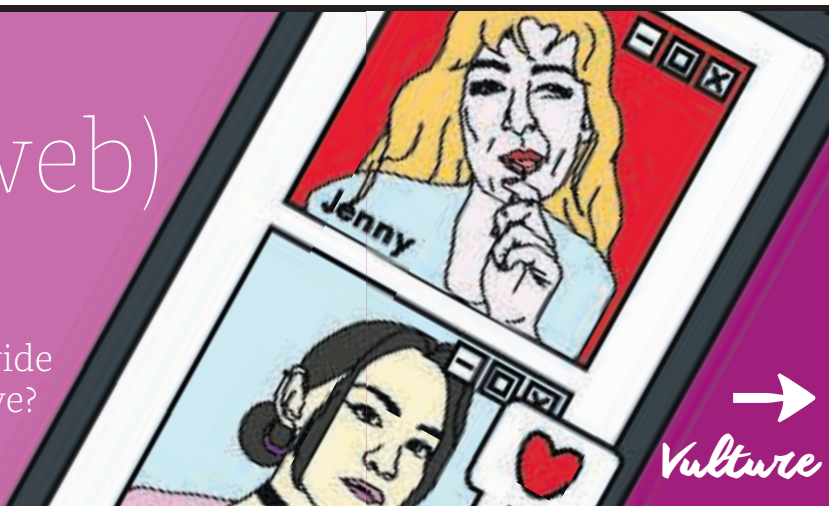


All loved app

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No. 839

Friday 19th January 2018  
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# VARSITY

## MP backs Zero Carbon calls as report day looms for Uni

**Exclusive**  
**Noella Chye**  
Senior News Editor

Three student societies, led by the Cambridge Zero Carbon Society, have joined forces to publish a report detailing how the University can achieve full divestment and positive reinvestment, drawing on examples of institutions that have divested from fossil fuels.

The report, titled *Decarbonising Cambridge: A Pathway to Divestment and Positive Reinvestment*, was written by a group of 20 students from the Cambridge Zero Carbon Society, Positive Investment Cambridge and Just Love Cambridge, a Christian student community.

The report has been submitted to the University's Divestment Working Group, set to publish its report on the "pros and cons of divestment" in Lent.

The report, led by Zero Carbon, centres on three key findings, firstly identifying three options for both partial and full divestment from fossil fuels, drawing on successful divestment of other institutions, specifically the Rockefeller Brothers Fund Investment and the universities of California and Bristol. The Rockefeller Brothers Fund Investment reduced the total percentage of financial investments in fossil fuels from 6.6% in 2014 to 1.7% in 2017. The UC system divested \$200 million in coal and tar sands investments in 2015, then a further \$150 million in response to student protests and sit-ins. It now has approximately 3% of its public equity holdings invested in oil and gas drilling.

In comparison, it was estimated that the University had £377,431,354 invested

in fossil fuels in 2014 — 6.4% of its endowment at the time. The figure was disputed by Andrew Reid, Cambridge's Director of Finance until January 2018, who claimed it was less than 3.5%. While the University publicly claimed in 2016 that it had no exposure to coal and tar sands in its direct investments, negligible exposure in its indirect holdings and no expectation to invest in such fossil fuels in the future, the Paradise Papers revealed otherwise — Cambridge invested £1.3m in Collier International, a private equity firm based in Guernsey.

The three proposed pathways to divestment include transferring investments to an external fossil-free fund manager, moving global share investments to a low-carbon index, and encouraging fund managers to implement sustainable governance and present the option of a fully divested fund.

The report also highlights the University's opportunity to be part of an energy revolution of investors using Green Revolving or Impact Investment Funds, both of which reportedly generate beneficial social and environmental impact alongside financial returns.

Lastly, it concludes that the University's investment procedure is unnecessarily opaque, citing a previous University report into ethical investment which "[failed] to take any meaningful action on the issue."

Daniel Zeichner, MP for Cambridge, wrote its foreword. Zeichner told *Varsity*, "The Divestment campaign is an important part of the battle against climate change. As the impact of rising CO<sub>2</sub> emissions becomes too enormous

Continued on page 7 ►



▲ Campaigners test out posters as they protest against Robinson's rent costs

(NOELLA CHYE)

## Rent protests gain momentum as students demand price cuts

**Noella Chye**  
Senior News Editor

Cambridge's Cut The Rent campaigners are close to a breakthrough as campaign heads at Robinson and Magdalene are hoping to present their cases to their respective college authorities in the next two weeks.

The Cut The Rent campaigns, currently active at Murray Edwards College as well as Robinson and Magdalene, aim to urge colleges to reduce their room rent charges, citing high prices and unsatisfactory accommodation.

The Big Cambridge Survey 2016, which surveyed 3,427 students and was published by CUSU, found that 57% of Murray Edwards students and 60% of

Robinson students were not satisfied with the value of accommodation. At Magdalene, just 24% of students felt their views were represented on accommodation matters.

Accommodation at all three colleges has been criticised for being not only unaffordable, but also poor value for money. Undergraduate rooms in Murray Edwards are priced within categories, the highest band of single rooms costing £1,969 per term for a 39-week license, including overhead charges, network connection and medical taxi scheme charges. At Magdalene, prices are standardised for undergraduate and postgraduate students. The highest-priced single rooms cost £1,421 every term; the lowest are £1,016. For Robinson, the most expensive rooms are priced at £1,995, while its band

of 'value' rooms cost £1,330.

Graduate students at Murray Edwards can pay £2,183 for an ensuite room, or the lowest available price for a room with a shared bathroom, £1,635. At Robinson, graduates are charged for fifty weeks of rent at a minimum cost of £5,345, with the most expensive accommodation costing £8,055.

The Cut The Rent petition at Robinson, which has been endorsed by its JCR, was circulated to students earlier this week, with the hope that it will give as many people as possible the opportunity to read and sign the petition before it is submitted to the college.

Speaking to *Varsity*, Matt Kite, a third-year Philosophy student at Robinson

Continued on page 4 ►



# Editorial

## Focusing on others in 2018

**V**arsity's first print issue comes out just over two weeks into the year. This puts us in a unique position. The year is still young, the die relatively uncast. Yet there is little doubt that even with the few steps taken into the year, most of us will have tripped and fallen; exquisitely crafted resolutions shattered – catastrophically, hopelessly – on the floor.

If this applies to you, consider this issue your consolation and your motivator. After all, there's little value in these abstract resolutions and personal manifestos. If there's one thing I learnt from writing a *Violet* column on self-help – and there surely was only one thing – it's that focusing so hard on 'improving yourself' is a bad way of making yourself a better person, and in turn a bad way of improving on the clusterf\*\*k of 2017.

In News this week we can see examples of students looking to improve their world in the ways they can, with worthy campaigns to cut the rent and create a green University. In this week's revitalised *Vulture* you can find lovely suggestions for the year ahead in Music and Fashion. Consider these not as a quick guide to great taste, but as a prompt for experimentation: an atlas for the curious, not the vain.

Varsity, too, has its plans for the New Year. Keep an eye and an ear out for our ever-expanding online portfolio. We've got a host of enlightening and insightful long-reads in the oven, three refreshed podcasts, and an enhanced video team. On top of a long read dissection of the Lib Dems' 2015 electoral failure, you can expect comprehensive rolling coverage of Cambridge's own CUSU elections.

But for this week, we've got more than enough to satisfy in print. Shoomena Anil shatters the romantic illusions of star-crossed lovers in Science; Paul Hyland interviews England international James Haskell about that tackle in Sport; and Film & Television's Lillian Crawford assesses this year's Oscar contenders.

It's doubtful that 2017 will go down as a banner year in the history of the West, but it has fired people up in a way that we haven't seen for a long time. We can only hope that this is more than a flash in the pan.

Life in 2018, as in every year before it, will be defined by how we act towards others. So let's focus less on our trivial attempts to better ourselves, and try to show more empathy and compassion to others.

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## News

# Supersized salaries Top staff could fall foul of new pay guidelines

*Plans to make universities justify high vice-chancellors' salaries could hit many in Cambridge*

**Caitlin Smith Deputy Editor**

Vice-chancellors paid significantly more than other staff at their university are to face heightened scrutiny, under new guidelines proposed by a committee of university leaders that could affect several of Cambridge's top staff.

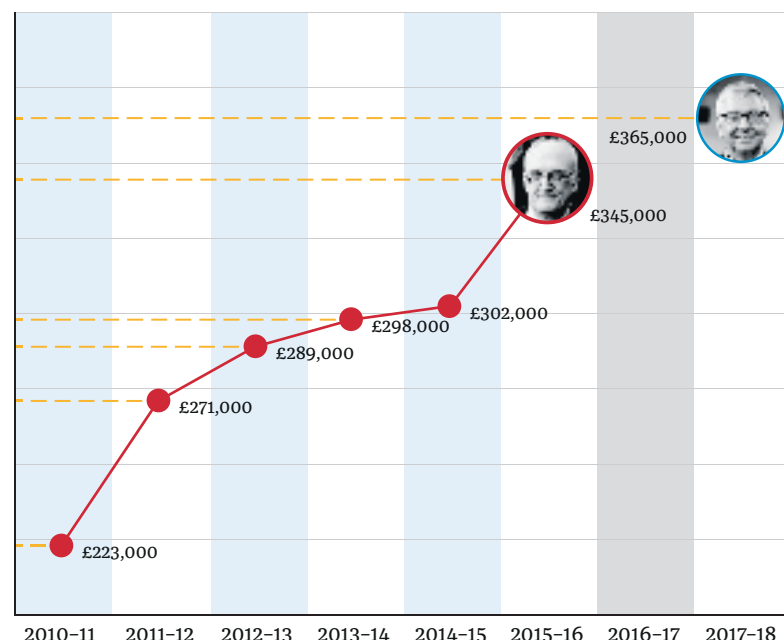
The plans, currently out for consultation, oblige universities to annually

publish details of how much their vice-chancellor is paid compared to the median pay of the overall workforce.

They identify an acceptable multiple range of 4.5 to 8.5 between leaders of universities and their median-paid employee, meaning that any university paying their vice chancellor more than 8.5 times the overall median salary will "need to be prepared to justify to stakeholders and their regulator why this is

## VC pay on a steady climb

Vice-chancellor pay has increased rapidly over the past seven years (data for 2016-17 has not yet been released)



desirable". Currently, 80% of higher education institutions lie inside of this range – Cambridge, where vice-chancellors' salaries have escalated in recent years, does not.

The guidance follows escalating criticism of remuneration for top figures at universities across the UK. Last year, reports that Bath University's outgoing vice chancellor, Dame Glynis Breakwell, had received a £468,000 pay packet – making her the highest-paid university leader in the UK – provoked national controversy.

The stringency of these new criteria could prove problematic for Cambridge. Following his installation last month, Varsity reported that Vice-Chancellor Stephen Toope's salary for the year 2017-18 would be £365,000. His predecessor, Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, earned a salary of £345,000 in 2015-16.

Data on the median salary for employees at Cambridge is not currently available. However, figures released under an FOI request show that, in the year 2016-17, the highest-paid employee had a salary 13.12 times higher than the median-paid employee. The figure places the University significantly above the threshold deemed acceptable under the new guidance.

Despite rapidly escalating salaries, vice-chancellors are not the most highly-paid figures at the institution. Figures released under the same FOI show that, in the same year, the largest salary paid by the University was £440,344. Overall, 123 members of the University were paid £140,000 or more, suggesting that large pay packets are not only distributed to a select few at the institution. A second FOI request revealed that the majority of these were academic staff.



News



Stephen Toope (top) and Leszek Borysiewicz (bottom) both scooped up hefty pay packets – but other top staff also earned highly

(University of Cambridge)

The guidelines also issue a warning about extravagant spending on expenses, placing responsibility for monitoring expenses claims on remuneration committees, and suggesting that “senior post holders could be encouraged not to claim for minor items”. Last year, *Varsity* reported that Borysiewicz recorded the second highest expenditure on flights of any Head of a Higher Education Institution in 2015/16.

Concerns are also raised in the plans about vice-chancellors sitting on the remuneration committees that decide their pay. The code is unequivocal in stating that heads of institutions may not be included in the membership of remuneration committees, in order to ensure the committees are “as independent and expert as possible”. When *Varsity* asked the University whether Toope sat on its Remunera-

tion Committee, they declined to offer comment.

In response to our enquiries, the University said they “welcomed the call for higher education institutions to demonstrate value,” but defended the salary it paid to the vice-chancellor: “The University’s Vice-Chancellor is held to account every year for what he delivers in the course of supporting Cambridge to make the discoveries that will change the world.”

The University also stated that the size of the salary had been determined by a “global search,” referencing the pressure they face to compete with universities abroad, particularly in the US, where salaries offered to vice-chancellors far exceed those offered to their UK counterparts. Even at home, after a series of headlines criticising rapidly increasing vice-chancellor pay, vice-chancellors themselves have avoided widespread public reprobation.

Senior staff at the University are not unaware of the growing pay gap at their institution. A report submitted by the University’s Board of Scrutiny last October noted that, while there had been a “sharp rise” in the number of staff earning over £100,000, core academic and academic-related staff were being offered pay increases that fell below levels of inflation.

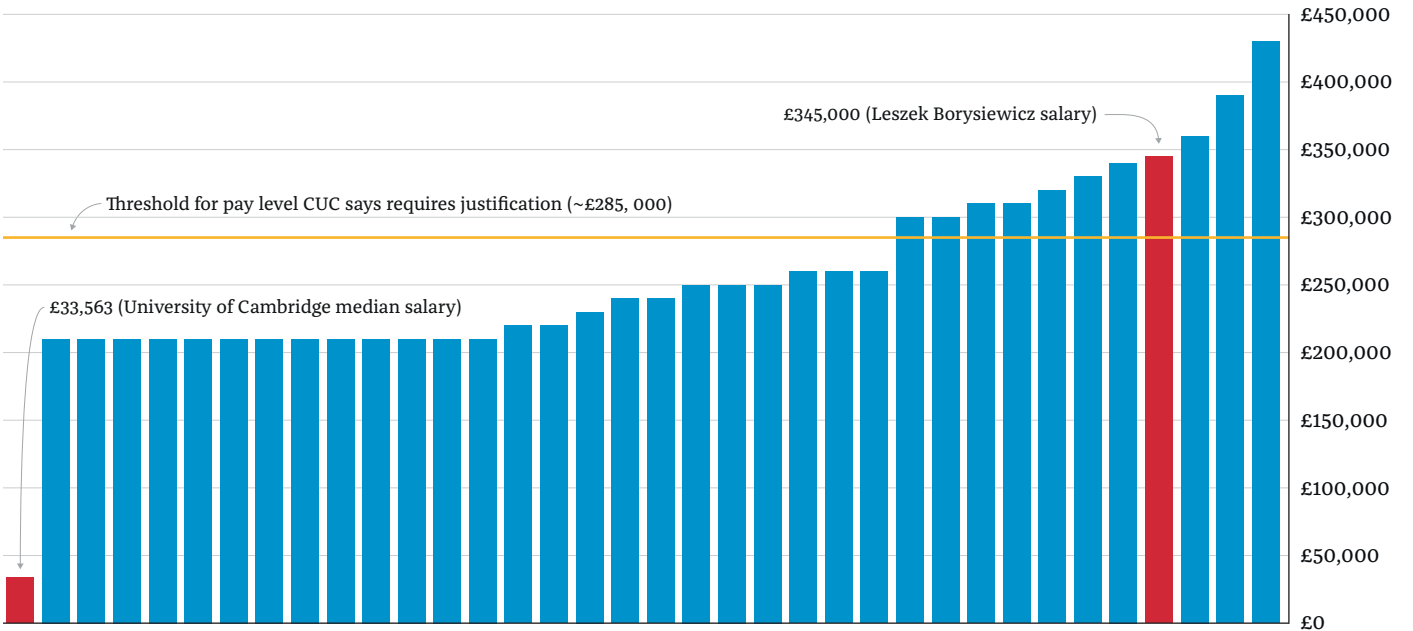
Although an attempt to assuage a long-running debate, the plans in themselves are likely to prove controversial. The body responsible for their establishment, the Committee of University Chairs (CUC), which represents the non-executive chairs of universities’ governing councils, is regarded as too close to vice-chancellors.

Furthermore, compliance with the guidance is optional, and the Committee has little power to punish those universities who opt out.

The University and College Union (UCU), which represents university staff and publishes an annual survey of vice-chancellor pay, cast doubt on the ability of the committee to police vice-chancellors’ pay. General Secretary of the UCU Sally Hunt said: “The time has come for vice-chancellors and their supporters to be removed from the setting of their pay and a national register of senior pay and perks.”

How many staff are paid above CUC’s threshold?

There are 11 staff employed by the University whose pay should undergo scrutiny according to CUC’s model, based on the latest figures. The chart shows median staff salary vs. those staff paid over £200,000 in 2015–16.





## News

# Students slam 'horror' college digs

◀ Continued from front page

and campaign organiser, said: "We hope college will understand that as rents continue to rise and the proportion of students from non-traditional Oxbridge backgrounds at Robinson remains one of the lowest at any college, this is not an issue that will go away. We want them to see the need to take action and cut the rent."

The campaign in Magdalene is similarly gaining traction in the lead-up to organisers approaching the college with a petition before accommodation bills are next sent out. Campaigners gathered in Magdalene bar on Wednesday afternoon to make posters highlighting their experiences with accommodation in Magdalene, titling their Facebook event 'Accomo-horror'.

