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Friday 8th March 2019  
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Cambridge's Independent  
Student Newspaper since 1947

# VARSLITY



▲ Candidates Shadab Ahmed, left, and Edward Parker Humphreys, right (Bella Peng)

## Parker Humphreys ahead in Varsity CUSU presidential poll on final day of voting

Elizabeth Haigh, Chloe Bayliss and Katy Bennett

Varsity's poll of Cambridge students has Edward Parker Humphreys as the clear favourite for CUSU president over current CUSU Access Officer, Shadab Ahmed, as voting closes at 5pm today.

Of the 664 respondents, almost two thirds (60.4%) said that they would be supporting Parker Humphreys, compared to just over a quarter (26%) who favoured Ahmed. The remaining 13.6% of respondents voted to either Re-Open Nominations, were undecided or preferred not to say.

Last year's Varsity poll was correct in

predicting that Siyang Wei would win on first-preference votes, but the factor of second-preference votes meant that Evie Aspinall snatched victory.

Without a third candidate this year, it is likely that these poll results will more accurately predict the outcome of the elections.

If Varsity's poll is correct and Parker

Humphreys' bid for CUSU president is successful, he will be the third Jesus College JCR president to take the CUSU crown in four years, following on from Daisy Eyre and Amatey Doku. Including Evie Aspinall, he would also be the fourth HSPS student in as many years.

Full story page 7 ►

## Clare Hall to fully divest from fossil fuel industries

Katy Bennett  
Senior News Correspondent

Clare Hall has announced it will fully divest its £26.6 million endowment from the fossil fuels industry.

Student campaigners have been putting pressure on various colleges to divest all investments in the fossil fuels sector. Last month, Selwyn College sold all direct investments in fossil fuels, and in November, Downing College announced that they would remove all 'practical investments' from the fossil fuel sector, and offset any remaining indirect investments with investments in environmental impact funds.

Queens' is the only known Cambridge college to have divested its entire endowment from the sector, including indirect investments and pooled funds.

On Thursday afternoon, Clare Hall announced its commitment to withdraw its direct investments from fossil fuel companies listed in the Carbon Underground 200 — which identifies the top 200 coal, oil and gas reserve holders globally, ranked by their potential carbon emissions — within the next three years and its indirect investments within the next five years. Different organisations define divestment in different ways, but the

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# News

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“I now realise that the spiritual journey I take, I will have to take alone”



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## OPINION

We must centre victims and survivors in our discourse around violent men

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## vulture Magazine

Access in theatre: the pitfalls of students paying for productions out of pocket



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## Correction

A correction was issued regarding a news article titled ‘The hidden reality of Cambridge’s homeless women’, published in February 2018. It was updated online on March 7 2019 to make clear that a weapon referenced in the first paragraph was purely for the purposes of defence

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# Lijia Zhang

## ‘I want to show the resilience of women struggling in the bottom of society’

**Belinda Ng** talks to the writer and journalist about the power of literature in exploring China’s rapid social and economic change

Lijia Zhang’s voice is soft and emotive as she reads a section of her latest novel *Lotus* to a group of attentive ears during her visit to Cambridge. As a freelance writer, journalist, and social commentator, Lijia uses her writing to convey new perspectives and shed light on the rapid changes China has undergone in the past decades. As Lijia discusses her work’s titular character Lotus, she also shares more about why sharing this story not only important in its own right, but to her personally.

*Lotus* is a fictional story centred on the life of a young woman of the same name who moves from her mountain village in Sichuan to the bustling metropolis of Shenzhen in search of a new life. Eventually, Lotus must turn to sex work to survive.

The novel details the effects of the region’s illicit sex trade, police brutality, and corruption on the lives of its ordinary citizens. This is reflective of how Zhang talks of prostitution “as an interesting widow [through which] to observe social tensions brought by the reforms in recent decades, such as the rural-urban divide, the growing gender inequality and the tug of war between the tradition and the modernity.”

She was first inspired to write this story when she discovered that her grandmother had been a sex worker in her youth.

Discussing the stigmatisation of sex

workers, Zhang says she wants to “humanise” their stories, “return their humanity, and inspire people to see them in a new way.”

She remains very critical of the lack of state support in China available to sex workers, given how much the country has benefited from immense economic development. “I met a woman who was a victim of domestic violence, but her family would not take her in, forcing her to become a sex worker to survive,” explains Zhang.

“It’s about giving a voice to [women] who don’t publicly have a voice.”

This comes through in *Lotus*, Zhang’s protagonist. Lotus undergoes a journey of love and personal growth, because “I wanted to tell the story of a survivor, not a victim”, Zhang explains. The twist in the uplifting ending was something that Lijia had set out first before working out how to get there in the plot. “This book is really about a young woman’s journey in finding herself,” she adds.

Keenly aware that her own background is so different of her protagonist’s, Zhang set out to gain better insight into the sex trade by interviewing sex workers in China’s big urban cities. In doing so, she encountered many challenges.

“Their lives are very transient as they change from one city to another; they change their numbers and vanish.”

Zhang’s breakthrough came when she met a former-sex-worker turned social worker at a conference in Beijing, who

▲ **Lotus is Lijia Zhang’s first novel - she previously spent a decade working in a missile factory**

(B LUNN/YOUTUBE)

“I wanted to tell the story of a survivor, not a victim”



# News



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More  
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runs an NGO helping female sex workers. While volunteering at this organisation, Zhang befriended some girls and learned more about their experiences.

“A high percentage of the girls had faiths of some sort.” In the story, *Lotus* is a Buddhist, just like Zhang’s own grandmother.

Zhang also notes how China’s rapid economic growth has greatly shaped the new challenges facing women. She describes how growing inequality hits female migrant-workers and those in the urban cities the hardest. “Market economy reforms benefit an urban, middle-class and educated type of women.”

For migrant workers, Zhang believes there is an expectation that they earn money for their families while remaining very conservative and abiding by traditional gender norms. However, “more women are being laid off from their jobs, increasing unemployment.” In particular, “women are seen as a burden in many ways.”

Almost all the female sex-workers Zhang had met sent their money home. “It was out of their filial piety and something that made them feel better.”

When writing *Lotus*, Lijia incorporated journalistic elements to provide context to Western readers who might not be familiar with the situation in China. “I tried to sprinkle the necessary information and deliver it in a less journalistic way,” she says.

Given this wider context of societal change, Zhang recognises the power of literature to reflect this transformation. “It opens up a new world for readers,” she says. But the power of words is not just

conveyed through literature. Zhang talks about the spread of the #MeToo movement in China, which began towards the end of January in 2018. “The younger generation of urban women are more aware of these international norms, sparking them to speak up about their experiences of sexual abuse and harassment,” she says. Yet, Zhang is not optimistic about the changing of platforms for feminism through literature.

“My friends who are female writers writing about these problems have faced problems with censorship,” Zhang says. In particular, she mentions the “Feminist Five”, young women who marked International Women’s Day by handing out stickers to passengers on public transport about sexual harassment. Their subsequent arrests reveal the immense political challenges facing feminism in China.

Perhaps, however, the hope comes from Zhang’s story of *Lotus*. Her fictional mirroring of the real experiences of many women brings these issues to light on an international stage.

“I want to show the crude reality of the Chinese market economy and the resilience of women struggling in the bottom of society,” Lijia adds.

Like the characters in *Lotus*, Zhang has experienced what life is like in a rapidly changing China, having spent a decade working at a factory that produced intercontinental missiles. Although Zhang had dreamed of becoming a journalist and writer from a young age, she was taken out of school to work at the factory at the age of sixteen. Whilst working at the factory, Zhang taught

herself English. “Reading gave me escape and enlightenment, and it gave me a route to escape the tough reality [of the factory] and to broaden my horizons”, she says.

Upon completing a Master’s degree in Creative and Life Writing in London, Zhang returned to China and her dreams took flight as she began to write. She wrote a memoir about her time at the factory, titled “Socialism is Great!”: *A Worker’s Memoir of New China*. With *Lotus* being Zhang’s first fictional novel, she mentions how the transition from fiction to nonfiction writing styles was “extremely challenging”.

“The freedom to create a fictional

world was both exciting and intimidating.” Freedom also takes on another meaning in the context of contemporary China when it comes to censorship. A previous book she wrote in Chinese about the Western image of Chairman Mao was censored, Zhang decided to write in English in order to “freely express” herself. This helped Zhang overcome another type of censorship that was not political, but rather “a writer’s own self-censorship”, as she calls it.

“By writing in English, I gained unexpected literary freedom. By not being inhibited by my mother tongue, I can also be bold as I experiment with the language. I use different words and I structure my sentences differently, consciously and unconsciously. Of course, my experiment doesn’t always work. But I enjoy the adventure.”

Although having studied English for thirty years, Zhang says she still faces great challenges when writing in English, “I write too slowly, and I don’t understand the subtle meanings of certain words, so in that sense, I still regard myself as being a novice.”

Throughout her journey, Zhang draws upon many literary inspirations. She cites George Orwell’s four reasons for writing: egoism, aesthetic enthusiasm, historical impulse, and political purpose, as key drivers of her motivation to write. In particular, she remains drawn to Jane Eyre, “a plain-looking character full of spirit and longing”, Zhang comments. In more recent years, she mentions how reading her MA professor Blake Morrison’s memoir *And When Did You Last See Your Father* shaped the techniques she had used to complete her own memoir.

Following the success of *Lotus*, Zhang is now turning her focus back towards non-fiction. She is working on a narrative non-fiction book about the children of migrant workers in China, also known as their ‘left-behind’ children. “There are currently 61 million children living in villages across the country without both or one parent,” she says. The book will focus on a rural community in Southwest China’s Guizhou province, to examine the human cost of China’s economic miracle. As preparation, “I am reading or re-reading outstanding literary non-fiction books on China, such as *Wish Lantern* by Alec Ash and *Factory Girls* by Leslie Chang.”

As for aspiring writers, Zhang’s words of advice is to just “read and write and live your life.”

“Just going ahead and writing is the best thing you can do,” she says with a smile.

Lijia Zhang was speaking at an event organised by Cambridge PEN.



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▼ **Campaigners  
for the release  
of the “Feminist  
Five”**  
(ASIA SOCIETY/  
YOUTUBE)





## News

# New cancer research hospital to come to Cambridge

**Kyoka Hadano**  
Senior News Correspondent

A new cancer research hospital is in the process of being developed in Cambridge. Patients currently treated on the Addenbrooke's site will be served at this new facility, except for children, for will be cared for at a new paediatric hospital approved last December.

The hospital's outline business case has been approved by the Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust board and is currently under review by the government.

It would have up to 77 beds in areas that include haematology, oncology and bone marrow transplants. Nine beds in a teenage and young adults' cancer unit are also being considered, but they may be placed in the new children's hospital instead.

The hospital will be 80% an NHS facility and 20% a university facility. "Patients will get the best possible care in an NHS setting, but they will also benefit from the great science that is ongoing," Professor Richard Gilbertson, director of the Cancer Research UK Cambridge Centre and current Head of the University Department of Oncology told the *Cambridge Independent*.

Patients will be the first to access and

benefit from new inventions and developments, with Professor Gilbertson raising examples in terms of "early detection as well as integrating investigations and the first in-human treatments".

Prof Gilbertson highlights the "three research components" of the new hospital: a precision cancer research centre, early cancer detection and a leading programme in breast cancer embedded within the new hospital. These research elements would "integrate physics, chemistry, engineering and mathematics towards better patient care and decision-making", while the programme in breast cancer features "the world's first precision breast cancer programme".

Prof Gilbertson highlights the need for new facilities to deliver "world-class care" to patients. "It's not just about a shiny new building. We are out of space," he says, highlighting how "the incidence of cancer is going to triple over the next 30 years just because the patient population is ageing". Other motivations for the hospital include the Life Sciences Industrial Strategy and the issue of staff retention.

"The Cancer Research Hospital will hugely benefit our patients, by providing better facilities and better access to the many recent advances in both diagnosis and treatment," celebrates Professor Bruce Ponder, who was Founding Direc-

tor of the CRUK Cambridge Institute and of the Cambridge Cancer Centre, as well as Head of the University Department of Oncology before his retirement.

The new hospital will be "a big step forward in the development of the Cambridge Cancer Centre and of truly novel cancer research", Professor Ponder told *Varsity*. He emphasised that the Centre "brings together the outstanding range of excellent science in Cambridge for practical clinical application".

"Success depends on building the strongest interface between scientists and the clinic," says Professor Ponder. "By enabling this, the Cancer Research Hospital will allow the Centre to grow to the next level."

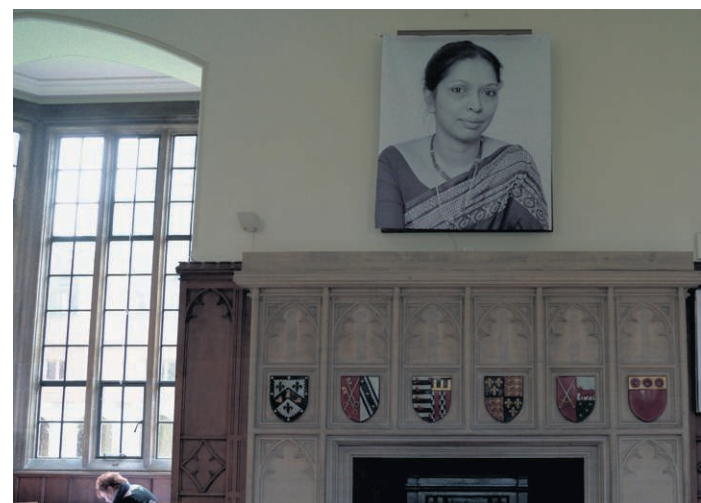
Funding for the hospital is understood to be under consideration by the government. As well as having agreed to raise £50 million towards the project, the University is collaborating with Cambridge University Hospitals on partnerships with pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, Cancer Research UK and charities such as Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust in order to fund the hospital.

If approved, the hospital could take five years to plan and build. It will be situated between Addenbrooke's Treatment Centre and the Frank Lee Centre, with its main entrance off Keith Day Road.

## International Women's Day comes to Pembroke

► To coincide with International Women's Day on Friday 8th March, Pembroke College hung portraits of women affiliated with Pembroke, with the portraits taken by photographer Ian Fleming.

Photography by Joe Cook




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## News



### PEACEFUL TAKEOVER Campaigners “reclaim streets”

Extinction rebellion took over Mill Lane in a “family friendly” road block. The protest, led by the climate justice campaign group, was peaceful and meant to resemble a party on the street. The road block featured various performances and addresses to the community about the movement and its aims. There was also a list of do’s and don’t’s released on the social media telling protesters that they could stay on the pavement if they did not want to participate in civil disobedience.

### SHATTERING NEWS Shop window smashed thrice

Homeware shop Ark, on Peas Hill, has had its window smashed for the third time in the past month by the same man. A handbag was used to break the glass in the first time, on the second, he used a tool and on the third, he threw a brick. Michael Hartlep has pleaded guilty and now faces 12 weeks in prison for the three charges. As nothing was stolen from the shop on any of the occasions, the police believe that Hartlep simply wants to go to prison.

### A WEE TRIUMPH Grafton wins “Loo of the Year”

The Grafton Centre was awarded a platinum rating by inspectors in Loo of the Year Awards 2019. This award, marking the highest standard of toilets in the UK, was awarded to the shopping centre in light of its £28.5 million refurbishment completed last year. The development also includes a new food area and new retailers. Centre manager, John O’Shea, says that the award is a “great reflection of the hard work” of the refurbishment. The centre shares the title with The Regal which won the award in 2018.

### NEED FOR SPEED Runners take on half marathon

Ten thousand runners participated in the annual half marathon on 2 March. This year’s winner was Michael Kallenberg, a long distance runner who competes in RAF athletic regularly, with a time of one hour, six minutes and 40 seconds. The fastest female runner was Victoria Knight of Cambridge & Coleridge AC who came in with one hour, 17 minutes and 20 seconds. This has been the most popular half marathon since the event began in 2012.

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## News

# ‘Institutional failure’ in access to education for disabled students, CUSU report finds

**Charlotte Lillywhite**  
Senior News Correspondent

CUSU has released a report citing the “substantial disadvantage” at which disabled students are placed, where teaching staff are often uninformed on the needs of individual students, who are then forced to “self-advocate”.

The report has said that there has been in Cambridge “an institutional failure to adhere to the equality duty in proactively ensuring parity for reasonable adjustments”.

The report has urged an investigation into “possible systems of accountability” on departmental, collegiate, and University-wide levels, so that disabled students “have clear routes to raise concerns and [to] ensure that they do not fall through the cracks”.

It has also recommended “comprehensive training” to staff on the existing measures in place for disabled students, as well as a greater commitment of central resources toward implementing practical changes to the system.

Compiled by CUSU Disabled Students’ Officer Emrys Travis and Matt Kite, CUSU Education Officer, the report collected data on the experiences of disabled students in seeking academic adjustments with the goal of “ensur[ing] that the burden is not placed upon disabled individuals to overcome barriers placed in their way”.

Under the terms of the 2010 Equality Act, Cambridge is mandated to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ for disabled

students, such as providing extra time on examinations, to counteract any impairments which put disabled students at an educational disadvantage.

Disabled students constitute over 15% of the student population at Cambridge – above the national average of 12%. Between 2008 and 2019, the number of self-identifying disabled students studying at Cambridge rose from 600 to 3,200.

According to the report, this increase has not been “matched by an effective concurrent commitment of resource to establishing, reviewing, and improving provisions for disabled students so as to ensure parity regarding opportunity”.

A *Varsity* investigation in 2018 found the DRC faces significant challenges, likely as a result of a major rise in demand for the service overburdening comparatively few employees.

The report found that “existing work” led by the DRC has started the “difficult but necessary culture change away from an individualised ‘case-by-case’ model” towards a “structurally inclusive ethos” of teaching and learning.

CUSU’s report, which used data from 109 completed student responses to surveys circulated in 2018, found that 73% of students had positive experiences with the exam adjustments application system, and that the reported negative experiences “point to improvements that should be made within the existing system, but not to the need for a complete system overhaul”.

By contrast, it found that the current Student Support Document (SSD) system “is failing disabled students”. An SSD is a

written summary of recommendations for supporting and teaching an individual disabled student.

CUSU’s report cited that 71% of students had average-to-negative experiences with their distribution of SSD, and that 44% of 64 teaching staff respondents had never heard of an SSD.

The report found that in this area, “reasonable adjustments are not being made”, and that when supervisors and lecturers are not provided with SSDs, “students are forced to self-advocate”.

It also found disparities across departments in existing inclusive practices. Furthermore, it found that of 64 teaching staff surveyed, 12% felt “comprehensively informed” about the needs of disabled students, while 60% felt “mostly or entirely uninformed”.

A University spokesperson told *Varsity* that “many of the issues raised in the report are seated in the University’s success in attracting applications from disabled students and admitting them in even larger numbers”, citing the “strain” this has placed on existing systems.

They added: “At present the process is complex. After the document is signed off by the student it is forwarded to agreed contacts across the University, in different colleges, faculties and departments. These contacts then need to distribute the document onwards – as agreed by the student – to everyone who plays a role in the student’s academic life, including supervisors, librarians and lecturers. Ensuring we meet GDPR compliance has made the process even more complex.”



▲ The Disability Resource Centre, on Trumpington Street, supports students with physical and mental disabilities (JAMIE HANCOCK)

They encouraged staff to look at ‘The Code of Practice: Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Students’ “and take advantage of the training on offer”.

The report has urged “support for the bid for resource to systematise SSD production and distribution via inclusion in existing central digital systems”. It encourages commitment from the collegiate University to “clearer, more frequent, and more transparent communication” so that the adjustment application and implementation processes are “advertised and demystified”.

It calls on the Examinations and Assessment Committee to review the medical evidence students must provide in asking for exam adjustments, and “whether there is parity in how this is understood across support staff on a

college level”.

The report has also recommended the creation of a Reasonable Adjustments Working Group at a University level.

The University spokesperson said: “The DRC and the Cambridge Centre for Teaching and Learning are currently working on the development of new online training for teaching staff to ensure they are equipped to support disabled students”, and that it will “take some time” for pilot schemes such as Lecture Capture to be operating efficiently enough to be introduced more widely.

CUSU and GU are holding an Academic Reasonable Adjustments Forum on the 21st March to “discuss and begin making steps towards” a “more systematised model” of reasonable adjustments in teaching and learning.

# Graduate application fee waivers to be introduced for low-income students and refugees

**Victor Jack**  
Senior News Correspondent

Fee waivers for graduate applications to Cambridge will be offered to British students from low-income backgrounds, as well as refugees and people with allied status. Low-income backgrounds will be assessed by students’ status when they applied for undergraduate student loans, with those who had recorded income of £25,000 or below to be offered a few waiver.

The decision, announced by the Graduate Union (GU) on 22nd February, came after lobbying from GU President Sofia Ropek Hewson, who co-wrote a paper with the Director of Admissions and Head of Graduate Admissions, which was presented and approved to the Postgraduate Admissions Committee.

The GU also announced that it had successfully stopped a proposal headed

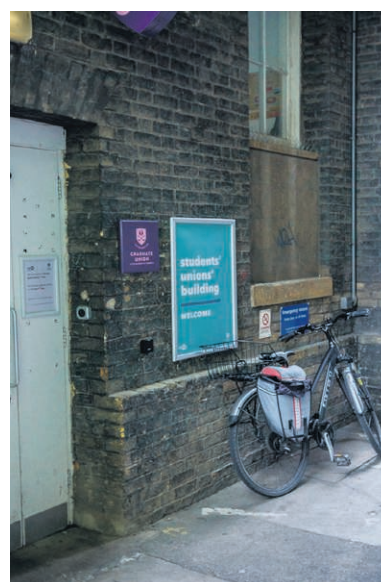
by the General Board to increase postgraduate application fees to £75 this year, an increase of 50% from last year’s fees.

Instead fees will be “more modestly increased in the medium term”, according to Ropek Hewson.

A reassessment aiming to expand fee waivers for international applicants in line with the UN’s list of low-income countries, which currently exist for some countries, will also be launched.

In a comment to *Varsity*, Ropek Hewson described the proposal to increase graduate application fees as “practical and symbolic barrier to access” and argued that given that the weekly Job-seeker’s Allowance remains at £57.90 for those aged under 24, the proposal to increase graduate application fees “symbolised a disconnect between the University and young people”.

She added postgraduates often apply to multiple universities and so can end



▲ The site of the Graduate Union on Mill Lane, which lobbied for fee waivers to graduate application fees (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

up paying around £60 for each, in contrast to undergraduates, who through the UCAS system pay £24 for five applications. She described the proposal as “indicat[ing] that postgraduate access wasn’t values in similar terms” as undergraduate access is.”

She said that “assessing need at postgraduate level is more complex than for undergraduate students, but Professor Paul Wakeling, who works on postgraduate widening participation at York, agrees that the method we’ve proposed is likely to be effective, and addresses a significant barrier to access.”

Ropek Hewson also drew attention to the Student Support Initiative, £300m of which is expected to be allocated to the expansion of postgraduate student-ships.

She said: “The University needs to consider whether a diverse range of people will be able to access [these student-ships].”

Ropek Hewson added: “This is an important step, but if the University is serious about increasing its postgraduate numbers... it needs to consider postgraduate access more thoroughly.”

“We need to bring together existing postgraduate access programmes happening locally across the University”, she said, by doing research and commissioning an “ambitious and well-funded pilot programme”.

She called for a “joined-up Financial Aid Office”, commenting that “it’s really exciting that the University has raised £79 million for postgraduate student-ships, but that money won’t be distributed to those in need of support, or with postgraduate access in mind”.

Last month, Cambridge received a £100m donation from the David and Claudia Harding Foundation – one of the largest donations in recent history to a UK university – £79m of which will go towards funding PhD scholarships.



# Parker Humphreys with 34 percent lead in Varsity poll

► Continued from front page

Ahmed's performance in the polls comes after a formal warning from the Elections Committee after he liked a promotional post for his campaign on a Christ's College Freshers 2018 Facebook page.

He had also received a prior reprimand for announcing his candidacy for the role before campaigning opened via his Facebook story, but following prompt removal of the material he was not issued with a formal warning at the time.

Both candidates saw significant support from within their own college. 83.3% of Jesus students who responded to the poll said that they would be voting for Parker Humphreys, while Ahmed can hope to receive a more modest 68.9% of the vote from Christ's.

The highest response rate in the poll came from Newnham college, where Parker Humphreys received 76.4% of the vote compared to just 20% for Ahmed. Besides the candidates' own colleges, the next highest turn out was for Queen's, where 61.8% of respondents voted for Parker Humphreys and 23.5% for Ahmed.

17 colleges had over 20 responses to the poll – in all of these, besides Christ's, Parker Humphrey's was the preferred candidate, gaining over 50% of the vote in 12 of them. Within these colleges, polling suggests that Ahmed is not attracting more of the vote than his rival at any



▲ (YUTONG CAI)  
**Parker Humphreys** is the most popular candidate at the highest number of colleges

college other than his own

Of these top respondents, Peterhouse had the highest rate of students choosing to re-open nominations, with 17.2% opting for this and a further 10.3% indicating that they were still undecided.

In the election itself, Jesus College has the highest turnout, with 42.9% of its students having voted as of 7pm yesterday evening. Assuming the vote-split roughly correspond to Varsity's poll results, this indicates a strong turnout in support of Parker Humphreys. Jesus' turnout is followed by Robinson, St Catherine's and Newnham, with Ahmed's college Christ's only coming in fifth with a turnout of 31.3%.

Of the top ten colleges who have voted so far, all but Christ's show a strong preference for Parker Humphrey's in the Varsity poll. 56.3% of respondents from Trinity Hall and 58.1% from Downing said that they would be voting for Parker Humphreys, with results from the other seven suggesting well over two-thirds of students would be voting for the Jesus student.

Almost twice as many Jesus students have voted as Christ's students, at 406 and 216 students respectively. However, there is still time for this to change – last year, 37.4% of students at Pembroke, Evie Aspinall's college, had voted 24 hours before the close of the ballot, and her victory was partially credited to a high Pembroke turnout.

Last year, the final voter turnout in the CUSU Presidential election was 20.9%, a drop on the previous year's figure of 22.5%. Following Aspinall's campaign pledge to change disenfranchised students attitudes towards CUSU and its democracy, it remains to be seen if her work will have a real impact on the proportion of those actively engaging in student politics.

However, the drop in student participation in the Varsity poll from over 700 students in 2018 to 664 this year could hint at a similar negative trend in student engagement in the elections this year.

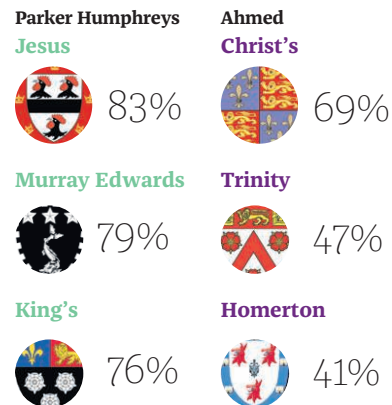
The gender balance in responses to Varsity's poll was fairly equal, with 47% of respondents identifying as female and 45% identifying as male, while 1% of respondents identified as non-binary and 7% chose not to say

Both candidates saw a small difference in terms of their support by male and female respondents, with 44.5% of those favouring Ahmed identifying as female and 51.5% identifying as male.

This trend was reversed for those supporting Parker Humphreys, whose supporters were 51.4% female and 40.2% male.

## Safe seats?

Where in Cambridge do the candidates have the highest support?



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[varsity.co.uk/topic/cusu-elections-2019](http://varsity.co.uk/topic/cusu-elections-2019)



Edward Parker Humphreys received more support from students identifying as non-binary or agender, who constituted 1.25% of his polling success compared to the 0.6% of Ahmed's supporters.

Of those who indicated they would prefer to re-open nominations, a huge 66.7% identified as male compared compared to just 17.8% as female, with 13.3% a further of these students preferring not to indicate their gender identity

Despite showing a clear lead in Varsity's poll, a win for Parker Humphreys is by no means guaranteed, with voting not closing until 5pm tomorrow.

In the final day of campaigning both candidates will likely be ramping up their efforts in an attempt to secure the last critical votes.

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Jesus versus Christ's

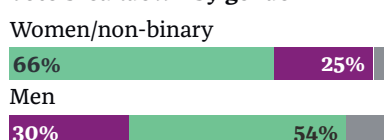


of Jesusans support  
Edward Parker Humphreys



of Christ's students  
support Shadab Ahmed

Vote breakdown by gender



Shadab Ahmed  
Edward Parker Humphreys  
Re-open nominations





## News

# Academics express concern about proposal to compete for military research programme



▲ Varsity revealed in February that the University had applied to house a Ministry of Defence research programme (ARILDV)

Noella Chye  
Associate Editor

Cambridge academics have launched an open letter to Vice-chancellor Stephen Toope and the director of the University's Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH), Professor Steven Connor, detailing their concerns over Cambridge's decision to apply to house a Ministry of Defence psychological research programme after it was revealed by *Varsity* in February.

The letter has garnered 40 signatures at the time of writing.

The research programme called the Human Social Science Research Capability (HSSRC) programme, involved the "targeted manipulation of information in the virtual and physical domains to shape attitudes and beliefs in the cognitive domain," according to a Ministry of Defence presentation in 2017.

Leaked documents showed Cambridge had entered the final stage of the bidding process to house the programme, becoming one of four final candidates, though a University spokesperson told *Varsity* it had dropped out at some point.

They did not respond to multiple requests for comment on when and why.

"We do not believe that the role of a public university is to involve staff in armed conflicts by acting as a supplier of contract research to the MoD," academics wrote in the open letter.

The HSSRC programme, they said, was particularly concerning because its results and methods would not be available for scrutiny by other academics.

They expressed particular concern that according to the leaked proposal, the University, if it had been selected to house the programme, was exploring the possibility of transforming the research centre into a "profit generating programme management consultancy" in the long term.

Academics wrote: "Undertaking government-funded contract research of this nature is troubling enough, but looking to profit from it is shocking. What kind of paying clients did you imagine would have wanted to buy services such as these?"

They also claimed the programme would "pose serious risks to the reputation and credibility of our research".

The risks, they wrote, were particularly serious in light of the public debate over the work of a Cambridge neuroscientist, Dr Aleksandr Kogan, in the Cambridge Analytica scandal in March last year, involving methods of "information manipulation".

Dr Kogan was placed at the centre of an international investigation by *The New York Times*, *The Guardian/Observer* and Channel 4, which alleges he played a prominent role in developing strategies to change voters' behaviour while working for the controversial political consultancy firm Cambridge Analytica,

**“We do not believe that the role of a public university is to involve staff in armed conflicts by acting as a supplier of contract research to the MoD”**

through his academic research.

Whistleblower Christopher Wylie alleged that Dr Kogan's social media algorithms had facilitated efforts by the firm Cambridge Analytica to influence the outcome of the 2016 United States presidential election which saw the election of Donald Trump.

When Cambridge's proposal to enter the bid was first revealed, the national Campaign Against Arms Trade said, in a statement: "The University management has serious questions to answer about how this proposal came to be, and what other programmes it has applied for."

At an open meeting with senior-provice-chancellor for education, Graham Virgo, on Wednesday, he was questioned about the bid.

In response, he said: "It is entirely appropriate for researchers to decide that's the research they want to do."

With regards to "autonomy" for research, he said, "as long as it's legal, [it's] something I'll always argue for."

Academics called on the University not to seek future funding under the HSSRC programme or similar ones.

A University spokesperson declined to comment on whether they could make any such commitment.

In a statement on the open letter, a spokesperson for the University told *Varsity*: "Outside organisations talk to us all the time about collaboration, but we are not part of this tender process."

## In full: The open letter sent to Vice-chancellor Stephen Toope and Professor Steve Connor

We are writing to express our dismay at the news that the University reached the final stage of bidding for the Human Social Science Research Capability (HSSRC) Programme funding by the Ministry of Defence through DSTL, which would have involved classified contract research across a wide number of domains, including "understanding and influencing human behaviour", and "targeted information manipulation".

Setting up a programme of this nature, involving work classified under the Official Secrets Act, would, we believe, pose serious risks to the reputation and credibility of our research, particularly in the wake of public debate over the methods of "information manipulation" carried out by a member of staff who was engaged by Cambridge Analytica on a commercial contract.

The University already hosts many major projects which are making an important contribution to research in the fields covered by the HSSRC, but in contrast to this programme, the results are published, the methods used are open to scrutiny by the academic community, and the benefits can be harnessed for the good of the wider public.

We are deeply concerned that the University chose to enter the bidding for a contract research programme on this scale for the Ministry of Defence. We do not believe that the role of a public university is to involve staff in armed conflicts by acting as a supplier of contract research to the MoD. Many members of the university oppose military interventions involving UK armed forces, such as those which have had devastating effects on Iraq and Afghanistan.

We note with particular concern that you were exploring the setting up of a "profit generating programme management consultancy". Undertaking government-funded contract research of this nature is troubling enough, but looking to profit from it is shocking. What kind of paying clients did you imagine would have wanted to buy services such as these? The DSTL's current list of suppliers in 'Human Capability' includes companies selling services and products to authoritarian regimes directly implicated in major human rights violations (including Roke Manor Research, part of the Chemring Group, and QinetiQ, whose clients include the Saudi Ministry of the Interior).

We are also appalled that, according to the minutes of General Board, "the potential reputational risks" associated with participation, were to have been "mitigated by a targeted communications effort, fully funded through the programme." In other words, one of the first targets of "information manipulation" would have been the very people whose taxes pay for the research in the first place, including members of staff and students at the University not involved in the programme.

We call on the University and CRASSH not to seek future funding under this or similar schemes.



# Clare Hall plans to divest £26.6 million endowment from fossil fuel industries

◀ Continued from front page

broader divestment movement generally calls for the removal of funds from the top 200 companies worldwide.

Campaigning group Clare Hall Fossil Free (CHFF), founded by students Logan Malik and Ivan Mouraviev in October 2018, has been pushing for this decision since the beginning of Michaelmas.

In a statement on today's decision, the group said: "Clare Hall hopes that its decision will help other Colleges, and the University itself, to respond to the urgent need for strong action on climate change by taking similar action."

93.4% of Clare Hall's current endowment fund is invested in the Cambridge University Endowment Fund (CUEF) worth £3.19bn.

CUEF, managed by the Cambridge University Investment Office, has been the subject of the University-wide campaign to push for Cambridge to divest over the past three years.

Last year, the University made the controversial decision not to divest its direct and indirect investments in the fossil fuels industry, based on the recommendations of a divestment working group set up to consider whether Cambridge should divest.



The University's decision, and the divestment working group, have since come under wider scrutiny. A bombshell *Guardian* investigation in January revealed that two members of the Working Group, Professor Simon Redfern and John Shakeshaft, were involved in considering donations from BP and BHP, which together amounted to £22

▲ Clare Hall will fully divest (CANTAVESTRELLA)

million.

As part of its commitment to divestment, Clare Hall has promised to advocate for increased transparency in the operations of the CUEF. It will be pushing the CUEF to adopt a divestment policy during the funds transitory period, and if this does not happen within the next 5 years, all of its £26.6 million investment

will be withdrawn.

Vice Chancellor Stephen Toope is a professorial fellow at Clare Hall and member of the College's governing body. In a statement, campaigning group Cambridge Zero Carbon said: "With his own college committing to full divestment, it is time the Vice Chancellor faces the facts: divestment presents effective, pragmatic action on climate crisis, and the vast majority of his students and staff support it." They also said that Clare Hall's decision was a "landmark moment", adding that "The whole of Cambridge University is demanding urgent action on climate crisis, it is up to those with the power to listen and lead."

A *Varsity* investigation in June 2018 found that the majority of colleges do not intend to divest their endowments from fossil fuels, citing the structure of their investments and rules from the Charity Commission.

Alongside Queens' and Downing, the college's decision marks almost £160 million of funding from Cambridge colleges' divested from the fossil fuel industry in the last 9 months — £86.2 million from Queens', £45.6 million from Downing, and £26.6 million from Clare Hall. Since February, Selwyn has also partially divested and no longer holds any direct investments in fossil fuels companies.

# Next year's CUSU budget predicts surplus for first time in recent years

Molly Killeen  
Senior News Correspondent

After what it has described as "a few difficult years in recent history", CUSU has released its budget for the 2019-20 academic, in which it projects a £5,522 surplus for the upcoming year.

This is the first time in recent years a CUSU budget has predicted a surplus, with the budget for 2017-18 predicting a £75,000 deficit, leading to the launching on an inquiry into CUSU's funding crisis, although actual losses that year were only £6,836. The 2018-19 budget predicted that CUSU will make a loss of just under £3,000 this year.

The funding model for CUSU underwent significant changes in 2018/19, which the recent budget report describes as having led to a financially successful year meaning that the model will be kept in place.

In particular, CUSU's budget has benefited from a significant increase in £80,000 a year of central funding from the University, which is its main source of income. CUSU has also benefited from moving towards a "collegiate levy" system, replacing affiliation fees for JCRs and MCRs, which will be used to run the welfare activities, primarily the Students' Union Advice Service, of both CUSU and the Graduate Union.

In total, CUSU expects to receive an



income of £802,391 in the upcoming year. To supplement the money it receives from the University, colleges and departments, CUSU relies on revenue generated through business and the services it provides for students.

The budget report notes that CUSU generates 27.5% of its own income, which is a lower percentage than that of some other Students' Unions, due to Cambridge-specific limitations on its trading abilities, such as space restrictions, the collegiate system and low funding. These factors mean that CUSU "struggles to adopt a traditional SU [Students' Union] funding model."

£5,522

CUSU's predicted surplus for 2019-20

There has been a "substantial increase" in the predicted income from the Widening Participation Project Fund, as CUSU has this year bid for funding to expand the project. If the bid is successful, the total projected income from the fund will be £51,437, with corresponding expenditure on all Widening Participation Projects of £37,690, including £16,690 for the Shadowing Scheme and £20,000 for CamSpire.

The budget also breaks down its predicted £796,869 in overall expenditure,

◀ CUSU's offices at 17 Mill Lane (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

“ [CUSU] struggles to adopt a traditional Students' Union funding model ”

a figure roughly similar to the prior year's. Projected expenditure for CUSU Campaigns has increased this year from £8500, split between five liberation campaigns with an additional £400 for the Ethical Affairs part-time executive last year, to a total of £11,200 to be divided between seven such campaigns in 2019/20. This year saw an increased number of liberation campaigns as a result of Class Act becoming a CUSU liberation campaign and the Ethical Affairs becoming a campaign as a result of the recent democracy review.

CUSU also expects to pay £9,159 in NUS affiliation fees over the next year. The report points out, however, that NUS is in the midst of a 'turnaround' period, given the current financial difficulties it is experiencing and, as a result, there is potential for changes to be made to the affiliation fee model. Such alterations will be agreed upon at the National Conference in April and, if needed, subsequently be brought before CUSU Council. The budget is set by the Finance sub-committee of CUSU's Board of Trustees and ratified by both the Board and CUSU Council. A specialised University committee receives reports on the Union's accounts four times a year, as part of a wider system which the report describes as working to ensure that "[CUSU's] finances do not prevent it from achieving its charitable objectives of supporting and representing students."



## News

# 'Cage campaign' protests arbitrary detention of Cambridge PhD student

Katy Bennett

Senior News Correspondent

Last weekend, protesters camped in a small wooden cage outside King's College for 48 hours to protest the detainment of Cambridge PhD student and activist Peter Biar Ajak, currently illegally detained and facing the death penalty in South Sudan.

Members of Cambridge University Amnesty International (CUAI) protested from 6pm on Friday until 6pm on Sunday as part of the organisation's annual 'Cage Campaign', which has taken place for over 40 years.

This campaign seeks to raise awareness of human rights abuses worldwide, with this year's protest focusing specifically on the plight of Peter Biar Ajak.

Ajak, 35, a PhD student at the University, has been detained without charge in his home country of South Sudan since 28 July 2018, in a notorious prison known as the Blue House. This is illegal, as the South Sudanese constitution states that no one can be held without charge for more than 24 hours.

The main aim of the protest was to gather signatures in support of Ajak's release, written on an 8 metre long piece of cloth positioned in front of the cage on King's parade, and to raise as much awareness about his detainment as possible.

The cloth will be sent to central Am-



▲ A protestor sits in a cage to protest against the detainment of Ajak (HASSAN RAJA)

nesty International "to provide a symbol and a glimpse of just how many people are thinking about him" and to offer evidence of the strength of support for Ajak's release.

Ella McCoshan, CUAI's Cage Campaign coordinator, told *Varsity* that "in deciding on a theme for this year's Cage Campaign, our team wanted to pick something which fitted the idea of 'human rights on your doorstep'. Not only did we feel this would make for a Cage Campaign which is more effective and

closer-to-home, we also wanted to target something we felt we could really contribute to."

Ajak fled South Sudan as a child refugee and has since been a vocal critic of the country's regime. He was returning to the country in July to attend a youth forum organised by the Red Army Foundation, which was created by former child soldiers seeking to address social issues in South Sudan, when he was arrested at Juba International Airport.

His lawyer Jared Genser recently told the BBC that Ajak is facing the death penalty, with the Sudanese government considering charging him with treason or terrorism. This has been met with outrage, from Cambridge to the US Congress. Ajak has still not been formally charged.

McCoshan said that CUAI believe Ajak's detainment and possible sentencing is "completely unjust and wrong for a man who stood up for so many, and advocated human rights and protected political speech", describing the conditions in which he has been held as an "atrocious".

CUSU passed an emergency motion in support of Ajak in October 2018, acknowledging that the majority of Cambridge's student body were unaware of his situation. The motion stated that "Peter is a political prisoner and should be released immediately." It added that "the student body of Cambridge University is highly politically active, and that

any commitment or encouragement of activism is significantly weakened if we fail to stand up for everybody's right to protest, including those of our fellow students internationally."

A petition calling for Ajak to be released, which states that "Peter has always kept his focus on South Sudan and his hope for a peaceful future for his country", has gathered over 100,000 signatures. His case has also been taken up by high-profile figures worldwide, including Congresswoman Madeleine Dean, who highlighted Ajak's plight in the United States House of Representatives.

Cambridge Vice-chancellor Stephen Toope made an appeal for Ajak's release to the President of the Republic of South Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit, in September 2018, and the University has also sent a formal request to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to intervene in Ajak's case "as a matter of urgency". So far, however, the South Sudanese National Security Service and government have been "unresponsive".

McCoshan told *Varsity* that CU Amnesty International intends to "keep up pressure and attention to ensure that this is not just a single headline which is then forgotten the next day". Addressing the lack of awareness of Ajak's plight among Cambridge students, she added that: "We hope and believe that this campaign has gone a long way in changing that."

# Homeless deaths in Cambridge over double the national average, according to estimates

Molly Killeen

Senior News Correspondent

Data released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has revealed that the death-rate amongst homeless people in Cambridge between 2013 and 2017 was more than double the national rate.

During this five year period there had been an estimated 18 deaths in Cambridge. This figure amounts to a death-rate of 2.7 per 100,000 people, over twice as many as the average rate in England and Wales of 1.2 per 100,000.

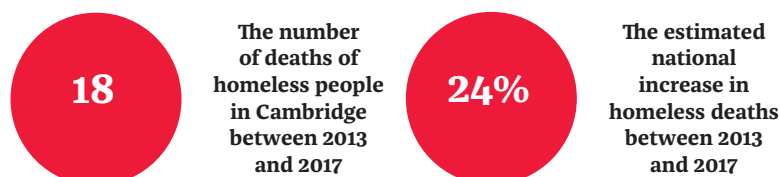
An estimated 597 homeless people died in England and Wales in 2017 alone, which marks a 24% increase from 2013 to 2017. This is the first time that official estimates of the number of deaths amongst homeless people have been gathered.

The ONS' findings also reveal that the more disadvantaged the local area, the higher the number of deaths there are.

The report outlines that in the most deprived 10% of England's local areas, the death-rate of the homeless per 100,000 was 9.2 times that of the least deprived tenth between 2013 and 2017. In Wales, the rate in the most deprived tenth was 3.4 times that of the least de-



▲ It had been estimated that 18 people died homeless in Cambridge between 2013 to 2017 (LUCAS CHEBIB)



prived tenth.

Accidents were the primary recorded cause of death in the five-year period, registered in 241 instances. The second most common cause was suicide, which accounted for an estimated 78 deaths. These two factors, combined with diseases of the liver, made up over half of the causes of death of homeless people recorded by the study.

It is noted in the report that exact figures are difficult to ascertain due to the limited information available in some areas and certain methodological constraints, meaning that the actual figures may be even higher than those released.

The study accounts for those whose recorded place of residence when they died, or their recorded place of death, was "no fixed abode", "homeless" or "night shelter", and also includes those who were listed as living at known homeless hostels or projects.

A Cambridge City Council spokesperson stated that "Cambridge City Council regrets the death of anyone using the city's homelessness services."

Whilst they welcomed the ONS' analysis, they said that "the figures need to be seen in context", given that, as the report

states, homelessness is concentrated in urban areas such as Cambridge.

"The council spends over £700,000 a year in grants to various services assisting homeless people and people on the street. All the major local homelessness charities receive some funding from the council. In addition to the grants it makes to other organizations, the council funds its own services for single homeless people and rough sleepers."

Councillor Richard Johnson, who is the executive councillor for housing, made it clear that "The death of anyone who is sleeping rough, or is known to homelessness services is a tragedy."

He added, "It is important, however, to understand that the rise in homelessness in Cambridge and in the country, with the sad net result being an increase of people dying on the streets, is linked to nine years of cuts from Whitehall."

"The government needs to recognise this by urgently changing course and give councils, including us, the full resources required to fully reverse this trend."

Last month, figures revealed that the number of people sleeping rough in Cambridge saw no improvement since 2017.



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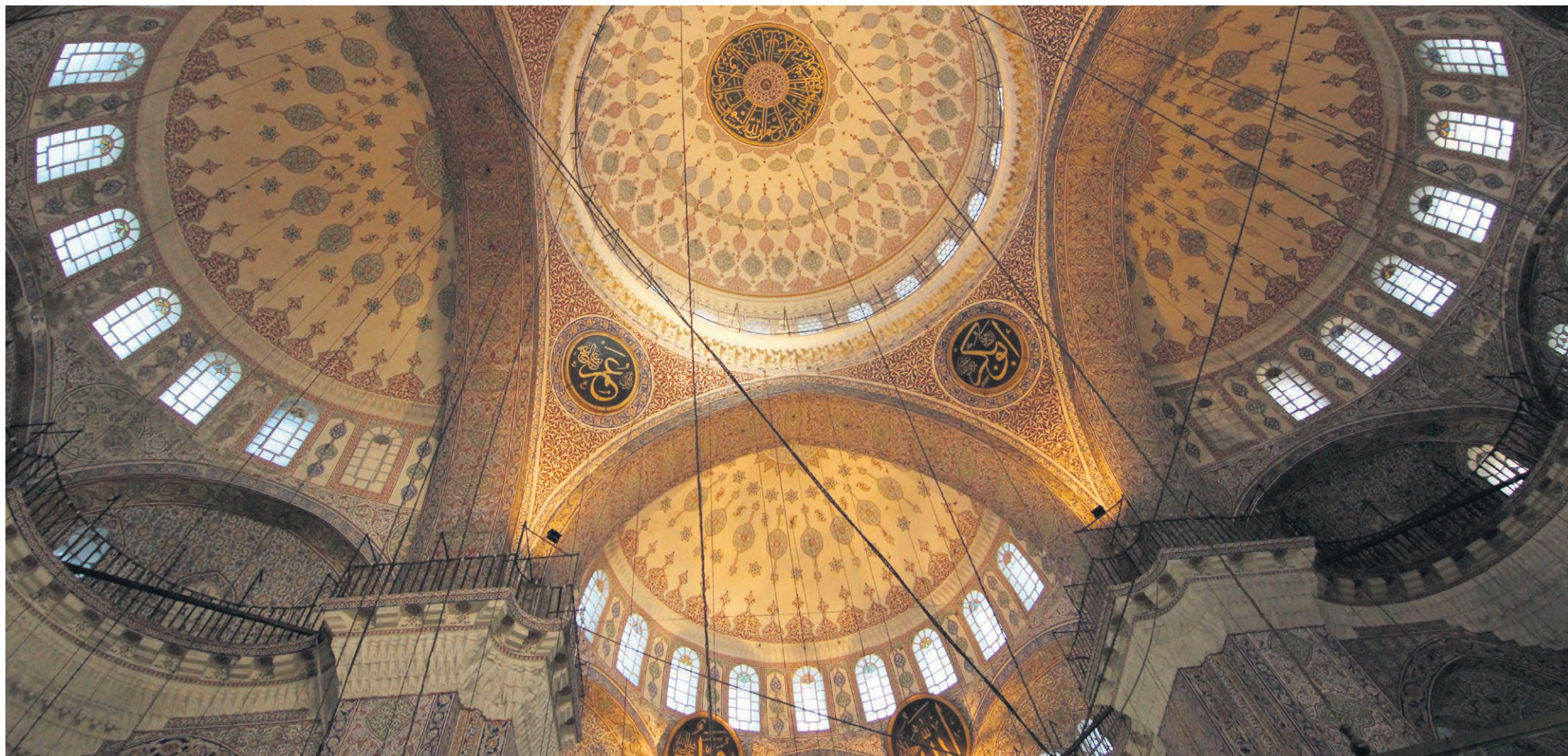


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# Features

## My religion is my own



*Khadija Tahir explores her journey with religion, and between Cambridge and Pakistan*

I identify as a Muslim, and despite the fluctuating relationship I have with my religion, it is undoubtedly a significant part of who I am. Having grown up in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, escaping my religious identity wasn't really a choice. Even the times when I wanted to forget about the "burdens" and "obligations" of Islam, the adhan would be a reminder of the integral role it played in my country and society; the stillness of Ramadan, the festivity of Eid and the sense of community brought together by the Friday prayers was an inclusive force drawing everyone in. Of course, this makes it difficult for religious minorities to find a place for themselves, and, to a much lesser extent, it's difficult for the lost and confused within the majority to completely fit in as well.

I have spent most of my life trying to find a balance between my Pakistani culture and the Western influences prevalent in any postcolonial society. Regarding language, rituals, clothing, and values, I seem to have been in a constant internal struggle to find a set identity that I could claim for myself. Part of this struggle for a set identity has a significant aspect which I avoid discussing: religion. In particular, the religion I have always associated with is Islam, and as such my relationship with Islam is integral to my identity. The global political climate makes the discussion of anything to do with Islam uncomfortable, and being from a country which accepts it as the national religion means that I often find myself defending both my country and my religion – regardless of my relationship with the latter.

Living in Pakistan, these confusions and struggles weren't something I faced alone. I think an entire generation felt, and feels, the same as I did. We accept the intersection of culture and religion, and try to come to terms with the fact that our shifting dynamics with either or both have to be explored privately. It wasn't acceptable to be confused about religion, because that would mean being confused about your attachment to the state. Exploring this part of your identity had to take place within the confines of your home, where warring factions

▲ Religious identity is difficult and confusing, but valuable (SAMUELES)

“My religious identity was either “too Muslim” or “not Muslim enough”

and Islamic values coexist naturally. In public, it wasn't okay for anyone to have a fluctuating relationship with religion because that would mean that their “faith was weak”, but it seemed inevitable in a culture where western ideals were greatly valued.

Before I arrived, I saw Cambridge as a place of exploration. It would be the place where all the restrictions I faced in Pakistan would disappear and I would finally be able to choose my own position on the religious spectrum. With no restrictions on what I wore, where I went and who I chose to hang around with, Cambridge promised total freedom. Instead, it gave me only pseudo-freedom. The visible discomfort people around me felt whenever I brought up the topic of Islam – as if being Muslim automatically rendered me intolerant of their lifestyle – made me realise that Cambridge wasn't so different from Lahore.

In Lahore I felt as though I could not discuss any possible move away from religion, and here it was the opposite: I could not discuss the possibility of growing closer to it.

My fluctuating relationship with Islam had no place in this society. This isn't to disregard the amazing support systems that are available for those who feel similarly, such as religious societies, but my struggle was about trying to figure out which way I leaned, as though stand-

“Despite it being a confusing... journey...it is that very complexity which makes it my own”

ing straight in the middle of the religious and non-religious spectrum wasn't acceptable. I felt that my religious identity was either “too Muslim” or “not Muslim enough”. From not being able to explore and shift the dynamics of my interaction with Islam in Pakistan, I found myself equally uncomfortable doing so in Cambridge. Religion, for me, has always been something that lies on a spectrum, and choosing which position one takes on that spectrum is an important individual right. Despite it being a confusing, and even difficult journey, I have begun to appreciate my complex relationship with Islam, because it is that very complexity which makes it my own.

Having lived in both Lahore and Cambridge, the dichotomy of the two places is reflected in my individual identity, and after 18 years of either apologising for or justifying this, I have come to learn one extremely important lesson: regardless of whether or not my country lays claims on Islam, my relationship with it is my own.

The fluctuations and shifts that I experience are merely part of the exploration and necessary to my own development. My religion is my own and whether I fit into the conventional mould of a Muslim has started to matter less and less to me, because I now realise that the spiritual journey I take, I will have to take alone.



# ‘It’s not selfish to let go’



**An anonymous student recounts their experience in leaving a toxic relationship with their parent**

*Content note: this article contains detailed discussion of abusive relationships*

If a family member causes you more pain and stress than you can cope with, it is not selfish of you to let go. Since distancing myself from a parent earlier this term, I feel like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders. Making the decision, I knew that my mental health had been suffering and was moving towards crisis point, but I couldn’t decide whether the situation was just not ideal or something I needed to protect myself from.

When someone has been in and out of your life for 18 years, your perception of them is made up of more than shared experiences – it’s also the inbetween times of waiting and expectation, the subsequent disappointment, the lingering memories. Since I was of primary school age, my encounters with my dad

were few and far between, usually once a year for a couple of days. This made those days special, to the extent that any acknowledgement that our time together had been less than perfect felt like ruining the image I had created of my father. It was unthinkable after having yearned to see him for so long. The disappointment was pushed to one side, as dangerous and scary. I didn’t want to come to any unwelcome realisations, very aware of the fact that this was my only father – I see his traits every time I look in the mirror – and so it felt like there was an obligation to put up with whatever curveballs the relationship threw at me. Anything rare becomes precious.

Now, reaching adulthood, the moments of disappointment have accumulated, finally reaching disillusionment. This manifested itself in emotional exhaustion. I remember clearly the moment this year when I thought, ‘I don’t want to do this anymore – and I don’t have to’. It was a case of proving to myself that I could stand up to someone I loved and cared for but who had exhausted my mental health for so long. In all other aspects of my life – in my studies, in my body, and in my individuality – I was proud of my growing self-confidence. But when it came to confronting my father, I was still the little kid, afraid to lose the parental love that had been so distant,

“*Standing up to someone you’re afraid to lose can be the harshest thing you ever have to do*”

afraid of his outbursts of rage.

Here, I could not find the words to build sentences I had rehearsed over and over. When I confronted my dad for the first time, I was 16 years old, engaged in student politics and a keen debater.

On the phone to him, I was shaking, holding my notes so I could remind myself of my resolve. Fear is power, undoubtedly. I knew that my mother had suffered under his emotional abuse for years, and I was painfully aware that she would defend his intentions, in order to convince me that I could take pride in a father who loved me. It was always easier to recognise and expose the absurdity of this reaction in her than to reflect on myself. I stick by the motto that, in any relationship – parental, romantic or platonic – if you would be worried about your friend if it were them in your situation, there is probably an issue that needs at least acknowledging.

Standing up to someone you’re afraid to lose can be the hardest thing you ever have to do. It can be painful, especially when, as in my case, a sullen face and a sincere apology were soon followed by a return to the status quo. The perpetual cycle of working up the courage to express unhappiness, pride in finally addressing it followed by a brief spell of apparent good relations, and then finally the realisation that all the same prob-

▲ It can be hard to acknowledge the abusive nature of those you love (RILEY BRIGGS)

“*For me, the only way to break the cycle was to take the leap of faith out*”

lems had resurfaced – to say the least, it’s exhausting. For me, the only way to break the cycle was to step away from the relationship. This was new territory, scary and unexplored, but it felt so completely liberating.

It wasn’t that I didn’t love him anymore, it was that I knew I was suffering whilst he was oblivious. Now, at last, I had agency – and this changed everything. As an adult, I was under no obligation to my parent, who had been shy of their own responsibilities during my childhood. You should not feel guilty about choosing to be healthy and self-confident. These are not privileges, but rights you must defend for yourself when nobody else will.

When a relationship reduces and weakens you, or causes those around you to express concern, you are at liberty to walk away. Clearly, this is easier said than done; circumstances are rarely uncomplicated. It took me three series of counselling sessions over 10 years to even reach the realisation that I could choose to what extent I wanted to engage with my father.

Even if circumstances don’t allow you to break away immediately or fully, and even if you don’t want to, an awareness of your agency is crucial. Your parent should want you to protect yourself – I like to think that, if they really thought about it, they would be proud.



## Features

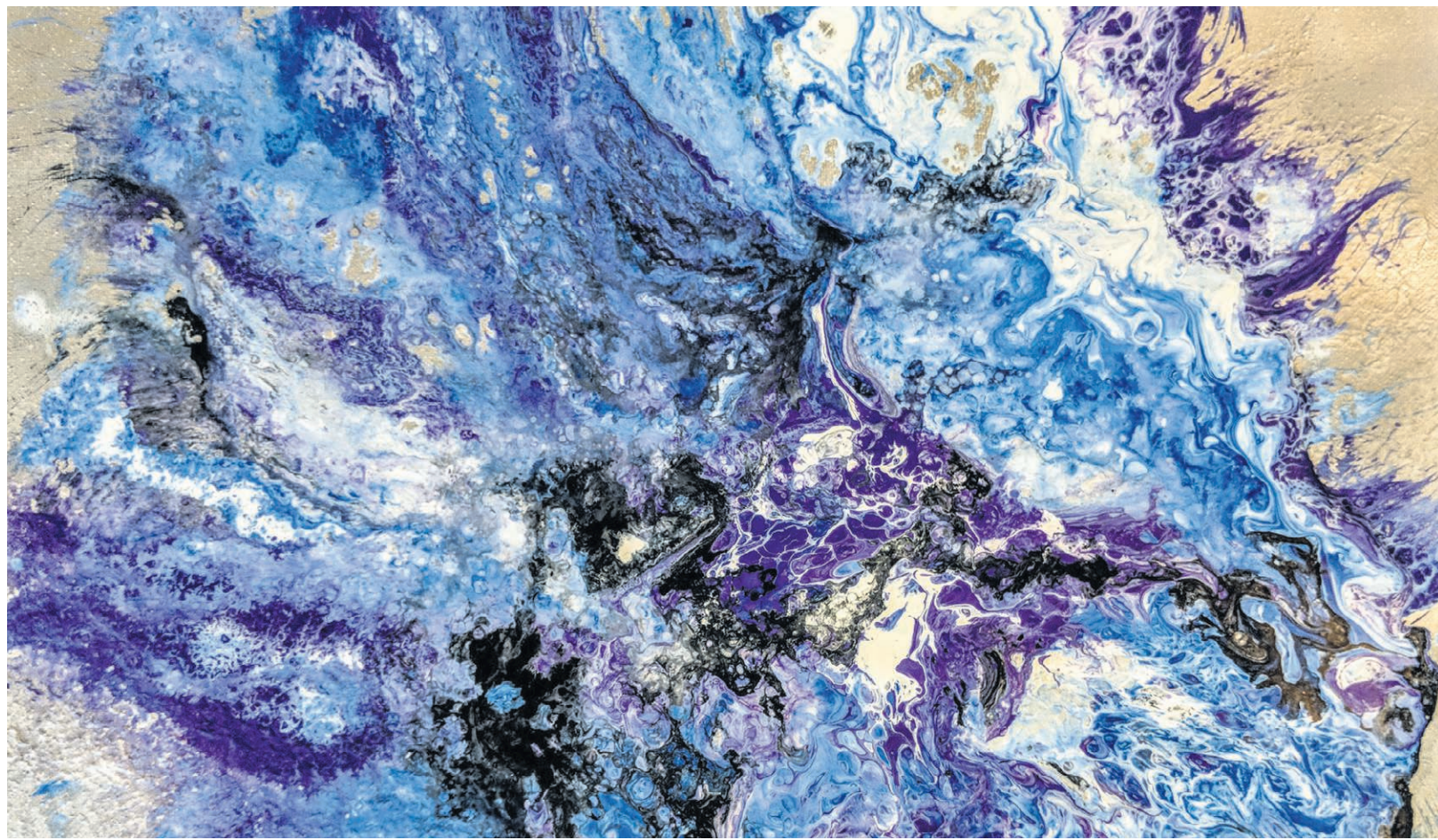
# The poisoned chalice of 'healthy eating'

**Cordelia Sigurdsson** warns that 'healthy eating' bloggers can promote eating disorders

Content note: this article contains detailed discussion of eating disorders

'H' ealth' related Instagram accounts are not necessarily as healthy as you might think. 'Low carb' and 'gluten free' this, 'refined sugar free' that – I mean what even is 'refined sugar'? Yet, these phrases fill the Instagram feeds of food bloggers the world over and I believe that they can potentially lead young and vulnerable minds down the wrong path. We must not perpetuate the idea that it's healthy for a young, still developing person to cut entire food groups from their diet.

Anorexia is all about food rules – what you are allowed to eat and what you are not. This is not helped by the fad for Instagram diets that put the *bad* label on certain foods. A sandwich may be higher in calories, but as part of a flexible and



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social diet, it is perfectly acceptable.

By adhering to dietary rules, you risk isolating yourself. Your friends might all be going out for dinner and grabbing ice cream after – but wait, you can't because it contains 'refined sugar.' Diet blogs give young people a way of hiding an underlying problem using the phrase: "Oh but it's healthy." I say this from personal experience: once the rules begin, they often only escalate until you have no flexibility around eating at all. The rules can never be broken; not even a small part of your brain is asking why your friends can eat a certain thing and you can't.

To make matters worse, fuelling this toxic Instagram culture are advertising companies who send 'influencers' money and free items in exchange for a promotional post about their 'healthy' product. Some Instagrammers, if you read between the lines, display some kind of disordered eating. But these free items act as a reward for a particular lifestyle. ?

When I was ill I followed countless food blogs, always on the search for recipes with less than 200 calories. A young developing person should be eating 2,000 calories a day. What an indictment it is that I could find these recipes promoted, and even glorified, by teenage girls whose main following is other teenage girls.

These same food blogger accounts generally also promote doing ridiculous amounts of exercise on top of already very low calorie diets. Again, not a bad thing in general but when you're exhausted from weeks of under-eating and have been running every day, all these posts do is make the eating disorder inside you squirm, and make you feel guilty for not pushing yourself as hard as the person you see on the screen appears to be. I distinctly remember one post of a Californian Instagram blogger whom I followed avidly. She posted a series of photos explaining how ill she'd felt – a

▲ 'Healthy eating' can be a mask for restrictive eating  
(AMBER LAMOREAUX)

“We must not perpetuate the idea that it's healthy for a young person to cut entire food groups from their diet”

cause for rest and food you would think? No, the next thing she posted was about how she went on a long power walk and ate a salad for dinner, because she couldn't bear to not have moved from the hospital all day. It sounds crazy but your brain starts to think that this is what you should be doing too. In truth, the people you follow on Instagram are strangers to you. All I knew about them was how little they'd eaten. During my eating disorder recovery, one of my therapy sessions involved 'detoxing' my Instagram. Any account that posted pictures of food or fitness, I unfollowed. Models and photo-shopped pictures were removed from my feed. I didn't think it would help me as much as it did, but as soon as they disappeared from my Instagram I didn't have the constant reminder every time I opened my phone that I wasn't good enough.

Bloggers can seem perfect in one carefully curated snapshot, but is there anyone who you know really really well who is beautiful, both inside and out, and yet doesn't also have some imperfection? I bet there isn't. So why are we continuing to compare ourselves to a screen? Instagram can be amazing. It can be beautiful to see how someone from across the world lived the same day as me in a completely different way. But I don't need to know if these people ate a sweet potato brownie rather than just a normal brownie, or that they ran 15km when I was exhausted and didn't leave my house. Before Instagram we lived without these constant comparisons, and we did so perfectly happily and perfectly healthily. So why can't we now? If you've been affected by any of the content of this article, B-eat Eating disorders provides useful information and resources, as well as a helpline at 0808 801 0677. The Students' Union Advice Service provides a more comprehensive list of support resources.



# Breaking into the boys' club of Cambridge

**Holly Platt-Higgins** explores the historical dominance of men in Cambridge

So, I made the decision, which people seem to enjoy referring to as a 'bold' or 'brave' choice, to take two dissertations in my final year. Now, as I approach the end of my penultimate term I can safely say, without a shadow of a doubt, I very much regret this decision. Do not do it. My second dissertation focuses on Virginia Woolf, and while staring out of the English faculty window, wondering why my mother didn't bother to make me become some child star so I could have avoided this horrible fate, I suddenly thought about how strange it is that, 150 years ago I wouldn't have been allowed to be here at all.

This realisation, prompted by my recent reading of *A Room of One's Own*, was followed by a quick trek through Google, from which I learnt that it's only been 72 years since women studying at Cambridge were permitted to have the status of 'full members', and just 25 years since women were allowed to study at Magdalene College, almost within my lifetime.

Once you notice how male-dominated this place once was, you begin to wonder about how this historically male presence has left its mark in the most seemingly insignificant ways: you start questioning how much of the handwriting you see in library books might be a man's, or how so many of the stone steps at the entrances to many colleges and

“While men are wandering on the beaten track, we're still paving the way”

libraries must have been worn down by mostly men's shoes.

So, does Cambridge still feel like a boy's club? Does it matter that we women haven't been making a mark in this place for very long? Well, I think I should preface my answer with an acknowledgement of my bias - no, not because I'm a woman - but because I'm at a college which has one of the highest discrepancy in their male to female admissions ratio. Churchill does sometimes feel like a boy's club purely because you don't see many women around.

Even outside college, there seems to be an air of invisibility regarding the women of Cambridge. From my first couple of years here, the people I remember seeing, but not knowing, were men. It seems men are just more visible than women, but why is this the case?

To start with, we're relatively new to a lot of the spaces in Cambridge. Only last year were women allowed to be in The Pitt Club, (not that that's much of a brag, but an opportunity, nonetheless) and in the whole history of Cambridge, there have only been four female student union presidents. Beyond our novelty, we also seem to be held back by the lack of effort made to recognise female achievement. Take sport for instance: there remains a certain condescension surrounding women's sport: you're far more likely to know the names of male blues than female blues.

And even now, there are still cases of incredibly outdated sexism and sexually inappropriate behaviour towards women happening throughout the university, often exemplified by the ever-present drinking societies.

It's difficult to discuss women's issues



▲ Senate house in 1880 (SWEDISH NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD)

without people instantly dismissing you, because they've either heard it all before or because it's an array of man-hating lies. Nevertheless, one thing that can be said is that it undoubtedly takes a whole lot more confidence for a woman to step forward and go for something in Cambridge.

Whether it's a first, a blue or a CUSU position, it takes a lot more courage for a woman to nominate themselves, simply because it's newer territory for us. The history of male dominance in Cambridge means that female participation is not the norm, and so while men are wandering on the beaten track, we're still in the process of paving the way. While there is an array of incredible

and talented women already trying to do this, we should all be working to create space for the women of Cambridge. Surely it is pointless to continue with the entrenched system of Cambridge as a boys' club when there is so much to be gained from the student body creating space for the talent of everyone here at the University?

Woolf wrote that, "All this pitting of sex against sex, of quality against quality; all this claiming of superiority and imputing of inferiority" was an attitude which belonged "to the private-school stage of human existence". So, as students, perhaps we should make more effort to move beyond the infantilized, unproductive outlook of boys vs. girls.

# RAG to riches: learning from Jailbreak

**Carla Maloney & Jemima Wickham** explain that RAG Jailbreak is not about how far you get, but the cause you support, and the people you meet

It was when we were lying on the dirt-trodden floor of Gatwick airport that we realised two things. One: everything had gone a bit wrong. Two: there was a sliver of hope yet that we would be able to put things right. Missing our flight to Salzburg by three minutes was not exactly what we had in mind when we signed up for RAG Jailbreak 2019 - an annual competition in aid of RAG's charities, entailing getting as far away from Cambridge as possible using 50% of donations received within a 36 hour period, with a minimum of £300 raised for charity.

There was talk of Rio, even Barbados,

but this was not to be. Neither is it for many an unsung Jailbreak warrior. Yet, this failure is all too often neglected in the dialogue surrounding Jailbreak. Failure is as much a part of Jailbreak as it is any other pursuit. Not only do we collectively need to address it to prepare our prospective Jailbreak successors, but also to recognise that failure, more often than not, can provide a much needed anecdote to give us perspective.

The fundraising for Jailbreak - the people you meet, the adventures you go on and the bizarre things you end up doing - is often overlooked. For starters, it was at the crack of dawn, with onesies donned as armour against the snowy weather, that the challenging nature of the task was first revealed to us.

Standing outside King's, we were met with a snarky "that's nice" in response to our efforts, a remark later topped by a Camden salesman's irritated but fair reply of "we're trying to *make* money", along with many a turned cheek and doorstep rejection.

This was not the Jailbreak the vlogs had promised. Camden Town seemed dubious about us. In all fairness, we were in onesies, in the snow, in the dark, vigorously shaking from a combination of cold and the flu. This was followed by many North Londoners saying "you're

“It was failure that forced us to distinguish between the fundamental conflict inherent to Jailbreak: travel vs charity”

mad", but often then lobbing a tenner our way.

Once we had reached Haringey, the pub crawl began. Still in our onesies and carrying our cardboard donations box, we were largely welcomed with a degree of curiosity. One notable figure was a middle-aged Oxonian who, after mocking our choice of University, donated generously. Others offered us pints and cheered us out in a moment of glory. Walking home, tired but somewhat proud, we bumped into one of the pub-goers and ventured on a hunt for his escaped great dane. Once again, shouting "Hugo" at midnight was not the Jailbreak experience we'd anticipated. The next day started off on a high note - we were invited into the house of an opera singer during our early-morning door knock. Soon after this, our fundraising drew to a close.

As one door closes, another opens. Whilst we had hoped this would have been a plane door swinging open to the streets of Salzburg, instead our eyes opened to the true value of Jailbreak - and of failure. We narrowly missed our flight to Salzburg, and faced repeated calls trying to get it refunded. It was soul-crushing to believe that our journey from Cambridge had led us only as far as the floor of Gatwick. But, it was

this very failure that forced us to distinguish between the fundamental conflict inherent to Jailbreak: travel vs. charity. Jailbreak is sold on the challenge of how far can you get away from Cambridge, but this can counterproductively come at the expense of charity, which is what it should be about. We were presented with a choice between getting a flight or bus, but despite the new 50/50 rule, this would have come out of the the pocket of RAG and would have betrayed its ethos.

We had so many unexpected misadventures and memories, met so many people from so many walks of life, and all without taking a step out of the country. It was almost as though we had fallen into a Louis Theroux documentary through the weird and wonderful nature of our experience.

Fundraising is the heart and soul of Jailbreak. Not only is it key to raising money for RAG, but the satisfaction you feel from raising this money through interaction with such a variety of individuals far outweighs the glorified goal of a few hours abroad. You may expect us to feel pessimistic about Jailbreak, but if done right, it can be one of the most rewarding and unique experiences of your time at University - even if you make it no further than London.



# Opinion



## Women must not be sidelined in public and popular discourse about violent men

*In creating media about violent men, the tragedy of the real victims is elided*

**Bethan McGinley**

*Content note: this article contains reference to sexual assault, murder, and violence against women.*

Following the #MeToo movement that has shaken the film industry in the last few years, 2019 appeared to be a promising year for Hollywood. Yet the release of *Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil, and Vile* (the Ted Bundy biographical thriller) reveals that there is still a long way to go both for Hollywood and society generally. The way that the film reproduces the glorification of Bundy that was so concerning at the time of his trial highlights the similarities between the treatment of Bundy and men on trial today, revealing an alarming lack of progress.

The fact that a film has been produced to profit from the story of a man famous for murdering at least thirty girls and young women is questionable at best. Victims and their family members are thrown back into the spotlight, whether they wish it or not. In addition, the Bundy is played by *High School Musical*'s Zac Efron, the heart-throb whose previous roles as the good-looking protagonist automatically present Bundy as gorgeous and misunderstood before Efron has spoken a word. Apparently not enough was taken from Bundy's victims at the time: forty years on, Hollywood has stripped them of their agency and dedicated a film to the memory of their killer.

The film focuses on Bundy with an exploration of the relationship between him and his girlfriend Elizabeth Kloepfer, played by Lily Collins. The women he killed are relegated to markers along the road of Bundy's character development. The emphasis placed on his charm, looks and wit 'glorify him', in the words of Kathy Kleiner Rubin, a surviving victim, presenting him as irresistible and almost unstoppable. These are titles he does not deserve. Bundy was a serial rapist, murderer and necrophile, one of America's most notorious killers. He was not particularly clever, especially charming or unusually good looking and to present him as such is an insult to the women he killed. They were not victims of his 'charm' or 'looks'. Two of his victims were simply asleep in their dorm rooms, another was a twelve year old girl waiting outside school, one was a lone hitchhiker and many more were simply kind-hearted young women, happy to lend a struggling stranger with a 'broken arm' a hand.

The memory of these women and their plight is firmly secondary within the film to the focus on Bundy. Although this is concerning, it is no surprise. The film merely perpetuates the tone of Bundy's trial, in which the women he hurt were subordinated. Indeed, the judge who sentenced Bundy to death took a moment to mourn, not for the

victims, but for Bundy's wasted law school-educated potential. Judge Cowart, who presided over a case in which two sorority students were sexually assaulted and murdered while asleep in their dorms, and two others were left with lifelong injuries, said "You'd have made a good lawyer and I would have loved to have you practice in front of me, but you went another way, partner [...] Take care of yourself. I don't feel any animosity toward you. I want you to know that." What is more, such views were espoused nationally in America. Men and women flocked to his trial, many of them adamant that he was innocent in spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

It is here that the picture becomes increasingly bleak. An examination of attitudes to Bundy during his trial are not dissimilar to modern views. Ultimately, those who refused to believe that Bundy was guilty during his trial are the same kind of people who stand by the likes of Brett Kavanaugh and believe that because the accused is white and educated, he must be innocent. They believe this in the face of clear evidence, but, most damagingly, they believe it at the expense of the women affected.

We have seen this time and time again. We saw it at the Kavanaugh case when Dr. Ford was forced to relive her rape before international scrutiny while

▲ A still from *The Ted Bundy Tapes* (NETFLIX)

“It should be unacceptable to attest to the innocence of educated white men guilty of hurting women”

facing daily death threats. The fact she came forward at great personal cost, with little personal motive, was dismissed because Kavanaugh is educated, white and powerful. We saw it when Brock Turner was found guilty of sexually assaulting an unconscious woman, and yet got only six months jail time, of which he only served three. We saw it when Jacob Anderson, a fraternity president, was indicted by the jury on four counts of sexual assault but got off with a \$400 fine, no jail time and the prospect of no record. The judge emailed the victim saying that 'our jurors are not ready to blame rapists and not victims when there isn't concrete proof of more than one victim'. Undeniably, male potential is prioritised over female well-being.

It should not be acceptable to produce a film about Bundy which presents him as more a misunderstood young man than cold-hearted serial killer. It is an insult to the memory of his victims. Forty years on, it should be unacceptable to attest to the innocence or ignorance of educated white men guilty of hurting women, in the face of overwhelming evidence. And it should be unacceptable to feel no animosity towards these men on behalf of their victims. Yet, somehow it still is. So I urge you: be outraged, feel animosity, and above all, do not be complacent.



# Hunger in Cambridge is rising: We should support the city's foodbanks

More students should be working to address the city's growing use of foodbanks

Dan Wright

Around the country, foodbank use is on the rise. Cambridge is no different: the numbers of people relying on emergency food parcels has risen year on year since 2015, with a 34% jump in the number of people using foodbanks in Cambridge from 2017 to 2018. This increase was well above the national average. There are plenty of factors behind this trend: the high cost of housing in Cambridge, the recent introduction of Universal Credit, and insecure employment all play their part. With social security becoming less generous in real terms, and growing numbers of people in in-work poverty, foodbanks now serve as a vital safety net for people on low incomes. In Cambridge, the Cambridge City Foodbank now supplies emergency food parcels to several hundred people a month.

The issue of foodbank use in the local community is simply not as visible to students as some of Cambridge's other crises, such as the shameful number of people forced to sleep rough. The issue of foodbank use in the local community rarely intersects with our experiences in the Cambridge University bubble.

My personal experience of foodbanks has always been much different. Not only has my family needed to rely on a foodbank in the past, but my home city of Salisbury is the birthplace of the Trussell Trust which now runs foodbanks across

Britain. When I arrived at Cambridge, it was one of the charitable activities I was most looking to engage with.

To that end, I joined the Cambridge University Foodbank Society in Michaelmas of my first year, which I now help run. We organise a collection for the Cambridge City Foodbank at the end of each term. Since it was founded a few years ago, the society has helped put food on the tables of some of the most vulnerable people in Cambridge.

But my experiences have made it obvious to me that one society alone can only do so much. Everyone who volunteers with the society is invaluable, not only because they give up their precious time to help, but because the number of students engaged with local foodbanks is so low. This isn't because students don't care. Quite the opposite: advocating political changes so that fewer people depend on foodbanks are things most people would support. Very few people could not be upset or outraged by the thought of people going to bed hungry in Cambridge today; But the lack of awareness is simply too great.

The Foodbank Society has been a powerful vehicle to allow students to engage with these issues. But I am now firmly of the opinion that for the issues of food poverty and food waste to be higher up the agenda for students, other student organisations need to adopt the issue.

“Local poverty and hunger are simply not as visible to students as some of Cambridge's other crises”

► Foodbank use has risen dramatically (CAMBRIDGE CITY FOODBANK)

Help from JCRs, MCRs, CUSU, and other student societies would be revolutionary. By putting their existing infrastructure, clout, and resources to use on this issue, the capacity for students to support our local foodbanks would be immensely increased. A culture of donating spare food and reducing food waste could be promoted, perhaps in freshers' week events, engaging students with local issues. And by speaking with common voice, we could send a message to the University and to events organisers that more must be done to reduce food waste. These are changes no single society could hope to produce, but could feasibly be achieved by working collaboratively.

This might be an ambitious suggestion. Student activists have done a great deal of fantastic work over the years on a diverse range of issues, and current discourse is centred on important campaigns which should be seen through to their completion. But the question of supporting our foodbanks is one which I hope will be taken up in the near future.

Supporting Cambridge's foodbank is one of the most direct ways students can help alleviate poverty in the local area. More than anything, I hope people reading this article are inspired to support the foodbank when next an opportunity arises.



## Sexual health can no longer be a casualty of austerity

Our ability to access long-term contraception and intimate health care has suffered under austerity

Helen Grant

CN: this article contains discussion of STIs  
A recent Varsity investigation highlighted the inconvenience of accessing long-acting reversible contraception in Cambridge, with our only sexual health clinic, the Lime Tree Clinic, a half-hour walk from the town centre. This inconvenience is not Cambridge specific: people across England are being turned away from clinics. Decisions about healthcare are still dependent on what's good for the pocket rather than the patient. Over the course of 2015/16 the public health grant to local authorities was reduced by 6.7%, with around £531m of cuts scheduled up to 2020.

We know that the NHS is in crisis, and as a result GPs are increasingly scaling back on their sexual health provision. Systems such as NHS 111 have put an extra strain on ambulance and A&E services. The GP recruitment crisis, the end to the nursing bursary in 2017 and the dwindling numbers of EU staff in our surgeries and hospitals have all already done their damage. Long waiting times mean that if it's prohibitively difficult to get a screening in one GP practice, it might not even be offered in another. A recent study by the King's Fund found that sexual health clinics themselves are being closed or relocated to less convenient areas. All of this has an effect.

Chlamydia remains the most prevalent STI in the UK and accounted for just under half of all new diagnoses made in 2017, yet chlamydia testing in SRH services has fallen by 61% since 2015, and overall testing even with DIY kits fell by 8% between 2016 and 2017. There were 2% fewer diagnoses in the 15-24 age bracket in 2017, and experts attribute this to the decline in screening provision rather than a victory against the infection itself.

What does good sexual health provision look like? Sometimes it's just easier to be offered a test than find the courage to ask for one, which is why opportunistic screenings at GP practices would be a huge step forward.

But in order to reach the broadest range of people, we also need more open-access, no-registration set-up of iCaSH clinics, and we need them moved to city centres so that people can actually use them.

You can't normalise frequent sexual health screenings if you're not willing to pay for their provision. Cuts to public funding are a political problem, and they have social and political solutions. There's still a huge amount of shame hanging over STIs, and until we start talking frankly about them, we can't speak up and ask for the services we need.



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## Opinion

# The pressures of election campaigning are exacerbated for disabled candidates

Potential candidates might be reluctant to stand in CUSU elections due to the pressures of the campaign period

Finley Kidd

Running in the CUSU elections has been an invigorating and rewarding experience, but it has also been frustrating and exhausting. Campaigning in a highly public arena for a period of nine days would be challenging for anyone, but the process becomes uniquely disarming when you are a disabled candidate attempting to use campaigning methods that don't quite fit you, all while existing within an institution that wasn't built for you.

I can't help but feel demoralised by the way in which I am unable to socialise with voters as much as I'd like to, wishing I could travel between colleges without experiencing the unique exhaustion that comes from interacting with new people in new sensory environments and has me falling asleep for hours every afternoon. Executing a campaign of this scale is a feat of organisation that multiplies in effort for students like me, who already struggle with executive dysfunction, a common feature of Specific Learning Difficulties. Attempting to coordinate flying across thirty-one different colleges that differ in location and internal set-ups is confusing enough, without my dyspraxic brain spinning to try and locate myself within a geography I will never intuitively understand. It is also a particularly tough time for campaigners with mental health conditions, which can be exacerbated by the stress of elections.

These are just a few limited examples of how, in my experience, being disabled makes campaigning more dif-

“  
I wish I could travel between colleges without experiencing the unique exhaustion that comes from interacting with new people in new sensory environments  
”

ficult. However, I'm not the only disabled candidate running in this election, and I deeply admire all of those attempting to navigate the experience alongside dealing with disabilities both visible and hidden. Yet, none of us should have to dredge up painful personal testimony of our struggles in order for people to recognise that elections can be inaccessible and ableist. Disabled candidates are placed in an uneasy double-bind in which they are implicitly pressured to disclose their disability, or risk their lack of physical presence being interpreted by the student body as apathy or incompetence. The onus should not fall upon us to constantly justify our failure to perform visibility, reliability, charisma and confidence in the ways that are typically thought of as signify a promising candidacy. In fact, many of the most committed, passionate and thoughtful student advocates and activists I know are engaged in quiet and unrecognised legwork for the causes they care about, unsuited for the public self-promotion that election season encourages. I worry that the way that elections are conducted currently puts off a number of potential candidates who would make incredible officers, but simply couldn't get through the campaigning period.

This predicament is intensified for women and people of colour, who are far less likely to be diagnosed by medical institutions or have their difficulties taken seriously. Women are notoriously less likely to be diagnosed with Autistic

Spectrum Disorder, with a 2009 survey of adults in England finding that 1.8% of men and boys surveyed had a diagnosis of autism, compared to 0.2% of women and girls. A Swedish study looking at chronic pain found that even when experiencing the same pain level, women were much more likely than men to accept their pain and attempt to continue at the same rate of activity. Paul Morgan's 2013 work on ADHD found that by the time BAME children in the U.S. reached eighth grade, they were between fifty and sixty-nine percent less likely to receive an ADHD diagnosis than their white counterparts. However, these disparities do not just inhibit the process of getting medical recognition, but also impact the quality of care that marginalised groups receive. The Mental Health Foundation reports that black people living in the UK are proportionally more likely to enter mental health services coercively via the courts or police, and are also more likely to be prescribed medication rather than offered holistic treatments. It isn't a stretch to imagine how class also acts on these disparities, with the wealthy much more able to access treatment. Thus, these issues are particularly pronounced at the intersection of race, class and gender, with working class women of colour being particularly underdiagnosed and undertreated.

It follows that the burden of campaigning while disabled is compounded by the fact that many students may still be invalidating their own difficulties

without the reassurance of an official diagnosis. Even when you have been diagnosed, it cannot be taken for granted that you will be receiving any kind of adequate care, particularly if you're functioning in a healthcare system where the odds are stacked against you. The struggle for legitimacy, then, extends not only to the public sphere where candidates' behaviour is being evaluated and compared, but also to disabled students' own sense of self. I still often wonder why I can't do certain things, assuming I must be lazy or inadequate because I haven't been granted the authority over my body or brain to claim another explanation.

If you aren't disabled, but know a disabled person participating in this election season, I would encourage you to reach out and offer your help to them. If you believe in them and their policies and can be physically present where they can't, do the social work that they struggle with, or help them feed and care for themselves throughout the election period then you should try to do so. However, I really hope to see elections develop alongside the vital, growing work of the Disabled Students' Campaign in ways that are less structurally disadvantaging of disabled candidates. Disabled students deserve the chance to fully demonstrate their talent and dedication to the rest of the student body, on their terms.

Finley Kidd and Kate Litman are currently running for the position of CUSU Women's Officer in this year's elections.

## Breaking the stigma around periods is the first step in tackling widespread period poverty

When it comes to broadening the provision of menstrual products, silence surrounding the issue is an obstacle we must tackle

Khushi Hunt

Period stigma still exists. Apple's introduction of a new period emoji doesn't make it any easier for a 13 year old to explain a sudden need to go to the toilet with "miss, I'm on my period", or for someone to convey that they need pain medication to deal with menstruation. Nor does it make it any easier for campaigners to be received warmly when they demand that period products must be treated as a necessity, rather than a luxury.

The phrase 'period poverty' has become more visible recently. Last July, multiple news outlets reported that over 137,000 UK schoolchildren are missing school days annually because they lack access to period products. Globally, the situation is worse: in Kenya, for example, 65% of women and girls are unable to afford sanitary products.

So why talk about stigma, rather than the material provision of necessities? Because the link between this stigma and access to period products is significant. National and international campaigns have acted not only to demand free sanitary towels and tampons in schools and universities. They have also emphasised 'smashing taboos' and de-stigmatisation. Stigmas and taboos surrounding menstruation vary in form globally – and campaigns seeking to derail them must

approach this – but the basic fact that poor information about and access to period products affects us all is a place to start if we want to challenge them. Already in Cambridge, a CUSU Council motion to provide free sanitary products University-wide, as well as the growth of panels amplifying campaigns like Amika George's Free Periods indicate University-wide engagement with period poverty. There is still, however, a long way to go in grasping the gravity of this issue on a national and global level.

Periods happen to half of the population, and not acknowledging that half of the population requires adequate sanitation, resources and facilities to deal with menstruation holds us all back. Children missing school, teachings struggling to teach, people of working-class livelihoods in particular finding it difficult to keep up with regimented schedules or attend job interviews – people of all ages missing out on the chance to learn, to develop, to access social mobility. Shrugging our shoulders about the importance of their access is symptomatic of the way we shrug our shoulders about health issues affecting marginalised groups more generally.

We need to break away from the deeply held notion that periods are just a 'women's issue' – because they are

a fundamentally human issue. Those who don't menstruate might be uncertain about the benefits of extending solidarity to those who do menstruate in Cambridge as well as nationwide and globally. But failing to provide affordable menstrual products prevents individuals from developing skills, relationships and a voice. Not providing adequate access to others limits our exposure from what they can contribute to us.

Access to period products is often presented in zero-sum terms. The conservative dismissal of talk about the price of periods as "left-wing hysteria" is based in an idea that we should be selective with spending and use money and energy on 'real issues', as if providing free sanitary products stops us helping other groups. In reality, ensuring access to work, education and social life by people who menstruate doubtlessly contributes to local, national and global growth and innovation. Systematic exclusion of one marginalised group on the grounds that there are not enough resources to prioritise their inclusion is not only flawed on its own economic utilitarian logic, it also – if unchallenged – justifies further degradations of access for groups which many of us are likely to belong to in some form.

Physical, social, and other health

“  
Over 137,000 UK schoolchildren miss school annually because they lack access to period products  
”

issues caused by a lack of access to adequate products and facilities, experienced by millions of people annually, should not be 'dealt with' alone by individuals that encounter them on a personal level. A world that is systematically unsuited to the reality of so many lives is a dysfunctional one.

Oxfam has chosen 'Wearing Red' as a Period Poverty campaign because this is something we can all do. When people of all genders and ages – reproductive age or otherwise – express an acknowledgement that periods will always exist, in all their messy, painful, monthly (in)glory, we can begin building an environment which is acutely aware of the need to deal with them safely while thinking seriously of ways to provide welcoming access to everyone: to schoolchildren, to those in poverty, to the homeless, to trans and non-binary people, and to everyone who is affected by stifling stigmas around periods, locally and globally. One day won't change a lot, but every small movement builds momentum. Our King's Parade rally at 3pm is aimed not only at showing how many people care about period poverty, but also encouraging the sharing of ideas, stories and art that reflects the intimate reality of dealing with periods. On March 8th, we're wearing red. Period.



# vulture



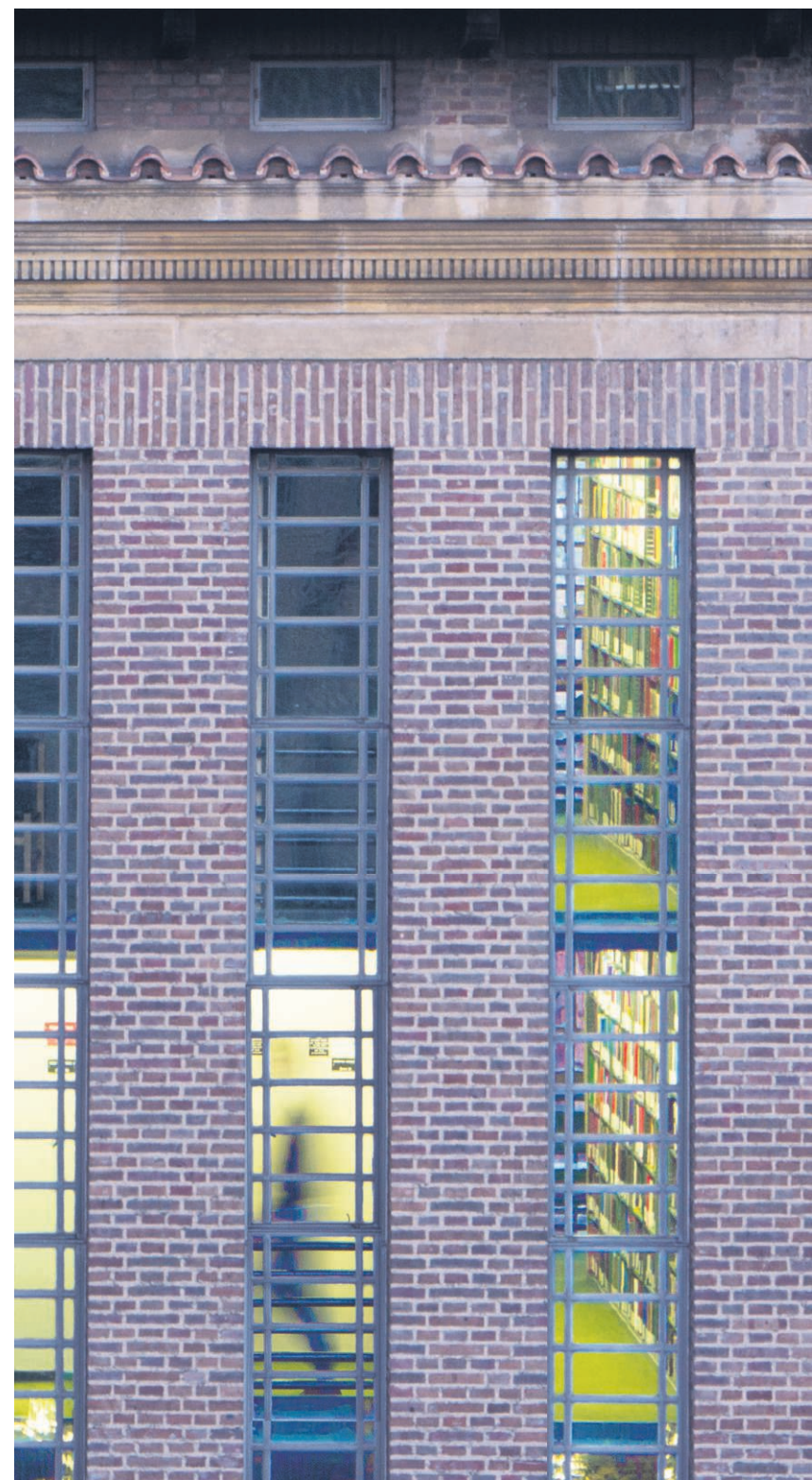
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Hoda Katebi, an Iranian  
Chicago-based blogger.  
Story on Page 22  
*Illustration by Lisha Zhong*





Contents (clockwise): 1. Fading light at the UL 2. Server at Selwyn. 3. Blocked off at King's. 4. St John's, closed and guarded. (CHRISTIAN HARVEY)



## Estranged Place

Christian Harvey is a third year coming to the end of his time in Cambridge. His photo essay attempts to document the increasing sense of hostility he feels from the physical university – the bricks, mortar and barriers that separate classes (both social and academic).







“*Cambridge has a feeling of institutional amnesia: the structure controls students*”

It's hard to be in Cambridge, as a first generation university student, and not feel like this place is physically trying to keep me out. The structures of this institution seem deliberately opaque: hard to see into, hard to get out of.

I tried to capture the feeling of isolation that pervades Cambridge. It's a city that has outgrown itself: its densely packed centre is devoted to immaculate college lawns in an era where affordable housing is virtually non-existent, spaces like Whitworth House are under threat of closure and the streets strain with a growing population of rough sleepers.

In recent years, the University seems to dominate the town more and more. Most industries have long gone, with the only product Cambridge has to sell being itself – on mugs, t-shirts and hoodies. The outskirts, especially around my college (Wolfson, in the village of Newnham) are devoted to sports fields: invaluable land that could house families and workers that is instead dedicated for students to have a bit of a kick-about.

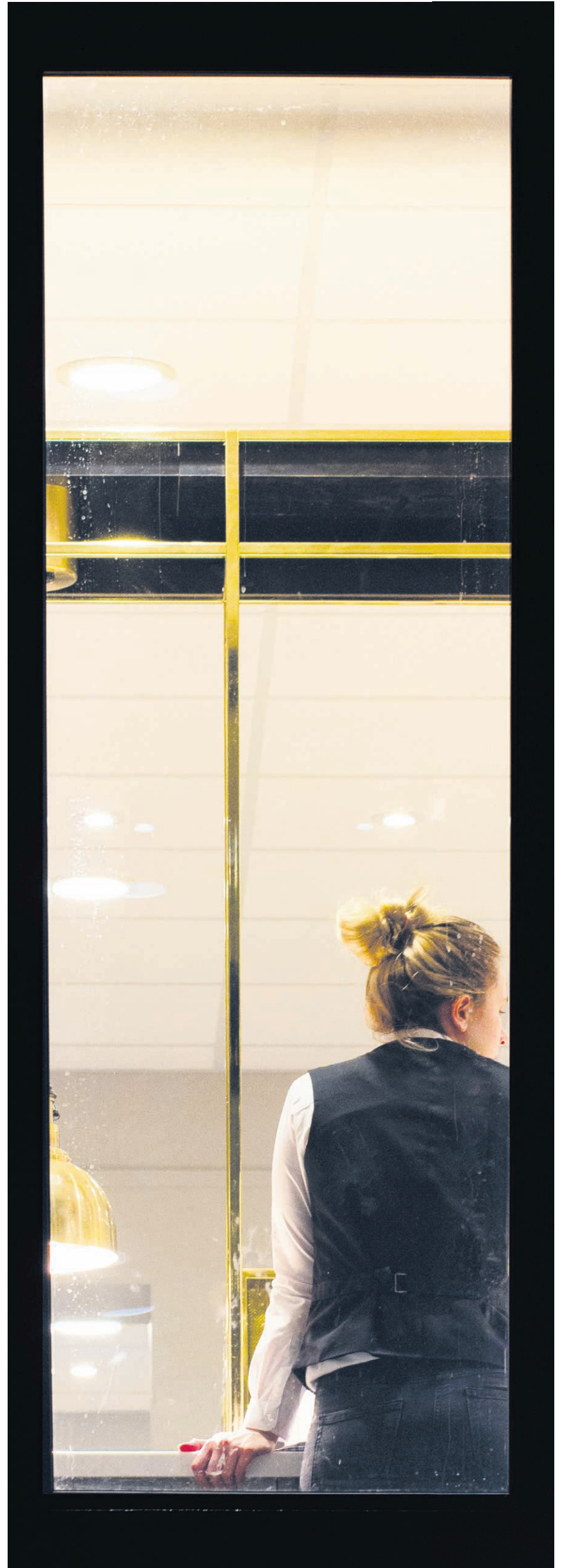
The other feeling I get is a sense of immateriality. Though the University's domination of the public space is almost complete – think, for instance, of how little of the city centre is available for you to pass through if you aren't a student – it is the events that these buildings contain that complete the dominance of the corporation over the city. The collegiate structure means that almost every procedure (from disciplinaries to divestment) is amenable to change and, it feels, to change in the favour of those who already hold power. Though students continually push for change – and sometimes achieve it – colleges that have AUMs bigger than some countries' GDPs appear unaccountable.

Partially this downcast look is because I am about to graduate, and I feel that my experiences will dissipate, while the material structures remain. The cycles of protest and reversion give Cambridge a feeling of institutional amnesia: students are here for such a short time that their efforts cannot change the corporation of Cambridge.

I bumped into a friend of mine five minutes after a massive protest with smoke grenades and megaphones.

“Did you see it?” I said.

“See what?”, he replied.





# The politicisation of fashion

**Sarah Naima** writes about the intersections of fashion, gender and the state.

Before I rush out of college, I catch up with a friend currently living in Berlin who did her exchange semester in Iran two years ago. I remember the media coverage of the Iran elections I watched prior to visiting her and my excitement about taking my flight to ‘contemporary Paris’ – fashion-wise, this was the image of Tehran I had. In the many English and American articles I file through now, the politics of Iranian fashion choices are omnipresent. In Tehran, however, it felt as if fashion was integrated into the vibrant city. Sophisticated colours and silhouettes were unassuming in comparison when debates on politics or music prompted long and nuanced arguments. In Cambridge, I find myself slightly anxious to wear brightly checked trousers to Hoda Katebi’s talk on the intersections of politics and fashion. I fear my choice of clothes may clash with Cambridge’s unspoken dress code. But what are the politics of slightly strange, vintage, wide-legged pants? I am unsure.

Hoda Katebi is Iranian but lives in Chicago, where she writes and researches: her thesis was on the underground fashion scene in Tehran and her blog *Joojoo Azad*, Farsi for ‘free bird’, is “a radical anti-capitalist, intersectional feminist and body positive political fashion blog.” The description seems appropriate: one of Katebi’s most recent posts provides a reading list on the crisis in Sudan; one of her most-read pieces dismantles the assumption that fashion can be unpolitical – a pointed analysis she presented during her talk in Cambridge.

Dubbed “a fashion blogger with a fierce message” by the *New York Times*, Katebi goes beyond the occasional endorsement of feminism with her political activism and engagement. The blogger presents a breadth of topics on *Joojoo Azad* within which she sees scope for political action. The reading list on Sudan features both academic publications and news articles, with specific chapter recommendations underlining the urgency of topics neglected in public discourse. Her piece ‘On the political value of fashion’ cuts straight to the point, describing fashion as an artform “perverted with the mass commodification of fashion under capitalism” and listing six ways from production to appropriation and symbolism in which fashion is inherently and inevitably political.

In a small lecture room in Trinity College, Katebi is only a few minutes into her talk when she shifts focus from a dialogue around intersections of gender and fashion to the materiality of cloth on body. “Fashion is violence of production touching us most intimately on our skin,” the activist says, insisting that “clothing is political, as all public art is.” Because fashion gets closer to us than we allow any other political statement to get, Katebi explains, and because fast fashion necessarily relies on systematic exploitation, disproportionately of women in the Global South, the political dimension of fashion is unique and complex. Katebi’s blog also features boycott lists, where fast fashion’s usual suspects Abercrombie & Fitch or H&M are listed next to less-obvious companies, such as Hermès.

Fashion also has political value because it



▲ Hoda Katebi, an Iranian Chicago-based blogger (ILLUSTRATION BY LISHA ZHONG)

functions as an expression of ourselves and our perception of the world. Even when placing practicality over all, Katebi explains, the very rejection of the aesthetic is a political, communicative statement. Fashion is not that different from fine art, which many claim is always political. The belief that you can create and remain apolitical is a sign of privilege: only a few can get dressed with the knowledge that their choice won’t get misinterpreted. Admittedly, this reminds me of my own privilege as a white woman. When I am unsure about what I wear, all I have to fear is a raised eyebrow. For other students in Cambridge, their choices of expression through fashion or faith are continuously stigmatised through uninvited presumptions and comments about their clothing in the media and on campus.

To some extent, the restrictions of what people can wear come directly from the state. In Iran, wearing the hijab is mandatory, a law that Katebi strongly opposes. In the same way, many countries that were colonised by the British mandated unveiling, which Katebi also draws attention to. In other places, secularism instigated the continuous debate of what is religious and what is not, of where the private ends and where the public begins. Why is it so difficult to leave it up to women themselves to decide what they want to wear?

And why are women’s appearances, as Katebi puts it, perceived as the benchmark of morality in a country? Katebi’s work is multidimensional, both a historical and anthropological deconstruction of these value systems, be they secular or not.

Considering the history of fashion in Iran, Katebi illustrates dress codes from the 19th-century’s Qajar dynasty, when queerness was, in Katebi’s words, “so normal, it was not even a form of identification”, through Shah Reza Pahlavi’s regime up to the Islamic Republic demanding women to wear the headscarf, sparking much international and domestic debate. The hijab has been both forbidden and mandatory, both regulations Katebi outspokenly opposes, and in none of these time periods have all Iranian people agreed on one dress code, nor, perhaps, has anyone any single place else in the world.

Katebi illustrates fashion’s intersection with international politics through a picture of Kabul in the 1970s, where women wore mini-skirts and “look[ed] all cute”: according to the *Washington Post*, that picture was shown to Donald Trump in an attempt to convince him not to end the military presence of the U.S. in Afghanistan because “essentially, the country could be civilised.” The objectification of women for interventionist politics is unset-

ling: 40 years after the photo was taken, the choices of the women it depicts are still being appropriated for political ends.

Katebi says that the women she speaks to in Tehran currently worry more about the impoverishing effects of sanctions than the enforcement of the hijab. She quotes an Iranian woman she interviewed: “fashion is the first thing you change if you want to change”. But whether anti-capitalist critique and the prioritisation of the cultural aspects of clothes complement each other is not a question that can be answered yet. The ethical navigation of the conditions of the fashion industry comes to mind when I read heated debates on Nike’s advert for an athletic headscarf. Should the company be called out for representing members of minority groups they exploit in factories or is the effort to include Muslim representation still worthy of praise?

For now, Katebi’s work exemplifies that a radical reflection is quite possible; she writes extensively about her scepticism for Nike’s advertising and posts a list of alternative companies that produce athletic headscarves ethically. When I read her piece in a Cambridge library a week later, I’m glad to have bought those conspicuous checked trousers second hand, but still wonder if they’d attract fewer raised eyebrows in some cafés of Tehran.



# Sincerity is scary: Britpop and the changing face of masculinity

**Nicholas Harris** reflects on how our musical role models have changed for the better

The Brit Awards 2019: the frontman of Britain's biggest band takes to the stage to quote a *Guardian* article, declaring that "male misogynist acts are examined for nuance and examined as traits of difficult artists while women and those who call them out are treated as hysterics who don't understand art." The same ceremony in 1996: the frontman of Britain's then-biggest band instead incoherently grunts, engages in some juvenile boasting, and then refuses to leave.

Aside from originating in Manchester, the differences between Oasis and The 1975 in this context could not be starker: the former cocksure and crass, the latter introspective and ruminating, complete with album titles which sound like *Buzzfeed* long-reads (*A Brief Inquiry Into Online Relationships*).

For Oasis, their appearance at the BRITs was just another chance for them to show that

they didn't care. They emerged at a time when 'lad culture', now thankfully shunned, was triumphantly rearing its head. Both *Loaded* and *FHM* had circulations of around half a million. What became known as Britpop appeared to be a cultural movement which genuinely revolved around bands. And at least some of those bands were intent on living up to this cult of brash masculinity. Oasis captured this atmosphere to the point that in one weekend in 1996, 250,000 fans packed a field in Knebworth to drunkenly shout along to their bold ballads of ambition and escape.

Today, the musical landscape seems strikingly different, as those rare rock stars lucky enough to collect an award don't drone, brag and mock like they used to. The 1975's Matty Healy instead chose his moment to raise awareness

against the prevailing culture of misogyny in the music industry. In a world where Gillette adverts are designed to prompt masculine reflection and #MeToo has brought to light the horrific nature of power structures in Hollywood, Healy's interjections come as another part of a wider reaction against a certain, and previously tolerated, form of masculinity.

There is a tendency to generalise when it comes to Britpop, as we conjure up images of the most uncouth excesses of Oasis as typical of the era. It was a seriously heterogenous movement that incorporated elements as diverse as class warfare, New Labour, patriotism, and naturally the future of rock and roll. Male grandstanding was hardly the genre's defining aspect even musically, from the ambiguous androgyny of Suede to the candid vulnerability of Bends-era Radiohead. You can see why Healy seems bent on self-consciously modelling his band after the latter.

And neither should the

change from that era to now be overstated. As various media outlets have noted, some more gleefully than others, something of a Britpop revival has taken place. But a return to the styles and the music has not been accompanied by the excesses. Noel Gallagher has retreated into a comfortable role as an affable and opinionated aged rocker, and Liam's media appearances are now generally more farce than impropriety.

The exchange of role models from the mid-90s to now tells us something about how attitudes have shifted. The idea of the Gallagher's 90s behaviour getting coverage, let alone laughter and plaudits from the media establishment is now unimaginable. Many object to The 1975 on the basis of their music – and a personal case can be made that their brand of melancholy indie pop does not merit the status they currently enjoy. Fortunately though, we at least have a band that are trying something different. There are conversations that need to be had, whether or not the problems they address were exacerbated by the likes of Oasis. Come the next pres, it's certain that 'Champagne Supernova' may well pop up next to 'The Sound'. We may not yet need to prune our playlists, but a change in our attitudes and behaviour is long overdue.



▲ Matty Healy, frontman of The 1975 (WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/PITPONY.PHOTOGRAPHY)

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# Costing an arm to break a leg

Amelia Hill explores the price of paying for productions, and why this is the most important access issue facing Cambridge theatre

We are so incredibly, unbelievably lucky to have the theatre scene that we do in Cambridge. There is so much money and opportunity floating around, it feels like anyone with a project can find a way to bring it to life. But with higher stakes comes higher costs, especially for those behind the scenes in productions. This is an article I've had brewing in me for a while, but it was only when I began work on it that I realised how important the treatment of money is to so many people involved in the theatre scene. It has been both reassuring and terrifying to see how many people have felt the same way I have about the strains on their personal finances, and to realise that almost everyone has had this conversation privately.

When I posted a questionnaire on Facebook asking people for their experiences with funding and reimbursement in Cambridge Theatre I was flooded with responses (I was almost hurt as no one is this enthusiastic about my flyering schedules). I was ready to write an article about the different facets of payment and reimbursement, but was caught off guard by the alarming similarity of experience. As one response put it: 'the assumption is that everyone can afford to be £100 down in their account, and still live their normal lives'. When starting this article I was concerned about people being over £500 down because of a show, but this is not an issue only to be discussed in the extremes; it is a culture that needs to be changed, and soon. It was often said for larger purchases like the rights to put on a play, people were reimbursed swiftly, but this is in itself assuming what counts as an 'insignificant' amount of money.

Almost every response said they were burdened by show costs: 'I've rather gone into overdraft than delay the production of a show' one response read. Others asked their family for the money, or had to ask other students to pay for them, but asking for money is embarrassing and rides on the hope that someone else is able to pay. Some have found the money at the expense of their living costs, stating they have put down as much for a show as their food budget for a whole term. When experiencing problems with people being able to pay upfront and funding bodies being slow to respond, I've known producers to pay out of their own money, acting as an intermediary between student and funding body, but these producers are students too.

Zak Karimjee, Set Designer and Technical Director, raised the problem of people simply not reclaiming parts of their spending when going over budget. He states 'I feel very uncomfortable with that. No matter how much I care about the show, I'm doing it in the knowledge that my only input is my time'. At the end of the day theatre is an extra-curricular, and whilst its demand on people's time and



▲ What needs to change most of all is the assumption that people can pay out of pocket for months (PEXELS)

energy is up to the individual, financial input should not be. Responses saw there being a pressure of 'failing' at their job if they did not fork out the money for another item of costume or props, especially during the pressure of get-in day. Lily Burge, Stage Manager, said '[spending money] is an implicit assumption of the role of SM - you would be seen not to be doing your job properly if you could not pay for props'. Again, it is the assumption that is what needs to change most of all: the assumption that people can pay out of pocket for months at a time is an access barrier to many. It has deterred people from applying to roles which would need to be reimbursed and made people choose between a show and their living costs.

The current system for most societies involves a budget being decided between the show and funding body, then receipts being submitted to the funding body after the show's run. The funding body will then reimburse students, either through cheque or bank transfer, once the show settlement has been paid to them, which for ADC shows is commonly 4 weeks after the run. One funding body stated the reason for this delay in payment is that they take on multiple shows in a term on a rolling basis, so having the ticket sales paid in before reimbursement allows them to fund multiple shows at once. Senior Treasurers and issues with dual signatures also come up in this conversation: with long chains of communication the message that a student is waiting on their money for over a month can get lost. But as much as these are valid arguments, and I'd hate to see less shows be put on because of lack of available funding, I feel like the attitude towards reimbursement needs to shift. One response stated: 'I have to constantly remind societies to make it a priority to give people back their money', and this sums up the issue. We should be considering people's finances as an absolute priority.

Reimbursements are urgent matters and they should be treated as such.

I have not been in charge of a funding body myself, and the responses in general were fully aware that a funding body cannot just hand out money without proof of purchase and that they have their own accounts to keep track of. But perhaps systems can be put in place to fix this. Suggestions made have been:

A change of all funding bodies to internet banking rather than cheques.

An online system, or even just a show spreadsheet, where people can log receipts as they go along. This coupled with a firm deadline set by producers can make submitting receipts after a show quick and easy, with minimal chasing up required.

Funding bodies could be sent an advance props/costume order and pay it straight from their accounts, so that reimbursement is unnecessary.

Reimbursing at a midway point if not on a rolling basis, so the final reimbursement is just for last-minute purchases.

Paying some of the budget up front in advance, particularly when a show's budget asks specifically for large items of set that will definitely be purchased.

What also comes up in the questionnaire, however, is that a large part of the stress surrounding reimbursements stems from the unknown. This makes communication another problem to be addressed: producers and funding bodies are the lines of communication between funding and show, but they are not the only ones to spend money. Anna Mochar writes: 'The most stressful thing is not knowing for sure when you can expect to get your money back' and others add that once a show was over it tended to be pushed to the back of people's minds, but a show is not over until people have been fully reimbursed. I know personally this has pushed me to look at my own experiences with reimbursing my crew.

In future I plan to explain who our funding body is and how to contact them at the very start of a show's process, as well as explaining the timeline of reimbursement after the show and informing people when the ADC settlement has come through. One funding body expressed to me if they know an individual will be several hundred pounds down due to expenditure (such as the rights to put on a play), they would happily reimburse earlier, but people need to know this information upfront. Another pointed out they are not usually the ones to delay reimbursements, as producers can struggle to collect receipts from everyone, or have their own essay crisis going on, but again, from all sides, people's money should always be a priority.

Overall, there are things that fundamentally need to change. Each funding body is run differently, some have a large pool of money, others have very little, but at the very least conversations need to begin. It may be difficult to justify to a treasurer, but a committee for a funding body is never out of pocket themselves, and therefore the money of individuals must come before the accounts of the bodies as much as feasibly possible. Producers too need to acknowledge that they are in a position of financial responsibility to their crew, and should establish clear communication about this from early on. I hope this article does not come across ungrateful for the opportunities we have in Cambridge, but instead raises awareness that this is a serious issue, and cannot be left on the back burner any longer. I'd like to finish this article by thanking Georgie Deri, Zak Karimjee, Phoebe Schenk, Anna Mochar, Lily Burge, all those who contributed to the questionnaire, and the funding bodies who discussed this issue with me. I encourage this conversation to continue outside of anonymous forms, as these issues are not something inevitable and we simply can, and must, change.



# Legally Blonde: The Musical preview

Holly Mackinlay on why *Legally Blonde* should be seen as a feminist tale

This year, the ADC's Lent Term Musical (the highest-budget musical of the year performed at the end of Lent Term) is *Legally Blonde*. For the uninitiated, it can seem like a silly, campy rom-com with all the emotional nuance of a soap opera, tailored for a noughties audience who didn't quite understand third-wave feminism. The reality couldn't be farther from the truth. *Legally Blonde: The Musical* isn't the feel good, fancy-free chick-flick that you might think of when you hear the name, it's a feminist narrative for a 2019 audience too.

The musical, like the film starring Reese Witherspoon, is based on the real-life experience of Amanda Brown, who studied at Stanford Law School and found herself deeply out of place as a blonde who enjoyed fashion and read *Elle* magazine at one of North America's top law schools. The film was an instant hit and is now lauded as a classic of 2000s cinema, but on re-watching, it is a little hesitant in embracing some of its more overtly female empowered narratives.

When pitching the show to the theatre, I was really passionate about bringing Elle's struggle through the masculine-centric academic world onto a stage that sits in the heart of one of the world's most elite academic institutions. Cambridge is a fortress

of exclusivity which has been centred for so long around the lives of men (and rich, un-diverse, white men at that) that as a person who does not fall into that category, it can be very hard to feel accepted. It's too easy to dismiss Elle's story as a formulaic narrative, but it is actually powerfully subversive – its key message is that aesthetics don't prove or define someone's worth, and how you do not have to compromise your personality or interests to survive in this world. The musical embraces this fact far more confidently than the film, and makes it not only powerful and affirming but funny and exciting!

The Elle in the musical is similar to Witherspoon's silver-screen interpretation, but is far more nuanced, becoming a genuine, believable and likeable character. It is primarily through song that we see the deepest and darkest of her emotions, and connect with everything from her very real heartbreak to her ecstatic elation. She is flawed, but that's what makes her a figure to aspire to – she takes her flaws, acknowledges them and then works against them. Elle's power as a character also comes from her unflappable lack of judgement. When society and academia's expectations and prejudgements are piled on her, she refuses to judge others, even when egged on by her sorority sisters. In the same way, she serves as a foil to the exaggerated portrayal of other stereotypes in the show – by exposing our inherent reaction to those stereotypes, we are reminded that things are not always how they look, and we shouldn't take things at face value.



▲ The cast of *Legally Blonde* in rehearsal (GABRIEL HUMPHREYS)

There is also an all too necessary message for a Cambridge audience. Elle experiences what can only be described as imposter syndrome, multiple times, both when at Harvard and when working at her internship with a law firm. Questioning not only your ability but also your right to inhabit an intellectual environment is a far too common trend in Cambridge, but one that feels unavoidable and unconquerable. Elle does work hard, but she doesn't get through these feelings by becoming a workaholic and battling through them. Instead, she looks outward, seeks the help and support of her friends and finds new ones along the way. It shows the power of friendship (female friendship in particular) and shows just how wonderful and important it is to reach out to help someone who is in

pain and struggling to come to terms with their place in the world.

When a supervisor made an off-hand comment about the amount of eyeliner I was wearing at 11 am (I might add that it was a very sharply cut wing which I was proud of), I suddenly felt paranoid that no one was taking me seriously because I'm interested in both make-up and academia. Reading Elle's story, and seeing how she does not compromise herself and her femininity while changing the world around her inspired me to be the person I am today, eyeliner and all. As a woman in Cambridge, this show has not only been an incredibly personal experience, but a wonderful joy to show the world and I cannot wait for audiences to see it and to feel like their voices are being heard.

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## The Varsity Trust

If suitable candidates present themselves, the Trustees intend to make awards to students about to graduate, or who are recent graduates, from either the University of Cambridge or ARU who intend to undertake approved training in journalism for 2019/2020.

Trust awards will be tailored to individual circumstances but are normally intended to make a significant contribution to the fees for the training concerned.

Up to £5,000 is potentially available.

For further information and how to apply visit: [www.varsity.co.uk/trust](http://www.varsity.co.uk/trust)

# VARSLITY



# Drifting through my diary entries

Karolina Zielinska reflects on what keeping a diary can do for you

I keep a diary. A simple statement, but something that can often be hard to admit. When most people think of diary-keeping, they imagine some scene out of a teen movie, with a writer lying on their bed clutching a huge fluffy pink pen, writing in a Regina George-esque burn book. A pastime that is inherently secretive, providing you with a way to cordon off part of yourself from the world and sequester it in the blank pages of a notebook. But my diary-keeping reality is so far removed from this scene it is practically unrecognisable in comparison.

The first diary I ever kept was a written one. My mother needed major surgery, so aged seven-odd years old I was sent to stay with a friend's family for a few nights. Their mother encouraged me to keep a diary of my stay, so that I could tell my family what I'd been up to when I got back. I can't say it was particularly ground-breaking work – the entries were mostly lists of the food I'd eaten that day, and the games I had played with my friend – but it introduced me to the concept of recording aspects of my life, for whatever purpose I desired.

Whilst my diary-keeping has always been, and I fear will always be, extremely sporadic, it is interesting to consider why and when I choose to write. In terms of the when, there

doesn't appear to be any consistency other than it tends to be when I have enough time to type up roughly a page's worth of text. But in terms of the why, it is abundantly clear that I turn to my diary to record very specific incidences that I want to remember, for whatever reason. For example, some of my earliest entries feature a concerned young Karolina who thinks that she is spending too much time playing videogames, and so my diary became a very inefficient sort of screen-time tracker. Similarly, an awful lot of entries feature strange dreams I have had – many of which are utterly ridiculous in hindsight, but are extremely emotive to revisit, especially since dreams are usually so transient and re-examining them is something impossible for many of us in the first place unless we record them quickly after awakening.

Some moments I have chosen to record are more sobering. I once had a conversation with my father, after I told him I had been selected to take part in a Holocaust Memorial project involving a visit to Auschwitz. He dug out a folder of documents for me, and began to tell me about my great-grandfather, who had been taken to Auschwitz and died due to the conditions within the camp. Having Polish heritage sometimes reveals stories like these, the Second World War being an inescapable incident in my grandparents' generation and beyond. I wanted to record how I felt in that moment, listening to my father talk with pride about his family, feeling so utterly disconnected from what I was hearing but also somehow that it was a part of me.



▲ "Some moments I have chosen to record are more sobering" (PIXABAY)

After getting to university, there was a notable shift in my manner of my diary keeping, not to mention the content! Suddenly my life was full of new experiences and people, and in my first few weeks I valiantly attempted to record the utterly overwhelming feeling of being both secure and 'at home' in Cambridge, yet being swept off my feet and unbalanced continually by situations I had never experienced before. The pace of life here also made it extremely difficult to turn to my diary, as I like to write rather long entries, as detailed as I can possibly make them.

Instead, I began to use something as simple as the notes page on my phone to record moments, forced to adapt to the lack of time available. Whilst I do miss the luxury of reading back through longer entries and reveling in the emotions that I remember all to

clearly feeling as I initially wrote them, the one upside of keeping a diary this way has been the use of emoji – whilst I risk sounding like a pariah of literature here, sometimes they can represent emotions or feelings that are extremely difficult to describe precisely. Alternatively, if I am really pushed for time I might record an audio clip instead, usually to retell a story to myself.

The fact that a diary can be so changeable, shift across so many different mediums, just serves to show that there is a form out there perfect for everyone. I would encourage all those who could to keep some form of a diary, even if your entries are as occasional as mine – whether for self-reflection, or just to laugh at your younger self – I guarantee you will be surprised at what you take from it when looking back.

## Who's afraid of William McGregor?

Orla Horan interviews a filmmaker who has thrived through the channels of the Watersprite Film

A few careers have massively developed during the course of the last decade. In 2010 James Corden was best known for being Smithy, Lady Gaga for 'Poker Face' and Jeremy Corbyn for being a persistent backbencher. How times have changed.

The last 10 years has been similarly transformative for writer-director William McGregor. From his award-winning short film *Who's Afraid of the Watersprite?* (2010) to his first feature length film *Gwen* (2019) it is clear that his progression from 'Farm boy' to 'Film boy', as he puts it in his instagram bio, is in full swing.

This transformation has not meant that McGregor has lost touch with his roots. In fact, he is extremely sensitive to the impact growing up in the "rural landscape" of Norfolk has had on his filmmaking. This fascination with the natural world manifests itself clearly in both *Poldark* (McGregor directed

several episodes of the successful series set in sublime Cornish landscape) and *Gwen* (set in the unsparing Snowdonia which McGregor is drawn to because of its "epic, mythic and haunting" quality). However, McGregor assures me that the backdrop is "not just about the setting and aesthetic". He sees a clear link between the folkloric traditions of bygone generations (such as the grinding and scattering of sheep bones to guard against evil in *Gwen*) and the landscape in which they are "embedded". Further, McGregor expresses a desire to "continue to investigate" this in his work, especially since he recognises that the relationship between [wo]man and the land is "becoming more and more distant for most."

The symbolic use of natural phenomena – the clattering of thunder in *Gwen* and the blistering wind in *Poldark* – helps convey what McGregor identifies as the "inescapably tragic element" of his work.

Using landscape to this end is in keeping with the tropes of romanticism and gothic with which McGregor is undoubtedly well-versed; he cites Goya's black paintings, particularly 'Drowning Dog', as "one of the most powerful images ever made". The ability to make use of supernatural and macabre elements, softened with dark humour, no doubt led to McGregor being the youngest director of *Misfits*.

As one would expect looking at McGregor's career trajectory, his knowledge and passion for his craft is second to none. What strikes me most is the compelling language which McGregor uses when talking about film: when asked about favourite directors, he refers to being on a "Bergman binge" and having a "new obsession" with the work of Max Ophüls; when recounting stumbling across a rock valley in Snowdonia, he says that he "had to write it into the script" for *Gwen*;

and, when I inquired what he would do if he wasn't a writer-director he movingly made clear that his career choice wasn't so much a choice but a necessity ("I think to be writer or director it's just something you have to do. I can't imagine doing anything else"). That said, McGregor recognises the importance of trying to "find something other than film to enjoy", but adds that "this is a 'do as I say not as I do' bit of advice."

One would be forgiven for feeling intimidated in the face of someone who has had such an amazing start to their career (alongside his film and TV work, McGregor has also made commercials for Pepsi and Ford amongst others), but McGregor comes across as incredibly down to earth. He mentions an endearing boyhood misunderstanding whereby he was given a copy of *The Hobbit* (his favourite book) when on holiday with his grandparents and for a long time thought he had actually met Tolkien himself.

When asked about advice what a typical working day looks like, he reflects honestly on the reality; some days entail working for long hours on set in a "high pressure" environment, "keeping a cool head in amongst the chaos of production" whilst "focused entirely on one thing, your vision for the script", others working across various projects – writing, attending development meetings, working on storyboards – "trying to keep all those plates spinning". But interspersed among this account of his working life, McGregor seems reassuringly aware of looking after himself – making time to go to the gym, watching films, getting enough sleep – so he is able to "climb the mountain again the next day" (this is probably meant metaphorically, but with the landscape McGregor shoots in there are no doubt literal mountains involved).

Making films is clearly a labour of love for McGregor, but he seems to know the limits,

which is very important for someone who looks set to be in the industry for the long haul. Looking forward to the next decade, McGregor has his sights on a second film, noting however that "only 34% of first-time filmmakers get to make a second film which is alarming." However, he makes clear that he does not want to "make films for the sake of it"; capitalising on opportunities to "continue expressing [himself] in [his] own way" is the more important end goal.

Whilst McGregor recognises the opportunities that have been afforded to his generation of writer-directors "thanks to the boom of content" provided by streaming services (McGregor himself currently has a series called *One of Us* available on Netflix), he is aware of the risk of becoming a "cog in the machine" having to help provide "bingeable content". He seems prepared to make use of these platforms and encourage others to do the same, provided that they are "staying true to what you want to say". This certainly seems possible given the success of Alfonso Cuarón's Netflix Oscar-winner, *Roma*.

McGregor's success is built on talent and tenacity, but he also recognises the importance of his early shorts: "I think the legacy of your short film work can become bigger than the shorts themselves. It's what you learnt and how they helped you to progress that matters. They may be flawed and imperfect. But they are also raw and in some way pure."

Made in an environment of creative control and away from the concern of commerciality." I asked McGregor about his 'pinch yourself' moments and it was refreshing that having a film festival named after his first short is still up there; I suppose if I had a festival named after me, I'd be pretty chuffed too.

Will be appearing in a panel event at the Watersprite International Student Film Festival this weekend



# REPLY CODE CHALLENGE



15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2019

The **Reply** team - based  
programming competition

## Meet a Master of code

The 15th of March is nearly here, and with it The Reply Code Challenge. Have you registered yet? Ahead of the event, we spoke to one of the experts who is cooking up the problems that this year's teams will need to solve.

### *Tell us about yourself*

Hello, I'm Mirko. I'm a Senior Consultant from Cluster Reply in Milan and I've been with Reply since 2005. My work focuses mainly on Microsoft technology, on back-end development and system integration. I took part in the first Reply Code Challenge and my team won, so I was invited to become a Code Master.

### *What is a Code Master?*

Code Masters are Replyers that set the problems for the code challenge. They also train people on how to solve programming problems. Plus, they also take part in external code challenges.

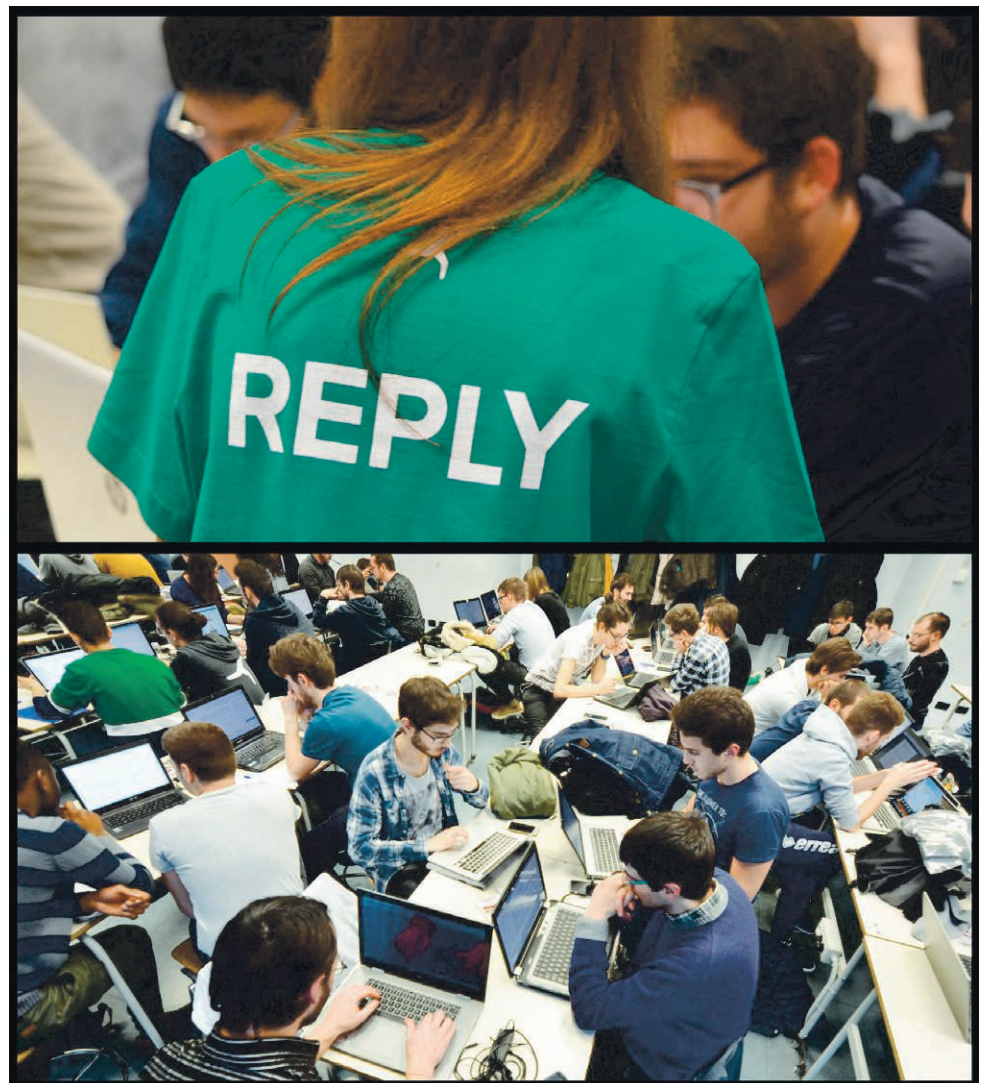
### *What is the Reply Code Challenge?*

Inspired by other code challenges, the Reply Code Challenge is designed to test your programming problem-solving abilities, mainly optimization. Teams of 2 to 4 people solve questions with different inputs – ranging from simple to complex, and with no fixed answers. Using code, they have to try and create the best solution to solve a problem.

### *How do Code Masters create the challenges?*

We brainstorm problems that could be interesting or difficult or both. Once we've identified a problem, we write a scenario detailing that problem. Then we write the rules – i.e. what's needed for the solution to be accepted – before describing the problem as clearly as possible.

After that, we write the code to verify if a solution is correct, and give it a score. We then add this code to the



code challenge platform and test it rigorously to see if there's anything wrong with it, or if we can improve it.

During the challenge we act as moderators, answering any questions from the teams, sorting out any problems, and making sure everyone's playing by the rules.

### *How can people take part in a challenge?*

Just go to [challenges.reply.com](https://challenges.reply.com), register on the platform, create a team or join one, and then start training for the challenges in the sandbox.

On the day of the challenge – 15th March – you can read the problems on the site, download the problem inputs, and get coding!

REGISTER ON [CHALLENGES.REPLY.COM](https://challenges.reply.com)

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# Science

## Seeing the universe through sound

**Grace Field** explores the influence of classical music on Einstein's scientific theories

Einstein loved music, and made no secret of it. He played the violin throughout his life, and talked about music in interviews, letters and self-reflections. He even said, in a 1929 interview: "If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of music." His son Hans reminisced, "Whenever he felt that he had come to the end of the road or into a difficult situation in his work he would take refuge in music that would usually resolve all his difficulties."

He began playing the violin when he was only five years old, encouraged by his piano-playing mother. But he hated the lessons at first, until he discovered Mozart's violin sonatas as a teenager. Mozart, and his violin, then became companions for life.

But what did music really *mean* to Einstein, and how did his music affect his science, if at all? These questions are only just beginning to be paid scholarly attention. Leon Botstein, a conductor and music historian, has gone so far as to suggest that Einstein's music may have *influenced* his science – in particular, that the aesthetic principles underlying Einstein's scientific work may have been grounded in musical aesthetic principles.

Einstein does seem to have valued clarity, simplicity and structuredness in music – aesthetic virtues that he is also known to have valued in scientific theories. He loved Mozart, the archetype of melodic and structural clarity, and objected to more modern composers like Debussy and Wagner based on the "lack of architectural structure" in their work.

“Einstein applied similar aesthetic criteria to music and science”

► Illustration by Alisa Santikarn for Varsity

At the same time, Einstein objected to modern scientific theories like quantum mechanics based on their lack of deterministic structure. Although the macroscopic world behaves deterministically – as in, if we know the laws governing a physical system, and the system's current state, then we can predict what the system will look like at any time in the future – quantum mechanics seems to tell us that the microscopic world behaves indeterministically. When we go to small-enough length scales, full knowledge of the physical laws, combined with full knowledge of a system's current state, does *not* seem to be enough to tell us what the system will look like in the future. Einstein objected to quantum mechanics because its indeterministic nature did not match the inherent clarity, simplicity and structuredness that he believed should govern the universe.

Botstein therefore suggests, considering Einstein's discovery of his love of Mozart came at age 13, *before* he started seriously studying science, that the aesthetic principles underlying Einstein's scientific work may have been influenced and reinforced, or even formed, by musical tastes developed in his childhood. He posits that Einstein's belief in the clarity, simplicity and structuredness of the universe may have been motivated by his childhood love of Mozart.

Since Einstein does seem to have applied similar aesthetic criteria to music and science, and since music has, for so long, been associated with the structure of the cosmos, Botstein's suggestion is alluring. Ever since the ancients cast the universe's structure in terms of the music of the celestial spheres, musical thinking has influenced science. Oresme, Kepler, and Thomas Young are just a few from a long list of scientists who allowed musical principles to influence their scientific work. It would be satisfying to be able to add Einstein to the list.



## Remembering Dorothy Garrod, a feminist archaeological pioneer

**Jess Sharpe**

Judging by the daily crowds in Newnham's Iris Café, you have probably visited Newnham's new building. However, you might not have known that it is named after Cambridge's first female professor, who established a chronological framework of the prehistoric period and employed a feminist work ethic to her archaeological sites. The Dorothy Garrod building is a fitting homage to this brilliant archaeologist.

In 1913, Garrod joined Newnham College to study history, and later received a diploma in Anthropology at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. After archaeological training in Paris, Garrod set out on excavations and in 1925 unearthed the second Neander-

thal skull ever found. By 1929, Garrod was directing excavations in Palestine, where she uncovered findings fundamental to the chronology of the prehistoric period.

Despite the challenges involved in being a professional scientific woman in the first half of the 20th century, Garrod worked across the globe. She relied on female co-workers, often with varying expertise, such as Dorothea Bate, whose experiences in the field would have mirrored her own. Bate recounted sexual harassment by the British Vice-Consul while on trips and stated that she did "hate old men who try to make love to one and ought not to in their official positions". Sexual harassment is a contentious issue in the archaeological fieldwork setting to this day. Perhaps as a response to this, Garrod built up

teams of researchers, staffed mainly by women recruited from local villages, as an early form of community archaeology. Within these teams, women carried out the skilled work of excavating and recording while men completed the menial and heavy labour. One of these women was Yusra, a Palestinian who worked with Garrod for six years and pieced together the fragmented skull of a female Neanderthal. This discovery stands as one of the most important – though unacknowledged – findings in early archaeology.

Garrod held a number of academic positions back in Cambridge before being selected as the Disney Professor of Archaeology in 1939 – as by far the best available candidate. Her position as the first woman chair at either Oxford or Cambridge is all the more remarkable, at a time when women could not become full members of the university, so could not speak or vote on university matters. Even back home and away from the chal-

“Women carried out the skilled work of excavating and recording”

lenges of fieldwork, Garrod could not partake in dinnertime conversation about department and university matters held in men's colleges, and she struggled to adapt her co-operative style to the bureaucratic Cambridge world. However, she introduced a course on global prehistory and her reliance on women workers in the field – who may recognise, specialise in or pursue different archaeological inquiries from men – is also likely to have impacted the field of study presented in the newly structured archaeology courses.

The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology holds a display on Dorothy Garrod's work, showing flint tools and a necklace dating back from around 10,000 BC. Other pioneering women in archaeology, such as Kathleen Kenyon, also feature in the museum – making it well worth a trip next time you fancy a science-themed afternoon out!



# Pollinators in decline

**Sophie Cook** reports on the dangers threatening our bee populations

Ecosystem services are defined as the numerous and varied benefits which we as humans gain from the natural world. Pollination is one such service, which has an enormous impact on agricultural systems. According to the UN, at least one third of the world's agricultural crops depend on the work of pollinators. In 2005, their global economic value was estimated to be around £132 billion. A UK government study found that pollinators add a value of around £600 million per year to UK crops. Unfortunately, the benefits these organisms provide are coming under increasing pressure from climate change and intensifying agricultural practices.

Pollination is the transfer of pollen grains from the male part of the plant (the anther) to the female part (the carpel). This can occur within the same plant, causing self-fertilisation or between different individuals, so-called cross-pollination. Cross-pollination is the more desirable outcome, as it increases genetic diversity among populations, making them more resistant to the spread of diseases and environmental change. Domestic honeybee populations are being increasingly relied upon to pollinate large swathes of agricultural land. In 2017, 1.7 million honeybee colonies were transported to California to pol-

linate almond plantations. These trees are responsible for 80% of the global almond crop and mean big business for American beekeepers.

In the UK, we have over 250 different bee species. The UK apple industry is particularly at risk from the decline of UK bee populations. It has been estimated that wild UK pollinators add £37 million per year to the value of Gala and Cox apples. They not only increase apple yields, but also apple quality – especially their firmness and texture.

In 2015, the Status and Trends of European Pollinators (STEP) project found that 9.2% of Europe's wild bees are now threatened with extinction, and US National Agriculture Statistics show that there has been a 60% decline in honeybee populations from 1947-2008. One of the main reasons for this decline is due to bee 'colony collapse disorder' (CCD). This is the unexplained absence of live or dead adult worker bees in and around the hive, despite abundant brood, honey and pollen levels. Many of the factors implicated in this worrying phenomenon stem from human activities.

The widespread use of pesticides in agricultural systems is thought to be one of the leading causes of CCD. A recent study at Harvard found that 70% of pollen and honey collected from bees in Massachusetts contained at least one type of neonicotinoid, a class of insecticides used to increase crop yields. Other factors thought to contribute to CCD include bee disorientation and stress as a

result of transport. Industries such as the almond plantations mentioned earlier are heavily reliant on the import of beehives to pollinate their crops.

Another serious cause of the rapid increase in CCD is due to the spread of the Asian parasitic Varroa mite. The mite arrived in Hawaii in 2007 which allowed researchers to study its effect on an isolated island ecosystem. They found that within one year, 65% of all bee colonies on Oahu island were wiped out. Similarly, their arrival in the UK in the 1990s is thought to be one of the primary reasons for the observed widespread pollinator decline.

Many plants depend primarily on native specialist pollinators, rather than generalist domesticated honeybees. Therefore, shipping large numbers of beehives around the world is not only ludicrous, but also limited in its effectiveness. A study in Argentina investigated over 40 crops in 600 different fields across the globe. The researchers found that wild pollinators were twice as effective as domestic honeybees at increasing fruit set.

The effect of these wild species was also found to be independent of the abundance of domestic honeybees in the study areas. Wild pollinators are more efficient than managed honeybees as they use a wider range of pollination techniques and also visit more plants, increasing the levels of cross-pollination. Honeybees on the other hand were observed to transfer pollen between flow-

“*Insects are a useful indicator of the health of an ecosystem*”

▼ **Honeybees can fly at speeds of about 25km per hour** (DAOUD ALAHMAD)

ers on the same plant more often.

Habitat fragmentation as a result of intensifying agricultural activity is also isolating wild pollinator habitats from their target crops. Wild bees typically reside in forested areas, which are becoming an increasingly rare feature in the UK countryside. Studies on Indonesian coffee plantations found that crops growing closer to forest patches had more pollinator visits and a higher percentage fruit set. Due to the increase in pollinator diversity, natural habitat fragments can also stabilise yields by reducing the variability of visitation rates.

What is being done to solve this problem? In 2013, the EU restricted the use of three neonicotinoids on several crops which attract bees such as oilseed rape. These restrictions have now been implemented by the UK and in the last five years, Defra has spent around £2 million on protecting English honeybees. The government has stated that 'unless the scientific evidence changes, the government will maintain these increased restrictions post-Brexit'. Sadly, I think the decline of insect pollinators is a symptom of the rapid degradation of global ecosystems. Often insects are a useful indicator of the wider health of an ecosystem, due to their sensitivity to environmental change. Perhaps tackling the pollinators themselves is not the answer. Instead, we need to address the more fundamental issues surrounding the sustainability of our agricultural practices.

“*There has been a 60% decline in honeybee populations from 1947-2008*”





# Even the Price Suits You!



Every dedicated suit-wearer knows that Hong Kong's master tailors have an enviable reputation for quality, efficiency and price. The only not-inconsiderable snag is that they are ordinarily in Hong Kong whereas most of us ordinarily are not. Seekers after the finest Hong Kong tailoring need not worry any longer. Mr Raja M Daswani, master craftsman and Hong Kong's finest and most respected bespoke tailor, **Raja Fashions** now travels to the United Kingdom every two months.

On each visit, Team Daswani takes over hotel suites in all of the United Kingdom's major cities, so any of us can make an appointment and get the full Hong Kong Monty practically without jet setting to the far-east. The measurements are done by Mr. Raja and his men here and mailed to Hong Kong along with a series of digital photos of you from every angle. Often, your suit will be started on by a tailor, 6,000 miles away before you've even left the hotel. You can then have it shipped by courier within four weeks if it is urgent-or wait for a second fitting when the Raja team hits your town again a few weeks later.

It is often said that British clothing chains 'have much to fear from Mr. Daswani.' His dedication to bespoke suiting borders on the fanatical. And both his company's quality and pricing are truly shocking-in the pleasantest possible way for customers, if not for Mr. Daswani's competition over here.

We are talking **£58 for a custom made shirt, £350 for a fully lined, made-to-measure suit in a lightweight wool or linen, to £425 for 100 percent wool, entirely hand finished suit** in a British cloth, with every refinement from hand-made buttonholes to knee lining and double thickness pockets.

Even the most expensive possible Raja Daswani suit made in deluxe cashmere wool for £2,500 comes in at something like a third of the price of the Saville Row equivalent.

In other words, customers can now buy two bespoke, custom cut and hand-stitched suits, made from fine British or Italian cloth and measured by a master tailor for the price of one off-the-peg, chain store suit.

Indeed, making an appointment with Raja Daswani's team is almost the archetypal no-brainer. Why would any British lover of the classic suit NOT?

The Raja revolution, with its inspired mix of artistic flair, entrepreneurial genius and digital technology may well see the end of the traditional-ie cheap-looking-off the peg chain store suit. It would be a fitting end to a too often ill-fitting icon.

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# Cambridge fall in Netball Varsity



**Oliver Little**  
Sport Reporter

Sunday March 3rd marked the Netball Varsity matches, hosted by Cambridge in front of a boisterous University Sports Centre crowd. The Blues capped off an incredibly competitive season with another spirited display, as the game only got away from them as the fatigue of a long season appeared to set in. The scoreline ultimately flattered a very well-drilled Oxford side, as Oxford finished the stronger, stringing together a series of goals as Cambridge tired.

The lively crowd had already been treated to a 45-40 win for the Swallows and a 53-32 thumping by the Jays. Ox-

ford Blues, however, in search of redemption, had every reason to be confident. An undefeated season in the league meant that they carried a great deal of momentum into the match that would prove pivotal in the final result.

Rather predictably, the game got off to an incredibly fast start. Spurred on by the effervescent sell-out crowd Goal Shooter and former Oxford Captain Elsa Wakeman scored the first goal of the afternoon. Cambridge VC Zoe Starbuck shortly equalized to make it 1-1. What ensued was a game of cat and mouse, a back-and-forth between Wakeman, Ellen O'Brien and Starbuck and Sarah Godlee in an attack-dominated opening quarter: 2-1, 2-2, 3-2, 4-3, 6-6, 7-7. Captains and

▲ **An Oxford player goes for the hoop**

(BEN PHILLIPS)

Centres Sophie Maitland (Cambridge) and Isa Cooper (Oxford) went toe to toe, pulling the strings and providing key passes to set up chances. Neither attack was letting up, as the potent counterattack of Oxford met its match the more methodical buildup of Cambridge. A lack of discipline in defence, which proved a thorn in the Cambridge side on the day, allowed Oxford the 8-7 lead. 30 seconds before the end of the first quarter, Cambridge were pressing for a vital equalizer, and with it the momentum going into the break. Their shot was blocked, and Oxford capitalized: on the sound of the klaxon Wakeman converted, giving them the momentum and a two-goal cushion into the break. Just how crucial would this be?

Sure enough, Oxford used this momentum to their advantage, and through Wakeman and O'Brien, the score was very quickly 11-8. Starbuck responded to cut the deficit to two after a great counterattack, as the injection of Centre Jordan Moxey added energy to Cambridge's attack. The three-point cushion was restored, and so began a rather more cagey period of missed chances and inconsistent defence. Indeed, the first scoreless minute occurred deep into the second quarter, a testament to the attacking capabilities of both sides. Nevertheless, it would be Wakeman and O'Brien's ability to convert from long-range that proved the difference in this quarter. Arguably helped slightly by the run of the ball – Starbuck and Godlee were unlucky to land a few shots only for them to rebound – Oxford established a five-point lead at half time, once again scoring a vital goal at the very last second.

Cambridge introduced Carla Hill who quickly pulled a goal back for the Light Blues with a free shot at the start of the

“*Cambridge will travel to Oxford next year stronger and hungrier for revenge*”

third quarter. Then, a great long-range goal by Godlee sparked something of a Cambridge revival – they reduced the deficit to three, and the crowd sensed that, with the momentum now tilting in their favour, they were very much still in it. However, the unrelenting Wakeman and replacement Goal Attack, Maddie Oshodi, were not making it easy.

20-17 quickly became 25-18, as Cambridge's impetus was firmly halted. Cambridge continued to fade towards the end of the quarter – Captain Isa Cooper was creating chances at Centre and Wakeman and Oshodi would duly oblige on converting. Cambridge will rue their discipline; obstruction and contact in the D allowed Oxford attackers on occasion three attempts at scoring, and players of their calibre were not going to forfeit such opportunities. A late flurry of goals from Wakeman meant that Oxford again finished the quarter the stronger. 32-20 going into the final period.

Unfortunately, the competitiveness of the game sapped in the final quarter. Within minutes, Oxford had added eight goals to their tally. Wakeman was imperious, and took advantage of a tiring Cambridge defence. Repeated offences in the D meant that Oxford's skilled shooters were given several opportunities, and there was a sense that on this occasion, they were simply outmatched. A spirited surge towards the end was to no avail, and after the full time whistle, the jubilant Oxford crowd careered onto the pitch. Credit to both teams, in what was a tight affair until the last quarter. Ultimately a deserved win for Oxford, who combined unwavering defence with ruthless attack. With the depth shown in the Jays and Swallows teams, Cambridge will travel to Oxford next year stronger and hungry for revenge.

## Boat Race Preview: In conversation with Dara Alizadeh

**William Ross** speaks to the CUBC President about all things Cambridge rowing

**W**e're confident in how we're doing. As we're now into the final fifty days, it becomes a lot more real and I think the guys are gearing up for that. The guys are working hard and we're definitely feeling OK for where we are but there's a long way to go.”

25 year-old MPhil student Dara Alizadeh is certainly not getting ahead of himself as he prepares to lead his crew in the Boat Race on the 7th April. Instead, the CUBC President exudes calmness, a calmness perhaps borne out of his vast experience in the sport: Alizadeh was in the 4 seat of the victorious 2018 Blue Boat, spent the 2017 season coaching rowing at Winchester College in the

UK, and also rowed for Penn University before coming to the UK.

His role as President of CUBC though, one of the country's oldest boat clubs, is certainly unique, and he describes his role as “to lead the squad and prepare them for the Boat race.

“Part of it is making sure that everyone is getting the most out of their experience but really the goal is to make sure that everyone is prepared enough so that the squad as a whole is able to put forward their best performance on the 7th April.”

As President, one of Alizadeh's key roles is to select the crew to face Oxford on the big day. What, I wonder, is the secret to selecting a successful crew?

“It's complicated to find the fastest combination of guys. We have different metrics that we can use - rowing machine scores - to compare guys individually but what makes a good crew isn't just picking the strongest guys. It's about picking a crew that develops a really good rhythm and just clicks and

can work towards having a solid rhythm that is resilient - you've got to have some toughness in the boat. Luckily we have a squad of guys who bring that toughness and now it's just about developing that resilient rhythm that will hold us through the race” As the conversation draws to a close, the conversation turns to some of the wider issues in the sport, and specifically rowing's elitist image. The Oxford and Cambridge men's eights at the 2018 Boat Race, for example, contained three times as many old Etonians as those who had gone through the British state education system. How, then, I ask is CUBC actively trying to combat these issues?

Seemingly taken aback, Alizadeh pauses before admitting that: “With rowing, it's an expensive sport, so there's definitely a history of that [elitism]”

Nevertheless, Alizadeh is keen to highlight the “awesome” work undertaken by the Future Blues Initiative: in February 2018, the Boat Race Company set up a new year-round community outreach

“*Bowing out with a victory against Oxford would prove a storybook ending*”

partnership in association with Fulham Reach Boat Club to improve access to rowing across the four London boroughs that the Boat Race Championship course passes through. Supported by Boat Race sponsors BNY Mellon and Newton Investment Management, the initiative targets 52 state schools, and an estimated 50,000 students in the area.

On top of this, Alizadeh stresses the accessibility of college rowing: “One of the nice things about Cambridge is that the opportunity to row as a student is available at college - the fact that college rowing is so subsidised by colleges allows for Cambridge students to get involved irrespective of background.

“The more we can try to diversify where our athletes are coming from, the better.”

Encouraging signs for the future in terms of widening access to Cambridge rowing, then. But for the next few weeks, Alizadeh is fully focussed on one goal: “winning the Boat Race on the 7th April”.



## Netball Varsity: Disappointment as the Light Blues slip to a 47-26 defeat against Oxford 31



Oxford

1

Cambridge

8

# Cambridge win 101st Ice Hockey Varsity

### Varsity Sport

The Cambridge University Ice Hockey Club Men's Blues wrote another chapter in the sport's oldest rivalry when they routed the Oxford University Ice Hockey Club in an 8-1 win on Saturday.

Cambridge's victory in the 101st Varsity match was doubly sweet as they reclaimed the coveted King Edward Cup and secured a first-place league finish over their arch-rivals, thereby earning a match-up against Edinburgh for the national championship next month.

A palpable atmosphere preceded the opening puck drop in Oxford. Varsity is the most important match of the season for both teams, and the Oxford Ice Rink was packed with fans. Although this year's match was held in Oxford, there was a sizable contingent of Cambridge supporters who had travelled to watch the game. Wielding banners and booming chants of support, the Light Blues' fans made it clear from the opening that their opponents would not enjoy an easy home-ice advantage.

From the start, Cambridge played their trademark brand of free-flowing, faced-paced hockey as developed by coach Robert Stellick. This produced early offensive chances for leading scorers Benjamin Proyer, Martin Limback-Stokin, and team captain Christoph Kehle. However, Oxford's defence — backed by goaltender Fabian Sivnert,

the University's Sportsman of the Year — was able to withstand Cambridge's initial onslaught.

The Dark Blues played a physical game, but the Light Blues largely dominated possession during the game's opening period. Putting Oxford under sustained pressure, it was only a matter of time before Cambridge found the back of the net. Cambridge's assistant captains would provide the goals: Proyer opened the scoring by converting on an odd-man rush, and, moments later, defenceman Ivan Grega sniped a shot past Sivnert from the point. When Grega's shot hit the net, the Cambridge crowd erupted with cheers. Cambridge would take a 2-0 lead into the intermission.

The second period picked up where the first ended: Cambridge taking advantage of their speed and puck-movement ability, and Oxford playing a physical, defensively-minded game backed by Sivnert's goaltending. Oxford managed to momentarily contain Cambridge's potent offence, but in doing so they incurred a number of penalties. With an extra man advantage, Cambridge's league-best power play made the Dark Blues pay dearly. First, Lucas Maddalena finished a flurry of offensive chances by lifting the puck past a scrambling Sivnert. Soon after, defenceman Evgeny Goncharov — famous for his cannon-like slap shot — blasted another goal from the point.

Cambridge now had a 4-0 lead, and

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In the battle known as Ice Hockey's oldest rivalry, Cambridge once again reigns supreme  
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Oxford were desperate to get on the scoresheet. Jason Lacombe and Will Andrews attempted to bring their team back into the game. Andrews managed to scrape one goal back for Oxford. However, