

# Where did all the time go?

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No. 853

Friday 26th October 2018  
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Cambridge's Independent  
Student Newspaper since 1947

# VARSITY

## 91.9%

Percentage of total  
Cambridge professors  
and readers who are  
white, of those who  
disclosed ethnicity



▲ Cambridge has few BME professors, a position which requires University approval through its General Board (ROSIE BRADBURY)

## £11,947

Difference between the average  
annual salary of black and white  
academic and research staff

## Cambridge among UK's 'most liberal' areas

**Amy Batley**  
Senior News Correspondent

The Castle area of Cambridge, which includes more than a third of the University's colleges, is "the most liberal area" of England, according to an investigation into national attitudes published last week.

The study, entitled 'Fear, hope and loss: Understanding the drivers of hope and hate', was conducted by anti-extremist political action group *Hope Not Hate*. These findings come after a report by the Centre for Cities, released in February this year, described Cambridge as the least equal city in the UK in terms of wealth and income.

The *Hope Not Hate* report argues that there has been an emergence of "two Englands", split between areas characterised by Euroscepticism and hostility towards immigration and "liberal, outward-looking and cosmopolitan areas". The study, which polled 43,000 people at several intervals between 2011-2018 and incorporated analysis of *Change.org* petitions in support of Tommy Robinson, highlighted stark geographic divisions in attitudes towards immigration and multiculturalism.

The report distinguishes between six different cultural attitudes, or "tribes", ranging from 'Confident Multicultural' to 'Active Enmity'. The 'Confident Multicultural' category, the report argues, is characterised by a "celebratory" attitude

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## Stark pay gap for BME academics

**Jess Ma, Catherine Lally, and Rosie Bradbury**

Black academic and research staff at Cambridge make on average nearly £12,000 less a year than white staff, and academics from Chinese backgrounds

make almost £10,600 less, of Cambridge staff who disclosed their ethnicity.

Data obtained by *Varsity* concerning the University's basic pay for the year 2017-2018 showed that the average salary for white academic and research staff was £49,442, while the total average across all ethnicities was £48,451.

On average, academics from other ethnic backgrounds face lower average salaries than their white colleagues at the University. Academic and research staff from Black and Black British backgrounds have an average salary of £37,495 per annum.

The average pay figures include only

those staff who have disclosed their ethnicity. In the University's 2016-2017 'Equality and Diversity Draft Information Report', 84.1% of staff had a known ethnicity.

Academics from Arab backgrounds

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# News

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love is a  
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### Correction

A correction was issued on October 22nd regarding the Opinion piece 'CUCA must be held to account' published in issue 852 to remove an erroneous claim made about members of the Cambridge University Conservative Association.

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# Pippa Rogerson: 'I want to hand the College on in better shape than I found it'

**Julia Davies** speaks to Caius' first woman Master on her visions for one of Cambridge's oldest colleges, and how "you can't be what you can't see"

For many, Gonville and Caius' appointment of a female master for the first time in its 670-year history is a huge milestone in the fight for equality. But for Pippa Rogerson, "diversity goes well beyond the women thing. That's not where we stop."

Rogerson graduated with a Law degree from Newnham in 1983. She developed a strong connection with Caius as an undergraduate through her supervisions. Now, she has been a fellow of the college for thirty years, working as a Senior Lecturer in the Law Faculty and Director of the Law Tripos from 2014-2015.

Although she feels "a very great debt of gratitude and loyalty" to Newnham, she admits that she has been linked to Caius for ten times longer than Newnham. Her cohort was less than thirty percent female, so being at an all-female college was a huge bonus for Rogerson. As she puts it, after Caitlin Moran, "you can't be what you can't see." On graduating, her intake at the firm Clifford Chance was over half female - twelve out of twenty. But now, all but four of them have retired, and of those four, two are here at Cambridge: Rogerson herself, and the Pro-Vice Chancellor Eilís Ferran.

Things today are a lot better, certainly, but much remains to be done to improve gender equality in career prospects. "How can we say that we've done enough when the evidence shows that people are just not being promoted or developed on merit, or anything that you would want your staff to be developing?" Rogerson asks, concerned by the "complacency" which envelops Cambridge. "Cambridge is not immune [to issues of equality and diversity], even though we'd like to think we're better at it."

For Rogerson, the diversity issue spans far beyond gender, and especially concerns race. Levels of representation for those who are "non-pale, non-male and non-stale" are "very low", and she says the discussions the University is having are "very uncomfortable", yet deeply necessary, and ultimately positive. Rogerson is actively engaged in these talks, and it is apparent to me that whatever changes are to be made, Rogerson will be looking to see that Caius is swift in

“Cambridge is not immune [to issues of equality and diversity], even though we'd like to think we're better at it”

adopting them.

Caius students have voiced their optimism that her tenure will be one of positive change, pointing to how Rogerson recently promoted the 'Caius4Consent' campaign on social media.

Rogerson leads from the front, something she is not unaware of. "I do feel that I'm slightly standard-bearing," she concedes, although she instantly tempers this with her characteristic humility. "You do feel a responsibility that you've got to get it more right, work harder, be more careful about how you present yourself and what you say [as a woman]". Later she reflects on how, in her own family, the expectation was that her brothers would attend Oxbridge, but the notion that she might was "crazy".

The maxim Rogerson lives by is Michelle Obama's: 'when you can, be kind.' "Basically, be kind: kindness extends to anybody, regardless of their position. We have to try and see the world through the eyes of somebody that doesn't have the [same] advantages." Rogerson is candidly aware of her own, saying, "I know very well that I am very privileged."

Rogerson has faced hardship, including the death of her husband, father to her five daughters, eleven years ago. "[My family] have faced considerable adversity, and that puts an awful lot into perspective," she says. "I left Cambridge never, ever thinking that I was going to face any sexual discrimination of any sort, and I haven't in any very obvious way." She continues, "I've just had a slower progression through the academic ladder from having children, Gerry dying, and various other normal vicissitudes of life, really." Here Rogerson's positive attitude is apparent. "But those will happen to everybody. It's how you deal with it in relation to other people that's important."

As a master, it is clear that Rogerson will be focused on the pastoral aspects of Cambridge life as well as the academic. "I have always had an academic minimum", she says, stating that getting as good a degree grade as possible is "why you're here." But at the same time, she cites the 440 university societies, noting that "not to take advantage of these

“You do feel a responsibility that you've got to get it more right, work harder, be more careful about how you present yourself and what you say [as a woman]”





wonderful opportunities is a waste of your time at Cambridge. Participate. Get involved.” She is reassuring about the work-life balance, too. “Work efficiently, work smartly”, that way you don’t have to work constantly. Although she warns “you must realise that you will get the balance wrong”, she is keen to stress that we learn from mistakes more than we do from getting things right.

Another key maxim for Rogerson is that “nothing is ever irrevocable”, no matter how set in stone it may seem. Should a master have a vision for their tenure? “It’s the sort of thing you always get asked”, she muses. “These ancient institutions develop strategy in a more iterative, organic way, so they can seem slow to respond to change. I feel the history of the 670 years that the college has been in existence.” Nonetheless, “you want to hand the college on in better shape than you received it.”

So what does this mean for Rogerson? The aim is to make Caius “a place



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in which everybody can thrive,” which will be achieved through discussion, and consensus. It’s clear that Rogerson cares about making the opinions and voices of others heard. When I ask her what her biggest fear is for Cambridge, she is sanguine about the economic threats, namely to the funding of higher education and research. She notes the “growing view that if we really do live in a post-truth world, the sorts of things we do are not really valuable.” But she is, as ever, optimistic. “We have fabulous, fabulous people here [in Cambridge],” whether they be staff, academics or students.

“We will find our way through whatever problems we face, whatever the problems are. This is a very resilient institution, and I believe that resilience will see it through these difficulties. If we’ve survived the beheading of the king, the Reformation, and two world wars, let’s hope a little thing like Brexit is not going to stand in our way.”

▲ **Rogerson in Caius College earlier this week**  
 (ROSIE BRADBURY)

► **Rogerson is a vocal supporter of the ‘Caius for Consent’ campaign** (OEAC UC NEWS)





## News

# Meet the NUS delegate candidates

**Stephanie Stacey**  
Senior News Editor

12 candidates have put themselves forward to represent Cambridge at the National Union of Students (NUS) conference next year, making this election the most contested in recent years.

Cambridge will send six delegates to the upcoming NUS conference, set to take place next April in Glasgow. CUSU president Evie Aspinall will be among them, and the remaining 5 positions are up for election. The group must be gender-balanced, so at least two elected candidates must identify as female.

Last year, there were 11 candidates for the delegate roles, and the year before, only five. At next year's annual NUS Conference, delegates will elect the national committee and vote on national policy.

Turnout in NUS delegate elections has previously been low: last year, 1,696 students cast votes in the election, representing more than double the turnout of the previous year, but just over 7% of the 23,803 eligible voters.

Voting for these NUS delegate positions, as well as the part-time executive roles, will open next Tuesday, 30th October, at 9am and will close at 5pm on Friday 2nd November.

**Alistair Hyde**

Alistair is a 3rd year HSPS student, President of the CUSU LGBT+ campaign, Vice President of Downing College JCR, and Co-Chair of CULC. He told *Varsity* that he wants to be an NUS delegate because, "I see how disengaged people are with the student union system and I really want to change that by actively seeking out students across colleges and faculties". His five focus areas are engagement, inequality, mental health, the environment, and anti-marketisation of education, and he hopes to table a motion mandating the NUS to produce material aimed at helping students engage in the national democratic process.



**Claire Sosienski Smith**

Claire is CUSU's current women's officer, and she is running to be an NUS delegate "to ensure that liberation is at the heart of our political organising". She said, "I want to bring my facilitation skills as Women's Officer to conference, working with other delegates to ensure



that we're passing meaningful policy that pushes for shifts in attitude towards sexual violence, the role of the university and adequate student welfare. She said she "will not be intimidated" by how the NUS works, having had experience in the NUS Women's Conference and Zones Conference.

**Shadab Ahmed**

Shadab is CUSU's access and funding officer, and is aiming "to bring a unique insight to help shape policy in numerous areas; Higher Education, Welfare and Society and Citizenship".

He said that his years of experience with access work enable him to "understand a whole array of issues that students face". He told *Varsity* "Access is HE Policy. Access is Welfare. Access is Political." and emphasised, "I aim to best represent Cambridge students as a whole, and be especially vocal for those most marginalised."



**Joe Foye**

Joe is a second year Philosophy student at Selwyn, where he is Vice-President of his JCR, and describes himself



as "one of the most vocal members of CUSU council." He told *Varsity* that he's running for one of the delegate positions "because the NUS is the opportunity for students to come together and make real change on a national scale." He aims to make sure, by representing Cambridge students, that "we are driving that change."

**Khaled Labidi**

Khaled is a second year Philosophy student at Caius and, in his own words, "a committed activist fighting against this exploitative capitalist system, and for a socialist future." He has written for labour4clause4.com, marxiststudent.com and Socialist Appeal, and believes that "our power as students will only be realised if we unite with workers and staff". He will fight for the NUS to "orientate towards the broader working class movement".



**Lara Parizotto**

Lara is a HSPS Student representative, Campaigns Officer for CULC, and representative for Girton in the Living Wage campaign. Her priority in running for NUS Delegate is "to ensure that we make strides towards bold policies that will make our universities truly capable of supporting students." She aims to aid movements such as decolonisation, and to encourage universi-

◀ Only 5 of the twelve candidates will become NUS delegates

(IMAGES CANDIDATES' OWN)

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ties and Student Unions to provide free sanitary products. She wants to “make sure that NUS officers we elect will be prepared to investigate current policies that are detrimental to students” and to effectively lobby for change.

## Matt Kite

Matt is CUSU’s education officer and is running to be an NUS delegate because he believes he has “the experience and knowledge of NUS to make it a campaigning national union that’s fit for purpose”. His policy priorities are ensuring NUS supports student unions fighting marketisation, ensuring that the learning and working conditions of post-grads are taken seriously, and continuing “the great work of NUS’ welfare zone on understanding welfare as a political issue.”

## Thais Warren

Thais is a second year History of Art student and activist. She told Varsity, “Our future is hugely at stake”, speaking of graduates employment struggles and the marketisation of higher education, and said “the NUS should not just be a vehicle for careerism and a discount generator”. If elected as a delegate, she

will fight “to make the NUS a true radical union representing, mobilising and fighting for students and workers across the nation on a radical socialist basis”.

## Henry Wright

Henry is a second year Computer Scientist who is running to be an NUS delegate to “bring some of the biggest issues facing Cambridge students to the NUS with the outlook of somebody previously uninvolved in student politics.” His manifesto focuses on five areas: “equality and access; the environment; students in the EU; the mental health crisis and common sense.”

## Shannon Bernard Healey

Shannon is a 3rd year Medicine student currently studying Neuroscience, who has previously represented students as part of CUSU’s part-time executive team. He campaigns with activist group Cambridge Defend Education, and has previously served as Churchill’s LGBT+ officer. If elected as an NUS delegate, he promises to “represent all Cambridge students and continue to work hard for free and liberated higher education”, with his manifesto focusing on mental health, racism on campus, the corporatisation of education and material conditions and costs for staff and students.

## Keelan Kellegher

Keelan is a third year History student at King’s and a former president of the Cambridge Marxist Society. If elected as an NUS delegate, he aims to “work with the other Marxist delegates elected across the country”, with his main aims being to seek the abolition of tuition fees, a vast reduction in rent, an end to the precarious nature of work in universities, and the provision of a living wage to all staff as a minimum. He believes that the NUS should “become actively political” by affiliating to the Labour Party.

## Tom Turtle

Tom is a second-year politics and anthropology student at Magdalene and the vice-chair of the Cambridge University Liberal Association. He is running to be a delegate this year “to make the NUS more relevant and effective for students”. A strong opponent of Brexit, he promises, if elected, to “speak unwaveringly and unashamedly for Europe and fight for the right of every student to achieve their dreams”.



## MAMMOTH DISCOVERY Mammoth remains discovered under A14

Roadworks on the A14, which has become notorious for delays and disruption, took an unexpected turn when Highways England workers discovered the remains of a woolly mammoth near Fenstanton. The mammoth remains are estimated to be around 130,000 years old, but have been sent to specialists in order to determine the exact age. This is the latest find from the team working on the road. Previous finds in the area include prehistoric henges, Anglo-Saxon villages and Roman pottery kilns.

## ROAD RAGE Petition to improve Mill Lane crossroads

Cambridge residents have started a petition to make the crossroads outside Pembroke and Fitzbillies a safer place. Currently there is no real system in place for cars and buses to give way to pedestrians, apart from a traffic light system that many argue is insufficient to make the junction a safer place for the many students, workers and tourists who use it every day. The petition calls on the council to investigate whether a new traffic light system is called for.

## PARTY TIME Homerton hosts sell-out festival

Homerton is celebrating its 250th birthday on Saturday, 27th October, and is marking the occasion with a festival of free activities for the public. The college is putting on a range of events throughout the day. These will include, among other things, talks about the NHS, a ‘Become a Barista’ workshop and zorbing, catering for every crowd. Unfortunately, however, it’s too late to get a place on that balloon modelling class you’ve always dreamt of, because all of the tickets for the event have sold out!

## IS THIS ‘FUR’ REAL Proposed ban on selling fur at market

This week councillors agreed to back a motion to ban the sale of fur items in the Cambridge market and other premises owned by the council. A Green Party councillor proposed the motion, stating that animals were often kept in “deplorable” conditions. The UK government banned the farming of animals for their fur in 2000, however the products can still be imported from countries where there is limited legislation to ensure animal welfare.

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## News

# Few BME academics in high ranks

- 92.6% of Cambridge professors with known ethnicity are white
- Arab and Chinese academic & research staff paid on average over £10,000 less

## ► Continued from front page

face a similar pay gap, with an average salary of £39,104, while academics and researchers from Chinese backgrounds are paid £38,857 on average. The average salary of those from Asian or Asian-British backgrounds of Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani origin is £45,127, more than £4,000 below the average salary of white academics and researchers. For academics and researchers of mixed ethnicity, the average salary is £43,156, and is £40,098 for those from other Asian backgrounds. The average salary for academics and researchers from 'other' ethnic backgrounds is £56,022, which is the highest average salary of any group. The average pay for some ethnicities was grouped together in the interests of having a sample size large enough for meaningful statistical comparison.

The pay disparities between ethnicities at the University are influenced by the underrepresentation of academics of certain ethnicities in senior positions. There are 16 professors from Indian backgrounds, out of 552 professors who disclosed their ethnicity. It is the most-represented BME group for professors, constituting 2.4% of the total figure.

More than half of professors are white British, while another quarter are white, from other regions. There are fewer than five professors from Arab, Pakistani, Black, and Chinese groups respectively who have disclosed their ethnicity. There are fewer than 40 BME readers of those who disclosed their ethnicity, and fewer than 28 from the cohort of senior lecturers. There are 25 Indian University lecturers, 13 from Chinese backgrounds, and 15 who are of mixed ethnicity.

The hierarchy of Cambridge's academic roles progresses from University lecturer to University Senior Lecturer, Reader, then Professor – the highest position for academic staff. Promotion to

the position of Professor requires the approval of the University on the recommendation of the General Board, a body which reports to the University Council on academic and educational policy.

A University spokesperson said Cambridge "is committed to being a space free from racism, discrimination, prejudice and harassment", and to "enhance a culture of racial inclusion and equality at Cambridge," they are "developing diverse recruitment guidelines to help attract more Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff, as well as launching a new BAME staff network to support and encourage those who join us." They noted that "we have much work to do to improve the experience of many of our BAME staff and students and to achieve greater representation of BAME staff in senior leadership and in governance structures", and will "continue to identify opportunities and remove barriers related to career progression for BAME staff".

Dr Manali Desai, equality officer at the Cambridge University and College Union, as well as head of its new anti-racism network, referenced the University's recent 'Let's Talk About Race' event as evidence that "the University is aware that there's a race problem". She said that "it is very clear that the data-gathering itself is a start", in allowing Cambridge to track its progress, although she wants to see it "work with this data to produce a set of goals".

Desai noted that diversity in the University "rapidly thins as you go through the senior academic ranks", and that "students' reference points are generally of a fairly white normative ideal of who gets to be an academic". She added that promotions can be "tricky, and depend on a range of things" – including "networking and earning grants", as well as "how your work is perceived", and "esteem indicators". She said greater promotions for BME staff is "very de-

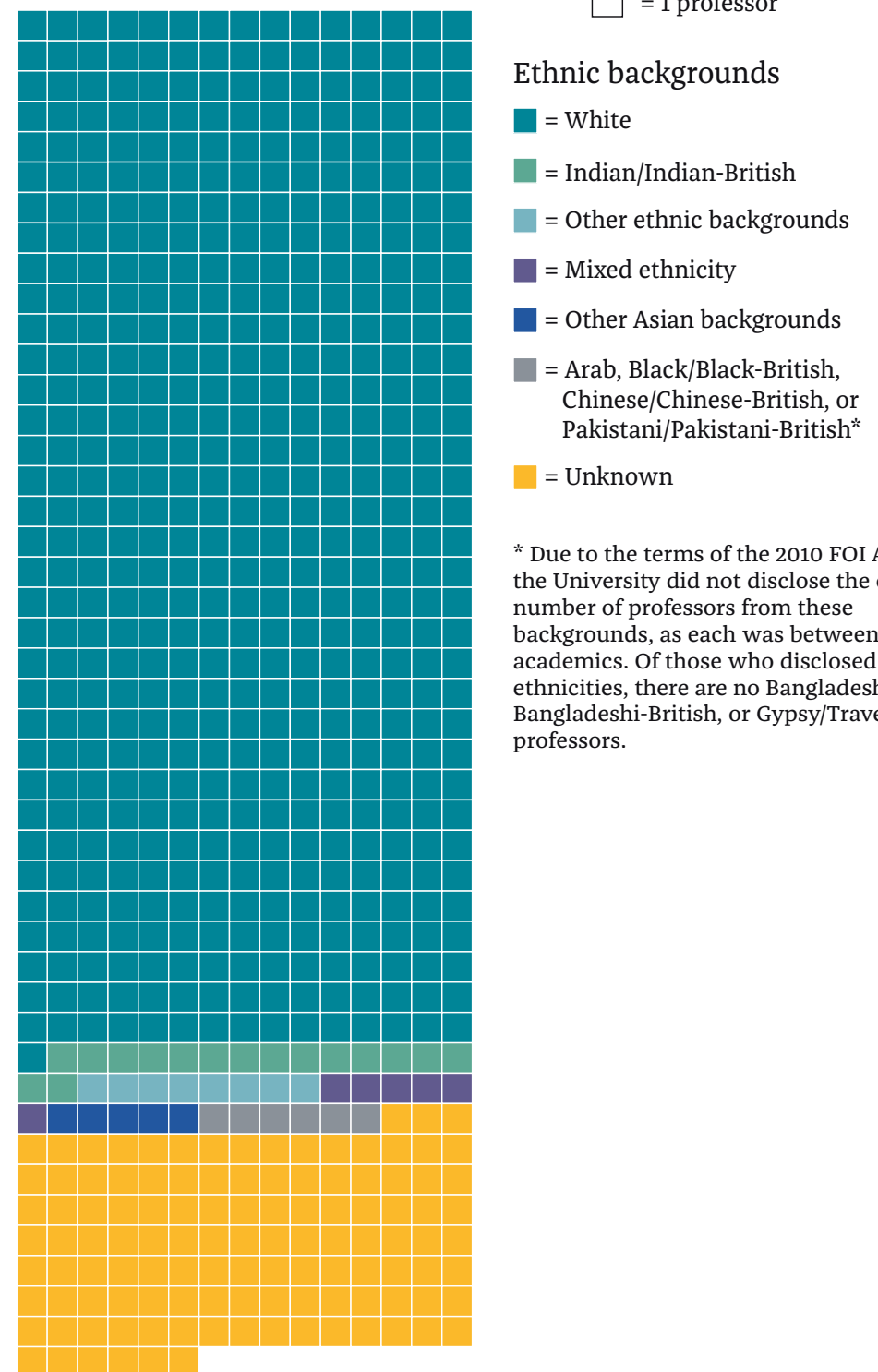
“Students' reference points are generally of a fairly white normative ideal of who gets to be an academic”



## BME professors at Cambridge are scarce

Out of 552 University professors who disclosed their ethnicity, 41, or 7.4%, were non-white.

□ = 1 professor



\* Due to the terms of the 2010 FOI Act, the University did not disclose the exact number of professors from these backgrounds, as each was between 1-4 academics. Of those who disclosed their ethnicities, there are no Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi-British, or Gypsy/Traveller professors.

▲ 666 academics at the University of Cambridge have the title of professor, the highest teaching and research position at the institution – and the best-paid (GRAPHIC: ROSIE BRADBURY)

pendent on a more level playing field where people take the work that BME academics do seriously.”

Employment figures for some ethnicities are very low, with the University employing fewer than 10 Arab and Bangladeshi academics who disclosed their ethnicity. The University notes that there are no gypsy – traveller employees, or black Caribbean employees, of those who disclosed their ethnicity.

Among academic-related and assistant staff, the distribution of pay is much more even. White staff earn £33,396 a year, while the total average across ethnicities was £33,466.

Speaking on the missing data, Dr

Joanna Jasiewicz, a Cambridge equality and diversity consultant, said that reasons for not disclosing one's ethnicity include "limited awareness as to why the University asks for ethnicity data [and] concerns about being identified as 'BME'." She added that some white staff "do not disclose because they do not think that the question on ethnicity and race refers to them". Jasiewicz added that the University is planning "increased communications on these topics to highlight how the University uses the ethnicity data", and that everyone, both people who self-identify as White and BME, should disclose to help us develop impactful initiatives.”

◀ Dr Manali Desai is head of Cambridge UCU's anti-racism campaign (ROSIE BRADBURY)



# CUSU disaffiliations in question as JCR fees scrapped

**Catherine Lally**  
Deputy Editor

CUSU and the GU have ended college affiliation fees, after several years of efforts, and have replaced them with a University-wide levy for all colleges. This is intended to remove the financial burden of CUSU or GU affiliation for JCRs and MCRs, and stabilise the CUSU's funding.

The cost of CUSU or GU affiliation will be passed to college administration, who will pay an annual levy based on the size of their undergraduate body, although some colleges may reduce JCR or MCR funding to make up the shortfall. The levy will be used to cover the cost of running the Students' Unions' Advice Service (SUAS) as well as the CUSU sexual health scheme.

Previously, college JCRs paid a certain fee per student in order to retain CUSU or GU affiliation, which brought in £100,772 last year. CUSU President Evie Aspinall told *Varsity* that CUSU expects the Office of Intercollegiate Services, the University body responsible for providing support to the 31 individual colleges, to provide CUSU with £131,938 for the year 2018-19, with this money strictly reserved for the provision of welfare services.

However, both Corpus Christi JCR and



Gonville & Caius Student Union (GCSU) have disaffiliated from CUSU, and have therefore previously not paid into for its services. The pattern of disaffiliation is even broader among MCRs, ten of which are disaffiliated from CUSU or the GU.

Students studying at unaffiliated colleges have still been able to access CUSU services despite their JCRs not contributing fees – which for CUSU, were traditionally set at £6.67 for undergraduates

▲ Gonville & Caius' Junior Combination Room is one of two disaffiliated JCRs  
(ROSIE BRADBURY)

and £3.30 per graduate student. They were able to use SUAS, as well as vote in CUSU elections. The levy model essentially removes the financial benefits of disaffiliation, as JCRs and MCRs will no longer be cutting costs by not paying affiliation fees.

Aspinall told *Varsity* that "CUSU represents and advocates on behalf of students at every College, and does so on many issues that college representative cannot resolve alone." She added that CUSU cannot predict the "impact the fee removal will have on disaffiliated Colleges, but we are certain that the student voice at Cambridge is stronger and more effective when collective and so we hope that disaffiliated colleges will reconsider affiliation."

Corpus JCR has been disaffiliated from CUSU since 2010, but runs both a debate and a referendum every year on the question of reaffiliation. Last November, 82.9% of those who voted elected to remain disaffiliated. Whether the new funding model will change this is yet to be seen. Corpus JCR President Nina Jeffs told *Varsity* "we've got a CUSU reaffiliation vote coming up later this term, so after that ... the views of the student body will be made clear".

In October 2017, a motion to replace affiliation fees for both CUSU and the Graduate Union (GU) with a levy was

passed by CUSU Council, and only required the approval of the Levy committee, which falls under the larger Bursars' Committee, to come into reality. A similar motion had been passed the previous year, but was less clear about how the funding would go directly towards welfare services.

Last year, ex-CUSU President Daisy Eyre said "a straightforward levy is not popular", but that some JCR presidents became more amenable to the idea after learning that the levy would fund CUSU's welfare activities.

The levy model was originally considered necessary to stabilise the students' union's funding during financial difficulties; however, last year, CUSU's fortunes changed as the University offered an £80,000 boost in funding and the students' union sought to both increase revenue and cut funding to political campaigns.

Aspinall said the change "occurred as a result of both the University and colleges endorsing CUSU's arguments for how it should be funded", which involved the University deciding it "should fund the core activities of the Union's representative efforts", that "affiliation fees unfairly linked cross-Collegiate engagement with a fee", and that "welfare services accessible to all students would ordinarily be met by the colleges".

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## Interview

# Josh Littlejohn



‘If you’re in a situation where you’re homeless, you’re out with society and you know that – you feel invisible’

**Oliver Rhodes** talks to the founder of Social Bite, a sandwich shop chain dedicated to ending homelessness in Scotland

I am reminded of just how chronic this city’s homelessness problem is every time I walk down Regent Street. When I have some change, I’ll give what I can, but usually I just smile politely and apologise. Perhaps nothing illuminates the inequalities of Cambridge more than that familiar, bleak juxtaposition on a Saturday night of revelling students and rough-sleepers.

Josh Littlejohn is more aware than most of the tragedy of homelessness. Moments before his speech to the chamber of the Cambridge Union this week, I sat down with him to discuss his sandwich-shop chain, SocialBite, which employs nearly 30 people across Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen who lack permanent accommodation. Over the years he has met many homeless people, and got to know their stories. “We kept asking people their stories about how they became homeless and what was interesting, but also a bit spooky, is that they kept basically telling us the same story.” He goes on. “They usually suffered a very traumatic childhood, grew up in the care system ... and then they became homeless in their late teenage years.”

There are around 11,000 homeless people in Scotland, and 1,500 in Edinburgh alone. Littlejohn co-founded SocialBite in 2012 with the purpose of sending its profits to a range of local charities. In its original form it was a “one-dimensional business model”, but the business soon found its purpose when opportunity, literally, came knocking at the door.

A Big Issue seller standing outside the shop “plucked up the courage to ask us for a job” and ever since, SocialBite’s mission has been clear. Littlejohn started offering more jobs to local homeless people, integrating them into the team. SocialBite also operates a system of “paying forward” whereby customers can pay for sandwiches and coffee on behalf of homeless people, who pick them up later in the day.

SocialBite has now become the centre of a much more ambitious effort to eradicate homelessness in Scotland. In 2015, Edinburgh’s high-street was nearly shut down when George Clooney visited the original shop, prompting a succession of high-profile publicity events which have included Leonardo DiCaprio, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. “That was pretty cool,” Littlejohn remarks nonchalantly of the last two, to the laughter of the chamber.

By offering stable employment for homeless people, Littlejohn’s project has proven to be a new way of tackling



“We’re not really helping [people] get on their feet and get out of it quickly”

an issue which is poorly understood. Too often, he argues, homelessness is conceived as a problem of “individual decision-making” involving alcohol or drug addiction. However, the stories he has heard from homeless people themselves have highlighted the extent to which this is a systemic issue. “It starts from childhood. Few realise how grim it is to be homeless or to be living in hostel accommodation or homeless bed-and-breakfasts ... and we’re not really helping [people] get on their feet and get out of it quickly.”

Policy decisions, he argues, have not helped. “The big thing is the structural response to [homelessness] in terms of how our national and local governments typically respond. The systems they create are a bit flawed, and they send a lot of money the wrong way.”

In the meantime, homeless people are either left to sleep on the streets, or channelled into hostel accommodation which can seriously impact on mental health, when people are packed in close-quarters with little privacy.

“The government has just created a new funding package for homelessness, which on the face of it is a good thing, but it’s going towards new hostel accommodation, and we know that this sort of accommodation, getting people together in a hostel, just doesn’t work, and it keeps people adrift from society.”

What matters, argues Littlejohn, is that homeless people are put into “mainstream” accommodation as quickly as possible, so that they can start leading normal lives. After SocialBite’s success, Littlejohn was inspired to set up his own housing projects for homeless people. “In more recent years we’ve started looking into projects about accommodation: there’s one called Housing First, which has been tried out on different scales all across the world, but mainly in Scandinavia.”

Under this system, “you put the house at the first point of intervention”, rather than the last as is currently done. Tenants have to regularly prove they can maintain their tenancy, but the responsibility of living independently and paying rent provides residents not only with permanent accommodation, but a sense that their life is in their control. “Over 90% of residents hold their tenancy, and that’s how Finland has pretty much ended its homelessness problem.”

Littlejohn’s understanding of homelessness goes beyond policy however. His projects have each emphasised a commitment to putting homeless people within the boundaries of normality, providing a personal face to the issue. In 2016, SocialBite organised ‘Sleep in the Park’, an outdoor overnight event that took place on the coldest night of

▲ Littlejohn addressing the Scottish Learning Festival in 2017 (YOUTUBE / EDUCATION SCOTLAND)

the year.

Hundreds of people slept rough in Edinburgh’s central gardens to raise money for the SocialBite Village, a project which has housed 20 people since its launch in May last year. ‘Sleep in the Park’ has been going ever since.

“One of the greatest things about the Village project is that the staff are pretty much indistinguishable from the people who are homeless. You can’t tell who are homeless, who are staff and who are volunteers: it’s just human beings living in a nice place.”

He gives some advice to those who are keen to make a difference on a personal basis. “If you’re in a situation where you’re homeless, you’re out with society and you feel that. You feel invisible, you know that you are sub-value to everyone else. So I think a big thing you could do is treat people like human beings. Say ‘hi’, have a chat. I wouldn’t be averse to giving money either.”

Homelessness, more so than ever, seems to be an insurmountable problem. Yet too often, it seems, attempts to solve it are administrative when they should be interpersonal.

During his speech, he emphasises the need to “think creatively” and not rely on the government to sort it out by themselves. “It’s not about resources but about focus”, he says.



# News

## Cambridge ‘among the most liberal places in the country’

◀ Continued from front page

towards ethnic diversity, low economic deprivation and proximity to universities. The report used the Castle area of Cambridge to exemplify its ‘Confident Multicultural’ category, arguing that “the area surrounding St John’s College in Cambridge emerges as the most liberal” in England.

Such areas, the report argues, are inhabited by “highly educated graduates or postgraduates who see immigration and diversity as hugely positive, both economically and culturally”.

The report’s authors propose that these areas are defined by “an optimistic, outward-looking perspective”. Central to the ‘Confident Multicultural’ tribe, the report argues, is the role of universities, as 90% of the ‘confident multicultural’ areas are located “within a few hundred metres of universities”.

The report claims that the Castle area “is within the least deprived

10% of the country in terms of income, employment and adult skills”, arguing that “economic concerns are uncommon in areas such as this”.

The report exemplifies juxtaposes the Castle area of Cambridge with the East Marsh Estate in Grimsby. The report claims that ‘East Marsh is flagged as the most hostile area of the country, while the area surrounding St John’s College in Cambridge emerges as the most liberal’ and ‘most confidently multicultural’.

The Castle area includes 12 colleges: Trinity, King’s, St Edmund’s, Lucy Cavendish, St John’s, Magdalene, Murray Edwards, Churchill, Trinity Hall, Clare, Gonville and Caius, and Fitzwilliam.

Rosie Carter, the main investigator behind the Hope Not Hate report, told Varsity that the report sought to understand differences in attitudes rather than simply economic disparities.

She said, “the report sees inequality, not just of wealth but of opportunity and wellbeing, as a key driver of attitudes”.

Carter also emphasised that the report analysed



“small geographic units of around 1,000 houses rather than the whole city”.

When asked about student frustrations with living costs in Cambridge, including the ‘Cut the Rent’ Campaign, Carter was sympathetic to students’ fi-

▲ The area around St John’s was judged the most liberal in England

(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

nancial circumstances but emphasised that the report “uses indices of multiple deprivation data”, including employment, education and skills and health, “rather than accounting for individual economic concerns”.

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## News

# Stable foundations? Behind the latest effort to transform Cambridge access

**Sarah Orsborne and Shruti Sharma**  
Senior News Correspondents

“The hurdles that people from low incomes face compared to people who are more comfortably off are known and measurable. Either we can say that, ‘we are not going to help you at all’, or you say, ‘we will try and adjust for that’”, said Alan Rusbridger, the principal of Lady Margaret Hall (LMH) Oxford, in an interview with *Varsity*. In 2016, Rusbridger’s college introduced a foundational programme for educationally-disadvantaged students to ‘catch up’ with their peers — in 2021, Cambridge is set to adopt a similar scheme across the collegiate University, in one of its most dramatic efforts in recent years to widen access.

“We know that there are some students who have suffered educational disadvantage”, explained Graham Virgo, Cambridge’s senior pro-vice-chancellor for education, adding, “the aim of the transition year is to say to those students, ‘look, as things are, you’re probably not going to make our offer but we can see potential, so come on our transition year and we hope that year will bridge the gap.’”

The University’s announcement of the transitional programme, consisting of a three week bridging programme as well as a full foundation year, comes amid lasting criticism of its proportionately low intakes of students from state comprehensive and low-income backgrounds.

In its 2017 admissions cycle, 26.5% of students admitted to Cambridge hailed from state comprehensive schools, while 4.5% of students were from regions with the lowest participation rates in higher education. Along with the foundational programme, the University has plans to reform its existing bursary system by expanding funding to students in the ‘squeezed middle’ as well as offering debt-free education to its poorest students.

Funding its foundation year project could prove challenging, admitted Virgo: “Frankly, we need philanthropy to enable us to deliver this”. The programme, as well as changes to the Cambridge Bursary Scheme, are expected to be funded by the University’s campaign to raise at least £500m over the next six years for student support.

In a recent article in *Prospect Magazine*, Rusbridger outlined the cost-benefits of LMH’s foundational year, which “for 12 students costs £230,000” in comparison to the £17m currently spent on access and other forms of support through outreach programs. LMH’s foundation year funds come exclusively from alumni donations, but if the scheme were to be expanded to other colleges, Rusbridger said that the College’s programme costs would be cut by nearly half.

Foundation years at LMH and Trinity College Dublin (TCD) have been cited as models the University of Cambridge might use in the development of their own transition year. However, unlike



▲ **Professor Graham Virgo, Cambridge’s senior pro-vice-chancellor for education**

(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

schemes elsewhere, Virgo said Cambridge intends to offer participants a “quality-assured award” upon completing the programme.

In *Prospect*, Rusbridger discussed the importance of expanding an Oxbridge education: “Focus groups around the country believed...academic ability wasn’t thought to be enough to get in: people thought family connections or money were also needed.”

Speaking to *Varsity*, Rusbridger argued that the foundation year, “is one of the the best ways of actually getting people through the door as opposed to just doing outreach and trying to make up the gap that... we can all agree does exist.”

Virgo added that the University intends to “[find] innovative ways of engaging” with potential applicants, to “capture students who may not be thinking about Cambridge, or even university”.

Advertising the transition year scheme will be a concerted effort, involving colleges and a “well developed

social media campaign”. He is keen on “using people like Stormzy. We will need to discuss it with him but I can imagine this being the sort of thing him and others would be willing to assist us with.” In August, award-winning grime musician Stormzy launched a scholarship to fully fund degree costs for four black students at Cambridge.

Beyond funding, another major concern for Cambridge will be to ensure the full integration of transition students into university and college life. While Virgo insisted that transition year students “will join a college in exactly the same way as everybody else”, he noted that the University is “so conscious” of incoming students feeling less worthy than their peers.

“It is not a sign of inferiority at all; it is just a sign that, [because of] where you’ve come from, you haven’t had the advantages of many Cambridge students.”

CUSU Access & Funding Officer Shadab Ahmed echoed these concerns, telling *Varsity* that, while he is “positive and optimistic” about the programme, “the University will have to stress that students applying to the foundation course are not at all inferior.”

Ellie Wood, the General Secretary of Class Act, a Cambridge community for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, said that she sees it as “imperative that transition year students are fully integrated into college and university life, like any other student studying another course.”

Woods noted her concern that if students are offered a transitional programme spot instead of being accepted into regular entry, it “might give an impression (however wrong that might be) that they are not good enough”. She added, “we would hope that the idea

of a transition year would be normalised... such that the issue of imposter syndrome would be combatted.”

Rusbridger recognised obstacles that LMH faced in integrating their first cohort of foundation year students, commenting, “I think some of the other students didn’t initially know who these students were, or what a foundation year was, so there was a little bit of hesitancy about where they fitted in the college”, but noted that the JCR has worked to “make sure they just feel like ordinary members of the common room.”

In contrast to LMH’s college-based foundation year, Cambridge intends for its transitional year programme to be rolled out throughout the collegiate University, rather than being focused on a single college.

Ahmed argued that the transition year “won’t solve the issue of encouraging people to apply to the University in the first place, which is something the University will have to continue doing as outreach work to ensure people apply for even a foundation year.”

However, Rusbridger and Sir Ivor Crewe, master of Oxford’s University College (Univ), were more optimistic about the schemes, reporting increased diversity in their respective colleges following their introduction.

Rusbridger noted that “the number of applications from state schools has jumped by nearly 40% in two years”. At LMH, seven out of 10 students from the first cohort and nine out of 11 from the second passed the foundation year and matriculated to Oxford. Rusbridger told *Varsity* the other students all received offers from Russell Group universities. Crewe said that University College’s three-week summer bridging programme “demonstrates to students from under-represented backgrounds that we take them seriously, that we want them to apply to us, and that we’ve got the confidence in them to make them an offer without lowering standards.”

Virgo chairs a project board for the transition year programme and the three-week bridging programme for students who “haven’t made their offer and, through the contextual data, are students who are meeting the widening participation criteria.”

Wood added that, in addition to a transition year, “there needs to be greater support for disadvantaged students who either just miss their offers or would, due to circumstance, not get the grades of a typical offer”. In its admissions process, Cambridge uses contextual data on socio-economic characteristics, school type, and individual circumstances to holistically assess applicants, but has resisted systematically lowering its standard A-level offers.

Speaking of his personal connection to the effort, Virgo said that “as somebody who was educated in a massive state school myself where hardly anybody went to Oxford or Cambridge, I know what it’s like. To have the courage to apply when you are just not used to what Oxford or Cambridge means, you have this image of it.”

“[It’s] one of the best ways of actually getting people through the door”





# Commercial Feature

## Meet the Expert – Quantum Computing

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*Tell us about the future of Quantum Computing.*

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*If a student wanted to learn more, where should they look?*

"Quantum Computing and Quantum Information" by Michael Nielsen and Isaac Chuang is the masterbook for this topic. 'IBM Q

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Also the 'Google AI blog' is a great source for the most recent research and studies.

*How does Reply support your research?*

In Reply we created a Community of Practice (CoP) dedicated to Quantum Computing. This internal "innovation team" interested in hot new topics, with the aim of finding opportunities and new way of solving problems of our customers.

Further, in June I participated in a "hands-on" workshop, where we made some experiments with the IBM quantum computer and the software kit, the QISKit.

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*Quantum Battlefield?! Is that as fun as it sounds?*

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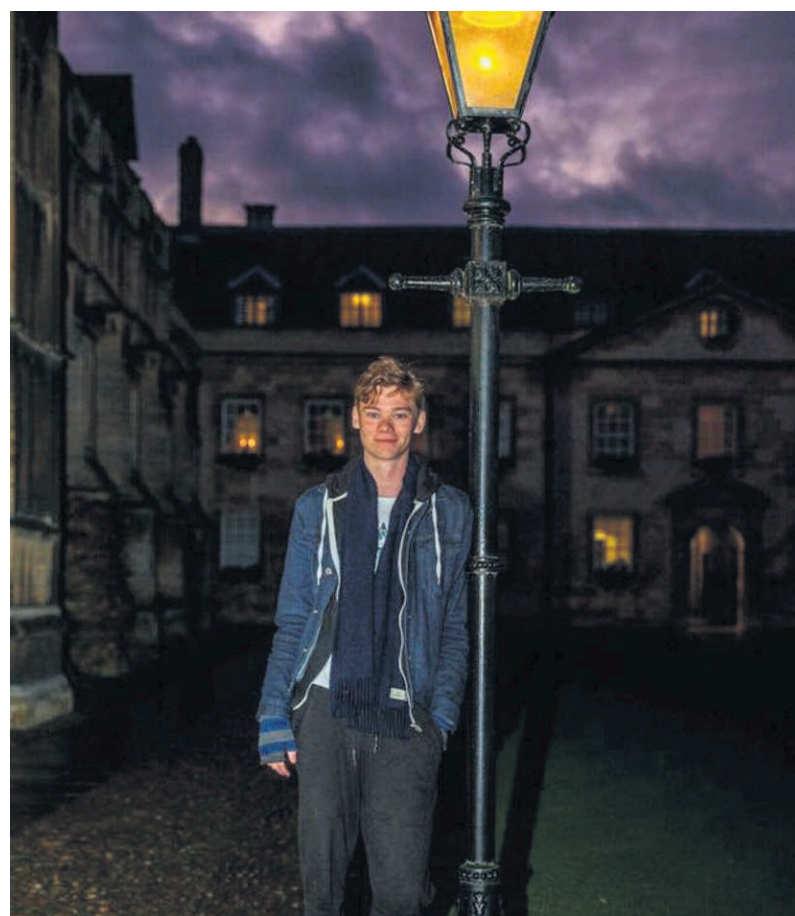
# Features

## The changing faces of faith in Cambridge

The co-founder of the Faiths of Cambridge project, **Samuel Isaac**, reflects on what Cambridge has shown him about faith

There's a debate amongst Jewish scholars as to how we should look at the lives of great religious figures. Their lives are laid out in the great biblical epics, from the tormented reign of King Saul to the tale of the exodus that leaves Moses barred from the Land where he has led his people. One school of thought tries to read such men as saintly figures, mitigating any sin attributed to them in the scripture. The polished, untouchable role model is curated from here. The other approach argues that it's precisely because of their struggles with faith, their uncertainties and complexities that they stand as role models for us all. The fact that we can see them as people enables us to relate to them in a truly human sense.

In my time here, I've been amazed by the diversity of faith groups on campus. From the passionate campaigns of the Christian Union to the intimate community found at the Islamic Society, I have found Cambridge a place where religious communities truly flourish. People of faith share festivities and fasts, while at



*“I found in Cambridge a place where religious communities truly flourish”*

◀ Emilia shares her experiences of faith (FACEBOOK/FAITHS OF CAMBRIDGE)

my own Jewish Society, the weekly Friday night dinners give my co-religionists and myself a space to continue traditions our families have practised for time immemorial. But in the larger university landscape, religious dialogue is muted.

For many, while religious doctrine is often debated, conversations about the struggles, difficulties and experiences of religion are often left at the side-lines. Like the figures of scripture, religion is too often conveyed theoretically: as polished, crystal clear and unrelatable, while the complex, real and sometimes messy reality of a life of faith is lost.

I've tried, through the past year, to explore that life and together with Tiwa Adebayo, we've met and interviewed the broadest church of students and faculty members through our Faiths of Cambridge project. I've found a diversity of opinion that could only exist in this city. From the engineering student who offered me spiritual healing to a post-graduate former Dominican Friar, it's been as much a confrontation with my own beliefs as it has been an opportunity to speak to others about theirs.

For Mia, a third-year at Trinity College, university has been a time for her to ask

▲ Will (Left) and Mia (Right) share their experiences of faith with Tiwa Adebayo and Samuel Isaac

(FACEBOOK/FAITHS OF CAMBRIDGE AND ANGUS PARKER)

*“Faith can become controversial and divisive because it occupies questions that all of us have considered for a time”*

questions of faith and belief whilst not feeling obligated to find every answer or subscribe to a particular faith. “It's nice to be inquisitive”, she argues, “and at Cambridge we're trained to think all the time and answer every single question. Coming to university has been a chance to explore other ideas that exist and know it's okay to not have the answers”. Conversely, for Emilia, studying at St Catharine's, it's the certainty she finds in her faith that keeps her strong. “So it's cool for me to wake up some days and know that even if things are going wrong and I'm not that happy, I can still be so joyful”, she explained, beaming and excited. “With joy, I know that I'll be okay”. Diversity of faith spans far wider than books and religions and more has to be done to promote this discussion on campus.

I wouldn't like to suggest, however, that only those who call themselves religious should have a monopoly on discussion. Faith can become controversial and divisive because it occupies questions that all of us have considered for a time and have all answered differently. The decision to name the project ‘Faiths of Cambridge’ as opposed to ‘Religions’ was

a deliberate one as our diversity of beliefs spans far wider than any religious creed could encapsulate. Although faith can bring people together, it is also distinctly personal, and we would be at a loss if we were to shy away from these more controversial issues out of fear of disagreeing or offending.

I spoke to Will last year, a third year student at Peterhouse who spoke of a religious life in flux and not always having the answers. ‘I am sure’, he admitted, ‘that there are those that see my sexuality as a ‘problem’ as much as there are those who think my pluralist attitude means that I can't call myself a Christian. I'm improvising as I go but I also have to see that other people are too and their understanding isn't necessarily perfect’.

Lived experience is primary to faith and through speaking honestly, we can find role models in one another like those rabbis found in the complex characters of scripture. As Will said so well, ‘it comes down to recognising that we're all looking for something that no one can actually grasp. Naturally people are going to come to different conclusions and that is fine I think.’ I think so too.



# Loving under a veil of secrecy

An *anonymous student* reflects on defying religious and parental expectations to be in their relationship

I started my first year of university with the conviction that romantic love wasn't for me on a number of different levels. Three weeks later, I was in a relationship.

My whole life has been a series of hidden love affairs, late night encounters with the local kebab shop down the road and a questionable group of friends and the knowledge that what I was doing felt wrong. I was never that adventurous. But secretly peeling off layers to reveal bare arms and the occasional patch of pale brown leg (I could never quite shake the guilt of baring a *whole* leg to the world), learning how to smoke a cigarette and taking a sip of a friend's vodka in the middle of the school day felt simultaneously like taking control and blindly letting go of everything that I knew to be me. In short, it felt like tumbling slowly towards a series of pits labelled "Identity Crisis".

That's kind of what love felt like, but if tumbling became falling and the pit became a gigantic canyon of confusion — more messy, more tumultuous and far more shattering than the faux, non-existent rebellion of my teenage years. Love wasn't the same as going on a night out, or smoking a joint once every two years, or forgetting to pray five times a day. Those things I felt guilty about, but was able to repent for and mostly avoid in the future. God meant a lot to me, as did my parents, and I knew, or thought, neither would approve.

Love, on the other hand, was constant, and something I actively worked hard to maintain. Love started as friends, and then a crush, and then unexpectedly and all at once — something more. Love did not take the form I imagined it would if it were ever to come into my life, but was rather the complete opposite in every sense; it had different beliefs, different experiences and did little to resemble what I was expected, and *wanted*, to have. But it was love all the same, in a way I'd never experienced before.

And so I let myself indulge in it, like most of us would, but the reality of doing so was far less romantic than I like to think it was. I reminded him daily that this couldn't last, that we should probably stop whatever was happening before things got 'too deep,' that he was

“God meant a lot to me, as did my parents, and I knew or thought neither would approve”



wasting his time with me and that, 'by the way, just so you know, we can never have sex.' In hindsight, that should've been enough for him to run for the hills, I know I would've. But he didn't. And neither did I.

Instead, he gently reminds me to pray five times a day, listens intently when I speak about experiences he'll never have and supports me in ways I didn't even know I needed. That's not to say it didn't take a lot to get this point, because it did.

The weight of emotional labour, no matter how 'woke' you think your partner is, never fails to exhaust me, and my unreasonable demands and unhealthy outlook on love laced with abuse exhausts him, I'm sure. But to have something that feels unconditional and reciprocal and so patient is something that is both terrifying and comforting in so many ways.

And so made up train schedules and quiet phone calls pretending to be elsewhere became a regular part of my daily routine. The familiar dance between love

▲ Illustration by Lisha Zhong for Varsity

“The dark underbelly of my relationship is one of limited time for both of us”

and lies have weaved their way through my life blissfully, as I fluctuated between gratitude to God and praying for something or someone else that made more sense, and brought less anxiety.

But if I've learnt anything it is that love is a choice that I made, albeit not a simple one. Love was not thrown at me or given to me as a gift, it was cultivated and worked on in a way that made *sense*. There were many times I could have turned my back on it, but I didn't.

Fast forward three years and this gulf of contradictions is my home, and the most significant part of my identity in so many ways. I can't pretend the dark underbelly of my relationship is not one of limited time for both of us, as we slowly move towards a 'point' where I either conduct the big reveal of someone I love deeply to those I've spent my life with, or put an end to it all together.

Living in the moment has amusingly never felt as real as it does now, as I tentatively take time to breathe and hold myself in between two homes. To feel the simultaneous responsibility of your

family's happiness, and your own, on your shoulders is a strange thing and not one I have yet learnt to navigate effectively. But if I could tell my younger self one thing about her coming future, it would be that holding yourself to the binary distinctions you're convinced define you brings nothing but pain. You are so much more than that. The love you have to give, and receive, is so much more than that.

I'm yet to make sense of how I feel about so many Big Things, but holding myself with love, and being held with love, feels Big in itself. I think back to the first time we met, and I wonder whether I should've walked away whilst I could, to avoid the emotional turmoil of making a nonsensical choice between two things that cannot be done away with. And, honestly, that's not something I think I can answer, nor something I want to answer. But I know that it doesn't really matter. There is no healing or pain like that of love in whatever way it presents itself, and right now, that is enough for me.



## Features

# Rethinking the canon: the colonial mindset

Columnist  
*Jonathan Chan*  
discusses critically  
rethinking our  
learning with  
*Fergus Lamb*

“Do you think Willy Wonka ever allowed the Oompa-Loompas to unionise?” asks Fergus Lamb (Second Year, Wolfson). Our giggling is followed by a moment of deep contemplation. We mull over the ways in which Roald Dahl’s famous chocolate factory also happens to be a fantastical vehicle of capitalism and colonialism. Before Dahl’s rewrites, the Oompa-Loompas were portrayed as African pygmies who were paid in cocoa beans. Perhaps this veered too dangerously near to the history of slavery, indentured servitude, and labour exploitation across the British Empire, as Dahl rewrote them as being white-skinned and having golden hair. This exercise, while humorous, serves to underscore what Fergus believes is necessary about approaching the English Tripos critically.

Growing up in Kent, Fergus was unaware of colonial undertones in the literature he read for a long time. “You adopt racist viewpoints when you’re raised in a racist society,” he remarks. Being white, British, and male, Fergus’s upbringing was comfortably Eurocentric, supplemented by an uncritical imbibing of portrayals of racial relations and colonial dynamics when reading ‘canonical’ texts. “When we’re young, we’re always being taught how to understand the world through ideology and political thinking,” Fergus asserts. Fergus notes the ease at which this became his predominant way of viewing the world before his encounter with postcolonial critics.

Reading Nigerian author Chinua Achebe’s famous lecture “An Image of Africa” inaugurated Fergus’s process of critically rethinking the worldview he grew up with. Achebe powerfully challenges Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, charging Conrad’s depiction of Africa as “a foil to Europe, as a place of negations at once remote and vaguely familiar, in comparison with which Europe’s own state of spiritual grace will be manifest”. Conrad, he says, portrays Africa as ‘the other world’, the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, which Achebe attributes to Conrad’s “residue of antipathy to black people”.

Reading Achebe helped Fergus to challenge the preconceptions he had passively accepted as part of his worldview. He often adopted stereotypes present in the media that exaggerated political affairs in other countries as

chaotic as opposed to recognising how actual political conditions emerged from historical circumstance. In particular, it helped to subvert his reading of *Heart of Darkness*, providing the language and critical apparatus he needed to confirm prior suspicions he had about the text and defend these positions thereafter.

“It is important that we do study and critique these old, stale, white writers,” Fergus argues, “because they’re still popular”. So long as such novels, poems, and plays depend on a colonial mindset to be understood, uncritical readings of such texts threaten to propagate the notion of a literary whiteness – one in which humanity is accorded to European characters at the behest of all others through literary representation. It is through such encounters with postcolonial paradigms that Fergus believes there remains the task of understanding and dismantling Eurocentric frameworks. “I never considered myself a racist growing up,” he comments. “Reading these theorists helped me make the leap from believing that racism is just an individual problem to recognising the way it is structural in Britain.” He was led to look back at texts he’d read before and see how nuance could be opened in such readings.

For example, Fergus points to the ways in which the character Caliban, from William Shakespeare’s play *The Tempest*, often brings to mind colonial anxieties about natives, sexual assault, and miscegenation. In the play, Caliban, a native of the island conquered by the sorcerer Prospero, is punished for an attempted assault on Prospero’s daughter Miranda. “It speaks of a rather brutal history,” Fergus claims, “of the perennial fear that ‘the other is out to steal our pretty white girls’”.

He also alludes to how Heathcliff, from Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, is described as a “dark-skinned gypsy in aspect”. Fergus points out that this language of the ‘other’ provides a means of understanding the low social position Heathcliff occupies, and how it allows readers to understand him as being both within and without the novel’s aristocratic household. An understanding of the tension defining Heathcliff’s status in his household and his family members can only be achieved via the language of racism.

Such readings can only be unlocked by a decentering of perspectives – one in which the hegemonic lens is recognised for its dangerous and patronising ability to strip individuals of their humanity. This contributes to a more robust intellectual practice of literary criticism, the ostensible objective of the English Tripos. The deconstruction of a colonial mindset in literature therefore seeks to challenge the ways in which mindsets that have historically sought to demonise and dehumanise people of other cultures and races has contributed to the proliferation of violence. In do-



“He continues to be conscious of the ways he can be complicit with structural inequality”

ing so, there remains the necessity of disassociation from a literary tradition of white supremacy. Fergus believes that it is vital for white British people to be exposed to postcolonial critics such as Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Frantz Fanon to better appreciate the physical and psychological violence suffered by the colonised and why it is vital to critique colonial thinking in literature.

Fergus admits that he continues to make mistakes. Despite having read these postcolonial theorists, he continues to be conscious of the ways in which he can be complicit with structural inequality.

Within the broader intellectual practice of decolonisation, Fergus believes that white people have a particular responsibility to play, especially in understanding their white privilege within cultural systems, social hierarchies, and the existing literary canon. “We cannot be led to believe that the intellectual labour of decolonisation should be left to people of colour,” he asserts.

Fergus’s process of rethinking his critical habits has been accompanied by his reckoning with the atrocities committed by people from his own home. His exposure to postcolonial writers has been key to reconstructing the narrative of empire he grew up with, yielding a sense of indignation toward the violence inflicted by colonialists in the past and the ways of thinking that serve to perpetuate such violence today.

More specifically, he believes that white British people should take their cues from those who have been historically marginalised in literary studies. The dismantling of one’s critical apparatus

▲ Fergus Lamb is a second year English student at Wolfson College (ROSIE BRADBURY)

when reading literature is essential to recognising how white privilege continues to operate in British society. Reading literature critically allows for one to identify the intellectual foundations of such privilege and to critique it. A dismantling of privilege does not seek to undermine white individuals, but rather to restore parity amongst those of different ethnicities.

“White people should be the infantrymen in this campaign,” he notes, referring to the ways in which white British students should allow the perspectives of minority ethnic students to be centred in the process of decolonising the English Tripos.

As pressure continues to be placed on the English Faculty to provide lectures on postcolonial approaches and contemporary thinkers and critical theorists, Fergus also notes the importance of not allowing our critical faculties to rest there.

“For a lot of us, we’re often happy to critique colonialism in the past, but there’s a sense that we can be unwilling to use the same critical force to critique present day injustice.” He mentions how there is a need to make a leap from critiquing literature to critiquing present day issues like immigration and our contemporary conception of the ‘third world’.

This metaleptic leap from past to present, text to lived experience, is the crucial corollary of rethinking the ways in which the English Tripos has been devised. We may find ourselves confronted with the questions that Edward Said once asked: how does one speak the truth? What truth? For whom and where?

“How does one speak the truth? What truth? For whom and where?”



# From Dartmoor to Darwin



Varsity's podcast presenter **Raphael Korber Hoffman** spoke to an ex-heroin addict and prisoner about graduating from Cambridge

**3** 50 mature students study at the University of Cambridge, coming from all over the world and bringing with them a wide variety of life experiences which often greatly impress the 18 year olds with whom they share their lectures. Few, however, would have as remarkable a story as Christian Austin, who *Switchboard* interviewed this week for our episode on mature students – *Maturing with Age*.

A heroin addict for 17 years and spending a total of 10 years in a prison cell over a 20-year period, Christian recently completed an MPhil in Criminology at Darwin College following undergraduate study at Cardiff University.

Raised on a council estate in Hampshire but spending time as a child in various care homes, Christian had his first run in with the law at age 6 and began truanting from school and taking drugs from the age of 12. Christian injected heroin for the first time aged just 18. Several decades of intermittent imprisonment followed, including spells at the foreboding Dartmoor prison. But despite the hostile prison environment and the heavy cloud of addiction, Chris-

tian, inspired by his mother, sought to educate himself as best as possible.

He read extensively including novels by Hugo, Dumas, Solzhenitsyn and Hardy whilst in jail. Pursuing his musical talents – Christian plays the saxophone, guitar and sings – have also always been of great interest. Not wanting his own children to follow the same path that he, and Christian's father who was an alcoholic, had followed, Christian entered a rehabilitation centre and moved to a new city to begin a new chapter of his life at the age of 35. Christian credits the help he received at the centre, as well as moving away from the town where he grew up and where the temptation of drug use was often too hard to resist, as significant factors in him being able to start out in adult life a second time.

Christian hasn't touched heroin since 1997, and in the years after his release he worked as a construction worker before, following redundancy in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2008, he sought to pursue his academic interests. He first got in contact with a Cambridge professor whilst researching his undergraduate dissertation on music in prisons, and once he graduated, applied to study at Cambridge University. Now, just over 20 years since he turned his back on addiction and resultant crime, Christian, father of four and the first person in his family to attend university, looks forward to potentially continuing his academic career by pursuing a PhD.

Another interviewee this week was Ulysses Chow who worked as a private investigator in Hong Kong before his arrival in Cambridge in 2017. Most commonly employed to investigate suspected extramarital affairs and custody cases, Ulysses spent up to eight hours a day watching, recording and taking photos of his targets. The intimate nature of private investigating became clear to Ulysses as he uncovered aspects of his targets'

lives which they believed to be entirely secret, with significant consequences for them and their families. Now a second-year law student, Ulysses is comfortable with the legal status of investigating, but views his days as a private eye as being behind him.

*Switchboard* also spoke with Joshua Agbo, who recently graduated with a PhD from Anglia Ruskin University, arriving in the UK with an already established academic career in his home country of Nigeria. A published author prior to his arrival in Cambridge, Joshua seeks

“Following redundancy he chose to pursue his academic interests”

to publicise alternative narratives of African history, becoming involved in Cambridge-based efforts to decolonise the curriculum.

To listen to our interviews this week in full, our *Maturing with Age* episode can be found on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts and all other major podcast platforms. Each week *Switchboard* seeks to connect listeners with people in Cambridge with interesting stories to tell. If you have heard any unusual stories from around Cambridge please contact us at [switchboard@varsity.co.uk](mailto:switchboard@varsity.co.uk).

▲ *Switchboard* presenter, Raphael Korber Hoffman (left) interviews mature student, Christian Austin (right) (JOE COOK)

“Despite the hostile prison environment he sought to educate himself as best as possible”

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# Opinion



## Action on the ethnicity pay gap is long overdue

A Varsity investigation today looks at Cambridge's pay disparities for Ethnic Minority academics. What happens next?

Priya Bryant

**R**unning quietly and often unacknowledged at the side of the gender pay gap, the disparity in pay between white and BME people in this country has existed for decades. So, too, has the disparity between the growing media attention and institutional action surrounding the gender pay gap and the silence surrounding the BME pay gap.

Similarly to the gender pay gap, this is a problem which reflects the multitude of limitations faced by BME people in the workplace: the casual racism, the belief that we don't really belong in positions of power, and the lack of representation at the highest levels of business and government. In almost any walk of life, BME people are less likely to break into an industry and are then held back from progressing within it.

Racism in the workplace is reflected in the overt harassment of non-white figures in the public eye - think of the almost daily racist messages and threats received by David Lammy or Diane Abbott. Yet at its most structural and its most insidious, it manifests in the systematic undervaluing and underrepresentation of BME people, and the result of this is a pay gap that reaches above

20% in some institutions. Some would blame the gap on a disparity in educational attainment between white and BME students - yet in 2016, a study found that the pay gap actually widens with qualifications. Black people with GCSEs were paid 11% less than their white counterparts, while for black graduates, the gap was 23%. For Ethnic Minority people as a whole, the pay gap at degree level was 10%.

These figures are shocking, and yet the problem has gone largely undiscussed in the national media. Compared to the uproar about the gender pay gap in the past year, there has been little reporting about the BME pay gap. For the BME women who are caught in the crossfire of these discriminations, the silence on the BME pay gap neglects to acknowledge their experiences.

In part, yes, this might be down to the fact that one issue affects around half the inhabitants of this country, while the other affects a minority. But to me, this is also another demonstration of the refusal of this country to face up to the racist legacies of its colonial past. Most people find it too difficult to address the ways in which BME people have been systematically disadvantaged, because it requires facing up to the racism that

has been ingrained in our institutions and our everyday interactions.

This is a problem which integrally concerns the University - as Varsity has reported, black academic and research staff at Cambridge make on average nearly £12,000 a year less than white academic and research staff. Racism at the University is often considered to be an issue on the students' side, a problem of access and an alienating culture.

While these are all struggles of fundamental importance, we need to start a conversation about the ways in which racism institutionally permeates the entire structure of the University and how significant its impact on staff can be. Not only are BME staff at the University disadvantaged in terms of the pay gap; they are hugely underrepresented, with fewer than 15 members of academic staff disclosing their identity as black, Pakistani or Bangladeshi respectively.

A conversation about the experience of BME staff at the University is long overdue. Just as the country as a whole needs to be talking about racism in the workplace, we need to expand our discussions of racism to encompass all minority members of the University, not just students.

Earlier this month, Theresa May fi-

▲ A Cambridge graduation ceremony last year (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

“We need to expand our discussions of racism to encompass all minority members of the University, not just students”

nally spoke out on the issue: the government plans to launch a consultation into whether mandatory reporting of wages will help to solve the problem. This seems like the right move - the gender gap furore proved that the only way to address systematic discrimination is to bring attention and public pressure to bear on the companies responsible.

Public pressure can work in the case of the University as well. The revelation of these statistics about the status of BME staff within the University must provoke a similarly tireless campaign. Of course, the disparities within the University are part of a much wider national problem, and are certainly not about to be solved overnight. The University has been making efforts, with the development of “diverse recruitment guidelines to help attract more Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff”, but it would do well to act more urgently on the fact that the BME pay gap at play when these individuals do become members of staff is a matter deserving of attention - and immediately - within its own right. If the University is truly “committed to being a space free from racism [and] discrimination,” it must commit itself publicly and immediately to resolving this most striking of injustices at its core.



## Opinion



# Understanding the undiscussed in our history

**Sophie Zhang**

*Decolonisation has to start well before Cambridge, in primary and secondary school history curricula*

Recently, Jeremy Corbyn has called for a greater emphasis on teaching about the “role and legacy” of British colonialism and black Britons in history in compulsory education. As a nation, we need to uncover hidden histories about colonialism and its impact, and develop a critical understanding of colonialism. Closer to home, *Varsity* reported on the Royal Historical Society’s findings which showed that 96.1% of university historians are white, whilst under 1% are black. However, this issue of representation is only part of the problems within historical scholarship. As the report itself stated, there is a ‘need for more diverse content of curriculums in schools and universities’ with current curricula ‘grounded uncritically in White histories and Eurocentric approaches to the past’.

As a nation, we need to uncover hidden histories about colonialism and its impact, and develop a critical understanding of colonialism. Some of the appeals for a decolonised curriculum have been loudest in Cambridge, but when it comes to understanding the undiscussed past of our country, changes are needed root and branch in the education system.

To some extent, decolonising our curriculum is simply about teaching modern history in a truthful way. At present, we awkwardly avoid teaching colonialism at school and treat it in a whitewashed way (if it is talked about at all, that is). I remember the one time we did learn anything about colonialism during school, when my teacher told us that Britain colonised many countries by “accident”. We then spent the rest of the lesson looking at the “interesting and different” ways the British colonised countries around the world, instead of actually discussing the actions and impact of the British administration.

The Western colonial powers fundamentally reshaped the modern world order and stemmed new inequalities of wealth and power. Therefore, without understanding the role of British colonialism, it is impossible to understand both modern British and world history. There shouldn’t be anything alarming about expanding our curriculum in this way; as Stuart Hall so succinctly put it in a 1991 essay, “There is no English history without that other history.” We can’t understand British history without understanding Britain’s actions abroad and how people of colour contributed to national history.

Without a public understanding of the history of colonialism, it is easy to perpetuate Eurocentric and often racist discourses. For example, without sufficient knowledge about Britain’s colonial past, it is easy for people to see ex-colonies

as somehow inherently poor, disorderly and backwards. This becomes not just an issue about historical truth, but also a problem that influences contemporary politics. Such perjorative portrayals of countries in the Global South encourage many people to support questionable actions, such as harmful foreign policies, discrimination against refugees and cutting foreign aid spending.

In the specific example of foreign aid spending, people often see other countries as ‘undeserving’ of British money, with the International Development Secretary, Penny Mordaunt, this year encouraging developing nations to ‘put their hands in their pockets’ as she warned of cuts to the foreign aid budget. Yet this attitude is amnesic, and forgets that much of Britain’s wealth came about through the exploitation of the labour and natural resources of its colonies. The problem is that without a historical understanding of both Britain’s economic exploitation of its colonies and the political disruption British colonial rule caused in countless regions around the world, it is easy to perpetuate stereotypes that encourage negative, often racist, discourses in politics, further enabling questionable daily behaviour in the form of racist remarks and actions.

Although Corbyn focused on the issue of decolonising compulsory education, it’s also vital to decolonise higher education. This is especially true for universities such as Cambridge, which have historic links to colonialism, be it through historically providing an education for colonial administrators, or through housing stolen artefacts, such as the Gweagal spears. Furthermore, as one of the world’s leading universities in producing research and theories, Cambridge has an extensive influence and could encourage other universities to decolonise. This is something which Sujit Sivasundaram, co-chair of the working group behind the RHS’ report and a fellow at Gonville and Caius, has himself identified as he declared, ‘We’re at a point where history in Cambridge will once again change’.

But at the same time, only a small minority of the British population study at Cambridge. In order to begin a public discussion about British colonialism, it is also necessary for the conversation to begin earlier on in schooling. We must equally push for a decolonised curriculum for compulsory education at the same time as advocating a decolonised university curriculum. In the end, both elements of the country’s schooling must be decolonised and it is not a question of either or. It is only by achieving this goal that we can begin to hope for greater social awareness of the importance of decolonisation: what would a decolonised global economy look like? What would a more egalitarian international order look like? Teaching about colonialism in depth in compulsory education is only the beginning of a much longer conversation and series of changes, all very worthwhile.

“Without understanding the role of British colonialism, it is impossible to understand both modern British and world history”

◀ Illustration by Lisha Zhong for *Varsity*



# Universal Credit is not a distant issue; its impact can already be felt in Cambridge

*Universal Credit will have severe implications for social mobility and access to top universities in the future*

Lara Parizotto

As Universal Credit is rolled out in Cambridge, the impacts of this policy must be of concern to us all. Access is a key concern within our University; if we really want to mean what we say, Universal Credit must be part of that conversation.

Universal Credit is a benefit combining six of our legacy benefits, including Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit and Income Support, but it achieves no practical improvements. Much has been said about the improvement in 'efficiency' that could stem from Universal Credit. An important goal of the scheme is ending the complexities of the current benefit system, to which I am not opposed. But Universal Credit is simply not addressing the issues it claims to be tackling – it is in fact creating new problems.

Despite the claims of the Secretary of State, Esther McVey, the National Audit Office has reported that it is not possible to measure whether Universal Credit leads to higher employment rates. It is already more expensive than the old system, costing £1.9 billion to get 800,000 people onto Universal Credit – and we are barely halfway there. Meanwhile, its

rollout is to be delayed once again, and yet the Government is still content to continue with this policy.

On a human level the cost is desperate. The average claimant is in £1400 rent arrears, with late payments all too common, some councils have been owed up to £8 million. These rent arrears lead to eviction letters being sent out to vulnerable people, the same ones ending up on our streets. Foodbanks are another indicator: the Trussell Trust states that in 2017, 1 million people relied on 3-day emergency food supplies nationally, marking a 13% increase on the previous year.

Working as a caseworker in an area of full Universal Credit roll-out, I observed its personal and political impacts. I listened to a teenage girl ask for help for her mum who was struggling to pay rent because of Universal Credit. Sitting there looking at copies of documents to try and help, I realised that all I could realistically do was ask the DWP for one more reassessment.

This was the same girl who should now be thinking of applying to university, not worrying whether Universal Credit will be paid in time. Future generations growing up in poverty and students who

need extra support will be shut out of our educational institutions.

If the future is bleak, the present is no better. Disabled students are affected by Universal Credit as they are being cut off from money essential to their extra living costs. Universal Credit, as it stands, does not automatically treat disabled students as having a "limited capability for work" a criteria that prior to Universal Credit entitled students, especially part-time students, to access Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Housing Benefit during their studies. The new rules will only consider extremely severe circumstances such as receiving treatment for cancer.

Mature students with children, especially single parents, should also not be cut out from further education, but reports have shown that single parents lose out an average of £1,350 a year with Universal Credit. Education should never be made inaccessible because of a poorly-designed welfare system and yet, that is what many students may now experience.

Worryingly, this system is indicative of the state of the welfare system in the UK and the financial support offered to students of all backgrounds. Costs are

“  
Reports have shown that single parents lose out on an average of £1,350 a year with Universal Credit  
”

up. That much we know and experience everyday when the cost of our accommodation increases alongside the cost of food, travel and course materials. Nevertheless, maintenance grants are scrapped and loans are insufficient. The burden of applying for further bursaries and scholarships once again falls on the student, whose mental health is worsened because of the stress of having to balance an intense academic career with the everyday financial strains of university life.

Just like people all across the country have to 'prove' their physical and mental disabilities or their lack of stable income caused by zero hour contracts to receive Universal Credit, our students are required to relive often traumatic experiences of family estrangement or spend hours on endless forms just so that they can access the most basic level of support that should be readily available for all.

As students, we must campaign for a stop to Universal Credit. This policy is already causing hardship to members of our society. I do not want to see it being rolled out further in Cambridge. I dread to think what more could happen in the most unequal city in the UK.

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# CUSU should not have had to assert its stance on Remembrance

The motion passed at this week's CUSU Council highlighted the effect the events of the past two weeks have had on our University

Lucy Fairweather

Two weeks after a motion put before CUSU Council to commemorate British war dead was amended to propose the commemoration of all those whose lives have been affected by war, CUSU's executive team proposed a new motion last week providing "clarity" on their Remembrance Day stance.

There are many debates to be had - and many have been had - as to the original motion presented to Council two weeks ago. It is understandable how the wording of some parts of it, such as 'examples of inspiration from instances of human fortitude and gallantry' could be perceived as a 'glorification and valorisation' of war. However, it is equally undoubtable that 'immense personal sacrifices' were made by members of the British armed forces, regardless of how one views the causes that these sacrifices served. Wearing poppies generally shouldn't be considered as being too controversial: their sale contributes a major part of the British Legion's income, a charity which helps veterans and their families.

Personally, seeing rows of names of the fallen fills me with sadness and regret, not an admiration of war. To commemorate and respect those who paid the ultimate price does not necessarily equate to endorsing the causes of their death. I equally understand the desire to remember not just veterans, but civilian casualties of war too. The commemoration of one does not have to come at the expense of the other.

But many may question whether CUSU Council is the right forum in which

to debate these issues. Whatever your opinion of Remembrance Day, your student union's stance on it probably isn't a deciding factor in your personal beliefs. There are topics where I care what my student union's stance on them is: on tuition fees, on staff strikes, on rent campaigns, but Remembrance Day is not one of them. I understand that how we remember those who die in wars matter, and it should definitely be discussed in public forums. However, I'd question whether CUSU council is the best place for this. Those working within CUSU and its campaigns, regardless of their personal opinions, at first did not issue a statement in their professional capacity.

The recent decision of CUSU to clarify its stance did not occur in a vacuum; it happened after two weeks of intense national media scrutiny which resulted in death threats being made against multiple individuals involved in the debate surrounding the original motion. I definitely do not want to add to mounting criticism both within and outside the University. However we must question to what extent this motion was written due to a strength of feeling from Council members and student groups, and how much influence people and factors external to Cambridge had.

For all the national media derision of 'safe spaces', these last two weeks have demonstrated conclusively that for those who dare to hold the 'wrong' opinion, these do not exist. While one can disagree with the content of the amendment to the original motion, the way the amendment was reported on



▲ During the media storm, the University tweeted a photo of commemorations (SIR CAM)

nationally sensationalised the debate and exploited the tired stereotype of the 'snowflake' student left. So I completely understand why CUSU, amid the media storm, felt the need to clarify their stance. The new motion still overwhelmingly focuses on the right of students to feel free to celebrate Remembrance Day as they see fit. That CUSU felt the need to reiterate this basic policy shows the extent to which national reporting has affected the University.

Remembrance Day will always incite strong feelings - it is after all, an incredibly emotive topic. The individuals occupying executive positions within CUSU

of course have political views, and so CUSU will never be completely apolitical, but this is not the sort of topic that these individuals expect to have to discuss in a professional capacity. CUSU does not normally have to clarify its stance on national issues, and nor should they feel like it has to through media pressure.

No one is, or should be, forced to wear a poppy, and no one should be threatened for their decision either way. CUSU is right to allow students to decide for themselves how to commemorate, even if the motion to clarify it came about in a painful way. But that was never what the media really cared about anyway.

## More than the education offered, grammar and state schools differ most in giving students confidence

Students' internalised view of their own ability differs drastically between comprehensive and grammar schools

Charlotte Lillywhite

Access is conventionally linked to financial and social issues. What underpins much of this topic, however, are the values which students internalise as a consequence of their lived experiences. Attitudes towards education propagated in school influence students' self-perception significantly and despite how this affects access to institutions like Oxbridge, this is often ignored.

Recognising this could not only broaden students' horizons in all areas beyond school, but also help us to tackle the epidemic of self-selection which narrows the socioeconomic backgrounds from which Oxbridge applicants typically come.

In some parts of the country a divide is established from the age of 11, where students are separated into the grammar or comprehensive schooling systems (alongside private schooling). Such a system suggests that where a child is placed at 11 indelibly signifies the level of their ability and how it will develop throughout their school years, but experience tells us that so much can change from the ages of 11 to 16. In some cases, though, this impression of per-

“There are definite flaws in the general cultural attitude towards education in the non-selective school system”

manence infiltrates students' own self-evaluations of their abilities, and thus the opportunities which they perceive as open to them.

Having attended a comprehensive school up until the end of year 11 and then a grammar school during my last two years of school, I believe it is crucial to address how different the attitudes to education really are, often in subtle and nuanced ways, between both systems.

There are funding disparities which hamper some non-selective schools from providing the best possible level of education and the vital work they do in catering to such a range of students despite this must be praised. While grammar schools focus on a specific portion of the student population, non-selective schools have to cater to the full range of students while being increasingly understaffed and over-populated.

In my experience, however, there are definite flaws in the general cultural attitude towards education in the non-selective system. While at my grammar school sixth form we were constantly pushed to achieve more, mentally broaden our horizons and push ourselves to take up as many opportunities as pos-

sible, this encouragement of ambition was far less common in my state comprehensive. Although we had many fantastic teachers who wanted us to do our best, predicted grades were treated as an end-goal rather than something which we could surpass, and our teaching was ascribed with this in mind.

This bleeds into the way our education is treated in the comprehensive system, with obvious and tangible implications for our future. With such a wide range of abilities grouped together in the student body, it appears sensible to stratify the year into sets according to individual ability in certain subjects. This enables specialised teaching. However, it also disables further academic opportunity for most of the year, as our academic performance in Year 8 decide sets which remain, for the most part, permanent until the end of our GCSEs at 16. As a result, all but the top set had their opportunity to take triple science removed from a ridiculously young age.

Yes, there is the possibility of moving sets if students really surpass their peers, but the permanence implied by this stratification hardly encourages many to try and push the boundaries imposed

on them. From this emerges a pervasive tendency to visualise grades themselves as barriers - something too difficult to get over if your attainment only reaches a certain point - rather than stepping-stones to reaching the best grade you can get. This sets up a generally defeatist attitude to education which dulls ambition and leads to self-selection when it comes to university applications. As students, having internalised such attitudes, they will automatically believe places like Oxbridge are not for them.

Of course, the academically-perfectionist attitude permeating the grammar school system also establishes an unhealthy conceptualisation of education. Pinpointing one's self-worth on academic attainment is a dangerous path to tread, with an often toxic impact on mental health.

We have to rethink our view of education from its very beginnings to change attitudes and improve access to higher education. Going to university is not the be-all and end-all, and should not be seen as essential for happiness and health. But above all else, the path to higher education has to *feel*, as well as be open to everyone.



# vulture



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# Hiding my body in clothing

**Fashion can be damaging, Phoebe Cramer argues, but it can also be a tool for recovery**

**Content note** This article contains discussion relating to mental illness and the process of recovering from eating disorders.

I used to have a pile of “My Favourite Clothes” stashed beneath my bed. The idea was for them to be out of sight, but I thought of them when dressing each morning. These clothes were my old staples. A pair of mom jeans from a mild 2016 hipster phase; a vintage top found in my grandmother’s memory box; some muted blue trousers with the right amount of fray. None were particular favourites or had any important impact of my style, but somehow they became my most important clothes.

It was because they no longer fitted. Or they did, but in a way that made me panic and pull them off again before my reflection sunk in. I loved those clothes, I loved the identity they represented and the memories attached. I did not love my body in them.

They became my target. Why get rid of them when I’ll look how I want to in them soon? Why waste such a useful tool of measurement? Of comparison, when I had photos of myself in those clothes that I loved?

The relationship between body image and

style is as complex as it sounds. It is entwined with self-identity and gender, and amplified by the photographic, media-orientated lives we live. To engage with fashion and develop a style is only fun when we have a good relationship with our bodies.

When a person has body image issues, when the facts are irrelevant and the internal dislike overwhelming, fashion can feel like a draining stress.

When my body-image issues reached their worst, I detached my body from my identity. It sounds philosophical, but really just means that I started to think in terms of ‘me’ and, separately, ‘my body’. This sent my relationship with clothes reeling. I have always felt best wearing clothes that represent myself, but gradually, I grew to want my body to be excluded from that definition and identity.

I felt undeserving of the clothes I loved and in my mind used to look better in. It felt like they were mocking me, reminding me of what I used to look like and could look like if I only X or Y or Z.

I developed an aversion to seeing other people in my clothes. By ‘other people’ I mainly mean my friends: a borrowed dress, a jumper to keep off the chill.

They looked infinitely better in them.

It was my style, my fashion, my precious clothes, but the person wearing them actually looked good. Deserving in a way I felt I was not. Some items I was put off forever and since



▲ Illustration by Lisha Zhong for Varsity

have left my wardrobe. Of course, I would be surprised, but happy, if any of those friends felt perfectly comfortable with their bodies at all times. Through all of this though, I learnt that fashion can be a genuine tool of recovery. Style can also make us feel really, really good about ourselves. When I started to resent my clothes and how I looked in them, I had to restock my wardrobe. I googled ‘Best Cuts To Wear For Each Body-Type’ and followed that advice. I quickly learned, however, that certain types of fashion do not belong to certain types of people. Never read an article like that. The aim of fashion is not to look the slimmest you possibly can.

So then I was forced to branch out into styles I had never considered before. I tried new trousers and skirts and dresses and tops and everything in between. It was a gradual process, but I got bolder. Patterns and colours felt eye-catching in a good way again, as opposed to drawing attention to a body I wanted to hide.

The pile of “My Favourite Clothes” no longer lives under my bed. I gave them away without trying them again. Perhaps I would have liked the way I looked in them, perhaps they would have helped me to feel good about my body again. Perhaps they would have just dragged me back to a time of insecurity and doubt. To every person holding onto something that they hope to wear in the future ‘if they get brave enough’ or ‘when they lose that weight’, get rid of it. Style should never be restricting. It should evolve and develop along with ourselves – including our bodies.

## Being GQ editor in a post-truth world

Editor of GQ Dylan Jones talks to Julia Davies



Illustration by Ben Brown for Varsity ▲

“(I think the most important thing for us is the fact that we’re still here.”

Dylan Jones’ judgement on GQ’s 30th birthday may come as a shock to anyone looking at this deeply self-assured magazine. The thought of this publication succumbing to the fate which has befallen industry titans such as *The Face* in the past few decades seems laughable. That Jones is proud at the mere survival of GQ is a salutary reminder of the precarious times facing journalism.

Jones has been editor of GQ for 19 years, during which the industry has changed beyond recognition. “The biggest change is in terms of technological change,” he says, referring to distribution and consumption behaviours. But there is a more worrying change in attitude that he also notes. “There is a presumption, particularly amongst [millennials], that news and content is not something you have to pay for.” The idea that everything should be free and instantly available, but also of top journalistic quality, reflects for Jones a “belligerence” amongst consumers operating in an “accelerated culture”, and is the greatest danger facing journalism today. This reluctance to pay for articles is the biggest difference between our generation and its forebears. GQ’s app is an important part of its future growth plan.

But this cutting-edge focus on the future seems at odds with the title of the magazine, *Gentlemen’s Quarterly*. I put this to Jones and he pauses for thought. “I think the relationship between the brand and the words is so abstract that they’re almost meaningless.” This is not mere bluster, however. In the light of #MeToo and other social movements, the 30th anniversary of GQ has not been marked with lavish shoots, spectacle and ‘banging our chest’, but instead by an in-depth YouGov study called ‘The State of Men’. The study at-

tempts to find out how men feel in and about themselves, their partners and their well-being in general.

For Jones, the author of 2006’s consciously tongue-in-cheek *Mr Jones’ Rules for the Modern Man*, now is not a time for jocularly. Instead, it is more important than ever to be a ‘gentleman’ – a word which to Jones simply means “being a good man.” Now is an opportune time to retrospect, and it is clear that culture has changed beyond recognition since 1988, when the magazine was launched. “It’s like different centuries. Everything is different. Twenty years ago, if I’d put a man on the cover, I’d have lost my job in six months, because it wouldn’t sell”, asserts Jones. To date, GQ has featured Sadiq Khan twice, and Jeremy Corbyn and David Cameron, amongst other high profile figures. “Culture has changed almost 180 degrees since the 90s, and for the better.”

At one stage I refer to GQ and similar magazines as ‘glossies’, and Jones slams his glass on the table. “That was disparaging.” The idea, to Jones, that luxury goods or fashion are a form of dilettantism is “puerile” and “demeaning”. But surely he must have encountered this opinion before? “I love that world [of magazines], it’s intoxicating. I don’t see any contradiction in having an advertisement for a pair of shoes next to a tremendous piece of journalism. One pays the other.” The fashion industry “makes more money than the car industry.” He is tired of people thinking it’s cool to know nothing about fashion, a view he sees as “incredibly sexist.”

He is tired of tabloid-style scrutiny of what people wear, such as Theresa May’s ‘trouser-gate’, but he is sanguine about the realities facing publications today. “If *Vogue* sold six times more copies a month, would it still be *Vogue*? You’d have to alter the editorial to ap-

peal to that many people. We can’t compete with Google. How could we? We don’t have that scale. We have to deliver a very particular audience for our advertisers. It’s all about demographics.” Jones emphasises the scale of the competition facing publications like GQ. “Media has changed enormously: the culture, delivery systems... people are far more judgemental these days. The media industry is more fragmented and fragile than it used to be.”

What can we predict of GQ’s 40th anniversary? “The aspirations of the publication will remain the same, but in what form it’s delivered, I have no idea. All people buy into us for our taste.” In Jones’ eyes, the role of GQ is to provide “nuance” and “filtering” in the face of the internet, which is a “mass of stuff”. GQ’s commitment to quality has never wavered, even when the society its readers inhabit, such as during what Jones calls the “fag end of the 90s, the Brit-pop era”, was not so highbrow.

Jones has no desire to play to the gallery, though. When asked if he feels he has to tread a middle path to appeal to as many readers as possible, he is horrified by the notion. “We don’t have to do anything!” he exclaims.

Jones reiterates his fears surrounding the devaluation of journalism, and the assumption that people are “just content providers; that it doesn’t mean anything any more.” He sees this putting talented people off becoming journalists. “However, there is beginning to be a return to an appreciation of expertise. I hope I’m right.” When we are faced with so much news, people are returning to the sources and interpreters that they can trust. In the wake of Trump, and Brexit, argues Jones, people are seeking a greater degree of engagement. It’s becoming a conversation. Perhaps it is this understanding of the interplay of fashion, politics and society that means that GQ is still here.

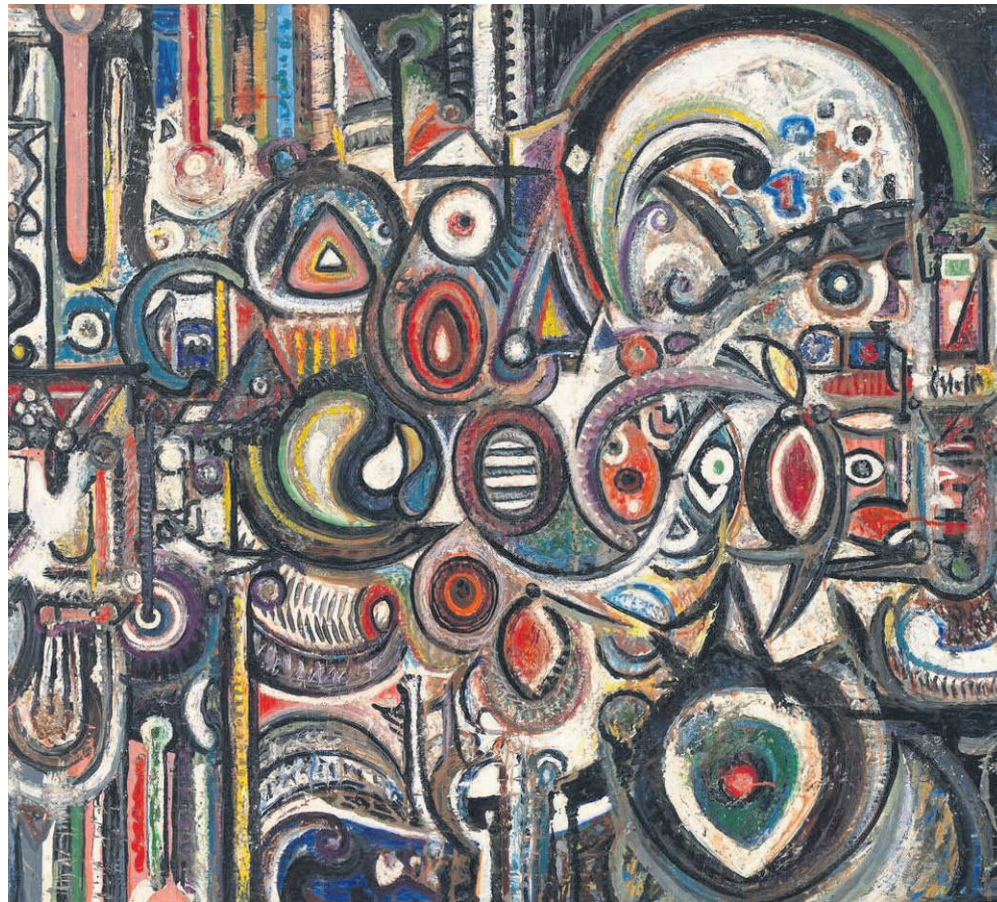


# Richard Pousette-Dart at Kettle's Yard

Isobel Bickersteth

Until now, Richard Pousette-Dart has never been the subject of a major solo exhibition in the UK. This seems surprising: he was a key figure of Abstract Expressionism, the art movement which radically transformed post-war American art, as well as being at the forefront of the New York School. With this in mind, *Richard Pousette-Dart: Beginnings*, is an exciting opportunity to view a selection of his early work in a carefully curated space.

The variety in medium and style of his work is impressive. Sculpture, photography and painting can all be found in the exhibition, which focuses on the formative stages of the artist's career. The exhibition plots Pousette-Dart's progression from a sculptor to an artist who became "taken with painting which drinks me up"; the diversity in his practice rendered through the galleries juxtaposition of his different artistic mediums. Interspersed throughout the exhibition are excerpts of his writings, letters and postcards which enable visitors to explore his inspiration. Upstairs lies another surprise: intense, strikingly evocative, photography line the walls of the Edlis Neeson research space. Portraits of his contempo-



▲ *Within the Room, 1942, Richard Pousette-Dart* (KETTLER'S YARD)

raries, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman and William Congdon, as well as art dealer Betty Parsons, serving as a reminder of how far he was embedded into the New York art scene.

Art is conceived as a continual, ever changing process: "I am passionately in love with... creative energy", he explained in a letter to Jim Ede. His painting shares a similar inclination for evolution. Geometric forms of Cubism lie alongside Native American inspired depictions of nature, which display graphic outlines of animal forms. Running throughout his work is an interest in symbols. This is realised in full in the second room, which focuses on his interest in the symbolism of the circle - particularly in work from the 1950s. His proclamation that circles are "all or nothing/ they are living signs of flowers or spirit/ they are signs of heaven/ rising and falling suns and moons/ the centre of the earth and universe/ God's eye" is adorned across one wall: "they tremble in my transcendental landscape". This "tremble" echoes most vividly in the large-scale paintings which fill the space, huge canvases centred around etchings of circles. Monumental in size, and mesmerising to view, their surface detail is equally fascinating. Pousette-Dart builds a textured and layered surface. *Square of Meditation #2* exemplifies this, its paint applied so heavily the surface appears almost sculpture like in quality.

This preoccupation with symbols is closely intertwined with his interest in spirituality. "I strive to express the spiritual nature of the universe", says one of his writings displayed as part of the exhibit, "painting...is mysterious and transcending, yet solid and real".

Energy radiates throughout this exhibition. Regardless of the style, or medium, of his work, Pousette-Dart's attempt to depict his "transcendental landscape" remains constant throughout the exhibit.

# Kurt Vile's *Bottle It In*: the soundtrack for days of self-doubt

Kurt Vile's latest record *Bottle It In* is "an emotional exploration of male mental health and isolation"

Tom Breakwell

I've always had a soft spot for Kurt Vile. I recall first hearing him when I was working as an usher at an independent cinema in Birmingham; it was my bar manager who introduced me to Kurt's characteristic drawl and his washed out, psychedelic guitar (plus a crisp hint of bluegrass banjo snaking in and out of the mix). On that shift it made good background music as I cleaned the empty screens.

At Cambridge I have been plagued, as I guess many of you reading have also been, by periods of self-doubt. For me, Kurt Vile is often the soundtrack for those days.

The Kurt Vile experience has developed from the workplace to those introspective melancholy moments at university. Those moments when the pressure and stress is too much to handle and the odd lyric from

the former forklift driver seems to sum up everything you feel.

*Bottle It In*, his seventh record in eight years, has all the typical trappings of a Kurt Vile record. The opening track 'Loading Zones', a song about the banality of daily life and the need to get "shopping done, and laundry too", is hardly Sex, Drugs and Rock n' Roll. But as a lyrical companion to songs such as 'Pretty Pimpin' off 2015's *b'lieve i'm goin down*, the theme is familiar.

But then there are those surprises: the track opens with electric fuzz that sounds like a malfunctioning R2-D2 swirling in a blender, while the chorus of "I park for free" is sang with a surprising amount of gusto. Hey, I'm trying to be moody here, don't be so upbeat!

For me, Kurt has never been much of a lyricist, even if the occasional line may hint at something more profound. On this new record he's outdone himself, with some of the lyrics sounding like they have been made up on the spot after about six pints.

A real highlight appears in 'Hysteria' with the beautiful semi-couplet, "Like, mmm girl you gave me rabies/And I don't mean maybe." But saying that, some of the longer cuts such as the almost 10-minute track 'Bassackwards' are pure stoner poetry as Kurt weaves a tale of existential pain fitting for an uncertain age.

'One Trick Ponies', features Kurt introspec-



▲ Kurt Vile performing at Roskilde

(BILL EBBESEN)

tively acknowledging his own music style, accepting his fondness for 'repetition' and ultimately shirking off any fears about being seen as a one trick pony. But it's also a bright and positive song about friendship, the perfect counterweight to the gloom of 'Bassackwards'.

The respite is brief, for the woe returns on the title track. I guess that many listeners might be put off by another 10-minute run time and some fairly sparse instrumentation, but on a personal level at least, the song acts as an emotional exploration of male mental health and isolation.

This is the song I have on repeat, while simultaneously trying to figure out why I keep returning to it. Ultimately, it is the static instrumentation which transforms the song into a hypnotic experience, a ripe emotional canvas onto which I can project my own thoughts and feelings.

Overall, *Bottle It In* may be a mixed bag. It is very much a typical Kurt Vile album, not really adding anything particularly new to his oeuvre.

A new listener may not find it his most accessible work, especially compared to the immediately arresting songs on *b'lieve i'm goin down*. But for me, as a long-time fan ploughing through *Bottle It In*'s 80-minute run time, there are just enough riches to reap.



# What to watch this Ha



## Lillian Crawford reveals her top eight picks this spooky season

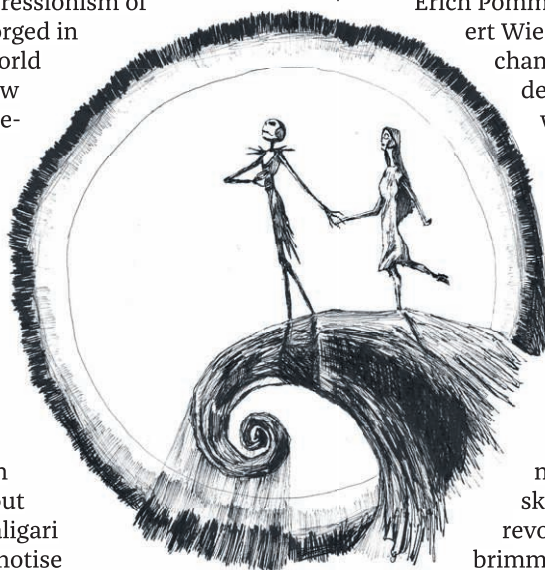
Many people on October the 31st will settle down to a low budget movie just like without any intention of being scared. However, should you prefer to frighten away the spirits with some visceral chills, this list might provide some better guidance.

Rather than slasher flicks and streams of jump scares, I have selected a range of accessible pictures which seek to perturb and question human nature. Spanning from the early days of German expressionism right up to contemporary melodrama, the bouts of introspection will be lightened by the occasional romp and a dose of black humour. Whether you only have a fifteen-minute break between studies or plan to set a day aside for a macabre movie marathon, there should be something here to satisfy your dark curiosities. Viewer

caution advised.

### **Das Cabinet des Dr Caligari (1920)**

The German expressionism of the 1920s was forged in the hellfire of World War One, and few films better represent the jarred perception of reality it invoked than this. Its creators, Hans Janowitz and Carl Mayer, wanted to use cinema to encourage popular pacifism with a story about the crazed Dr Caligari who would hypnotise the somnambulist, Cesare, to commit crimes. Upon being caught, he would go to an asylum, wherein lay the original twist — Caligari was actually the director of the asylum, making the film



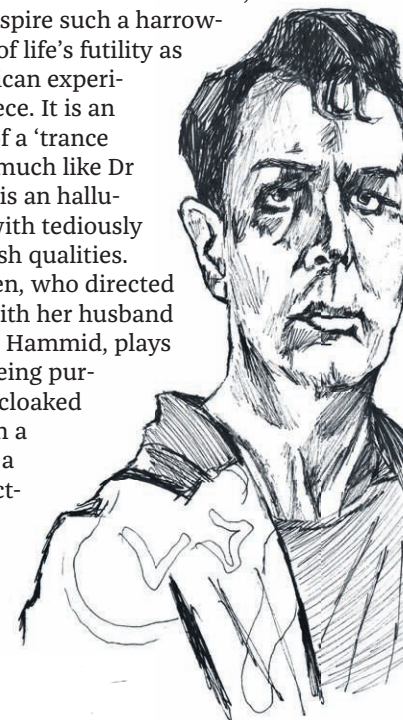
a poignant statement on the insanity of authority.

However, once the film was adapted by Erich Pommer and handed over to Robert Wiene to direct, the plot was changed to make this twist the delusion of the protagonist, warping the message to suggest that it was not authority figures who were mad, but those who believed they were. It is worth watching for Hermann Warm's set design alone, which conveys the same jagged abstraction as the best-known painters of the expressionist movement, especially Lyonel Feininger and Wassily Kandinsky. There is something truly revolutionary at work here, brimming with a post-war dread that remains alarming today.

### **Meshes of the Afternoon (1943)**

There are a number of excellent short films

I could have included on this list, but few inspire such a harrowing sense of life's futility as this American experimental piece. It is an example of a 'trance film', and much like Dr Caligari it is an hallucination with tediously nightmarish qualities. Maya Deren, who directed the film with her husband Alexander Hammid, plays the lead being pursued by a cloaked figure with a mirror for a face, reflecting the darkest thoughts of the subconscious into reality. It is smattered with symbolism, with





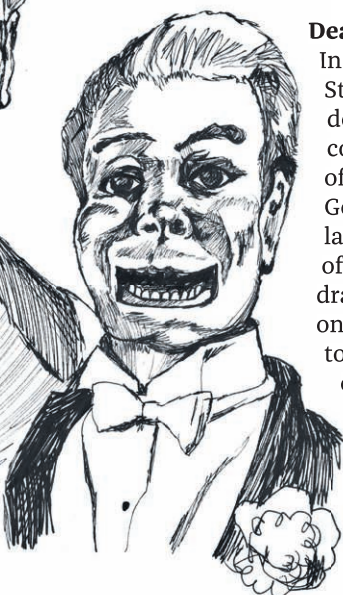
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▲ Laura Palmer in the Twin peaks prequel that garnered boos at Cannes in 1992 (YOUTUBE/NEW LINE CINEMA)

▼ All illustrations by Ben Brown for Varsity

recurring shots of keys and knives spiralling almost to the point of banality. Its avant-garde depiction of the troubled female soul would inspire the birth of New American Cinema in the 1940s, and is also discernible in several films by David Lynch.



## Dead of Night (1945)

In the 1930s Ealing Studios had been dominated by the comedies and musicals of Gracie Fields and George Formby, before launching into a series of realistic military dramas during the Second World War. While today the comedies of the late '40s and early '50s, such as *Whisky Galore!* and *The Ladykillers*, dominate popular memory of the studios, a number of the films pro-

duced under Sir Michael Balcon have a supernatural theme. British horror would come to be dominated by Hammer in the following decade, but in 1945 Ealing stalwarts and newcomers Alberto Cavalcanti, Robert Hamer, Charles Crichton, and Basil Dearden came together to direct one of the very first horror anthology films. With its stories focusing on a haunted mirror, a ghost at a Christmas party, and the iconic living ventriloquist dummy, it continues to inspire horror, notably this year's *Ghost Stories*, in the 21st century. An essential piece of British cinema history that reflects on the emasculating power of post-war social anxiety.

## Cape Fear (1962)

Forget the 1991 Martin Scorsese remake – this Hitchcockian J. Lee Thompson original is proper hair-raising cinema. It has little reliance on visual horror; *Cape Fear* works in shadows and slowness, obscuring the raw evil of the Robert Mitchum-played antagonist, Max Cody. Even the great Gregory Peck fails to inspire the usual comfort audiences feel in his presence, as it gradually be-

comes clear that the criminal whose prison sentence he had guaranteed several years before will stop at nothing to destroy his family. It is a work worthy of Alfred Hitchcock himself, who initially storyboarded the plot but left the project over a dispute. This is no doubt aided by a cracking Bernard Hermann score, who I have long believed to be the true 'Master of Suspense'.

## The Company of Wolves (1984)

The revival of British art cinema in the mid-1980s gave rise to some incredible aesthetic accomplishments, particularly in the films of Peter Greenaway and Derek Jarman, including this Neil Jordan-directed Gothic horror. The colourful misty sets and jaw-dropping visual effects elevate Charles Perrault's original tale of Little Red Riding Hood beyond even that of Angela Carter's short stories in *The Bloody Chamber*, upon which the film was based. Indeed, Carter worked with Jordan on the screenplay to do justice to the feminist critique so central to her tales published in 1979. The result is a powerful and frightening exploration of patriarchal predatory behaviour which also gave impetus to the Wolf's song 'Hello Little Girl' from *Into the Woods* by Stephen Sondheim.

## Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me (1992)

Much of David Lynch's filmography could make the list, from *Mulholland Dr.* to *Inland Empire*, but it is this prequel to the television series *Twin Peaks* that perhaps comes closest to horror. While there are undoubtedly malevolent spirits at work in the seemingly peaceful town, it is the tangible, realistic abuse Laura Palmer faces in the days before her death that makes the skin crawl the most. The charm and humour of Kyle MacLauchlan's Dale Cooper is quickly cast aside to revel in darkness, thematically driven by the moody jazz of Angelo Badalamenti's score. Sequences border on the psychedelic, including a scene in a night club which gives provocateur Gaspar Noé a run for his money, and a climactic cacophony of phantasmagoria that rattles every sense. It is no wonder that it garnered boos at Cannes in 1992, audiences unprepared for such a radical shift that now, in light of the show's third season which aired last year, feels comparatively tame.

## The Cabin in the Woods (2012)

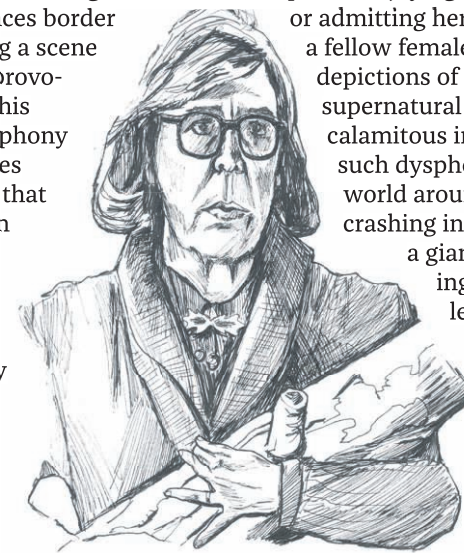
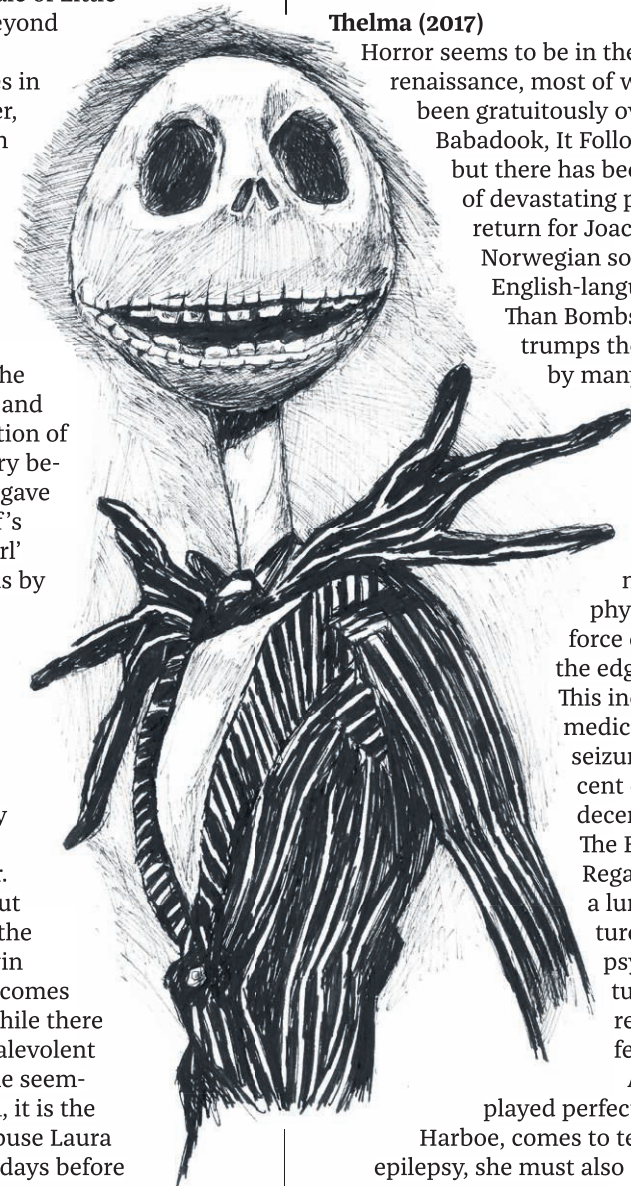
Director Drew Goddard's

latest film, *Bad Times at the El Royale*, has only just been released. It is a fine pastiche on pulpy American gangster drama, that if nothing else features a shirtless Chris Hemsworth. So too does Goddard's first, and far superior, feature, which is itself a satirical play on the tropes of torture porn and the slasher genre. It is essentially a scaled down, rustic *Battle Royale* that pits a host of horror staples against a gang of horny, stoned youths. From zombies to unicorns, via the tooth fairy and Sigourney Weaver in cameo (the only form of role she seems capable of playing anymore), it is a wild and often raucous ride through the history of the genre. If the other items in the list prove a little taxing, this will make for a lighter interlude.

## Thelma (2017)

Horror seems to be in the grips of a renaissance, most of which has been gratuitously overrated (*The Babadook*, *It Follows*, *Get Out*), but there has been a sprinkle of devastating pictures. This return for Joachim Trier to Norwegian soil after the English-language *Louder Than Bombs* certainly trumps those pictures by many a chilling mile, and will strike a chord with any conflicted student. There are moments of physical fear that force one toward the edge of the seat. This includes a medically induced seizure reminiscent of the only decent scene in *The Exorcist* when Regan undergoes a lumbar puncture, but it is the psychological turbulence that resonates most ferociously.

As Thelma, played perfectly by Eili Harboe, comes to terms with epilepsy, she must also adjust to university life under the constant judgement of her overbearing evangelical parents. Their phone calls inspire a self-loathing that is often hard to watch, beating herself up over enjoying a drink with friends or admitting her attraction towards a fellow female student. The literal depictions of angst through the supernatural represent the calamitous impact one believes such dysphoria is having on the world around them – a bird crashing into a library window, a giant chandelier lurching forward at the ballet at the suggestion of sexual intimacy. Feelings far more terrifying than men in masks waving phallic chainsaws at half-naked teenage girls.





# A freshers' guide to Cambridge pub crawls

Joshua Walley valiantly sacrifices his spare time to find you the best pubs in town

Cambridge is a place of learning, of academic excellence, of research. Or so my supervisor says. I spend my days trawling through libraries and obscure websites in search of that essential quote that gets my essay the honourable 2:1 we all crave. Good stuff. But why stop there, I thought? Why waste these skills on



academia?

So I, aided by the experience of two most learned colleagues, embarked on a first-year journey to sample as many pubs as we could in search of a few gems to get us through the next two years here. The results were indeed startling. So read on – I present to you my dissertation.

## The Mill

A pub I came across on my very first day here,

the Mill tucks itself away behind the Anchor and is by far the superior watering hole. Initially appearing a tad pricey, it soon becomes evident that the Mill more than makes up for the four pound plus pints in character and charm. 19th century wood panelling and myriad beer mats adorning the bar, it is an ideal pub for a cold winter's day. With classic vinyl records playing most evenings you can easily pass a Friday evening there, well away from the sweat of the Life queue. Add to that a wide selection of in-house board games and you realise that the Mill is the gift that keeps on giving. And that's before even mentioning the beer – winner of three CAMRA awards, roughly eight good ales are on tap at any one time.

Their stout is so good that my learned Irish colleague even prefers it to Guinness! With bar snacks extending from chilli peanuts and crisps all the way to pork pie and scotch egg, the Mill is an absolute must, particularly if somebody else is going to be paying!

## The Granta

The next pub on this list continues the theme of riverside refreshment, finding itself just round the corner from Darwin and bordering Coe Fen. The Granta, although not having quite the same range of ales as the Mill, makes up for it in price – their wine is cheaper too. Add to that a by no means shameful selection of bar snacks (anywhere that does chilli



◀◀ The Mill and Granta are the perfect pubs for a warm summer's evening (AURELIA LI)

peanuts is good in my books) and you have a solid drinking establishment.

However, where the Granta really calls the shots, as my approving college wife points out to me, is its location. The riverside view and interior décor make it seem almost as if you're on a Mississippi paddle steamer at times and with a large, open terrace overlooking the fen, it's the perfect pub for a warm summer's evening. A definitive "date pub", its appeal and aesthetics are what boosts it to a spot as one of the best pubs in Cambridge.

## The Elm Tree

Perhaps the real wildcard choice on this list, the Elm Tree – part of a "Bermuda Triangle" of

three different pubs within about five doors of each other on the other side of Parker's Piece – is a great way to escape the bubble and venture into the more down-to-earth "townie" side of Cambridge.

An extremely homely pub, classic art deco adorns the walls and the landlords make a great effort to make the decoration seasonal. (it was getting decidedly spooky upon our last visit!) The range of drinks is astounding – ten on-tap ales are just the tip of the iceberg, with over fifty Belgian beers – even mead (ASNACs take note) makes its way onto the menu. Candlelit during the evenings and with a great selection of books and games, this is a pub to remember for when the nights draw in.

# LGBT+ narratives of ostracisation are still relevant today

Flic Kersting responds to recent criticisms of an older LGBT+ play as being outdated

*This article contains discussion relating to mental health, suicide, LGBT+ issues, harassment, and homophobia*

Know that 44% of young LGBT people have considered suicide – almost double the number of heterosexual cisgender young people in the UK. LGBT+ people are 2-4 times more likely to have faced harassment in the workplace. In 2012, a study discovered that 55% of LGBT young people had been victims of homophobic bullying at school. 41% of those who had experienced this at some point in their lives said it had led to suicidal attempts or ideation. I could go on.

While the UK has made a lot of progress regarding LGBT+ rights and treatment in recent decades, statistics like these are a harsh reminder of the reality that LGBT+ people still face exclusion and discrimination due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity on a daily basis.

The production of *The Children's Hour* at the ADC this week was an important reminder of how far we have come since it was first published in 1934 – people are no longer routinely ostracised from their community if suspected of having a same-sex relationship, homosexu-



▲ The ADC production is a reminder of how far we have come since it was first published in 1934 (HELENA FOX)

ality is no longer a taboo subject, and employment rates for LGBT+ and heterosexual cisgender people are not significantly different. However, it was also an important reminder of how far there is still to go – many of the themes and emotions in the play resonated with me, a bisexual woman, and I know many of my LGBT+ friends felt the same.

The *Varsity* review of *The Children's Hour* suggested the play wasn't "accessible to a contemporary audience" and that it was on the wrong side of the line between invoking pathos and being melodramatic. Watching Martha (Jessica Murdoch) struggle with accepting her sexuality throughout the play

and finally breaking down when she finally admitted her feelings to childhood friend Karen (Saskia West), felt all too familiar. In this, I saw the same internal struggle, the denial, the fear of coming out to my friends (especially female friends I had feelings for) that I have myself experienced. Many LGBT+ women struggle with their feelings for other women because we feel predatory or worry that our friends will no longer feel comfortable around us. This situation is further exacerbated by media representations

of queer women as either overly sexual or constantly preying on their female friends. Being ostracised from the community is no longer common in cosmopolitan UK cities such as London, but many queer women I know who live in smaller towns or outside the UK are either unable to come out to family members because of the homophobia they will experience or have been told by immediate family members that being LGBT+ is fine 'as long as the neighbours don't find out'. In many cases, queerness is still seen an embarrassment, dirty laundry that needs to be kept behind closed doors.

I found it interesting that the *Varsity* re-

view notes Sayers' portrayal of Joe, the only male character in the show, as one of the high points. While Sayers' performance was good, the scenes that moved me most were the ones where Martha and Karen or Martha and Mrs Mortar, Martha's aunt (Eleanor Lind Booton), interacted – watching Martha try to navigate her feelings, while having to cope with so many comments about how 'unnatural' she was, was a difficult thing to do. This should serve to remind people that the language we use matters, as it can damage people's lives.

*The Children's Hour* was at times uncomfortable to watch. However, this was intentional: it is uncomfortable to face the fact that the UK is not as accepting a place as we often make it out to be.

If more progress is to be made, it is important to face the issues directly rather than letting portrayals of the queer experience be brushed off as 'outdated'. This play also serves as a testament to the huge amount of (often underappreciated) female talent in Cambridge theatre, and proves that plays focusing on the experiences of LGBT+ women are sorely needed.

Calling this play "a cultural antique", as one 1962 *New York Times* review did, shows the continued, wilful ignorance of those not affected by LGBT+ issues, and this is still true of society today. Sweeping these problems aside instead of engaging with them will not stop discrimination, and *The Children's Hour* was a clear reminder of the crucial work that remains.





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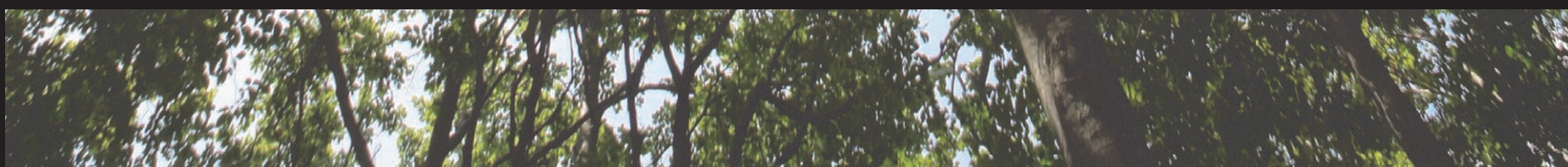
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# Science

## Why does time fly?

Joseph Krol discusses the incommensurable nature of time perceived and time measured, via such subjects as psychology and relativity

Time passes differently in Cambridge. Weeks might feel like aeons while essays are ground through, and yet the deadline accelerates towards us, ever faster; the good is all too fleeting, the tedious drags inescapably. Term blends into term, year into year, memories are confused, or else mislaid – and all this amidst the short stretch between matriculation and graduation, seeming hardly more than a month or two. It must be said that the human perception of time is a litany of contradictions, quite totally illogical. Perhaps this is to be expected; it is, after all, inextricably internal, a sense more based on one's own psychology than of anything manifestly real.

The factors that can affect time perception are numerous. Perhaps the most notorious is ageing: most people report that time seems to go faster as they become older. Why this is, is still not completely understood, though it is partially due to how the brain changes as we age. During childhood and adolescence, the brain constantly encounters new experiences, learning new skills. Then, as one gradually reaches a rut in adulthood, rarely breaking from routines, the resulting lack of mental structural alterations is thought to lead to changes in time experience. In the Cambridge context, it is rather like the phenomenon in which one's first term takes a long while to pass: almost everything is new, each day a new skill learned, each evening new people met.

Drugs also appear to have an intriguing impact. Again, while little conclusive research has been done in the field, most users of cannabis report that it very no-

ticeably slows down the passing of time within their brains. It has been suggested that this relates to reduced blood flow through the cerebellum, a part of the brain closely associated with movement, as well as cognitive functions like attention.

The physicists, too, have tried to formalise time. The time one perceives is not obviously – in many cases not at all – the same as the 'objective' time of chronometers. They both seem to pass in the same direction, yes, but beyond this little can be said: biological time, with all its progressions in fits and starts, seems to be of a wholly distinct character to that of the carriage-clock. As physical theories of time have become increasingly unintuitive over the years, philosophers have often stood ready to deny the sensible identification of the two.

Newton, at least, was broadly unobjectionable. His definition accorded with the layman's time: his formalisation of mechanics was built around a universal clock, a single standard by which seconds would pass, in any place and in any situation. His universe was one of raw determinism, largely simple intuition: with events occurring simply one after another, there was plenty of room to fit a God behind the scenes.

Relativity changed the story. It is usual to give credit entirely to Einstein, but many of the implications of the theory had been circulating for years in the scientific community. Much was largely implicit within Maxwell's revolutionary formulation of electrodynamics, but it was only noted in retrospect; Lorentz had the formula as early as 1896, but he claimed it only as a mathematical convenience, as if not wanting to deal with the implications. Indeed, in large part, it was Einstein who, in one of his great papers of 1905, bestowed special relativity onto an unready world.

To speak of precedence in this context seems almost ironic; the destruction of temporal ordering is one of the strangest consequences of the theory. To give a brief summary, relativistic physics centres on *reference frames*, imaginary co-ordinate systems moving with constant speed with respect to which all things are measured. In Newton's theory, location largely didn't matter – for instance, throw a ball in a steady train carriage and it will travel, from your perspective, just the same as it would have done had you thrown it while standing on the platform. In relativity, things behave much more differently: depending on your speed, objects can have completely different lengths, events can have shorter or longer durations.

The aspect of the theory that most provoked confusion, even anger, from non-physicists was its implications for the nature of time. It turned out that, depending on which reference frame you pick, one can often either perceive event A precede event B in one, and see event B before event A in another. However, if A and B were *causally* related, they were always bound to occur in the usual order. The intuitive strangeness of this was not lost on the thinkers of the time; many wilfully misinterpreted it, with 'relative' devolving into an empty buzzword. When done seriously, however, the debates could get quite acrimonious.

“In relativity, events can have shorter or longer durations depending on your point of view”



In 1922, the eminent French philosopher Henri Bergson took on Einstein in a public debate, arguing that Einstein's ideas could not sensibly be interpreted within the philosophical paradigm of time; the physicist curtly replied that in his eyes, “there is no time of the philosophers”. Later that year, Einstein was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics, but not for his work on relativity, which the Committee still took to be suspect; for now, the philosophers had won.

Cambridge is prone to provoking a fresh awareness of time; no doubt some

▲ Illustration by Lisha Zhong for Varsity

part of it is merely the nostalgia of university days, but there seems, beneath the historic streets, to be buried a further subtlety.

Nabokov described it well in his memoir *Invitation of a Memory*, written some three decades after his years at Trinity (studying, of all things, Natural Sciences): “I cannot help realising that, aside from striking but more or less transient customs, and deeper than ritual or rule, there did exist the residual something about Cambridge that many a solemn alumnus has tried to define. I see this





“Cam-bridge is prone to provoking a fresh awareness of time”

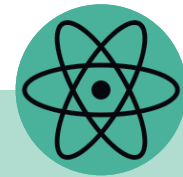
basic property as the constant awareness one had of an untrammelled extension of time... nothing one looked at was shut off in terms of time, everything was a natural opening into it, because, in terms of space, the narrow lane, the cloistered lawn, the dark archway hampered one physically, the yielding diaphonous nature of time was, by contrast, especially welcome to the mind.”

I do not know if we are lucky or unlucky to live in Cambridge, a city forced to look to time for its dimension, a city at the crossroads of the scientific and

“It’s a rare concept that entrances both the physicist and philosopher”

philosophical interpretations. It is a rare concept that entrances both the physicist and the philosopher, that exists on the fringe between us and nature, that can never quite be understood by either side except in terms of the other; time is one of the few to have truly taken hold. Research continues in all of these areas, striving in earnest to prise free objective details about a concept almost impossibly ineffable.

To recast it all in two words: time flies. To go much deeper might only prove a distraction.



## Varsity explains How does the Corpus Clock work?

Joseph Krol  
Science Editor

The Corpus Clock is one of Cambridge’s most unusual sights – not least for the massing tourists who so often block Bene’t Street. Unveiled in 2008, its appearance is at once gaudy, refined, erratic, meticulous – some love the addition to Cambridge’s landmarks, while others think the artwork is unattractive, even terrifying. Built to the design of kettle entrepreneur (and Corpus alumnus) John Taylor, it has now confused passers-by for over a decade.

The ghastly insect that adorns the top of the clock was intended as a tribute to John Harrison, a great clockmaker who revolutionised horology with his introduction of the grasshopper escapement. His work was all done towards the determination of longitude, the east-west coordinate which was effectively impossible to calculate without a precise reading of the time.

Escapements form the central mechanism of all traditional clocks. After being wound, the escapement serves to push the pendulum slightly, with each swing moving the clock forward by a fixed amount. Since the pendulum’s swings are necessarily of the same length, no matter how far out the pendulum swings, this period will stay the same, ensuring that the clock keeps good time. Before Harrison, most escapements were fairly crude. His invention, the grasshopper escapement, cut down massively on friction by using two pivoted arms, which give the impression of something creeping round the edge of the clock, hence the name. It was never often used, being relatively technically involved to produce.

While designing his clock, Taylor decided that he wanted to bring back an awareness of clockmaking to the masses, and so incorporated the escapement on the outside of the clock. As such, the ‘Chronophage’ on the top of the clock forms an integral part of its functioning, moving a shade around the clock through which LEDs shine through, marking the passing of the seconds.

However, the system is quite deliberately imperfect. Every so often the clock runs deliberately slowly; at other times the pendulum will stop altogether, or even begin to run backwards. It’s only perfectly on time every five minutes; Taylor claimed that he wanted to reflect life’s inherent irregularity. Its other quirks include the eyelids of the Chronophage, which open and close at random intervals.

The science behind it may be clear, but in a lot of aspects the artist’s intentions are not. Taylor’s very certain, though, about the meaning of the Chronophage, a name which literally means ‘time-eater’: “I view time as not on your side. He’ll eat up every minute of your life, and as soon as one has gone he’s salivating for the next.”



► The Corpus Clock  
(SIMON LOCK)



## Science

# Separating science from the scientists

**Zak Lakota-Baldwin** asks why universities are still protecting their scientists, and how we can be responsible scientists

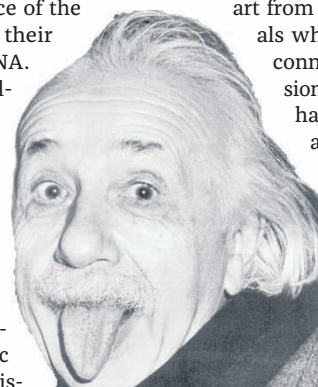
*This content contains mention of child abuse, domestic abuse and eugenics.*

What started with Harvey Weinstein in Hollywood, has spread into politics, industry and journalism. According to the New York Times, #MeToo has brought down 201 powerful men across the professional spectrum. Bullying, harassment, misconduct and views like homophobia or xenophobia have become unacceptable, with people losing their jobs over the attitudes they portray at work or in private. But when will the #TimesUp movement reach

academia, and specifically the scientific community?

Separating science from its scientists is an old phenomenon. Nikola Tesla, for instance, hailed as the father of electricity, also happened to be a vocal advocate for eugenics, believing that by 2100 there would be a “universally established” system for weeding out perceived undesirables such as criminals and the mentally ill. Albert Einstein was a cold and controlling husband who mistreated his first wife Mileva Marić until their divorce. If you’ve ever bought a pint at The Eagle and flinched at the exorbitant price, you’ve got the legacy of Watson and Crick to thank for that, as their choice of the

pub to announce their discovery of DNA. What’s less well-known is James Watson’s appalling track record of racist, sexist and homophobic comments. Yet, Watson continues to command significant influence in the scientific world. There is a dis-



connect between the fame of a scientist and their personal views and behaviours, however toxic and hateful.

Why is it that Einstein’s abusive behaviour is rarely mentioned, yet the use and abuse of women by celebrated 20th-century creatives like Ted Hughes and Pablo Picasso is extensively documented and discussed? Some might point to the stronger link between an artist’s personality and their output, as compared to that of a scientist. Women certainly featured prominently in the writings and paintings of Hughes and Picasso, while Einstein’s theory of relativity had nothing to say about his marriage. Yet the entire debate around separating the art from the artist centres on individuals whose work supposedly has no connection to their own transgressions. Unsurprisingly, Kevin Spacey hasn’t made any films about the abuse of minors, and yet Netflix announced it would discontinue any version of House of Cards that included the actor.

It is effectively impossible to boycott the work of scientists; Watson’s part in the discovery of DNA’s double helix structure is so valu-

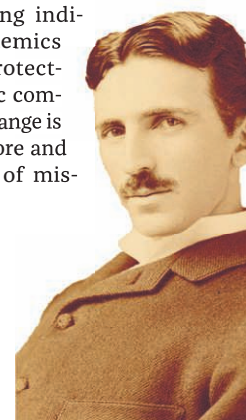
able and ingrained in scientific academia, that it is neither desirable nor feasible to disengage with it. When it comes to scientists, a different form of action is required.

One response involves adding a more critical historical perspective to the teaching of science giving people the chance to weigh up the achievements and flaws of scientists. In a community that still has a long way to go towards redressing its problems with diversity and representation, this would send out the message that science will not tolerate discrimination.

A second response is to stop shielding individual academics and start protecting academic communities - change is in the air. More and more cases of mis-

**Einstein and Tesla are central to the question**

(EMMA DREWETT/



conduct and xenophobia in academia are coming to light. Cambridge has received almost 200 anonymous reports against sexual harassment this year, admitting that “the University has a significant problem involving sexual misconduct”. Churchill College Master Athene Donald has spoken out publicly against harassment and bullying. Aron Wall, a maths lecturer recently hired by this University, was very publicly criticised for his homophobic comments made online in 2015. And a small handful of professors, mainly in the US, have been suspended over substantiated sexual harassment allegations.

A study published in *Nature* this June outlined just how big the problem of harassment from senior academics is, concluding that Universities’ existing policies to address the issue are ineffective. In times of increasing public sensitivity to issues of diversity, tolerance and consent, universities must understand that no matter how impactful, prestigious or financially rewarding a person’s science is, it cannot be produced at the cost of the wellbeing and safety of their colleagues and students. In order for #MeToo and #TimesUp to reach our communities, we must stop separating science from the scientist.

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# Bridget Fryer: the woman who wants to transform the Cambridge athletics scene



**Finn Ranson**  
talks discus and determination with CUAC's latest president

Meet Bridget Fryer, new head of the oldest athletics club in the world. In a former life as an engineering undergraduate at Oxford, she rowed at stroke in the University's second boat, headed the Blues Committee and was elected president of the women's Boat Club in her final year. After graduating she worked for a short time in London as an exotics trader before starting her PhD in structural engineering at Downing last year. Now, she dons the Light Blue colours in discus. However, this presidency could be one of the Oxbridge veteran's sternest challenges yet.

Despite a promising start with victory for the women in the Freshers' Varsity Match last November, CUAC suffered defeat in both the winter and summer Varsity fixtures for the second year running. "We used to be really dominant," Fryer explained. "Oxford have just got their act together and Cambridge haven't really responded and matched it. Maybe they

“The main goal is to win the Varsity match and not go bankrupt in the process”

are just investing a bit more in coaching, becoming a bit more professional, and then they're probably just getting talented people in."

It was, though, a chastening defeat in May. The Dark Blues won all four fixtures, men's and women's, firsts and seconds, with only Cambridge's top women hitting the typical 100-point mark across 17 events. The inevitable ebb and flow that comes with the ephemerality of university sport only counts for so much and Fryer feels keenly a sense of responsibility to introduce systematic change. First on the agenda is to bring a piece of OUWBC to the Wilberforce track.

"We want people in the club to be on the same page quite early on," she began. "With the boat club you have one very tight-knit squad that see each other twice a day, every day. Athletics is really tricky because you've got ten different sports and everyone's an individual athlete and you don't really compete as a team until the day of Varsity."

The women's rowing squad was also blessed with Christine Wilson. An assistant coach for the US Olympic team in the run-up to Athens back in 2004, Wilson was a revered but formidable taskmaster who was crucial to the drive to improve and professionalise the women's teams ahead of their move to the Thames in 2015. "She was very effective at set-

◀ Fryer was formerly president of the Oxford Women's Boat Club (CUAC)

▶ Fryer in action for the Light Blues (CUAC)

ting standards and expectations about yourself and how you should train," she smiled. "And she was very American. She was just very open about talking about winning."

It's clear that Fryer wants to emulate that transitional period for the OUWBC with a flagging CUAC. But for all its illustrious sporting history, CUAC has also thrived in recent years as one of Cambridge's most social sports clubs. A large body of its membership pay their subs to come down to the track once a week and just be a part of a relaxed, swap-going collective. The diverse nature of athletics, its purity as a discipline founded mostly on general fitness rather than niche skill, makes it a uniquely inclusive University sports club, as Fryer is quick to point out.

"If you're half-sporty there's probably something for you," she laughs. "Even if you can't run you can probably throw something." And sometimes this openness, and inclusivity is key to unearthing new talent, talent like Kaesi Opara. He was a basketballer who only took up competitive sprinting a few months before the 2017 Varsity meet. There he became the best sprinter at Oxbridge, with a 100m time of 10.96.

To instil that discipline and redoubtable winning mentality while preserving this spirit of CUAC, Fryer concedes, will be a difficult challenge. Yet for her, university represents a golden last chance to get stuck into something resembling professional sport. "You can say, I've got the time to try and get really good at something whereas when you're working in London you just don't have the time," she says, perhaps with a flashback to those two intervening years on the stock market. "It's a good opportunity to dedicate yourself to something you want."

Fryer was an avid connoisseur of all sports growing up. But a serious skiing accident in her final year at school tore virtually all her knee ligaments, and doctors advised her to stay away from any high-impact physical activity. When she arrived at Oxford, rowing was one of the few sports she could take up. "I turned out to be alright at it, so I was in my college first boat straight away," she said. "Then in my second year I trialled for the University team, not really expecting to hang in there."

She excelled in fact, and seemed set for a starting berth in the Blues boat. But then disaster struck again. A month into the season, en route to training, Fryer was involved in a major car accident that left her with a broken back.

"I completely snapped my spine but just enough that I wasn't paralysed," she said. "They bolted it back together, so then I was kind of safe but it was very uncomfortable. I spent four or five months on a Wattbike: still training, still hoping that I could row again."

Against all odds, six weeks before the race, Fryer was selected as the last member of Oxford's second boat. By race day, Fryer had worked her way up to stroke seat and she led the crew to an extraordinary victory. "So that was good," she says with comic nonchalance.

For her superhuman effort that year Fryer's body paid the price, and shoulder trouble has kept her out of a boat ever since.



Sport is not something Fryer has been able to take for granted. It is no wonder that it means so much to her and that she wants, earnestly, for CUAC to bring the same valuation to every training session.

I notice Fryer is wearing a University of Pennsylvania athletics top. A combined Oxford and Cambridge team competed against Cornell and UPenn in the summer in the Achilles Cup, she tells me, and it's always a good opportunity to get some more stash. Penn and Cornell dominated the podiums, winning 28 of the 38 men's and women's events. It's a stark reminder of the disparity between US and UK university sport and the job Fryer has on her hands to realise her bold vision.

"The Americans are always so shocked by our setup," she laughs. "They have full facilities they can use whenever they like, they'll have a coach for every session, a coach for all their gym work, they'll have a customised plan, a physio. They look at us and they can't believe it."

Cambridge simply doesn't have the same war chest for sport as Cornell or Upenn. Even when Fryer got involved in the Oxford rowing setup in 2013, both universities had recently received hundreds of thousands of pounds from a major sponsorship deal with Newton Investment Management. With limited alumni donors, the former exotics trader faces an altogether different challenge, to qualify that visionary ambition with pragmatism: "The main goal is to win the Varsity match," she smiles. "And not go bankrupt in the process." Fryer has already had to make some tough decisions including releasing her discus coach last year, 2012 Olympian Abdul Buhari.

But make no mistake, she remains optimistic. After all the injuries, the toil, the hours on the Wattbike, she seems to have an enduring optimism in the power of sport. She still donates to the Oxford boat club — in her eyes it's the absolute least she can do. "You realise when you're working whatever job that all the teamwork and the determination didn't come from a lecture theatre or from writing an essay," she said. "They came from doing sport and working with people and striving for something other than just exam results."

“Athletics is really tricky because you've got ten different sports and everyone's an individual athlete and you don't really compete as a team until the day of Varsity”



**Swift changes.** Varsity speaks to Bridget Fryer, formidable athlete and new CUAC president **31**



# Blues fight sleepy start to save winning streak

**Marcus McCabe**  
Sports Editor

There was a feeling of expectancy in the air as the Cambridge Blues and Exeter Women's lacrosse teams warmed up on a brisk afternoon at St John's Sports Ground. Both teams had won all of their games so far this season, and both had accrued a hefty amount of goals in the process. Cambridge came into the season as last year's BUCS Premier South division defending champions, but Exeter were particularly buoyant after thrashing Bath University 21-4 last week. A good old-fashioned, top of the table clash.

And it was Exeter who were the more switched on from the start. A clean win from the draw had Exeter charging down on Cambridge's back-line, with the first whistle still ringing across the field. Elmitt, the Exeter number 76, darted through a desperate Cambridge backline to dispatch the ball into the left-hand bottom-corner. 0-1 with only 10 seconds on the clock.

Cambridge almost found a reply immediately with Wise, however, as the Blues number 21 found a yard of space in the Exeter goalmouth and fired home – only for the goal to be disallowed. In what was a frantic start, Exeter responded by getting hold of the ball and applying concerted pressure to the Cambridge defence, until Elnett found another gap

to dance through, and once again find the bottom corner for 0-2.

Despite tireless transition play from Erica Wallace and valiant defending at the back, Cambridge were struggling to get out of their own half, and another period spent with Exeter camped inside the Cambridge defensive area led to yet another goal, this time from Garland. Timeout called, the Cambridge players looked stressed, but determined to wake-up and force themselves back into the game.

And the blues did look far more focussed after the restart. Lehovsky won the ball from the draw and found the upraised crosse of talismanic forward and captain Sophie Tambllyn who finished high into the top corner to pull one back for Cambridge. Building on this momentum, Lehovsky and Miller ducked and dived and drove from deep until Miller was blocked in front of goal where she dispatched the subsequent free shot with aplomb.

Cambridge was resurgent, but Exeter were not rolling over just yet. Elnett proved a particularly tricky customer all game and she completed her first half hattrick with another strong run stopped only by a foul and the resulting penalty tucked away into the bottom corner.

Two goals to four, but not for long, as Wise went on to notch two goals of her own in quick succession after some smart play around the Exeter goal. Comeback complete, but Cambridge

▲ **Cambridge had to defend deep in the first half** (NICHOLAS FOONG)

▼ **Tambllyn and Fraser battle to pluck the ball from the sky** (NICHOLAS FOONG)

were not satisfied; a flurry of passes soon culminated in another goal for Tambllyn, followed moments later by Crerend and Miller to put Cambridge three goals to the good. The Blues were now well and truly in business.

A goal from Exeter kept up the frenetic end-to-end pace but it was immediately cancelled out by a mazy run and finish from the uncatchable Wallace. 8-5 to Cambridge as the half-time whistle sounded.

Having recovered from their sleepy



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start, a much hungrier-looking Blues outfit commenced the second-period as Exeter had begun the first. With Lehovsky winning the ball from the first whistle, the Blues advanced at break-neck speed, with a flowing move finished off by a clinical finish from Dillingham.

This didn't signal the flood-gates opening, however, and with both teams fully settled into the game, the rate of goals slowed. Eventually Exeter pulled one back to make it 9-6, but a yellow card for an Exeter defender stunted their ability to push on for a seventh; and it was Cambridge who hit double figures minutes later with Lehovsky popping up to score a masterful tenth and twelfth either side of another accomplished finish from Crerend.

Exeter offered two consolation goals in the last 5 minutes, but it was too little too late as Cambridge had hit their stride and both Tambllyn and Crerend completed hattricks to leave the scores 14-9 at the final whistle.

Cambridge were able to claw back control after a shaky first quarter, with the Blues showing both skill and hard graft all over the pitch, and it will prove a tough afternoon for Bath University when they become the Blues' next victim on 31 October. However, Captain Sophie Tambllyn and her team will be well aware that to gift the likes of Oxford and Durham such a head-start it will be far more dangerous. For now, though, Cambridge march on.