One poster read, "Why do I fall behind on my work because I spend all holiday waitressing to cover my college bill?!" Another featured a drawing of a fuse box captioned, "Old fuse box or IED?", a reference to one student's encounter with a fuse box so old it had been sending out sparks. Sprawled across the top of the poster was the quote, "Try not to die in here", which one student claims they were told by a member of the college maintenance department.

One campaigner said that they aimed

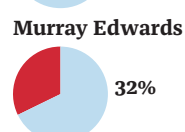
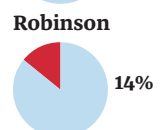
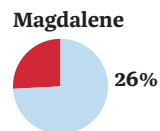


to create, through the distribution of posters, "an atmosphere of concern", "There's an underlying tension, but people don't have a collective voice."

"It's not that everyone has a treacherous experience at Magdalene, it's just that everyone has an experience that doesn't match up to what they're paying."

### Popular appeal?

How many of each colleges' students have signed?



◀ **Protesters prepare posters**  
(NOELLA CHYE)

A document available on the Magdalene Cut The Rent Facebook page lists fourteen entries since its creation in November last year of students' experiences with accommodation and fines they contend are unfair. Students in three houses allege that the heating leaves much to be desired; in one case, it is "so cold you can't sleep".

Additional costs, such as Magdalene's Kitchen Fixed Charge (KFC), have also been a source of much frustration, with students paying £190 every term to use the gyp rooms in their accommodation and subsidise the cost of eating in Ramsay Hall, the college's dining hall. The sum has to be paid regardless of whether students use the hall or not. One student commented, "You're paying £190 a term to use a microwave."

There have been no significant developments at Murray Edwards since the college responded to the petition last November.

A spokesperson told Varsity: "The College held an Open Meeting at the end of November to discuss these issues with all undergraduates and postgraduates. Following this, the President, Bursar and Senior Tutor invited members of the student working group on rents to meet and go through the figures and concerns in more detail. As yet this offer has not been taken up, but the invitation still stands."



### Topple of the poplar

An 80-year old poplar in Jesus College's orchard toppled in high winds on Thursday morning.

(LOUIS ASHWORTH)



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## News

# Zeichner slams May for 'scape-goating' international students

**Anna Menin**  
Associate Editor

Cambridge's MP Daniel Zeichner has praised the contributions that international students make to the economy, describing them as a "huge benefit".

Zeichner reiterated his support shortly after the publication of a report by the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) which set out the economic costs and benefits of the international students who study in the UK.

The report, which showed findings by constituency, concluded that, on average, international students were worth £310 to the economy for each UK resident.

Cambridge was the constituency where international students had the eighth highest net economic impact – contributing £1460 per Cambridge resident. Zeichner said that the research "shows the huge benefit that we get from international students, in concrete figures – let alone the community benefit we gain from having a diverse society."

He also criticised Prime Minister

Theresa May's plans to keep international students in immigration targets, describing her stance as "nonsense". She has also been opposed on the issue by many Conservative backbenchers.

Zeichner's comments follow a letter signed by seven mayors seeking to "highlight the profound and positive impact international students have on our cities and regions", which was published by the *Financial Times* yesterday. The signatories include Sadiq Khan and the Conservative mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, James Palmer.

It said that the immigration system should acknowledge "the vital contribution international students make to regional jobs and growth." They emphasised that "latest recruitment figures show that we have seen a slowdown in recent years, compared to many of our leading competitors."

Zeichner criticised the prime minister's "ideological scape-goating" of international students, and echoed the letter's concerns that numbers of international students in the UK have been flatlining since 2010.



### Don on a ramp-age

A video of Wolfson's praelector, Brian Cox, scootering down the college's new ramp received thousands of views online.

(WOLFSON COLLEGE)



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## Doku defends 'snowflakes' at parliamentary inquiry

**Oliver Guest**  
Senior News Correspondent

Former CUSU president Amatey Doku has told a parliament that the narrative of students being "snowflakes" is "not based in fact".

The current NUS vice-president for higher education told Wednesday's session of the Joint Committee on Human Rights that there is a "tiny pool" of examples of students trying to restrict speech with which they don't agree.

His words clash directly with those of recently-removed universities minister Jo Johnson, who claimed that no-platforming and safe-spaces are putting free speech in universities "under threat". He said that universities could be "fined, suspended or ultimately deregistered" if they fail to uphold free speech.

Doku told the committee that "we need to respond to the evidence and not respond to the very strange narrative we have nowadays that students are snowflakes". He said that "issues to do with bringing in speakers" are "barely on the agenda at all" for students.

Several witnesses questioned the government's Prevent policy, including Wes Streeting MP, former president of both CUSU and the NUS, who said that "Prevent has more impact on freedom of speech than anything else". Doku criticised in particular the ambiguity in Prevent's definition of extremism as "vocal and active opposition to funda-



▲ **Amatey Doku speaking at NUS national conference last year**  
(NUS)

mental British values" when it is "not entirely clear what that means". CUSU president Daisy Eyre welcomed his comments, saying "the constant media narrative of young people as 'snowflakes' who are unable to hear opposing views is distracting from the real issues that are facing students".

In written evidence to the committee, the University of Cambridge said that it is "fully committed" to freedom of speech. It was also the only university out of the four who submitted evidence to explicitly defend safe-space policies.



# Fact check Reports of EU staff Brexodus aren't true – so far



**Analysis**  
**Todd Gillespie**  
Senior News Editor

Alarm about the impact of Brexit on higher education continued this month in *The Independent*, which ran the headline: “More than 2,300 EU academics resign amid warning over UK university ‘Brexodus’”.

The story used data *The Independent* had obtained exclusively from freedom of information requests made by the Liberal Democrats. It highlighted, among other universities, that Cambridge saw 173 EU academic staff leave last year, up from 153 in 2015/16, and 141 in 2014/15. The article was picked up by *Politico* and various higher education news sources.

Predictably, the Liberal Democrats’ education spokeswoman, MP Layla Moran, slammed these reported effects of Brexit, saying that they were “the latest sign of a damaging Brexodus”.

“These valued members of our communities,” she said, were “now voting with their feet.”

However, the Liberal Democrats’ freedom of information requests neglected to ask Cambridge, or any other university, for the number of EU academics that had arrived.

Helpfully, Cambridge has provided figures which show that the number of EU academics joining the institution has in fact risen year on year in the same period featured in *The Independent*: 391 joined in 2014/15 (a net rise of 250), 434 joined in 2015/16 (a net rise of 281), and 509 joined in 2016/17 (a net rise of 336).

“**Brexit bitterness should not preclude careful analysis of the facts**”

Currently, there are just under 4,000 academic staff at Cambridge, including researchers and teaching staff.

While the full impact of Brexit on higher education is yet to be seen, the academic year following the June 2016 referendum saw the highest rise in the number of non-UK EU academic staff in Cambridge in three years (the University did not provide numbers of resignations and arrivals predating 2014/15).

What the figures do not reveal, however, is whether these academics exited the UK higher education sector altogether. As they are, they only record the number of EU academics leaving individual institutions, who could theoretically have gone on to join other universities in the UK.

When *Varsity* put these points to the Liberal Democrats, a spokesperson acknowledged that their conclusions could have been improved by asking universities for arrivals statistics, but reiterated the overall trend of rise in resignations and referred to anecdotal evidence they had received.

In a statement, the Liberal Democrats said that they “deeply value the contribution EU academics bring to UK universities.”

“These figures suggest there has been a worrying rise in EU academics leaving UK universities since the Brexit vote.

“This is an issue that must be looked at in more detail by the government, through a thorough assessment of the impact of Brexit on the university sector.”

A spokesperson for the University of Cambridge said, “The number of academic staff employed by the University of Cambridge fluctuates naturally from year to year. However, the number of non-UK EU academic staff joining the University of Cambridge has been more than double the number of those leaving during each of the past three academic years.

“Though people have left, many more were offered (and accepted) jobs in the same period”.

They continued, “There are multiple reasons for staff’s departure in a highly mobile sector, and they cannot with any degree of certainty all be attributed to Brexit.”

The national picture is, of course, more complex: *Varsity* does not hold the data for EU arrivals at all 103 UK universities who replied to the Liberal Democrats’ freedom of information requests, although the Russell Group has recently noted that the “lack of [government] clarity is causing considerable concern for EU nationals at our universities and impacting on our ability to recruit talented staff from the EU”.

EU academics bring huge benefits to our University and the higher education sector as a whole, and the government should ensure that they can stay in the UK. Regardless, we should be careful not to let the bitterness of the Brexit debate preclude careful analysis of the facts.



▲ Zero Carbon Society set off smoke grenades at King’s Parade in November (LEFTERIS PAPAROUNAS)

## Divestment campaign pushes on

◀ Continued from front page

to ignore, it is clear that drastic action is required and at a much faster rate than is being taken now. I am very supportive of Cambridge University divesting from the fossil fuel industry and taking a lead on promoting a low carbon economy.”

Two of the three student groups involved in producing the report have voiced hope that the University will now consider divestment a viable prospect.

Marcel Llaveró Pasquina, Cambridge Zero Carbon Society campaigns officer, said: “With both academics and students voting for divestment, the question the Working Group is considering has long been resolved. The working group should be reoriented in considering how Cambridge will achieve divestment. Our report provides practical answers to this particular question and highlights the positive potential of a divestment decision. This collaboration not only demonstrates the widespread support for divestment among students but also proves that divestment is plausible, achievable and necessary.”



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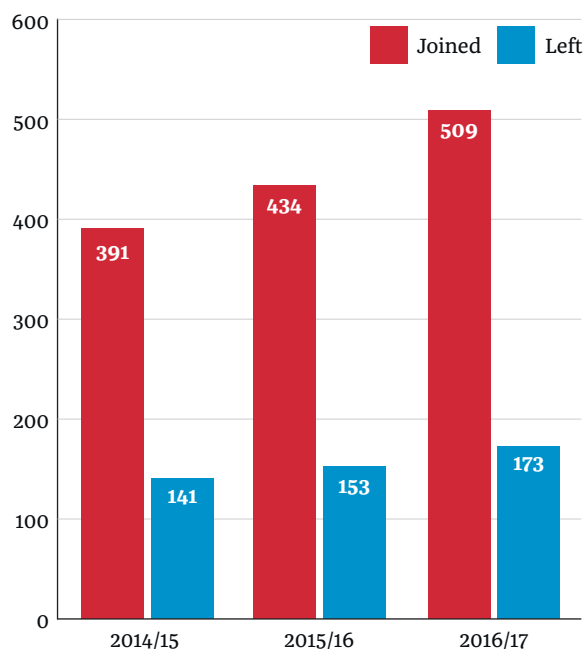
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## Rise in new EU staff

The number of non-UK EU staff who joined the University has risen year-on-year for three years





## News

# Christmas catch-up: Cantabs scoop up honours, taxis hailed back, and higher education in flux

● **Stephanie Stacey and Siyang Wei round up six weeks worth of goings-on in Cambridge and beyond**

### THE SAGA ENDS?

## Full and simple class lists opt-out finally offered

On December 11th, a proposal was passed by the University Council which, if approved by Regent House, will give students the choice to remove their names from the class lists, both in print and online.

A simple tick-box will replace the current lengthy and difficult opt-out process.

Peter Tompkins dismissed fears that the new system would threaten the future of the Tompkins Table, which ranks colleges by Tripos results, saying that he “would not personally expect a deluge of students to wish to absent their names from the results list.”

### HERE TO STAY

## Uber's Licence extended for another five years

Users of the popular ride-hailing service Uber may rest assured that they will be able to continue making use of the service in Cambridge for at least the next five years, after the city council approved the renewal of their licence for operation.



▲ Cab companies were unimpressed by Uber's arrival (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

Although Uber's operations in Cambridge only began in late 2016, the company claim that more than 75,000 people have already used their app in the city. A spokesperson for Uber said the company was “delighted”.



◀ Protestors kick back at Oxfam's Sidgwick Beach (LOUIS ASHWORTH)



▲ The Cambridge Union, a prominent site for debate in Cambridge (OM285)

## SAFETY FOR SAFE SPACES Cambridge defends 'safe spaces'

Cambridge was the only one out of four universities to explicitly defend the use of safe spaces in its evidence submitted to a parliamentary committee inquiry into free speech on campus, saying that it “supports unequivocally the right of students to meet in safe spaces”.

The University noted and defended the use of safe spaces by CUSU's autonomous campaigns, including some meetings of the Women's, BME, and LGBT+ Campaigns, as well as by FLY.

However, they were keen to differentiate between safe spaces and ‘no-platforming’, which they warned “could be contrary” to the University's statement on freedom of speech.

### SUMMER IN SIDGWICK

## Oxfam create a beach to protest tax havens

The Sidgwick site briefly shifted season in November, when Oxfam Cambridge University (Oxfam) set up a mock ‘tax haven’ beach, replete with relaxing bankers.

The protest follows revelations last November that the University and several colleges have indirectly invested millions in tax havens. Oxfam President Miriam Quinn criticised this behaviour, arguing that it deprives governments of funds “to provide vital services for their people”.



◀ Trinity fresher Lewis Croney featured with his mother and rapper Professor Green in *Working Class White Men* (UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE/TOM WILLIAMS)

### SHORT, BUT NOT SWEET

## Toby Young's short-lived OfS career

The appointment of Toby Young to the board of the Office for Students at the start January sparked controversy, due to comments he had made on social media as well as during his career as a journalist.

Shortly following his appointment, Young deleted almost 50,000 tweets, including numerous crude references to women's breasts and several derogatory comments about gay men. Attention was also drawn to an essay he had written in 2015, which argued for “progressive eugenics”, as well as a 2004 article in which he recounted a night spent dressing as a woman in order to assault lesbians.

Almost 100 Cambridge academics signed an open letter describing Young as “a serial purveyor of misogynist, homophobic, racist and ableist commentary.” CUSU President Daisy Eyre condemned him as “ableist, classist and sexist”. After only eight dramatic days, Young resigned, prompting celebrations from Cambridge staff and students alike.

However, some commentators have not abated their warnings that the creation of the OfS marks the final step in the marketisation of higher education.



▲ Young resigned after only eight days (YOUTUBE/CHANNEL 4 NEWS)

### MATHMO ON TV

## Fresher featured on 'Working Class White Men'

Trinity College Mathematics fresher Lewis Croney was featured on *Working Class White Men*, a Channel 4 documentary that aired in early January. As the title suggests, the show follows the lives of six young working class white men.

Presented by Professor Green, a rapper from Hackney, the documentary aims to explore the “identity crisis” that he believes is facing members of the social group currently least likely to attend university in Britain.

### SHELL-ING OUT

## Shell Director 'proud' of controversial Nigerian operations

Footage emerged of a Shell director saying he is “fundamentally proud” of the country's record in Nigeria, taken only a week before Amnesty International accused the company of close involvement in human rights abuses in the country's Ogoniland region during the 1990s.

The controversial remarks were made on November 20th by Andrew Brown, a member of the Royal Dutch Shell executive committee, at the Shell annual lecture. The event was affiliated with the University and held at Emmanuel College.

The release of the Paradise Papers earlier in November revealed the University's indirect investment in Royal Dutch Shell through an offshore fund.

The company is also under investigation by Dutch authorities for alleged corruption during a 2011 oilfield purchase in Nigeria.

### DOING THE HONOURS

## Cantabs clean up in New Years Honours

The New Year's honours list named at least 14 members of the University community, including actor Hugh Laurie and former deputy prime minister Nick Clegg. This year's list was drawn up under new guidance by Theresa May, to reward “genuine public service.”

However, Clegg proved to be a controversial addition to the list, having recently lost his Sheffield Hallam parliamentary seat, and having faced public outcry for breaking his party's election pledges during the coalition government.

Other notable honourees include Professor Sir Keith Peters, an honorary fellow of Christ's and Clare Hall who was the head of the School of Clinical Medicine until 2005; Sir Christopher Geidt, a Trinity Hall alumnus and former private secretary to the Queen; and Sir Kenneth Olisa, an alumnus of Fitzwilliam College who endowed their Olisa Library together with his wife.

## Honoured Cantabs include...

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Christopher Geidt, GCB  
Demis Hassabis, CBE  
Sir Anthony Habgood  
Jane Humphries, CBE  
Hugh Laurie, CBE  
Suzannah Lishman, CBE  
Philip Rutnam, KCB  
Keith Peters, GBE  
Sir Kenneth Olisa  
Ian Goodyer, OBE  
Tina Barsby, OBE  
Suranga Chandratillake, OBE

### CUSU CALL TO ARMS

## NSS boycott renewed for 2018

CUSU and Cambridge Defend Education launched their campaign to boycott the 2018 National Student Survey (NSS) earlier this month, after last year's campaign saw Cambridge omitted from the 2017 survey results.

Campaigners are calling for final-year students to avoid filling in the survey in order to oppose the government's marketing reforms to higher education, particularly the Teaching Excellence Framework, which could use NSS data to facilitate a differentiated yearly tuition fee increase.

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## Interview

## Malcolm Rifkind



‘The EU was designed to fix something which was never broken in Britain’

Josh Kimblin meets the former Foreign Secretary to discuss Britain's place in Europe, now and in the past

As a visual guide to the last 40 years of British politics, Sir Malcolm Rifkind's office is difficult to beat. The walls are punctuated with photos of past cabinets and, in the corner, sits his ministerial box. As one of five Ministers to remain in office throughout the 18 years of the Thatcher and Major administrations, serving as Defence Minister and Foreign Secretary under the latter, the photos are suitably numerous.

I've come to hear Rifkind's reflections on British relations with Europe, past and present. The date of our meeting, 22nd November, is significant: it is Budget Day, but also the 27th anniversary of Thatcher's resignation – he “remember[s] the day vividly”.

