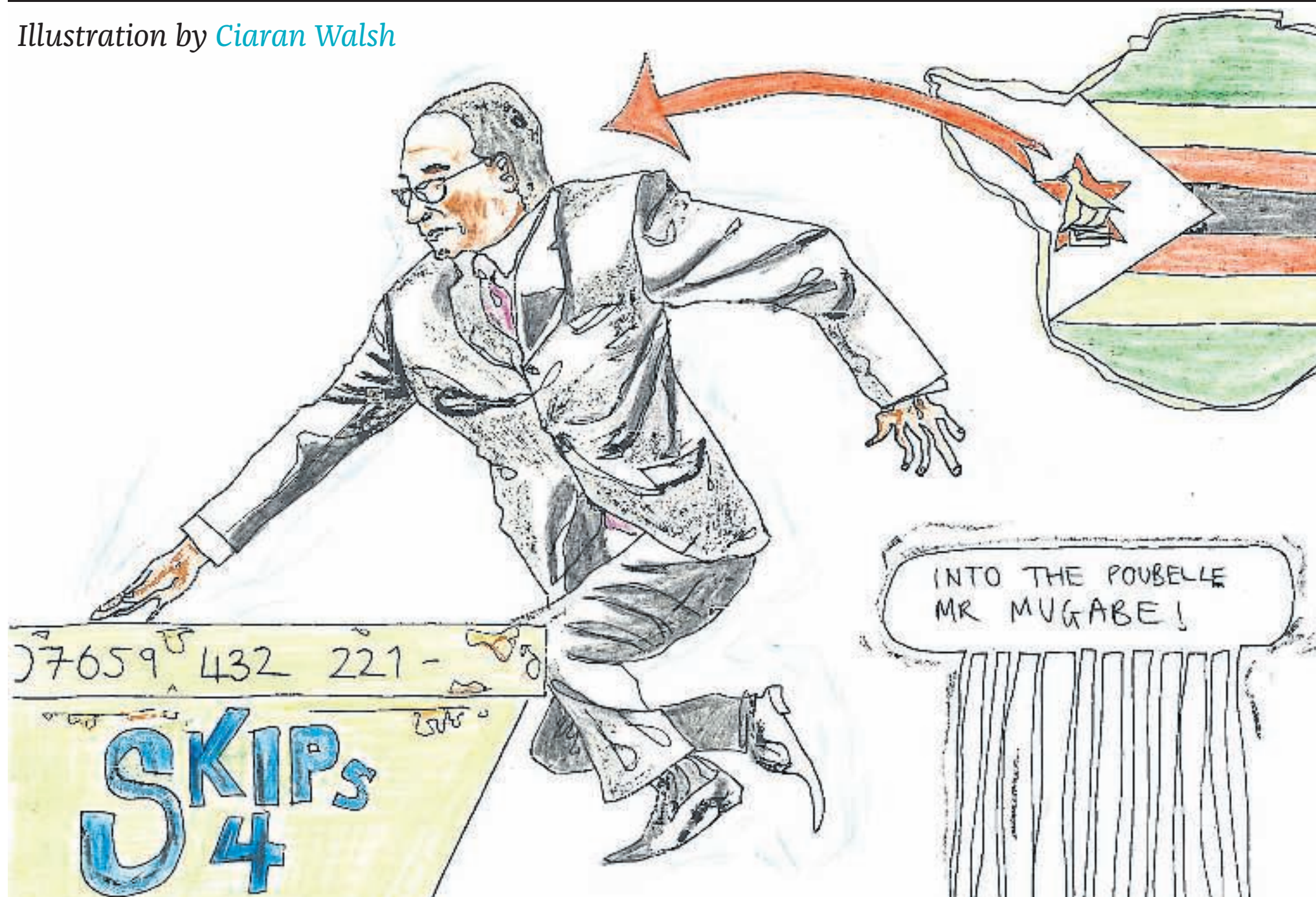
However, it's possible we are living in a moment in campus political history that is fundamentally different than the decades preceding us. For the first time, it seems that student political power has hoisted two formerly-fringe figures in politics into positions of authority. Jeremy Corbyn is the leader of the Labour Party; if you had told Tony Blair that Corbyn was destined to lead his party a decade ago, he would have laughed you out of Downing Street. Bernie Sanders, a man who was not even affiliated with the Democratic Party before he ran for president, almost took the nomination from Hillary Clinton. Both these men were long considered too left-wing and too extreme to be major forces in their

respective political parties. Youth mobilisation has helped to change that. Sanders won 84% of the youth vote at the Iowa caucus; Clinton only beat him by 0.3%. Analysis by Ipsos MORI suggested that Corbyn's unexpectedly strong performance in the recent general election was caused by the highest youth turnout since 1992. I don't need to tell anyone who was here last year that Cambridge was fiercely supporting Labour in the 2017 general election, and the trend was visible in student cities nationwide.

The leftward shift of major political parties in the UK and US means, that for the first time in decades, campus political leanings are reflected in mainstream politics. Naturally, Cambridge is not homogeneously Corbynite; our university has members from every part of the political spectrum. However, the dominant discourse on campus is undeniably left-leaning. Perhaps some of the media hysteria that surrounds campus politics stems from the fact that the far-left, and by extension campus politics, is powerful again (though not in power) – and this inspires fear amongst the ranks of right-wing media outlets. Or maybe they are just making the mistakes of their predecessors and indulging in the hysterical 'juvenioia'. Either way, history tells us that the kids are going to be alright.



Illustration by [Ciaran Walsh](#)



## Blue Labour's vision needs to get with the times

[Henry Coleman](#) tells us that the Labour Party pressure group is out of touch with modern work and the modern working class

It sometimes feels like the Labour Party has been gripped by a series of existential crises over its future and purpose since it was first founded. The latest instalment of this series comes in the shape of academic, community organiser and founder of the pressure group Blue Labour, Maurice Glasman, who believes Labour has fatally lost touch with the working-class. Interviewed in *Varsity* last week, he described modern Labour as a “predominantly middle-class party”. But Glasman’s analysis is fundamentally flawed. The class system he identifies is that of the past, irrelevant to the modern world and its transformed economy. Most dangerously of all, it may well prevent Labour from properly reckoning with the true issue: the risk that the nature of work itself might change so much we can no longer talk of a working class at all.

Glasman’s vision of the past is a romanticised one. While last week his harshest words were directed at New Labour, he has previously said that he thinks Labour became a middle-class party after 1945. Was the National Health Service not worth stuffing doctors’ mouths with gold, in the words of its founder Nye Bevan? The tradition Attlee sprung from is one which was crucial to the Labour Party from its inception: the

Fabian Society, made up of the middle-class intellectuals and philanthropists, was one of the organisations which founded the party in 1900.

Most important, though, is that Glasman’s working class doesn’t exist now. It is surely an impossible task for Labour to get back in touch with a homogenous blob of a working class when it isn’t present in the real world. The basis for the working-class culture Glasman idolises is dead, focused on industrial work which has long since left this country. The modern working class is more fragmented, more diverse, and concentrated in the large cities Glasman seems to innately mistrust. The Northern cities left behind in the wake of a changing nation were won over just last year by an anti-austerity Brexit campaign promising money for public services and courting nostalgia. Unfortunately for Glasman’s ideas, the Brexit campaign only won by combining that with anti-immigrant sentiment. This would be unsustainable for the modern Labour Party, precisely because the modern working class is made up of immigrants and ethnic minorities.

This working class is also now having to struggle with an entirely new set of challenges. The nature of work is changing in the face of the gig economy, as



Henry Coleman is a first year Historian at Christ’s

pioneered by companies like Deliveroo and Uber – so much so that the BBC’s Class Survey even suggested a new class, the precariat. These are people working unreliable, insecure jobs, jobs which would not have existed a hundred years ago. Glasman has attacked globalisation, but this feels a small part of the rest of his thinking – instead of new solutions, his alternative is simply a retreat to a isolationistic ‘utopia’. But, as the word ‘utopia’ comes from the Greek for ‘no place’, Glasman’s thoughts are reminiscent of nothing more than nineteenth-century utopians, whose visions of delightful agrarian economies on the rough model of the Garden of Eden became a cottage industry of themselves while the Industrial Revolution roared on around them.

It is perhaps ironic that it is the society created from that revolution which Glasman harks back to, even as a new upheaval seems to be happening. It is never easier to understand Glasman’s antipathy towards bureaucrats than with the jargon of a ‘fourth Industrial Revolution’, but their point is true; robots threaten to revolutionise the world of work, and any social democratic party needs a solution to that impending problem. Glasman’s ideas on the subject always seem to return to the vague

instruction of becoming more like Germany – a worthy goal, but not one Ed Miliband found particularly electorally successful. Getting in touch with the working class is important, but most important of all is getting in touch with what work is, not what it once was.

Glasman’s ideas pivot on the question of identity. For him, family, religion, and patriotism are not vague abstracts but the things which bind communities together. At the heart of his idolisation of the working class is his feeling that it was the guardian of community, and now it is not. David Goodhart, another Blue Labour thinker, has written about a divide between ‘anywheres’ – urban, middle-class intellectuals without a sense of community – and ‘somewheres’ – the rooted working-class. The critical problem with this conceptualisation is that people who felt a strong sense of attachment to community were actually more likely to vote Remain in the EU referendum – unlike Glasman, who backed Leave. It is hard to see just how Labour could correct for the decline in family and faith taking place in the West, but Blue Labour seems to think it can do so on the Tinkerbell principle: believing, in community and values and the working class as one homogenous lump, is enough. Doubting is not an option.

“The nature of work itself might change so much we can no longer talk of a working class at all”





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*Outside the Old Building*



# Vulture



***'I finally decided to nail  
my colours to the mast'***

***Reformation in King's Chapel***

***22-23***

**Art for an audience**  
Telly don Jamie Fox, 27

**Your top Christmas film**  
... actually? 28

**Gadji beri bimba...**  
Going Dada, 30

**Acting the Other**  
Where BME went wrong, 31

**Celebrating diversity**  
In Vogue again, literally, 32



# Rev Andrew Hammond: ‘The teaching

*Jesus loves me, too? From dancing on stage with drag queen Courtney Act to college welfare, Reverend [Andrew Hammond](#) chats to Anna Menin about how inclusive Christianity can be*

“I’m really sorry, I have terrible resting snob face”, the Reverend Andrew Hammond laughs as he poses for our photographer. This might not be something many people expect to hear from the Chaplain of King’s College, but Hammond is not one to be weighed down by people’s expectations.

This term, he has been putting Cambridge’s most recognisable building to new uses – hosting “radically inclusive” services in King’s Chapel in a departure from its usual fare of choral evensongs and televised carol broadcasts. “King’s is associated with such an amazingly dignified, formal, beautiful...kind of liturgy and worship”, he tells me, as we sit down for tea in his spacious flat in King’s, “and it has a very particular appeal, and students do come – but there wasn’t really anything else much on offer.”

This observation led to Critical Mass: three services held this term with the aim of creating “inclusive spaces” for LGBT+ Christians to “encounter God”. Hammond describes them as “very different” to typical King’s services: the congregation sits on rugs on the Chapel’s underheated floor, with “what you could naughtily call ‘spa music’ just doodling away in the background.”

“I wanted to do something that was very, very different, but still cohered with the general values of the place”, Hammond explains, “which very much are about welcome and inclusion and all the rest of it, but it’s very hard to articulate that in choral evensong.”

Did he feel as if there was an absence of explicit inclusivity in Cambridge Christianity? “I think that’s true actually, yeah.” Although he is “pretty sure” that most chaplains and deans here “would be pretty affirming”, he feels like now is the time for him to be “a little bit more vocal”.

How, then, does Hammond feel about the landscape of Christianity in Cambridge? “I’m slightly resistant to characterising it as liberal versus conservative”, he begins, before admitting that he does worry that “the sound that people hear of the Christian voice in this town or in this University” tends to be “rather puritanical.”

“I’ve been ordained for 10 years, but I’ve spoken freely in any context except in the pulpit about how I think the teaching should change, particularly on sexuality and gender identity. I finally decided to nail my colours to the mast at the beginning of this term.”

