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### Features 16

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# VARSIT

# 'I didn't want to do this loud

Lapses found in college disciplinary procedures: Two students speak ou



Over the past year in Cambridge, existing procedures for handling cases of sexual misconduct have come under a process of questioning.

In October, Breaking the Silence - a centralised campaign by the University to tackle sexual harassment - was launched. Last term, CUSU Women's

Campaign campaigned for a change in the University's disciplinary procedure standard of proof from proof 'beyond reasonable doubt' to a 'balance of probabilities'

Amid the attention the University and campaigners have placed on the issue of sexual misconduct, two students spoke out on the bureaucratic push back they faced when they complained to college administration about experiences related to the issue.

As part of one student's course last vear she was placed into contact with someone she later found out was a convicted pedophile.

The professor was found in 2008 to possess images of child pornography. He was arrested that year and given a twelve-month suspended sentence for rehabilitation, during which he was given full pay by the University, and told he could return to work the following April

(ROSIE BRADBURY)

A University spokesperson commented: the Breaking the Silence campaign is "part of our continued drive to ensure members of the University community can make disclosures without fear of reprisal, so we all can thrive as part of a safe, welcoming, inclusive and diverse community that nurtures a culture of mutual respect and consideration."

He returned to Cambridge under re-

Continued on page 9 ▶

### College transfers slow and complex

**Stephanie Stacey** Senior News Editor

The University's college transfer guidance may seem decisive, but anecdotal evidence from students suggests that the reality of the process is not so clearcut.

Unlike course change or intermission, college transfers are markedly rare. In the past ten academic years, just 37 students formally changed college, an average of less than four students per year.

Last year, four students successfully changed college, three of whom left Homerton. Speaking to Varsity, several students highlighted their struggle with a lengthy, drawn-out transfer process, which sometimes intensified the stresses and discomfort that had made the college transfer necessary.

The University's official guidance states that transferring colleges "is not

### 'We won't cave in' Residents fight home demolition

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Damn, I wish I'd known that: A freshers' guide



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### 'They'll have to force us out' Residents campaign to halt demolition

Montreal Square residents are trying to prevent a new development from replacing their homes

#### **Isobel Griffiths Deputy News Editor**

Cambridge Housing Society (CHS), a local housing association, announced earlier this year that 18 residences just off of Mill Road were to be demolished, replaced by over 30 new houses and blocks of flats. Varsity spoke to three women who are campaigning to preserve the square many have lived in for decades.

Cheryl Smith, 60, Marti King, 73, and Ann Byerley, 67, have lived on Montreal Square, a cul-de-sac of 18 homes just off Mill Road owned by CHS, for 17, 40, and 43 years respectively.

It was in January that they first heard of CHS plans to demolish the current square. Residents were presented with little specific information about what the development would entail, as the housing society did not yet have any clear plans at that time.

A board meeting was due to be held in March to make the final decision about the future of the square. "We kicked up a stink", says King, "so they cancelled it." They now expect a decision on whether the existing houses will be demolished to come through in October.

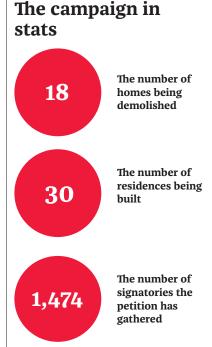
A campaign led by residents, 'Save Montreal Square', began shortly after residents were made aware of the plans, and an online petition protesting the planned development has received over 1,400 signatures. The campaign received backing last week from Cambridge Defend Education (CDE), a Cambridge University student activist group, who shared the petition on Facebook

They have held multiple demonstrations in the square, and pointed out that even on the "wettest day of the year",

over 70 people came.

Support has come from Unite, a British and Irish trade union that campaigns on many social issues, whom the women call a "lovely bunch", and FeCRA (The Federation of Cambridge Residents' Associations), as well as many local businesses."We've made a lot of friends" says King.

If the plans go through, residents will be rehomed and be given a £6,100 home loss payment from the government. When the new homes have been rebuilt, they will be able to move into





one at the same rent as they were paying previously.

Smith, however, points out that the new homes will be much smaller than those that are currently there. King claims that "they're ruining the place by overdevelopment. What they're building is rubbish", citing recent new builds that have required many repairs less than a decade after construction.

CHS told Varsity that they plan "to replace the current 18 houses with new homes of the right size for current residents to rent; plus as many low cost homes as possible and possibly some market sale homes"

Residents have also argued that the development would be harmful to the local environment. The square is home to 40 trees, all of which would likely be destroyed in the demolition. CHS, however, have said that a "generous amount of green space" will be created in the new square.

CHS has also claimed that the redevelopment is necessary, since "Montreal Square is the only CHS site in Cambridge suitable to build more new homes than exist there already."

However, Smith points out that it is "black and white" that many of the homes will be sold for private owner-



ship by CHS, and highlights that private homes nearby have sold for over £600,000.

"You know and I know they're not going to put homeless people on this site, because there's no money in it."

CHS have said that the development will "possibly" include some market sale homes, "to help pay the costs of the redevelopment".

However, they have assured the local community that "our aim is to increase the number of truly affordable homes at Montreal Square, not to make a profit."

Cambridge is currently the most unequal place to live in the UK, according to the Gini coefficient, which measures equality based on wealth distribution. The number of rough sleepers in Cambridge doubled between July 2016 and July 2017, and many Cambridge residents found themselves forced to move away as house prices soared.

The women say that most of those residents who are against the development have refused to speak the CHS about any sort of rehousing. They describe the current situation as a "stalemate".

The residents have been told that they can contribute to the design of their new homes on Montreal Square. King, however, feels that, "If we engage ▲ Several signs i protesting the i development are b scattered around Montreal Square t

(ROSIE BRADBURY/ ISOBEL GRIFFITHS) it means we're listening to what they have to say". Byerley agrees with King:"they'll have

to force us out." King adds, "I would chain myself to the trees outside if I had to."

"People say to me 'you mustn't get emotional', but how can you not get emotional when you're facing losing your home?"

What is most striking is the strength of the community in Montreal Square. Byerley is the longest-standing resident, and her house in Montreal Square was the first house she had owned. She and King have been friends for more than 40 years.

"No one ever moves out, everyone's been here for decades", says King.

They point out that for some, the move could be devastating. "We're all of a certain age", says Smith, noting that many residents have had health issues in recent years which would make a move very difficult for them.

"[CHS have] pushed us at times to make us doubt our sanity", King explains. "There's been times when it's got us down, but we won't give up", adds Smith.

Smith agrees: "they know we won't cave in."







### Researchers campaign to protect employment rights

Priya Bryant Deputy Opinion Editor Sarah Orsborne Senior News Correspondent

Earlier this year, concerns were raised within the Regent House, the University's governing body, regarding inequalities among research associates from different faculties. Research associates are mostly comprised of postdoctoral staff, who undertake the majority of research within the University.

Membership to the Regent House is currently granted to research associates only if their faculty enrols them or their department does not fall under a faculty. Because not all faculties choose to inclusively enrol every member of their staff, some research associates have Regent rights, such as the right to vote in University elections, whereas others do not.

A ballot was called to address this issue. The Grace 1 of June 27th seeks to remove these membership requirements, thus extending Regent membership to all research associates.

Since this ballot was called, an amendment to the Grace has been proposed by the University Council, requiring all research associate members be employed at the University for a "total period of at least three years continuously prior to the date of promulgation of the Roll".



Under this amended Grace, many existing Regent members would have their membership revoked if they do not meet the three-year criteria. As a large number of postdoctoral staff are employed on contracts lasting less than three years, postdoctoral representation in Regent house would presumably decrease. Campaign for Cambridge Freedoms,

backed by Professor Ross Anderson,

**66** The Grace removes an arbitrary distinction between certain staff are calling for the original Grace to be passed and the amendment blocked. Professor Ross Anderson argued the proposed amendment will "infringe [on research associates'] employment rights" and "discriminate against colleagues who have taken a career break to start a family".

Flysheets in support of the campaign have been circulated around various Uni-

versity departments to gather support for the original grace and against the Council's amendment. The University did not respond to request for comment on the campaign.

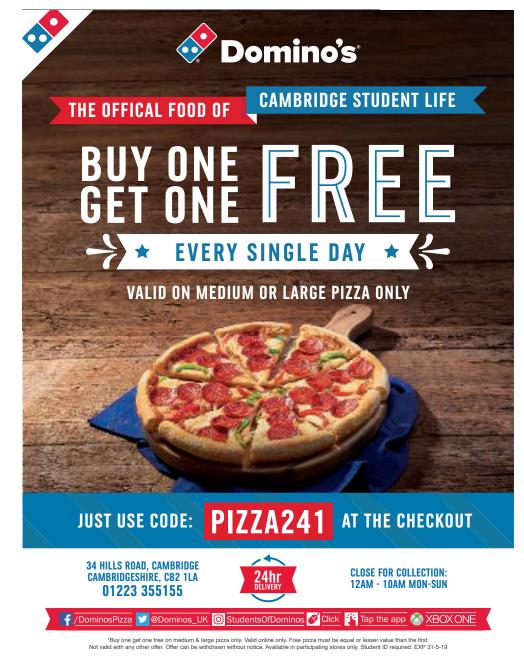
The flysheet's authors, Dr Daniel Thomas and Dr Stephen Kell, estimate that "between a half and three quarters" of University research staff will be excluded from Regent Mmbership if the amended Grace passes.

Cambridge UCU (University and College Union) told Varsity their "executive Committee unanimously supports the Grace and opposes the amendment".

"We support the Grace because it removes an arbitrary and unfair distinction between the status of certain categories of staff, notably research associates, based on where they work.

"We oppose the amendment because it proposes a qualifying period that would introduce another arbitrary distinction around Regent House membership, of a different nature, applying to Research and Computer Associates but no other categories of staff. It would also disenfranchise a large number of existing Regents. Both of these elements we find unacceptable."

The signed flysheets will be submitted by 1pm on Thursday 4th October, followed by the ballot in which Regent members will cast their votes on the Grace.



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ROSIE BRADBURY)

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College JCR reps and freshers' committees welcomed the newest cohort of Cambridge students on Thursday as they began to arrive for Freshers' Week







(ROSIE BRADBURY)

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# College transfer process found to place burden on disabled students

 Last year, only 4 students successfully transferred colleges

• Two students said their mental health worsened as the processes lagged

### Continued from front page

normally possible" and affirms that a student's reason for transferring must be "substantial and compelling".

The University notes, for example, that it is not sufficient for a student to "claim that they prefer another college, find their current college's location inconvenient or have friends in another college."

Three specific "exceptional circumstances" which may justify a college transfer are listed on the University's website:

• Disability, other serious medical grounds, or other special need that cannot be met by a student's own college but can be met by another.

• The irretrievable and significant breakdown of a student's relationship with their present college.

• A traumatic event or series of events affecting the student for which professional advice has been obtained that indicates that staying at their present college would be untenable.

It is unclear, however, the extent to which any of these conditions must be satisfied in order to justify a transfer.

The University does not hold records of reasons for previous college transfers, so only student testimony has confirmed the use of each of these listed circumstances in specific instances.

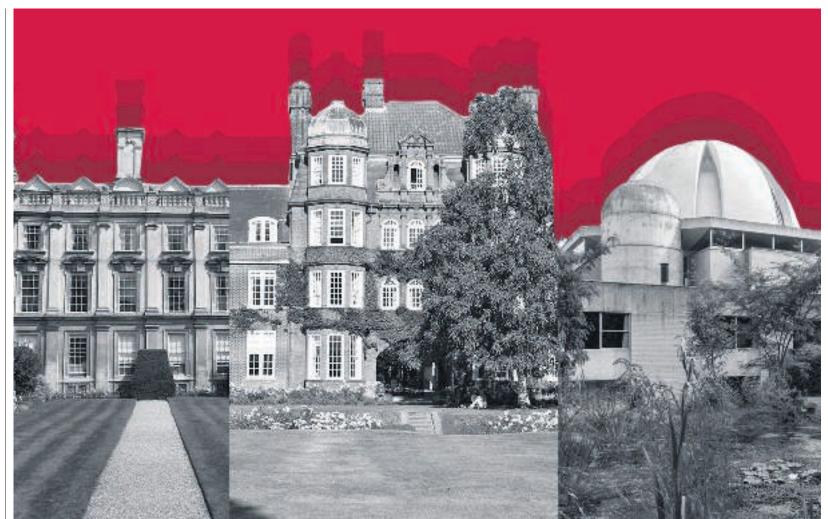
Leora Cohen, a music student who transferred to Newnham last year, described her original college, Homerton, as "truly lovely," but at a distance from town was "tough from day one."

Cohen has flat feet and scoliosis, so "the walking and cycling started became quite difficult early on," especially since the majority of her music events took place in the city centre. She said, "I was constantly in physical pain and soon my mental health started deteriorating."

"I loved Homerton but was never really there." Long days in town were expensive in terms of bus transport and meals out, and did not provide private places for music practice and studying. Furthermore, Cohen struggled to establish strong friendships in college, losing contact with many people she had known prior to arriving in Cambridge.

She spoke to her senior tutor, as the University's college transfer guidance suggests, but the first meeting "wasn't too helpful," though further meetings were arranged.

All the while, Cohen said, her mental health was declining.After speaking to a student who had successfully been



granted a college transfer, Cohen realised that her scoliosis and flat feet might allow her to be classified as disabled by the transfer panel. She "immediately" sought written letters of proof from her doctor to provide to her senior tutor, but her senior tutor was still "reluctant" to take action.

She said, "trying to classify myself as disabled made me feel awful. In my eyes I am completely able and it felt so wrong and selfish."

As a result of her deteriorating mental health, Cohen "completely lost" her appetite, "losing something like 10kg by the end of the first term." In Week Seven, when Cohen went to see her senior tutor again, "she took one look at me before deciding to put me through the application process for moving college."

Cohen received a taxi account, paid for by college, for the end of Michaelmas, and, in the third week of Lent, she received an email informing her that she could transfer to Newnham.

Dr Penny Barton, the Homerton College Senior Tutor, said to Varsity that Homerton "supported the application" to transfer, and that the College was "pleased that Leora was able to transfer before beginning her second term at Cambridge."

"When I first thought of the idea of moving college, everyone told me it wasn't possible", Cohen said, "but it obviously was, and ended up being the best thing really." She added: "For the first time in months I was excited to be at Cambridge." ▲ For some, the college location made transferring necessary. For others, it was the college environment (STEPHANIE STACEY) Alycia Leach was pooled to Murray Edwards, and immediately realised that her mobility disorder would cause difficulties in travelling between town and a distant college every day. She raised her concerns after A Level Results' Day, and began trying to initiate the transfer process in her first week at Cambridge, though it took until the beginning of Lent term for her to move into Clare. She told her tutor that she couldn't

cope "physically and emotionally and academically" with the distance, and was offered advice, but Leach said she

### **66** I struggled

### with who to reach out

to

knew even then that a transfer was the only way to completely "fix" the problem: "I felt like I couldn't live my life like my peers and do well, so I was determined to change it."

Leach sought help from the Disability Resource Centre (DRC), which sent emails to the college on her behalf. She then spoke with her senior tutor, who began the transfer process.Her college transfer was approved in late Michaelmas, and Leach moved into Clare at the beginning of Lent term.

Although Murray Edwards was "very

### Intercollegiate dynamics: Tracking college transfers

Over the past 10 years, 37 Cambridge students successfully transferred to a different college



supportive." Leach found her first Cambridge term difficult: "my academic work really suffered for the entirety of Michaelmas so by Lent I felt like I was a term behind everyone else in terms of progress and academic development."

Leach was satisfied with the outcome of her college transfer, saying it was "handled well by both colleges." She noted, however, that the entire process "could have been avoided" had her concerns been better listened to when they were initially raised in August.

"Having completed my first year, I feel part of my new college, as if I have never been anywhere else.'

For both Cohen and Leach, it was location, rather than a dislike of their college, which rendered a transfer necessary. For others, it is the environment within a college which causes discomfort.

A Newnham student, who chose to remain anonymous, said that after being pooled to a women's college, she "immediately knew" she didn't want to go there, "having been at an all-girls school in the past and having left due to the unhealthy environment."