We begin with the past. Hoping for an insider's perspective, I ask how the decisions taken during Rifkind's time in office, including the creation of the single market and the Maastricht Treaty, contributed to the broader rise of Euro-scepticism within the Conservative Party.

“These were important events, certainly,” he agrees. “But their causation relates to a much more existential question about what kind of union the EU intended to be.

“The fact that the Conservative party moved from one view – pro-Europe – to a Eurosceptic position did not happen in a vacuum. It wasn't an internal Conservative wrangle; it reflected the dynamic towards ‘ever-closer Union’.

“When we joined, it is perfectly fair to say that the British should have realised that the European Community wasn't static. Nobody could have predicted how far and how fast it would go towards an integrated Europe, although the likely direction was never in doubt.

“But that was not how it seemed – nor



as much as it threatened continental European countries... Britain has never had the isolationist aspiration which the Americans occasionally yearn for.”

This analysis would leave historians spluttering with caveats but it is quite persuasive. Cheekily, I ask whether he agrees with the *Yes, Minister* dictum that, for 500 years, Britain's foreign policy been to create a ‘disunited Europe’?

“These are marvellous lines,” he laughs, “rather like Lord Ismay's comment about the purpose of NATO being to ‘keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.’” Ever the politician, though, he adds that Sir Humphrey's characterisation is “a gross parody of reality”.

Turning to the present, Rifkind strikes an optimistic tone about the long-term trajectory of British relations with Europe. “We still have a strategic, geopolitical interest in working extremely closely with those in Europe who want co-operation.”

When I ask how this co-operation might proceed, he points to the precedent of including Germany as part of the Iran nuclear deal. “When the Iran negotiations were handed to the P5 nations in the United Nations Security Council, those states agreed that Germany had to be included to make the approach credible. So it became the ‘P5+1’. The equivalent we need is an ‘EU+1’.”

“We have the most important military capability and most important intelligence agencies in Europe. Our defence budget is the largest. These are assets for Europe as a whole, if it chooses to use them.”

So will the long-term diplomatic impact of Brexit not be as great as many currently assume? Rifkind demurs: “I would put it slightly differently – I think it *need* not have a large impact. If there is a mutual interest then, once we get over the rhetorical differences and initial hurt over our departure – and hurt is a better word than anger – then the substantive foreign policy issues should be resolved quite easily.”

Rifkind is a master of fine distinctions and diplomatic phrasing: given the tenor of the Brexit negotiations, the phrase “rhetorical differences” seems like an understatement.

However, his recognition that the fallout from Brexit “need not” – but *might* – be exaggerated relates to a broader shift in Britain's diplomatic outlook. Whereas Rifkind's brand of diplomacy is pragmatism personified, his incumbent successors are driven by almost entirely ideological convictions.

Tellingly, one of his few critical comments is directed at advocates of the ‘no deal is better than a bad deal’ argument. “There are some prominent backbenchers who do not currently carry responsibility for policy and are therefore at liberty to propose ideal alternatives which nobody seriously believes are tenable.” He mentions no names.

As I thank him for his hospitality, it is difficult not to wonder whether current politicians ought to take a leaf from Rifkind's textbook of discretion and pragmatism.

how it was sold – to the British public at the time.” As he points out, Wilson and Heath agreed to “a trading organisation but not an incipient United States of Europe.”

“Since then, the UK has always measured its success in Europe by its opt-outs: from the single currency, from Schengen, from a European armed force. On balance, I took the view that the benefits outweighed the disadvantages; others argued that it was unsustainable.”

This is a clear analysis. However, if Euroscepticism can be found across Europe, why did it find such dramatic articulation in Britain? To answer, Rifkind offers a reflection on Britain's longer-term relationship with Europe, rooted in the differences between the British and continental experiences of the past century.

“For most of Europe, the twentieth century was a lousy century, with two World Wars, communism, fascism and Nazism,” he begins. “Democracy and the rule of law have been fragile. Membership of the EU has been seen as an insurance policy for Europe's democratic institutions; you surrender part of your sovereignty to strengthen those values.

“The United Kingdom has these values but sees no need to insure them. We have not been invaded for a thousand years. Unlike every other continental country, except perhaps Sweden, our rule of law system has not been threatened since Oliver Cromwell. Our distinctive experience has given us a sense of identity... the European Union was designed to

fix something which was never broken in Britain.”

Rifkind's analysis identifies pragmatism as the central tenet of British foreign policy – a principle incorporated into the title of his memoirs, *Power and Pragmatism*. “The British view is that we share sovereignty where there is obvious benefit,” he explains, pointing to the creation of NATO and the single market. “What we don't do is share sovereignty for idealistic reasons, or for a great vision of a united Europe.”

If we extend Rifkind's thought process, which implies a ‘deep narrative’ behind the surface details, then another feature of Britain's relationship with Europe becomes apparent: every time Britain has withdrawn from continental affairs, it has become involved again. Is this a trend which we should expect to continue post-Brexit?

“It's a good point you raise and it's very relevant,” he acknowledges. “Despite being an island, whenever Britain has seen European stability threatened by one state or another, it has not only sided with those threatened, but chosen to be militarily involved.”

“It started with Marlborough, at Blenheim; it continued with Napoleon. In neither case were we physically threatened with invasion: most of the continent would have been happy if we'd remained neutral. But, far from being isolationist, we took the view that if Louis XIV dominated Europe, if Napoleon dominated Europe, or the Kaiser, or Hitler, or Stalin, that threatened us

▲ Sir Malcolm Rifkind speaking at a foreign policy event

(FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE)

“ Britain has never had the isolationist aspirations which the Americans yearn for ”



POWER AND PRAGMATISM  
BY SIR MALCOLM RIFKIND

◀ Rifkind's memoirs, published in 2016, offer an account of his time in office (AMAZON UK)



STYLE AND SUBSTANCE

## Sartorial success on University Challenge

Fitzwilliam College's Theo Howe has risen to online fame as a result of his fashion statement, debuted on Monday night's *University Challenge*. The student sported a multi-coloured bow in his hair, which quickly achieved something of a cult status on Twitter. While not universally admired, most commenters complimented the stylish addition – one Tweet praised Howe by asking him to “take a bow”. Reverend Richard Coles, Howe's proud godfather, took to Twitter to offer his support for Howe's “ravishing” choice of accessory. The Fitzwilliam team demonstrated academic flair too in



▲ Howe and his bow appeared on Monday's edition of *University Challenge* (BBC)

their defeat of Magdalen College Oxford, which guarantees them a place in the quarter-finals.

CAM PRESS REGULATION

## Ofcan't think of anything better to do

Casting a critical eye over Cambridge journalism with the tagline “We're making Cambridge's student media work for everyone”, Ofcam has undertaken the unenviable task of offering media-themed metaphysics, in the form of opinion on opinion, journalism on journalism. Inspired by media regulator Ofcom, Ofcam says its purpose is purely to entertain, although the size of its readership is yet to be seen. Since its inauguration earlier this term, the site has already graced the internet with articles including ‘Tab and Union in bed again’ and ‘TCS goes ersatz’.

SCRUBS UP WELL

## Uni gallery buys prison soap art

A sculpture in soap has arrived at an art gallery in Cambridge. The artwork, based on Auguste Rodin's *Gates of Hell*, was carved by stonemason Tom Phillips during his two-and-a-half year spell in prison. Phillips, who incurred his sentence for owning an antique pistol, said the sculpture became a reminder of his family during his incarceration. The sculpture has been purchased at a cost of £800 by Stuart Stone, curator of the permanent collection of the Radzinowicz Library at the Institute of Criminology.

MONDAZED

## Double rainbow stuns Cambridge

Cambridge residents were amazed by the appearance of a double rainbow on Monday. Photographers expressed their delight with a flurry of scenic shots shared on social media. The Cambridge Observatory's astronomical mouse, Astronimouse, was among the first to share snaps. This most recent phenomenon is the latest in a series of meteorological exhibitions, following December's red sky. This week's double rainbow added to Cambridge's reputation as a scenic hotspot, setting the bar sky-high for 2018.



# Academics will vote on strike action today amid ongoing pension dispute

Rosie Bradbury  
Senior News Correspondent

In an ongoing dispute over changes to academics' pensions, a ballot for national strike action issued by the UK's largest higher education trade union will close today.

The Cambridge branch of the University and College Union (UCU) has strongly advocated against the changes proposed by Universities UK (UUK), which replaces the ‘defined benefit’ fund for incomes under £55,000 to a ‘defined contribution’ fund.

The UCU argues that the ‘defined contribution’ scheme is riskier, as incomes depend on returns from money invested in the stock market and offer academics no guaranteed income in retirement. UCU General Secretary Sally Hunt has cited analysis by financial planning firm Tilney Bestinvest, which has found that the best ‘defined benefit’ schemes are five times more generous than ‘defined contribution’ schemes.

However, the UUK, a university advocacy group, has cited an increasingly precarious financial position of the university sector's largest pension scheme, the University Superannuation Scheme (USS). It estimates that the USS currently has a £12.6bn financial deficit, a figure the UCU disputes.

Discussions between five UUK representatives, five UCU representatives, and an independent chair will take place in a Joint Negotiating Committee next week. The outcomes of the committee, and the results of the ballot, will determine the likelihood of strike action.

As mandated by trade union laws, the ballot must have at least 50% turnout amongst University of Cambridge members for academics to take industrial action, as the ballot is on an institution-by-institution basis.

If the Joint Negotiating Committee does not reach an agreement, the UCU plans for industrial action to take place in February. The UCU has warned of



▲ UCU last staged a walkout in May 2016 (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

potential “chaos” across 50 UK higher-education institutions if the issue is not resolved, where lecturers may refuse to reschedule classes or substitute for sick colleagues.

Cambridge UCU Pensions Representative Richard Farndale told *Varsity* that if a strike occurs, the Cambridge UCU is optimistic that it will prevent the implementation of a defined contribution scheme for USS pensions.

Farndale noted that such a change would create “a gross disparity in terms and conditions between different parts of the [Higher Education] sector”, and stressed that “an important part of the attractiveness of [Higher Education] as

a career path is that it offers a good, secure pension”.

In the meeting held by the Cambridge UCU, academics raised concerns over the potentially adverse effects of a strike on students, and whether any negotiation reached would simply be a temporary fix, as pensions are scheduled for re-evaluation every three years.

UCU Higher Education Committee Representative Amanda Williams responded to such concerns by arguing that “students wanting to go into academia stand to lose the most” under the UUK proposals, as their pension would be entirely under a ‘defined contribution’ scheme.

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Science

# Why don't facts change people's mind?

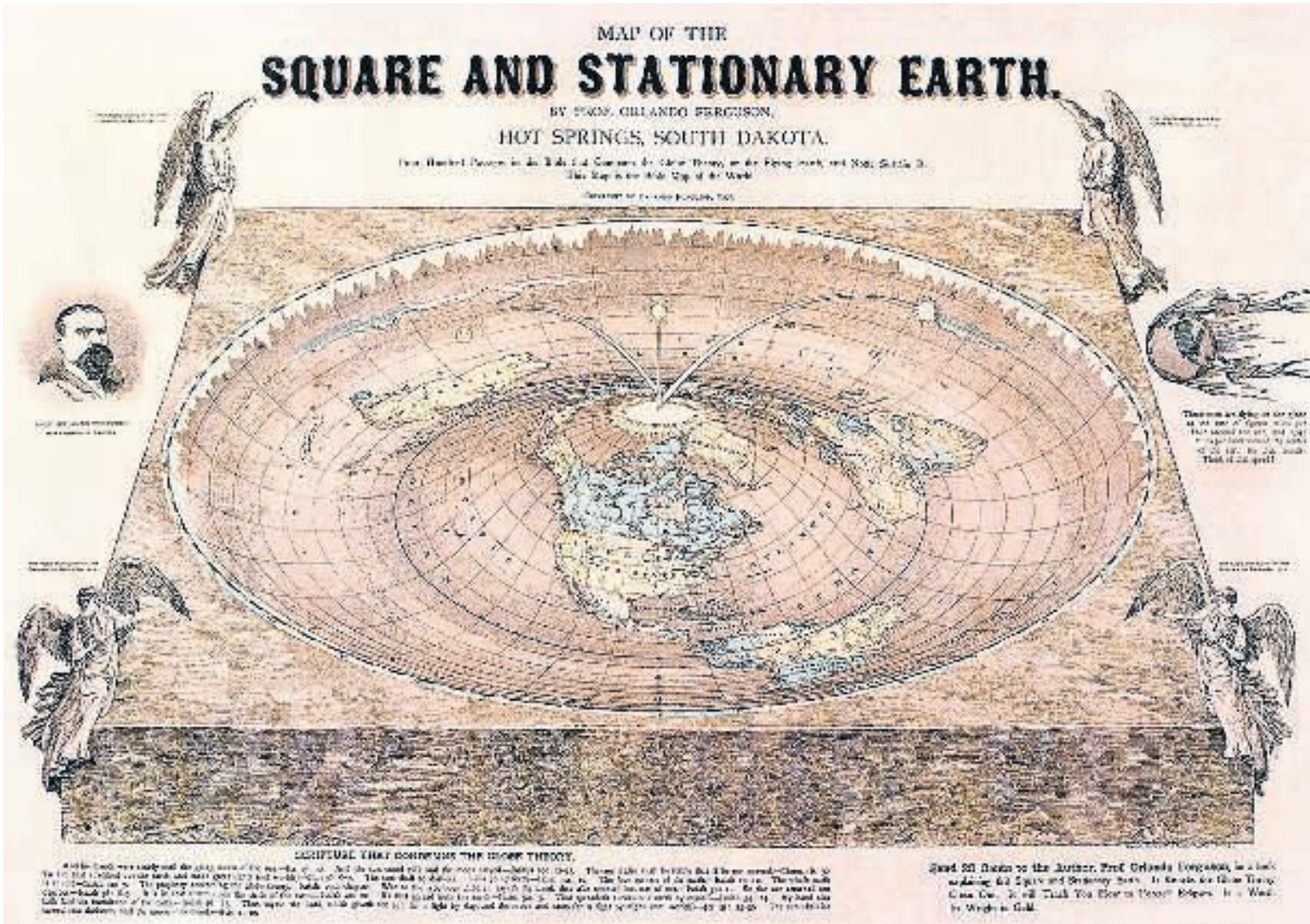
*In the era of post-truth politics, cognitive psychology shows why our brains are fighting the facts*

Ben Teasdale

Aron Ra, former President of the Atheist Alliance of America, has spent much of his life advocating secular politics and humanist values in America's 'Bible Belt'. Addressing an audience in the Cambridge Union Library on Wednesday, most of his anecdotes were of defeat. His arguments defending scientific facts consistently failed to convince believers. His talk begged the question: Why?

While the ascendance of post-truth politics is largely recent, psychologists have been studying similar phenomena for decades. In the 1950s, social psychologist Leon Festinger famously studied the fallout of a failed doomsday claim. Dorothy Martin, a Chicago suburbanite turned prophet, earned a cult following after claiming 'Guardians' from another planet were coming to save them. Even after the date of the supposed apocalypse passed without reckoning, group members failed to admit any error, instead doubling down on their proselytising.

These and other observations formed the foundation of Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance, the often extreme resistance to information contradicting personal beliefs, ideals or values.



The latest news in the home of scientific endeavour

To apply to edit Varsity Science, send a short critique of the section, along with examples of writing to applications@varsity.co.uk by Tuesday 23rd January.

▲ A “Flat-Earth” map drawn by Orlando Ferguson in 1893. (ORLANDO FERGUSON, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS)

Far from a fringe theory of flat-earthers and doomsday prophets, cognitive dissonance is an inherent aspect of human consciousness. Festinger, for instance, studied people's smoking habits, observing that people addicted to smoking generally ignored facts about lung cancers. In fact, a study from Yale University provides evidence that more intelligent people may be more adept at changing data to fit their preexisting beliefs. The mind resists change.

Yet, not all information is held equal before the brain. More recently, modern neuroscience research has shown how our brains process counterevidence differently. Jonas Kaplan, a psychologist at the University of Southern California, presented facts and counterevidence to participants inside an fMRI scanner. Facts drew from topics as politically charged as abortion and immigration to less controversial topics like fluoride. He found that new information did not change how people understood abortion; but this was not the case for fluoride.

In his study, published in *Scientific Reports* in 2016, Kaplan showed that political challenges activated structures of the brain associated with social identity: “Challenges to political beliefs produced increased activity in the default mode network – a set of interconnected structures associated with self-representation”.

Political arguments also showed increased activation of emotional centers of the brain, as Kaplan found that “participants who changed their minds more

“When it comes to personal beliefs, facts don't seem to matter much”

showed less BOLD signal [an fMRI technique] in the insula and the amygdala when evaluating counterevidence.”

While neuroimaging studies such as this cannot reliably indicate mechanism, it is clear the brain has multiple ways of handling new information. Information becomes personal, and intertwined with neural structures of emotion and identity. When it comes to personal beliefs, facts don't seem to matter much.

Cognitive dissonance seems a flaw of human nature – an evolved cognitive defect rendering people resistant to understanding evolution. Following a crude logic of natural selection, organisms more adept at learning new information should stand a better chance of survival. A wolf-skeptic may not fare as well as modern-day climate change deniers. Yet, cognitive dissonance persists. If cognitive dissonance is really so bad, why hasn't evolution corrected it?

Cognitive scientists Hugo Mercier and Dan Sperber, in their book *The Enigma of Reason*, provide an alternate theory: “Reason developed not to enable us to solve abstract, logical problems or even to help us draw conclusions from unfamiliar data. Rather, it developed to resolve the problems posed by living in collaborative groups.” Cognitive dissonance didn't evolve as an obstacle to rationality, but to help people collaborate.