I ask about the sermon in question, in which he declared: “in the end, for me, it’s the quality of the love that matters between people, not the gender

of the lovers”. He beams when recounting the “quite extraordinary” response people had to it, with “people of all ages” going beyond “the normal ‘thank you, lovely service vicar’”, instead “seizing my arm and saying ‘thank you for saying that, it needed to be said’”.

But it is apparently still not something that can be said in a Cambridge pulpit without raising some eyebrows – he was visited by some members of the Inter-Collegiate Christian Union (CICCU) shortly afterwards “to have disputations”.

“It was done in a very friendly way, it was extremely constructive”, he says, smiling, but ultimately “we didn’t agree”. “They’re trying to save my soul, I think”, he chuckles. I ask how he feels about CICCU generally. The image they project tends to be of a relatively conservative Christianity – does he see that as an issue?

He says it “worries” him: “On the whole, yes, it’s a rather sort of conservative with a little ‘c’ and evangelical organisation. It would describe itself as very much Bible-based, as though other Christians weren’t. But, at the same time, every individual you’ll meet is as nice as pie. And that’s not a fake – they are nice, it’s just they’ve got some views that can give you the heeby-jeebies.”

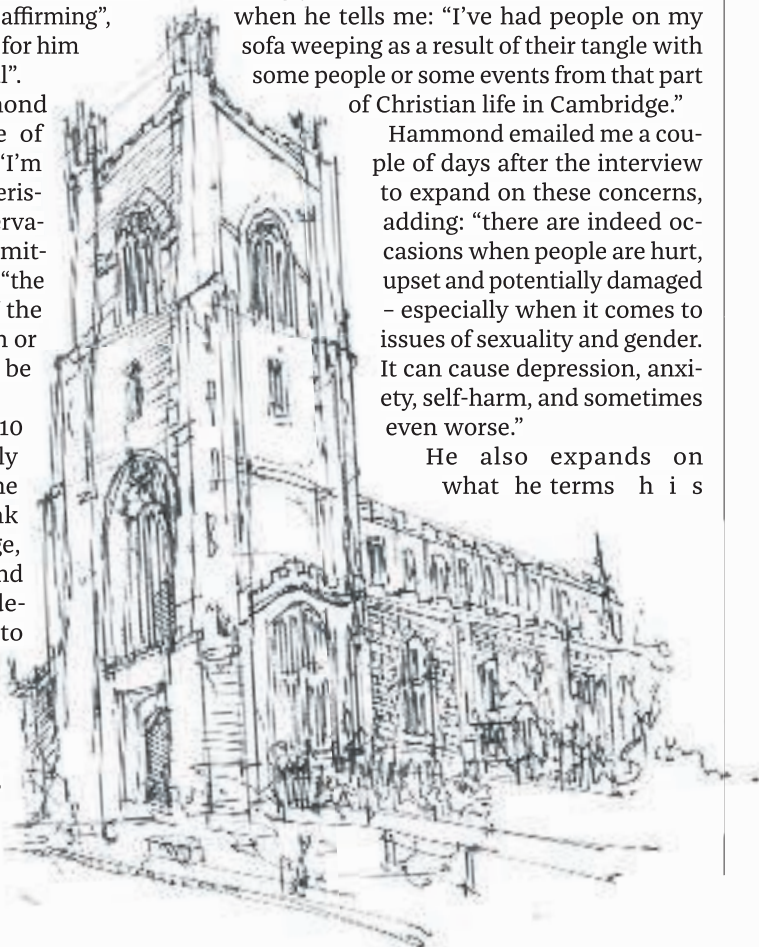
“There is the particular kind of theology and ethics that they have, which, are actually, for all that they look terribly numerous, are a minority position in the Church of England. The other thing, which is what really gets me, is the effect that it can all have on people who don’t feel like they fit this mould of a certain kind of human being.”

This is clearly something Hammond feels strongly about, and his frustration is evident when he tells me: “I’ve had people on my sofa weeping as a result of their tangle with some people or some events from that part of Christian life in Cambridge.”

Hammond emailed me a couple of days after the interview to expand on these concerns, adding: “there are indeed occasions when people are hurt, upset and potentially damaged – especially when it comes to issues of sexuality and gender. It can cause depression, anxiety, self-harm, and sometimes even worse.”

He also expands on what he terms his

“It’s the quality of the love that matters between people, not the gender of the lovers”



LOUIS ASHWORTH



# should change'

Illustrations by *Matthew Seccombe*



"more outspoken stance on inclusion and acceptance", and how it is not simply "giving another Christian point of view", but is "more about paying loving attention to other people and to the way they express their love and identity." The role of a chaplain in college welfare support is something that comes up a lot in our conversation, and I ask Hammond about what he considers a chaplain's pastoral responsibilities to be.

"It's easier for me because I'm single, which means I can live in the heart of college, and be accessible – but I think some chaplains don't want to be terribly accessible all the time." Should they be? "Well it's not for me to dictate, but I just get the sense that a lot of students are pretty fragile, and I don't meant that in a pejorative sense at all. They are ill-served by schools, who just stick them through this sausage machine of A-Level achievement, and then they're shot out into Cambridge".

"I just think that whatever is possible to provide by way of support is really really important", he adds. He makes sure that everyone has his mobile number – "In the first week, I had three calls in the middle of the night."

"It's all joined up: it's not like I do chapel sometimes, and chaplain other times. It's absolutely joined up. The kind of Christianity that I am wanting to talk about and to live out makes sense of that", he explains.

Eventually, and inevitably, we reach arguably the biggest moment of his Cambridge career so far – singing onstage with drag queen Courtney Act at last term's King's Affair. He recalls the night fondly as "huge fun": an organiser knew he was a "huge fan" of "RuPaul's Drag Race\*", so told him Act would be performing. "All I said was that in my wildest dreams, it would be great fun to get on stage and introduce her", but they had other plans.

At one point it was suggested the two do a duet of 'Physical', "which would have been an outrage", he hoots, "but I was so terrified of getting it wrong". In the end, it was decided he would sing a verse of 'Amazing Grace'. "I had my white summer cassock on, so I was dressed like the pope", he says, grinning, "and then she said: 'I think there's room for more than one man in a dress up here'."

"It was huge fun in itself, because I used to be an opera singer, so I like audiences and showing off", he enthuses. But as much as he had a wonderful time, it was the overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic student reaction that really touched him

Does he think it demonstrates the need for more spaces in Cambridge where things like that could happen, rather than it being a May Week one-off? "It depends what it would look like in other contexts, because if it becomes compulsory for Cambridge chaplains to sing with a drag queen... ", at which point he breaks off laughing.

"But I would hope it made anybody who's an overt ambassador for the Church and for the Christian faith in Cambridge colleges to think: 'well, what am I doing?'"

## Religion isn't going anywhere fast, no matter what atheists say



*Spiritual tendencies are more deep-rooted than the institutions that represent them, argues columnist **Sam Brown***

In the 2001 UK census over 390,000 respondents self-identified as followers of the Jedi faith. The Office for National Statistics revealed the figure in a press release entitled "390,000 Jedi there are". Ridiculous as this may seem, it sheds an important light on the gradual degradation of religion in the UK over recent decades. Faith, it seems, has been decentralised in society on a personal and institutional level – it is the subject of mockery and ironic Jedi derision. In a 2016 survey only 41% of the UK population defined themselves as Christian, while 53% indicated 'no religion'. While this cohesive force that keeps societies unified and anxieties about mortality at bay may be on the decline, it is wrong to predict the future death of religion based on these current trends. The relationship between faith, economics, and our own human psychologies is far too complex for such an assertion.

One clear factor that drives a country such as the UK towards atheism is economic growth and financial security. Existential stability follows on from wealth creation, a strong welfare net, and good educational services. As Phil Zuckerman, author of *Living the Secular Life*, argues: "Security in society seems to diminish religious belief." This theory goes both ways, however. Existential stability is by no means infallible and Western economic success in the future is far from certain. To therefore boldly predict the 'death of God' is to trust in a continuous upward trend in growth and happiness, something that 2017 has depressingly demonstrated to be unlikely.

Suffering can rekindle religious belief in an instant. The devastating 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand demonstrated this phenomenon clearly, with religious faith increasing among the earthquake-affected, despite an overall decline in religious faith elsewhere in the country. Taking into account the increasing effects of global warming and economic uncertainties in the 'developed' nations, the last nail in the spiritual coffin is clearly yet to be hammered down.

However, even if we lived in a utopia without earthquakes, disease, or poverty, religion would still retain some sort of presence in society, thanks to the 'god-shaped hole' that exists in our species' neuropsychology. 'Dual process theory' helps us to explain how this psychological 'need' for the spiritual develops. Described in simplified terms, it argues that humans have two basic forms of thought: system one and system two. System two is the narrative in our head, the rational and logical voice that

enables us to plan and think. System one, on the other hand, is innate and intuitive. It is this system that makes us repelled by gore and allows us to speak a native language without 'thinking'.

Crucially, system one also lends itself to religious belief and worship. It makes us instinctively primed to perceive life forces everywhere we go, whether or not they actually exist. This phenomenon, known as 'hypersensitive agency detection', had its uses in our more primal stages of evolution, when the sensing of concealed danger was of utmost importance. However, aside from the detection of snakes, sharks, and honey badgers, this 'agency detection' process also makes us vulnerable to inferring the existence of invisible beings – be them ghosts, fairies, or omniscient, benevolent deities.

In turn, this instinctive and primal system of thought encourages us to think dualistically, separating mind and body in a way that creates fertile ground for the development of religious frameworks of explanation. As Robert McCauley, director of the Centre for Mind, Brain and Culture, explains, religions are "by-products of our cognitive disposition... cultural arrangements that evolved to engage and exploit these natural capacities in humans."

Scientific progress is the opposition to system one and the non-rational ways of thinking it involves. However, science is a difficult cognitive pill to swallow, exposing harsh realities and claiming hypotheses that are often hard to demonstrate without a confusing cloud of jargon and statistics. We can, for instance, never fully comprehend the extent of the universe without stating large values and figures that, paradoxically, only work to emphasise the unknowability of the cosmos. Religion is, for many, an easier path to embrace – one which will provide comfort in its explanations and one which fits infinitely better with humans' evolutionary makeup. "Religion is something we don't even have to learn, because we already know it," McCauley argues.

While I do not personally believe in a god, I am not surprised or downhearted that existing evidence points towards the perpetuity of faith. Of course, the structures that we associate with faith – places of worship, faith schools, organised religions themselves – may die out with the onset of secularist humanism, yet spiritualism and superstition as modes of perceiving the world will endure long after these institutions of faith have dissipated, thanks to their grounding in human psychology ●



# All I want for Bridgemas...

## Robyn Schaffer, Fashion Editor

It's nearly Christmas, and with that comes the wonder that is the Christmas jumper. From the subtle and discreet to the loud and utterly horrendous, Christmas jumpers come in all modes and manners. This Christmas, I'd like to see something of a compromise – festive but wearable. In an ideal world, clashing colours and itchy fabrics would be out of sight along with slogans featuring mediocre puns. Colours such as dark greens, navies and burgundies keep to a wintery palette without being too in-your-face, while simple patterns keep things fun and interesting. It's time to do away with flashing lights, unnecessary amounts of sequins and glitter and unflattering styles that make us look like we've had a few too many mince pies.

## Devarshi Lodhia, Senior Sports Editor

By the time the 2018 World Cup rolls around it'll have been 52 years since Bobby Moore lifted the iconic Jules Rimet trophy at Wembley. Since then, bar semi-final appearances at Italia '90 and Euro '96, England's form at major international tournaments has been nothing short of

woeful. Embarrassing showings at the most recent World Cup and European Championships including an 0-0 draw with Costa Rica and *that* match against Iceland have done little to inspire confidence amongst even the most die-hard England fans.