The student was unsure how best to initiate a college transfer and fearful of jeopardising valuable relationships within Newnham: "I struggled with who to reach out to with this issue - neither tutor nor director of studies nor any other college staff seemed appropriate as they had chosen to work in an all female college and my unhappiness there seemed - to me - like an attack on their career choice.

After first speaking to a counsellor,

\*\*\*\*

she was referred to CUSU's student advice service, advised that they might be able to offer help where the counsellor could not. The University's official college transfer guidance states that any student seeking to switch college must speak first to their senior tutor, however this information was not known, it seems, to either the student or their counsellor.

In part due to the confusion of the process, the student decided not to pursue a college transfer any further, but remains unhappy with her situation: "I feel that being in an all-girls college largely clouded my first year at Cambridge, and if I could go back and have a chance to change to a mixed one I still would."

"I truly wish I could say I have come to 'love' my college, but in reality I have merely come to accept my circumstances.'

Dr Mark Wormald, secretary of the Senior Tutors' Committee, said that the aim of the college transfer procedure is "to formalise and ensure maximum efficiency, consistency and fairness in the Colleges' response to those comparatively rare requests for a switch of colleges."

The college which saw the greatest number of students leave through a formal college transfer over the past ten years was Homerton, with six students overall. This may be due to its location: distant from the majority of lecture sites, this can cause difficulties for those with disabilities

Homerton also accepted the highest number of students through formal college transfers, with six students.

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ENTRY

#### Explained: The process for college transfers

In order to initiate a college transfer, a student must speak to the Senior Tutor of their current college. With or without the senior tutor's approval. paperwork must be submitted to the College Transfer Request Panel.

If the panel approves a transfer request, it will select a shortlist of up to 5 Colleges to approach to potentially accept the student through a transfer. The official transfer procedure states that, in choosing the colleges to approach, the panel "will consider the preference and needs of the student."

I felt like I

couldn't live

my life like

and do well

my peers,

St John's and Jesus accepted comparatively high number of students through college transfers, each accepting four in the past ten years, while Pembroke had four students transfer out of the college. However, the number of formal transfers over the past ten years is too low to prove any significant trend.

Florence Oulds, former CUSU disabled students officer, said that "the current system definitely has the potential to work well if the student's current senior tutor is supportive of their application, and when both the student and the senior tutor agree to the transfer it's usually quite straightforward".

However, she also noted that because the college usually submits the application on behalf of the student. "if they are not supportive of the transfer it can

Of the four students who transferred college last Homerton

trapped by the decisions of a senior tutor who they disagree with, but has author-

the procedure" and said that the panel "can't ensure that they will find a suitable transfer college as neither colleges nor the university have the authority to make a college accept a student," de-scribing this as "a classic issue of the difficult power dynamic between colleges and the university."

Although guidance is available to students on the University's website, the information is not accessed by many. Lack of clarity and awareness of the process creates doubt, and has resulted in delays in students being able to transfer college.

# be very difficult." where "a student feels

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ity over them. She highlighted the "uncertainty of





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### News Reporting misconduct

# The gaps in colleges' handling of misconduct complaints



#### Continued from front page

-turned to Cambridge under restrictions from the University that he would only teach those who consented to work with him and would not be allowed contact with anyone under the age of 16.

[After I found out, I] walked straight back to college and didn't really breathe until I got back to my room. I wanted to throw up.

"When I was [younger], I was raped by a guy who was significantly older than me. He was in the sixth form of mv school.

"I decided to go to the police about it because I wanted to press charges, or at least scare him so he wouldn't do it again.

"I was going to do it quietly – I didn't want anyone in my school to find out. But [after I spoke] to my school and the police about it, at some point he was spoken to, and as soon as he realised I was talking about it, he immediately spread around that I was lying, that this never happened, that I was a liar, like people do to victims of sexual assault."

At the end

of the day

I'm not

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my side

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[After hearing of the professor's criminal history] my brain was just spiralling. I remember thinking [that I wanted to do something to] shock me back into some kind of reality because I didn't have a grip on it," she said.

When she took this to a college administrator she was told everyone in the faculty really trusted him. She said she was asked "to offer how to solve the entire university system ... as if it was me, solely, who had to do this", with questions like, 'What would you do? What would you do if we started running supervisor checks?'

"I didn't want to do this loudly," she

said. "I just wanted students to be informed and lectures to be recorded in future so that students would have the choice about whether to go, but it just seemed like it was blown out of proportion because of the intermediary that I had."

She was told to keep this quiet. "[I was told], pretty much verbatim: don't take this to the student press, don't take it to Varsity; the faculty hates it when things like this come out in the papers; things will grind to a halt, nothing will get done, and it will reflect really badly, which was... terrifying."

In Easter, on the day of one of her exams she got a text from a friend who had been assigned the same pair of examiners: she had been examined by the professor after the faculty made a switch.

It was two hours until her exam. She thought maybe she wouldn't take the exam and miss out on the marks. "I spent the entire day sobbing."

Towards the end of the day she was told that an alternative arrangement had been put in place for her. "[They] expected me to trust [them] when my experience ... was so negative.'

In a separate instance, a student at a different college filed a complaint about her supervisor after noticing his prolonged inappropriate behaviour. Parts of her course involve reading texts with sexually explicit content, and in one supervision the supervisor had demonstrated fingering someone. In a separate supervision, "he felt the need to tell me how a man felt about oral sex", and reportedly "said stuff like oral sex is an act of charity from a woman to a man." She said: "It wasn't really part of the literary analysis anymore, was it?'

She's spoken to some of his other stu-

dents - "they all say he's creepy, and that he brings up sex a lot."

When she took it to the college, they informed her that filing an official complaint would involve speaking to him about her complaints, which she wasn't prepared to do. She asked if she could just switch supervisors, but the college refused. "They told me I'd have to keep going to [his] supervisions or I'd have to intermit."

She was facing mental health issues at the same time, and said she was struggling to go about her normal life. "I didn't have the energy to fight with my college for what I want.

She thought: "I don't have any evidence, I don't have a recorder, there isn't enough to have him removed very far away from me... At the end of the day I'm not going to win this because I don't have enough on my side.

"He's seen as this genius in his field, as this extremely intelligent man. People see him as a weird figure who has quirks ... and he's also seen as bit of a dinosaur ... so people just accept these things about him."

The supervision system creates intimate environments between students and supervisors. The one-on-one supervision systems in many humanities courses has the potential to place students in more vulnerable positions. In certain cases they may not have others in the room to back them up about an incident they wish to report. "I sincerely think that if him and I were in a room with thirty people he would not have done that," the second student said.

Both students said they felt they weren't taken seriously, that they had been painted as making a fuss, and viewed as over-emotional.

tied ribbons to the Senate House gates in May (FELIX PECKHAM)

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"When vou report something you're seen as someone who's complaining," the second student said. She's previously been spoken to about her activity on social media. "I'm a figure of controversy in the college."

The first student said: "It reminded me of the aftermath of when I first experienced sexual assault, the fact that information about me was taken out of my control, and I knew that people were talking about it, and discussing whether I was just being overly emotional." She's spent the year looking at her supervisors and thinking: "Do they know who I am? Do they agree with me? Do they just think I'm this crazy social justice warrior?'

Her experience in Cambridge has brought painful memories back. "I still don't like talking to anyone in high school because I know they'll have heard these stories about me and have an idea about whether I was telling the truth about it. There are a lot of parallels with the situation with my faculty - not knowing who knows, not knowing who believes me, not knowing who sees me as an emotional woman.

Both students also said they ultimately felt their efforts would lead to little consequence.

The first student said: "I felt really hopeless, like nothing was going to change."

In the second students' case, she said: "I was angry that the other people who reported him were not taken seriously and not supported. I was angry that I was stuck with this guy in a room and there was nothing I could do about it overtly. More importantly my anger was because no matter what I did I would not be able to take him down. I thought it was just futile.



Each ribbon represented one signatory of a recent open letter calling for reform to the University's student displinary procedure (FELIX PECKHAM

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### ANALYSIS

### What could the pension strike outcome mean?

#### Noella Chye Editor Rosie Bradbury Senior News Editor

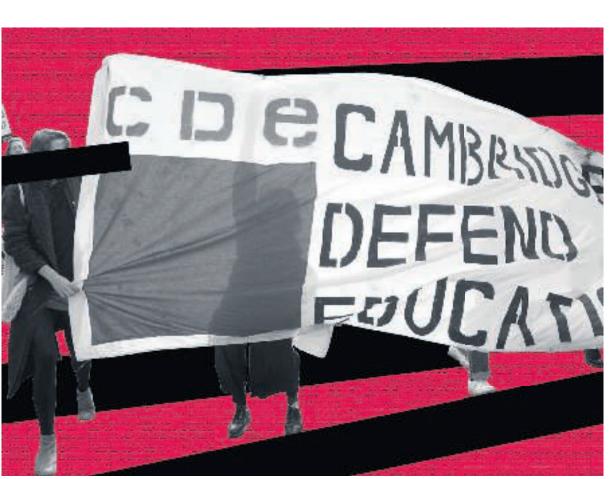
Earlier this month, an expert panel, the Joint Expert Panel (JEP), found the employers' decisions that sparked this year's pensions dispute had been based on shaky foundations. Its findings vindicated staff who had voiced similar concerns to no avail.

The past year saw a new focus placed on the perceived disconnect between senior administrators, and staff and students – a consistent thread over the past year, where structures have proven illequipped to give differing perspectives due weight.

#### Struggling to cut through levels of bureaucracy

Student representation within University committees has proven to carry little weight in current governance structures in cases where there is a lack of genuine engagement between perspectives.

Writing in Varsity in March, student representative to the University's divestment working group Alice Guillaume said: "The working group is afraid to be



Cambridge Defend Education joined staff in protesting pension cuts

ambitious, in the fear that its recommendations will not be accepted by the University Council."

Despite the working group having been tasked with consulting widely on whether to recommend divesting Cambridge's endowment from fossil fuels, Guillaume argued that the debate was constrained, as members were hesitant to recommend proposals which were unlikely to be approved by the University Council – to whom the group's final report was presented.

She called into question the group's ability to form an independent opinion, arguing that even if there had been rigorous debate among members of the working group, Cambridge's governance structure meant that radical change was never on the table.

Levels of bureaucracy have also meant that discussions take place in various

committees before reaching the Council, such that few issues were brought to University Council with members not having already formed an opinion.

Ex-CUSU President Daisy Eyre, who served on University Council, has described her "feeling that decisions have been made long before they make it to the Council", and where Council is unable to come up with its own recommendations.

### 'How do we know that we're investing in Shell?'

In both the pensions dispute and issue of divestment, senior officials have cited the complexity of financial issues in dismissing staffs' or students' concerns.

A *Varsity* investigation in June found that finance officials dismissed a Grace signed by 501 members of Cambridge's (MATHIAS GJESDAL-HAMMER/ROSIE BRADBURY)

governing body Regent's House – which called for the retention of existing pension values – as "evidence of the poor understanding of the matters at issue."

And, in the divestment working group report – meant to be a point of genuine engagement with the various arguments – members dismissed campaigners' concerns with the claim that they poorly understood the issue at hand.

A lack of sincere engagement was evident in the final report's simplification of their main argument. The group wrote: "many of the calls for the University to divest... presupposed that such action was straightforwardly feasible and within the direct control of Council and the IO [Investment Office]", largely overlooking campaigners' challenging the University's very lack of control over its indirect investments. When divestment campaigners asked for more information on respective issues, they were denied it.

In an unprecedented move in July, Queens' announced that it will divest the entirety of its £86.2m endowment, noting explicitly that the decision was a direct response to growing calls for ethical investments. The college's decision was the first of its kind in Cambridge, both in that it marked the strongest commitment so far from any Cambridge college to environmentally ethical investments and that it saw students' calls as sufficient reason to take action.

In making lobbyists' concerns a focal point and in recognising that their efforts justified a response, the College – in an unusual move – took the divestment lobby to be significant enough to warrant action.

In both cases, the University's response placed campaigners in a Catch-22, telling them that they didn't understand the University's finances and could not get more information.

#### Schrödinger's strike

It was only as a result of 14 days of staff action that an independent panel was created, and validated their concerns. Dr Jo Grady described the situation in a tweet responding to the JEP's report: "The JEP has simultaneously demonstrated the strike was both necessary & unnecessary. Without the JEP we wouldn't have the proof it was unnecessary, but the strike was necessary to get the JEP. "It was Schrödinger's strike!"

Employers' responses to the report's findings remain to be seen over the next few weeks as UUK begins a series of consultations with them before returning to the negotiation table with the University and Colleges Union, the UK's largest higher education trade union.

In Queens' taking into account campaigners' arguments in choosing to divest, the college offered a counterpoint to University structures skirting genuine engagement on financial concerns.

The JEP report is the most substantial legitimation of striking staffs' perspectives on the pension dispute so far, as the independent panel came to a similar conclusion as staff: that employers may be capable of taking on a higher level of risk. It could mark a turning point in the search for legitimacy.

Stephen Toope and staff strikes, explained

### **Rosie Bradbury**

Senior News Editor

Stephen Toope was installed as 346th vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge last October.

In early 2018, as strikes broke out across the higher education sector, the leadership of Cambridge's Vice-chancellor Stephen Toope on the pensions issues came under new scrutiny. In early March, Cambridge Defend Education (CDE), a student activist group, protesting university markestisation, began an occupation of Old Schools – which houses the central university offices – in protest against the proposed staff pension changes.

This was the first student occupation of the central University administrative building since the 2011 tuition fee hike, and student activists listed an open meeting with Toope as one of the conditions for the direct action to cease.

CDE said that the open meeting was simply "in line with Toope's promises to being open and transparent". Calls that Toope should be more perceptive to criticism reflected a belief among many students and staff that University leaders must be held more forcefully to account for decisions and directions taken at the highest levels of Cambridge's governance structures.

There was a particular frustration among staff with the fact that the University had initially expressed strong sup-



HAMMER)

port in 2017 for the controversial reforms to the pensions scheme, as the proposals promised to level a lower burden of risk on employer institutions, despite later changes to Cambridge's position amid the pension strikes.

And despite the fact that reforms to the pensions scheme for Cambridge staff were dealt with on a national level, staff and student activists argued that Toope had an opportunity to play an essential lobbying role in country-level talks to (f)
[It is a mistake to think] that the anger directed at university leadership is all about pensions ??

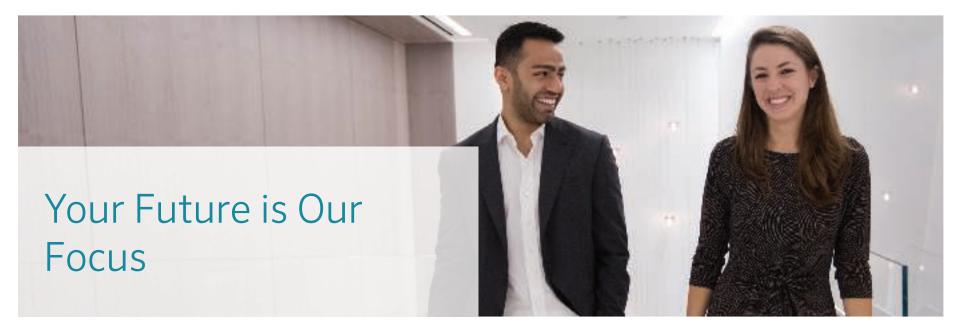
steer the proposals to being more favourable for staff.

As the strikes continued into mid-March, the University relaxed its position in favour of staffs' demands for their pensions, including proposing that Cambridge pay higher contributions toward the scheme, and that it accept greater risk in the short term.

Three days into the five-day student occupation of Old Schools, Toope wrote a letter to *The Times* decrying the "fundamental error" of university marketisation where students are "reduced to mere consumers".

In an open meeting attended by over 500 students and staff in mid-March, Toope agreed largely with audience members on pensions issues and on employment precarity in the higher education sector. He criticised the University's response to the pensions proposals which it submitted in September 2017 as being done "far too quickly", where there "probably wasn't enough thought" given to various factors at play for staff.