At the end of the talk, I asked Ra how many creationists show up to his events: “Fewer and fewer,” he replied. Both groups, it seemed, had discovered they weren't going to win the argument.



# Love, actually: the neural basis of love

**Shoomena Anil**  
*explores the chemistry of falling in love*

Romantic love is a fundamental drive; a mechanism for survival. Contrary to the anatomy referenced by many of our favourite artists, love is not rooted in the heart but in the brain.

The principles of attraction involve pathways in the brain analogous to those that control 'reward behaviour'. Advances in technology, such as fMRI scanning, have shown the involvement of two brain areas in the love pathway: the ventral tegmental area (VTA) and the caudate nucleus. The VTA is old in evolutionary terms, forming a part of the primitive neural network. It is associated with pleasure, focused attention, and the motivation to pursue rewards, while the caudate nucleus is a region associated with reward detection and expectation. Both these regions undergo high rates of activity when people are shown a photo of someone they are intensely attracted to, compared to when they are shown someone they feel neutral towards.

Unpredictability, mystery and sexual attraction induce hyper-stimulation of

the brain's fear centre, the amygdala. This signals to the adrenal glands, which in turn pump a surge of adrenaline, noradrenaline, and cortisol into the bloodstream. Your heart rate increases, your skin flushes and you sweat a little. Sounding a little familiar? I thought so.

Simultaneously, first attractions trigger the release of high levels of dopamine. Dopamine activates the same reward circuits that drug addicts use cocaine or heroin to stimulate. In other words, during the early stages of love, you crave the person because they induce a good feeling.

The powerful physical attraction that these transmitters cause could underlie the basis of what most people would call 'love at first sight'. Indeed, a study has suggested that it may just be this strong sense of attraction that people identify as love, either instantaneously in the moment or in retrospect.

As you spend more time with that special someone, a different arsenal of neurotransmitters and hormones orchestrate your feelings. As well as dopamine, levels of oxytocin and vasopressin are boosted. In contrast, the stress hormone cortisol is decreased.

Oxytocin, also known as the love hormone, is heightened by skin-to-skin contact and sex, deepening feelings of

attachment and provoking contentment, calmness, and security. Vasopressin is linked to behaviour that produces long-term, monogamous relationships.

The contrasting yet complementing behaviour induced by these two phases of hormone release may explain the stereotype that passionate love fades as attachment grows. However, in a study that compared couples who had been married an average of 21 years with couples who were newly in love, the same intensity of activity in dopamine-rich areas of the brain was found. Thus, in the long term, the excitement of romance can remain while the apprehension is lost.

In addition, attraction seems to lead to a reduction in serotonin levels. Interestingly, a similar reduction in serotonin occurs in people who suffer from obsessive-compulsive disorder. Low serotonin levels thus possibly precipitate the overpowering infatuation that characterises the beginning stages of love. Likewise, heartbreak is also associated with low serotonin, and this could potentially underlie the obsession that some people feel after a break-up.

Romantic love is distinguished from platonic love by high levels of arousal or strong emotions. Whilst platonic love is also associated with the release of oxy-



▲ Hugh Grant and Martine McCutcheon receive a dose of oxytocin (AMAZON PRIME)

tocin and vasopressin, it lacks the neurotransmitters that induce the fervour and intensity of romantic love. Thus the differentiation between platonic and romantic love arises due to a unique pattern of neural signatures.

Love also shuts down the neural ma-

chinery fundamental to making critical assessments of other people and generating rational behaviour, including parts of the prefrontal cortex.

In short, love makes us dumb. Perhaps it is this that underlies the saying 'love is blind'.

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# Opinion

## The left must not allow justice to become partisan

*All politicians must take action on sexual assault claims, irrespective of their party*



Rhiannon Melliar-Smith is a second year at Trinity Hall doing HSPS

Rhiannon Melliar-Smith

During the usually un-newsworthy period between Christmas and New Year, *Saturday Night Live* star turned big-shot Democrat, Al Franken, gave his first public speech since announcing his resignation as a Senator for Minnesota in the wake of sexual harassment claims. For many, Franken's departure represented a turning point in the left's approach to sexual harassment in its own ranks. But his speech elicited a wave of mourning among Democrats, as well as infighting just months before the midterm elections. At best, negative reactions to Franken's resignation have been hypocritical; at worst, they demonstrate unchecked misogyny.

The politicisation of sexual harassment claims has been blatant. Defenders of Franken cite his votes on women's issues as arguments against his resignation. Why is it fair that Donald Trump, a known misogynist and alleged abuser, sits in the Oval Office, while a man whom the left deem ideologically sound should exit the political arena? Surely, women are served well by Franken, who votes consistently in favour of reproductive rights? Perhaps people forget that public service is not a right, but a privilege. Yet Franken's resignation, for many, was simply bad politicking. Indeed, a Public Policy Polling Survey conducted

“The truth is that sexual assault is not a partisan issue”



▲ Gillibrand received criticism after calling for resignations in her party (CHRISTOPHER MUNCEY)

last month found that Republicans supported Franken's resignation 71-19, while Democrats opposed it 71-22.

True, Franken's legislative record is undeniably pro-women. His votes have served to advance women's rights to a greater degree than many Republican Senators. This, however, does not excuse his engagement in a culture of unchecked sexism. I am reminded of a scene from *The West Wing*. “It's bad politics, but for good reasons,” says C.J. “But good men with good reasons shouldn't set precedents for bad men with bad ones,” Toby replies. When people frame responses to sexual harassment in terms of political strategy, they remove focus from justice, and worse, from the victims.

The degree to which the situation has been politicised is most clearly demonstrated in the treatment of Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, who initiated calls among Democrats for Franken's resignation. It is here that one finds tinctures of hypocrisy. The same people who called for Roy Moore's deselection as Republican candidate in light of allegations of sexual assault and child abuse, which he denied, argue also that Gillibrand disregarded due process in calling for Franken's resignation. Gillibrand was deemed “the most devious and cunning politician in America today” by CNN's Matt Lewis. She has been accused of leading a witch hunt, branded disloyal and opportunist, and much worse, in comments on her social media, a space in which outspoken female politicians are all too often subject to sexist abuse.

The trend persists. Minority Leader

Nancy Pelosi appeared hypocritical in her approach to sexual harassment claims against Representative John Conyers, praising women for saying ‘zero-tolerance’ to harassment, yet shying away from condemning Conyers's behaviour. In the British Labour Party, young activist Bex Bailey claimed she was raped by someone within the party and told not to pursue the matter, while the same party frames the Conservatives as an old boys' club amid numerous resignations and harassment claims made against their MPs. Similarly, the left has not shied from discussing President Trump's misogyny. The problem lies in the fact that Democratic President Bill Clinton, with numerous claims of assault against him, is not treated in the same way. In fact, Gillibrand faced a wave of abuse when she recently suggested that Clinton should have resigned 20 years ago.

When people who are otherwise good on the issue of sexual harassment shy away from discussing its occurrence within their own party, they contribute to a culture in which questions of justice and decency become political pawns. The left has been on the right side of history when it comes to women's rights, this is true. But this does not automatically afford them the moral high-ground on women's issues that they so often take for granted. The truth is that sexual assault is not a partisan issue. Progressives can be abusers. Conservatives can be abusers. The left must remain vigilant and check misogyny in its own ranks. Not just for its own integrity, but for the victims, for the future, and for justice.

## Envisaging an impactful and empowered student union

*Connor MacDonald outlines how student representatives can work more effectively and amplify their voices*

Imagine, if you will, a place where you don't just have to pay for university, but you must do so up front. Every September and every January, you have to traipse up to your University's registration office, cheque in hand to pay for your schooling. You might be able to get a loan from the government, but this of course accrues interest, and if you can't get a loan or don't have the money in hand, no university education for you.

From this description, you'd probably think that any sort of reform towards the current UK system would be a large step forward, or at least one in the right direction. You'd likely be even more surprised that, as of this year, those making up to 150% of the median wage now have free tuition, no questions asked.

Not only does this place exist, but it is where I live; the tiny province of New Brunswick, Canada. Last year, the provincial student union secured free tuition for a huge proportion of New Brunswick students. For the rest, tuition fees remain about £4,500. If nothing else, these changes were remarkable in how little fuss they provoked. Students and representatives got to an agreement; we moved on with our lives.

It's difficult – impossible really – to imagine anything remotely similar happening in the UK. Admittedly, this is partly down to the government; scrapping tuition fees is certainly not Conservative Party policy. But the NUS has done nothing – literally nothing – to ensure their credibility with the wider community

and, by extension, make any such reform possible. They do not work with the government – the last NUS President to do that was unceremoniously booted out after one term. They do not even try to be diplomatic: when the VP Education says the government is run by fascists at the NUS Annual Conference in 2016, it's pretty clear communication has broken down.

This would be justified if the government was fascist, corrupt or irrevocably evil. Yet it is abundantly clear that this government, whatever its flaws, is not that. Surely we can all agree on this. But when students make outlandish accusations about elected representatives, we cannot be taken seriously.

Similarly, the semi-annual demonstrations that have become the norm in British politics have done little in the grand scheme of things. Granted, the government did not go through with a planned tuition rise (of £250), but this should hardly be seen as a victory. When was the last time the NUS actually pushed the needle in their direction,

rather than just blocking some minor change?

In Canada, similar protests occurred in Quebec. In response to a £1,000 hike in tuition fees (from £1,500 to £2,500), students poured out onto the streets. They vandalised parts of the University of Montreal, blocked students from attending class, provoking over 3,500 arrests.

Eventually, under the pressure of significant disruption in the downtown centre of Montreal, the government buckled, but not before the credibility of the student movement was well and truly shot. In Quebec there have been no attempts to eliminate tuition fees, which now rise at 3% annually.

In contrast, over three years ago student unions in New

Brunswick sat down with the provincial government. Successive groups of union leadership picked up where the previous left off – relationships were cultivated, support was built within government and within university administrations. In those three years not a single student strike action was called nor a single cabinet minister smeared. The result has been the most revolutionary policy change in Canada in higher education for years. Its impact upon the poorest students will undoubtedly be considerable.

If nothing else, the Canadian example shows there is another, more successful way to do union politics. It simply isn't good enough to be perpetually outraged. If we are actually committed to making a difference, we should expect more from our student unions. Instead of applauding when we hear what we want to hear, we should have higher expectations. Otherwise, we might as well take our bull horns and banners, walk into the middle of Jesus Green and yell at the air.







Ciaran Walsh

# Feminism needs to embrace diversity and difference

Contextual and cultural forces cannot be ignored, says **Joanna Banasik**



Joanna Banasik is a third year at Emmanuel doing HSPS

**Joanna Banasik**

Feminism means different things to each of us. It is as diverse in meaning as our multiplicity of experiences of gendered oppression are. Yet as a result the term has divided us as much as it has united us. Announced as word of the year in 2017 by the Merriam-Webster American dictionary, feminism is a hot topic, but the word itself is far from simple and it is increasingly acknowledged that the equality-focused movement has at times fallen into other prejudicial assumptions, ignoring intersections such as race or sexuality in women's experience of oppression.

Just this week, Emma Watson raised awareness of intersectional feminism, acknowledging the diversity of feminist experiences in the face of accusations, which she realised were far from unfounded, that she was a 'white feminist'. Watson's approach illustrates what the feminist movement needs: dialogue between women, sharing our different but united experiences to shape and change our societies.

My own feminist story started later than some; in Poland, my home country, the term itself is often still stigmatised. Describing oneself as a feminist is a whispered secret among women, yet growing up in Poland I have known incredible women whom I most certainly have come to perceive as feminists. As a young woman, realising that being a woman does not, or at least should not, be a significant source of restriction was a landmark in my own feminist journey. My experience shows that we need to appreciate that the road to feminism is not universal, but dependent upon the individual and their culture; always requiring, to differing degrees, great confidence and bravery among women.

Feminism is context-dependent. While we are united as women we all experience womanhood differently. A successful feminist agenda will allow it to be just that, context-dependent. We can share goals while remaining different. Poland is an example of the effects that a gendered society has on the young. In a recent

World Health Organisation publication, young girls in Poland were shown to have the lowest self-esteem of any in Europe, but such trends are not unique to Poland. As young girls, we are taught, often subliminally, that we should mould our bodies only to fit into male perceptions of femininity, to please men. The male gaze is unavoidable in contemporary society. In order to truly give women and girls the impetus and tools to define and own their own bodies and minds, we need to start recognising the different experiences of women, allowing girls to define and discover themselves without bounds.

In academic discourse feminism has become divided. Too often, I think, as feminists we get caught up in the theoretical distinctions between different factions or branches. Instead, for feminism to feel relevant to the lives of individuals everywhere, we need to focus on what we share. Feminism is a multifaceted ideology; it requires both difference and unity. We thus need to move away from the binary understanding of feminist schools.

Nancy Fraser, an American feminist thinker, reimagines what is one of the most constructive visions of a new feminist agenda. Fraser argues for the recognition of feminism as a complex interconnected web, comprising a plurality of

principles, some of which are equality-focused, others difference-defined. Furthermore, she emphasises that for the state to address injustices in society effectively it needs to account for the intersections in policy and law. Legislative and redistributive agendas need to address gender inequality head-on, acknowledging different experiences of oppression among different women. This, I believe, will be one of the biggest challenges that Western states will face in the future.

I don't support simply an individualistic feminism, or conversely subscribe only to a structural call to arms. In fact, the painting of such approaches as inherently binary is part of the problem. Rather than feminism becoming uniform in perspective, more women need to do as Watson has done: acknowledge their privilege, listen to other voices, and support and empower other women.

We need to further the feminist cause everywhere, accepting that women are empowered in different ways in different contexts. Pushing a single feminist narrative excludes many women. Only an inclusive movement can allow all women to feel strong and empowered on their own terms, not on the terms of men, and not on the terms of other, perhaps often more privileged, women.

“Feminism is a multi-faceted ideology. It requires both difference and unity”



## Opinion

# To matriculate is to capitulate: why is Cambridge so obsessed with labelling?



DAVID ILIFF

On her return to Cambridge, [Hannah Webb](#) considers the social impact of labels, and the dangers of taking them too seriously

Cambridge perhaps furnishes its students with more labels than convention dictates. Inside our bubble, we are tagged by subject and college, by extra-curricular and curricular success. On the outside, we are pegged with that dreaded social slur: 'Wow! You must be so clever!' It seems that once you've signed your name in that big old book you have effectively resigned yourself to three years of tripos-theory (Science: hard. Humanities: doss) and a lifetime as the token egghead. To matriculate, to capitulate – the saying might go.

But why is it that as soon as we find out someone studies English or History, we throb with the injustice of contact hours? Why does 'NatSci' prompt a wince and Geography a wink? What is la-di-da about the arts, and what is stale about the sciences? A similar set of questions might be posed about the college hierarchy – unspoken and yet widely understood. Or even about Cambridge itself – as Plutarch said, 'Barba non facit philosophum'. In other words: just because I have a beard doesn't mean I know all the answers to University Challenge.

What we have here is the Cambridge nervous system: a series of automatic reflexes that lead us to believe we 'know' things about people based on how far their college is from Sainsbury's, or how

many hours they sit in lecture halls, or the fact that they go there at all. We sniff out labels and arrange them neatly into piles, judging people on the basis of hearsay and generalisation – past and present. It begs the question: if Cambridge is supposedly a collection of the brightest minds, fostered by the best education, then why do we still fall victim to the ills of generalisation?

In the basement of a mobile phone warehouse in central Faridabad, the site of a small women's polytechnic university, this question was brought into sharp focus for me. As part of a women empowerment project in the summer of 2017, I travelled to India as a teacher-volunteer. Instructed by the centre's supervisor to focus initial lessons on 'personality development', I found myself standing before a blackboard, chalking my finest stick-woman. Fourteen lines skewered her lonely figure – one label per student.

I waited for the first volunteer to put forward the first 'personality-developing' label. There was little response, so I began: I scraped 'smart' onto the board and fourteen sets of eyes stared blankly back at me. They told me that while they understood the meaning of 'smart', it was my application of it that they could not comprehend. A voice from the back delivered the blow: "Boys are smart; girls are beautiful."



Hannah Webb is in her second year studying English at Fitzwilliam

“Intelligence, for these women, is gendered”

Was this aphorism not born of a belief system similar to that which produces statements like: 'all John's students are indulged', or 'all Cambridge students are elitist'? Is it not, however much we might not like to admit it, underpinned by similar structures of generalisation – of assumption? Intelligence, for these women, is gendered. Etched into their bodies is the notion that their worth, as women, depends on their domestic and aesthetic prowess – from looking nice and keeping house. They have been prescribed a standardised identity. Is such prescription not simply a gendered version of what we do to each other today? I began to wonder: why had I even labelled the figure in the first place? Was my impulse to label my stickwoman another cog in the wheel that had first churned out the offending statement? It was when I questioned the merit in skewering someone with words that 'define' them, that I began to understand the problem for what it really was – not an issue of labels but an issue of their imposition.

Labels can be positive, uniting people together in an empowering way. It is human nature to seek companionship in those we can relate to, and in those who understand us. It is a means by which we can better understand ourselves. Yes, if you are a boy you can be smart. Yes, if you are a girl you can be beautiful. And vice versa. The same follows for our Cambridge equivalents. There is nothing wrong with being what you are expected to be, it is simply important to remember that it is not what you have to be. The labels that you give yourself are touchstones; those that others impose are ceilings.



