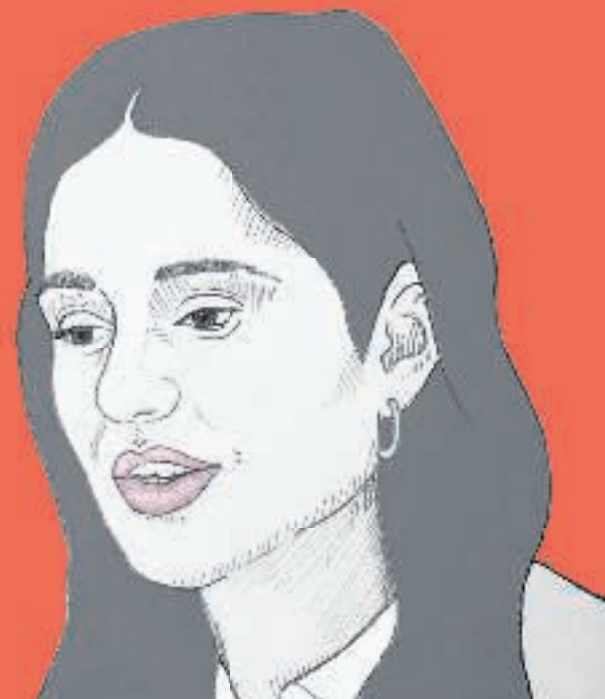


# How do I look?

Varsity video looks behind Cambridge's facade of perfection

Features 18



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# VARSITY

## 'You don't expect people like this to be hired at Cambridge'

- Four LGBT+ mathmos spoke to *Varsity* about the hiring of Aron Wall
- He has previously come under fire for homophobic blog posts

Stephanie Stacey, Elizabeth Haigh & Alexandra Giannidi

"It's disappointing," said one gay mathematician on his department's appointment of Aron Wall, an academic who has made openly homophobic comments on his blog. "I'd like to give him a chance," another student said, "but I would feel uncomfortable."

Aron Wall's appointment by the University has been widely publicised since his comments emerged. Earlier this year, *Varsity* reported that Wall wrote on his blog in 2015 that same-sex couples engage in "unnatural sexual acts", and same sex marriage "hurts only the couple themselves". Wall is due to join the university's mathematics faculty in January 2019.

*Varsity* spoke to LGBT+ mathematicians about their reactions to Wall's comments, and their feelings about potentially having to work with him in the future.

"I'd like to give him a little bit of a

chance," said Jonny Tsang, a PhD student in fluid mechanics.

Earlier this year, after news of Wall's homophobic comments emerged, Tsang created an LGBT+ mathmos mailing list. Around 70 students have joined the list, for which the mathematics faculty has expressed its support. Meetings for all interested students have been planned for later this term, which organisers have said they hope will create a more unified and supportive environment.

Tsang told *Varsity* that Wall was informed of the mailing list over email, saying, "I've invited him to take a look at our mailing list, to join up and to get to know the people here."

They said that as far as lectures are concerned, "as long as he sticks to the topic of the lectures, I don't think his personal views are that troubling."

However, Tsang remarked that the prospect of being supervised by Wall was "different": "I've certainly had supervisors with strong views on things

Full story Page 6 ►



Fashionably (matricu)late: story on page 5 ►

(JESS MA)

## Analysis What's next for Breaking the Silence?

Anna Yakovleva  
News Correspondent

In the most recent survey, Revolt Sexual Assault and The Student Room reported that across 153 different UK universities, 62% of all students and recent graduates have experienced sexual violence, the majority of whom identify as either female, non-binary, or as having a disability. Only 2% of those experiencing sexual violence felt both able to report it to their university and satisfied with the reporting process.

In Cambridge, the Breaking the Silence campaign's flagship project was its 'Intervention Initiative', a series of workshops to equip students in how to safely intervene in situations involving sexual harassment or assault. The initiative, which was introduced in October 2017, has been raised recently by Senior Tutors (in a discussion) of a debate within Cambridge "highlighting the need for both College and Departmental intervention", where Dr Mark Wormald, Secretary of the Senior Tutor "continued momentum in the work" of Breaking the Silence was emphasised.

Gender and Policy Insights (GenPol), a Cambridge-based think tank, recently published a new report on sexual consent education at British universities entitled, 'Consent training and sexual violence prevention in UK universities', as part of a larger research project on the question: 'Can Education Stop Abuse?'

Continued on page 9 ►



# News

## INTERVIEW

### Hong Kong's "father of democracy"

Page 11 ►



## FEATURES

### Don't romanticise Britain's past

Page 16 ►

## SCIENCE

### Women in seminars two and a half times less likely to ask questions than men

Page 33 ►

## vulture Magazine

### I watch, therefore I am: the rise of philosophical TV

Page 30 ►



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# Dalia Leinarte talks abortion rights as human rights

**Oliver Rhodes** talks to the chair of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women about her work on Soviet women's history

I meet Professor Dalia Leinarte in the spacious precincts of the Law Faculty just minutes after her keynote speech at the recent conference, 'The Development of Abortion Rights in a Changing Europe'. A Lithuanian historian specialising in women and families in Imperial Russia and the former Soviet Union, Leinarte had been given the responsibility of opening the first conference of its kind at the University, organised by undergraduate students.

Leinarte's address comes at an important crossroads in the development of abortion rights. In May, one of Western Europe's most institutionally conservative nations, Ireland, voted to overturn the Eighth Amendment, which had banned abortion in cases of rape, incest, or fatal foetal abnormality.

Conversely, the photograph of President Trump reinstating the 'Mexico City Policy' – denying US federal funding to international non-governmental organisations that advocate abortion rights or perform abortions – inside a male-only Oval Office has become, for some, symbolic of the spirit of the administration. A similar backlash is occurring across the Atlantic: Poland's far-right government attempted to restrict abortion to only the most extreme cases, while tens of thousands marched again earlier this year to protest the "Stop Abortion" bill, which would prevent abortion even in cases of extreme foetal abnormalities.

I ask Leinarte about these developments. In Eastern Europe, she argues,

"we didn't experience the second wave of feminism." She added: "that changed [Western European] societies forever because it completely changed attitudes towards women and their role in society and the family – but it also changed how men treated women. So the mentality of both genders has been completely changed."

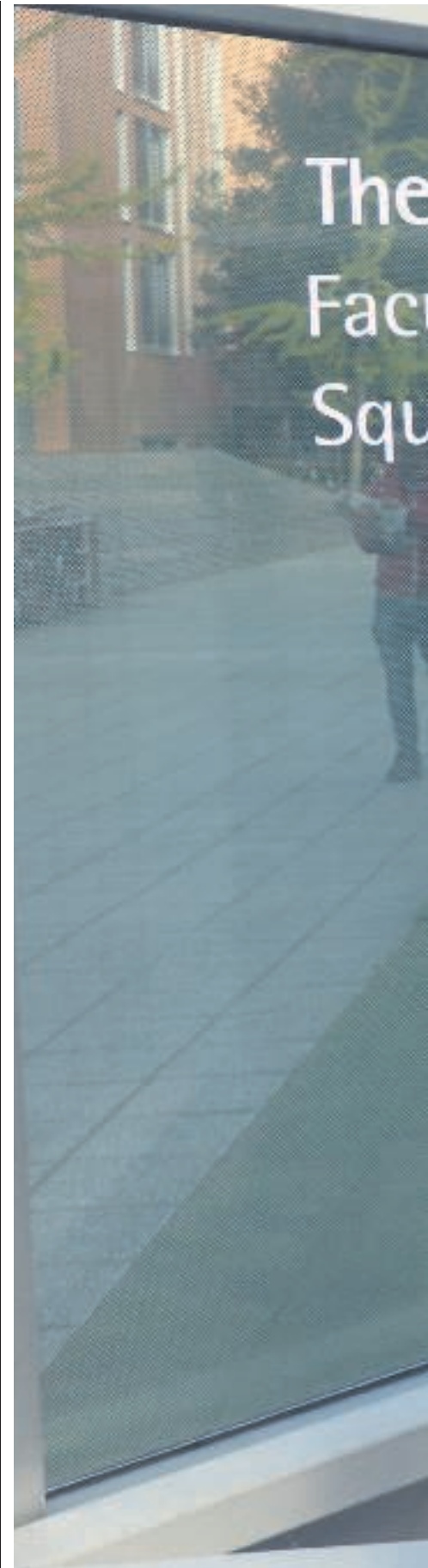
Reflecting on recent policy changes in the United States, Leinarte remarked: "America is one of maybe two or three countries that still doesn't ratify the CEDAW convention. It allows them, without any meaningful punishment, to be more conservative regarding women's rights."

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly. Leinarte is well-known for her role on its committee, consisting of "23 experts on women's rights", acting as its chairperson. The committee studies the implementation of the convention, and seeks to enforce it.

Since becoming a CEDAW member in 2012, Leinarte has worked to promote women's rights in the constitutions of those countries that have ratified the convention. "As someone who was born in the Soviet Union, I understand the value and the importance of having many voices that come from different religious and cultural backgrounds." She says, "that is what I learned and that is what should be treasured: It's not that you should avoid all diversity of opinion – you should take them on board and then find consensus."

Yet with member states from every continent, I am curious as to how CEDAW manages to reach consensus on such a sensitive issue. "It's a living

▼ A banner displayed in a protest against changes to Poland's abortion laws in April 2016. It reads: 'We want doctors not policemen'. (ZORRO2212)



document", Leinarte argues. "So far we have reached the consensus that abortions should be allowed at least in four cases: of rape, incest, health and life of a pregnant woman, and the malformation of foetus."

It's a surprisingly liberal consensus, given the membership. Many of its signatories have constitutions which are heavily influenced by religious conservatism. But one need not look so far for variation on the issue. Northern Ireland continues to recognise abortion only when the mother's life is at risk. It therefore fails to meet the criteria of the convention of which the UK is a ratified member.

But Leinarte has faith that through persistent political pressure, national governments take the convention seriously. Leinarte also stresses the importance of regional conventions, which





◀ Professor Linearte shortly after her address at the Abortion Rights Conference

“Of course we cannot say that women’s rights have been implemented fully in any, but the fact is that globally in 165 constitutions, they have this notion of gender equality and women’s rights”

propose recommendations for the constitution. “If you ask me whether the CEDAW convention has made an impact in fostering human and women’s rights globally, I would say yes. Of course we cannot say that women’s rights have been implemented fully in any country. There is no such country. But the fact is that globally in 165 constitutions, they have this notion of gender equality and women’s rights.”

It is not in the legalities, however, where Leinarte’s passions lie. She sees this as part of a broader commitment to liberate women. “When I was analysing national laws regarding prostitution, I found that the more national jurisprudence has restrictive laws regarding abortion – full or partial ban on access to legal abortion – the more they have liberalised laws regarding prostitu-

“It’s not that you should avoid all diversity of opinion – you should take them on board then find consensus”

tion.” This inverse relationship between abortion and prostitution law, she argues, reflects the relative importance of cultural beliefs. “The more cultures are patriarchal, the more they divide their women into good and bad. So good women should produce children, no matter what, and bad women should be always available.”

Leinarte criticises those who point to the Soviet Union, where legal abortions were readily available, as a feminist success story. She stresses that it is relations between the genders that really determine the rights of women in any particular society. “A lot of Western academics and historians say there was real gender equality in the Soviet Union. They brought 100% literacy, they brought women into labour, brought them education and so forth; everything was avail-

able to them. It’s not true. It was part of modernisation and openisation, but partially it was because the Soviet government needed their hands to work.”

The Iron Curtain, she argues, insulated Eastern Europe from the cultural changes happening in liberal democracies. The entrenchment of traditional gender roles means that political activism can only go so far. “Now these countries have been accepted into the European Union, women’s rights and gender equality have been implemented in these countries only in the form of directives, of change in the laws.”

Changing the law is difficult. But changing the culture is even harder. This realisation has put Leinarte in a challenging yet vital position. Constitutional change can often be frustrat-

ingly incremental. It is in the relationship between constitutional change and cultural attitudes, however, where the real struggle lies. In countries with corrupt or weak legal systems, large rural populations, and social and economic structures centred on traditional models of the household, how far can ‘top-down’ activism hope to change practices? By making abortion rights a human as well as a legal matter, Leinarte is attempting to bridge that gap.



Got a story for us? Email our news team at news@varsity.co.uk



## News

### CAIUS TO THE KINGDOM

#### Caius appoints its first female master

Gonville & Caius College has installed the first female master in its 670-year history. Dr Pippa Rogerson, who became the 43rd Master of Gonville and Caius College on Monday, graduated from Newnham College in 1983 with a degree in Economics and Law. She became a Caius fellow in 1989, going on to become a Director of Studies in Law and a tutor. She said that she was “delighted and daunted in equal parts” to be appointed as master. The number of female college masters in Cambridge is now 12 – almost 40% of Cambridge colleges.

### THYME TO SAVE UP

#### St John’s plant sale goes ‘viral’

Those f(r)ond of plants, rejoice – St John’s College is hosting a plant sale on Thursday 11th October, offering Cambridge students the opportunity to green up their rooms with plants from Cambridge’s Scotsdale Garden Centre. Eager plant buyers will have to hurry, however, as over 1,000 people have clicked ‘interested’ on Facebook, with almost 200 students ‘going’ to the event. The college JCR have said that the “viral” event will provide “oxygen producing goodness!”

### UBER WEIRD

#### Homerton warns of fake taxi drivers

Homerton College has sent an email to its students this week to alert them to incidents of fake taxi drivers in Cambridge, citing a recent case of someone pretending to be an Uber driver. Students were given advice on how to avoid being scammed and how to corroborate the identity of their Uber driver using the website. 75,000 people had used the app in Cambridge as of December 2017, when its license was renewed for five years amid disapproval among local taxi cab companies and concerns around Uber safety.

### SLICE OF THE ACTION

#### Shipping container pizza place opens

The Cambridge Leisure Park has seen the arrival of a new pizza take-away restaurant, Pizza1889 – a restaurant which comes in the form of a shipping container. The restaurant’s founder Daniel Southwell has said “there really is nothing quite like Pizza1889”: with pizza made before your eyes by professional pizza chefs, those disappointed by the end of free Domino’s from the Freshers’ Fair may make the shipping container their next stop.

### Gown-ing up

Freshers’ Week entered full swing as the newest cohort of Cambridge students experienced Cindie’s, punting, and formal for the first time

(JESS MA/ZOE MATT-WILLIAMS/ROSIE BRADBURY)



# Join us!

Varsity’s looking for writers, reporters, artists, photographers and more for Michaelmas term.

Come hang out at the Varsity office and find out how to get involved, with free food and drinks sponsored by Cobra beer.

16 Mill Lane, Cambridge CB2 1RX  
Sunday, October 7th, 5pm to 8pm





# News



# Wake up with Varsity!

Can't make the freshers' squash? Find out more ways to get involved with Varsity this term over free coffee and waffles at our office.

16 Mill Lane, Cambridge CB2 1RX  
Saturday, October 13th, 8am to 11am



## News

# LGBT+ mathmos speak out over hiring of lecturer in light of homophobic views

- Aron Wall, who will join Cambridge's mathematics faculty in 2019, wrote in 2015 that the LGBT+ community has an "obscene lifestyle"
- *Varsity* spoke to LGBT+ students about their reactions to Wall's controversial comments, and their feelings on working with him in future

### ► Continued from front page

I disagree with, but then again it's not been quite as personal as this. Nothing that hits at my identity."