Despite that, an unbeaten qualification campaign and a team full of youth and promise have me cautiously optimistic going into Russia. The influx of world-class coaches into the Premier League including Pep Guardiola, Mauricio Pochettino, and Jurgen Klopp means that English players, who were once seen as technically limited, especially when compared to their Brazilian, German, and Spanish counterparts, are now playing some of the most exciting, innovative football on the continent.

Under Pochettino at Spurs, Harry Kane has become one of the continent's most deadly strikers, while the likes of Dele Alli, Eric Dier, and Harry Winks have also proven themselves at the highest level, with Alli notably putting in a man of the match performance as Spurs dispatched Real Madrid 3-1 in the Champions League. Similarly, Pep Guardiola has overseen the development of Raheem Sterling, Kyle Walker and John Stones from 'promising youngsters' to genuine world-class talents. The major job for Gareth Southgate now is to ensure his players are allowed the opportunity to play football we know they're capable of.

Will 2018 be the year football finally comes home? We still believe.

## Lillian Crawford, Film & TV Editor

All I want for Bridgemas... it's time for the Jedi to end.

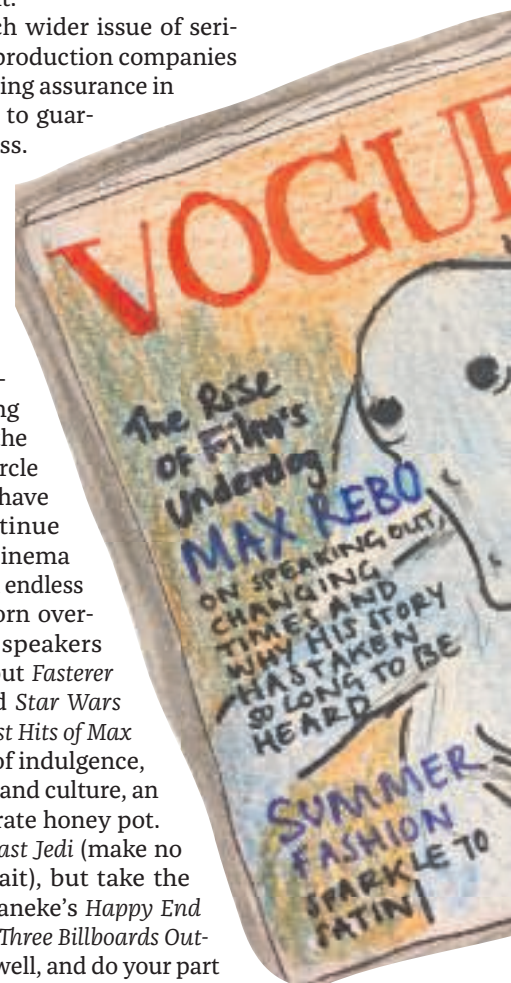
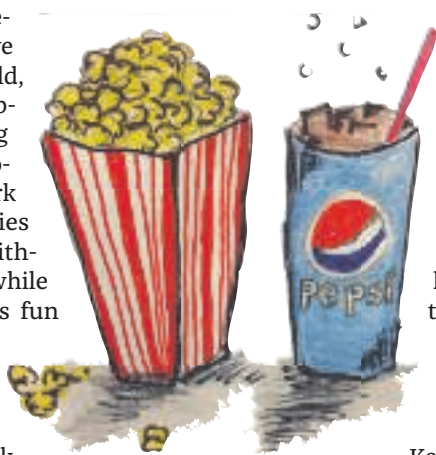
I love Star Wars as much as the next nerd, and have done as long as I can remember. The originals have endless appeal, and the first two films will no doubt remain amongst the finest works of science fiction ever put to celluloid for years to come. I would even venture so far to say that the prequels are, with a few obvious defects, excellent, especially the stunning *Revenge of the Sith*, and my excitement could barely be contained for the release of *The Force Awakens* two years ago. But at what point does Lucasfilm say enough is enough and leave it as it is, take the money and invest in something bold, something new?

To fans of the saga, the prospect of never going the length of a year without a new entry in the series is tantalising, and yet there is magic in the uniqueness of cinema, of the originality of sharing tales as of yet untold to the world. Fans waited 38 years to see Han, Leia, and Luke again – that level of anticipation can surely be the result of time, allowing it to embed itself so deep in popular culture everyone, young and old, went to see it. Now viewers have lost this patience, with Netflix and other streaming platforms even denying television the build-up of a week between episodes. In the age of the binge-watch, perhaps even a year will seem too long a wait for audiences anticipat-

ing the next instalment.

It is a part of a much wider issue of serialisation in film, with production companies relying on money-making assurance in established franchises to guarantee box-office success. The blame then has to be placed then on the most self-defeating, hypocritical criminals of all – the pirates, robbing the wider community of art in exchange for blockbusters that make going to the cinema worth the entry fee. The vicious circle this band of low-lives have established will continue to spiral, until every cinema has reclining sofas with endless fizzy drinks and popcorn overflowing, gargantuan speakers and screens blasting out *Fasterer and Furiouser* 47 and *Star Wars Episode LXXXI.v: The Lost Hits of Max Rebo*. It will be a shell of indulgence, devoid of aestheticism and culture, an ever-expanding corporate honey pot.

So, go and see *The Last Jedi* (make no mistake – I cannot wait), but take the time to see Michael Haneke's *Happy End* or Martin McDonagh's *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* as well, and do your part





What do the Varsity editorial team wish for Bridgemas? Forget chocolates and jewellery, we want World Cup glory and elucidation on epigenetic inheritance. Oh, and tasteful Christmas jumpers

to save the cinema we all know and love. My Bridgemas wish is perhaps more that cinema becomes accessible again, an art for everyone rather than an occasional treat, a return to its roots. What a fantasy that would be!

**Sian Bradshaw, Senior Theatre Editor**

All I want for Christmas is good old-fashioned panto. While it might not be everybody's cup of eggnog, pantomime is undeniably a British institution, and one that revels and carouses in its own silliness, evolving with the times to ensure its own survival. Say what you will, but its roots are a little bit more refined than some would have it: panto has a long theatrical history in Western culture, dating back to classical theatre. It developed partly from the 16th-century *commedia dell'arte* tradition of Italy, as well as other European and British stage traditions, such as 17th-century masques and music hall. So you might think twice next time you raise an eyebrow at the slapstick – McKellen has even tried his hand at it in a 2004 production of *Aladdin*!

Ultimately, pantomime is the first taste of theatre for many individuals, and an art form that brings such gurgling pleasure when done well will always remain relevant. It fosters a particularly unique relationship with the audience: on a good night at the panto, performers and audience are locked in a tight embrace and there is a genuine and unbreakable bond between the stage and the members of the auditorium – a bond that a lot of other theatre productions might learn a great deal from. So when you next hear somebody bemoaning its fervent use of double entendre, or cries of 'He's behind you!', just remember that the pantomime is full of mischief-making and subversion, festival, carnival – a chaotic world turned topsy-turvy, albeit one that marks a welcome departure from the sobriety of everyday life.

**Jake Cornwall Scoones, Science Editor**

This Bridgemas, I would like a proper elucidation of epigenetic inheritance. Epigenetic inheritance is the transmission of information that is not encoded in the genome from parents to their children. This information is encoded in the form of chemical tags that inform the packaging of DNA and hence the relative expression of different genes.

Most of these tags are reset with each new generation, apart from selected loci called imprinted regions. Humans are 99.9% genetically similar to each other, yet we vary dramatically: from differences in eye and skin colour, to differences in facial structure or in personality. Understanding which areas of the genome display this inher-

ance, how widespread the phenomenon is, and the mechanisms by which it operates could hopefully help us understand some of this variation in form, which may be of particular use in terms of predicting the risks of and determining interventions for non-communicable diseases.

**Perdi Higgs, Music Editor**

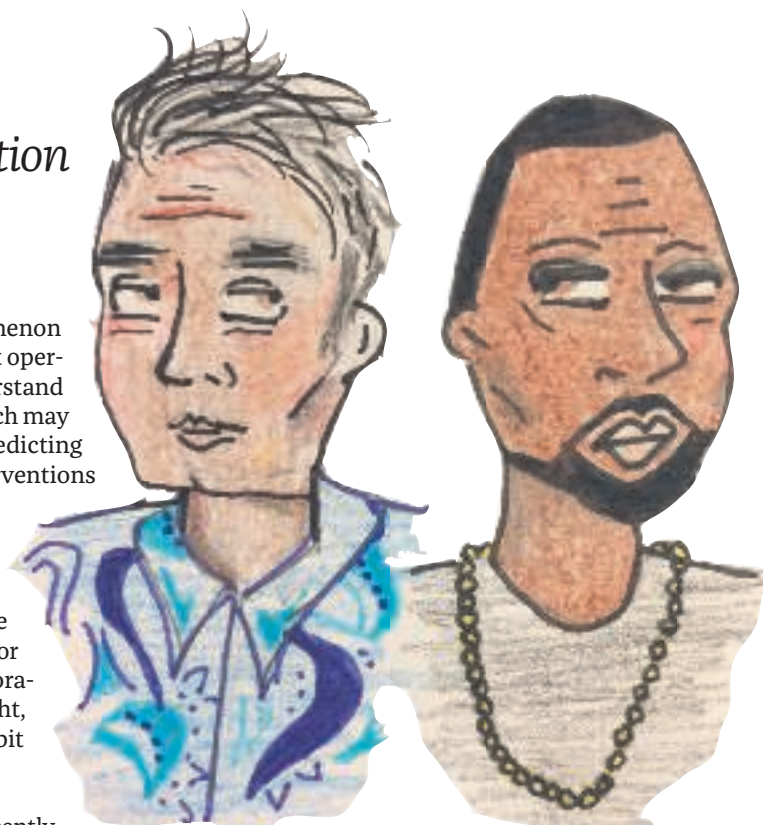
Here comes the time of year that Christmas wishes really can come true, so this year, I will be wishing for some truly iconic potential collaborations. With no Oasis reunion in sight, these pairings would add a little bit of spice to the end of 2017.

*Morrissey and Lana Del Rey*

Satirically or not, Del Rey was recently dubbed by *Pitchfork* the "US version of Morrissey", and there is something to be said about a combination of these two enticing drawlers. A collaboration between the two artists would unite sad boy and sad girl aesthetics from both sides of the Atlantic, and hopefully, Del Rey could teach Morrissey vital skills of knowing when not to share your opinions publicly.

*Kanye West and the cast of Hamilton*

2018 will usher in the arrival of the production of *Hamilton* to the West End – just in time for a slight revamp. Sure, Lin-Manuel Miranda may have mastered storytelling via the medium of rap, but have you considered being taught about the founding fathers through Kanye's dulcet tones? History has never sounded so angsty.



Manye... Korrisey...

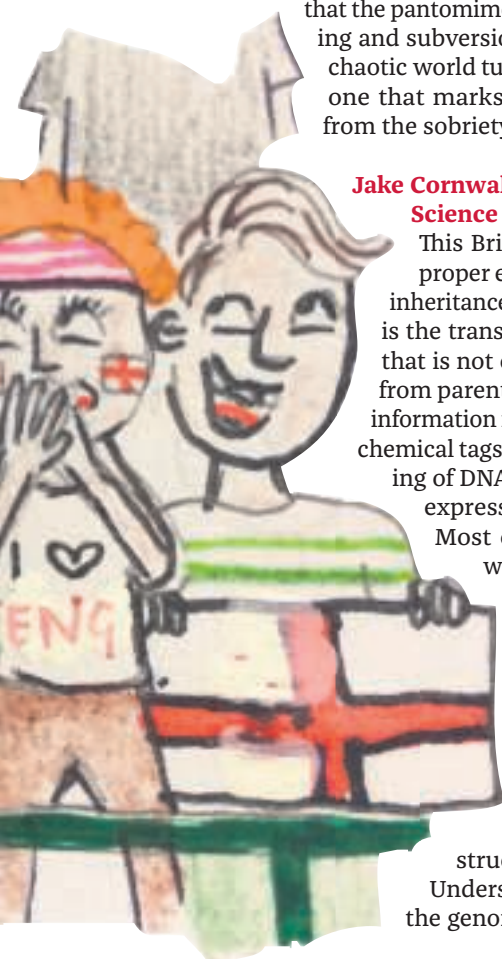
**Elizabeth Howcroft and Patrick Wernham, Editors**

Our Thursday evenings back. We certainly won't miss that all-too-common feeling of a seeing a great event on Facebook, making plans, asking friends if they want to go... before realising that it's on a Thursday evening. We might miss those friendly phone calls from the printers asking us where the pages are, though.