## The shadow

In his first column, [Naman Habbtom-Desta](#) examines the impact of European intervention in Libya, and why it matters

When seen from Britain, Libya appears as a faraway sandbox separated from this island by two bodies of water and a continental mainland. However, from the beaches of Sicily, it appears as a forsaken land plagued by destruction and mayhem with no imminent prospects. While our attention is turned to Syria in regards to power politics, the possibility that Libya will have a greater long term impact on Europe is more obscure from this side of the channel.

Libya's long term legacy will be the presence of military intervention in Europe's foreign policy. The Security Council resolution that enabled the implementation of a no-fly zone in 2011 was a rare moment where a consensus was reached by the major world powers. This could have formed the basis for future cooperation and trust between the European Union on the one hand and Russia and China on the other. However, instead of harmonious collaboration, distrust emerged as France and the UK, with American support, seemed to move from enforcing a no-fly zone to demanding regime change, an allegation not wholly refuted by those advocating the intervention. When asked if NATO violated the Security Council resolution by going to Tripoli, the former French foreign minister Bernard Kouchner responded '[t]hat's not completely untrue.'

The problem lies not merely in the intervention itself but what it is now understood as. According to General Michael Hayden, former CIA Director,





## of Libya looms large over Europe

possession of a nuclear weapon has become a rational objective for North Korea in light of the demise of Colonel Gaddafi, after the latter disbanded his WMD programme. But nuclear proliferation in northeast Asia is not the only lasting consequence of our reckless conduct; look, for example, at Russian obstructionism towards UN involvement in Syria, and the establishment of a no-fly zone. Thus, the inability to foster a relationship based on trust has resulted in another source of external pressure on Europe. Fortunately, there has been some recognition of this fact. This October, at a joint press conference featuring the Egyptian and French presidents (which was preceded by a meeting on Libya), Macron moved away from the interventionist tradition when he said ‘just as I don’t accept being lectured on how to govern my country, I don’t lecture others.’

The most obvious issue caused by intervention is migration. As a result of the 2016 EU-Turkey refugee deal, the Balkan route fell out of favour among migrants, resulting in the Mediterranean route becoming more popular. Though irregular migration has decreased, it’s difficult to tell if you are Italian. While British media may not emphasise the Libyan component, the people in the south of Europe certainly do. In 2016, I wandered the streets of the Roman-Byzantine city of Ravenna, renowned for its historic churches, where sub-Saharan migrants sat aimlessly in the city centre. Though my grandmother, a native Italian speaker, had herself once fled a war-torn sub-saharan country - replete with the classic tropes of a military junta, rebels/separatists, and famine - she nonetheless remarked with frustration and mild coarse-

▲ Libya’s political impact on Europe might not be as far away as appearances suggest

(LUCA GALUZZI)



ness at the migrant situation.

What will this mean when Italians vote in March? With Italy soon to form its 66th government in 72 years, this founding state of the European Union risks destabilising the pillars that have been foundational in post-war European order. With Austria considering deploying troops to the Italian border, and Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic being taken to court by the European Commission over their unwillingness to resettle refugees from Italy who travelled by way of Libya, will the impact of Libya catalyse in the south, east, or west? ‘We don’t know if Europe will remain an advanced and united continent or if it will be destroyed,’ Gaddafi once said. His prophecy now haunts us.

Though qualitatively better off than Syria and Iraq in terms of living standards, Libya suffers from more intractable problems, and is therefore of greater long term consequence for Europe. The defeat of ISIS by Syrian and Iraqi governments, as well as the growing strength of Damascus and Baghdad in dealing with rebels and Kurdish separatists, illuminates a glaring difference between the Mesopotamian states and Libya: the presence of state institutions. In the years to come, Europe will need, and come to accept, the continuance of the Ba’athist government headed by Bashar al-Assad, while we are left scratching our heads over who is actually the leader of Libya, as two rival governments claim exclusive right to lead. Though some European leaders, such as Merkel and Gentiloni, have sought to circumvent Libya entirely (by reaching out to Chad and Niger in dealing with migration), a solution will ultimately require a functioning Libya at its core.

Libya is not simply a distant failed state. In many ways, it is a geopolitical ‘fourth shore’, as Mussolini once described his former colony.

## Mapping the Difference: the Anglo-Irish familiarity deficit

*Nadia Hourihan laments Britain’s ignorance of their neighbour, and reflects on the detrimental effect this has on Anglo-Irish relations*



In November 2017, a Channel 4 video was doing the rounds on social media. The video records the attempts of British citizens to draw the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Of the five attempts, only one man manages to keep Donegal (a county in the north of Ireland which is nevertheless not in Northern Ireland) within the Republic. Several of the less successful sketches swoop so low as to claim Dublin for the United Kingdom.

However, the accidental conquest of my hometown for Northern Ireland wasn’t the video’s low point. One of the men interviewed in the video declared that “what would really solve the problem, and what would be in everyone’s interests, would be if Ireland left [the EU].” With the EU’s popularity at a record high in Ireland, that looks more than unlikely. All the major Irish political parties have been scrambling to paint themselves as the EU’s best friend, trying their hardest to forget the curses they spat in Brussels’ direction during the bailout years of the Great Recession, when Ireland was made to administer austerity measures in return for EU financial assistance.

Another vox pop from the Channel 4 video went so far as to say that “the Irish are just making trouble because they lost”. What exactly it is that the Irish lost is never elucidated. Perhaps the woman interviewed believes that, straight out of the Russian playbook on how to interfere in international elections and alienate people, the sneaky Irish fleshed out the ranks of the Remoaner 48%. She continues: “Yeah, the southern Irish have to lump it basically, you can’t always have what you want in life”.

It’s enough to make a geography teacher weep.

And anyone who’ll have to “lump it” - whatever that may entail.

But the Channel 4 video’s many horrors are not enough to justify the particular strain of anti-British self-righteousness that rears its head amongst Irish people whenever someone British says something ignorant. It’s important to remember that a canny producer put this video together to court likes, clicks, and retweets - all the easy products of Irish ire at Britain’s apparent unawareness of Irish geography, history and culture.

In an experiment of sorts, I sent unmarked maps of the UK to some of my Irish friends. I asked them to mark in the Scottish and Welsh borders. The results were as you might expect. One friend managed to draw the Scottish border above Edinburgh, which was already marked in on the map. I suspect that the Channel 4 border experiment proves less that the British are startlingly callous, but rather that we’re all crummy cartographers. The memory of my friend’s mother discussing Ireland’s 39 counties (a number only achievable if we were to invade and conquer Scotland) dem-

onstrates that the we all might need a little extra tuition. We should probably deal with the plank in our own eyes before moaning about the speck in our neighbour’s.

Some argue that the horrors the Irish have experienced at the hands of the British justify any sneer and snigger at our neighbour’s expense. This kind of bloody account keeping should be avoided. Just because one actor wrongs another, doesn’t mean we revert to an antediluvian justice system. Why is it that an eye-for-an-eye sounds so much more tempting when it’s your turn to dig your fingers into someone’s sockets?

This is not to say that the Irish don’t have legitimate grievances when it comes to our neighbourly relations (or lack thereof). Alarm bells should sound whenever British politicians, often with ministerial portfolios depressingly relevant to Ireland, flaunt ignorance of their neighbour. In June, David Davis should have known better than to email an official in the Department of the Taoiseach requesting a meeting with “Kenny”. A senior Irish diplomat promptly responded to the Secretary of State for the Department of Exiting the European Union to remind him that “(a), the Taoiseach is not Davis’s interlocutor and (b), you don’t refer to the Prime Minister of a country by his surname”.

At least Davis got the surname right, unlike his Conservative colleague Bernard Jenkin, who cited “Enda Kelly” as one of the “former Taoiseachs, Prime Ministers of Northern Ireland” in support of his claims that Irish efforts to stave off a hard border were manufactured by the EU for extra negotiating leverage.

Whether it’s former Conservative Party leader Iain Duncan Smith blaming Irish presidential elections (the Irish President is never more than a much-loved figurehead) for December’s negotiating deadlock, Jacob Rees Mogg’s suggestion that the deadlock was due to a motion of no confidence in Ireland’s Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) who had already resigned from office, or Lord Kilclooney referring to the current Taoiseach as “the Indian” it’s difficult not to look across the sea and sigh.

The Irish are not right to look down their noses at the British people’s every small misstep, but they are right to demand that Her Majesty’s Government educate themselves. The British people, no more clueless than their Irish neighbors, deserve better informed representatives. Not only is this parade of ignorance damaging to Anglo-Irish relations, but to the rest of the world this ignorance looks at best distasteful, and at worse speaks of a lazy unpreparedness which other nations may seek to exploit in future negotiations. The British people need a government that can do its homework.

We have lots to learn, and lots, I hope, to learn from each other.



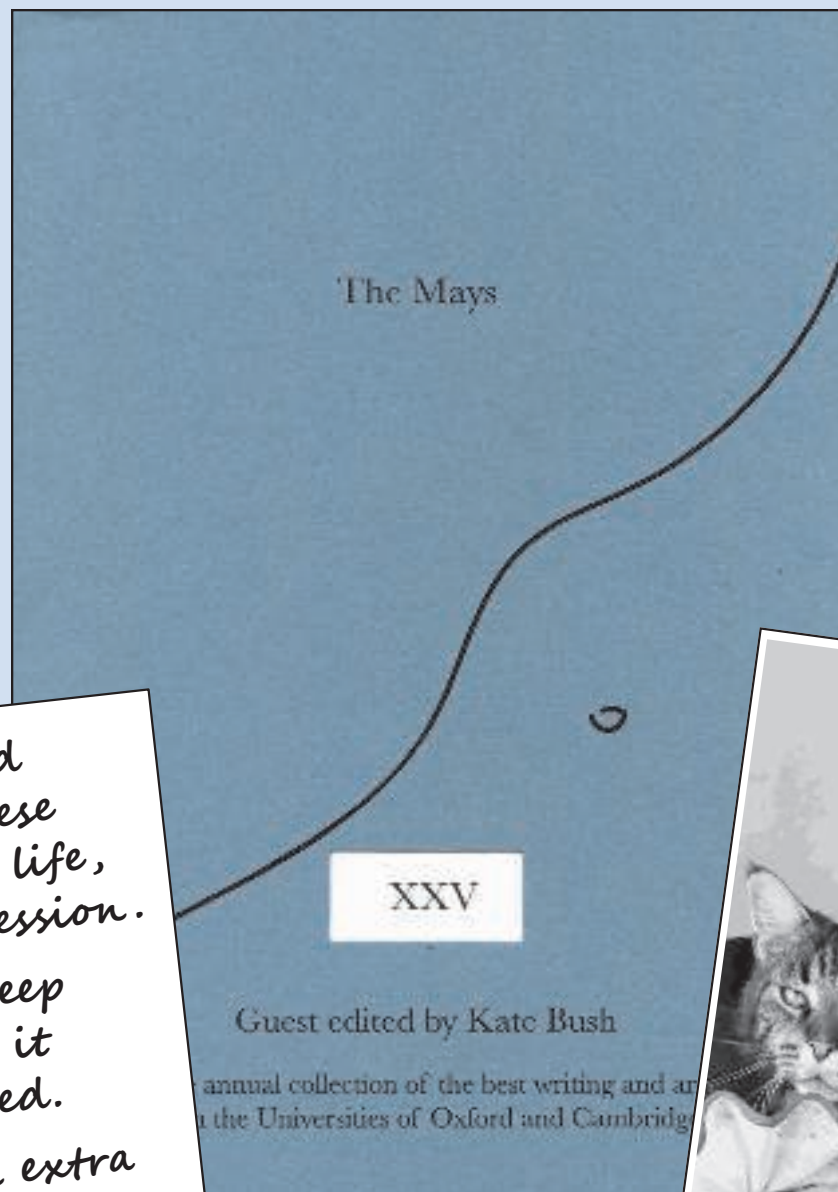
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# The Mays XXV

The annual collection of the best new student writing  
and art from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge

Guest edited by Kate Bush



*I really enjoyed  
reading all these  
poems. Full of life,  
fun and expression.*

*I wanted to keep  
them all but it  
wasn't allowed.*

*I sneaked an extra  
one in.*

*Kate Bush*



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# Vulture

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## Virtual romance: escaping norms

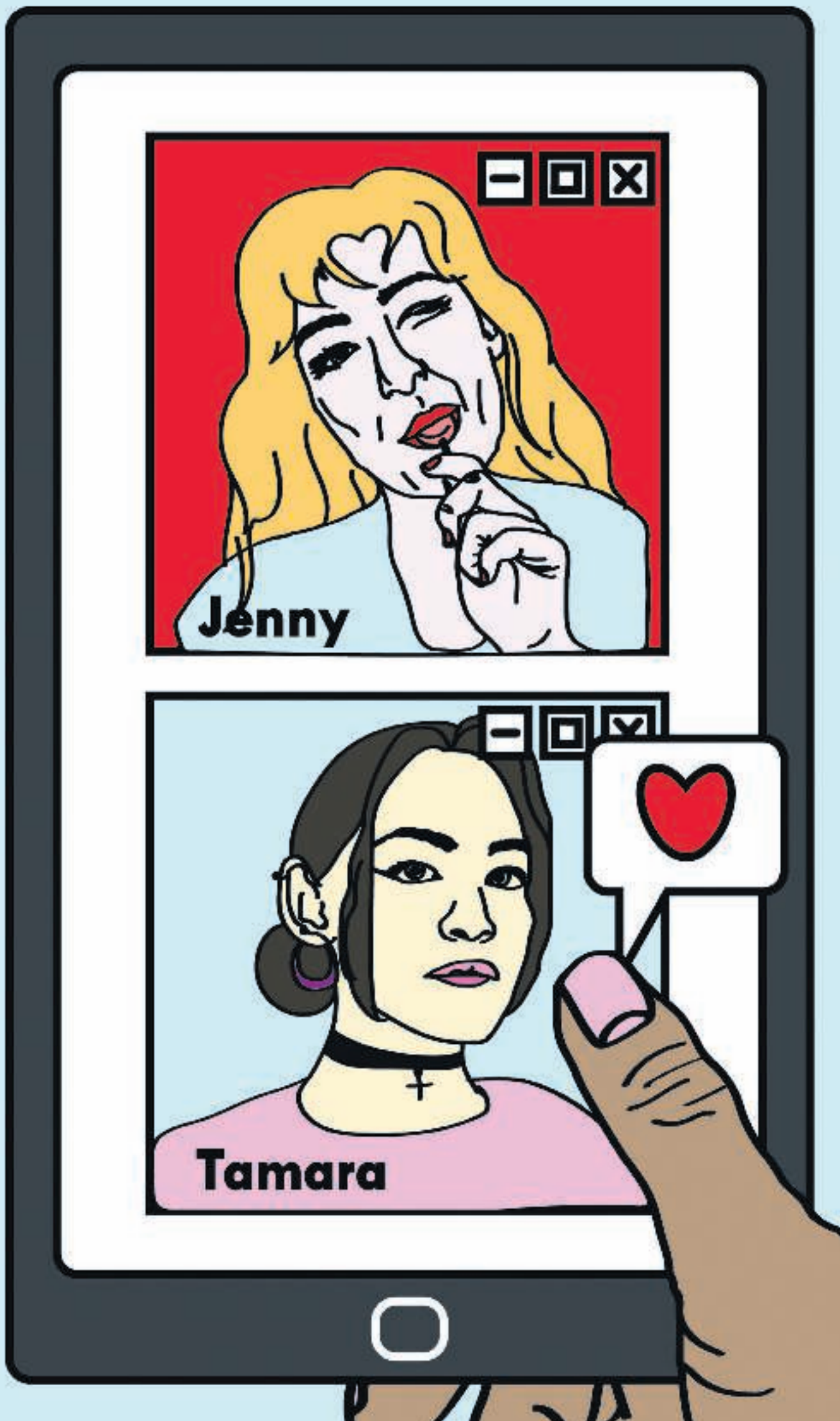
By Zachary Myers

Like all other forms of human interaction, dating has undergone a revolution in the digital age. With the advent of dating apps such as Tinder, your chances of finding a couple who first met in a bar or a club are growing slimmer every day. A study conducted by smartphone maker HTC found that in 2016, 37% of Britons reported that they met their significant other on one of these apps.

However, it's not just the process of finding a significant other that's becoming increasingly digitised. Today, the modern relationship is one that is primarily mediated through the use of the internet as the use of social media becomes essential to our communication. Of course, as with any discussion of web-based communication, the increasing 'virtualisation' of relationships has its critics. One article published in *Vanity Fair* went so far as to refer to it as the 'dating apocalypse'. It's easy to imagine how the detachment that the internet causes can rob romance of some of its magic, and many people believe that our increasing reliance on social media in our relationships is depersonalising them.

**Continued on page [22]**

Illustrated by Sophia Luu





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### Ana Ovey on grief

When Ana lost her dad last year on a gap year in Australia, her life changed completely. Read her poignant first column this week

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### The Shape of Water review

'Putting sublimity to celluloid': Sex with fish monsters and other treats, all reviewed by our opinionated Film & TV Editor Lillian Crawford

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### Fashion trends 2018

What links Rihanna and Alexander Wang? They both make an appearance in our Fashion Editors' list of top trends for the upcoming year

## 29

### Derek Jacobi 'teenage idol'

Francesca Vella-Bonnici has gone through the *Varsity* archives, and has found clippings reviewing the first ever ETG tour show in 1960



## Complex and mysterious, Ultra Violet is the colour to wear in 2018

During Michaelmas term, I celebrated Jeremy Scott's efflorescent SS18 collection, the standout piece being Taylor Hill in a purple tulip-shaped dress. Several months later and Ultra Violet is taking the world, both of fashion and otherwise, in its deep and transformative storm. Pantone, the colour institute, which announces yearly a colour to represent the current creative, political and social zeitgeist, have revealed it as their choice for 2018. The executive director of the institute emphasised the "inventiveness and imagination" which the blue-based purple tone represents.