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- > Full Time Analysts 2019 Strategic Advisory & Restructuring (London) Applications are now open and will close October 26, 2018
- > Spring Insight Program 2019 Strategic Advisory & Restructuring (London) Applications are now open and will close January 4, 2019

We review applications on a rolling basis, so early submission is strongly encouraged.

### Interview

### Emma Drewett, the student looking to make Cambridge a little less lonely

**Belle George** talks to the creator of Cam Connect, the platform bringing students together

mma Drewett, creator of the newly-launched online platform Cam Connect, says she never really considered Cambridge as an option" growing up. It wasn't until she attended talks and visits to the University, organised by access groups, that she contemplated applying. Fast forward a few years and Drewett is heading into her second year studying English at Jesus. Drewett spoke to Varsity about how the isolation and pressure she felt in her first year at Cambridge prompted her to set up the platform which, in just a few weeks of being active, is quickly on its way to 100 members.

A member of the Varsity team mentioned Drewett's post on the Official Cambridge Freshers Facebook group, explaining the creation of Cam Connect. Having myself noted the difficulty of creating intercollegiate friendships, Drewett's goal of connecting people who otherwise wouldn't cross paths seemed like an idea that could create tangible change for students across Cambridge.

I ask Drewett about her university experience so far. She is immediately and refreshingly honest. "Before Cambridge, I never struggled to socialise: I always considered myself to be loud and outgoing, which is why it came as a surprise to me to discover characters far bolder than I was.'

She goes on to explain in more detail the cause of her first year struggles. "Overwhelmed by the diversity in personalities and character types. I began to lose confidence in myself, becoming quieter and doubting whether I would fit in". She added that she was "already apprehensive about [her] ability," and found her sense of 'imposter syndrome' was exacerbated by "meeting people "far more confident and self-assured" than she felt. She said that this "was enough to encourage me to find refuge within the comfort of my room, and shy away from new opportunities and new faces".

Drewett's experiences are not unique. I remember meeting the second years studying HSPS at my college on my second day in Cambridge. Another fresher quizzed the second years about third year papers - I hadn't even given thought to which papers I'd be taking in first year yet. It was intimidating.

The 'imposter syndrome' Drewett speaks of is widespread in Cambridge.

It can be especially daunting for freshers, prompting some people to feel pressured to 'prove' they are worthy of their place through excelling academically. This pressure can lead to social isolation, as Drewett herself found. She said that as a result of her "diminishing confidence", she "worked incessantly, feeling



the need to compensate" for what she believed herself to be lacking.

Additionally, many Cambridge students report difficulty in making friends on their course, exacerbating discouraging feelings of isolation. This is particularly common for arts students, who lack the one-on-one peer interaction experienced by science students in labs. Low contact hours and large numbers mean the likelihood of sitting next to the same stranger in a lecture often enough to strike up a friendship is low. And be yond our firs tweeks, how many of us continue to introduce ourselves to the person sitting next to us? Emma explains that English students seldom use their second year group chat, aptly named 'huge scary engling chat', to reach out to one another. "Personally, I find messaging the group chat highly daunting and I am sure other students share in this experience." Jokingly, she adds "Maybe a name change is in order, to 'huge friendly engling chat.'"

Pressure to excel, coupled with social isolation is a deadly combination. They exacerbate one another: working ceaselessly prevents socialising and being socially isolated can lead to a false impression that peers are cruising through academic work while you struggle to cope.

Groups and platforms that connect students so they can support one another have an important role to play in alleviating this cycle.

What prompted Drewett to act on her feelings of isolation was her discovery of Camfess, the anonymous confessions Facebook page that revealed to her the number of students experiencing the same emotions of isolation and stress as she was. "I was shocked to hear that I was not alone, which was encouraging at first but I was left saddened by the number of students struggling to strike the correct balance or to fit in. I decided that something needed to be done to tackle the issue." And thus Cam

I was saddened by the number of students struggling to strike the correct balance or to fit in

99

Emma Drewett what it says on the tin: an online platis a second year studying English

form through which students can connect with other students for advice, support and breaks from studying.

Highlighting that many music or sports societies have a "competitive rather than casual" nature that can be daunting for some students, Drewett says that "Cam Connect stands in as an informal society for lovers of walks, talks, coffees, and cinema trips," offering a "simple platform to meet new people and do more 'normal' friendship establishing activities."

Drewett explains Cam Connect is

Connect was born.

The platform is undoubtedly a step in the right direction for those looking to form more intercollegiate friendships, and Drewett notes that it has already begun to be successful, offering advice to international students who identified the lack of a Moroccan society at Cambridge. One hopes this is only the first of many future small successes for the online platform, that will snowball to contribute to a more inclusive and connected Cambridge.



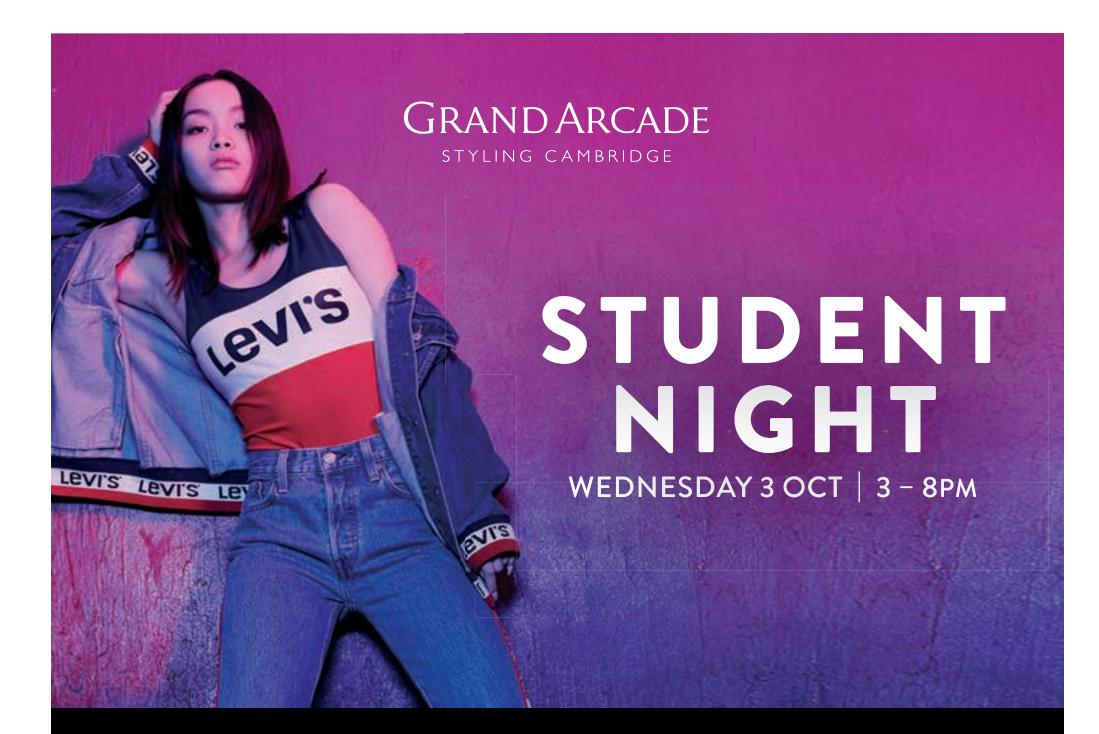
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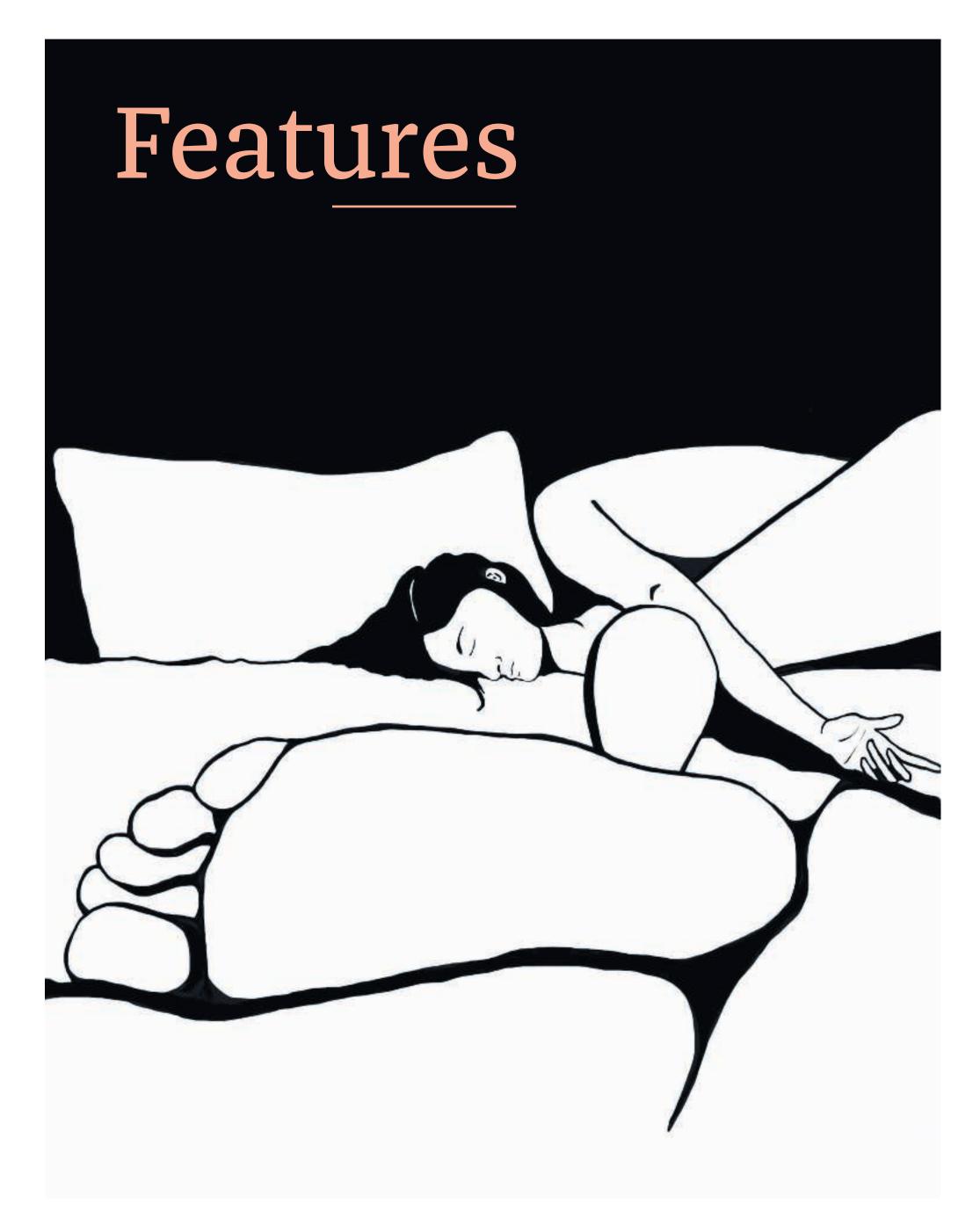
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### FEATURES Letters to freshers

# A slow upwards haul: my journey to recovery

Content note This article contains discussion relating to mental illness and the process of recovering from assault

ntil this year, my mental health had never been a huge concern. I had had my ups and downs, particularly in sixth form, but after a year out where I had, among other things, worked on myself, I was stable and happy.

Like many others, I entered university with unrealistically high expectations about it being the best three years of my life, in which I'd make friendships that would last forever and love every second. The reality couldn't have been farther from the truth: at the end of my first term, I was assaulted.

Responses to trauma are varied and entirely unique to everyone. All survivors will tell you they have very different ways of processing what happened to them.

In my case, I delayed any form of reaction until early in Lent term when I had a breakdown. I could barely muster the energy to eat, let alone talk to anyone. The thought of having to struggle through another 12 essays, or get up and get myself to lectures seemed impossible. I would alternate between crying until I was sick and staring at the wall for hours- I contemplated intermitting.

However, some form of innate stubbornness combined with a desire to not take another year out meant I decided – perhaps stupidly – that I would power through. Until this point in my life I had always been able to cope with what life threw at me and somehow still do well academically. I can admit now that far too much of my self-esteem was entangled in my perceived intelligence comparative to others.

Cambridge is the kind of place where pretty much everyone struggles with a sense of being an imposter and I felt that, as I was not coping, I was not deserving of a place here at all. This only exacerbated the isolation I felt. It seemed everyone else was getting on with their normal, trauma-free existences when for me, just waking up in the morning was a huge task.

Yet somehow, I got through it. I found the courage to tell my DoS I wasn't coping – despite literally never having admitted defeat to myself ever before in my life.

I found the strength to find my college nurse to set me up with counselling, and I found the physical and mental energy to walk into the University Counselling Centre once a week. I managed to get out of bed every day.

Things began to get easier. I started making it to a couple of lectures a week and my essays stopped being completely incoherent. I smiled more. Over time I began to see what I had perceived as failure and defeat was anything but- it was a sign of my own strength to keep on going through what was the worst period of my life.

Perceptions of self-care can fall into clichéd expectations of bubble baths and hot chocolate. Yet for me, self-care was having a shower in the morning. When I began to regard actions such as having some fruit, as looking after myself, I began to forgive myself for not coping which enabled me to try and move on.

ot Contraction of the second s

## Fresher fears: What if I find out that I'm not good enough?

aving attended the same school for the past seven years, leaving the safety net of my old friends is a rather daunting prospect. Despite trying to avoid it, the odd doubt slips in. What if I'm not interesting enough? Not confident enough? Not [insert any other adjective] enough?

In particular, I'm panicking about not being 'good enough'. My education so far has put the spotlight on my academic achievements — yet at Cambridge I fear this this will hardly be noteworthy. These niggling doubts are compounded when I have to Google the definitions of words

#### used on my subject group chat, or can't follow conversations about Marxist historiography. Although it hasn't made me doubt that I should come to Cambridge, it has made me question how I'll adapt to an environment so different to my mixed-ability state school.

To me, Eton students (and the like) seem like unicorns — mythical creatures from a world away. Yet soon, some of them will be my peers. I imagine our disparate experience of education so far will have developed different skill sets. In my sixth form, My classes of thirty students whose targets ranged from A\*-E were taught by teachers frequently

### "

I no longer needed to 'sell myself' as the ideal, multi-facted Oxbridge

student

on their time that there was a limit to how far they could extend teaching. With so many privately educated students attending Cambridge, will I be disadvantaged by my lack of knowledge beyond an A-Level curriculum? Or will it actually help me because of the independent study skills and self-discipline I developed?

overstretched with so many demands

A year on from redrafting my UCAS personal statement 21 times, I've found myself countlessly rewriting the fourline bio about my hobbies requested by my college. It was difficult to remember that I no longer needed to 'sell myself' as the ideal, multi-faceted Oxbridge student. Therefore, I took some convincing that it was perfectly fine to write about my love of trashy romance novels, rather than feigning a fascination for Homer's Illiad.

On group chats, people have discussed their political campaigning and their orchestral performances. By contrast, I read the odd Snapchat news article and struggled to reach Grade 5 on the piano. They have mentioned their acting experience and their times in choirs, whereas the extent of my performance in the theatre was as the Lead Elephant in a Year 7 production of The Jungle Book.

Emily Hal

### Letters to freshers FEATURES

However, my recovery did not come solely from myself. Thankfully, I had an incredibly supportive DoS and Tutor who helped organise special exam arrangements and repeat supervisions for those in which I had panic attacks. They reminded me it was ok to just be surviving right now.

The best thing anyone told me this year was my DoS informing me that I only had to pass my exams; there would be no repercussions, no stern conversations about how I hadn't worked hard enough.

I finished the year with a 2:1 - a minor miracle for anyone who had met me in Lent term. Although it initially appeared miraculous, reflection has made me see

"

In Lent term I could barely muster the energy to eat, let alone talk to anyone

that it was a slow upwards haul to recovery. I would not say that I am back where I used to be and perhaps I never will be. All I know is that now I am at a point where days and weeks can go by without thinking about it. Now, my goals for the day are things such as spending time with a friend, rather than only to get out of bed.