Netflix and Kill?  
(cinema)



Illustrations by  
**Lara Erritt**





# What's on

By **Georgie Kemsley-Pein**  
Illustrations by **Amy Teh**

The Cambridge Russian-Speaking Society collaborates with Russian Film Week in London this week, providing students and locals with the opportunity to view productions by Russian film directors, featuring a gamut of genres. Most of the films will be shown for the first time outside Russia. Check out **www.camruss.com** for information.

**Russian Film Week**  
**Various locations**  
**21-26 November**

**KCMS Michaelmas Concert**  
**King's College Chapel**  
**27 November, 8:30-10pm**

Head over to King's College Chapel this Monday for an evening of music, featuring performances of pieces by Poulenc, Ballance and Stravinsky. Tickets will be available on the door.



The evening consists of a series of nine short monologues, poems and performances which relate to the work of Dame Elizabeth Frink – the current exhibitor at the Heong. Her sculpture 'In Memoriam' honours those who have been victimised on the basis of their beliefs, and the texts performed are taken from individuals who have endured extreme tribulations, such as human rights activists and prisoners of conscience. The event is free of charge.

**Downing Dramatic Society presents:**  
**'In Memoriam: Arts After Dark'**  
**The Heong Gallery**  
**29 November, 6-7pm**

## Finnish Independence: When Tove met Tom

**Anna Hollingsworth** takes a look at her homeland's cultural icons, and their unexpected similarities

MAX PIXEL

There was a time when all the cards I posted from home in Finland were carried off by Moomin stamps: from Moominpappa typing up his memoirs to Snorkmaiden fixing her fringe, I felt like my mail carried an extra dose of cuteness and goodwill to the world. But one day, a Finnish card appeared in my pigeonhole with a different kind of aesthetic: in the top right corner, a face with a thick moustache and a strong jawline peered at me from between a man's muscular thighs, partly masked by his bottom – and a very pert one at that.

That was in 2014, and the Finnish Post had just launched a set of stamps celebrating the art of Tom of Finland, to accompany those with Tove Jansson's Moomin sketches, long

established as a national symbol. Now, three years later, Finland is celebrating its 100th anniversary of independence with an increased attention to its national brand abroad. Where in the past the focus was on the once-glorious Nokia phones, minimalist Nordic design, education, and the recurring BBC piece on baby boxes and social welfare, now most international media attention goes to the unlikely pair of Tom and Tove.

Tom of Finland was the pen-name of Touko Laaksonen, the Finnish artist who revolutionised the homoerotic aesthetic of the second half of the 20th century and served as the inspiration for the likes of Freddie Mercury and the Village People. Advertising agency illustrator by day, freelance artist at night, Laaksonen introduced sailors, bikers, lum-

berjacks and policemen into the gay fantasy canon. Much of his initial inspiration drew on his time in the army during the Second World War, where there was no shortage of men in uniforms; although deeply disgusted by the Nazi ideology, Laaksonen later admitted to ranking the Germans as by far the sexiest in the trenches.

It's not hard to see these origins reflected in his work: just as the leather clothing of the characters is bulging with muscle and male anatomy, the sketches bulge with a macho masculinity that had been largely absent from homoerotic art until then. It's perky bums galore, whips and batons, manly men getting at it while rafting on logs, on breaks from construction work, or while a policeman stops a biker for inspection – in all senses of the word.

It was the same war – albeit not as much in the way of uniforms – that drove Jansson to write and illustrate the first Moomin book, *The Moomins and the Great Flood*. She felt the need to write something where everything would have a happy ending (not in the Tom of Finland sense of the word, mind you): in the novel, Moominpappa has gone missing, and his family – a tribe of large-snouted, round, hippo-like characters – go on an adventure to find him and encounter loss, sorrow and danger on the way, reflecting the war-time atmosphere, but in the end find hope of a brighter future. It was also the start of Jansson's personal happy ending.

But there is more of a link between the butch

bikers and tender trolls than their origins in war – after all, which artist living through a war would not be affected by it? Both Jansson and Laaksonen encoded their anti-authority stances in their art. Given that homosexuality was decriminalised in Finland only in 1971, it is hardly surprising that neither Laaksonen nor his sketches were out loud and proud. After gaining popularity in *Physique Pictorial*, an American gay proto-porn magazine, his work was initially spread through an underground network of fans on both sides of the Atlantic. The sketches not only defied authority by virtue of the illegality of their subject matter, the uniform-rife imagery provided a hotbed for ridiculing the authority that wore it. A recurring theme in the sketches is how to, quite literally, fuck the police.

Later, Laaksonen's work would feature in exhibitions in the US, but his own homosexuality remained a secret to even his family, apart from his sister, who actively discouraged him from coming out. His alter ego as Tom of Finland was revealed only after his death in 1991. In an interview, his nephew reveals how they knew that Uncle Touko spent his winters in California drawing calendars – but no one thought to ask what kinds of calendars they were.

While Tom of Finland isn't particularly subtle about erecting its rebellion, Jansson incorporated her own defiance into the Moomins in more hidden ways. Nevertheless, she, too, risked breaking the law with references to gay relationships. Thingummy and Bob, timid



# Arts

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[varsity.co.uk/arts](http://varsity.co.uk/arts)

## Interview: Dr James Fox

**Peter Chappell** talks to Caius fellow turned TV art historian James Fox about the difference between academia and entertainment



TWITTER: @THEARTSHOW

How James Fox got into television sounds like the opening of a spy thriller. “I got an email out of the blue from the commissioning editor for Arts at the BBC” he says, with an air of feigned bemusement. “He just wrote, ‘Hi James, hope all’s well, would you like to come in for a meeting at the BBC?’ I wrote back saying ‘sure’, not knowing what this was about. So I went for the meeting, all the way to White City. I met with Mark; ‘Well you know why you’re here?’. ‘No, I have no idea,’ I replied. ‘Your students wrote a letter to me about a year ago,’ said Mark, ‘and it’s only just come to my attention. They said you might be good on television.’”

The students’ suspicions proved correct. The thirty-something Cambridge art historian (or, in the words of Mark, a “young, arts person”) and Caius fellow has gone on to write and present popular arts programmes including

*A History of Art in Three Colours*, *Bright Lights*, *Brilliant Minds*, and most recently *The Art of Japanese Life*. I paid him a visit at his flat near Sidgewick Avenue in torrid mid-July, only too eager to escape the open day I was helping with at Downing and the pressing questions from nosy mothers. I was wearing a hot pink ‘How Can I Help?’ t-shirt. I sat down on his antique couch, feeling conspicuous.

How can living be an art form? This knotty question occupies Fox’s work in Japan. “That distinction between what is Art with a capital ‘A’ and what is just other aspects of culture and life doesn’t really exist at all. Generally in my work I like to think of art in a broader domain, something which cultures do to make meaning of their lives, to entertain themselves, to decorate their environments.”

His apartment is certainly testament to his belief in the beauty of the domestic; an an-

tique piano inhabits a corner of the parquet floor, twentieth-century oil paintings are dappled with sunlight from the garden. He continues: “When you go to Japan, you see there is artfulness and aesthetic considerations in all kinds of activity. And there is just as much thought put into things we wouldn’t typically think of, like designing a pen for instance, as there would be in painting a picture.”

Minimalism, restraint, exotic elegance. These Western labels typify our understanding of Japanese art. Fox says this isn’t quite the whole picture: “When you travel around Japan, you don’t see much of this myth of Japan; lots of Japan is really quite ugly. Cities are really ugly, there’s not much urban planning, there are exposed cables everywhere, everything is a big old mess.”

In the programme, Fox talks to Daido Moriyama, a photographer who has documented post-war challenges to traditional Japanese culture. Many stereotypes about Japanese art still exist: “It’s a very challenging thing to reconcile the messiness of so much of Japanese life, and yet the obsession with attention to detail and the tidiness of other parts of Japanese life.”

At the same time, Fox is aware of his BBC audience: “You want to inspire viewers, you want viewers to see the beautiful things, you want to satisfy viewer expectations. A lot of viewers jump to a programme like that, thinking ‘here we go, ikebana, beautiful interiors’ but you have to also just nudge them beyond what those expectations might be.”

Many hard-up academics dream of making it as a ‘telly-don’, but not all can write and perform in the distinct registers demanded for TV and for academia. A presenting role requires clarity, charisma and an unpretentious turn of phrase. “It’s a challenge to do well,” Fox admits. “When I’m writing academic papers, I’m writing for small readerships. They’re

a captive audience.” It’s a different kettle of fish with TV: “You are constantly fighting a battle against other television programmes which are on at the same time, you are fighting against indifference, against the fact a lot of people would switch on a programme, and it’s so easy for them to switch over. In a lecture hall it’s quite difficult to walk out if you’re bored after a minute!”

Fox’s apparent commitment to the suit (black, skinny) has become a trademark of his programmes. Whether it’s the North African desert, Venice, or New York, the uniform is the same. In Japan this time around, it looked very hot. “I don’t want to wear the suit! I fight having to wear the suit” he laughs, “I started wearing it five years ago for a programme called *A History of Art in Five Colours*, where we were doing a sequence at NASA in Texas. So I had to go into Mission Control, and I was meant to walk around intercut with archive footage from the 60s. The archive footage was almost entirely men wearing black suits with thin black ties. It was the first thing we shot, and the director said ‘why don’t you wear it for that, and it really would be very clever for us to visually rhyme the two things!’ The decision stuck.

The interview ended with me wondering which life Fox preferred, the presenter or the art historian. Does he enjoy a bit of fame? “A small amount. I’ve got some friends who were with me at Cambridge who are really famous. Eddie Redmayne did *History of Art* with me”. “Who’s he?”, I joke. “A big star” he says, getting up from his chair. “Also Dan Stevens, from *Downton Abbey*. My squash partner is Simon Bird, who was in *The Inbetweeners*. We play squash pretty much every day if we can, and he can’t walk 20 metres without someone asking him for an autograph!” Maybe Fox should have written sitcoms instead? “Maybe. Maybe that’s what I should have done” ●

little creatures holding hands and speaking a language undecipherable to others, are based on Jansson herself and her former partner, Vivica Bandler. With them, they carry a red ruby tucked away in a suitcase: a powerful metaphor for forbidden love. The lighthouse keeper Too-ticky, on the other hand, is a portrait of Jansson’s later partner for life, Tuutikki Pietilä. Beyond portraying her own forbidden relationships, Jansson was also a critic of war: *Comet in Moominland*, where the inhabitants of Moomin Valley flee their homes to escape a fast-approaching comet, serves as an allegory for the atom bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Ultimately, though, as much as Laaksonen and Jansson rejected authority, their work is equally about advocating tolerance and inclusiveness. The Tom of Finland sketches mainstreamed ideas of sexuality and masculinity that until then had been very much outré, and served as a platform for many gay men in the 60s and 70s to feel more comfortable with them. Laaksonen also advocated interracial relationships, at the time still as condemned as same-sex ones. In his work, men of all skin colours are equal, with all men equally desirable and fetishised, and no tops or bottoms based on race.

Jansson, in turn, advocated for tolerance from a feminist perspective. The Groak

– a terrifying being with a chilly aura and who freezes everything under her feet – would traditionally be cast as a male character, while the outspoken Little My has become a synonym for feminism. Beyond strong women, there is also an ethos of accepting anyone and everyone in more general: in *The Invisible Child*, Ninni, a human girl, is invisible because of past traumas – an allegory for children in children’s homes – but becomes visible after the Moomin family takes her under their wings. Even the Groak is not judged despite her freezing Moominmamma’s precious flowers: rather, the Moomins treat her with respect, feeling mainly sadness for the creature’s lonely existence.