The shade is politically charged, being a colour associated with the Suffragettes and more recent women's movements. Its boundary-pushing potential is also reflective of the way in which the fashion industry has pushed both creative and political boundaries in the past year, something that is likely to increase.

The colour has certainly been utilised creatively by the fashion industry, and was central during Fashion Month from Paris to London, New York to Milan. The fashion industry thrives off fantasy and Alessandro Michele's Gucci collection for SS18 was as wonderfully innovative as it was characteristic of his modern-meets-retro, self-aware designs which have revived Gucci in recent years. Michele chose a violet palette, with the catwalk it-

self being a bluish purple shade. The look of the show was certainly a bold purple dress, covering the model from head to foot. Light bounced off the glitter-embellished material of the dress, adding to the aura of cosmos which surrounds Pantone's choice.

As with many looks on the runway, it can often feel a little daunting to think about how to incorporate the artistic ingenuity of fashion creatives into your everyday style. However, Ultra Violet is much more wearable than you might initially think. Think less Daphne from Scooby Doo, and more Rihanna fearlessly rocking a Molly Goddard dress with a pair of beat-up trainers. The boldness of Ultra Violet represents "the mysteries of the cosmos", providing infinite opportunities to stand out. If you're feeling braver, let the colour speak for itself and take centre-stage in an outfit. This deep purple could be the season's new red, a staple way to make a bold statement – and who isn't down for a minimum effort stand-out look?

Sustainable Californian brand The Reformation have recently released their gorgeous dresses in purple hues, as have Australian-brand Réalisation Par. While both companies' pieces are on the pricier side, high-street stores such as Urban Outfitters have been recreating the styles which are popular on Instagram. So, keep your eyes out for easy daytime dresses for a classic West-coast-cool take on the Ultra Violet trend for spring and

“  
A  
unique  
shade  
for a  
unique  
year  
”





summer.

Incorporating the enigmatic violet shade through accessories adds a chic accent to an outfit. Nike's purple-toned Air Force is fulfil all my dreams: perfectly merging the colour with the 'ugly trainer' trend, creating a look which I can't get enough of.

Ultra Violet also offers a galaxy of options for beauty lovers too. The Maybelline Color Tattoo in 'Endless Purple' is a wonderful take on the shade, a creamy shadow that's easy to work with. Or, try Buxom's lip glosses in 'Purple Haze' or 'Jane'; worn with minimal makeup they are the perfect sheer way to rock the colour of the year.

Ultra Violet also encapsulates the movement towards a less-gendered fashion industry (and society). 2017 has seen a movement of the fashion industry towards a more inclusive and androgynous creative space, one which will continue into the new year. That purple is the amalgamation of both pink and blue, two colours which have traditionally epitomised binary gender distinctions, seems prescient to me.

Ultra Violet's prevalence on the runway is perhaps reflective of the potential and opportunity for social change, of which fashion has, and hopefully always will be, at the forefront. It perhaps symbolises artistic ingenuity, non-conformity, hope and possibility ●

Vivienne Hopley-Jones

Get the rest of your *Vulture Fashion* fix on page 28 ➡



What's On This Week

**ETG**

THEATRE 16TH-20TH, ADC

**Much Ado About Nothing**  
The European Theatre Group's adaptation of Shakespeare's beloved comedy is coming to Cam. If you're looking for a night of wit and treachery, this is the show for you!

COMEDY 21ST, ADC BAR

**Quickfire**  
Cambridge's Impronauts meet Oxford's Imps for a one-night-only display of the finest improv Oxbridge has to offer.

THEATRE 23RD-27TH, ADC

**Piranha Heights**  
Phillip Ridley's play is an apocalyptic vision of society at conflict with itself, as family drama quickly becomes fatal. A must see for lovers of dark theatre.

THEATRE 23RD-27TH, CORPUS

**There is a War, A Comedy**  
Tom Basden's bleakly comic play about the absurdity of war is being performed for five nights at the Corpus Playroom.

MUSIC 26TH, TRINITY CHAPEL

**Nachtmusik Concert**  
Cambridge's all-female vocal ensemble The Cantabrigians perform renditions of Elgar, Schubert, Verdi, Andrews, Downes, Hilary Tann, and Poulenc.

THEATRE 16TH-20TH, ADC

**NSFW**  
Lucy Kirkwood's NSFW is a biting satire of manscaping, misogyny and media manipulation - aco-worker cocktail that's definitely Not Safe For Work.

MUSICAL 20TH, ADC

**24 Hour Musical**  
Presented by CUMTS, a group of talented teams are given only 24 hours to write, rehearse, and perform an original musical. It's sure to be spectacular!

ARTS 22ND, SIDNEY BAR

**Drink and Draw iii**  
Collective run another drink and draw in Cambridge's cheapest college bar. Materials are provided, so draw, draw, draw.

THEATRE 24TH-27TH, CAT

**Romeo and Juliet**  
A Marlowe Arts Show take on the Shakespearean classic at the Cambridge Arts Theatre.

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carries on - no matter how impossible your work might seem at the moment.





# A date with data: can digital dating open new windows for love?

(continued from *Vulture* front cover) Are we sacrificing intimacy in the name of convenience?

The digital age has provided us with the capacity to always have our partner 'in our pocket', so to speak, as with the click of a button on our phones we can speak to them and even locate them. While to many people this may seem akin to something from an episode of *Black Mirror*, it can present a kind of happy paradox. One of the key advantages of the internet is that people in long-distance relationships can use it to stay in touch with ease. Essentially, one of its key benefits for many is its ability to connect people across geographical distances – in a sense, the usefulness of the internet hinges upon a lack of

physical proximity.

However, this technology makes it so that we can speak to people as if they are in the room with us. The internet allows people to move beyond the geographical limits placed on physical bodies and creates its own kind of pseudo-geographical immediacy. As the internet moves society from the material to the virtual, our increasingly sophisticated representations give us an opportunity to embrace a degree of connectivity never seen before in human history.

That being said, as the internet becomes more and more proficient in creating the illusion that your partner is always right there with you, the question begins to present itself: would we want to be with our partners every



minute of every day? One of the inevitable downsides of increased connectivity is that continuous availability begins to put pressure on us to stay in constant contact with each other. There is always the pressure to be 'plugged in' to the vast virtual network of the internet.

For relationships, this can obviously lead to a degree of strain. In a romantic setting, this pressure can quickly become an obligation, as a message left on read or a missed 'good morning' text suddenly develops into a cause for concern. The emergence of tracking features like Snapchat's 'snap map' only exacerbates this issue as couples now have the ability to monitor each other's exact whereabouts. It appears that, in many cases, constant access to your partner comes at the price of privacy.

While the internet can make privacy within a relationship difficult, web-based communication has a certain discretion that can prove vital for some. This particular benefit moves beyond sometimes saving the average person from having to witness to gratuitous public displays of affection; in queer dating and relationships, the internet acts as a space outside the gaze of a largely heteronormative society. For some, using apps like Grindr and Tinder is often the most effective and even the safest way of meeting people. Our current society is not one where a gay person can go up to any person of the same sex in any bar and buy them a drink without any fear. Heterosexuals still have privileged access to the modern spaces of courtship, and so dating apps have provided an excellent method of adaptation for queer people.

What the internet does best is provide an alternate space for relationships, one that subverts material geographies on levels beyond simple distance. This alternate space condenses the miles and kilometres of actual space, and more importantly acts as a method of escaping society's heteronormative

“The digital age has provided us with the capacity to always have our partner 'in our pocket'”

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attempts to police its romantic and sexual spaces. Regardless of the stresses that come with the double-edged sword of the internet's immense connective capabilities, this virtual space is becoming essential to our formation and maintenance of romance. As society continues to venture further into the digital era, it seems to me that if there's one thing that shouldn't get left behind, it's love ●



## Ana Ovey

### Death is taboo. But don't be afraid to seek kindness out



Nobody misses the ordeal of making conversation with new people in those strange and fortunately distant first days of university. Stilted and inorganic questions like 'So, where are you from? What subject are you doing? What college are you at?' rolled off the tongue with what became a distressingly practiced ease for all of us. But for me, small-talk felt a little more like a minefield than a way of forming friendships. Eventually, when everything else conversational had run dry, the topic of parents managed to crop up a surprising amount – and treading the line between brevity, so as not to share too much, and coldness, so as not to make an accidental enemy on the first day, is high impossible.

There are things which, for better or worse, we can't bring up in conversation with people we've just befriended. The 'better' of this is that I don't find myself crying embarrassingly while explaining to someone why only my mum and her friend dropped me and my belongings off on the first day, instead of both my parents. The 'worse' of death being so unspeakable is that, on days when I wake up and want to sob incessantly or kick a wall or shout that life is ugly and cruel – death even worse – I can't articulate it to anyone, for fear of overstepping. How do you bring it up? Knocking at a friend's door with a 'Hey, my dad died this year and I feel really sad about it... Can I get a hug?' seems a little too forward, but not saying anything at all is brutally isolating.

It doesn't help that people are amazing at saying the wrong thing. It's not intentional: death is a heavy and hugely uncomfortable subject, and we're an awkward species. But it's a necessary thing to speak about, especially for those grieving. Death changes everything. Loss becomes one of the lenses through which we who grieve come to see the world. When something good happens, when I hear a song I like, when I find a new poet I love, I can't help but think of how I am unable to tell my dad about it and share my joy with him. And suddenly, my happiness is muted.

If you're attempting to wade through life at Cambridge, which is chaotic enough, and also struggling with all these sticky feelings, find a friend who understands. One of my best friends organised to meet me in London after my dad's arrhythmia. When she saw me she ran across the traffic-heavy street and, hugging me fiercely, burst into tears. The whole thing was so kind and sincere and seemingly melodramatic – though it came from the best of places – I found myself laughing. Crying in front of her about my dad doesn't feel nearly so difficult now as it does with others. Another

friend, sat on the Tube with me, looked at me earnestly and admitted, "Things will never be the same" – which shouldn't have been comforting. But the knowledge that she got it, and didn't want to dismiss any pain I felt, was relieving.

Another friend of mine had lost her dad a few months earlier, and sent me literal paragraphs of wisdom and kindness I'm still so thankful for: that it's normal to have nightmares about it, that it's okay to feel happy, important to look after yourself, that people will say the wrong thing and it'll suck. And, vitally, "don't float off into your head too far", "tie yourself down with friends and family" – which seems especially essential advice for bereaved, over-worked young adults at Cambridge.

The last friend I'll talk about I only met within the context of university. Our dads had known each other; he recognised me immediately and opened with a "Hi, you don't know me but I think our dads were friends". Thinking this would be yet another painful conversation I'd rather not have, I began to shut myself off, laughing nervously – but he followed it up with a "My dad died too. I know exactly what you're going through. It's rubbish". It was so gently heartfelt, and I was touched – and also felt, immediately, less isolated. Another person reaching out with no motive but friendship is a kindness not easily articulated. Then again, grief is not easily articulated.

But it's human, and so is saying the wrong thing, and so is friendship – which is strengthened by the giving of support. People, in loss, are strengthened by kindness. Greifsters: don't be afraid to seek it out. Death is taboo – but with communication, with empathy, with love, one day it might not be ●



ANA OVEY



# Arts

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



## Balthus' masterpiece is creepy. But does that mean it should be removed from the Met?



Following the Met's recent controversy surrounding Balthus' *Thérèse Dreaming*, **Lucian Clinch** argues against moral censorship of great art

**T**he quest to properly define any discipline is a notoriously difficult task, and perhaps no subject is harder than art. Art remains diffuse in its media, broad in its subject matter. But across the startlingly diverse creations that we term 'art', several factors are constant. It challenges what we regard as political consensuses, societal norms, and the status quo: it challenges our own emotions. Art has provided a tool for important transgressions, as shown in the recent Tate exhibition, *Queer British Art*. Another exhibition too, Basquiat at the Barbican, shows art which defended and supported a burgeoning urban

▲ ***Thérèse Dreaming* (Balthus, 1938), currently on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art**  
(FLICKR: TONY HISGETT)

subculture in 1980s New York.

And New York is the latest battleground for freedom of expression. A petition started by Mia Merrill, an American HR director, has called for the Metropolitan Museum of Art to remove a particularly "suggestive" painting. *Thérèse Dreaming* by Balthasar Klossowski de Rola (better known as Balthus), on show since 1998, is a surrealist depiction of a young woman sitting on a chair. One leg is raised to reveal her underwear, and a cat laps at a bowl of milk nearby. She sits in a sexually suggestive way, according to Merrill, who also questions why the Met would support the voyeurism and sexualisation of a child.

This is a slippery slope. It is undeniable that the painting is creepy, especially considering Balthus' own predilection for underage girls. Born in Paris to Polish expatriate parents, he often painted girls in eroticised poses, yet always denied paedophilia charges. But why should a museum have to drown its viewers in context? Museums are for the enjoyment, consideration, and discussion of art; whatever one may think of its content, *Thérèse Dreaming* is as legitimate for a gallery as the *Mona Lisa*.

“We as the viewer are undeniably peeping, if only for an instant”

It is worth considering the current climate of heightened sensitivity to sexual crimes. With the silence breakers winning TIME's Person of the Year, and with Hollywood in revolt against its abusers, the petition of Balthus' painting seems at home. However, it fails to take into account the differences between art and real life. For all its impeccably deployed realism, *Thérèse* is a painting of Balthus' neighbour, asleep and dreaming. It is voyeuristic in the sense that we are intruding on a private moment, but some of the most beautiful art preys on the intimacy of its subjects. Take Vermeer's *Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window*. It is unimpeachable in its moral compass, but here too we as the viewer are undeniably peeping, if only for an instant, on a young woman's private moment.

One accusation that cannot be levelled at Balthus is that of pornography. The painting was not created purely for sexual gratification, and is too stylish to be so. The care given to her raised arms, the wicker of her chair, and the pillow lightly supporting her back is equal to that given to the delicate arrangement of her legs. Its 'realistic' qualities certainly ought not to bring the painting in for more criticism. When asked about her provocative pose, Balthus merely responded "it is how they [young girls] sit".

A petition calling for a painting to be removed from the public eye inevitably raises questions about the suitability of other artistic output. It seems a dangerous route to traverse. Should we ban *Lolita*, for instance? Described by Martin Amis as both "irresistible and unforgivable", Nabokov's novel about paedophilic fervour for a young girl is silky in its prose, yet transgressive in its subject matter. Stuffed full of intertextual references and puns made more impressive by knowing that English was Nabokov's second language, *Lolita* is normally invoked today only to be praised.

A comparison between *Thérèse* and *Lolita* provokes an unsettling conclusion. *Thérèse Dreaming* is condemned because it contains supposedly immoral material and its painter had creepy tendencies. *Lolita* is held up as a work of great substances despite its decided moral dubiousness, and most crucially, due to the innocence of its author. For the average consumer, both are equally immoral. The difference between the two works is null and void, and reeks of a double standard.

Despite the intellectual and aesthetic pleasure that can be gained by viewing art for arts sake, the modern public is worthy of better. We are right to be challenging, querying and questioning the art that hangs around us, and wonder at the motive of the artist to paint such an unsettling work as *Thérèse Dreaming*. We can wonder at its inherent morality, too, but art is inanimate. It cannot fight back and answer for itself. It deserves to be contemplated, discussed, and perhaps even rejected by its viewership, but it must not be removed ●



# Music



## Hermione Kellow My new music resolutions, from grunge to grime

*Dipping her toes in new waters and back into the classics, our columnist sets a path for her year in music*

The Christmas tree is down, your New Year's hangover is long-gone and the multiple boxes of Quality Street are now being used to store excess stationery. It is officially the season of resolution and in keeping with the atmosphere of self-improvement, I've decided to do a bit of musical preening myself.

Over the holidays I came to the realisation that there are tons of 'classic' albums I still haven't properly listened to. We're talking The Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds*, Nirvana's *Nevermind*, The Velvet Underground and Nico, the list goes on. It's true that I probably know the few famous tunes everybody else does, but it seems almost fraudulent to listen to such brilliant music in such a shallow way. Therefore, this year I am going to attempt to listen to music in a more traditional way, before the rise of streaming sites made shuffling through an album so easy. Recently, my trigger finger for skipping tracks has been incredibly quick, so hopefully by instilling a bit more patience into my listening habits I will have a more fulfilling experience. In the New Year, I am making it my resolution to listen to a different classic album every week from cover to cover and to write a mini review on how I found the experience. Hopefully by the end of the year I will feel much more musically informed!

Hand in hand with this resolution is an exciting new purchase I have made to kickstart 2018. After years of research and desperately watching scenes from *High Fidelity*, I have finally taken the plunge and bought my first record player. For me 2018 should be all about

appreciating the present, what is going on right now with friends, family and in general the world around us rather than giving into digital temptations. My aim is to appreciate music more this year and the physical presence of owning and buying vinyl is something that lends itself to this.

A resolution I'm sure many of you will share is to go and see much more live music. I absolutely love going to gigs, but with the price of them being fairly high and my own lack of organisation, I tend to leave a lot of my gig-going to summer. However, considering how thriving the Cambridge live music scene is, with such quick links to London too, there really isn't any excuse. This year I am pledging to go and watch as many artists as I possibly can; after all, live music encompasses so much it would be a crime not to soak up as much as possible. Two particularly

exciting bands playing Cambridge Junction in February are Marmozets and The Amazons, both bold and exciting performers, now staples of the festival calendar, so be sure to snap up tickets while you still can! The same goes for general culture as live theatre, comedy events and art exhibitions are equally numerous. If comedy is your thing, be sure to catch some of your favourite comedians at the Corn Exchange this term as the venue will

be host to a star-studded line up including Katherine Ryan, Joel Dommett, Jimmy Carr, Ed Byrne and Jon Richardson!