Tsang added that for supervisions, it is "very important" that there is a "respectful relationship", both academic and personal, between a student and their PhD supervisor.

Steven Edwards, a second-year LGBT+ maths student, also said that he would feel "uncomfortable" being supervised by Wall.

Although Edwards acknowledged that personal conversations were unlikely to arise in maths supervisions and he wouldn't anticipate any discussion which would cause him to feel "personally attacked", the issue would lie in "knowing that in that person's head they have those homophobic thoughts."

Asked whether Wall's appointment has affected how supported he feels as an LGBT+ student, Edwards replied, "yes, of course". He explained: "You don't expect people like this to exist any more, and especially not to be hired at Cambridge."

When contacted for comment on LGBT+ students' discomfort with his employment, Wall directed *Varsity* to the University's communications department.

On Wednesday in an introductory lecture, second year mathematicians were reminded of the University's commitment to equality and diversity, and urged to call out any unprofessional behaviour by staff. Guidance on how best to raise concerns was offered to the students, along with examples of previous incidents of faculty action following student concerns.

When asked if he would attend lectures by Wall, Edwards replied that he "wouldn't have any other choice", adding: "You could not go in protest but that's just hindering yourself more than helping any cause."

He noted that lectures, especially large maths lectures, allow little space for personal views to be expressed, saying, "For all I know I could've been lectured by massive homophobes before, and I never knew about it."

Although Edwards said, with "regards to the University hiring the best person for the job, I respect that completely", he noted that he was still disappointed.

Edwards raised concerns about any role Wall may take on in terms of personal and pastoral care within the University: "Can he really take himself out of the situation of being homophobic and actually give someone real advice? I don't think he can."

Wall noted his intention to work as a college supervisor in a blog post earlier this year where he announced his appointment to the faculty, saying: "My talents shine best in a one-on-one setting, where I can adapt my approach to each student", adding: "I'll definitely apply to join a college, but I don't know which one yet."

When asked about the line between the faculty's commitment to freedom and their commitment to diversity, Ethan Redmond, a second year mathematician, said: "I don't think the faculty does have a commitment to freedom of expression."

Redmond explained, "I think the faculty has a commitment to making sure everyone can do the best work they can, which means, in my opinion, no discrimination."

The Faculty of Mathematics also released a statement when news of Wall's comments became known in July, saying: "We take the concerns of our staff and students very seriously." They affirmed their commitment to supporting current and prospective LGBT+ staff, students and visitors, and promised to work to support any concerned students.

The statement emphasised that the Faculty does not accept any form of discrimination and "will remain vigilant and act decisively when issues arise."

Although Redmond warned that firing Wall based on his views might set a "dangerous precedent", he said that other options should be offered to students who would feel uncomfortable being taught by him. He said, "I think we have the right to not be supervised by people who we would feel uncomfortable with, and I would definitely feel uncomfortable in this case."

Redmond praised this. Another mathematics undergraduate, who chose to remain anonymous, considered the explanation and support to be "inadequate" in the face of Wall's appointment.

The anonymous student said, "I believe that the right to religious views is of the utmost importance, however that simply does not excuse hate speech dressed up as religious views."

He described the homophobic attitudes displayed on Wall's blog as "a back-



▲ **Steven Edwards, a second year mathematician at Selwyn** (EMILY BRAILSFORD)

wards way of thinking which does not belong at any educational institution."

In his 2015 blog posts, Wall expressed his belief that members of the "gay community" live a "notoriously promiscuous, reckless, and obscene lifestyle".

In a different post, written in March 2015, Wall openly criticised the gender transitioning process, and said, "I think the wholesome and psychologically-integrated thing to do is accept the body which God actually gave us", and that "trying to be somebody completely different is not the right way to fix body image problems".

He added, "it's not politically correct to find this procedure disgusting, but again on any objective standard I think it really is".

Specialising in black hole thermodynamics and quantum gravity, he has been employed by the Stanford Institute for Theoretical Physics since 2017. After coverage of his blog posts, Wall deleted the controversial comments.

Like other students contacted by *Varsity*, the anonymous student said he would attend lectures and classes given by Wall in order to avoid damaging his education, but emphasised that

many of the views openly expressed by Wall deeply offend and distress him. He argued that Wall does not "deserve any pastoral role unless he gives a full statement apologising and retracting his previous views".

The student did praise the University for the equality and diversity work that they have done, saying: "I don't think I can speak for everyone - but in my personal experience the University has good intentions when it comes to striving for equality," although "this episode shows it is not perfect."

Tsang similarly praised the faculty's work on diversity, but argued that the faculty should expand its efforts to recruit transgender and non-binary students and establish a maths-specific LGBT+ society.

CUSU LGBT+ Campaign President Alistair Hyde said he found the prospect that Wall could be "involved directly in welfare roles" concerning, as it "could have an exceedingly negative effect on the welfare of LGBT+ students". In a bid to reassure students, however, he added his belief that "any issues will be swiftly dealt with by his college or his department, and concerns will be taken seriously."

In a statement released in July, CUSU said called for "a public apology from Dr. Wall, and a statement from the DAMTP ensuring that the utmost care would be paid to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of any students or staff Dr. Wall supervises or otherwise works with", adding: "there is a clear distinction between free speech and hate speech, and Dr. Wall's comments fall squarely into the latter category."

“You don’t expect people like this to exist anymore, and especially not to be hired by Cambridge”

“The right to religious views... simply does not excuse hate speech dressed up as religious views”

“You could not go [to his lectures] in protest, but that’s just hindering yourself more than helping any cause”



# Open letter urges Toope to support better pay in higher education

Millie Kiel  
Deputy News Editor

The Cambridge branch committees of the University and College Union (UCU) and UNISON, the UK's largest trade union, have sent an open letter calling on Vice-chancellor Stephen Toope to support their campaign for better pay in the higher education sector.

The open letter, sent earlier this week, marks the latest development in an ongoing campaign for higher pay for academic staff across the UK, which was among the issues highlighted in the industrial action earlier this year.

The letter asserts that across the higher education sector nationally, according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), "real-terms pay has dropped more than 12% since 2009." In order to allow staff to recover from this, the UCU has called for a pay increase of 7.5%, along with £1,500 for all staff.

2%

The pay increase proposed by UCEA

7.5%

The pay increase called for by UCU

The University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), however, proposed a 2% increase, which the open letter claims represents "another pay cut" due to the inflation of living costs in the UK. Cambridge UCU secretary Waseem Yaqoob told *Varsity* that Toope "should come out clearly and publicly against this wholly inadequate offer."

UCU and UNISON's open letter asks Toope to support "action to address the spread of precarious contracts and pay inequality."

The letter asserts that "it is a sign of staff anger" at UCEA's offer, that the Cambridge branches of UCU and UNISON, representing more than 2,000 members between them, are currently balloting for strike action.

The current ballot, which opened on the 30th August, will close in mid-October. It is primarily concerned with four key issues in the HE sector: low pay, the gender pay-gap, the casualisation of employment, and high workload.

According to a Cambridge UCU survey in 2016, staff at the University have a longer working week than the nationally agreed higher education hours, with an average of 52.8 hours work per week due to teaching and collegiate commitments.

In an email to staff in September, Toope said that he is concerned about the "low remuneration of UK academics and professional staff", citing staff

pay as a "critical" issue if the University is to recruit and retain "the very best people."

For these reasons, Toope said, "the University recommended to UCEA that it should offer a higher uplift in basic pay than 2%", emphasising that Cambridge "remains committed to this" even if the national offer changes.

The open letter praised these "commendable words," but stressed the need for them to be "backed by actions."

Similarly, in response to Toope's email, Ivan Williams, the chair of Cambridge's UNISON branch, told *Varsity* that while he was "happy to hear" the remarks, "it is easy to say nice things, what is a lot harder is to make a difference."

Yaqoob told *Varsity* that the University is currently proposing extending performance-related pay and introduc-



ing "financial wellness" schemes "as a solution to low pay." Criticising these proposals, he said, "the suggestion that better domestic budgeting is the way forward is frankly insulting to overworked and underpaid staff."

The recent open letter addresses higher education concerns nationally, as well as within Cambridge. It asks Toope to "show leadership in reversing the trend of sacrificing staff pay and conditions in higher education budgeting."

Speaking about Toope's role in influencing national policy, Williams added that he believes the Vice-chancellor has the ability to "steer Cambridge University" into a position where it is the benchmark "for other Universities to strive to when it comes to pay and conditions."

◀ Escalating strike action from the UCU (MATHIAS GJESDAL HAMMER)

“  
[Toope] should come out clearly and publicly against this wholly inadequate offer  
”

“  
It is easy to say nice things, it is a lot harder to make a difference  
”



## P&G Presentation October 22nd, 2018

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## News

# Toope reflects on 'eventful' year in annual address

**Sarah Orsborne**  
Senior News Correspondent

"As rituals of initiation go, I hope this one has run its course", Cambridge Vice-chancellor Stephen Toope said of the past 12 months in his annual address at Senate House on Monday.

In his 20-minute address, Toope touched on the "divisive" issues facing Cambridge: staff pension strikes, divestment, the Prevent legislation, and, more broadly, University democratic decision-making.

In one of his more public acknowledgements of the frustration felt within the University community amid an unresolved dispute over staff pensions, Toope said, "I deeply regret the erosion of trust between those who have voiced their concern about the proposed changes, and those of us whose job is to keep the university running and to focus on the long term".

Frustrations mounted earlier this year as staff took to the picket lines in protest of proposed changes to staff pensions by employer advocacy group Universities UK (UUK), which had initially received support from the University in its individualisation of risk on employees.

Toope's concessions during the strike action – in calling on Cambridge to assume higher pension contribution costs,



"I deeply regret the erosion of trust"

and in introducing a Cambridge-specific pensions scheme if negotiations failed to reach a resolution – had followed months of criticism of the University's lack of sympathy for staff concerns.

Toope acknowledged in his annual address the personal impact of the pensions crisis for staff, that the situation was "fraught – because it directly

▲ Vice-chancellor Stephen Toope gave his second annual address at Senate House on Monday (UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE)

touches on people's livelihoods". He argued that the dispute required "complex thinking", mentioning his "genuine dissatisfaction at not being able to deliver easy answers to questions that trouble the entire system".

The vice-chancellor expanded on staff frustration beyond the issue of pensions, touching on concerns that the University has lost its sense of being a "self-governing community of scholars". He acknowledged the "appetite" to simplify the University's decision-making processes, to "ensure that each [University] committee is clear about its role... without reducing democratic oversight of policy decisions".

Recently Cambridge's committee-based governance system came under scrutiny by former CUSU President Daisy Eyre, rendering University Council, Cambridge's principal policy-making committee, a "rubber-stamping body", where "decisions have been made long before they make it to the Council."

Toope's address also indicated a shift in the University's approach on the Prevent duty, a counterterrorism policy introduced by the UK government in 2015 and rolled out in 2016 across the collegiate University. Toope's address offered his first public acknowledgement of collegiate differences in the rollout of the Prevent legislation, and announced that the University would "work to better

coordinate approaches across collegiate Cambridge".

Earlier this year, *Varsity* revealed inconsistencies in different colleges' interpretations and implementations of the Prevent duty, with at least two colleges having intervened in speaker events.

Toope reiterated Cambridge's com-

£500m

Cambridge's latest fundraising goal for reforms to student support

mitment to a 'light-touch' approach on Prevent, a thread in University rhetoric which came under scrutiny following University intervention in a panel discussion run by the Cambridge University Palestine Society (PalSoc) in November 2017. The University requested replacement of the panel's chair, Dr Ruba Salih, with a "neutral" staff member – a move the University apologised for earlier this year.

Toope also announced several new University initiatives in his address, including commitments to reimburse EU staff for settlement application costs, and Cambridge's pledge to raise £500m for student support initiatives.

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EXHIBITORS INCLUDE\*:





# Cambridge study findings on sexual violence offer vision for 'Breaking the Silence'

◀ Continued from the front page

The think tank, made up of both students and academics, investigated good training practises, highlighted challenges and weaknesses in current education initiatives, and provided recommendations for those committed to ending gender-based abuse. Research found that in order to significantly reduce abuse cases, sexual violence training alone is not sufficient. The call for implementation of adequate policies at the institutional level alongside convincing leadership commitment to the cause, was cited as essential to the prevention of violence.

GenPol's research revealed a need for institutions to address changes in disciplinary procedures and reporting mechanisms, whilst also reflecting commitment to change by high profile university members – in order to significantly reduce abuse cases, the data indicates that sexual violence training

alone is not sufficient. The 'Breaking the Silence' campaign followed a sustained campaign by CUSU Women's Campaign (WomCam) and women's activists for Cambridge to introduce official sexual assault policies across colleges to support and protect its students. Former Women's Officer Lola Olufemi, who oversaw the launch, said it was "a step in the right direction". She has urged, however, that campaign efforts must address questions of whether the University is "willing to fund the support services that are being outsourced", of whether formal and informal disciplinary procedures are adequately responsive to students' complaints, and how to push colleges to "have someone that students can access, that works specifically on sexual violence and assault".

GenPol points out that the congregation of rape culture within the climate of UK universities campus housing structures is especially dangerous and is linked to higher rates of sexual vio-



lence.

GenPol recommends approaching the rejection of consent education by male participants through positive masculinity practises, such as encouraging the importance of male-allyship and denouncement of toxic masculinity traits. By incorporating a broader focus

▲ CUSU Women's Officer Claire Sosienski Smith addressed last year's Reclaim the Night rally (EVELINA GUMILEVA)

on deeper inequality issues within gendered power systems, we can continue to develop understanding of the benefits of a less violent world, whilst also maintaining the motivation to change at the individual level.

173

Number of complaints submitted between May 2017 and January 2018

£87k

The sum that Cambridge was given in 2017 to invest in anti-harassment initiatives

Finally, consent learning should not end after the initial training is offered. By combining multiple training formats, covering more topics in depth and at a more personal level, individuals can be further encouraged to actively participate in shaping a world free of violence.

Women's movements have fought to pioneer a critical shift in our understanding of sexual violence as a human rights violation whilst also re-defining sexual assault as not restricted just to physical coercion. This classification, as well as initiatives to raising awareness of consent and campaigns working to empower people of all genders to express consent safely, is now beginning to be adopted by organisations and legislatures across the world.

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## News

# Martin Lee: Hong Kong must grow its own “fruits of democracy”

Hong Kong’s “father of democracy” talks to **Bethan McGinley** about press freedom, protest, and British silence

**M**artin Lee, Hong Kong’s internationally-recognised politician and barrister, is calm and unassuming as he smiles and shakes my hand. Lee had just spoken at a Cambridge Union panel, along with other pro-democracy campaigners from Hong Kong – including Benny Tai, Evan Fowler and Nathan Law. No doubt tired after a day of travelling, Lee remains attentive and waves away my apologies for asking yet more questions so late in the evening. He tells me, “you are only tired if you say you’re tired; I say I am awake so I am.” It is exactly this strength of mind which has characterised Lee’s long campaign for democracy.