It is not difficult to see why the Moomins and Tom of Finland’s men are gathering such a following today, even if they are not the most obvious choice for national branding. The world is calling for tolerance and rebellion more than ever, and that is why art questioning authority and advocating equality is bound to spark an interest, whether in the form of trolls or leather-clad policemen.

There is something, literally, cheeky and oddly satisfying about licking a man’s bum on a stamp, sticking it to an envelope and posting it to anti-gay Russia. Through their work, Tove and Tom allow us to go to arms still today ●



WIKIPEDIA: KATSUTOSHI SEKI

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# Film & TV

## Christmas film survey: Oh, piss it! It's *Love Actually*

**Lillian Crawford** puts aside her critical spectacles and considers this film from a more festive angle

The last time we asked Cambridge students to choose a favourite film, they surprised us with *The Empire Strikes Back*, the appeal of adventure stories and pure

escapism too much for them to resist. Having counted up the votes in our Christmas survey, an even greater shock took the lead early on, and had an outright victory - *Love Actually*. Why on earth would they choose that? One student wrote that they appreciate "its pure ridiculousness". One might wonder if it could have been better put.

Indeed, perhaps the result is less bizarre considering that we asked for your "favourite" film, rather than "the best", which may have seen the second-place finisher *Die Hard* win the contest. If any tenuous connection be-

tween the two is to be observed, it is in Alan Rickman, whose Hans Gruber makes Ernst Stavro Blofeld look like a well-groomed Persian cat. The midlife crisis his character goes through in *Love Actually*, however, possibly speaks more directly to its intended audience, and the resulting sorrow experienced by his wife, stirring played by Emma Thompson, certainly stands out as the most remarkable strand in the film. No wonder its soundtrack proved a popular choice in the survey, when Joni Mitchell's 'Both Sides Now' carries with it such tender heartbreak.

While those that chose the film would clearly disagree, it must be noted that, critically speaking, *Love Actually* is not a very good film, possibly three stars at best. The threads are so confused and knotted that when the characters appear again at the end of the film, some of them have already been forgotten (Kris Marshall's Colin stands out as an unnecessary time-filler). Colin Firth's story feels more Stephen King than Richard Curtis, and the absurdity of its conclusion to the sound of Craig Armstrong's nauseatingly sentimental score throbbing in the background is nothing short of painful ("I hate Uncle Jamie!").

At times Curtis pushes this to excruciating extremes, with Andrew Lincoln undoubtedly stealing the worst performance award. His scenes alongside the frustratingly naïve Keira Knightley, with her "terrible taste in pie", feel out of place and overlong, and Lincoln's fit-like physical responses to the situation drive bouts of unintentional laughter. Some of the respondents claimed repeated viewing never allows the humour of the film to diminish, and yet the reuse of gags within the film itself, like "Radio Watford", stifle much of the overdone, pretentious dialogue from being amusing even upon the first watch.

Admittedly, this is rather unfair, and there are times when the film shows signs of

becoming a solid work of romantic comedy. Rowan Atkinson's gift-wrapping scene is a fine example of physical comedy, played excellently next to Rickman's exasperation ("What else can there be? You gonna dip it in yoghurt? Cover it with chocolate buttons?"). There is similarly lots of seasonal cheer to be enjoyed, and it may be the giant Christmas trees and musical numbers that cause audiences to continue to put it on over the festive period. With the starry cast looking down at them, it is almost as though the crème-de-la-crème of British acting talent have popped round for a mince pie and a cup of cocoa.

Thankfully, the soundtrack failed to win out in the second category, with the chilling melodies of Danny Elfman's *The Nightmare Before Christmas* taking the top spot. The film itself, directed by Henry Selick, is a visual wonder of stop-motion animation, although it is probably the songs that have given it cinematic immortality. Perhaps the Hallowe'en connection prevents it from taking the film prize as well, for while the uplifting 'What's This?' is certainly sufficient in itself to get one in a Christmassy mood, the remainder have a delectably dark tone. It might only be rivalled by Elfman's score for Tim Burton's twisted masterpiece, *Edward Scissorhands*, the 'Ice Dance' theme causing one to shiver at the enticing mystery blowing through the frosty night.

This leads us to the final question of the survey, and of course, the most highly anticipated film of the vacation is *Star Wars Episode VIII: The Last Jedi*. Unlike the main winner, such an obvious choice was this that one respondent simply justified their vote with "See title of film", and it is sure to be a magnificent instalment in the franchise.

It would seem that there are many as-of-yet uninitiated members of the *Star Wars* cult looking forward to seeing the latest film, with a hopeful viewer saying they have "heard good things about the franchise in general". Yes, very good things indeed, although there are also 'good things' to be said of Michael Haneke and Martin McDonagh, for example, whose *Happy End* and *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* are sure to be some of the holiday's finest films, although anything set closer than a galaxy far, far away might be somewhat overshadowed. Whatever you choose to see over Christmas, do get in touch about reviews and features as online content will continue over the vacation.

Whether you enjoy cheesy flicks like *Love Actually* or *The Holiday*, adrenaline-fuelled action as in *Die Hard*, or prefer the classic nostalgia of *It's a Wonderful Life* or *Miracle on 34th Street*, remember that cinema has a particularly powerful emotional effect at this time of year.

Regardless of merit, the films we watch in the festive period become intertwined with feelings of warmth and family spirit, of celebration and comfort, that transcend the cinematic elements of the films themselves. Maybe there is no other time where the magic of the silver screen is more truly felt than around a roaring yuletide fire. From all of us at Varsity, we wish you a very merry Christmas indeed, and many more fond adventures through Tinseltown ●



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BUENA VISTA PICTURES



# Indefensible atrocities in *Justice League*

**Toby Saer** attempts to find something worthy of praise in the latest DC blockbuster, and fails

Dir. Zack Snyder  
In cinemas now

★

According to rumour, if a teacher at my old school could not find anything positive to say in a report, they were told to resort to purely factual statements about the student: “Ollie regularly attends class”, “Georgia often listens as I talk”, “John owns a pen”.

*Justice League* is a movie. It was released in 2017. It stars Ben Affleck, Gal Gadot, and other actors. Its writers (presumably) own a pen.

*Justice League* comes in just where *The Avengers* did for Marvel: after several smaller films introducing (or teasing) our heroes, a potentially world-ending threat arrives and all the superheroes from the previous films (plus a few more) must team up to stop it. Here ends the narrative, not for fear of spoilers, but because to talk any more about it would imply a logic and coherence which does not exist in the film.

Needless to say, just like *The Avengers*, there is team infighting and disagreements before they come together in the end to defeat the baddie. And ‘baddie’ really is the correct term here, for the character is far too cartoonish to

deserve to be called a ‘villain’.

Nowhere is the sheer lack of imagination in this film more present than in the music choices. The opening credits (a montage of trademark Zack Snyder slow-motion shots) feature a cover of Leonard Cohen’s *Everybody Knows*, and over the end credits plays a fantastically on-the-nose choice of a cover of *Come Together* by The Beatles. There is perhaps not a more perfect metaphor for the film as a whole than the decision to take two of the most universally lauded artists of all time and do exactly what they did, but worse.

There is not a single original thought in the movie – the plot, character, visuals and dialogue are all taken from better films. The script was almost certainly constructed by feeding every film cliché into a computer and plucking out a random selection of them.

It feels very strange to be criticising even the visual effects of a \$300m blockbuster, but so much of it looks like a video game that one wants to search around the cinema for an Xbox controller to take the reins and force them to make better decisions. This is not to mention the digital removal in post-production of the moustache of one of the characters, which leaves his face looking slightly uncanny and a little creepy. This is not helped by a performance so bafflingly wooden that it makes Keanu Reeves look like Daniel Day-Lewis.

The script, allegedly much rewritten for Joss Whedon’s reshoots, strives for the witty repartee of the Marvel films, but never came close to eliciting more than a polite titter from the audience. The only exception was one line at the very climax of the film, which caused hysterics at the deadpan way this

horrible piece of writing was delivered.

I have three siblings, and my mother regu-

larly said to us when we were younger, “If you don’t have anything nice to say, don’t say anything at all”. While generally a good policy, I have had to suspend its use for the purposes of this review. I return to it now ●



UNIVERSAL PICTURES

# Rejoicing that *Film Stars Don't Die in Liverpool*

**Rachel Tsang** delights in the wild and charming world of this biopic

Dir. Paul McGuigan  
In cinemas now

★★★★

To peer behind the curtain of stardom has always held a doubled-edged allure. The more beguiled we are by the star persona, the more we wish to corroborate that the star really ‘is’ what he or she appears to be. Throughout much of its runtime, *Film Stars Don't Die in Liverpool* seems devoted to fulfilling this deep-rooted need. Gloria Grahame, a fading actress of classical Hollywood, is represented in a way that reflects both our memories and our imagination.



SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

By uncannily evoking Grahame’s trademark flirty patter, Annette Bening recalls the seductive tenor in which all her characters spoke; by flitting effortlessly between easy-going charm, neurotic

vanity, and fits of theatrical rage, she seems to embody all we associate with the ‘ageing Hollywood actress’ type.

Couple this with the rear projection for the scenes in New York and California – where much of the tragic romance between Gloria and the Liverpoolian actor Peter (Jamie Bell) unfold – and one has a film that

looks and feels comfortably superficial. There is a striking beauty to both the hazy skyline of New York and the sun-kissed highways of California, but it is a beauty that does not ring quite true.

Yet this may have precisely been director Paul McGuigan’s intention. The hazy charm of these scenes, as well as evoking the rose-coloured realm of memory, hark back to the soft-lensed, gauzy aesthetic of Gloria Grahame’s past – the black-and-white movies of the Golden Age.

A stunning structural twist in the final act of the film forces us to reinterpret the world – a little too beautiful and a little too stark – that has thus far been created. The story has been told up to this point from the perspective of Peter, whom we have seen bewitched by this amusing, delightful woman from the first moment she invites him in for drinks and a disco hustle. We see him completely in love, and then completely heartbroken when their affair ends abruptly.

But then we turn to her: cinematically retracing our steps, we replay one crucial scene that had earlier unfolded, except this time, through the eyes of Gloria. For the first time, her every line, every wrinkle, every fragility is seen and magnified. She stands boldly not as Peter’s idealised vision but as who she is, and yet, paradoxically, as the consummate

disciple of the craft to which she has devoted her life.

Through classical visual cues, and through the repeated references to stage and screen, we realise that Gloria is an actress above all. The revelation of Gloria’s refusal of chemotherapy, arising in part out of vanity, in part out of the fear of revealing her true condition to her family, and her colleagues, is poignantly telling.

Here is a woman defined by both the distance she maintains from others, and a love for her vocation – a vocation, moreover, which doubtlessly facilitated this distance. The enactment of this struggle, and, crucially, the transcendence of it through the enormous love in which she is received by both Peter and his family, is what makes this film a truly memorable work ●



MANE SANCHEZ



# Music

## Going Dada?



**Thea Sands** explores the musical interpretations of the Dadaist movement, which combined the primitive with the highly intricate

HEARTFIELD

HAUSMANN

“G adji beri bimba glandridi laula lonni cadori...” slid from Hugo Ball’s subconscious. “I have invented a new series of verses, verses without words... sound poems...” And with these sound poems, Dada pierced music. Reason: rejected. Logic: damned. Dadaists were inspired by nonsense and irrationality. In the first decades of the 20th century, Italian Futurists smashed full steam ahead into the now, while Cubists dismantled natural form itself. But it was on the stage of Zürich’s Cabaret Voltaire that nonsense seized the public by the throat and forced music into the mad babble of sound poetry.

Author of the 1916 Dada Manifesto and founder of the Cabaret Voltaire, Ball declared that its aim was “to remind the world that there are people of independent minds – beyond war and nationalism...” The Cabaret Voltaire was a centre for artists and writers to experiment in performances of spoken word, dance and music. Raucous soirées consumed the night. Chaotic, confusing and brutal, they reacted against cultural and intellectual conformity in art and society after the devastation of World War I.