I'm not sure what my advice is to incoming freshers. Many of you will have struggled or be struggling with your mental health, you may be worried that any attempts at recovery you have made will be dragged down by the stress of day-to-day life here. You may be nervous to admit to yourself you are scared it will be too much.

" I stopped believing my worth was entirely

defined by academia

My own experience has taught me that it is ok to admit you aren't coping. It is ok to ask for help, however and whatever you need, even if it's just a cup of hot chocolate with a friend, to talk about whatever is on your mind.

I learnt that prioritising my own wellbeing was the only way to survive. I stopped believing my worth was entirely defined by academia and focused on looking after myself and ensuring I was as healthy and happy as I could be that particular day. I was lucky in that the support I received from both college and UCS allowed me to focus on myself and myself alone. I no longer had to be perfect for anyone else, which let me finally begin to forgive myself for not being able to be perfect academically - and otherwise. It was then, and only then, that I began to feel happy again.

Recovery is not a walk in the park. It is a pretty much constant battle to remind vourself that things will eventually be ok and that life can be amazing. In my case, self-forgiveness and prioritising my welfare were lessons hard learnt.

To all freshers, and current students, the most important thing to realise is that you aren't alone and that things can, and do, get better.

If you have been affected by any of these issues, you can contact the Samaritans in the UK on 116 123 or email jo@samaritans. org, and the mental health charity Mind by calling 0300 123 3393 or visit mind.org.uk.



But, I find it genuinely interesting and often reassuring to see what is discussed on these chats. I was relieved to find that everyone had found the Admissions Office impossible to contact: in my subject chat, discovering others with similar educational experiences has helped alleviate a lot of my concerns about the state/private divide. I will confess to being somewhat of a 'lurker' on most of these chats. Perhaps my reluctance to regularly contribute is based on the fact that I'd rather people judge me on how they find me as a person in 'real' life but that hasn't stopped me from scrutinising my Instagram and Facebook to remove anything remotely embarrassing.

My current friends were made with the blissful overconfidence and social obliviousness of a cocky eleven-year-old. Now, a slightly more insecure and jaded version of me has to convince a whole bunch of new people that I'm worth keeping around. It's more than a little bit scary. In an attempt to appear as if I've got my life sorted, I've overthought everything to the point where my packing list even includes mini wooden pegs

to attach photos to my string of fairy lights.

My common sense isn't renowned, and recently being home alone led to an accidental defrosting of the freezer, the demise of our entire tomato crop, as well as the untimely and inexplicable disappearance of my sister's pet fish. As much as I like to claim that I'm capable, I'm well aware that the truth is far from that-hence overcompensating before my arrival.

When it comes to it. I'm hopeful that in reality I will crawl out from under my duvet and be genuinely excited about coming to Cambridge. Ideally, I'll reread this article in the future and laugh at my typical habit of overthinking absolutely everything. Yes, I'm scared about making friends-but most people know no one, so we're all in the same boat. Yes, I'll find having more autonomy intimidating. Yes, a lot of the people will be formidably talented at seemingly everything but not everyone can grace the stage of the National Opera House, and the same group chat has happily debated fitting Timberlands in a clutch bag.



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### Features

# What is decolonisation and why does it matter at Cambridge?

Since the #RhodesMustFall campaign in South Africa captured international headlines in 2015, students have been mobilising on campuses throughout the UK to demand the decolonisation of their universities. As momentum for this movement continues to grow at the University of Cambridge, so does the urgency of clarifying what exactly campaigners mean by 'decolonisation'.

'Diversity' initiatives are not 'decolonial' initiatives. Diversity initiatives simply seek to expand reading lists to include more authors of colour whereas decolonial initiatives start from the premise that colonial power stole and destroyed land, bodies, and knowledge from indigenous people. In practice, this means that diversity initiatives perpetuate the status quo of Eurocentrism whereas decolonial initiatives seek to fundamentally challenge the presumption of Eurocentrism.

Campaigners have argued that in simply including a few non-European voices in historically xenophobic reading lists, diversity initiatives fail to interrogate how the existing academic industrial complex - with all of its historically xenophobic structures - continues to center whiteness and continually place non-white voices on the margins. In other words, they say, the inclusion of authors of color do nothing to challenge Eurocentrism. By contrast, a model of decolonial resistance centres around the role that colonialism plays in perpetuating systemic injustices today, arguing for the need for reparations by Europeans to ex-colonies, de-centering of European ways of being, and re-centering of indigenous perspectives.

But how does decolonial resistance apply to universities, when the modern University is not immediately recognisable as a colonial power?

Many students and academics have formed working groups to reconsider how existing curricula simultaneously excludes the epistemologies of indigenous people and fails to situate white authors and their theories in a colonial context, and have successfully put Fanon and Gandhi into the introductory Politics module. These measures, campaigners argue, are insufficient in seriously considering the impact of colonialism in the history of European political thought.

While reforms to the curricula are undoubtedly necessary to displace hegemonic assumptions about the superiority of Western thought, it should be emphasised that this alone cannot lead to decolonisation. Researchers Tuck and Yang have written that decolonisa tion cannot simply be conflated with calls to adopt more critical pedagogical practices because doing so would reduce decolonisation to a metaphor. Instead, decolonisation must maintain its specifiety in claims to sovereignty by indigenous and colonised people. In other words, to decolonise we must constantly and continually reassess and reconsider our positionality and the spaces we occupy.

Howard Chae & Faria Tabassum

### "

How and why does decolonial resistance apply to universities, given

that the modern University is not immediately recognisable as a colonial power? **??** 





19







Beyond the question of knowledge production, universities have also financially benefited from colonialism. Glasgow University recently announced that "the institution benefited directly from the slave trade in Africa and the Caribbean in the 18th and 19th centuries to the tune of almost £200m in today's money."

Cambridge's partnerships with Caterpillar Inc. and BAE Systems through the Cambridge Alliance Service have come under recent scrutiny, as 40 University student groups have called for Cambridge to boycott the companies due to their involvement in conflicts in the Middle East.

Cambridge's colonial heritage remains apparent within the University's walls. Trinity College has permanently loaned Australian Gweagal spears to the University's Museum of Anthropology and Archeology (MAA), refusing to repatriate collected colonial artifacts.

Churchill College's namesake is a Prime Minister who was responsible for overlooking a genocide due to his own dehumanisation of colonised peoples.

Last year also saw students and academics of colour involved in decolonial work at Cambridge harassed by the national press. A *Daily Mail* piece headlined 'How CAN Cambridge let this hate-filled don pour out her racist bile?' attacked Churchill academic Dr Priyamvada Gopal, an advocate for decolonisation of Cambridge's English curriculum, for criticising an Oxford theologian as being a colonial apologist. The University's failure to provide explicit support demonstrated their continued privileging of white comfort over the security of coloured students and staff.

Over the coming term, the BME Campaign hopes to begin shifting the terms upon which students engage with decolonisation. By rooting the university decolonisation movement in its sociohistorical context and its origins, we hope to inspire a re-imagining a radically different university. For those of us invested in carrying forward localised decolonial resistance, we must recognise how the University continues to uphold imperialistic power. Reforms to pedagogy (including changing the curricula, reevaluating hiring practices, and funding for research) must work side-byside with social justice movements in working toward creating a decolonised university.

As we return to this Michaelmas term and resume our various working groups, let us remember to "interrogate the acceptability of decolonising rhetoric as a sign that it is being co-opted" by the very structures of racist, sexist, ableist, and classist oppression that we seek to dismantle.

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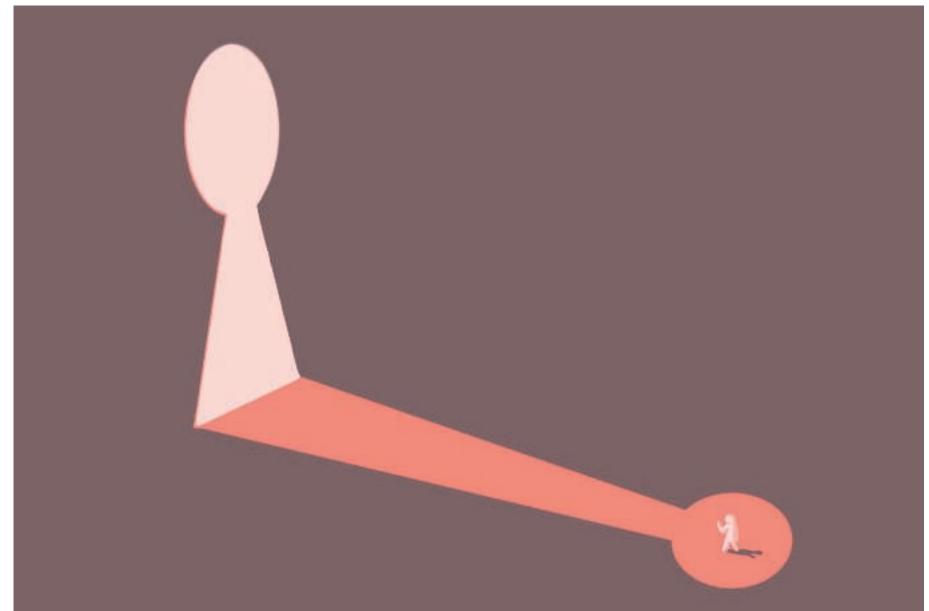
To decolonise we must constantly and continually reassess and reconsider our positionality and the spaces we occupy?



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### **Features**

# Perspectives from a state educated, working class, mixed race woman



This week marks my last shift at worka North London fish and chip shop.

66 I pic-

lectures 🏓

No. I do not fit the Cambridge stereotype: privately educated, white, and upper class do not describe me; my parents did not finish their education. However, they had an unwavering belief in its power and instilled this value in me. As such, I set my sights high.

When we were asked to write down our dream universities in secondary school, I confidently wrote down 'Cambridge'. But to my disappointment and shock, I was given a pitiful glance by my secondary school teacher and told to be 'a bit more realistic.' My 15-yearold self was disheartened.

As I stared back at my scrawny handwriting, I could not understand what was so unrealistic about attending Cambridge. I had recently watched the Theory of Everything, with Eddie Redmayne starring as the young Stephen Hawking, cycling past



(ILLUSTRATION BY LISHA ZHONG)

the backdrop of King's College Chapel and zooming through narrow-cobbled streets. I pictured myself, too, rushing past magnificent buildings on my way to lectures and chasing friends down quaint back alleys.

In this fairy-tale daze, I started doing research about Cambridge admissions- but my jaw dropped. I found out that every year, more than 17,000 bright young people apply to follow Stephen's footsteps, but only 3,500 make it through.

Suddenly, I wondered whether my secondary teacher was right to tell me that I was being unrealistic: how could I dare to think that I had the potential to attend the same university as Hawking?

For black/mixed-race students, the barriers set in front of us are exacerbated by the fact that we tend only to be shown a rigid range of possibilities for ourselves. For example, when year

### **Features**

10 work experience was upon us, to my dissatisfaction, we were only offered the opportunity to go to retail shops.

What about us budding lawyers, politicians and scientists? Why were we as a collective - simply because of our socio-economic background - expected to amount to nothing more than menial labour?

Experiences such as these quickly made me realise that for a resident of Wood Green (North London), Cambridge was, in actuality, virtually unobtainable.

More than my place of residence, I realised that my very person- a state educated, mixed-race, and workingclass woman- made Cambridge more and more like a distant fairy-tale. After all, what did I have in common with Hawking?

Fortunately, as I was scrolling through my twitter feed one day, I came across a tweet by Courtney Daniella (a former black Cambridge vlogger) which advertised an Access Conference hosted by the African Caribbean Society (ACS). Such new platforms and initiatives have altered the landscape for pro-

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**66** Being in a room of black students made be realise Cambridge didn't have

to be a fairy tale 🏓

and give me hope for a future that once seemed impossible. After seeing the twitter post, hope had

been restored and I immediately signed up to the conference. Being in a room full of black current

and prospective students filled me with awe, because it made me realise that Cambridge did not have to be a fairy-tale dream, it could be my future reality. In particular, it was my mentor,

former ACS President Ore Ogunbiyi, that gave me the courage to walk through that door. Ore dedicated hours per week skyping me and holding interviews. I am extremely grateful for her care and devotion, but those sessions did something more important: I saw a positive and intelligent young black woman studying the degree I hoped to

gain admission to. In Ore, I saw myself and the possibility of my future. Her 旨 I wonguidance and feedback improved my der how self-confidence as she told me I was a much of the strong candidate, and that I had every right to apply and study at Cambridge Cambridge like herself. fantasy will

It was the tight-knit black community within Cambridge that extended their hand to me as a prospective student and now as an incoming fresher.

I am determined to enable this community to flourish and graciously extend my hand to my current mentee through her application process. Worry and excitement fill me at the

thought of beginning term in a few short days. Starting university will undoubtedly be a difficult time of transitioning from frying fish on Friday nights to attending

formals and balls. I wonder how much of the Cambridge fantasy will turn out to be a reality: the Harry Potter-esque robes, the May balls and the fancy buildings.

Or whether my fantasy bubble will be burst by a plethora of microaggressions. endless deadlines and a disappointing Eurocentric curriculum?

Communities like FLY Cambridge and the ACS will become a home away from home. I'll be fine, and I will flourish because that is what I do despite the odds.

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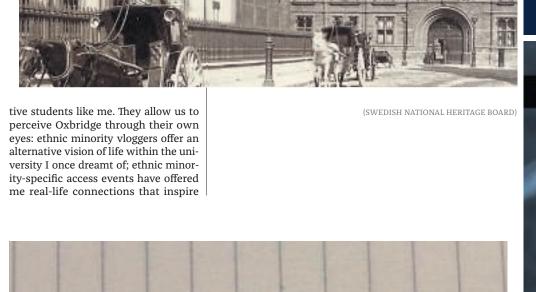
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# Opinion



### The deafening silence around student finance must be broken

Charlotte Lillywhite n 8 March 2016, Jerome Rogers' body was found in a woodland area near his family home, where he used to play as a child. Jerome committed suicide after his debt spiralled to £1019, resulting from two traffic fines which he picked up while working a zero-hour contract job. The last person to see the 20-year-old alive was a bailiff.

His story featured on the BBC documentary Killed By My Debt. Shortly after watching this documentary, an advert for a prominent bank's student plans appeared on my screen. A would-be student, using spoken word poetry, rhythmically expressed his determination to be financially stable and independent of his mum before beginning university. After all, financial insecurity and having insufficient personal funds is just a choice, right? And this meant being a Real Man, with the archaic 'man up' thrown in for good measure. What a joy to see an advertising campaign which not only perpetuates but advocates a classist culture of financial shame, directed towards those most vulnerable to it.

I was struck by not only this tendency to sideline the cultural and psychological factors surrounding student finance, but the discord of the documentary and advert I had seen within a such short space of one another. How can we decry the young male suicide epidemic while being complicit in a culture of shame which stigmatises issues like debt and personal finance, some of the biggest contributing | factors to this epidemic?

The humiliation and subsequent silence surrounding personal finance do not only exist in news stories and in the lives of the working population: they are implicit in Cambridge's classist culture. Although the 2016/17 Big Cambridge Survey found that 38% of students felt their financial situation had negatively impacted their time at university, there is a tangible assumption that everyone here has money. This assumption fosters a culture in which students are simply expected to be able to afford the extravagance of May Week and frequent formals, without a second thought for the day-today costs of living independently.

Of course, we are lucky to have the generous financial support Cambridge offers, but our lack of financial preparation before university - by which those from less wealthy backgrounds are disproportionately affected - alongside this oppressively privileged attitude, means many are unable to take full advantage of the financial support available to them. What's more, this classist assumption also exists on a national level, with the proportion of maintenance loan a student receives determined on the assumption that their parents or guardians will 'top up' the rest for their child. This isn't possible for many, and students are left with maxed-out overdrafts, mounting pressure, and – particularly here – a support system lacking in diverse socioeconomic experience.

The lack of action to combat this issue is unacceptable. Yes, managing your own finances, especially for the first time, is naturally somewhat stressful – I'll admit it took me longer that it should have to figure out which end of my debit card goes into the machine (unbelievable, I know). But managing this with no financial education while living in a classist culture which equates financial insecurity with shame, especially in an elite institution like Cambridge, forces it to become a burden it doesn't have to be.