Having been directly involved in the drafting of the mini-constitution of the post-1997 Hong Kong in 1985, and in the discussions surrounding the sovereignty of Hong Kong after 1997, Lee’s struggle for Hong Kong’s autonomy has spanned over three decades. He is the founding chairman of the United Democrats of Hong Kong, the first major political party in Hong Kong and later the Democratic Party, the current pro-democracy party. It is no wonder then, that he is known as Hong Kong’s “father of democracy”, a title which he corrects to “grandfather” with a wry smile.

The 2014 Umbrella Revolution, which saw pro-democracy sit-in street protests in Hong Kong, captured the world’s attention. Lee was 76 at the time, and while on the frontlines with student activists, police fired tear gas on the crowd. Indeed, four years on he claims in mock-seriousness that “tear gas keeps the mind sharp”. Such light-hearted humour puts those around him immediately at ease, with the exception, I would imagine, of the Beijing government whom he calmly condemns. While China had pledged an election of Hong Kong’s chief executive by universal suffrage in 2017, this has failed to materialise. Twenty-one years post-handover, Lee states that “one country, two systems is fast becoming one country, one system”.

It is this desire, for promises to be fulfilled and democracy to be achieved in Hong Kong, that has driven Lee’s long career. From the outset, he states that in the writing of the constitution he “wanted to give as much power to the legislator over the government”, in order to preserve Hong Kong’s autonomy. And whilst Lee acknowledges that the “one country two systems” policy is “very difficult to work”, he says that the onus lies with Beijing. It is just like a seesaw, he explains: “the larger system must move towards the centre”, while “the mainland is much bigger, heavier – but it is still using its might”.

Indeed, the Joint Declaration agreed by the UK and the People’s Republic of

China decided that the political and legal system of the PRC would not be practised in Hong Kong, and that Hong Kong’s way of life would remain unchanged until 2047. Lee puts it candidly: “since one country, two systems is China’s own basic policy put into writing ... and enshrined in our constitution of basic law; that is still the only way forward.” Yet in 2014, Ni Jian, China’s deputy ambassador to Britain, was said to have told Richard Ottoway, the chairman of British House of Commons’ Foreign Affairs Committee, that to Chinese officials the Joint Declaration “is now void and only covered the period from the signing in 1984 until the handover in 1997.” Lee echoes this, as he lists the fruits of democracy he believes Hong Kong enjoyed under British rule, which are being gradually eroded by the government in Beijing. “We don’t find a democratic tree [in Beijing]. In Hong Kong we must grow our own. We are unable to look to Beijing for fruits of democracy.”

Such “fruits of democracy” include the free press, which is under threat from China’s authoritarian government. It is on this topic, more than any other, that Lee does not hold back. “We don’t have an independent press anymore” he says sadly. “There are so many of them which are entirely pro-Beijing”, he adds. According to Lee, since the Alibaba Group – China’s largest online commerce company – bought the South China Morning Post, there is now no English-language independent paper in Hong Kong. “The South China Morning Post,” he says with a shake of his head, “used to be independent and used to be very good... now Alibaba has bought it of course it loses its independence”.

For Lee, there is no question that the government in Beijing is leaning heavily on the press to construct a pro-China propaganda narrative. In this, alongside other infringements on Hong Kong’s autonomy, he speaks unapologetically, never breaking eye contact as he describes how Beijing is “emboldened by the silence of the British government and the rest of the world”.

Whilst Lee primarily blames the British government’s silence on a desire to maintain Chinese trade relations, he also notes that, given the “the lack of accurate reporting in English”, as British citizens, “you may not even know what’s happening in Hong Kong”. It is this which he voices with a degree of frustration, communicating just how important a free press is to sparking activism; “if you feel strongly about Hong Kong,” he tells me “you might go to see your local MP, write letters, protest... thereby [putting] some pressure on the British government”.

However, Lee is not disheartened. He speaks strongly and with passion, and in addressing the panel, he answered



▲ Lee after speaking in the ‘Democracy in Hong Kong’ panel (BETHAN MCGINLEY/CATHERINE LALLY)

“Freedom of the press ... it is up to you, if you are brave enough to report it”

with a resounding “yes” that he did truly believe that Hong Kong would achieve democracy in the next fifty years.

For Lee, the goal is a democratic Hong Kong, “nothing more, nothing less,” as was promised, and the free press is both needed to fuel the struggle, but also to act as a cornerstone of a truly democratic society. For Lee, press freedom is priceless and the opportunity afforded to students in Cambridge to learn, debate and report freely is one to be cherished and upheld. In his final words he tells me, “freedom of the press ... it is up to you, if you are brave enough to report it”.

► A street sit-in during the 2014 Umbrella Revolution in Admiralty, Hong Kong (DOCTOR HO)





## Commercial Feature:

### PAXMAN'S GREAT WAR - At Great Saint Mary's

Jeremy Paxman will be presenting his own incisive view into Great Britain's Great War and how it changed us. After his talk, he will be signing copies of this and other books which will be on sale.

The centenary of the end of World War I is on 11 November 2018. The war tore this country apart. Cambridge railway station saw crowds of buoyant men from town and gown leave for the

Front and it saw the poignant procession of the wounded returning by train. Losses from the University numbered over 130 from St John's and a shattering 619 from Trinity -

the equivalent of three years' intake. The city became the First Great Eastern Hospital. The Leys school, Clare and Trinity Colleges provided space for beds as cloisters and halls became wards.

As sponsor of Jeremy Paxman's talk, Vanessa Burkitt, Managing Director of Catherine Jones, the Cambridge Jeweller said, 'Every family in the country was touched by the horrors of the First World War. Communities across the country lost a generation. The people of Cambridge and the University worked together to care for the wounded and for those who returned after the Armistice with visible or invisible injuries. They came back to a country and a town that was transformed.'

This reality will be the background and context for Jeremy Paxman's talk.

A lion of British journalism, Jeremy Paxman's early engagement as a journalist was as Editor of the Cambridge University newspaper, *Varsity* (centre bottom row in the photo below) while at St. Catharine's College. A renowned, award-winning BBC journalist he made his name as a forthright, trenchant interviewer and a courageous documentary maker.



He made his name early covering the Troubles in Northern Ireland. His reports for BBC TV on *Tonight* and *Panorama* led him to become anchorman of the BBC Television's *Newsnight*, in 1989, a post he held for 25 years.

Known for his forthright and sometimes abrasive interviewing technique, *Newsnight* was the BBC's platform for interrogating politicians. While these appearances were sometimes criticised as aggressive, intimidating and condescending, they were also applauded as tough and incisive. Though not of his own fashioning, the question 'Why is this lying bastard lying to me?' could well be the guiding principle behind Jeremy Paxman's interviewing technique.

Cambridge students will have encountered Jeremy in *University Challenge* which he has chaired since 1994 with his inimitable vigour.

Jeremy continues to make documentaries for television including one of the effects of the First World War on Great Britain. He anchored Channel 4's *Election Night* coverage in May 2015 and June 2017. He is a contributing editor at the *Financial Times* and the author of ten books.

Among other honours, Jeremy Paxman is an honorary fellow at St. Catharine's College, Cambridge.

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## News

# Students reflect on Stormzy and the state of black access

**Rosie Bradbury**  
Senior News Editor  
**Noella Chye**  
Editor

This week, two black students matriculating at Cambridge received the Stormzy Scholarship, which will fully fund their tuition fees and provide a maintenance grant for the duration of their undergraduate study, to an estimated value of £18,000 for the 2018-2019 academic year.

The scholarship, announced in July by Brit-award-winning grime artist Stormzy, was launched in an effort to improve black access to the University, and to remove the financial burden of attending Cambridge for four black students.

Earlier this year, *Varsity* spoke to students who have worked on BME access efforts during their time at Cambridge, on their predictions of the impact of the Stormzy scholarship.

"People don't realise that [race] can be a factor way, way, way before you even get to applying to university in terms of not going to good enough schools, subjects being cut", said Oyinkan Odumade, a Cambridge African and Caribbean Society (ACS) member who appeared in the videoshoot announcement of the scholarship with the artist.

Odumade saw the scholarship as



▲ **The Stormzy scholarship will support four Cambridge students for the duration of their degrees** (STORMZY/YOUTUBE)

having a "different type of impact" than messages from teachers or parents, and that it was part of an effort of "levelling the playing field" for underrepresented groups at Cambridge.

Cambridge has faced recent scrutiny over the state of access for disadvantaged students. In its latest admissions round, black students had application success rates seven percentage points lower than average rates, and in the 2016 admissions round, Cambridge accepted more black students than Etonians for the first time on record.

“  
To be black  
at Cam-  
bridge is to  
disrupt  
”

In the scholarship's announcement, Cambridge ACS members appeared in a photoshoot with Stormzy, with the aim of improving visibility of Cambridge's black student population to minorities and prospective applicants: to "[show] that... this University can be for you, and it can be accessible", said Odumade.

Several photographs of Cambridge ACS members – including one in 2017 of 14 male students in St John's college, and a photo taken earlier this year of over 50 female students commemorating 70 years since the first black female student graduated from the University – have gone viral on social media.

Cambridge ACS President Toni Fola-Alade argued that the announcement of the Stormzy scholarship, alongside videoed interviews with black Cambridge students, "puts a positive message about the black Oxbridge experience on a national scale on a way that no one else really can".

"In your head, you think that there's a certain type of person that Cambridge looks for... a posh, privately-educated white student who speaks a certain way and acts in a certain way, does certain things, and that almost kind of puts you off of applying because you just think, 'even if I am good enough, they'll choose this student over me'", said ACS Vice-president Timi Sotire.

Sotire, Odumade, and Fola-Alade all

reflected on how their experience at Cambridge has in part been shaped by being from an underrepresented background, and on how implicit racial biases has affected them: "To be black at Cambridge is to disrupt", said Fola-Alade.

"Anything we do to promote the welfare of our students to help more deserving black students get in, to ensure that our cultures are celebrated and that other members of the student body get the access to both our cultural and intellectual capital as black people, is disruptive", he added.

Rashidat Animashaun, facilitator for FLY, a network for women and non-binary students of colour in Cambridge, commented that she's noticed many students of colour "have [a] feeling of guilt because they know that back home there are issues of finances that their families have to deal with... and they recognise that they might be spending money that at home, with family situations, wouldn't be possible."

She added that the term "women of colour", is a "very broad church... What you find with many of the BME communities in Cambridge is that many of them are familiarly or personally quite wealthy, so what may be one woman of colour's struggle is not another woman of colour's struggle."

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# Features

## Rethinking the canon with Leonard Yip

*Jonathan Chan sits down with several English students to examine the personal implications of a decolonised English curriculum in a Varsity features column*

A student like Leonard Yip (Third Year, Wolfson) is a rarity in the English Faculty. An international student, Leonard hails from Singapore, a country known for producing pragmatically-minded students. One only needs to walk by the Law or Economics faculties to hear the intonations of Singaporean English. Yet, Leonard's choice of academic discipline has yielded intellectual fruit, particularly in thinking through the reconstitution of the English language within Singapore's context.

To Leonard, the approach to rethinking the canon of works that undergraduates are exposed to on the English Tripos demands some nuance. He opines that we should not preclude the opportunity to engage with cultures— in literature we find ourselves instantaneously transported across kilometres and oceans, and the act of reading broadly often serves to emphasise our collective similarities, not differences. Having grown up reading the tales of King Arthur, Leonard mentions that we should not excoriate ourselves for loving things that are not our own. Yet, he also notes that there exists a finer point of distinction between being an international student and a BME student. Being of Chinese ethnicity, Leonard had the privilege of being a part of Singapore's ethnic majority. Moreover, he had the luxury of engaging with works of English literature as cultural imports. To that extent, his experiences bear sharp differences from being a minority in Britain.

"English is the language I've grown up speaking and the only language I'm fully proficient in", Leonard remarks. Not only is it the language that he uses to express his thoughts and address his

academic engagements, but it is also the language that he uses to unpack his identity. Perhaps this is unsurprising given that English is one of the official languages of Singapore as enshrined in government policy. Singapore's decision to adopt English as an administrative language is emblematic of a broader phenomenon: that English is no longer the domain of the English. A distinct offshoot of colonisation, the avalanche of people who speak, write, and think about their country's heritage and history in English brings particular credence to the fact that much of the Anglophone world has never stepped foot in England.

In thinking through the reclamation of the English language, Leonard points to Chinua Achebe's seminal novel *Things Fall Apart* as a powerful example. "We were 13-years old in school when we studied it," Leonard notes with a laugh. "Nobody expected us to be thinking about postcolonial theory". Yet, his teachers chose to emphasise how Achebe's novel was crafted as a response to colonial literature and the English language was used as a vehicle for African languages, traditions, and ways of life. Leonard remarks that Achebe details and recomposes Igbo idioms, stories, and songs often disregarded by colonialists. Looking back, Leonard identifies a recurring question that came up through the study of the novel: How is Achebe reclaiming language from the mouth of the coloniser? Leonard argues that Achebe acts as a linguistic ventriloquist, making the language say what he wants it to say, making the language his own to engage with the heritage and history of his own country.

"I think many people often overlook the fact that language is always political.

► Leonard Yip is one of a handful of Singaporean students studying English in Cambridge

(JONATHAN CHAN)



The stringing of sentences always seeks to drive a point or express a perspective. Writing does not operate in a vacuum." In recognising that language cannot be disentangled from its context, Leonard believes that theoretical readings of texts often provide an ungainly way of deriving meaning. Rather, Leonard sees the study of English as the cultivation of a desire to strive for elegance in the way things are read. Leonard's meditation on the polemic nature of language manifested in an essay he worked on for the long 18th century, a period spanning 1660 to 1870. Leonard analysed the first travel writing created about Singapore and the Malayan Peninsula, and in doing so addressed the rhetorical domination that led to the commodification of the island and the 'othering' of the natives.

“English is the only language I can speak fluently, but it is not spoken by my grandparents”

It is with a tinge of irony that we recognise that when the English language first arrived in Singapore, it was used to define and colour the land through a foreign perspective, ultimately leading to a colonial enterprise that lasted 123 years.

"I felt that I owed it to myself as a specialist in English to grapple with this," Leonard notes. "I'm in a strange position. English is the only language I can speak fluently, but it is not spoken by my grandparents and is not indigenous to the land I grew up in." In poring over the writing of early travellers, including Stamford Raffles, the governor-general often regarded as the founder of modern Singapore, Leonard recognises certain distinctions from the Eurocentric travel writing of the time. These ventures





beyond Europe facilitated the development of an orientalism that would lead to the subjugation of entire countries. In analysing the language of such travel writing, Leonard identified the dominating frameworks that were first used to control Singapore and the Malayan Peninsula. However, by speaking and thinking in the same language that was once used to dominate his country, Leonard remarks with a measure of discomfort, “I feel like I have one foot on the shores of Singapore and the other on the deck of Raffles’ ship. My academic work was an attempt to reconcile the two positions”.

It is amidst this that Leonard asserts that not only is it crucial to study how the English language came to be, but also how it has continued to change and

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transform beyond the ‘domestic context’ of the British Isles. He cites the meticulous attention paid in lectures to regional variations in the language of the medieval text Gawain and the Green Knight, but the comparative lack of focus given to the varieties of English from around the world. “It is a disservice to all English speakers to overlook geography-bound narratives”, Leonard argues, for one only needs to examine idioms, phrases, and creoles to recognise the shifts that have been induced by the particularities of context.