The anchor of the arts cracked off its ship and was lost to the all-consuming ocean: art became unstuck. Music abandoned tonality, Picasso’s Cubism mangled the human form and Dada smashed conformity, rules and regulations, picking apart the polystyrene walls that separated art into an autonomous domain. Processes using non-artistic materials expanded into an all-encompassing ‘functional anarchism’, as Jed Rasula calls it. The anarchists and nihilists broke down definition, dragged art-making and music-making off the umpire’s shackled pedestal and turned it into senseless art and senseless music for a senseless war-torn world.

Emanating from the Futurists’ manifesto *Art of Noises* (1913), Richard Huelsenbeck described Dadaist music in his 1920 history of Dada: “Dada music was bruitist, enamoured of raw sound, and could consist in simultaneous chanting of nonsense syllables or shouts... Dada ‘loves the noises of the Métro.’” This self-implosion of music into ‘non-music’ etched into experimental composition. Edgard Varèse’s ‘liberation of sound’ merged with the absurdist art of Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia. ‘Sound makers’ shook up Varèse’s music with whistles, rattles and sirens reflect-

ing sounds of the everyday. Marcel Duchamp’s self-proclaimed ‘readymades’ – a signed urinal (*Fountain* 1917), *A Bicycle Wheel* (1913) – echoed Varèse’s noises of the everyday, ridding art of subjectivity. American composer George Antheil furthered this mechanical ideology in his *Ballet Mécanique* of 1923, written for percussion and non-musical mechanical objects, effectively ‘readymades’, indifferent with no aesthetic emotion.

Dadaists developed new artistic techniques and effects. Pierre Schaeffer’s *Musique Concrète* adopted these same every-

day, ordinary soundscapes, using fragments that already existed in reality, creating not just music but ‘sound objects’.

John Cage’s *Living Room Music* (1940) furthered this. Scored for performers playing household objects, furniture and parts of the room’s architecture, it framed the ordinarily unnoticed everyday as art.

Futurist Antonio Russolo’s 1921 composition *Corale and Serenata* sounds like a traditional march but is filled with roaring that shadows orchestration, like a huge industrial engine. Ball’s 1916 *Karawane* follows only a trio of chanting vocalists growing louder in unison. Tristan Tzara’s *L’amiral cherche une maison à louer* of 1916 exuded exuberant comedy with whizzing, banging sound effects.

Erik Satie collaborated with Picasso on productions like the ballet *Parade* (1916-17) which

was a parody of itself. Satie used sound collages – an orchestral suite with passages for piano and siren – to confuse. These effects of collage, cut-ups, photomontage, readymades and performance art formed the basis for Dadaist reaction. Similar followed in Dadaist sound poetry which reimaged sound, introduced extinct languages, and noise. According to Tristan Tzara, to make a Dadaist poem one is instructed to:

“1. Take a newspaper and scissors. 2. Choose an article of the length you want to make your poem. 3. Cut out the article. 4. Carefully cut out each of the words that makes up this article and put them all in a bag. 5. Shake gently. 6. Take out each cutting one after the other. 7. Copy conscientiously in the order in which they left the bag. 8. The poem will resemble you.”

It’s all up to chance. These poems were divided into three categories: bruitist poems were phonetic; simultaneous poems were read in different languages, with different rhythms and tonalities, and by different people at the same time; and movement poems were ac-

companied by primitive movements.

These ideas are all rooted in satire. Grosz said Dadaist art was intended as a protest “against this world of mutual destruction”, calling for an abandonment of sincerity and meaning. The work of Dadaists was a critique of the bourgeois, ruling elite. Ball wanted to “shock anyone who regarded all this civilized carnage as a triumph of European intelligence.” Francis Picabia stuck a stuffed monkey to a board labelling it a portrait of Cézanne. These absurdities reflected the ridicule of war itself, exemplified by Laurent Le Bon: “Dada explains the war more than the war explains Dada.”

Andy Warhol, Frank Zappa, the Sex Pistols, David Shrigley and Lady Gaga trace the same anti-art sentiments of Dadaism, celebrating nonsense. Although the Nazis tried to kill Dada, damning it as degenerate – ‘Entartete Kunst’ – this only amplified the spirit of rebellion after World War Two, letting postmodern indifference flourish, permeating art and music today ●

## REVIEW



### Paloma Faith *The Architect*

★★★★★

Leading up the release of her fourth album, Paloma Faith has been clear about one thing: it is her political album. Inspired by Marvin Gaye’s *What’s Going On*, she is making a statement about the world we live in. It is ‘politics with a small p’ – permeated by calls for kindness, compassion and unity.

Faith has never been one to shy away from saying what she thinks, but even so, the album is a risk. There is the almost unspoken message that ‘you’re just a pop singer – get back in your box’. Yet this album was always going to happen. Ever since Faith took Guardian columnist Owen Jones with her on her last tour, proclaiming that music can no longer shy away from politics, a record of this kind seemed a question of when rather than if.

It is impossible to miss the political overtones. The album begins with a monologue, delivered by Samuel L. Jackson, telling us to “not be fearful of evolution”, which leads into the title track. Written as a love-letter to humanity from Mother Nature, it is some of Faith’s best writing to date. “I will forgive you, but I won’t forget” belts Faith’s soaring vocals against an orchestral backdrop that somehow retains a raw tone, making for a strong start the album.

Thematically, the record is a spiders web. Upon a first listening it might not be clear that ‘Surrender’ is about homelessness, or that ‘Lost and Lonely’ explores isolation in

old age. But the whole point of this album is to look deeper. Interludes from Owen Jones about the ‘politics of hope’ and Baby, Nym and Janelle (Faith’s three backing singers) about the feeling of being voiceless remind the listener that virtually all of this album has a deeper message.

Musically, this is undoubtedly Faith’s strongest outing to date. The record fuses the orchestral ballads of 2012’s *Fall to Grace* with the funk and retro motifs of 2014’s *A Perfect Contradiction*. ‘Guilty’ is so big-voiced and string-heavy that it could be a bond theme. At the other end of the spectrum, ‘Crybaby’ is a slick disco-pop affair. It’s a delectable combination of influences that underpins the musical identity of the album.

The variation is somewhat eclectic. “Til I’m Done’ is pretty much impossible not to dance to (yes – even in libraries). In contrast, the album finds a moment of isolation in ‘Still Around’. Piano, bass and her seductive tones entwine, leaving us with the sonic equivalent of lovemaking. It draws the listener into the personal before the album shatters it with ‘WW3’.

‘WW3’ is dark and twisted – for a Paloma Faith song at least. One of the more lyrically blunt songs on the album, the track begins with a soulful Amy Winehouse tone, but quickly breaks into a beautiful chaos of warped vocals, distorted guitars and percussion. The whole song competes as one of the strongest of the album.

Despite the numerous high points, there are undoubtedly some weaker moments on this album – typically the poppier ones. ‘Warrior’, written by pop heavyweight Sia, might sound promising, but ultimately it doesn’t go far. Interpreting it as about the suffering of migrants, Faith makes a soulful song, but it doesn’t add much.

Overall, this is a strong album. Threading your record with politics is a risk, but one that has paid off. It’s refreshing to hear a pop album that that shuns breakups and stories from the singer’s past, in favour of commentary of the world we find ourselves in. Albums which stick more closely to the pop formula might sell better, but at least Faith has something to say that’s worth hearing ●

Joe Foye



# Theatre

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



## The 'Other' Actors



*We must revise the use of the term 'BME' in Cambridge theatre, argues Christian Harvey*

Before I came to Cambridge, I had no idea I was BME. According to Wikipedia's disambiguation page, the phrase has 16 different meanings: the version that predominates in Cambridge is "Black and Minority Ethnic, a term commonly used in the UK to describe people from non-white descent."

This definition appears nowhere on the page which it links to the much more substantive (if problematic) 'Classification of ethnicity in the United Kingdom'. Here, ethnicity is divided into categories and subcategories. This definition, used in government censuses and medical forms, does not require every person who is non-white to be lumped together into one group; it does not create an 'other' that is opposed a norm of 'whiteness'. Moreover, the term is simply inaccurate. As I am of both white and black descent, this definition requires me to abandon this and to be fully "of non-white descent", to be "other".

It is this view of ethnicity that dominates the Cambridge theatre scene. In the Lent term 2018 CUADC Actor's Lists, the word 'BME' appears 19 times. Most egregiously, a show with

▲ "Good acting comes from good acting and not your skin tone" (Manuel Harlan © RSC)

an entirely white production team calls for five roles, three of which are to be 'white' and two of which are to be 'BME'. Ethnicity can be an important part of a role's characterisation, but to suggest that the only importance in a casting is that they are BME, as opposed to white, perpetuates the alienation that I felt.

Equally, it's ridiculous to suggest that a South-East Asian, a black person, and a mixed race person all have the same otherness; the experience of race is different between each person, never mind between people with ethnic origins that are separated by thousands of miles and millennia of history. Rather than creating a role for marginalised people, this approach marginalises them all. By suggesting that any race except white is interchangeable, it creates the expectation that 'BME' actors can only play the 'other' parts.

I have experienced this othering firsthand: I was cast in a play for a role written for a black person. Of course, there is nothing wrong with race-bending a part if there is nothing that requires them to be of a certain race. However, one monologue had the character claiming that they occupied this position of being 'other': quoting from the script, they described themselves as "something skankier", and describes that "mud from another pond left a stink on her" (with the heavy implication that this stink is race-mixing).

When I asked the director (who had not caught this subtext), she

## Online



Review:  
*The Memory of Water*  
 by Alex Sorgo

admitted that the part was originally written for a black character. When I asked her why she had cast me, she said it was because I was "obviously non-Aryan". This was the first time I had ever been made aware that the slight tan of my skin meant that I was 'other' enough to play the role of a fully black person. The piece, which was new writing that had won a prestigious prize, was of course written by a white Cambridge student, for whom the experience of being alienated was alien.

Not all of Cambridge so explicitly others its performers; *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* had a diverse cast, and a lead (Jordan Julien as the eponymous Ui) who, in his closing speech, gave an incredible example of theatrical mimesis. I believed that he was Hitler, and his race had nothing to do with how good an actor he was. This attitude, which was reflected in the final product, was fostered from the start of the production: the Actors List from that term stresses that auditions for the play were genderblind and colourblind, rather than white and BME. This is the attitude that the Cambridge theatre scene should foster: the best people for the best role, not the blackest people for the blackest role.

Simply using "colourblind" in place of BME is not enough. One show next term has "colourblind" casting, and yet has dedicated one of three slots exclusively to "BME AUDITIONS ONLY". If casting is colourblind – equal – why segregate its auditionees? Such efforts give the impression that "BME" people should only occupy one audition slot (in this case, the slot that is shorter by a full hour than any other); an impression that once led a harmless thesp to suggest that, while waiting to attend a packed audition, I should "just come to the BME slot tomorrow".

Other efforts to foster this diversity often feel insular, or like quota-filling. One wonders, given that the term BME 'others' the people to whom it is applied, why CUMTS feel it necessary to host a BME Bar Night. The night is not to foreground musicals by people of colour, but instead to limit the people who can perform explicitly to this homogenous other, which in itself implies a parochial, protective attitude: why can't BME people share the stage with non-BME people?