Rather than by our schools, we are taught by banks which services we should buy: HSBC urges us to 'be prepared for life's unexpected costs' by subscribing to their overdraft service. Thank you for the advice, but what about the reality of living with an overdraft? Their student account offers an overdraft of up to £3000 by third year, which sounds wonderful until you realise that once it is transferred to a graduate account, anything above £1500 is immediately charged at 19.9% interest. This shouldn't be banished to the small print of financial agreements: Toby Thorn, a former Cambridge ARU student, took to the back of a Barclays letter demanding he repay his £3000 overdraft, to write a note before committing suicide back in 2012. His £8000 debt, including a student loan of £5000, was ruled as a major contributing factor.

Young people are drawn into this

trap, and many see no way out, having been exploited by a predatory system which claims it wants to help us achieve our goals. If that is the case, why would Camden council have allowed Jerome's debt to accumulate so extortionately? What kind of logic entails that a 19-yearold who cannot afford to pay two £64 traffic fines would be able to find over a thousand pounds stashed away?

It astonishes me that our PSHE lessons were spent being lectured on drugs and alcohol, while this silent killer was ignored. I want to confront the financial and access-related struggle in Cambridge which affects diverse areas of student life, and the classist attitudes which simultaneously underpin and burden it. Class privilege does prevail here, but this doesn't mean that there are no Cambridge students from lower-income backgrounds who are alienated by this assimilating assumption. Student counselling should target this, and every college should give thorough talks in Freshers' Week about the financial support available. You shouldn't have to 'know where to look' to find this information, it must be impossible to ignore. Privilege must not be the loudest and most-valued voice.



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# Varsity Editorial

We're still trying to be perfect on our own terms

The first is what we often hear about: incessant academic perfectionism. We rarely hear about the second. It isn't difficult to notice a homogene-

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ity in some aspects of Cambridge student culture. A lot of us talk, dress, text and take pictures in the same way, feeding into a pervasive aestheticism.

Part of the aestheticism stems from trying to rid ourselves of the parts of Cambridge culture we may feel embarrassed about. In trying to reject the academic perfectionism that many of us come here with, for example, we may reach for images of nonchalance, and curated weariness

It's also shaped in part by a subtler form of imposter syndrome. Coming to Cambridge feels slightly unreal, like it's a dream that we're continually trying to process. Because of that, there's a compulsion to try to live a grander life. I don't know what being a student in Cambridge should be like. It doesn't feel at all like I've been told or imagined it would. Even after two years of living a starkly different reality, I often get a nagging sense that my time here has got to be better or more beautiful than how I'm experiencing it.

During my two years here I've discovered worlds of similarity with the people I'm closest to, who have sensed too that we subconsciously partake in a Cambridge culture uniform in several ways because we feel a pressure to feel accepted from the get-go, as if our identities are fixed. As if we aren't 19, or 20.

In ten, fifteen years from now I know I'll remember the warm light in a best friend's room; people, gorgeous and vivid; and Cambridge in the summer. I hope I remember too that for most of my time here I haven't been at ease with the person I am, and that I'm still confused, but I was growing. I hope I remember to celebrate that.

We're still trying to be perfect on our own terms. There's a pressure here to fit ourselves into the existing culture, to live a life that feels perfect, instead of carving out spaces for ourselves.

When I stepped into Cambridge I found a culture deeply at odds with places I'd lived in before, and a compulsion to shape myself to fit it. I was uncertain and afraid of not having a rightful space, of being odd and out of place when home in Singapore was an ocean away.

Sometimes I still lapse into doubt about which parts of me people will accept, and my instinct is often to grow quiet for stretches of time. I've found I often feel like I can't be fully present in the spaces around me, like I'd rather just observe, because I feel out of place, a little like a glitch.

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In Cambridge I've been confronted tradictory, directions. I often feel I have

to overcompensate, and live more like the person I wish I was.

The past two years have also been a gradual process of navigating my insecurities, feeling things click into place. There's another, louder part of me now that has a better grasp of what feels real to me and what clearly doesn't, and believes that takes priority.

The pressures for perfection in this sense are less visible but equally, if not more, unrelenting. They're subtler too, seeping into how we live our lives and responding to our insecurities in ways we haven't fully confronted.

How many people have come before us; how many have walked these streets and felt out of place?

As I start my last year here this week, I'm feeling, more than ever before, the tide of time. I'm thinking more about the place I'm going to leave behind and how I hope it evolves. A big part of that is hoping we collectively become a little less relentless in scrubbing, and scrubbing, at ourselves in the hopes of reaching a self we like, and demanding that we make perfect sense, always,

This week a group of freshers will arrive to discover Cambridge for themselves.

Freshers, reach for what feels real. Be wary of the network of pressures we create from our insecurity. Imagine what Cambridge could be if we stopped demanding that we make ourselves relentlessly better. Finally, liberated.

## Power-play and blurred consent are the building blocks of sharking

harking. This is a term most commonly seen in the Facebook comment section of any second year that hits interested on a freshers' week event. 'Sharking' occurs when students from upper years exploit the power imbalance at play between themselves and freshers, an imbalance created by a difference in age, knowledge of Cambridge and university life and, often, sexual experience. Crucially, the targets are students who are made vulnerable by the fact that they have just had their world turned upside down, and are eager to fit in.

Sharking is recognised by JCRs as a form of sexual misconduct, to the extent that Pembroke has included it as a topic in their consent workshops. It's easy to see why. It frames sexual encounters as an exchange between a predator and a victim - a victim who, by virtue of being hunted, does not need to consent.

**Cecily Bateman** 

Going along with sexual acts that one isn't comfortable with in an effort to fit in can be incredibly distressing and, although it is often dismissed as trivial, can have longer-lasting effects than regret

the morning after. At its core, sharking is just a very 'Cambridge' expression of the pervasive sexual pressures and power dynamics at play across society, dressed up to seem "fun" and "traditional" rather than predatory.

The gendered nature of sharking makes this fact clear. Sharking is primarily thought to describe older male 'sharks' and female freshers. This is symptomatic of both the social pressure on men to demonstrate an enthusiasm to make advances on women, as well as the expectation that women should want to be seen as attractive, and be accommodating to the desires of men. This is especially prevalent in University societies, where, although there is already a hierarchy of office in place, gender also plays a key part. It was disappointing to see that when a question was asked about improving fresher retention in a society's Facebook group, one of the most common pieces of advice was "make sure nobody sharks female freshers". However, it is untrue to claim that only men can shark women - anyone of any gender can enact or experience

sharking, and both the power dynamic and the effects remain largely the same. Victims are still being valued as objects for sexual gain.

Naturally, not all cross-year relationships involve sharking. But let's be clear: people don't shark 'accidentally', and in your heart of hearts, you know if you have gone out there with the intention to pull a fresher because you see them as 'easier to get' than your peers. Furthermore, over the course of conversation with them, you can sense whether there is a power dynamic at play. You can ask yourself: "Am I genuinely engaging with this person as an equal, and is that how they are engaging with me?" This second part is crucial, as in the panicky and high-pressure atmosphere of first term, many freshers do in fact see those getting sharked as "cooler" simply because they know older students. You may have gone in there with the best of intentions, but if you can tell the fresher doesn't see you as an equal, it's time to disengage. Sometimes power dynamics arise regardless of one party's actions, but that doesn't mean they aren't there.

Though many people joke about sharking (though how funny the jokes are is dubious), there seems to be little thought given to the atmosphere this creates for freshers, especially women who are already told endlessly to be wary on nights out. A deluge of comments about how someone's friend clearly can't wait to put the moves on a person framed as a piece of meat, does not create the most welcoming environment. Instead, it is more likely to make incoming freshers feel worried about how people will act towards them, the sincerity of the relationships they're forming, and their willingness to accommodate unwanted advances

To tell the harsh truth, if you need to exploit pre-established power dynamics to pull, you have terrible game. Time for some honest self-evaluation, reflection and work on developing qualities that make you attractive. Ultimately, when it comes down to it, sharking is about power. It is about exploiting a powerdynamic to prey on the vulnerability of new students for one's own sexual and social gain.

" the spaces around me "

Opinion

### Opinion

### Being othered in Cambridge has chipped away at my sense of belonging

#### 

Constantly assumed to be a tourist or an international student columnist Sophie Zhang discusses the microagressions that characterised her first year



hen I first came to Cambridge, I was filled with a naïve excitement about studying at such a prestigious university. Even more outlandishly, I had high hopes for making Cambridge my home - where I could feel like I belonged after years of moving around. As term progressed, however, I began

to feel disoriented. I navigated my walled college nervously, and was left only with the feeling that I did not belong in Cambridge. And it was not only Cambridge, but the whole of the United Kingdom that felt alien. Despite having spent 18 years in this rain-sodden country, despite sporting a British coat of arms on my passport cover, during my first term in Cambridge I became foreign.

Unlike many freshers, I wasn't particularly set on presenting a new version of myself upon setting foot in university. But I would find, whether I liked it or not, that my identity would in fact be contested once I arrived in Cambridge. There would be my pre-existing identity. the one I had formed before coming to Cambridge, and the other identity that people would often assume from my skin colour: foreign, international student, tourist.

Over time in Cambridge, a series of small microaggressions built up, chipping away at my sense of identity and belonging. Being signalled not to enter my own college by a random white person because I was assumed to be a tourist. Assumptions that English was not my first language. The realisation that people automatically categorise me as an international student, if not a tourist, purely for being of East Asian descent. I was increasingly given the impression that in Cambridge, to be British was to be white British, and to be of visible East Asian heritage was to be foreign. To the sound of praise for Cambridge's progressiveness and the values of diversity, inclusivity and tolerance that Britain supposedly espoused, I could feel my identity and past being slowly but surely erased.

Sometimes I ended up being swept away by these microaggressions, feeling that I was foreign, just as others had made me feel. It was strange; I had spent as many hours as everyone else studying Shakespeare and Henry VIII, debating

 King's was embroiled in controversy last year over its porters treatment of Dr Priyamvada Gopal (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

> " I would find, whether I liked it or not, my identity would be in fact be contested

British politics, and waiting for the Tube, only to feel that those hours had suddenly vanished, that I had never actually done those things. In Cambridge, being a visible person of colour and of Chinese heritage, I was automatically read as foreign, and those memories and tenets of my identity vanished like dust into the skies. I felt like I had been uprooted from my own personal history.

Initially, I found it very hard to process the microaggressions, and sometimes found myself consumed by them. I was confused, because I had been reading and hearing about how positive and progressive Cambridge is, only to forget that groups of vocal students pushing for progressive reform do not erase Cambridge's history as an institution created with a certain type of person in mind. I had forgotten that history casts a long shadow over the present.

Eventually, I did find places in which I could belong. I've gained so much support and insight from participating in groups such as FLY. With time, through my degree, and talking openly with others about my experiences, I gained the tools to articulate and comprehend my own experiences at Cambridge.

I can only speak for my own experience, and it is true that many of my BME friends have more pleasant stories to share. However, as an institution that has historically thrived off exclusion and privilege, we must be alert to how remnants of this proliferate today, especially for people who do not fit the bill of a 'typical Cambridge student'. It is vital to listen to others and to seek to improve everybody's experience at Cambridge, through changes in our actions as well as University policies.

### Ignorance shouldn't be cause for shame

#### 

Sophie Zhang

A fear of exposing what we do not know must not stand in the way of educating ourselves



am deeply terrified by the forests of my own ignorance. This fear can become so debilitating, the forests so overwhelming, that I simply give up trying to claw my way out. Most recently, this has resulted in me relinquishing attempts to chase after current political discourse. The strong feeling is that I will never know enough: about macroeconomics, about the American Civil War, about the rise of authoritarianism in Poland. About Brexit.

Undoubtedly, my fear of ignorance was heightened after getting into Cambridge. I recall when early on, a family friend questioned me about King Edward VII's role in the Second Boer War. I turned about as bright red as a brown person can go, admitting that I couldn't offer him anything other than dates and names. His response, a comment I've received perhaps twenty times since, was: "Call yourself a Cambridge historian, and you can't tell me about \*insert historical event here\*?". What I now wish I had said, is this: "Sorry, Paul, but British military history in the late Victorian era is not my area of interest. You clearly know plenty about it, so please enlighten me." Or, more succinctly, "Piss off, Paul".

Nowhere is this fear of ignorance - of potential embarrassment - more pronounced than in the realm of political discussion, and this is the direct result of politics becoming far too enmeshed with personal identity. Alongside the music we listen to and the clothes we wear, politics has become another expression of self. This has led to two things: one, a worry that our political views or ideas will be used against us, and two, a level of engagement with political causes that can at best be called superficial. Our primary concern has become not the substance of ideas but rather the portrayal of a consistent political image. I should not have leapt to support my lecturers simply because the term 'pension cuts' sent a cold shiver down my leftist spine, but because I had come to an informed opinion on the issue itself, isolated from pre-existing beliefs. Moreover, seeking validation through politics will always lead to simplicity. Significant historical change has been enacted by thousands of nameless, faceless heroes; posting a photo of yourself at the divestment rally is not a virtue.

So, what to do? The Japanese philosopher and samurai Miyamoto Musashi implores us to "Think lightly of yourself, and deeply of the world". When discussing politics, give up your ego, and accept that sounding clever in a conversation at vour college bar is probably not going to fix the housing crisis. By the same token. so many times have I worried about appearing stupid, that I have prevented myself from debating and developing my own opinions, and from challenging other people to defend theirs. This leads to intellectual stagnation, a permanent subscription to a political identity that refuses to change.

The fear of ignorance is also selfperpetuating; the more scared we are of being wrong, the less willing we are to open up and learn. Isaac Asimov wrote despondently of a "cult of ignorance" that he perceived in the US, which was fostered by the "false notion that democracy means that my ignorance is just as good as your knowledge". This comfort with being in the dark for the sake of maintaining a political image is unacceptable. Rather, we have a responsibility to face the forest head on, and self-educate.

The internet has democratised knowledge, and whilst the volume of information can be overwhelming, it can also be essential for revising our prejudices. Find the most cogent arguments for your beliefs, and then read the rebuttals those arguments have received. Concede to the experts. It was only this summer, after

" The more scared we are of being wrong, the less willing we are to open

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listening to Ha-Joon Chang, that I was able to find the language and information to articulate thoughts I have held for over eight years (my angsty twelve-year old socialist self has finally been satiated). In this way, when our knowledge inevitably falls short, it is not for lack of trying.

The limitations of human knowledge define our consciousness: we still don't know what caused the Big Bang, or why I have recurring dreams about my eyelashes falling out. My fear of ignorance, though not unfounded - the ignorance itself most certainly exists - exists in us all. But as soon as we become outwardly political, as many of us first do during our time at university, this ignorance becomes a threat not only to our ideology, but our personal morality and character. Rather than forgive ourselves for momentary ignorance, the reasonable prelude to knowledge, we jump to conclusions based on neon headlines and prejudice as a means of self-defence. What we must practise instead is letting go of self-importance, and undertaking a slower process of self-education. We should try to understand what matters to us in as much detail as possible, and most importantly, not be afraid when that is not enough.

### This year, we should support staff strikes in the name of the bigger picture

### 

There is more at stake than we think in the ongoing staff pay ballot

**Angus Jacksov** 

n a few weeks, the ballot for members of the Universities and College Union (UCU) voting on whether to stage further industrial action will close. This comes just months after the largest higher education strikes for decades were carried out across the country, as 40,000 took to the picket lines in February .

As a fresher, arriving in the Cambridge whirlwind for the first time, you could be forgiven for viewing this as a rather insignificant, if sudden, turn of events as you come to terms with your first lectures, formals, and Wednesday Cindies. However, it is neither: the strikes have neither arrived out of the blue, nor can their importance be underestimated.

It is vital to remember that the recent industrial action has not come about in a vacuum. The strikes emerge from a context in which years of political consensus amongst the political establishment has brought privatisation and commodification to nearly all areas of education in this country. Whereas across Europe, even in Scotland, university education is seen as a public good, and is either free or cheap at point of use, decades of neoliberal consensus have eroded this ethos in England.