As Leonard asserts, “You cannot call yourself a student of English without paying heed to stories and Englishes from around the world”. Maybe this is the least we can hope to see reflected in a transformed English curriculum.

# Don’t romanticise Britain’s past

*Daniella Adeluwoye explores what decolonisation means for the liberation of our own minds*

When I was young, I always used to look forward to the crunch of autumn leaves because October meant Black History Month. Thirty-one sacred days to finally deviate from the myopic and Eurocentric lens that is our curriculum and indulge myself within the rich tapestry of black history.

But year after year, Black History Month was spent celebrating Britain’s role in ending the slave trade. Did we ever critically engage in Britain’s role in the slave trade in the first place? No. Did we ever learn that the effects of the slave trade transcend its abolition? No. Our national curriculum fails to teach us about the deprivation characterising the lives of former slaves as they were left illiterate and unskilled and how this created an intentionally orchestrated drawback that remains intergenerational.

Who tells what version of Britain’s story? My younger self would have been delighted to have learnt about black abolitionists such as Olaudah Equiano rather than hearing about our convenient national hero, William Wilberforce. History is not an objective narrative, it is always told by the winners: declining sugar prices and over-competition contributed to the anti-slavery policies that enabled Wilberforce’s glorification; the myth that Wilberforce represents the moral righteousness of Britain fails to consider how the abolition movement, in many ways, just followed existing market trends of the time.

Rather than continually deify Wilberforce, I would have been awe-struck to hear that Britain also had a black power movement, that we too had our events to mirror the Montgomery Bus boycott, such as the Bristol Bus boycott. It is frustrating in retrospect to uncover that we have our own history on our door steps, yet our national curriculum sweeps it under the carpet, because even during Black History Month, it is white people who celebrate the story of white Britain to the rest of us.

Growing up as a mixed-race person, I would often pester my teachers with my observations about how Eurocentric the national curriculum was: the British monarchy, the Great Fire of London, the abolitionist movement in Britain. Our curriculum offers us a palatable version of Britain’s history, concealing the blood stains and the cracks of its colonial past such as the devastating effects the British Empire had on India. This version of British history is a romanticisation

“ Our curriculum offers us a palatable version of Britain’s history, concealing the blood stains and cracks of its colonial past ”

of the nation’s past, we have been led to believe that racism was never our problem and all we did was innocently sip cups of tea.

I’m sorry to disappoint, but Britain’s tradition of tea was built on exploitative imperialism. Britain illegally drugged up the entire nation of China, dragging it through two Opium Wars, forcing the cession of Hong Kong as colonial territory, to maintain this country’s culturally appropriative afternoon drinking habits. So, stop teaching me about how Isambard Kingdom Brunel was one of the greatest figures of the Industrial Revolution. Instead, teach me how the Industrial Revolution was built on slavery and sustained systems of capitalistic domination throughout the world that feeds into neo-colonial economic relationships today.

Britain has repeatedly failed to come to terms with its colonial past, but the rise of decolonisation-related activism of Cambridge students gives me hope that we can have critical discussions about who gets to tell what version of Britain’s story. The curriculum must go beyond middle-class white men and adding a few BME writers will not harm sacred western philosophers; but at the same time, this does not necessarily require the removal of all white people from the existing syllabus. It means contextualising white people in their colonial context or offering postcolonial readings on existing texts. Take *The Tempest* for example, we can engage in a post-colonial analysis of the play and allow ourselves to challenge more traditional interpretations.

To liberate our curriculum is to ask ourselves who holds hegemony over narratives and recognising that these supposedly authoritative voices are not formed in vacuums. They are reflections of our geo-political institutions and ones that we must not passively consume.

The real danger is that the meaningful issues at stake become obscured in our attempts to diversify our national curriculum. We need fundamental change to our education system because when Caribbean girls and black schoolboys are disproportionately at the bottom of the education system, making Chinua Achebe a compulsory author to study is not going to be enough. We must also address issues of unconscious bias and low expectations amongst teachers and what effects this has on their students, but a more liberated curriculum would undoubtedly be the first step to helping students feel included and ensuring that there is a personal connection with what they study. Because as inquisitive young students who want to explore their own identities during a crucial period of their lives, Henry VII may not be the best historical figure to do so and there is only so much we can explore within those fleeting 31 days of the year.



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## Features

# Let's talk about dyspraxia

*Mimi Robson and Kitya Mark talk about what having dyspraxia, a rarely publicised and frequently misunderstood specific learning difficulty, can mean for the self-perception of young adults minds*

Accidentally throwing a partner out of bed (twice, in under 15 minutes) because it was difficult to adjust to the confines of a single mattress is just the beginning of a floodgate of memories of mishaps and minor calamities. Forgotten names, turning up 50 minutes late after a bitter feud with Google Maps, struggling with items of clothing: the list goes on.

There are ways to tell all of these stories as light and entertaining anecdotes. There is something inherently funny about being a 'klutz', and at times it can be tempting to play up to this persona. We fulfil the classic 'arts student' stereotype, yet this is a stereotype informed by the ingrained sexist view that arts students are generally female, and consequently 'ditzy' figures. We want to use this space to reflect on how, although dyspraxics may choose to make a joke out of their experiences, dyspraxia can lead to considerable personal and academic difficulties.

When discussing the effects of dyspraxia, our conversation quickly moved to the kind of intimate scenes of clumsiness in the bedroom — mostly because of the prominence that these instances can have in terms of self-perception, rather than that we're both sex-obsessed over-sharers (give us the benefit of the doubt). While sexuality doesn't have to be an important part of anyone's life, for us and for some others there can be a sense that, feeling like a competent sexual being matters.

Bedroom contexts can be difficult for most people to navigate, but these contexts become more difficult when navigation is not your strong point. Dyspraxia can mean that your limbs don't always perform 'the limb thing' in the way that you hoped that they would. It can make you feel persistently uncoordinated, inelegant, and frankly lost in most places. This means that you don't just feel subtly embarrassed but you also feel undesirable if you struggle to move in a 'sexy' way. Nothing makes you feel sexier than being gently told that you look like a foal that can't walk properly, or being asked how you manage to get dressed in the morning.

In Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, Neville reflects, "I lack bodily grace and the courage that comes with it", and this statement has a surprising capacity to speak to the public and private effects that dyspraxia can have. What is undermining about having dyspraxia is not only the movement, but all of the things that do (or do not) come with it. For example the difficulties that accompany feeling as though you're always sat in the wrong place in the room, or that every intimate moment comes with the threat that you might spoil it with your clumsiness.

The connection between dyspraxia

► Illustration by  
Lisha Zhong for  
Varsity



and mental health has started to receive more consideration: a recent study in *The Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology* journal suggested that late adolescents with moderate-to-severe DCD were 78% more likely to experience mental health difficulties. These difficulties were associated with challenges in social communication and low self-esteem, and the risk was found to be even higher for female participants.

These psychological conditions are also associated with the less conspicuous effects that dyspraxia can have on mental processes. While dyspraxia does not have an impact on overall IQ, difficulties with things like working memory (the use and retention of short-term information), issues with planning and structuring words and ideas, as well as increased difficulties with organisation, can generate anxiety and low self-worth if the right support is not in place. These difficulties might be particularly felt during a dyspraxic person's education. Studies carried out by the Cambridge Disability Resource Centre have so far shown that students at Cambridge University with specific learning difficulties (SpLD) have much greater discrepancies between their performance

in dissertations and their performance in the exams than is the case for their non-SpLD peers. This includes students with dyspraxia, dyslexia, ADHD, and dyscalculia. All students on average performed better in dissertations than exams, but the difference is greater for SpLD students, which suggests that they might underperform in exams. While this isn't the be-all-and-end-all, it is easy to see how these discrepancies might feel undermining.

What complicates dyspraxia is that it perhaps only deserves a certain level of sympathy. For all our complaining, there is nothing inherently life-threatening about it. Having a disability which is largely invisible is also a form of privilege. But because of this lack of visibility, dyspraxia can feel incredibly

► Illustration by  
Kitya Mark



ibly isolating: finding each other to write this article triggered something in between a rant and a therapy session. It can feel challenging if you are the only person you know who cannot work when the library fans are turned on, who loses hours of the day trying to remember where your folders are, or even what chapters you have read recently. On the whole, there is not only little consideration of these experiences, but raising them comes with the dismissive accusation that "you're blaming everything on dyspraxia".

Being dyspraxic can sometimes feel like living in a world that wasn't proofed against you, where no matter how you do in your final exams, you'll still manage to pour coffee down the front of your blouse on graduation day. Laughing along with a nosy onlooker about your handwriting is undermining in a world where the challenges beneath the humour are consistently ignored.

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Being  
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# ‘The concept of looking in a mirror and liking what you see has always been quite alien to me’

Four students speak out about the insecurities they’ve been keeping hidden in *Varsity*’s latest video

Produced by  
Cordelia Lam & Joe Cook

Watch it at  
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# Varsity Editorial

## I've spent the past ten years in denial

I didn't have a freshers' week. I remember the morning of my matriculation — so cold and lightheaded I thought I would faint.

I arrived in Cambridge with an eating disorder I've had since I was around 10. Up until today I've never really told anyone everything. Just two months ago, over the summer, I admitted it to myself.

Lately I've thought a lot about when I first arrived. I spent my first term in Cambridge feeling strange and ashamed. I remember looking for people in Cambridge who were writing about it and not finding anyone. When I went home for Christmas, I didn't want to come back, to return to a place where I'd spend days on end alone, in a rigid daily routine that allowed me to last until the evening without food, saying no to everything — meals, formals, drinks — so I'd never have to deviate from it. I knew then I wasn't happy, but I didn't let the weight of what was happening truly sink in. I was so embarrassed about it.

The summer before I came to Cambridge I was forced to see a doctor. He told me I looked frail, and haggard. I couldn't see it. When he said I had to take a blood test to check if I had deficiencies, I cried. I didn't want the people around me to have evidence that something was gravely wrong, that they could use to make me change the way I was living.

If I close my eyes and think about the past ten years, I can still picture in my

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I'm writing this to my nine-year-old self, when the first hints of insecurity began creeping up  
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head the details of the most painful moments, and feel the fear, the self-hatred. It doesn't feel like it's really happened to me. I can't believe I've been, and still am, in this much denial.

Going into my final year, I realised that someone else will arrive in Cambridge this year dealing with deep-seated insecurities of their own, scared or ashamed of them; who, like me two years ago, hasn't heard about the insecurities that people face in Cambridge and how it can shape your time here; who suspects they may be alone. I felt I had to say something.

I'm writing this editorial because it's exactly what I would've wanted to hear. I'm writing to my fresher self, saying: you're carrying so much on your shoulders, and I wish I could take it off of you.

I'm writing this to my nine-year-old self, before it all started, when the first hints of insecurity began creeping up. I have a distinct image in my head of one particular moment at school. I'm with a group of friends just about to climb a blue staircase, looking around at the people around me and thinking about how much prettier, and more normal, and less oddly-shaped they are. I think I remember that moment so clearly because it stands out as one of the first moments I felt I had to do something about that insecurity. In my mind I'm writing to that girl, in that moment. When I think about her, and how uncomfortable she is

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This disorder has shaped my life in ways I haven't fully confronted  
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with herself and so the world around her too, I feel this immense sadness.

I think fragments of all of these past selves I'm writing to lie in every one of us — insecurity, self-doubt, shame. So I'm writing to you all too.

We have a long way to go in Cambridge in recognising the insecurities we all face — to making this a place where fear is no longer the norm.

This disorder has shaped my life in ways I haven't fully confronted. I still find myself in denial; the only way I can get through each day is by trying not to think too hard about having an appearance. Sometimes I'll catch my reflection in a glass window and still feel my heart drop. Photos and videos are hard; I can't really bear to look at them and realise each time that I'm nowhere near liking how I look or feeling like *that's me*.

Today Varsity releases a video where four students talk about their experiences with body image. Throughout this week I've been thinking about what it would've been like watching it two years ago when I first arrived — how I would've felt being told that what I was going through wasn't some sort of wound. That these people have been there. That it's okay to feel lonely and out of place. That I didn't have to hide something that was consuming me.

That it's not my fault for feeling the way I did, that there's nothing to be ashamed of. That it's part of the culture here. No more.

# Privilege has an iron grip on the extracurriculars at Cambridge

/////////  
Attitudes towards clubs and societies ignore their hidden financial inequalities

Charlotte Lillywhite

From Toope's plans to raise £500m to support lower-income students financially to Stormzy's decision to fund two black students' Cambridge education, financial access to university has spearheaded recent debate and discussion of Cambridge access. This is vitally important and we would do well to maintain such a focus, but why aren't we also talking about finance and access *within* the University?

Last week, I discussed the broader pressures and misinformation surrounding student finance, especially in institutions like Cambridge. And it is precisely these pressures which continue to affect university life even after becoming a full member of the University, applicable to our higher education system in general and pertaining to the privilege implicit in extra-curricular accessibility here.

This week, hordes of new students across the University signed up to the hundreds of extracurricular clubs and societies present in the CUSU Freshers' Fair. While we are undoubtedly fortunate to have these opportunities quite liter-

ally on our doorstep, the appeal of these activities as goldmines of socialising, networking, and future prospects is not so achievable for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, with hidden costs — concealed by the upfront membership fees many require — revealing themselves as the year progresses.

This elitism and exclusivity pervades extra-curricular life at Cambridge, and is encapsulated by the financial pressures of Cambridge theatre. Could this become any more obvious than during the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, upon which Cambridge thespians descend in droves each August for an impossible-to-turn-down opportunity for those wishing to pursue theatre post-university, which requires students pay hundreds of pounds?

What is the point in Toope claiming he wants Cambridge “to be genuinely open to all who have the talent to flourish” here, if such talent can only be exercised when students have enough money to enable it? This is a barrier to progress and inhibits the full potential the institution has to offer.

Contributing to these financial con-

straints is the clear social privilege which exists within Cambridge and affects extra-curricular participation. A Maths Doctor 2014 report found that the average spend on after-school activities for parents in the UK was £109.34, standing at £148.17 in London.

Evidently, extracurricular activities are less accessible to children from lower income households, and many more privileged students arrive at Cambridge with an immediate sense of entitlement to its clubs and societies, having been so accustomed to extracurricular participation growing up. Others may take longer to adjust, and find these harder to access with little experience. This is definitely relevant here, with the 2016/7 Big Cambridge Survey reporting that 18.39% of students felt their social background has negatively impacted their university experience. With more privileged students coming therefore to dominate extracurricular activities, financial consideration becomes skewed.