The same criticism might be levelled at all-BME productions. Cambridge has absolutely no shortage of Shakespeare, so what exactly do BME versions of *Twelfth Night* or *Macbeth* add to the equation, aside from ghettoising the actors within them? These efforts would have been timely before people accepted that good acting comes from your acting and not your skin tone. But as the recognition for actors like Riz Ahmed, Paapa Essiedu and Benedict Wong shows, we are no longer at that point. I sincerely doubt that there is anyone at Cambridge who thinks that the colour of your skin limits your acting ability; we must therefore stop limiting the roles available to these actors ●

“  
 The term  
 'BME' others  
 the people to  
 whom it is  
 applied  
 ”

## What's On in Week 8

**Monday 27th**  
*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*  
 ADC Theatre  
 7:45pm

**Tuesday 28th**  
 DRAGTIME  
 ADC Theatre  
 11pm

**Thursday 30th**  
*A Dream of Armageddon*  
 ADC Theatre  
 11pm

**Friday 1st**  
*CUMTS Christmas Cabaret*  
 ADC Theatre  
 11pm



# Fashion

## Back in style: Enniful's new British Vogue

*From white-wash to diversity, the new British Vogue has a keen reader in Vivienne Hopley-Jones*

**T**he first edition of British *Vogue* under the new editor-in-chief, Edward Enniful, is all class without the hauteur. Forget *This is England* '90, because *This is Britain* 2017 (N.B. we should never forget *This is England*).

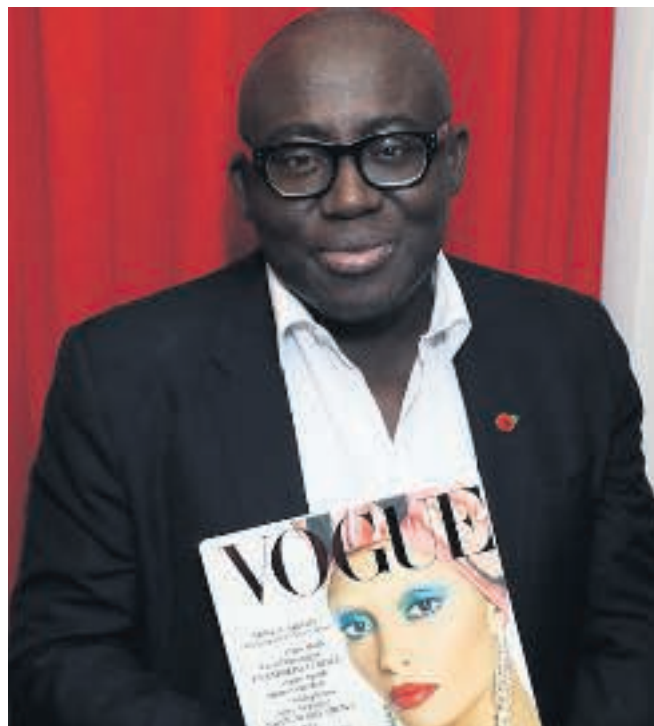
Enniful, a fashion stylist and contributing editor at a range of publications throughout his career, made his name as fashion director at *i-D* magazine, a position he earned at the age of 18. His stylistic approach has the perfect touch of street sophistication, which makes Enniful an exciting and potentially innovative choice as the editor-in-chief of the iconic magazine. With the capacity to create a modern and current British *Vogue*, while preserving the publication's history, class and style, the direction under Enniful has been widely anticipated.

After 25 years in the hands of Alexandra Shulman, no one could have quite predicted the extent of the tumult and politics surrounding the transition. An article Shulman wrote recently has been vastly criticised for its racial implications. With her legacy at the publication under question from both within and outside the fashion world, Shulman put the final nail in her own coffin with the mighty thwack of an elitist hammer in an agonising interview for *The Guardian* last week.

There is no word other than nonchalant to describe Shulman's attitude to the lack of diversity that underpinned every aspect of British *Vogue* under her leadership. From her literally all-white team, the 'Sloanie Club', to the extreme inadequacy in ethnic and racial representation of models who have made the cover, Shulman refuses to acknowledge, never mind apologise for, the unacceptable lack of diversity. This is especially notable when other publications, including British *Vogue*'s counterparts in America and beyond, have made efforts to increase diversity.



▲ Supermodel Naomi Campbell has been outspoken in her criticism of Alexandra Shulman's recent comments (Wikipedia: Renan Katayama)



“Shulman put the final nail in her own coffin with the mighty thwack of an elitist hammer in an agonising interview for *The Guardian*”

◀ Edward Enniful with his first issue as editor-in-chief of British *Vogue*, featuring British model Adwoa Aboah (Instagram: britishvogue)

Shulman subscribes to extremely racialised descriptions; referring to Naomi Campbell as “vocal”, playing into the racial stereotype of black women as loud and aggressive. That someone in the creative industry sees such opinions as justified is alarming, considering Shulman has been leading perhaps the most influential publication in British fashion for the past 25 years.

In a contrast which could not be starker, Ghanaian-born Edward Enniful's first British *Vogue* is a celebration of British culture and fashion in all of its multicultural glory. The perspective he seeks to highlight is only emphasised by the publicity surrounding his predecessor's recent comments. Enniful features a range of voices and contributors from a variety of professions and industries, and a collection of ethnic backgrounds.

The issue, for me, is an embodiment of Britishness, which stands up in the face of the negativity and rhetoric many of us associate with our culture and history in the wake of the political and social tumult of recent years. From Salman Rushdie's alternative Christmas, Zadie Smith's exploration of the cultural figure of 'Mrs. Windsor', and the Delevingne sisters' perspectives on what it means to be 'British', Enniful's *Vogue* grounds itself in the unique, inclusive, multicultural, apologetic, and self-deprecatingly wonderful culture that is Britain.

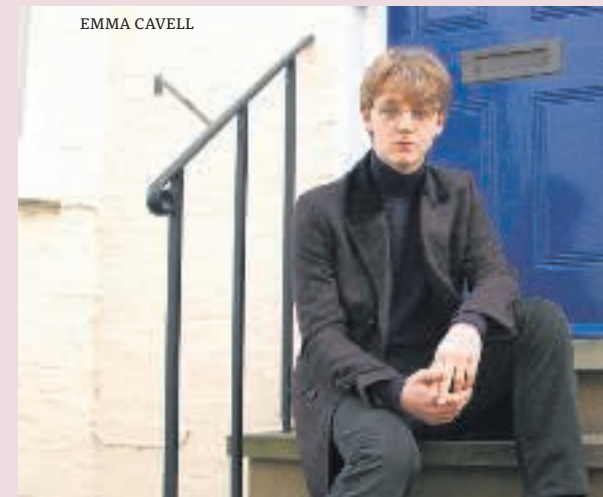
Enniful reflects a diverse Britain, yet one that is distinctly recognisable: a Britain of the NHS, the BBC, David Bowie, and 'bloody hell'. The new *Vogue* is also the *Vogue* of creativity and fashion, from powerhouses such as Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell as contributing editors, to Julia Hobbs' piece on the 'future stars of London's arts and fashion scenes' in 'Creatures of Change'.

This is a *Vogue* which is celebrating the old and classic alongside the new and innovative. It is a *Vogue* which knows its history, yet is unafraid of change.

Who can say what exactly the future holds for British *Vogue*, other than that it does at least have one with the new look of Edward Enniful's editorship. This marks the beginning of a publication that has the potential to thrive, artistically and creatively. It hopefully mirrors the chances of the diverse 'Great Britain' it showcases ●



EMMA CAVELL



EMMA CAVELL





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# CUCFS theme revealed: 'The Fabric of Politics'

*Ahead of Cambridge's Charity Fashion Show in March, Fashion Editor Robyn Schaffer considers how the theme, 'The Fabric of Politics', might play out on the catwalk*

Last week it was announced that the theme of this year's Cambridge University Charity Fashion Show would be 'The Fabric of Politics'. The fashion show is one of the most hotly-anticipated and popular events on Cambridge's social calendar – a black-tie affair featuring high-profile designers, chart-topping performers and incredible entertainment.

Ultimately, however, the show is about fashion and the theme at the very core of this, but don't think you've heard the end of the 'politics and fashion' debate. Politics, conveniently, is something that has pervaded all areas of the industry for a considerable time now; everyone is trying to make a 'political' statement or engage with controversial social issues on their catwalks, but how can CUCFS approach this in a refreshing and unique way that is accessible to the student demographic in Cambridge?

The team this year claim to have four main objectives:

1. To show how designers and labels express political statements explicitly or subliminally through their designs
2. To show how young people engage with current affairs using art and fashion
3. To show how designers reflect their 'native' cultures through their designs, using fashion as a means of celebrating culture and identity
4. To show how fashion pushes the boundaries and encourages discussion of these social issues

The theme is certainly one that is relevant and warrants exploration and discussion, and it will be interesting to see how these four objectives are expressed and combined. There

is the danger, however, of making the same mistakes that many in the industry have come under fire for when also tackling this delicate issue. First of all, there were those 'feminist' slogan t-shirts by Maria Grazia Chiuri at Dior, then Prabal Gurung followed suit with similar T-shirts emblazoned with the likes of 'The Future is Female', and the hordes of pantsuits on runways which were viewed to be 'defying the patriarchy'.

While the sentiment can be appreciated, these attempts at discussing politics on the catwalk largely were met with heavy criticism; these self-proclaimed 'feminist' and politically-centred products sell for what are essentially inaccessible price points for the majority of us. No one wants to buy a \$600 T-shirt at the expense of making a minor political statement. It seems almost ironic that we have to buy into this elitist world, where money gains you entry, in order to be a part of a movement which encourages complete acceptance, diversity and equality. That being said, there are several ways that CUCFS can, and has in the past, overcome these obstacles.

Firstly, in keeping with their objectives, it will be crucial to showcase designers – particularly those who are emerging, in order to support up and coming talent – who engage with current political and social issues in a relevant, engaging and respectful way. CUCFS then fulfils its second aim organically by being a team made up of students, and through their production of the show, from casting to creative direction, represent how young people engage with political issues through the medium of fashion which is a natural extension of ourselves, our identity and self-expression. This has proved successful in previous years particularly through the model casting; it is notable that a range of body types, ethnicities and gender orientations have been represented, as this is something which the fashion industry, especially in the high-end sphere, has failed to replicate, garnering more criticism and accusations of hypocrisy.

The fourth objective is something that often happens instinctively; fashion, as an art form, is inclined to push boundaries due to its experimental and creative nature, and in order to keep up with changing times must discuss current issues. But, it is the third objective that is most intriguing. In a world dominated by arguments over cultural appropriation and misrepresentation, particularly in regard to fashion and its misuse of these, it will be interesting to see how ideas of 'native' culture are expressed on the CUCFS catwalk. Primarily, CUCFS is about celebrating emerging design talent and discussing prevalent political and social issues that we face today for a charitable cause through the somewhat limitless creative medium that is fashion. The world really is their oyster, but ground must be trodden carefully.

CUCFS President, Kate Hammond, has said, "We want it to be really explorative and discussion-based – we're not preaching a certain political message at all." Instead, it is about creating conversation through fashion in an open, welcoming environment where everyone feels able to express their views creatively and comfortably while also tackling widespread problems. As a theme, it



◀ US brand, Public School, took to the runway to talk politics, presenting T-shirts and caps mimicking Donald Trump's infamous slogan, 'Make America Great Again' (Instagram: [publicschoolnyc](https://www.instagram.com/publicschoolnyc))



▲ Stella McCartney has joined the list of designers choosing to make political statements through fashion (Instagram: [stellamccartney](https://www.instagram.com/stellamccartney))

certainly doesn't come as a surprise. Politics is very much at the forefront of our minds, especially in the fashion industry and today's current political climate, but it now remains to be seen how CUCFS will approach this undeniably complicated, but wholly rewarding and exciting theme in the coming months ●



**2020 Casting are recruiting supporting artists (Extras) for a new feature film that is shooting in Cambridge. This production is called Red Joan and features Judi Dench, Sophie Cookson (The Kingsman: The Secret Service) and will be directed by Trevor Nunn.**

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We will also require your measurements and a head and shoulders photo as well as a full body photo - against a plain background.

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## Sport

## In conversation with: Lara Gibson

## Lawrence Hopkins

speaks to the captain of CURUFC Women's Blues: **Lara Gibson**

Lara Gibson will lead out the women's Blues at Twickenham on Thursday 7th December. Coming off the back of a 3-0 defeat in last year's Varsity Match, she is all set to take Oxford to task in this year's iteration of the Women's Varsity Match.

The Women's Blues have enjoyed a strong season thus far, having conceded only one try since an early loss to Durham back in September. That run has included a 97-0 victory against the University of Leicester and a 61-0 win against the University of East Anglia. "We aim to top the BUCS league [Midlands 1A], having been relegated last year. We are currently 100% in the league. However, going down a division makes it difficult to judge the standard of our rugby." The Blues are regularly turning games into cricket scores; they scored 102 points against Nottingham Trent at the end of October.

Gibson maintains that her side have improved week on week throughout the

season: "The Durham game was very early in the season, it would be interesting to see how it would go if it was played again. We demand improvement from ourselves every week, and are getting better all the time."

Playing a division down from Oxford in the BUCS set-up, are the any concerns over the level of competition that the Blues are facing, one wonders. Conceding next to no points suggests that the Blues are yet to be challenged defensively: "There is a concern over the level of competition, but we do have a friendly against Hove RFC upcoming. I don't have any particular concern over defence; especially against Nottingham we were tested, but held firm. And we will have to be more defensive against Hove."

How then, do the Blues get anything out of the BUCS fixtures they must contest? "BUCS games are about game management for us, we aim to reduce the errors we commit. When we have been under pressure in BUCS games it is largely self-inflicted, our own mistakes can put us in trouble. We also aim to win the ball back within three or four phases and we work on our kicking game too in these matches."

With three fixtures still to come before Varsity, one wonders how much rotation of the squad there will be, perhaps to try

and limit injuries: "No, we are only three weeks out, so there will not be much rotation."

"Come Varsity, I am certainly hoping for a more entertaining game." One suspects this might be a reality soon, with the Light Blues making sides look silly with increasing regularity. "I was recently re-watching the Varsity Match from two years ago, when we won comfortably, and I think that the current side is better than that side."

Much will, of course, depend on the outfit that Oxford send into battle at the home of rugby on December 7th. "We can only follow the scores, but then again we don't know the standard of the opposi-

3-0

**Oxford edged out last year's Varsity Match, avenging their 50-0 defeat from the year before**

tion they are playing. Last year, we played them before the Varsity Match and they used that game to analyse our game, so I am actually glad that we haven't faced them, even if we don't know much about them this time around. And we do have an idea about them."

Gibson can, however, control her side,



▲Lara Gibson captains the Womens Blues from outside centre (CURUFC)

in as much as she has a hand in selection. "There are no standout players, as such. From 1 to 22 we are strong players. But we do have just the one fresher in the team, Bluebell Nicholls, who has done really well so far in getting stuck in."

Gibson captains from outside centre, so must be enjoying the rugby the Blues are playing at present, and whilst not too keen to reveal any tactics she does add that "attacking games are the ones I like playing in, and we are hoping for an entertaining Varsity Match this year. So when it comes to style of play, we want to attack." As we round off our discussion, I ask how confident she is of reversing last year's narrow defeat: "There is no point in not expecting to win, we are confident, in ourselves certainly. And yes, I do believe we have a good shot at winning."

December 7th will see the third iteration of the Women's Varsity Match to be played at Twickenham. With the overall balance currently in the favour of the Dark Blues, 18-11, Gibson will be hoping she can lead her side to victory to take the tally at Twickenham to 2-1 Cambridge, and narrow the gap overall. Before Twickenham though, the focus for the Light Blues will be on their remaining BUCS league match against Oxford Brookes on November 29th at Grange Road.

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# In conversation with: Charlie Amesbury

## Lawrence Hopkins

speaks to the captain of CURUFC Men's Blues:

## Charlie Amesbury

Charlie Amesbury, full-back extraordinaire, is in his second year at Cambridge. Coming from Bristol's professional set-up, one might question whether the Varsity Match is really that significant for him, even being captain of the Men's team. Any doubt was put to rest by the Blues captain as we discussed the biggest game of the year prior to the Steele-Bodger Match on Wednesday 22nd.

"The performances post our tour to South Africa have been good. We made a strong start to the season. It was a shame to miss out on a win early on in the year." The Blues drew twice in their first three matches, against Durham University and Cambridge RUFC. Since then the results have not gone to plan, however the Captain is keen to stress that the schedule was constructed to challenge his players: "We have been to some dark places, but we are stronger for it."

Against Northampton in October, the Blues succumbed to the professional side 59-7. The result was an improvement on

the previous year, and the Saints' side included a number of internationals. "That game was a measure of our physicality. It was a turning point in our campaign last year and allowed us to measure ourselves against the best."

CURUFC's most recent game, against a British Police side, finished 42-40. "Scoring a lot of tries was a positive, as we aim to be unpredictable in attack, but we have some work-ons in defence." Is the Steele-Bodger Match, the 70th iteration of the historic fixture, an opportunity, then, to tie up a few loose ends?

"There are still positions up for grabs at this stage," says Amesbury. The 70th Steele-Bodger Match is the last fixture for the Blues before the big occasion at Twickenham. "We are hoping that our combinations will gel. The game, being

**This year marks the 136th Men's Varsity Match in Rugby, with the first one occurring in 1872**

a big occasion, is a good opportunity for the boys to experience playing in front of a crowd. It will be loud so communication will be tested, as it will be at Twickenham."

What combinations Amesbury is hoping will gel remain to be seen. The Blues,



▲ Amesbury starred in Cambridge's win in the 2016 match (CURUFC)

like their counterparts at Oxford, have battled injury all season. "Injuries are not an excuse. We have had to bring in younger guys up front, and thus lack a bit of power. But, those who have come in have played really well."

With so many younger guys in contention, such as scrum-half Chris Bell and centre Jake Hennessey, does Amesbury shoulder the sole responsibility of leadership himself? "I expect a team of 15 leaders, 23 when the replacements are out there. From full back I can't lead the pack, so there is an element of reliance on leaders up front, the likes of Will Briggs, Nick Koster, and Andrew Hunter."

One wonders how much interest Amesbury has taken in the fortunes of the Oxford side up to this point. "I will look at the Oxford side post-Bodgers game. But for the most part we are concentrating on ourselves. We want to be as good as we can be. I know they have a lot of firepower, and everyone wants to see a great game of rugby."

When asked if he expects a fierce contest, Amesbury replied, "It is every year."

The captain, in his second year in the fenlands, must finely balance his responsibilities leading the team with his own performance: "I have to make sure that the right processes are in place for success, but I also cannot forget about

myself. I have been helped immensely by the Secretary Jonny Dixon and Coach James Shanahan, but we also have a great bunch of guys and the culture in the club is excellent."

The Varsity Match, in recent years, has been headlined by a number of international stars. Only a few years ago, Jamie Roberts, Wales international and British & Irish Lion, was part of the Light Blue set-up. Who, though, does Amesbury consider his current standout players? One such player is Chris Bell, scrum-half and second-year at Girton. "Bell has really stepped up to the plate; he has great passing ability on either side, and his kicking game has come on an awful lot. Nick Koster is another standout; Nick has played Super 15s rugby and is a big ball carrier up front."

When asked what style of rugby his team wants to play, Amesbury, with good reason, is less than forthcoming: "We're getting into tactics here," he says as he laughs off the question. As a Cambridge student myself, I leave the conversation there.

CURUFC won the 70th Steele-Bodger Match at Grange Road on Wednesday 22nd November, running in nine tries in a 53-22 win in their final fixture before the 136th Men's Varsity Match at Twickenham on Thursday 7th December. Is Amesbury confident? "We have got the team to win it," is his response.

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## Varsity Rugby In conversation with Charlie Amesbury and Lara Gibson 34-35



# Blues continue winning start against Cardiff

**Danny Wittenberg**  
Sports Reporter

Talk about sticking it to the opposition. Cambridge University Women's Lacrosse Club (CUWLC) recorded their sixth win in a row on Wednesday lunchtime by crushing Cardiff 19-2 at St John's College Sports Ground.

Half of the eight different scorers for Cambridge, Katie Lehovsky, Erica Wallace, Tori Molloy and Amelia Miller, completed hat-tricks, helping the Light Blues extend their perfect record so far this season in style.

Despite a strangely sloppy opening, Cambridge began to stretch their Welsh counterparts towards the end of the first quarter and led 7-1 at half-time. It was in the third quarter when their quality really showed, as they relaxed into their lacrosse and slotted home nine goals, setting up what could be a league-deciding encounter next week with Oxford.

Cardiff crossed the border without four players who were prominent in the reverse fixture last month, where Cambridge trailed at the interval before edging an 11-9 victory. The newly-promoted side were in fine form, however, having won away in Bath in their most recent outing.

Perhaps with half an eye on their Varsity rivals, the Light Blues also tried to manage their injuries, as Julie Wise sat out the first half and vice-captain

Ella Benson watched on for much of the second due to respective knee and groin niggles. Yet, their main focus was building confidence and goal difference ahead of a visit from the Other Place.

Cambridge looked eager to impose themselves at the start, but they struggled to retain possession and it finally took some tough defending from Miller, the skipper, and Benson to gain a grip on an end-to-end first 10 minutes. Once Sophie Tamblyn, a St Catharine's fresher, had found the breakthrough, though, the goals kept Tamblyn in. Two from Wallace, the Player of the Match, either side of the first from Molloy rounded off a frantic first period which already hit the visitors hard.

Wise, one of the co-captains from last season, expressed her pride at how smoothly all three of the early goalscorers have settled into their maiden university campaign. "Coming into a Blues team as a fresher is really intimidating, but today and last week, our freshers have stepped up competed brilliantly under pressure," the attacker said afterwards.

Tamblyn and Wallace received their first call-ups to the senior England squad this autumn after moving up from the under-19 team. Along with Miller, Lehovsky and Wise, they feature among five Blues hoping to represent their country during the Home Internationals in March.

Cardiff competed well in the middle of the park and bookended half-time with two of only eight goals that Cambridge have conceded at home this term. Still, such strength in depth eventually proved too much for the second-from-bottom club, who have failed to beat the Light Blues in the seven matches between these teams since 2011.

Cambridge still had a gear or two to shift up and tried to change from running races to slick passing transitions as the game progressed. The variation was evident in the evolution from the fifth goal, straight from the draw by Miller, who was simply far too fast for Cardiff, to the sixth, scored by Tamblyn following a give-and-go. Lehovsky, the experienced centre, notched her first of the afternoon with five minutes left in the second quarter, bringing her mix of skill and composure to the fray.

The action abounded after the break as Molloy and Lehovsky checked the Cardiff goals by doubling their personal tallies. Bridget Shaffrey, an MPhil student from Virginia, scored her first goal shortly afterwards, before Lehovsky, lovingly known as 'Lehov', launched the move of the match, single-handedly turning defence into attack to make it 13-2.

Miller and her team-mates had set the ambitious target going into the game of scoring 15 goals and securing a double-digit winning margin, and the onslaught on the 40-minute mark sealed the deal.

▲▼ CUWLC sit second in the table, three points behind Oxford but with a game in hand

(ANGUS PARKER)



After Wise and Shaffrey returned to the scoresheet, Wallace clinched her third of the day for a 16-2 lead with the final play of a thrilling third quarter.

"It was a great team performance," said Wallace, a Jesus student. "We were really happy to get such a high score as it was much closer when we played them away. The standard in this league is incredibly high and matches tend to get feistier than they were at school, but our team is more than capable of coping and I'm really enjoying my lacrosse here."

Both sides were understandably tired towards full-time after some fast, liquid lacrosse, and visibility dropped as the shadows of Westminster College and the University Library cast a dark hue over the ground.

The home goalkeeper Helen Gildersleeves handled the conditions to execute her fifth vital save of the match, with Cardiff surging forwards in search of consolation goals. Talia Smithers became the fourth fresher to score as Cambridge countered, before Molloy and Miller laid the final blows as the game quietly drew to a close, capping a ruthless display.

Cambridge (goals): Helen Gildersleeves, Ella Benson, Lottie Paterson, Tori Malloy (3), Erica Wallace (3), Amelia Miller (3), Katie Lehovsky (3), Sophie Tamblyn (2), Olivia Cox, Talia Smithers (1), Lara Dillingham, Bridget Shaffrey (2), FM Gardner, Julie Wise (2), Angharad Thomas