The effect of this marketisation was clear to see during the strikes last year. Whilst huge swathes of the studentbody refused to cross picket-lines and staged demonstrations, I consistently came across students, even those supporting the strikes, who responded in terms of consumerism, as paying customers: "I support the strikes, but I'm annoyed about how the disruption will affect my exams ... " Such attitudes give in to the privatising agenda of those who would sell education as though it were a piece of tat at a car boot sale. Strikes are *supposed* to be disruptive. We must learn to stop thinking as individual consumers when it comes to education and start defending our right to education as a public good, not our right to good exam results as a paying customer. The real fight, we must remember, is not just for our education, but for education itself. The moment we relinquish the premise that education is a public good is the moment we lose everything.

Not that such attitudes are surprising. We have all come through a system in which we rank the educated with exams from a young age and quantify the educators through league tables, with high prestige given to categories such as 'average graduate salaries', as though a high-paying career is the ultimate goal of our education. We have been sold David Cameron's lie that a degree is a 'phenomenal investment', expecting our return to come in the form of future job prospects. Even on its own distorted terms, the neoliberal approach to education is failing.

In Cambridge, there are lessons to be learnt from last February and March. Students should not feel strikes are something for them to process alone or feel pulled in different directions by, on the one hand, CUSU advocating support for the strikes, and, on the other, some lecturers demanding they cross picket lines, while colleges offer pastoral support if they feel work is being affected (it *should* be affected!). Strikes can be a time of creative and collaborative endeavours that bring us together, rather than divide us.

There must also be a more thorough and concerted attempt by both UCU and CUSU to inform students of the *reasons* for the strikes. Perhaps, as have been utilised elsewhere, free teach-ins could be held on the picket-lines, with speeches made by both students *and* lecturers, setting the strikes in the broader political context, discussing why it matters **CC** The moment we relinquish the premise

that education is a public good is the moment we lose everything that teaching is being missed, why the strikes are as important for students as they are for striking staff.

Above all, we must continue to shift the terms of debate. Arriving freshers must be integrated into movements such as Cambridge Defend Education, who must sustain the changes to the political climate set in motion by the strikes: from individual to collective action, from private purchase to public good, from consumers to students.

This year's strikes are not, therefore, just about University staff pensions, or pay, or the casualisation of their labour. These are only the symptoms of a much larger rot at the heart of our society. Education has become one of the last meaningful battlefields between a neoliberal establishment which asserts that 'nothing is worth doing if it doesn't make monev' and those of us who believe education to be a public good, as Jeremy Corbyn's pledge to scrap tuition fees and set up a National Education Service recognises. Strikes remain a tool not only for winning tangible gains in industrial disputes, but for disrupting the very terms on which these disputes are fought; they are battles to be won, but also a vital weapon in the ongoing war.

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### Opinion

## Rethinking the politics of solidarity

### 

Reflecting on successful emancipatory protests throughout history, Cambridge activists must locate their cause's place in the wider world



**Ed McNally** 

uch contemporary student politics is defined by its insularity and fragmentation. Both absorbed by the campus itself and focusing on struggles conceived as singular and separate, leftwing organising on campus is often bereft of any coherent practice of solidarity. This has not always been the case, and as calls to decolonize universities gain currency, we can learn much from the anti-imperial and anti-colonial struggles of the last century. Here we find a kind of solidarity – universalising, unifying — worth remembering, and worth reviving.

Student politics at its best and most vibrant has always faced the world, attuned to with transnational fights for freedom. Recalling his time as a student in London in 1945, the great Ghanaian anti-colonial revolutionary Kwame Nkrumah later wrote of being inspired by

"experiencing first hand the determination of student bodies fighting and agitating for colonial freedom in the very heart of a country that possessed a vast colonial empire". At a time when the American state was gunning down defenceless black citizens in cold blood, slaughtering hundreds of thousands in Vietnam, and drafting young Americans into the military, the Black Panther Party. founded in Oakland in 1966, built a coalition of the three. Solidarity here was understood not as 'allyship' or secondary support, but common struggle underwritten by universal opposition to empire and particular struggle against its American iteration.

Students at US universities, composing the bulk of the anti-war movement and resistance to the draft, were an important part of this coalition. At Yale, thousands of (predominantly white) students responded to the Party's call for solidarity and staged a major strike in April 1970 agitating for the release of Panther political prisoners. They pushed the University administration into public questioning of state repression of the Panthers, and catalysed a national student strike in which more than four million took part.

Huey argued that these white, bourgeois students facing the draft were oppressed in a "somewhat abstract" way, immune as they were from class exploitation and racism. Perhaps they weren't oppressed at all. Nevertheless, he thought that the place of the students in the Panther-led anti-imperialist coalition could be made concrete by the act of them "choosing their friends." He continued: "they have a choice between whether they will be a friend of Lyndon Baines or a friend of Fidel Castro. A friend of Robert Kennedy or a friend of Ho Chi Minh. And these are direct op-

Students
 tied red
 ribbons around
 Cambridge to
 campaign for
 divestment
 (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

posites. A friend of mine or a friend of Johnson's."

What does this mean for students today? Though conditions have changed, there is much to be learned in our contemporary student political landscape from this (largely lost) spirit of solidarity. Too much organising on campus becomes consumed with transforming its own political spaces before seriously orienting itself to the world. Facing the world and choosing our friends should instead be the starting point. Then comes the work of coalition building, of common struggle and service.

This idea of solidarity and the coalitions that came of it were forged in the heat of an assertive age of global anti-colonial insurgency, and might thus seem rather alien to our contemporary student political landscape. The imperative for students in a place like Cambridge to choose their friends endures, implicated as we are in our University's historic and ongoing complicity in the reproduction of oppressive power structures. Much of the work to extricate our institution from this position is already underway: fossil fuel divestment activists have worked with indigenous communities fighting climate change, whilst Palestine solidarity campaigners work alongside, and take lead from, Palestinian civil society.

Underlying all this is the simplest of ideas: that 'our' freedom is inextricably bound up with that of others. It was this that led the great Labour politician Tony Benn to insist that "injustice to anybody anywhere is a matter of concern to everybody everywhere", and to Nelson Mandela's declaration after the fall of Apartheid that "our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians." The best historic traditions of emancipatory politics teach us that particular struggles are inseparable from universal causes, and vice versa. In seeking to build a better world and subvert the stature of elite universities towards the end of social good, student activists of all stripes in Cambridge and beyond would do well to remember this.

"

Our free-

dom is in-

extricably

bound up

with that

of others

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### The reality of summer: not always a pretty picture

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Our idealised summer doesn't reveal the difficulties of home



here is an idealised summer that we have been fed. Just as the cast of *High School Musical 2* sang its praises when we were younger, we now constantly celebrate summer in exam-term conversations and on social media as a time of rest, travel, and memory-making. This past summer, however, I started to find cracks in the ideal we have collectively created.

Before coming to university, I was privileged enough to have never had to think twice about the realities of a prolonged period away from school: I'm lucky enough to have a home I have always felt very comfortable going back to. Yet as I've grown older, I've realised that it seems there will always be some aspects of returning home, even to one we love, that can make us feel uneasy. I still recall returning to Hong Kong at the end of my first year and being taken aback by how much I'd changed - but I didn't realise this until I got home. Giving it some thought, this change struck me as unsurprising: at Cambridge, I had been exposed for the first time to new people, cultures, and causes that had become an integral part of who I am. The physical act of returning home forced me to confront the differences between the person I was raised to be, and the person I am now - and it was an unsettling experience.

I had always been taught the principles of self-sacrifice rather than selflove in my Chinese-Korean family. It was only from new friends and networks like FLY (Cambridge University's forum for women and non-binary people of colour) that I learnt how to say "no" without feeling guilty or being afraid of appearing selfish. Realising that I can and should prioritise myself when necessary was so liberating; it changed how I interact with others and how I organise my life.

### **66**

We should be wary not to erase the variety of experiences students face when May draws to a close

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However, disagreements at the dinner table occur when explaining these shifts in mindset - family dynamics become uncomfortable.

But I've found these disagreements are seldom discussed, partly because they don't adhere to the idea of summer we so desperately cling to. When we talk about summer, we never talk about how hard it is for those who are struggling with their self-image to be constantly reminded of their weight by family members; how frustrating it is when racist or heteronormative jokes follow any mention of a friend with a different background to yours; the difficulties of living with people who aren't good for your mental health. And, if living at home is too detrimental to your wellbeing, finding and funding your own accomodation can be equally draining. The drain is not only financial, but emotional, as we watch as our summer pale

in comparison to what summer should be.

But unexpected friction because of these changes at home can be rewarding. Trying to work through the differences – to reconcile the old and new me – has brought us closer together, and we've learnt more about each other and the people we want to be. I recognise that this approach is not possible for everyone. But you are in the best position to determine what works best for you.

Worshipping the summer holidays is not a harmless act; we should be wary not to erase the variety of experiences students face when May Week draws to a close. Not until we begin to talk candidly about what summer means will we create an environment in which we can talk openly about our difficulties, and begin to share and seek out practical advice. To achieve this, we must dispel the myth of the perfect summer.



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# Damn, I wish I'd known that

As freshers move in this week, Vulture Lifestyle asks the Varsity team to look back at what they wish they'd known when they arrived in Cambridge as freshers

Having spent the

view of the ocean

from my window

I had reservations

about attending a

the coast

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first 10 years of

my life with a

ith so much to remember as you embark on the beginning of university life (or return after a long summer break), it can be easy to forget the small things. From some general bits of advice to the quirky items they've become dependent upon, several current students share the tips they wish they'd known earlier in their Cambridge lives.

### Searching for the sea

#### **Belle George**

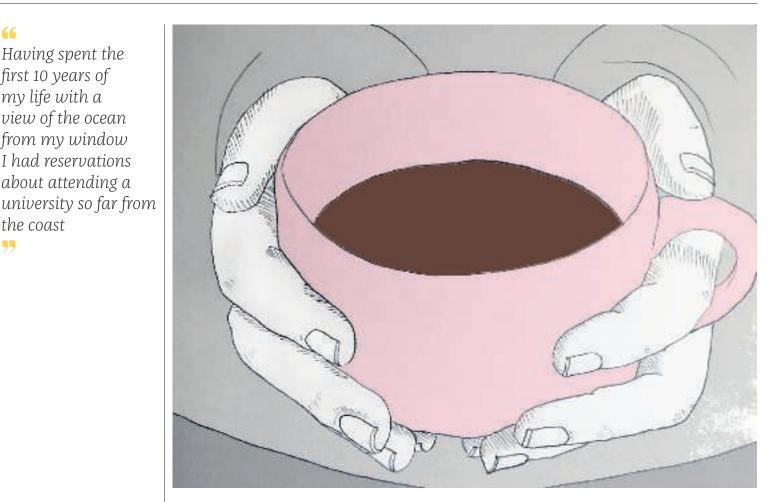
Having spent the first 10 years of my life with a view of the ocean from my window I had reservations about attending a university so far from the coast. However, I quickly learnt that Cambridge has lots of lovely swim spots - try a dip in the Cam at Grantchester (there's a big tree with rope swings in the middle of the meadows that's particularly fun) or visit Emma, Christ or Girton's college pools. Suggest a swim to your new mates before free time and sunshine disappear for the winter.

#### **Bowls are the new plates**

#### **Isobel Bickersteth**

If university has taught me anything, it's that bowls are the new plates. They're versatile, portable and practical. It's possible to eat all three meals of the day from a bowl, and when you're bogged down with work the seconds saved in cleaning will feel like a lifesaver. But beyond this, bowls are sociable in ways plates just can't be. From carrying stir-fry to the buttery to gathering in my friend's room after a night out for pasta, a bowl means I can easily eat wherever I want. These communal moments of food and friendship underpinned my first year - so don't underestimate the importance of bringing a bowl with you!





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### **Time management? I got you**

#### Millie Kiel

My college principal told us in her matriculation speech that the 24-hour day could be divided into three: 8 hours for work, 8 hours for sleep and 8 hours for everything else. While putting numbers on the amount of hours of work you do isn't helpful for everyone, I found this structure really useful in dividing my time and ensuring I still had a social life. Using this as a rough guide throughout the year, I have come out in one piece and have had much fewer desperate nights in the library trying to finish essays! Regardless of the hours you break it into, structuring your time to suit the way you learn is invaluable.

### **Patience is a virtue**

#### Zébulon Goriely

Back when I started here I was often told that 'you'll make all your closest friends in Freshers' Week'. This can put a lot of pressure on you right at the start of term and I've found that it's actually a huge myth. Sure, you might bond with some people instantly, but I didn't make some of my closest friends until a month, a term or even a whole year after matriculation. Moving to a new place without knowing anyone is tough, but if you're patient and put yourself into situations where you'll meet others then eventually you'll find your people.

Deputy Catherine Lally lives a minute away from Fitzbillies.

Pack the essentials (milk frother included)

#### **Catherine Lallv**

If I could have told my fresher self the hit my personal finances would take as a result of a mild-to-moderate caffeine dependency, I would have sprinted to Hot Numbers and bought an Aeropress right there and then.

Your first Michaelmas is likely to be exhausting, but don't force your future sleep-deprived self to rely on Cambridge's (admittedly lovely) cafés. This should go without saying, but I lacked foresight.

Any make of coffee machine, as well as a cheap frothing wand and milk pitcher (works on even the worst of gyp hot plates) is your best friend.



## From the runway to King's Parade

Runway fashion isn't as 'out there' as you might think. **Vivienne Hopley-Jones** finds inspiration for your autumn wardrobe from this show season

id-September and the grey skies and drizzle seem to have solidly set in. Having just about given up on the precarious promise of an indian summer, I've finally reached a point of acceptance that allows me to welcome the beginning of a new season. With conkers and amber leaves coating the pavements, and deceptively sunlit streets disguising blistering winds and the icy chill of the morning air, there's a lot of beauty to appreciate in autumn.

Autumnal styling is just as beautiful as the season itself. With Michaelmas term upon us, it's time for the Autumn/Winter collections from February to finally filter their way into our wardrobes. Fashion weeks across the world are overwhelming in number, so I've hand picked you a few of my favourite shows from last season to give you inspiration in your own wardrobe this autumn.

### **Chic like Coco**

Possibly my personal favourite of this Autumn/ Fall show season was Chanel's collection. The power suit has been a staple for womenswear designers in recent seasons. From skinny fits to more traditionally masculine styles, the classic trouser suit isn't going anywhere. However, Chanel's signature skirt suit is being thrown into the mix this season. Parading through wild woodlands, the collec-

tion was chic and practical.

Textured knits and bold silhouettes define the emboldened woman Chanel is seeking to celebrate through design. Elegant and powerful, earthly and beautiful; the infamous French label is a gorgeous place to find style inspiration for autumn.

How to wear it now: Pair a tweed skirt with a leather jacket and chunky trainers or boots to work the classic style of Chanel into your wardrobe in a more casual or grungy way. Alternately, go for the full skirt suit for a put together workwear look.

### Sole destroying

The Louis Vuitton menswear show for AW18 was utility wear at it's finest. Vuitton offered a collection that managed to be both otherworldly yet inherently solid. The grounded earthy tones in the collec-



tion play against metallics and the animal and wildlife prints of the fabrics.

The standout garments for me were the hearty hikers boots which the models donned throughout the show. It is these boots worn by runway veterans Naomi Campbell and Kate Moss, in addition to many of the male models, that give this show a place in my autumnal wardrobe edit.

How to wear it now: There's no need to fork out on the Louis Vuitton boots to channel the swagger of Campbell or Moss. Pull out your favourite Dr. Marten boots, which are also making a comeback (if they ever went away). and are now available in vegan leather. Slinging chunky docs or hiker boots with an oversized coat and boyfriend jeans is the perfect way to channel LV menswear.

### **Tonal teddy chic**

While this may be slightly off-piste, a show from which I've continued to find inspiration is one from the 2017 show round. Max Mara's Milan presentation for Fall/Winter 2017 was one of my favourite collections. With rich browns and lavish layering, the classic Italian label's collection remains a stunning option for this year. With Max Mara (and Fendi) featuring a camel colour scheme prominently in the recent SS19 runway shows, this colourway is an investment that will last you through the seasons.