Another resolution I have for 2018 is to give some new musical genres a go. I have always considered myself as having fairly eclectic taste, being able to skip from indie/alternative to jazz, through classical and then into anything from electro-funk to contemporary. However, despite my best efforts I have never quite been able to get my head around grime/hip-hop/rap... to be honest I don't even know

“  
A resolution of mine for this column is to bring as much attention as possible to the brilliant new artists breaking into the industry  
”



CARLOS LORENZO

if there is a difference between the genres or if they are all the same thing! So, as I am on a musical journey of self-improvement I think it is about time I at least make an attempt to understand the style.

This year is certain to be absolutely great for the music scene. With many well-known favourites making long awaited returns and plenty of exciting up-and-coming artists proving their worth, we are in for a year of brilliant new records and a whole host of great

performers. Just as vinyl is returning and bringing quality music to a new generation, a personal resolution of mine for this column is to bring as much attention as possible to the brilliant new artists breaking into the industry at the moment. With so much great talent out there, I look forward to showcasing as much of it as possible. In the spirit of turning over a new leaf and looking ahead to a brilliant term, let's raise the last dregs of New Year's bubbly to a newly enriched lease of musical life ●



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# Film & TV

## The contenders

With the Oscars fast approaching, Film & TV Editor, **Lillian Crawford** weighs up two deserving frontrunners

### The Shape of Water

Dir. Guillermo del Toro  
In cinemas 14th February  
★★★★★

Oh, there is blessing in the female orgasm! Gentle fingers dancing along collarbones, caressing delicate breasts, splashing the waters of humanity – masturbation is the ultimate form of self-exploration. It is best to take to the subject head on, as Guillermo del Toro does, his silent heroine indulging in the erotic sanctuary of a bathtub. Unlike our antagonist's primitive fucking, Elisa is a tender woman seeking to delve into the depths of her body, and her soul.

*The Shape of Water* is never shy of its sexuality, nor should it be. Men can be attracted to men, and women to fish monsters. Love pervades the scene, its influence manifested in a favourite childhood sweet or a hardboiled egg. Del Toro has mastered its intricacies and complications, penetrating beyond the surface toward something touchingly personal. Through Elisa, we are given not merely a

glimpse, but the full director's tour of what makes him tick.

Much like the masterful *Pan's Labyrinth*, the screenplay is imbued with mythology and fairy tales. Co-penned by Vanessa Taylor, the duo fill every monologue with a pinning to grasp what captures the imagination, drawing on its powers to craft a green-hued stage for events to play out. They never forget the necessities of plot while developing this, charming in its wit and heart-breaking in its tension. Together, they have written the summation of a genre, putting sublimity to celluloid.

Its enchantment is captured by a majestic score from maestro Alexandre Desplat, who after last year's *Suburbicon* seems to be on a streak of writing the most enthralling film music. Married perfectly with the diegetic soundtrack, we are elevated to realms previously unexplored, and Renée Fleming's rendition of 'You'll Never Know' comes to define its romantic airs. Events blur into dreams, the simplicity of pristine droplets twirling on a windowpane so elegant it draws tears from the eyes. We never for a moment resist del Toro's capable outstretched hand.

If *Pan's Labyrinth* had been a swansong for childhood, *The Shape of Water* is a reflection of the pangs of adulthood. They are embodied in a trinity of del Toro's being: the effervescent



FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

and often perfect Octavia Spencer as his biting humour, Richard Jenkins his struggling creativity and possibly conflicted sexuality, and the show-stopping, no-singing-all-dancing Sally Hawkins, who portrays his borderline-fetishistic love of all things monstrous. Her muted performance is the finest in years, conveying more passion and raw emotion in her silent delivery than she ever could with speech. She represents the part of del Toro he most wants us to embrace with acceptance.

It might take 123 minutes, but all fantasies

must eventually reach a climax. It is one that pays off wonders, finishing on a difficult note that feels just right. Del Toro overcomes his demon, a terrifyingly excellent Michael Shannon, a man who wants to destroy his creations and deny him his profoundest pleasures. Strickland is unaware that they are invested with a divinity that will outlive us all, the closest he may believe himself to come to God. It is our honour, and our privilege, that Del Toro has decided to take us on that ride with him ●

### Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri

Dir. Martin McDonagh  
In cinemas now  
★★★★★

In the beginning, there was an assault. "RAPED WHILE DYING" fills the screen, one of three billboards announcing Mildred Hayes's quest to avenge her murdered daughter. Yet in the pastures beneath the signs, we too are battered with pretentious statements and gasp-inducing racist 'jokes'. N-words pile upon f-words until we are left restless, exhausted, our minds on the cinema door. The unseen criminal scribbling down this mess lurks in the shadows, all hopes for excellence abandoned in the foyer.

Then there was a denouncement. Wit pervades the scene as the Church, embodied in a minister, brings the mania to a halt. Attempting to put down Mildred's redemptive plight in the best interests of normality, he brings on a storm from a mother enduring the unimaginable: heed her words and practise what you preach! At last, the real Martin McDonagh

steps into the light, his words cutting through a veil of ignorance. A veil that is beaten, torn, and burned in the remaining minutes.

It is a shining moment for Frances McDormand, our bandana-ed crusader tearing down the doors of institutions to reveal the corruption within. We do not see the minister again, he would not dare, for a new teacher is in town. Not since *Fargo* have we seen such fury in McDormand's eyes, ever present behind the coolest of façades, throwing Molotov cocktails and kicking students in the groin. Hardly the perfect heroine, but undoubtedly human.

"Who are the heroes?" McDonagh cries. They can be racists, homophobes, misogynists – redemption is the agenda of the day. A life of ignorance and sin may be turned around in the work of a moment, an envelope of cash, a magic trick, a hand on a ladder. Those who seek not forgiveness are its recipients, both Woody Harrelson and Sam Rockwell supporting McDormand with the deftest hands. In the eyes of God, wrongs can be righted.

McDonagh can do violence and comedy – In Bruges suggested it, Seven Psychopaths confirmed it.

Here we receive something different. The initial misfires hurt, but soon one cannot help but move on and laugh, sometimes aghast, often with affection. Possibly the result of habituation, the initial onslaught dies down and there is much to be appreciated in deer and flowers, the potential of rebirth. The biggest laughs are crushed with the biggest blows to the heart, the one scene in which we see Mildred's daughter striking the hardest. It makes her persistent absence all the more painful to bear.

Everyone has their demons, their tests and

sorrows. Chief Willoughby has his cancer, Dixon his overbearing mother, and James, a stand-out Peter Dinklage, his unrequited love. Mildred is so often blind to them, seeing only action without causation, and our cinematic omniscience should not force judgement on either. Instead it is what no one sees, but is felt by all, that must be acknowledged: the real evil at large, manifested in a rapist we may or may not know. McDonagh allows us to decide, justice in the hands of the heroes, of where the blame might lie, and if it exists at all.

So Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri goes. Much like its title, we are taken on a ride the long way round, with shining stars and missed opportunities. We have here a white Irish man attempting to cast light on America's most controversial issues, its laws and opinions. It seems, for some time, an utterly dreadful film – yet there is a turn, from pretence to genius, humanity, and grace. Imperfections should not define our verdict, and when all is said and done we might even forget original sins. Its message of reconciliation and forgiveness one of the most effective ever told, the same must be extended to McDonagh, and his beautiful tale ●



FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES



# Best actor: Far from Gary Oldman's *Darkest Hour*

**Seth Jordan** claims that a remarkable leading performance overshadows any faults found elsewhere in another Churchill biopic

Dir. Joe Wright  
In cinemas now  
★★★★

Winston Churchill lends himself to dramatisation. His eloquence, stubbornness, determination, depression, wit, and heroism create fertile territory for filmmakers, the man himself having written a sufficiently exciting story in reality before the addition of any fictional embellishment.

Joe Wright's film chooses to tell only a short period of Churchill's life, dealing with the time after he became Prime Minister in May 1940 to Dunkirk in early June. The conflict is whether to broker peace with Germany, supported fervently by Lord Halifax and ex-PM

Neville Chamberlain, or to carry on fighting against the odds.

Rather than characterising the opponents as Nazi lovers, the film reminds us that the debate over Britain's direction in the war was a real and intense one. The prevailing lesson for modern day politicians, instead of vindicating nationalist isolation, is to show leadership with complete transparency of intent, of impassioned discussion in the face of enormous peril, miles away from the petty kerfuffle of our current political discourse.

Focusing on close quarters politics creates a fast-paced and, for the most part, very enjoyable story of the great man's finest hour. The film has a highly stylised look, huge streams of light illuminating the Prime Minister in the House of Commons, and most of the rest of the action playing out in dimly lit basements. An almost monochrome colour palette is only punctuated by bright red post boxes and buses flashing by as Churchill is driven through London – sparks of Britishness amongst the devastation.

There is a tendency for theatricality, such as an extraordinarily enigmatic opening shot of Churchill, but the film mostly avoids kitschy melodrama. Gary Oldman is superb in the lead role and will deservedly win an Oscar. Laden with prosthetics, he captures the charismatic and beguiling nature of Winston, both leader and man. While looking like a

"pig", Oldman imbues the character with a scene-stealing vivacity and fervour, particularly during his speeches.

Such a tour-de-force performance means the ensemble can get

left behind. Stephen Dillane and Ronald Pickup are excellent as Halifax and Chamberlain, and Ben Mendelsohn gives a strong performance as George VI. Kristen Scott Thomas, though

“A scene-stealing vivacity and fervour”

excellent, is underused and, because the focus is so heavily on Churchill, is written out of the film in the second half.

Only one moment in the film really jars, and is so bizarre that it is unbelievable it made the cut. In the midst of his internal debate, Churchill descends to the quaint land of the London Underground, and conducts a pseudo-focus group with the public which has huge bearing on his final decision. Not only is the scene a fiction, it almost undermines the rest of the film in its ham-fisted surrealism.

The remainder of the film, fortunately, is consistently gripping. The arrow-like drive of the writing means it provides a thrilling close-up of a pivotal moment in history, but leaves the full portrait of Churchill unfinished. Yet with a performance as brilliant as Oldman's and such exhilarating pace, it is enough ●

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# Fashion

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## 5 trends to follow in 2018



**Eli Hayes** and **Robyn Schaffer** discuss some of 2018's top forecasted trends to include in your winter wardrobe, from bold brights to sportswear with an edge

**W**ith a new year comes a whole host of brand new fashion trends to try and test. For 2018, this means delicate, feminine pastels, winter-appropriate layering, the ever popular sports luxe trend, combining textures and waving goodbye to spending time planning and matching outfits.

### Pastels

Pastels can often be a hit and miss with many of us, and it can at times be difficult to find the right pastel piece to inject a feminine touch into our wardrobes. Red carpet events have been a breeding ground however for spotting this trend recently, with *Mad Men* actress Kiernan Shipka taking to this year's Critics' Choice Awards in a pink and green pastel ensemble which boasted sequins and tulle galore, creating just the right amount of elegance and edge. Look to Axel Arigato for a slightly more tomboy-ish take with pastel sneakers, while Max Mara is a must for staple pieces such as winter coats and timeless handbags.



### Layering

The crisp and cold winter months can often mean having to sacrificing style, but not for much longer. One of 2018's biggest trends-to-be is layering, so pull out all your t-shirts, jumpers, jackets and scarves and get ready to wrap up warm. Proenza Schouler demonstrate this perfectly by layering a black leather bralet over a striking red top and skirt co-ord, while Gucci's take on this trend included boldly patterned trousers and tops underneath colour blocked jackets, creating contrasting styles. Not only will you be able to avoid those winter chills this year, but you can also stay on-trend.



### Clashing patterns

Gone are the days of matching and co-ordinating your outfits - this year the motto is 'the more the merrier', especially when it comes to patterns. A whole host of designers have been showcasing this in some of their most recent collections, with Demna Gvasalia (of Balenciaga) pairing animal prints with elegant florals, and Marc Jacobs giving us juxtaposing metallic sequins with clashing kaftans and headgear. If you're on a budget, however, head down to Zara or Topshop to find similar pieces without having to part way with hundreds or compromise a chic, fashion-forward ensemble.

### Playing with texture

Manipulating and playing with different textures is perhaps one of the most underrated trends out there, but 2018 promises to bring it to the forefront of the fashion industry's mind. Shapes and silhouettes can be simple, but the focus here is on draping, folding and combining different fabrics to create and build most sculptural pieces which are visually very striking. Take notes from Mulberry and combine a corduroy skirt with a chunky knit jumper and silk scarf, or get inspired by Christopher Kane whose black patent trench coats were finished with delicate lace details and paired with tasseled shoes.



INSTAGRAM: MARCJACOBS

### Sports luxe

From Alexander Wang to Rihanna's Fenty x Puma collections, the sports luxe trend is no stranger to the catwalks. For several years now we've been throwing around the word 'ath-leisure' while some of the world's biggest designers have been proving that sportswear need not be confined to the gym. Neoprene sweatshirts, silky track-suit bottoms and bold puffer jackets are just a few of the several ways in which you can incorporate this popular trend into your everyday wardrobe, while pairing some sleek heeled sandals with a satin bomber jacket can take your look from day to night.

INSTAGRAM:  
ALEXANDERWANGNY





# Theatre

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## Computer generated Shakespeare: Live at the ADC

**Ben Martineau** previews *Neural Notworks*, the show where the script is printed live on stage

Most academic study, no matter what subject one pursues, has the ultimate goal of finding order in the apparently chaotic existence we call home. We search for explanations for human behaviour throughout history; we search for patterns in our economy, our society, and our language. It seems that to 'explain' something is to provide evidence or models for how or why something repeats itself. Many types of cognitive bias in fact arise because we tend to see order where there isn't any, suggesting that this tendency to seek out patterns is somehow hard-wired into what we think of as human intelligence. Given this understanding of human intelligence, it shouldn't be surprising that computers appear to possess something like machine intelligence when we use them to reproduce the many everyday patterns we ourselves use.

In 2015, Andrej Karpathy kicked off a wave of popular interest in this kind of machine intelligence with the publication of a (now-famous) blog post entitled *The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Recurrent Neural Networks*.

“  
Imagine  
any  
sentence  
as a  
series of  
letters  
”

```
8550/14700 (epoch 36), train_loss = 1.252, time/batch = 0.160
8600/14700 (epoch 36), train_loss = 1.290, time/batch = 0.160
8650/14700 (epoch 37), train_loss = 1.238, time/batch = 0.158
8700/14700 (epoch 37), train_loss = 1.180, time/batch = 0.161
8750/14700 (epoch 38), train_loss = 1.144, time/batch = 0.162
8800/14700 (epoch 38), train_loss = 1.068, time/batch = 0.158
8850/14700 (epoch 39), train_loss = 1.177, time/batch = 0.158
8900/14700 (epoch 39), train_loss = 1.095, time/batch = 0.158
8950/14700 (epoch 40), train_loss = 1.001, time/batch = 0.161
9000/14700 (epoch 40), train_loss = 1.050, time/batch = 0.160
model saved to models/harrypotter\model.ckpt
9050/14700 (epoch 41), train_loss = 0.936, time/batch = 0.157
9100/14700 (epoch 41), train_loss = 0.976, time/batch = 0.161
9150/14700 (epoch 42), train_loss = 0.920, time/batch = 0.160
9200/14700 (epoch 42), train_loss = 0.875, time/batch = 0.157
9250/14700 (epoch 43), train_loss = 0.875, time/batch = 0.157
9300/14700 (epoch 43), train_loss = 0.875, time/batch = 0.159
9350/14700 (epoch 44), train_loss = 0.879, time/batch = 0.161
9400/14700 (epoch 44), train_loss = 0.863, time/batch = 0.158
9450/14700 (epoch 45), train_loss = 0.828, time/batch = 0.159
9500/14700 (epoch 45), train_loss = 0.779, time/batch = 0.157
9550/14700 (epoch 46), train_loss = 0.760, time/batch = 0.161
9600/14700 (epoch 46), train_loss = 0.732, time/batch = 0.157
9650/14700 (epoch 47), train_loss = 0.711, time/batch = 0.156
9700/14700 (epoch 47), train_loss = 0.673, time/batch = 0.159
9750/14700 (epoch 48), train_loss = 0.665, time/batch = 0.157
9800/14700 (epoch 48), train_loss = 0.615, time/batch = 0.154
9850/14700 (epoch 49), train_loss = 0.643, time/batch = 0.159
9900/14700 (epoch 50), train_loss = 0.361, time/batch = 0.160
```

What he demonstrated was extraordinary: using nothing more than a simple model for human language and the complete works of Shakespeare, a computer could learn the Bard's style so effectively that it might easily dupe someone unfamiliar with his works (which does tend to include many computer scientists). It turns out that, letter-by-letter, Shakespeare's English has a consistent pattern.

But let's back up. What is a neural network? Popular science often claims that these are computer programs somehow designed to mimic the human brain. Neural networks are built from neurons that don't resemble anything like ours, in structures and on a scale very different from that of our brain. Often, they can simply be thought of as a (very large) mathematical system, along the lines of  $ax+by=z$  where we know some data,  $x$  and  $y$ , some result,  $z$ , and we want to know how the two are related,  $a$  and  $b$ . The key to neural networks is that they can learn  $a$  and  $b$ , if given enough examples. They can learn relationships between data that are so complex that they

appear to border on the intelligent.

How does this relate to Shakespeare? Imagine any sentence as a series of letters. Some letters are more likely to come after others. For example, unless you're playing Scrabble, 'u' is much more likely than 'i' to follow a 'q'. Given enough examples of what letters are supposed to follow others, therefore, a neural network learns how words are spelled. What it lacks, however, is any sense of what it is saying, leading to hilarious turns of phrase, non-sequiturs, and absurd moments.

This week, we're bringing to the ADC stage what we believe to be its first ever computer-generated performance. The improvisational skills of the actors will be put to the test as they grapple with scripts printed live on stage in a variety of styles, ranging from Shakespeare to *Fifty Shades of Grey*. In a strange way, we expect to show both how ingenious and how incredibly stupid machines can be. It may be terrifying. It will be unique. *Neural Notworks* is on at the ADC Theatre at 11pm on Friday 19th January ●

### Kulture reviews

#### Much Ado About Nothing

ADC Theatre

★★★★

#### NSFW

Corpus Playroom

★★★★

#### Local Singles

Corpus Playroom

★★★★

## Let's start at the beginning: ETG goes on tour

**Francesca Vella-Bonnici** delves back into the Varsity archives to examine the group's history

As the European Theatre Group swings into its 60th year, it is perhaps time to trace its humble origins which paved the way for success. Set up in 1957, ETG has not only produced high-quality renditions of Shakespeare's plays throughout the continent, but has also served as the starting ground for some of the most prolific actors both in the UK and the world.

Diving into the archives at Varsity I was able to uncover the review of one of the company's first productions starring Derek Jacobi as Hamlet. Jacobi has gone on to feature in *Gosford Park*, *The Golden Compass* and *The King's Speech*, alongside numerous RSC appearances.

Then called the Experimental Theatre Group, in 1960 the company performed *Hamlet* in French universities and schools. The show was hailed a great success with Jacobi being compared to a 'teenage idol' and the review-

er describing the audience as 'entranced by the poetry and the music of the blank verse'. While some of the comedy scenes were clearly lost on the French schoolchildren, the actors were nonetheless elevated to popstar status and were 'besieged in the dressing rooms by dozens of schoolgirls'.

Over the years, ETG has attracted talents such as Miriam Margolyes and Stephen Fry, and continues to be a fixture of the Cambridge theatre scene. With so many years' experience already under their belts, the ETG's latest choice of *Much Ado About Nothing* will no doubt prove to be another triumph and is currently running at the ADC. Who knows what the current members will go on to achieve in the world of theatre?

ETG's *Much Ado About Nothing* is on at the ADC Theatre at 7.45pm until Saturday 20th January ●



▲ A review of ETG's second-ever tour show (Varsity archives)



## Sport

## James Haskell



‘What was good enough when I last played wouldn't be good enough now’

**England international talks player safety, Six Nations, and plying his trade overseas with Paul Hyland**

Let's get one thing out of the way. What exactly possessed James Haskell to flatten Harlequins' Jamie Roberts with that shoulder-to-the-head challenge at the Stoop last Saturday? Why, when Wasps were 28-26 to the good with only five minutes remaining, when only a win could preserve any realistic hope of qualification for the next round of the European Champions Cup?

"I got cited for that foul on Jamie Roberts," he says, opening himself up to the scrutiny of the Union debate chamber with a refreshing honesty, "it was illegal and I shouldn't have done it."

Haskell's sending off on 76 minutes, with his team 28-26 to the good, left opposite number Roberts in need of immediate medical attention, and sparked a last-gasp recovery from a Harlequins team playing for pride alone. Quins had been chasing a 17-point deficit at one stage, before converting a try on 80 minutes to complete a marvellous comeback. Haskell's concern remains firmly on his opponent:

"You've got to understand about safety," he explains, "and my intention was never to hit Jamie in the head. When I got to him I actually thought I'd hit him lower than I had. I didn't realise when I connected with him. But we're trying to eradicate concussion and what I did is not gonna help with that."

With Wasps staring down the barrel of an early European exit, and with a six-week ban from playing rugby in prospect, Haskell also understands that his latest suspension might be terminal for a chequerboard international career. Whether he makes the cut or not, he remains buoyant regarding England's chances of a third Six Nations title in a row:



▼ **Haskell was all smiles signing copies of his new fitness book**  
(PHILIPP KOEHLER)

"I believe that whoever comes in and fills those vacant spaces will do an incredible job," he tells a group of assembled journalists. "Eddie [Jones] has a habit, with Paul Gustard and Steve Borthwick, of getting the best out of players, understanding how to motivate them. They've created an environment where everybody raises their standards - what was good when I played last wouldn't be good enough now, and what was good enough in the Six Nations won't be good enough in the summer tour, so it's ever evolving and it brings everyone with them."

Stories of Jones's managing the enormous personalities of his new England squad with crates of Guinness and bags of Haribo, complete with a half-persuasive imitation of an Aussie twang, draw belly laughs from the Union chamber. But Haskell never betrays anything other than deep-rooted respect for the coach who steered England from an ignominious early exit from a World Cup on home turf to two consecutive Six Nations titles, including a first Grand Slam accolade in thirteen years:

"I've got a lot of time for Eddie," he says, even in spite of being kept out of Jones's squad in the recent Autumn International series. "What he did in terms of his work ethic and his management of the England team, taking it from essentially a PR disaster to being very well respected. His strength of character to do that was incredible."

There's something I want to know. In Jones's recently announced England training squad, Haskell is just one of three players with any experience of rugby outside of these borders, having represented Japan's Ricoh Black Rams and, more notably, Stade Français, where he was a losing finalist in the Heineken Cup in 2011. Has exposure to a broad range of coaching methods and cultured given him the edge on the competition?

"It's probably more so off the field than it's developed me on the field," he begins, "to maintain that professionalism where stuff around you isn't that professional, being away from your friends and family, being out of your comfort zone - it was quite constructive and helpful. I just think the different styles of rugby, under-

standing how different teams operate is interesting. And working with different coaches, understanding different managers and how different people operate."

Surely then, he must take issue with the RFU's policy, introduced in 2010, that disbars English players at clubs abroad from representing their own national team? In 2015, Clermont-Auvergne's English full-back Nick Abendanon was voted European Player of the Year, but was still ruled out of contention from Stuart Lancaster's side. Abendanon spoke out against the ruling that year, arguing that his time in France had made him an overall much better player. More recently, talented young England flanker Sam Underhill was removed from consideration until he left Swansea-based Ospreys.

Haskell's take on the issue is a touch more diplomatic, if not pragmatic. "In my case they could have kept Sam Underhill in Wales," he laughs, "then he wouldn't have taken my place! I think from my perspective I was very lucky, I managed to navigate those waters and get away with doing it. I understand why the ruling's there, especially the way Eddie runs the England team, he wants full access, he wants to be able to impose his way of doing things on players which I think's a good thing."

"I think that players have a choice to make and that playing abroad is fantastic, it's enriching for so many reasons - as well as life experiences, it turned me into a more rounded human being, and I think that if you're not gonna be around, I think you should go and explore it. But if you've got any aspirations to play for England or your national side I think you have to be around, you have to be in the country. People better paid than me make decisions on why - you can understand the logic behind it, and luckily for me I managed to get around it all."

Time for one last question. How does Haskell, as one of the beneficiaries of the onset of professionalism in rugby, think the sport has changed across his career?

"When I first started playing Wasps were a pioneer in terms of having everyone conditioned to a certain level - we were bigger and fitter! Every team now has full time fitness coaches, everybody's as big as everyone else, the backs are as big as the forwards, so the physicality across the board has completely changed. I think the game is more intense, obviously there's far more injuries happening, so they're trying to manage that."

And with another nudge and wink towards the Roberts incident, he concludes: "If you're playing a high-impact contact sport, people are gonna get hurt. That's it, you're never going to eradicate it. So I think everyone goes into it with open eyes. The big thing that's changed is the physicality but I think people are trying to manage it as best they can."

*Haskell has since been suspended until February 12th following disciplinary proceedings. If selected for the Six Nations, he will be unavailable to play against Italy and Wales*



▲ **James Haskell, 32, is fighting for his Six Nations place**  
(PHILIPP KOEHLER)

“If you're playing a high-impact contact sport, people are gonna get hurt.”



# Bama: College football's greatest dynasty

Nathan Johns

It is always the biggest stage that produces the most memorable moments. The culmination of this year's college football season took place last Monday, in the form of the College Football Playoff National Championship game. Nick Saban's Alabama came from 13-0 down at halftime to defeat Georgia, thus emulating their professional state counterparts, the Atlanta Falcons. Yet that is not what is to be taken from this game. With this victory, coach Saban took his sixth national title – his fifth in the last nine years. He has equalled legendary Bama coach Paul 'Bear' Bryant's tally, yet he took 13 fewer years to do it.

Saban's achievements have left pundits, fans, and rival coaches alike desperately trying to find the key to his success. It would appear that the magic ingredient is single-mindedness in the pursuit of success. The beauty of his coaching style is its simplicity.

The hero of last week's game, backup quarterback Tua Tagovailoa, exemplifies perfectly Saban's mentality. The freshman came off the bench to throw the title-winning 41-yard touchdown in overtime, seconds after being sacked for a 16-yard loss. The youngster out of Hawaii had started the evening behind junior Jalen Hurts, who boasts a 25-2 record as the Crimson Tide's signal caller. Hurts, however, could not find any rhythm leading the offence; his struggle prompted Saban to replace him at halftime with Bama 13 points in arrears. A bold move to say the least. Hurts is the current SEC Offensive Player of the Year,

22

**Under Saban, 22 Bama players have been first round NFL Draft picks**

with career numbers of 6,500 yards and 61 touchdowns, not to mention that this was his second year in a row guiding the Tide to the title game. Yet Saban had no hesitation in replacing him, illustrating his ruthlessly pragmatic approach. For a long time now, freshmen have been red-shirted and rookies in the NFL have been benched, not afforded the opportunity to play due to age or lack of experience. Yet, Saban does not let these factors cloud his judgement. For him, the best man plays, regardless, hence the fearless decision to



put Tagovailoa in the game.

The other quality that makes Saban's Bama unique is the depth at their disposal, which stems not only from his skills as a recruiter, but again from a certain clarity of thought in recognising what exactly he is looking for in a player. In the past Saban has stated that there is a reason there are classifications in boxing – you don't put middleweights in with heavyweights – and Saban wants heavyweights at every position. He looks for the biggest, fastest, and strongest high school recruits, and as many of them as possible. Alabama physically dominates their opponents. "Roll Tide, Roll" is a rallying cry with context – the Tide steamroll opponents. This is particularly the case on the defensive side of the ball, and heavy recruiting means that every player on the roster is a physical specimen. Take defensive tackle Raekwon Davis who, at 6'7" and 306 pounds wouldn't blend in anywhere; that is exactly what happens when he lines up next to his superhuman teammates. You only need to look at this season's injury list as further proof of this top-quality depth. In game one, linebackers Terrel Lewis and Christian Miller went down. Then they lost Alabama native, senior and starting middle linebacker Shaun Dion Hamilton to a knee injury vs LSU, before backup Mack Wilson went down with a foot injury. Safety Hootie Jones and OLB Anfernee Jennings followed their teammates into the treatment room as the season went on, compelling the Tide to rely on their depth to earn success. Saban knows

“Under Saban, Bama is a true dynasty”

precisely what he wants, and he has communicated that beautifully to his recruiters and scouts on the road.

Then, there is the culture and attitude that has been instilled in this programme. Winning begets winning, and no matter the personnel, this never changes in Tuscaloosa. Players and staff alike know that if everything is not given

▲ Nick Saban has coached the Tide since 2007 (MATT VELAZQUEZ)

over to the cause, there will always be someone ready to step up and fill the void. There is never any question of Alabama's effort, one never sees anything remotely resembling a lack of energy or hustle on their players' highlights reels. All this has led to an insatiable desire to win. Following the win over Georgia, legendary strength and conditioning coach Scott Cochran was reported to have destroyed last year's second place trophy with a sledgehammer. Enough said, really.

What brings all of these elements together beautifully is Saban's on-field football mind. His tactics, for the most part, are as simple as football tactics can in all earnest be. He is a master of identifying weakness in the opposition, and when he finds it, he throws everything he has at that one spot on the field. Last week's victim was Georgia cornerback Malkom Parish who, at 5'10", gave up 5 inches to the man he found himself covering frequently, 6'3" Devonta Smith. Like much of Saban's philosophy it seems simple really – throw the ball to the bigger man – but it worked. Smith burned Parish to catch the game-winning score in overtime, cementing this generation of Alabama football's, and Nick Saban's, place in college football folklore. Under Saban, Bama is a true dynasty.



▼ In each of the past ten seasons Alabama has at one point been ranked #1 in the AP Poll (THE COINER)

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## Rugby Union James Haskell comes clean on dangerous tackles and England selection 30



CURUFC

10

Army

73

# Blues found lacking attacking threat by Army invasion

**Lawrence Hopkins**  
Sport Editor

Under the lights in the heart of Cambridgeshire, the Army unleashed hell on a youthful Light Blue outfit, overwrought by the physicality offered up by the visiting side. In his last game as Captain, Charlie Amesbury, forced into the centres by injuries, was to leave the field disappointed.

Will Saunter stepped off the bench to start, joining fellow graduates from the LXs side Omar Hatteea and Joe Story in the back three. The trio would be marshalled by the experienced Amesbury, but the Army were to prove too strong for the Light Blues.

Cambridge were under pressure early, repeatedly defending perilous positions as the Army pressed home their physical advantage. Only with intuition and tenacity, from scrum-half Bell and Hennessey respectively, were the home side able to venture beyond their own 22. The Army were a complete side; hooker Austin was magnificent, taking the ball at first receiver and scrummaging strongly with his front row companions. First blood, however, went to Cambridge. Hennessey, who started last month's Varsity Match at inside centre, dispatched a penalty between the posts. This was to be the only lead Cambridge would hold.

With Evans barking orders through a thick Welsh accent, the Army were soon once again in the ascendancy. A series of

powerful scrums placed the visiting side within enemy territory; despite the ball hitting the turf as it went wide from the base of one such scrum, a man clad in red was able to collect and dive over for the first of 11 tries for the side.

A second try was surrendered rapidly by the hosts. Though Saunter defended Smith's drive for the line admirably, the excellent Davetanivalu crossed the whitewash. Further points were awarded to the visitors after clean line-out ball presented one of their number with the opportunity to crash over. One could sense the frustration in Amesbury, who assumed kicking duties to try and ignite the Light Blues' attack. The Captain's efforts were not to go unrewarded. Bell orchestrated repeated thrusts at the line from the forwards, before himself burrowing through next to the goalposts after Burnett was held just short.

Before half-time arrived, the visitors chalked up two more tries. The Army, resplendent in crimson, exhibited a vast array of weapons: mobile forwards fashioned the first of two scores from a line-out, and Dixon darted his way through the Cambridge line for the second. 35-10 at half-time.

There was to be no fairytale send-off for Captain Amesbury, his side put to the sword in the second period. Acrobatics from Evans behind the ruck afforded the backs of the British Army time and space to attack. Aggressive running from Rokodoguni, brother of England international Semesa, created an opening for

his teammates who added to the ever-increasing gap between the sides on the scoreboard. Another pinpoint line-out throw, and another score, swiftly followed the restart.

As the second half wore on, the Army showed their class against a tiring home outfit. The visitors scored a try of such quality, few will compare in the remaining games at Grange Road. Textbook scrummaging from the Army front row had the Cambridge pack back-peddalling and clean ball presented itself to Evans. Direct, straight running put the crimson-clad men into the Cambridge half. An offload in the tackle and superb supporting lines later and any one of a number of Army backs could have brought up the half century.

The hosts were not to be go do without a fight, however, showcasing their own ingenuity in seeking the line. A penalty begat a line-out; subsequently, clever passing at the front of the line saw a Blue touch down. Under the floodlights and peering through the stanchions, one could only guess at why Referee Adams had denied whomever was in temporary jubilation a score.

The ceaseless march of time was to put paid to any attempts at the miraculous, and both benches emptied with a raft of replacements introduced. Edwards was the beneficiary of quick hands in midfield, touching down in the corner as the game aged. Vunivesilevu drew up his own try, exploiting gaps in a much-changed Cambridge defensive line

▲▼ Charlie Amesbury captained the Light Blues for the final time  
(DOMININKIS ZALYS)



to give the visitors their tenth score.

An eleventh would be added with the final action of the contest; one of the impressive Army pack was prevented, illegally, from crossing himself and Referee Adams blew under the posts for a penalty try to draw proceedings to a close with the score 73-10.

Charlie Amesbury walked off the Grange Road turf for the final time as Captain of CURUFC having been on the receiving end of a display of attacking intent his Light Blue side lacked. A young side, many of whom will feature in the U20s Varsity on March 3rd, will surely have learnt from such a contest. Growing pains are to be expected whilst the next generation of Blues are cultivated. The scoreboard bore considerable damage; one only hopes that confidence is not broken by such a result against battle-hardened opposition with experience on their side.

Cambridge University RUFC: Saunter, Story, Amesbury (C), Triniman, Hatteea, Hennessey, Bell; Dean, Burnett, Troughton, Hunter, Rose, Smart, Leonard, Richardson.

Replacements: Huppertz, MacCallum, White, Beckett, Eriksen, Hammond, Elms, Perks, Bewes.

Army: Davies, Rokodoguni, Davetanivalu, Leathem, Edwards, Dixon, Evans; Titchard-Jones, Austin, Smith, Bean, Smith, Cross, Dawson, Taura.

Replacements: Brown, Dowding, Gill, Parkins, Miller, Vunivesilevu, Nacavamuto, Wilson.