That's not to say that we must all begin university with the same experience and financial status to level the non-aca-

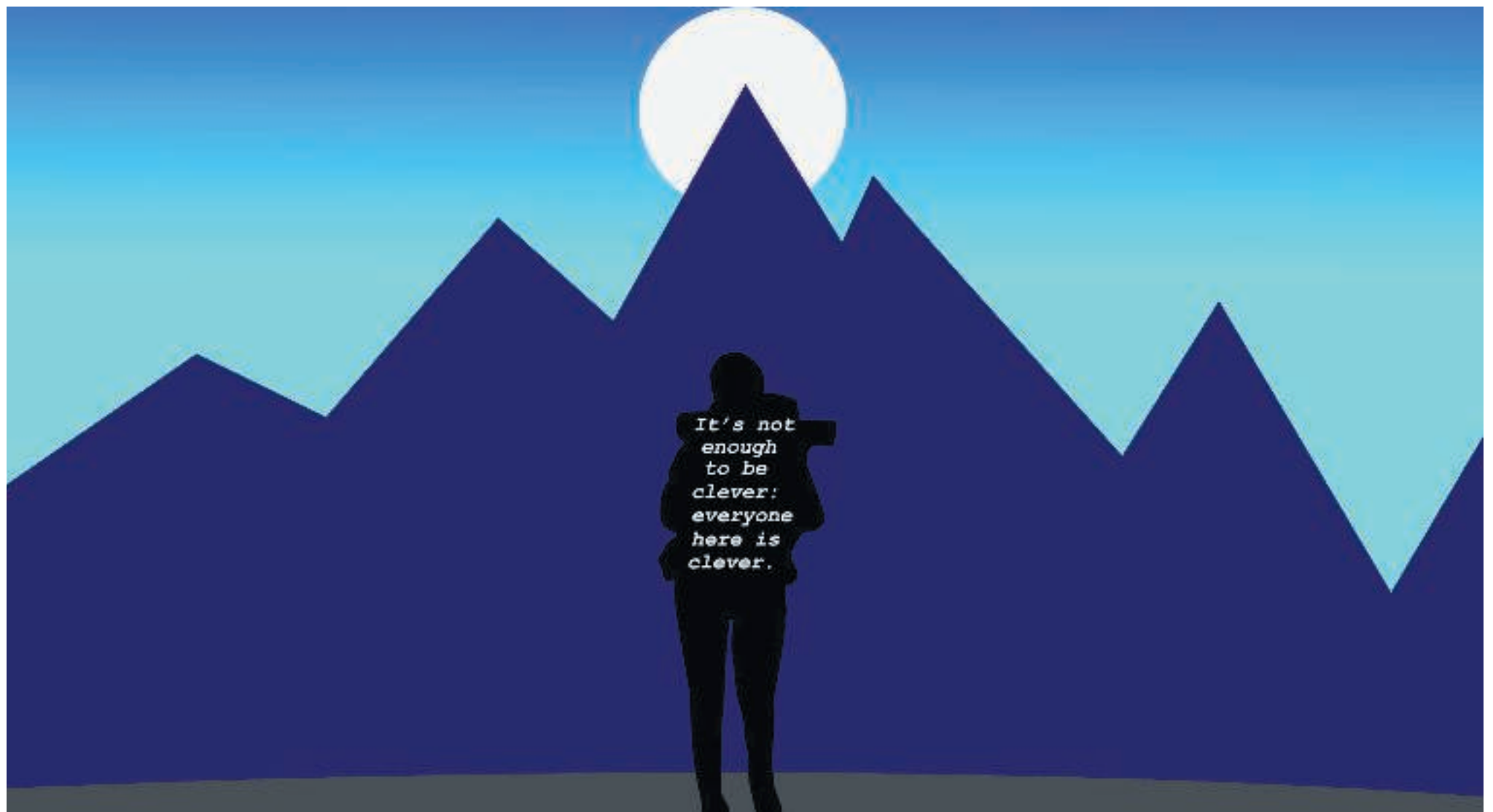
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Elitism and exclusivity pervades extracurricular life at Cambridge  
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demic playing field, as this would be impossible. Yes, participating in activities outside of your degree can push you out of your comfort zone, and is likely to cost some money for most students. However, when these costs regularly dip into the extortionate with no regard to the range of students' financial situations, and when students on the lowest incomes are expected to pay as much as those on the highest, it becomes unacceptable. In these cases, there should be more support from the University, supporting those whose parents are unable to fund their child's extra-curricular ventures.

Ultimately, student finance is a complex and nuanced issue. The privilege which monopolises not only Cambridge's academic life, but its extra-curricular opportunities, stagnates and assimilates university life and undermines the Cambridge experience which should be open to all with the ability, not the money, to flourish here. We would do well to remember that Cambridge has the funding available to truly change this and pave the way for greater, more equal student participation and future prospects.



# Opinion



## Facing up to the question of “what else?”

Stepping into activism can be difficult, writes columnist **Holly Beveridge**, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't try

**Holly Beveridge**

**M**ay Week is over, I have just about unpacked, and yet somehow it's September. To my great trepidation, a summer largely saturated by a heady mix of stifling heat and boredom has morphed into autumn overnight. What was once leisurely nonchalance is now a full-on rollercoaster hurtling towards the finish line – except that the end point is the starting blocks, and I don't know if I'm ready to race.

As with most of my 'back-to-school' endeavours comes the inevitable post-mortem of the year before. New books and pens and notebooks are bought, all geared towards the single pursuit of self-betterment. This pursuit exists so much more acutely in a place like this, where it often seems like there's pressure to answer a looming 'what else?'. It isn't enough to be clever, everyone is clever. What else have you to offer the table that nobody else is bringing? What else do you do?

In theory, I know this isn't true. To exist at Cambridge is not easy, to excel is even more difficult, and your worth is not determined by how many plays you've been in this term as much as it

isn't determined by a rushed essay. Yet in the face of alumni who monopolised on their time here so successfully, remaining rational is a challenge.

Hugh Laurie was a member of Footlights and rowed for the Light Blues; he's now an award-winning actor, director and comedian. Zadie Smith's submission to The Mays Anthology attracted a publisher's attention and landed her a contract for a novel. Emma Thompson was the vice-President of Footlights and is the only person to have won an Academy Award for both screen-writing and acting. The list goes on.

I should at this juncture assuage any fears that I'm in the throes of an existential crisis about the likelihood of future fame based on how many clubs I did or didn't join in first year. Rather, I reflect with a twinge of guilt, not about the late nights or questionable liaisons, but for the student that I feel I should have been.

It was a recent read of *Long Walk to Freedom* for a piece of holiday work that prompted my own self-reflection on thoughts I had harboured all year about the power of the student voice. Mandela writes of his initial concerns

joining members of the ANC for marches and meetings: he had always been a politically active student but felt out of his depth amongst new, more knowledgeable peers.

The climate in which he wrote is worlds away from mine, but the sentiment rings true. I believe in putting my money where my mouth is. And in the past year, when so many of the big campaigns dominating student life have been unfamiliar, it has often felt disingenuous to get involved without a comprehensive understanding of everything at stake.

Friends would send excited messages: "Bring pots and pans", "Anything that makes noise!", "Who's coming to the march?". Excuses were frequent – I was too busy, there was reading to be done, I had woken up too late. And while all were inevitably true, none felt like particularly valid arguments. Didn't everybody have work to do and people to see? A student in one of my compulsory classes was juggling the end of term reading while on hunger strike. Acquaintances went straight from lectures to rallies. Therein lay the Catch-22 of it all. If they could do it, why couldn't I?

▲ Illustration by **Lisa Zhong** for **Varsity**

**“**  
In the face  
of alumni  
who monopolised  
on their  
time here  
so successfully,  
remaining  
rational is  
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**”**

My lack of action wasn't symbolic of scepticism or apathy for the causes themselves. I was certainly sympathetic, at times actively partaking. I managed the whole of Lent without crossing the picket line. But if somebody asked me at a rally why I was there, I wasn't always confident that I would be able to explain the intricacies of the issue in detail. It would be naïve to pretend that this fact didn't play a part in my participation.

So the question of activism sits protractedly amongst 'packing' and 'reading' on my pre-term to-do list. I'm not so foolish as to imagine I'll turn into an eco warrior or a justice fighter overnight. Nor are these titles I currently actively aspire towards. But conscientious, considerate, informed? Those are labels I would be proud to wear. This term, I'm ready to work for them.



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# Remember, admissions offices deal with eighteen years of educational inequality

We should look beyond Oxbridge to understand its access problem

Lucy Fairweather

Another week, another Oxbridge access news story. This time, that Oxford has spent over £100,000 for every extra student admitted from a low-income background since 2009. In a piece for *Prospect* magazine, former *Guardian* editor Alan Rusbridger highlighted the abysmal progress made by Oxford since 2009, when it pledged to increase its proportion of students from the 20 percent of most deprived postcodes from 6.5 to nine percent of the overall cohort. Despite this representing only 23 extra students - less than one per college - Oxford has failed to meet this target in six out of eight years.

By now, that Oxbridge has an access problem is not news to anyone, with comprehensive reporting on the matter having become almost unavoidable - and rightly so. While I welcome the attention the issue receives, I can't help but feel like nothing really has, or will, change as a result of it. A few days of headlines are generated, and then life continues as normal. In a few months' time, the same stories will be run once more.

Part of the reason for this is a mis-

guided tendency to view Oxbridge admissions in isolation. While the shock figures are what really shape the news agenda, perhaps the most revealing part of Rusbridger's essay was a quote from Danny Dorling, an Oxford academic and inequality expert: "I think Oxford admissions reflect the times. When the country is very unequal in other ways, the admissions statistics around disadvantage tend to be very poor."

In 1981, 52% of pupils entering Oxford were state educated, rising steadily from 43% a decade before. Today, more than 30 years later, this had only increased to 58%. Perhaps it is no coincidence that in 1981 Britain's Gini coefficient, a measure of inequality, was just above 0.26, and had risen to 0.34 by the end of the 1980s. For the past 30 years, it has fluctuated around that mark.

Oxbridge must shoulder its fair share of responsibility for admissions, but it is important to remember that it is not operating in a vacuum. There is certainly a debate to be had over the merits and problems with the way admissions are conducted, but it is an undeniable fact that when Oxbridge receives its annual

round of applications from over 30,000 candidates, it is dealing with 18 years of educational inequality.

Who gets into Oxbridge is of course an important story, but we should not only consider the immediate acceptances and rejections. We must remember that these are the product of a the state of education in a society where still only just over half of British pupils obtain a pass in five GCSEs including English and Maths, but some independent schools have over 90% of grades marked at an A\* or A. A system where some pupils are going to school hungry, while top schools charge over £30,000 a year in fees.

The best ways to combat this inequality is a conversation that must be had, but what is certain is that while 26.4% of all A levels awarded nationally are A\* or A grades, while in some schools this rockets to 80%, Oxbridge will to continue to have to navigate the tricky waters of distinguishing polish from potential, and in all likelihood the same news stories will reoccur.

I often wonder why we as a nation seem so fixated on Oxbridge students despite there being only 24,000 under-

“Oxbridge is believed to act more widely as a proxy for social mobility”

graduates at any one time. I've come to think that, among other reasons, it is because Oxbridge is believed to act as a proxy more widely for social mobility. Admissions statistics provide concrete evidence of racial, regional and educational disparities that apply more broadly to society as a whole. We should broaden our focus beyond an Oxbridge

What Oxford has spent for every extra student admitted from a low-income background since 2009

£100,000

fixation which leaves us blind to the societal ills which colour the news stories which saturate the media. Until we think more broadly, and more often, of the inequalities entrenched in the British education system, we will continue to see the same kinds of Oxbridge stories published every year.



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## Opinion

# Not all literature is ‘universal’, and it shouldn’t have to be



Columnist  
**Sophie Zhang**  
argues for the personal and political importance of art which centres the experiences of marginalised groups



◀ Students rallied in support of the Decolonise the Curriculum campaign  
(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

“In glorifying the universal, we neglect the particular”

When I have studied English Literature in the past, the curriculum has centred around texts which claim to explore supposedly ‘universal’ themes and experiences. What such curricula time and time again failed to recognise was that in glorifying the universal, we neglect the particular. Indeed, as the decolonisation movement has identified, this deficiency exists within our own curricula here at Cambridge.

By focusing on traditionally canonical texts, curricula continue, as Howard Chae and Faria Tabassum outlined in their recent *Varsity* article, “to centre whiteness and continually place non-white voices on the margins”. For if there exists something that is ‘universal’, its

opposite also necessarily exists – that which is marginal. Within literature, the experiences of the marginalised – of people of colour, diaspora, LGBT+ people, and people with disabilities – are overlooked in the search for ‘universal’ experiences.

The problem here is twofold: curricula that neglect marginalised voices both deny marginalised individuals the opportunity to understand their own experiences and have them be represented and expressed, but also fail to educate individuals in more privileged positions about struggles these individuals may face.

Take, for instance, diasporic literature. Discourse about immigrants often involves a dehumanising portrayal of their lives. The debate revolves around the economic value of immigrants and

their ability to assimilate as ‘good immigrants’, by completely abandoning their previous identities, cultures, and loyalties to become unquestioningly devoted to their new state and its culture. This conversation does not leave room to talk about the human struggles faced by many: the loss of a community, having to adapt to a completely new culture (potentially without receiving much support), and the need to negotiate changes in their identity.

The beauty of diasporic literature is that it attempts to bridge this gap between crude arguments about the economic value of immigrants and the full complexity of the diverse lived experiences of immigrants and their descendants. It is not literature alone which

achieves this feat.

I remember when my German teacher played the German-Turkish film *Almanya: Welcome to Germany* in class: one of the few times at school I had been exposed to stories about immigrants. Although it was a comedy, I was in tears by the end of the film – I couldn’t say whether this was because of its bittersweet ending, or because the film reflected parts of my own experience as a child of immigrants. It spoke to me in the finest of details, in whispers from one diasporic group to another: I so clearly remember a scene in which the children tell their parents that they’re getting Christmas wrong. Though a minute detail in the film, this echoed my own experience of having to teach both myself and my parents about British culture while growing up, instead of being able to rely on my parents to teach me about it.

Sometimes I have felt alone in that world, that I was the only person who did what I had to do. But the film taught me that I wasn’t alone. Having to navigate different cultures and the mishaps which might occur in doing so might not only be common for children of immigrants, but are also sometimes comedic.

Literature which focus on marginalised voices is no less important than texts which focus on so-called ‘universal’ experiences. It is imperative that we support initiatives such as the decolonisation movement which seek to diversify the texts platformed in academia. Understanding other people’s experiences undeniably enriches the way in which we think about the world. Diversifying the curriculum would benefit everyone, both within and without marginalised groups.

## You shouldn’t care about the college hierarchy



College rankings are enough to make fresher feel uneasy: let’s take things a little less seriously

**Steven Edwards**

As with many state school students, my choice of college was effectively random. I had visited Cambridge a couple of times and, fondly remembering Selwyn’s ivy-covered Old Court, I ticked the relevant box on my UCAS form without much more thought. I was one of the lucky ones, having been fortunate enough to be able to visit Cambridge before applying; every day I thank God for having had a chance to grasp what it means to be cast away to Girton, or to know that going to Sidney Sussex means using a Nectar card more than a CAMcard.

Many state-educated students aren’t always this lucky, which means that when it comes to applying, many are more likely to simply apply to a college whose name they recognise. When freshers’ week rolls around, whole swathes of students are too in-the-dark to know that mention of “Clare” and her “Hall” is not a coded reference to a BNOC, or, as in my case, that “Tit Hall” isn’t in fact part of an elaborate Georgia O’Keeffe exhibition.

More bizarre to new students, perhaps, is the hierarchical ranking of colleges. You freshers might be asking, “we all got in to the same university, so why are we still competing against one another?” There’s the Tompkins Table, published each year, which directly ranks colleges based on undergraduate examination results. Less formally, but arguably more prevalent, is the question of which college is ‘best’, a frequent topic of debate among students. This can have dangerous repercussions: While I was having this discussion with someone from Homerton, they came to realise in the middle of their well-rehearsed argument about unique community feelings and dreadfully-misunderstood avant-garde sculptures that they had missed their flight back to college.