> How to wear it now: Try colour blocking your outfits don't worry about oetting a perfect match but think tonally instead. Opt for layered taupe to brown shades for a style true to Max Mara's fall collection. Or, try working with cream and white for another option I'm loving for this season. A camel jumper with brown wide leg trousers is perfect for this look, topped with an oversized coat of the same colour family. Faux fur and fluffy coats are in abun

dance this season, and they're the perfect way to finish off this teddychic look.

### Sweater weather

After taking some time away from the company she founded 25 years ago, Filippa Knutsson returned to Swedish label Filippa K for an anniversary collection at Stockholm fashion week. The AW18 show is a fresh take on the classic minimalist style of the brand. From unassuming cord suit in a forest green to a chunky knit paired with a pleated skirt; the brand manages to incorporate trend pieces of the moment in a way that seamlessly blends into the labels

own characteristic style. With blues in shades

varying from the midnight of deep October nights to the dusky tones of crisp September mornings, the colours in this collection are beautifully wearable.

How to wear it now: Opt for a classic tailored look, with slouchy knits and wedged boots. This collection is perhaps one the easiest to incorporate into your student wardrobe. Chic and cosy, you can't go wrong following one of the centrifugal 'Scandi' fashion labels.

### **Burberry's Britain**

Despite the damage to Burberry's reputation following recent revelations about the company's business practices, Christopher

Bailey's swan song collection for the label was remarkable in design terms. Marrying the modern with the classic, the collection was summative of Bailey's legacy at the label he helmed for 17 years.

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In a homage to his time at Burberry, a lot of the pieces you'll see on the shelves this autumn are inspired by the Autumn/Winter collection. From the timely rainbow motifs to the more classic check prints and camel tones, the collection screams Britain in a way few other than Bailey have mastered.

How to wear it now: Stores are awash with the pale taupe and camel shades that best suit the checks and tweed of the classic Burberry designs. Try working in the archetypal British design to your outfits for autumn through accessories; bags, scarves and hats worn in the classic print are a wonderful accent or focal point to an outfit. Alternately, opt for graphic tees with the rainbow lettering paired with loose fit trousers for a more casual take on the collection.



▼ Sliding chunky docs with an oversized coat and jeans (NOAH HOPLEY-JONES) fas

Want to write for Varsity fashion? (Of course you do) Pitch to us at fashion@varsity.co.uk



### Your Michaelmas guide to Cambridge theatre

Baffled by Camdram? Fear not! With over fifty new shows, Cambridge's theatre scene has it all for you this term. Whether you're looking for sketch comedy, Shakespearean history, or a retelling of Wuthering Heights, our Vulture theatre editors are here with their top pics of what to watch this Michaelmas

#### Week One: Vita & Virginia

Adapted from the correspondence of Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West, two of the 20th-century's most notorious literary women, this play is frank yet sensuous, colloquial yet artful. It is everything you might expect from letters between a modernist icon and her unconventional lover.

Corpus, Tuesday 9th – Saturday 13th October, 9.30pm

Want to hear from more strong female figures? Head to the Corpus Playroom for *Amayonnaise*, a saucy (and slightly surreal) solo standup (*Monday 8th October*, 9.30*pm*) or get to know Ania Magliano in her one woman show *Mysterious Girl* (*Monday 1st October*, 9.30*pm*).

#### Week Two: The Children's Hour

In 1930s New England, two female teachers are socially ostracised when one of their students falsely accuses them of homosexuality. Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour* (1934) was banned in London when it was published due to its controversial depiction of female homosexuality. Now, in the 21st century, it serves as a powerful reminder of the horrors of intolerance.

ADC, Tuesday 16th – Saturday 20th October, 7.45pm

#### Week Three: Richard III

Political drama meets gangster-thriller in this adaptation of Richard III, which sees one of Shakespeare's least redeeming characters seamlessly slotted into the modern world as a scheming mobster. Could anything be more fitting?

ADC, Tuesday 23rd – Saturday 27th October, 7.45pm

Craving more history? King Charles III (ADC, Tuesday 6th – Saturday 10th November, 7.45pm) explores the conscience of Britain's most famous family as a 'future history play', and Oh, What a Lovely War! retells the story of the Great War through a satirical lens (ADC, Wednesday 10th – Saturday 13th October, 11pm).

#### Week Four: Northanger Abbey

Performed in the neo-Gothic splendour of Selwyn College Chapel, this unconventional and ambitious take on the novel aims to capture Austen's wit and originality. Its use of physical theatre, multi-roling, puppetry, and live music give the audience the impression that they have entered the world of Catherine's imagination. With a stunning venue and a still-relevant story about a young woman finding her voice within societal constraints, this is Austen as you've never seen it before. Selwyn Chapel, Thursday 1st –Saturday 3rd November, 9pm

A die-hard fan of Victorian female novelists? The new musical *Cathy*: A *Retelling of Wuthering Heights* tells the story of a passion which transcends life – and death – itself (*Corpus Playroom, Tuesday* 13th – Saturday 17th November, 9.30pm).

#### Week Five: The Ladies

Watch the drama unfold, first from the corridor outside, and then from within the most glamorous, the most mysterious, and the most sacred of all locations: the ladies' loos. New endings and old beginnings, frustration and embarrassment, humour and tenderness this play examines the walls we build around gender and sexuality, and the difficulties of navigating a queer new world when these walls unexpectedly come down.

Pembroke New Cellars, Tuesday 6th - Saturday 10th November, 7pm

If you're looking for a slightly different vision of relationships, head to the ADC for Anna, an exciting circus adaptation shrouded in the mysteries of its eponymous character (ADC, Wednesday 31st October – Saturday 3rd November, 11pm).

#### Week Six: The Yeomen of the Guard

In the Tower of London, during the reign of Henry VIII, Colonel Fairfax has been sentenced to death for sorcery and awaits execution. Commonly regarded as Gilbert and Sullivan's darkest and most poignant operetta, it has emotional depth and a majestic score to match many grand operas. The G&S Society are proud to present it as their Michaelmas show. *Robinson Auditorium, Thursday* 15th - Saturday 17th November, 7.45pm

This term is also bursting with musicals, from High School Musical at the ADC (Tuesday 6th – Saturday 10th November, 11pm) to the CUMTS musical A Chorus Line, also at the ADC (Tuesday 30th October – Saturday 3rd November, 7.45pm, plus Saturday matinee, 2.30pm).

#### Week Seven: Belleville

Belleville is a bleak psychological drama in which two people in love can't help but destroy one another. Americans Zack and Abby — young, bright, and newly-wed — seem to be living the expat dream in bohemian Belleville, Paris. But when secrets are revealed, intimacy is unravelled, and love turns pathological, the dream of their perfect life is quick to shatter. *Corpus Playroom, Tuesday 19th – Saturday 24th November, 7pm* 

This isn't the only show where Corpus strips away the outside world and shows us the truth behind the front door: *The House They Grew Up In (Corpus Playroom, Tuesday 30th October – Saturday 3rd November, 7pm)* will subtly change the way you look at the people around you.

### Week Eight: The Bacchae

Ritual madness has descended upon Thebes.



▲ The Ladies is an exploration of constraints placed upon gender and sexuality (ALICE TYRRELL)

Civilisation declares war on instinct as the divine tears up the mortal. This visceral new production provokes uneasy questions and demands uneasy answers. Explore the fear of the unknown, as this divine tragedy exposes the cracks in our own moral codes, in a horrifyingly compelling examination of society and the self.

Corpus Playroom, Tuesday 26th November – Saturday 1st December, 7pm

Not enough Classics for you? How about Thyestes by Seneca, the Cambridge Latin Play, a staging of one of the most violent and heart-breaking tales from the Classical world (*Queens' Fitzpatrick Hall, Monday 12th - Thursday 15th November*).

#### **Top Comedy Picks**

#### Two By Two

Mitchell and Webb, Mel and Sue, Fry and Laurie. Cambridge is the home of the comedy duo! Why not come and suss out Cambridge's next budding stars? It promises to be a hilarious evening showcasing the beauty of working as a pair, on the glorious new ADC theatre stage for one night and one night only. ADC, Tuesday 30th October, 11pm

#### Bedheads

All was peaceful at Bedheads Record Company. But when the unexplained death of one of the company's star acts lands Bedheads' two producers in prison, everything changes. A brand-new interactive murder mystery, it also doubles as a musical sketchcomedy, based around the alibis of the dark and quirky individuals that emerge from Bedheads Records. Everyone knows that the music industry is cutthroat, but nobody ever thought it would be like this.

Corpus Playroom, Tuesday 23rd – Saturday 27th October, 9.30pm

#### **Improv on the Orient Express**

sure not to miss a thing.

An improvised, interactive, and hilarious murder mystery where YOU choose the murderer. You should be paying US to see it, it's that good, but that's not how capitalism works. Until we throw off these chains and lead the revolution into a new blazing sunset of equality and hope, the Impronauts and their comedy will have to do. I ADC, Tuesday 16th – Saturday 20th October,

11pm But that's not all (or even close)! Head to www.varsity.co.uk/theatre and you'll be



**SUMMER PICKS ONLINE** UNRAVELLING MYSTERIES AT A MILANESE AUCTION HOUSE

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# Looking for Cambridge through the lens

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I was

fed up

with this

image of

the city

being

a place

where

ever

nothing

happens

Domininkas Zalys sits on King's Parade every day and takes a single photo, he tells **Noella Chye** 

Very day, people attempt to capture Cambridge through a camera lens. Hordes of tourists. Students capturing moments to remember.

The city's beauty gets in the way. So much of Cambridge is grand and picturesque, often at odds with how it feels like living here. The best parts of Cambridge often aren't picture perfect, and the daily reality is far from it. Photographing it truthfully means facing a struggle of trying to see past its wonder, ditching the easy narratives of its grandeur, glitz and quirks, and finding that in a single snapshot.

Photographer Domininkas Zalys is trying to do just that.

Every morning he sits just outside Caffe Nero on King's Parade and takes a picture. One morning he invited me to join him, "where it all happens."

"What you do is," he reaches for his phone and holds it in front of him, then says, "pretend that you're taking a selfie. The most innocent thing in the world is a phone. People will never realise.

"As soon as there's someone a little out of the ordinary, I'll capture it purely because it's Cambridge, but it isn't associated with it." He seeks out the images you'd never find on postcards, capturing the people who shape the place, searching for its soul. "I love this city," he says, but "I was fed up with this image of it being [a place] where nothing ever happens."

King's Chapel sits in the background of every picture in the series — a perennial backdrop to the figures who have come before us, and will last through the generations. The lives of those who follow in our footsteps too will revolve around these streets, traditions, and one, immutable chapel. "This will stay here forever," he says, "but me, and things around it... we'll leave."

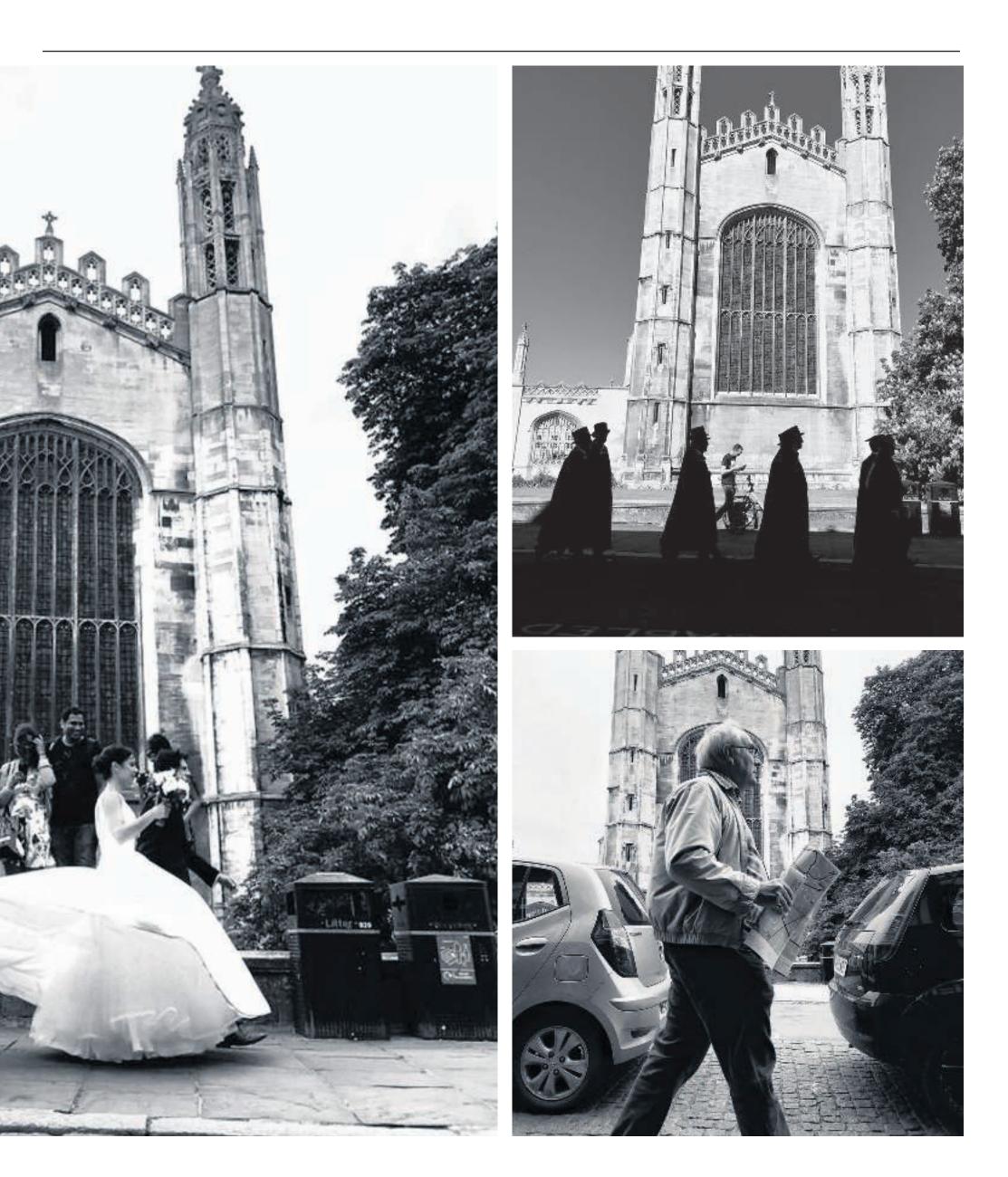
I start my last year here this week. And like many others, the time has slipped between my fingers. There's so much to preserve in the three, four or more years we're here, we see the city through a lens we never will again. Already, walking through Cambridge, I notice that familiar sights are tinged with impending finality. When I return to the city in a few years' time, feelings of possibility will be replaced by a sense of time having passed and all that transpired here gone with it. More than ever I want to collect memories, to take pictures which get to the heart of Cambridge, here and now. Zalys will continue to photograph the chapel and its passerbys until he leaves Cambridge in two years, graduating from Anglia Ruskin. After this he'll move on to New York to pursue fashion photography. He hopes someone else will continue what he's started. "Everyone sees things differently. I want to see what other people would capture, what other people notice, but having this in the background," he tells me.

The city is incessantly gorgeous, but many sights mean more than they appear to at first. The gown store on the corner, glowing through the night. The stack of tattered hardbacks beside the Mac. The bicycle on King's Parade riding toward a slow sunset. The city just past six in the summer, golden.

We all grapple with the disconnect between Cambridge's perception and our lived experiences of it. The city commands a superficiality. It compels people not to peer beneath its surface. Cambridge in the popular perception and through history is a fiction — simple, homogenous and picture perfect.



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**ONLINE THIS WEEK** BOJACK HORSEMAN AND PERFECTIONISM IN CAMBRIDGE

### **Interview** Monkman and Seagull speak to Vulture



After University Challenge icons Monkman and Seagull's breakout year, **Devarshi Lodhia** talks to the duo about Love Island, DeLoreans, and copying Big Shaq

he last few years have been quite a journey for television's newest dynamic duo, Bobby Seagull and Eric Monkman.

Following their breakout performances on University Challenge in 2017, the pair have released a quiz book, presented a show on BBC Radio 4, and now have their own four-part series on BBC Two: Monkman and Seagull's Genius Guide to Britain.

The show sees the pair travel around the British Isles in search of hidden gems of scientific and technological ingenuity. I ask if there was any particular standout locations they visited.

Bobby instantly mentions the DeLorean Museum. "I'm a big *Back to the Future* fan and I didn't realise that they made the DeLorean in Belfast in the early 80s" he says. "I even had the opportunity to drive one, although I didn't get it up to 88!"

For Eric it was the people he and Bobby met along the way. "We were shown around by so many knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and generous guides who gave us a lot of time and were very kind."

Speaking about the reception for their new show, Seagull, a PhD student at Emmanuel College and part-time Maths teacher at a school in East London tells me the reaction from his students is mixed. "Some of the kids I teach don't watch any TV so they're like – why's everyone so gassed about Mr. Seagull? But sometimes it makes a teaching a little bit easier, especially with more challenging kids who find maths difficult. If they think they've got a teacher that's got some sort of profile they pay more attention in my lessons."

Bobby's passion for Maths and making it "cool" has extended into a number of solo projects with his new book, *The Life Changing Magic of Numbers*, set to be released in October – as well as a series of ads for UKTV for a fictional show called *Geek Island*.

"I'm a big *Love Island* fan so it was the perfect thing for me to do. On the back of that, I met Miss England winner Stephanie Hill who also has a degree in Oncology so I've asked her to do my introduction speech of my book launch at the Royal Institution and so that's going to be really quirky."

As well as maths, one of Bobby's great passions is rap music – something which he's tried to incorporate into his teaching.

"The thing that got me into doing maths raps in class is kids in the playground were rapping Big Shaq's *Man's Not Hot* and they could recite the entire song but when it came to class they couldn't remember basic things in maths. It made me think if you can engage kids in things they're interested in whether it's music or football, it's the best way to get them hooked onto maths."

The trailer for the new show features Eric singing a song based on the Welsh song, *Men of Harlech*, so I ask whether an album could be up next for the pair.

"That's actually a really good idea – we hadn't planned that before but now you've said it... There's a lot of nice song parodies about science and I think that'd be my contribution to it and Bobby can do his maths raps."

Monkman and Seagull's Genius Guide to Britain **continues Monday on BBC Two at 8pm**  ▲ Monkman and Seagull first met on University Challenge (BBC PRESS OFFICE/LABEL1)

Some of the kids I teach don't watch any TV so they're like, why's everyone so gassed about Mr. Seagull?

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Vulture TUNES

### What we wish we'd listened to in freshers' week

Musically, Freshers' Week can be draining. The endless cycle of trying to seem interested in the Drake album at pre-drinks in order to impress new friends, followed by the inevitable 'Mr Brightside' singalong of every tentative night out, is enough to leave anyone crying out for musical inspiration.

Well, fear not, because your Music Editors have got your back. Covering everything from homesicknessquashing bangers to hangover-curing chill-out tunes, here's Varsity's Freshers' playlist:

Just a Stranger Kali Uchis (ft. Steve Lacy)

Audacity of Huge Simian Mobile Disco

Narcissist No Rome (ft. The 1975)

Every 1's a Winner **Ty Segall** 

Vegas **ABRA** 

Young Lady Kid Cudi (ft. Father John Misty)

LILO **The Japanese House** 

Out on Love **Lydia Loveless** 

Got to Be Real **Cheryl Lynn** 

Heart to Heart *Kenny Loggins* 

▼ Amber Bain sings, produces and plays the instruments in her electropop act, The Japanese



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# **Science** Yawning at the catastrophe: the psychology of climate change

Sophia Borgeest Science Editor

What is the most effective way to slow down global warming? Sander van der Linden and Cameron Brick, two researchers at the department of Psychology, argue that the climate change challenge is primarily a social and psychological one: to stop the earth from warming, we need a change of heart.

"Climate change is the largest social dilemma in history," says Linden. The paradox of the health of our planet is such that although at societal level we would all be better off if everybody acted sustainably, at an individual level unsustainable behaviour is typically the default - an easier, less costly and psychologically more attractive choice. If we want to solve climate change, Brick and Linden argue, we will first need to understand the psychology of this dilemma: Brick asks, "Why is it that despite all the scientific evidence, people's general response to climate change is collective inaction?" Public engagement and policy lag far behind the consensus of expert recommendations. So, what is causing people's apathy?

"We know from behavioural economics that people care less about things that are far away in the future - a phenomenon called temporal discounting," says Linden. The effects of climate change will be catastrophic, but they are not imminent. Instead, because the processes of global warming are complex, their consequences are delayed. "Even if we doubled our fossil fuel consumption this year. it wouldn't immediately translate into clear, observable impact." says Brick. We have evolved to run away from predators in the desert, to solve local, experiential and imminent problems - not to be scared of abstract, invisible and delayed threats. In other words, we're not made for foresight. The very thing that has allowed us to evolve is now coming back to bite us.

Plus, when it comes to climate change, there isn't a bad guy. "Hardly anyone is walking around deliberately harming the planet," says Linden. Harvard psychologist Dan Gilbert explained this problem as follows: "If climate change was some type of nefarious plot visited upon us by very bad men with moustaches, then I guarantee you that our president would have us fighting a war on warming with or without Congressional approval." In the absence of a clear potential villain, there's nobody to blame except ourselves, and this can trigger a range of defensive biases – including inaction.

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To study the psychology of climate change, Linden and Brick employ a range of methods. Surveys designed to assess people's attitudes to environmentalism, the future of the planet or global warming. More informative than questionnaire data, Sander argues, are experi-



ments: "I like collecting data on people's behaviour, rather than just what they say, because often those two things are very different." But it's important to ask how valid is

what people do in a lab when it comes to assessing everyday behaviour? A few years ago, Linden and his colleagues studied the effects of a 'do it in the dark' campaign at a US college campus, which encouraged students to switch off the light more regularly. "We found that during the campaign people really made an effort to reduce their energy usage, but as soon as the campaign ended, everyone went back to the same patterns of behaviour as they did before," says Linden. Such findings can have important implications for policy: if a government wants to encourage more sustainable behaviour, it needs to know what works in the long run.

One successful environmental policy in the UK has been the plastic bag fee. "It's amazing how powerful just five pence is," says Brick, "people really want to avoid paying it." So, is the aim of Brick and Linden's endeavour to turn everyone into Ryanair-boycotting vegans? "I'm getting increasingly pessimistic about changing those types of behaviours," says Brick. Instead, he is hopeful when it comes to policy engagement. What needs to happen so that people talk about climate change with their friends and colleagues?

### What needs to happen so that people talk about climate change

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with their friends? Only if the public asks for it, Brick argues, will government implement laws and regulations that will slow down global warming. According to recent calculations, replacing the world's air conditioners with more efficient models would reduce total greenhouse gases by the equivalent of 90bn tonnes of CO2 by 2050 – roughly 30% more than if half of the world's population were to give up meat. Therefore if the public demanded stricter regulations for air conditioners, it could go a long way to saving the planet.

Nudging people out of their position of comfortable inaction into a feeling of urgency and political agency – maybe that's how we'll solve climate change.

## **Commercial feature** Meet the expert: Securing the future with cyber security



As we all move into a cyber age that seems unnervingly similar to a dystopian sci-fi movie, security is becoming a more and more contentious topic.

Engaged in the never-ending quest for complete cyber security is Roberto Carlo Paleari; graduate of the University of Milan, PhD, Cyber expert and Cyber Security Master, Senior Consultant in Spike Reply.

#### Can you introduce Cyber Security to us?

Cyber Security is a really huge field. It includes several different areas, ranging from very technical topics but also including non-technical like risk and compliance, GDPR and so on. In Spike Reply, where I work, we cover all those areas but currently I'm working in a very technical hands-on group where we focus on the identification of security vulnerabilities in embedded IoT products. For example we analyse set up boxes, routers, cars and even things like connected boilers for our customers and we look for security issues affecting these products.

#### How did you get involved with Cyber Security?

I started with Cyber Security in high school. In a technical sense, it's not only hacking, it's a mindset. I started programming at about 6 or 7, I began to look at how things worked. I wasn't really involved in hacking but I was programming, analysing the code and I didn't start getting involved with cyber security until high school with my friends where we were doing some hacking stuff since it seemed cool. I then took it forward into university.

#### The history and basics of Cyber Security?

Cyber Security is as old as IT. Nowadays it has become a very trendy topic with the news about data breaches, vulnerabilities, malware and so on, they headline almost every day. So it is a really really old topic but nowadays has gone mainstream. The basics is very simple, you have a product like a website, phone or car and you want that product to behave as it was intended by the developers. But there are bad guys, attackers, who would like to access some data which is stored inside that product. That's the game in the cyber security field. You would like to protect your product against possible attacks, so this may sound simple but products are becoming even more and more complex which makes it even more and more difficult to ensure they are secure.

### So you have to think like a bad guy, right?

Yes, that's right. Well, the most difficult part is that you have to be very creative. You have to think outside of the box, try to make a product behave differently from what was intended. Even if it's a very rational, deterministic job you have to still be very creative. That's one of the main qualities and skills we are looking for for components of our team.

#### How has the evolution of technology affected Cyber Security?

Technology is evolving really quickly and today even more complicated products, devices , and applications hit the market daily so more of these products are dealing with your data. This means that the need for security is continuously increasing, and in my opinion a more important point is that the need for cyber security has entered the physical world. Someone can hack your car and push your brakes which can affect your safety and not only your virtual security. So, the evolution is moving cyber security into the physical world which is a huge difference.

#### What do you think is the future for Cyber Security?

This trend, the fact that security is moving into the physical world, will continue for sure and probably security will be even more pervasive, you'll need it for your washing machine, lightbulbs, everything. As products are getting more complex cyber security is more and more complicated. Companies will start looking for very specialised cyber security experts, for example you'll need an expert on connected products, an expert on web applications, smartphones, so as the complexity ▲ (REPLY) ▶ (@LUIGI\_CUTOLO AND @LUIGI\_FRUN-

ZIO)

increases, also the specialisation and the knowledge required to deal with such technologies will increase.

#### How does Reply support your research and learning?

We deal with new technologies every day, so Reply HAS to support our research or we would not be able to do our daily activities, so it's pretty natural for Reply to let us invest some time into learning how new products work.

Research and learning is an integral part of our day to day activities and probably the most important part of this is the team.

The team I'm a part of is made of several really skilled people, they have international experiences in this field so it's really important for us to keep learning from each other. Then of course you have all the initiatives organised by Reply like peer to peer trainings, hackathons and so on. One initiative we just opened for Replyers and externals the Cyber Security challenge, next 5th October, on challenges.reply.com. So if you want to start or keep on hacking you can train in the sandbox mode then join the competition and win prizes.

#### Why does Reply organise such challenges?

Reply has a culture that really encourages you to keep learning. So, events like the Cyber Security Challenge or even like the Student Tech Clash fit in with the Reply aim to encourage you to keep learning new things and promote coding. They also work a lot with students and the younger generation to encourage them to code.

### How does it feel to be part of a growing company and what are the advantages?

The Reply network includes access to a lot of different projects, teams and know-how so the access to that knowledge is very agile. If you want to better understand how some technology works you can just write an email to someone who is in a different Reply company who already deals with that technology so you can increase your skills in new technologies.



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### We must address gender equality in sport

William Ross explains why Cambridge needs to level the playing field

The issue of gender equality in the world of sport is never far from the headlines. From FC Barcelona placing its men's team in business class and its female team in economy when both teams boarded a flight to the US in July, to tennis player Novak Djokovic publicly arguing that male tennis players should be awarded more prize money than female tennis players, it is clear that the wider world of sport has work to do in achieving gender parity. How, though, does the world of Cambridge sport fare by comparison?

The issues of equality of funding and sponsorship are particularly conten-

tious. They made national headlines in April when the Women's Boat Club pulled out of the Sveti Duje regatta after the Women's crew were offered youth hostels to stay in, while the men's crew were put up in a five-star luxury hotel. The issues, however, extend far deeper

than this single incident. This summer, a number of men's teams travelled abroad – in sports including rugby, football and rowing, at both University and college level – to attend training camps, while their linked women's teams received no similar invitations. Although in most cases it would have been a painful decision to deprive male athletes of travel opportunities, the decision of these clubs to accept an invitation to an event in which female competitors were excluded is questionable.

In the words of Daphne Martschenko, former President of CUWBC, "if perhaps, a sponsor is only willing to sponsor one gender, that should be a sign the sponsor isn't worth having."

In rugby, the men's blues were able to attend a training camp at the Browns Sports Club in Portugal this September, while the female University rugby players had to make do with a pre-season training camp back in Cambridge. A source within the Women's Rugby Club commented: "we have struggled to get sponsorship this year, and so could not [go on tour]."

She also added: "from my perspective, the problem is far deeper than simply a lack of funding at the club level here. It is deeper-set, with the sponsors far more likely to back a men's team due to the higher profile of male sports making it seem a more lucrative venture".

On a more positive note, the same source commented: "we do now have a number of shared sponsors for both men and women's teams who are incredibly supportive", and "key individuals are working hard within committees at the club to ensure that a level playing field for the men and the women is the ultimate goal."

The men's football team, meanwhile, jetted off to Wuhan in July after being invited to participate in the World Elite University Football Tournament. Katy Edwards, the CUAFC Women's secretary, clarified that the "opportunity hasn't been offered to the women's side to my knowledge", and "the women's side of the club didn't go on a tour this year for a variety of reasons: namely a lack of funding, no obvious opportunities and the fact that no-one had time to organise one." She was, however, keen to emphasise her "hope that with the recent merging of the men's and women's teams we will be able to collaborate better and make planning tours easier and more affordable'

▲ The Cambridge women's football team at a match (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL CLUB)

More work can be done in addressing issues of equality in Cambridge sport when it comes to funding and sponsorship. The tendency for male athletes to attend international tours without their female counterparts is concerning and damaging. The University should be seeking to set the gold standard in terms of gender equality in sport. Instead of accepting invitations which are only extended to male athletes and accepting sponsorship money from organisations only willing to fund male athletes, Cambridge's sport clubs might consider taking a stand. It's time for change.

### Cambridge men's rugby team kicks off with a convincing win

### Chris Bell

Sports Correspondent

Last Wednesday evening saw Grange Road host Loughborough in a thrilling opening match of the season, as the men's rugby team started their journey to Twickenham with their first victory over the Leicestershire side for many years. After a fwe weeks of pre-season, including a tour to Portugal, the Blues were raring to get back on the pitch.

And things couldn't have started better. Within the first minutes, scrum-half Chris Bell had touched down under the posts following a barnstorming charge by Charlie MacCallum and a neat run by fresher Joey 'Ali' Gatus. Not long after that, the speedy Elliott Baines scored Cambridge's second.

Loughborough were not to be deterred, and they began to launch their own offensive. Phase after phase, and soon the Light Blues were feeling the pressure as the penalties built up. A further ten minutes of pressure in the Cambridge 22, but the Blues held their own where lesser teams may have faltered.

Success breeds success, and a penalty in the corner led to a few quick phases finishing with Miles Huppatz forcing himself over to leave the score at 19–0 after 25 minutes.

But alas, the fairytale had to end at some point, and Jonny Dixon was shown

# CURUFC26Loughborough21

yellow and the Light Blue defence finally gave way for Loughborough's first try before half time.

The second half began in a remarkably similar fashion to the first. Most people had barely retaken their seats, and even fewer realised a penalty had been awarded, before Bell had taken a quick tap and was under the posts for his second of the evening.

But Loughborough's resolve was not to be dampened and they once again attacked the Cambridge half, only to be halted by a tackle from the ubiquitous Bell and the subsequent turnover. However, the pressure returned and soon Loughborough scored their second of the night to leave the score at 26–14 after 48 minutes.

A quarter of an hour later, the away side had scored once again, and the touchline conversion turned it into a one-score game, as the final 15 minutes were played out with the score at 26–21. As the bodies tired, the defence seemed to strengthen: a credit to both sides.

Early season games can never be expected to run perfectly smoothly, but Cambridge ground out a win through some tireless defensive sets. If this game was anything to go by, we have a lot to look forward to in the season ahead.