Of course, as per the cliché, now that I’m studying at Selwyn I couldn’t imagine being anywhere else. However, when I first arrived at Cambridge, I too was disappointed (but not surprised) to find that there exists an established intercollegiate hierarchy. I was struck by how much the academic ranking of col-

leges seeped into the consciousness and every-day lives of the student body. Students who possess the almost God-like status inherent in being a “Trinmo” – a Mathematician at Trinity – are so revered by all Mathmos that people will often clutch at any proverbial straw to forge a claim to Trinity. “My Uncle’s friend was a Trinmo, but I thought I’d pick Churchill because I liked the atmosphere,” someone who got pooled from Trinity might say.

Trinmos are as intelligent as they are mysterious. Midway through a lecture in early Michaelmas, every single Trinmo stood up and left to complete the Great Court Run, a ridiculous tradition in which students attempt to run around Trinity’s Great Court in the time it takes for the college clock to strike twelve. The lecturer was as perplexed as the rest of us mere mortals, and the whole affair did make me question whether Trinmos go to lectures because they want to learn (or because they need to *in order to* learn), or because they go for what they count as a social event.

This archaic pecking order of colleges might make you insecure about your ac-

“This archaic pecking order of colleges might make you insecure about your academic ability”

ademic ability, maybe even for the first time – and, truth be told, it is bound to alienate any cohort of freshers. As a first-year, rumour had it that someone in my year had a number named after them. Meanwhile, there I was, proud of getting into what I was made to feel was the skimmed milk of colleges – although certainly white, it wasn’t quite the richest, thickest or, well, the best at maths. You might be left to wonder whether you, looking nothing like a member of the cast of *The Big Bang Theory*, got in by mistake.

My advice to you, dear fresher, is that ultimately, it doesn’t matter what other people say about your college. Beyond the walls of this university, who on earth is going to care about what essentially boils down to where you lived during university? It is important to remember that not only are you in charge of the direction of your learning, but that you are not what other people say about your college: if you love your subject you *will* thrive. And if you don’t, then don’t worry – just change to HSPS.



# vulture

► **FASHION** THE AUTUMNAL BEAUTY  
EDIT • 24  
► **LIFESTYLE** A CAMBRIDGE  
STAYCATION - 25  
► **ARTS** TORONTO FILM DIARY • 26-7  
► **MUSIC** FINDING HOME IN  
LYRICS • 28



▼ Take inspiration from the runway and from the natural landscape of a Cambridge in autumn (SARIKA DATTA)

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# Escapes and escapades without leaving the bubble



## Discover the beauty of the city from a new angle with Chloe Bayliss

Cambridge is a beautiful city. If you're a fresher, you've undoubtedly already wandered around the bustling market, or stood amongst the swarm of tourists in the shadow of King's College Chapel.

The more adventurous of you may have already gone for a cheeky punt down the river to explore the college backs. However, as the weeks roll by and the frost sets in, the leaves will turn brown and start to carpet the paths, and you may find yourself wishing there was a way to escape the chaos of the Cambridge bubble.

So, to encourage some autumn adventures, here are my favourite escapes in Cambridge that feel miles away from the world of supervisions, emails, and lectures.

### St Edward's Passage

Nestled right in the heart of Cambridge city centre is one of the most peaceful spots I've come across. Though not technically a spot of natural significance, St Edward's passage is home to St Edward's churchyard, a small grade II-listed building that oozes charm. There's also the independent G. David's bookshop, adding to the quintessential historic Cambridge atmosphere. Shrubs and trees cling to the fences surrounding the courtyard, and at golden hour the street's magic is tangible. Despite its



location off King's Parade, very few people venture there, so it's a perfect location for a few minutes' respite without having to walk for miles.

### Grantchester Meadows

If you're not up for a walk to Grantchester village itself, the meadows are definitely a scenic alternative. You too can walk in the footsteps of Pink Floyd, ambling along the riverside, completely at one with nature. At various points in the year, you can encounter cows freely roaming as well as herons, squirrels and conkers... a world completely alien to the madness of hectic cycle lanes and reckless bus drivers. There is, of course, the obligatory stop for a glass of red at The Mill or The Granta, two incredibly cosy pubs close by.

### Castle Hill

Cambridge Castle gave Castle Hill its name in the Anglo-Saxon period; all that remains now is a grassy mound. You can find it just off Castle Street near Magdalene and Murray Edwards. After a relatively short climb up the hill, you can enjoy panoramic views of Cambridge's spires, with the myriad church and chapel roofs poking up through the trees. It's the ideal spot to unwind when you're overwhelmed, as it allows you to put things into perspective and reminds you that studying at Cambridge gives you the opportunity to live in a remarkable city.

### The College Backs

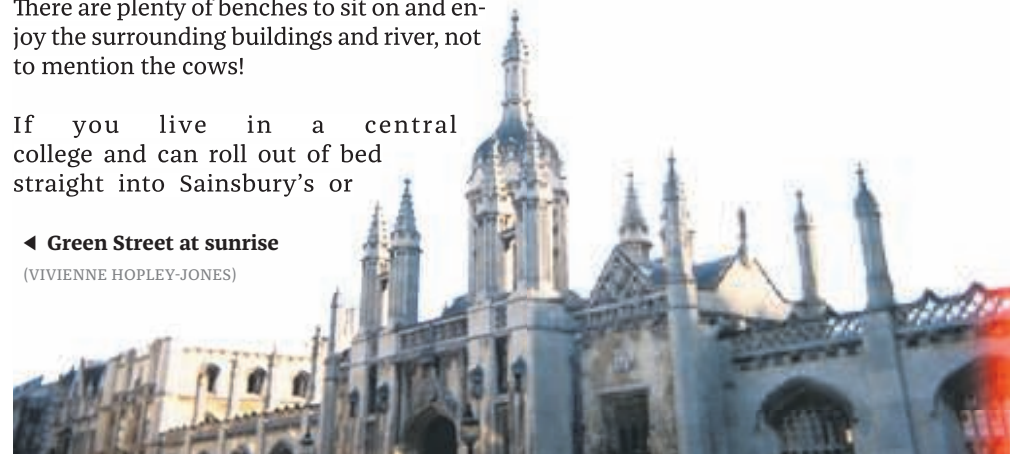
If all else fails and you just need to get out of college, it's possible to visit other colleges using your CamCard. Walking down Queen's Road, you can see the backs of Trinity and John's, which – though at times quite busy – are often home to copious numbers of swans, geese, and ducks that can be quite comical. There are plenty of benches to sit on and enjoy the surrounding buildings and river, not to mention the cows!

If you live in a central college and can roll out of bed straight into Sainsbury's or

Sidgwick, it can seem hard to escape the city centre. Whether it's a ten minute study break or an afternoon stroll, there are so many places to explore and recharge your batteries. Autumn is objectively the best season of all, so make sure to pile on the scarves, fill your thermos with herbal tea, feel the cool air on your cheeks and crunch some leaves! You deserve it!

### Green Street at sunrise

(VIVIANNE HOPLEY-JONES)



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# Capturing culture

Flo Arden spent her summer in Toronto. She writes: “the focus of my work is less on the well-known locations in Toronto and more on the everyday views of the people who regularly navigate the city.”

A photo story on [varsity.co.uk/arts](https://varsity.co.uk/arts)





The still waters of Lake Ontario



Trinity Street on the distillery district



# A sonic youth: music as home

Anna Mochar  
Music Columnist

Music has a strange way of touching us. Often it is a particular lyric that resonates with our experiences. Other times, a soundscape that we step into, finding something in the melodies and harmonies that strikes a note we can't express; something we had been searching for without knowing what we hoped to find. The language of a song's lyrics, however,

Tennis Court Lane at night, singing the lyrics, "Du ziehst nervös an deiner Zigarette..." from the song 'Du trägst keine Liebe in dir' by Echt, or crying together while watching the music video to 'Deine Nähe tut mir weh' by Revolverheld opened up a whole new way of experiencing music.

Never before had these songs touched me so deeply or been so important to me. I was gradually understanding that this had to do not only with the songs themselves, but also that they were becoming a way to reconcile my 'home identity' with the life I was living in Cambridge. The distance between home and university seemed to grow smaller as friendships

To me, German music was not necessarily a way of dealing with homesickness. Rather, it helped me to understand how formative years spent abroad didn't have to create a breach with my 'home identity'. Music was a stabilising force. In moments

Music was a stabilising force. In moments



is rarely thought of as the emotionalising element of a track: language is there as a tool to convey the emotions carried by the lyrics or heighten the mood set by the music.

Yet it was in the stress and emotional upheaval of my first term at Cambridge that I came to appreciate songs in my mother tongue in a new way—one tied almost purely to the fact that the lyrics were written in German. Cheesy German pop songs stood on a level with my favourite artists as they all became a way of remaining in touch with my home country, Austria.

The transformation of the way I experienced music coincided with the busy socialising of Freshers' Week and the rest of Michaelmas. It was during this time that German and Austrian music started to become a kind of glue to budding friendships. Walking down

stronger; friendships that were, to a certain degree, formed by listening to German music.

Sharing  
a mother  
tongue  
with friends  
meant  
more than  
just being  
able to un-  
derstand

derstand how the other might be feeling as a fellow international student. It also meant being able to bond over shared experiences tied to media in our mother tongue: films, TV shows, and, above all, music. Songs were not just enjoyed or consumed, they became a way to acknowledge our backgrounds without having to discuss them openly. Music helped create a silent feeling of understanding and solidarity between us.

when I felt distant from myself, a text from my best friend with a song recommendation would help me find my way back, back to a base from which I could see how my sense

connected to a changed understanding of the concept of 'home'. At the same time, this new significance of music helped deepen my friendships.

There are many elements to form-

ing friendships. Undeniably, shared interests rank among the most important. A shared taste in music is particularly fertile ground for moving from the 'acquaintance' status of Freshers' Week towards forming the lifelong friendships we all hope to find at university. When considering the deep lyrics and artistic abilities often to be found in music, this is hardly surprising. Talking about songs is a gateway into discussing profound themes; it makes it easy to spot kindred spirits.

While I was aware of this, I had not expected that lyrics could prove to be an important element of my enjoyment of music. Distance seems to make the heart grow fonder (of German music), and I am immensely grateful for the way in which listening to songs of all genres, all united by the language of their lyrics, has allowed me to settle into life abroad. And, of course, for the power of sad German songs in helping me find incredible friends.

# vulture tunes: The best of German pop

Keeping with this week's theme, we have your next exploratory musical journey all set. We begin with classic examples of the power of cheesy German pop songs, then move into industrial metal, electronica, folk and finally 'homage'...

Du trägst keine Liebe in dir  
**Echt**

Deine Nähe tut mir weh  
**Revolverheld**

Feuer Frei!  
**Rammstein**

Der Kommissar  
**Falco**

Denken Sie Groß  
**Deichkind**

Rock You Like A Hurricane  
**Scorpions**

Ma Baker  
**Boney M**

These Days  
**Nico**

The Man-Machine  
*Kraftwerk*

Tom Waits  
**Kommienezuspadt**





# Filling in the silhouettes with *Vita & Virginia*

Iris Pearson

Spend a summer reading the diaries of Virginia Woolf, and it's impossible not to want to meet her and the people who moved around her. The words of her diaries and her letters seethe with the intellectual, with perfectly-placed adjectives, as she navigates the light and dark of literary society in the 1920s. It is these letters, specifically the ones written between Virginia and her lover Vita Sackville-West, which Eileen Atkins has adapted into the play 'Vita & Virginia', and which Sarah Taylor and her wonderful women are bringing to the Corpus stage next week.

The words of this play tremble between the intellectual and the erotic, interspersing discussions about the latest publications and criticism with expressions of tenderness, revealing a relationship fraught with paradox, tension and intensity. Emmeline Downie (Virginia) and Corinne Clark (Vita) have never acted together before, hadn't even met before the call-backs for this play, but there is something so intuitive in their connection. These two have studied their characters in exquisite detail, reading biographies over the summer and realising how much they have in common with their characters. They seem to feel a real affinity with Virginia and Vita.

The passion they feel is clear. Emmeline and Corinne tell me, is the authenticity of it,



▲ When people think of Woolf, they think of suicide, filling her pockets with stones and stepping into the river, but her letters are full of life and laced with excitement (BELLA DALLISTON)

the fact that the words they are speaking are words actually written by Virginia and Vita. Even if it means that the loosely-structured sentences are very difficult to piece together and speak on stage, there is something wonderful in following the trains of thought of these two influential figures. What struck me as I watched the two actors rehearse was the

surprising lightness of the letters. When people think of Woolf, they think of her suicide, filling her pockets with stones and stepping into the river, but her letters are full of life, laced with excitement and the pleasure of living. The scenes are bursting with irony; Vita and Virginia smirk at each other as they recount stories about their daily lives and

the people who move around them. Part of the beauty of this play lies in the necessity of interpretation: these are the exact words that these women wrote, but they are still only words. These literary silhouettes become filled-in people through the course of this play: they become more than genius words on a page.

The presence of the letter in this play is an enduring one. Taylor discussed the difficulties which the letter form poses in terms of movement: the play straddles inner monologue and dialogue, some of the lines directed to the audience, some to the audience, as each of these women hide behind their writing, in their own spaces, protected from the reality of what they are saying and the emotions they are expressing. Keeping it lively has been a challenge, but I have hope that this team will succeed. And at times stillness is perfect. Some questions are never answered, lost in the letters as they lurch from one topic to another, and the audience hang captivated in this unfulfilled answering.

This show should not be missed. The women involved – directors Taylor and Williams, actors Clark and Downie – feel a passion for the play and characters which the audience cannot help but feel. The relationship is one which flickers between tension and irony, described throughout in the words of these writers, whose character analyses and overflowing sentences will leave you breathless.

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# I watch, therefore I am: the rise of philosophy in TV

Michele Sanguanini

A wise man once wrote that you have to have a very high IQ to understand Rick and Morty. For what matters (and nothing really does), the same holds for 'The Good Place', whose third season is being released weekly on Netflix. With its direct references to Aristotle, Kantian ethics, and utilitarianism (yes, trolley dilemmas included), 'The Good Place' is just the most outspoken among a slew of recent TV series with a focus on philosophy.

'BoJack Horseman', another Netflix gem, is a dark tale of self-discovery and self-destruction. Its characters struggle to find happiness, a sense of belonging, or just some meaning in life. A further case dealing with existential questions is 'Rick and Morty', probably the most polished piece of epic fiction since Neil Gaiman's graphic novel series 'The Sandman'. Two absurdist anti-heroes travel across parallel universes fighting against implausible creatures, fly humanoid bureaucrats, and POTUS, because why not? As lead Rick Sanchez says, "Nobody

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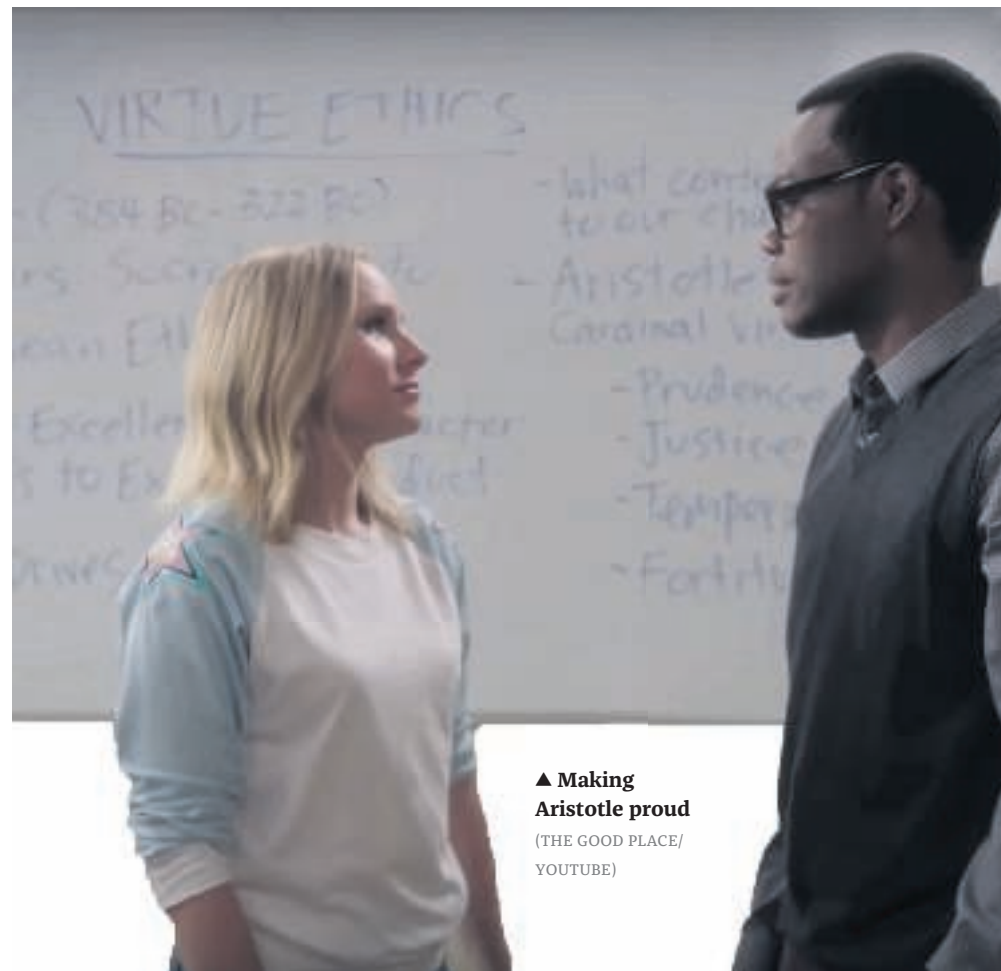
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▲ Making Aristotle proud  
(THE GOOD PLACE/  
YOUTUBE)

exists on purpose; nobody belongs anywhere; everybody's gonna die. Come watch TV?"

Why is the rise of explicit philosophical messages in TV series happening? Or is it telling us something more profound about our society and the 'millennial' generation?

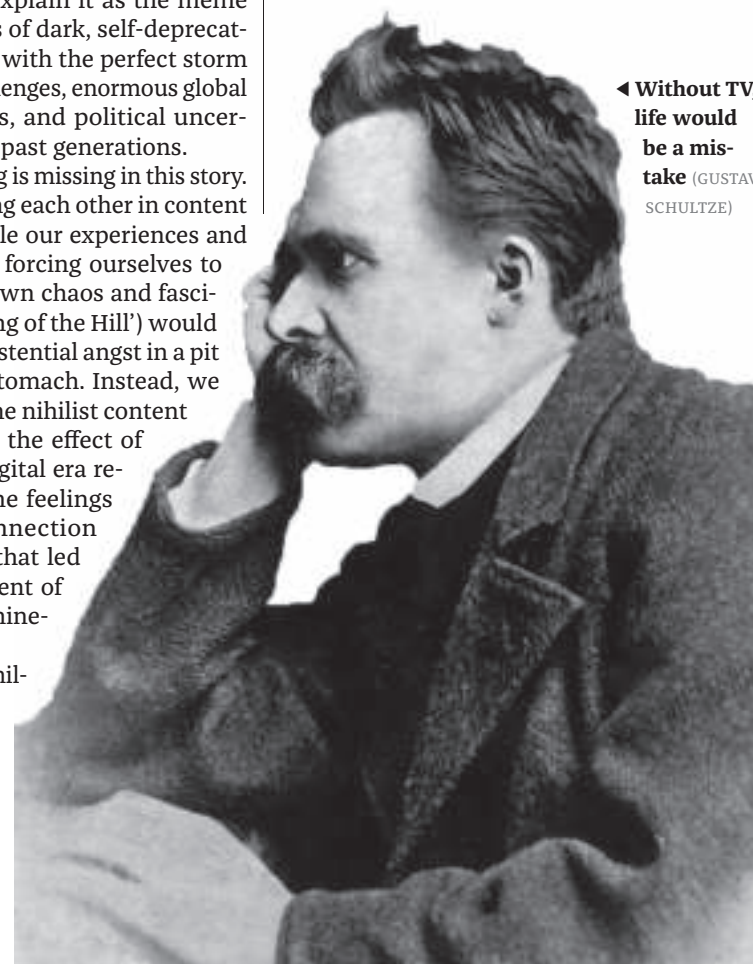
I like to think that we are living at the dawn of an era of disruptive creativity and deep rediscovery of tradition, much like the end of the belle époque. Rick Sanchez is the digital Man Without Qualities, BoJack our Leopold Bloom. Easy jokes are intertwined with sharp and nihilistic statements on life and existence. In 'The Good Place', the almighty Judge (Maya Rudolph) who determines whether someone should be doomed to 'The Bad Place' for all of eternity is found binge watching NCIS, and getting excited over her burrito.

It is attractive to explain it as the meme generation's fondness of dark, self-deprecating nihilistic humour with the perfect storm of environmental challenges, enormous global and local inequalities, and political uncertainty inherited from past generations.

However, something is missing in this story. In a sense, with tagging each other in content or sharing how volatile our experiences and emotions are, we are forcing ourselves to face existence in its own chaos and fascination. Hank Hill ('King of the Hill') would stick all feelings of existential angst in a pit deep down into his stomach. Instead, we expose ourselves to the nihilist content of dank memes or to the effect of wholesome pics. A digital era repurposing of the same feelings of sublime and connection with human misery that led to the first development of existentialism in the nineteenth century.

These two sides of millennials' behaviour of social media are well represented in the contrast between the dark and cynic view of existence in 'BoJack Horseman' and 'Rick and Morty' and the somewhat optimistic attitude of 'The

Good Place'. Whereas the former two shows are distinctly nihilistic, 'The Good Place' maintains an optimistic tone, despite being faced with the threat of being sentenced to eternal suffering. Life might be devoid of purpose, existence might be pain, however, what the main characters from 'The Good Place' show us is that meaning *can* be found. It simply comes from caring from each other. Perhaps these shows, while portraying life as meaningless and absurd, show us how to find a meaning in life after all.



◀ Without TV, life would be a mistake (GUSTAV SCHULTZE)



# THE MAYS

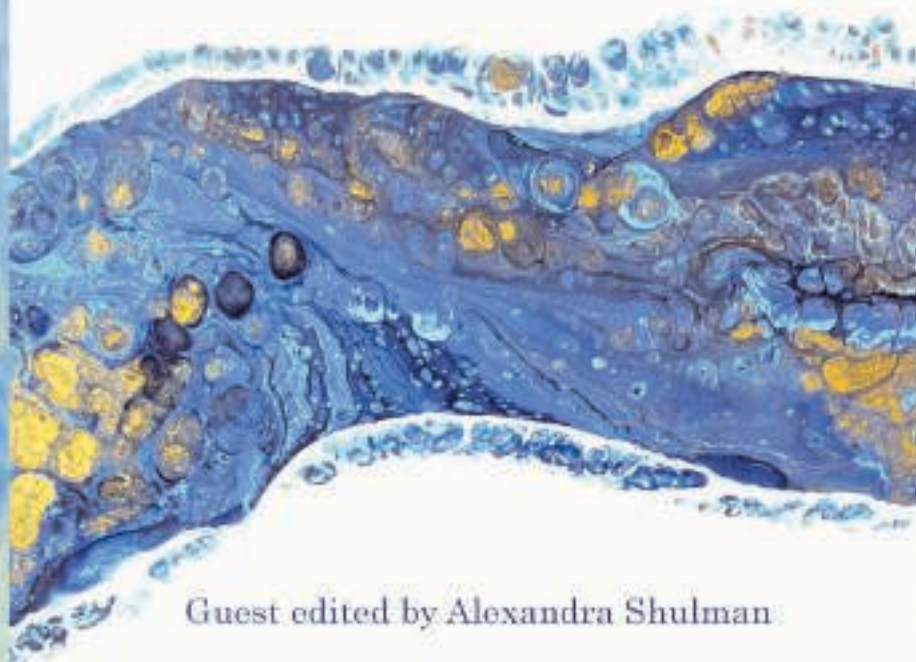
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# Science

## When should you have your caffeine fix?

Sophia Borgeest  
Science Editor

You (probably) wouldn't want to sit through a 9am without having one. This article certainly couldn't have been written without its help. We're talking, of course, about caffeine: the most consumed drug in the world. 90% of adults in the world drink it daily, whether through tea, coffee, or other beverages. Despite its popularity, most of us know little about what exactly caffeine is, or what it does to our bodies. How much coffee is too much, and are there any health risks associated with it?

Raw caffeine tastes bitter and is classed as a crystallised purine – a methylxanthine alkaloid, to be precise. Caffeine is a psychostimulant, which means that it stimulates the central nervous system. As you're sipping your flat white, caffeine is binding to the adenosine receptors in your brain. That means that it blocks these receptors, not letting adenosine in. Adenosine normally signals tiredness to the brain, but if it can't bind, an arousal signal is sent out instead – giving you a feeling of alertness. Feeling alert, however, does not necessarily mean that you are actually sharper. Unfortunately, the relevant studies have been largely inconclusive. Some studies suggest that medium doses of caffeine can improve memory retention and reaction time; others show the opposite.

A lot more research has gone into whether or not caffeine is harmful to your health. Drinking three or four cups of coffee a day is actually associated with health benefits across a range of conditions. According to a 2018 study

investigating one of the largest datasets of almost 500,000 NHS patients, coffee drinkers were less likely to die from cancer and cardiovascular disease. Prior to this study, there had been concerns that while coffee might be good for many people, it might be problematic for others. Specifically, some studies had suggested that people who have a genetic variation for the enzyme in charge of caffeine metabolism might be in trouble. If your body breaks down caffeine more slowly, they hypothesised, you might be at higher risk for heart problems in the long run. However, this new paper found that the effect of the speed of caffeine metabolism is tiny, concluding that coffee drinkers, irrespective of their genetic makeup, don't have to worry. Does this mean that everyone should drink more coffee? No, said the lead author, Erika Loftfield, a research fellow at the National Cancer Institute in the United States. "At this point, the study provides reassurance to coffee drinkers, not guidance. The results don't indicate that people should begin drinking coffee for its health benefits."

While 'normal' caffeine consumption of a few cups of coffee a day does not seem to be linked to health problems, high doses are. Drink too much, and you can experience dizziness, diarrhoea, insomnia, headaches and irritability. At toxic levels – about 30 cups a day – symptoms become very severe, including hallucination, irregular heartbeat and, in rare cases, death. According to a 2014 editorial in the journal *Addiction*, energy

drinks are especially problematic, since people are often unaware that they can include four times as much caffeine as a typical cup of coffee. Still more worrying is powdered caffeine, of which a single teaspoon, according to the American Food and Drug Administration, is equivalent to a lethal dose. In order to minimise this risk, the FDA has recently banned supplements containing concentrated caffeine in powder or liquid form.

It turns out that *how much* caffeine you have is not the only factor – drinking caffeine at different times also alters its effects. Ever had your coffee and felt like it just didn't work? The reason for this phenomenon comes from chronopharmacology: the interaction of biological rhythms and drug actions. The suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN), a part of the brain, controls levels of cortisol – the body's stress hormone. makes you, when present, feel alert. The SCN controls its release following what chronopharmacologists call a *zeitgeber* (German for 'time giver'): the circadian rhythm. This rhythm differs for different people. For someone who rises at 6:30am, cortisol levels peak between 8am and 9am, again around noon, and from 5:30pm to 6:30pm. If you have coffee during these peaks, you will, in time, develop caffeine tolerance, making it hard to get out of bed using only your cortisol. Rather than having your coffee right after you wake up, you should wait until your cortisol levels are beginning to drop – so until around 9:30am, and again after lunch.

“Have you ever had your coffee and felt like it just didn't work?”

◀Illustration by  
Ben Brown



Varsity  
explains

Joseph Krol  
Science Editor

Were you recently logged out of Facebook? You're one of the 90 million users affected by precautions taken after a major Facebook security breach. The attack, revealed by Facebook to have affected up to 50 million accounts, could soon prove catastrophic. Over the last few days, more information has come out suggesting that the hackers used the accounts they harvested to log into various other services. It continues a year of bad news for the site, which has already

been criticised for allowing Cambridge Analytica to store masses of user data. So how did the hack work? It could seem almost ridiculous, but the hack was based on the benign-seeming birthday videos that are automatically generated on one's profile each year. We've all seen them – perhaps been slightly nostalgic – but it's hard to believe that they spelled doom for countless people's data. Essentially, it relied on a programming error in the 'View As' function, which allows Facebook users to see their own profile as other users do, so as to check privacy settings and so on.

However, when hackers did that, they discovered that when viewing one of the automated birthday videos, it generated an 'access token' not for the viewer, but for the user they were looking up, allowing direct access to the user's Facebook profile without ever needing to know the password. (Access tokens include the security details corresponding to a Facebook session, including the user's details and abilities on the website.) As such, any user who has been 'viewed as' in the past year has been logged out.

For the sake of something this simple a huge chunk of the website's userbase

has potentially had their private content divulged. Facebook insisted that there's little that users can do; however, some remain sceptical that the firm is hiding the full details. While there have yet to be any data dumps, and the attackers' details are unknown, there's certainly a chance that it could all implode. The Ashley Madison leak of a couple of years past, which leaked details of millions of affairs, may soon seem like small fry.

It's worth noting that internally-encrypted secret messages can't be leaked in this way. The little-known feature might soon become more popular...

“The Ashley Madison leak may soon seem like small fry”



# Women in seminars two and a half times less likely to ask questions than men



**Zak Lakota-Baldwin**  
Science Writer

A new study has found that women are two and a half times less likely to ask a question in academic seminars than men. The research, combining survey data with observations from almost 250 seminars at 35 institutions across 10 different countries, reveals some of the underlying factors behind this disparity, and offers potential solutions for addressing them.

The study joins a growing body of work seeking to tackle the lack of women in academia, referred to as the 'leaky pipeline' problem of representation. Women account for 59% of undergraduate degrees, but only 47% of PhD graduates and just 21% of senior faculty positions in Europe.

Dr Alecia Carter, the lead author of the study and at the time a Junior Research Fellow at Churchill College, told *Varsity* how the idea for undertaking this research came to her from a chance observation she and one of her co-authors, Dr Dieter Lukas, made at a seminar. "We attended a seminar about sex differences in cognitive tasks and I commented that it was 'interesting' that all of the questions were from male audience members. Dieter pointed out that most of the audience were women, which got us wondering whether this phenomenon was more general."

The study, published last week in PLOS One, confirms that the issue is indeed much more widespread, with the number of questions asked by women both absolutely and proportionally lower in the observed seminars. Survey results from over 600 academics revealed an existing awareness of the imbalance, especially among female respondents.

While many men and women reported sometimes thinking of a question and not asking it, their reasoning tended to differ. Women placed more significance on factors such as not feeling clever enough, finding the speaker intimidating, or being unable to work up the nerve. Recommendations in the paper for improving the visibility of women in seminars focus on immediate changes that can be implemented during question and answer sessions. These include allocating more time for questions, or keeping the questions short so more can be asked (as more questions are asked, a greater proportion are asked by women), and prioritising a female-first question, to counter 'gender stereotype activation' and increase the likelihood that later questions will be asked by women.

Carter stresses that these are just simple, initial steps that can be taken, rather than an easy fix, and there is much still to be done in order to permanently resolve the imbalance. "This larger problem of attrition can only be addressed by lasting changes in the academic culture that break gender stereotypes and provide an environment that everyone can feel a part of," she said.

Although the lack of role models for women in academia is problematic, the research shows that women are not less likely to ask questions when conditions are favourable. Carter hopes that the community will react well to change: "I've been humbled by the positive responses we've received about the work and the corroborating data and anecdotes from people's personal experiences that have come up... overall, it feels like much of the scientific community is on board and happy to have some data-driven recommendations for how to address the imbalance."

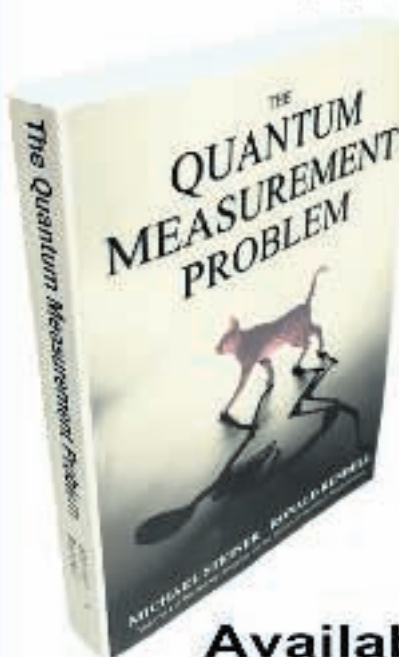
▲ Women placed more significance on factors such as not feeling clever enough

(NOELLA CHYE)

“This larger problem of attrition can only be addressed by lasting changes in the academic culture”

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# How maths could solve organ donation shortages

We are in the midst of a critical shortage of organ donations. Demand for more organs already outstrips supply by ten to one according to the Global Observatory on Donation and Transplantation. This is not only delaying vital treatment and recovery, but actually costing lives. NHS figures show 607 people died last year before receiving the transplant they needed.

Many solutions have been hoped for or devised, from change regulations to "opt-out-schemes", but it is clear we need something more fundamental if we are to resolve this crisis.

One of the most promising developments is tissue engineering, an interdisciplinary field, involving biologists, chemists, materials engineers and mathematicians. It's concerned with the creation of useful, functional tissue for everything from lab-grown meat to organs for patient transplantation. The potential implications are huge, tissue engineering could enable thousands of patients to have new organs custom-made in a lab in weeks, saving many lives and dramatically reducing demand for donors.

However, there are a number of obstacles to overcome before we can realise the vision of mass-producing human organs on-demand. In particular, while small spheres of tissue, approximately 200µm across, can be grown with relative ease, anything larger goes into issues of nutrient delivery. How can cells deep within the centre receive all the nutrients they need for life and growth when it is being taken up by the layers closer to the outside, closer to the surface? Without solving this problem, new organs could develop unevenly or ending with dead tissue on the inside.

In the body, cells receive nourishment by the intricate network of arteries, capillaries and veins that deliver nutrients to within any reach of all cells. We need something similar for lab-grown tissues, not just to guide the shape of the tissue or organ, but to provide the infrastructure "plumbing" through which nutrients can be pumped to supply all the cells.

There are many possible approaches to addressing this. Scientists have taken existing organs, and even livers, then stripped them of cells, leaving only the proteins which make up the structure, including that of the blood vessels or veins of the liver. New cells are then introduced, growing across the proteins, forming a new tissue.

It may seem an ideal solution to take a potentially transplantable organ and treat it in this way, but there is logic behind it. By growing tissues and organs from cells sourced from the intended recipient, the need for anti-rejection drugs is removed, providing a more successful outcome.

An alternative method involves creating a structure, or "scaffold", from scratch. Scaffolds can be 3D-printed in different forms, from a spherical vessel to a Swiss cheese design, providing surfaces on which cells can



Image courtesy of iStock

grow and a network of connected spaces, through which cells can migrate and nutrients can be pumped, reaching all parts of the growing tissue. Yet providing new vessels healthy tissues that are viable for implant is a difficult process, involving a lengthy course of trial and error and expensive experiments. What if we could accurately predict what scaffold will create the perfect organ for any particular patient or design stage in the virtual world?

Enter the mathematical biologist. This branch of applied mathematics seeks to describe and understand biological and biomedical systems, providing new insight into the processes underlying biological mysteries and to predict future behaviour. How will this emerge? How quickly will this disease spread?

In terms of tissue engineering, new advances in cutting-edge mathematics and computer modelling allow us to investigate the predicted impact of different scaffold designs on nutrient transport and cell population growth, and could finally help bring us closer to healthy lab-grown human organs that can be successfully implanted. Here at the University of Huddersfield, as part of our PhD studies, we have been working on new mathematical models to help optimise the growth of new tissue in the lab, via computer-generated estimates. Our research recently won the Smith Institute's TakeAIM Competition, one of the UK's top mathematics awards, which recognises maths that has the potential to benefit society.

We have used a method, originally applied to the study of soil and other porous media and known as multiple time-scale analysis, that explains the differences between spatial or temporal scales in the

description of a problem to allow simplified analysis. For example, it has been used to capture the impact of the shape and arrangement of soil particles on the flow of water in the ground. Here, by using information on the scaffold microstructure, and the colonising cell population, the model predicts the resulting tissue growth, and profiles of nutrients. Different scaffold geometries can be tested in this way, enabling us to predict the most likely to produce a viable tissue for implant.

Ultimately, this means we could use computer-generated custom-designed structures which can then be 3D-printed and used to grow healthy viable organs. These techniques are not limited to the growth of human tissue and organs for transplant, the potential is far more wide-reaching. The resulting tissues could be used for everything from providing an alternative to animal testing for new drugs, or to growing lab-grown beef, with low environmental impact.

Tissue engineering may hold the key to meeting the huge global worldwide demand for organs, doing away with long waiting lists and saving thousands of lives. Mathematical modelling is seeking to play its part, aiming to bring about these solutions more quickly.

The Smith Institute's TakeAIM Competition opened on 9th October 2018. For more information visit [smithinst.co.uk/takeaim](http://smithinst.co.uk/takeaim) or contact [info@smithinst.co.uk](mailto:info@smithinst.co.uk)

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# New to a Blue: the Cambridge trampolining club

President Leo Jurascheck spoke to **Marcus McCabe** about how trampolining balances fun freestyle spirit with gentle guidelines

**T**rampolining is trampolining right? “Go up, do cool thing, come down, repeat with different cool thing!”, as Cambridge University Trampoline Club President Leo Jurascheck succinctly summarised.

Whether you're on the trampoline in your back garden trying to master the ambitious and elusive star jump, or at the Olympics pulling off your third triple-twisting double Back Somersault of a routine, the same principles apply: "trampolining is first and foremost for fun, and it's just amazing for that. Learning new moves, perfecting old tricks, pulling off rogue skill combinations... there's a satisfaction and a rush you get from bouncing that's hard to put into words."

Inspired by the dizzying fashion in which particularly bold trapeze artists would use their safety nets to bounce off and perform death-defying feats of acrobatics, the first trampolines were invented in the garage of American inventor and gymnast, George Nissen. Nissen designed them in 1934, but before long they could be found all over the USA, from school's PE departments to astronaut training programmes. Not long after that, they were a staple of backyards and blissfully-spent afternoons worldwide.

However, even more significant were the sporting implications. Such was the (elastic) potential of his invention, so spectacularly did it enhance the tricks that gymnasts were able to perform, that it was inevitable that trampolining would soon be a sport in its own right. As Leo Jurascheck explained, it offered the ideal springboard for acrobatic innovation.

"After the first modern trampolines were designed, the sport evolved cha-

otically for many years under what international coach Jack Kelly has called a 'challenge culture where participants strove to outdo each other without the constraints of formal competition rules'. It was a freestyle sport."

Fun and a healthy dose of fearlessness propelled daredevils higher and higher (trampolinists have been known to achieve heights of over 33 feet, or the length of a school bus!), turning more and more difficult twists and somersaults as they went.

For the sport to be taken seriously, though, standardisation and some regulation was necessary. Now, in a formal competition setting, members of the Cambridge University Trampoline Club can expect to “perform ten move routines, either solo or with a synchronised partner, doing shape jumps, body landings, somersaults and more,” *Varsity* learned.

Evidently, this gradual implementation of gentle guidelines has worked – trampolining was made an Olympic sport at the Sydney games in 2000 and it has been a favourite watch for Olympic audiences ever since. But, as Jurascheck was keen to remind us that although “in recent decades, the competitive aspect of the sport has become formalised”, at “the core of the trampolining experience will always be that uninhibited freestyle spirit.”

Fortunately, readers seeking that freestyle spirit for themselves are in the right place. Jurascheck reports that the Trampoline Club boasts "probably the best equipment and coaching team of any university trampolining club in the UK (or, for that matter, Europe) – eight trampolines, of which five are Olympic standard."

Running three training sessions and one conditioning session a week for around 30 years, this environment has nurtured countless national-standard trampolinists: “we’ve had quite a few people absolutely smash the regional and national student circuits, with a lot of medals, and one of our ex-coaches has just qualified to be an Olympic trampolining judge.”

Vitally, these excellent sporting standards translate into what can only be de-



▲ **Two Cambridge University trampolinists captured in mid-air** (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY TRAMPOLINE SOCIETY)

scribed as the highest sporting accolade Cantabs can hope to achieve: Blues status. CUTC “tend to award two or three Half Blues and one Full Blue per year, taking into account performance at Varsity, regional competitions and BUCS.” But if you are hoping for a more casual bounce, you’ll still be landing on your feet.

Jurascheck emphasized: “There’s something about the atmosphere at the club that clicked with us straight away – it’s a really friendly vibe. We do a lot of stuff on the social side, with regular post-session pub and lots of official and unofficial events, including LGBT nights.”

So, if you are interested in reaching

new heights in your sporting life and making plenty of friends in the process, "come along and try it out at the University Sports Centre!" Jurascheck asks those interested to check their "website for a live calendar with session times." Newcomers are welcome, "and you can just show up on the night."

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**Cambridge boasts some of the best trampolining equipment of any European university**  
(CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY TRAMPOLINE SOCIETY)

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**Trampolining:** *Varsity* talks all things trampolining to CUTC president Leo Jurascheck **35**



Cardiff

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## Blues fall to Cardiff in dispiriting BUCS opener

**Will Robinson**  
Sports Reporter

Cambridge University Hockey Club Women's Blues' BUCS struggles continued into the new season, as they slipped to a 4-1 defeat at the hands of Cardiff University.

In what was a more even-sided game than the eventual scoreline suggests, Cardiff capitalised on the Blues' early mistakes to condemn Cambridge to a 16th consecutive regular BUCS season game without a win: a run that stretches back to the beginning of February 2017.

In crisp, autumn conditions at Wilberforce Road, Cardiff started the match at breakneck speed, going close from a penalty corner after just three minutes; much of their warm-up had focussed on penalty corner routines, and it would prove worthwhile as the game progressed. A minute later and they were ahead, again from a penalty corner, with a well-placed shot finding the bottom left-hand corner of the net.

Cambridge refused to bow to the early setback, pressing Cardiff on the ball and forcing early errors, and they could have equalised soon after; a tremendous interception and run from Lucia Corry created the space she needed to try and pick out a teammate in the D, but the Cardiff defence did enough to deflect the shot wide.

The Blues kept knocking on the door of the Cardiff defence with three consecutive penalty corners, and had the ball in the net only for a minor infringement to prevent the goal from standing. Cardiff's attacking threat was ever-present, however, and winning the ball back from Cambridge's penalty corner, they broke upfield at terrific speed, and came close to snatching a second.

As the half progressed the match began to settle into a rhythm, with Cambridge seeing a lot of the ball, but struggling to contain Cardiff's pace in attack. The play was often scrappy, with neither side wanting to make the mistake that would allow a chance to get a shot on goal.

Having contained the threat relatively well since falling behind early on, a lapse in concentration from the Cambridge defence allowed a quick Cardiff attack to enter the D. Despite the best efforts of the Blues' goalie, the chance was converted, to put the visitors two goals to the good.

Cambridge were visibly rattled, and gave the ball away almost immediately from the push back. This allowed Cardiff to stay on the front foot. Having survived the first Cardiff penalty corner, the second was deflected goalward by the Cardiff attacker from barely a yard out, leaving the Blues' goalie with no chance. It increased the visitors' lead to a three-goal margin with almost 15 minutes of the half remaining.

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The Cardiff onslaught showed no sign of letting up, and fatigue was beginning to set in amongst the Cambridge players. Three successive penalty corners were desperately defended, but misplaced passes and high Cardiff pressing prevented the Blues from escaping their own half. With Cambridge penned in, a buoyed Cardiff midfield began to control possession, winning their fifty-fifty challenges across the field and forcing the Blues' midfielders, led by captain Hattie Bevan, to drop deeper in support of their defensive team-mates.

The second half began much as the first had ended, with the visitors netting from a penalty corner just four minutes in. Left in acres of space on the far side of the D, the Cardiff attacker was allowed to shoot low to the goalie's right-side, making the score 4-0.

Rather than capitulate however, Cambridge were determined to maintain their pride, and their energy duly increased in response. Slicker passing and higher pressing forced mistakes in the Cardiff side, and soon enough brought its rewards, as a well worked move from a free hit just outside the D resulted in a consolation goal 25 minutes from full-time, tucked in by Blues' forward Olivia Shears.

The final third of the game was not lacking in intensity, but scrappy infringements and fatigue on both sides saw both teams reduced to ten men on two

▲ **The match took place on a crisp afternoon at Wilberforce Road** (WILL ROBINSON)

▼ **Cambridge fought on from early setbacks** (WILL ROBINSON)

occasions, with neither side able to make use of their numerical advantage. Both sides went close with half-chances, but Cardiff's better first-half performance meant that any hope of a comeback for the Blues' had long faded by the time the umpires brought the game to a close.

The result, whilst a disappointment for Cambridge in their efforts to improve on last season's BUCS campaign, will not define the opening weeks of the new season, with a 5-0 victory over Sudbury in the East League Division 1 North, kick-starting their efforts to gain promotion back to the East League Premier Division. Having lost to Cardiff both home and away last season, their next chance for revenge will come in Wales on 7th November.

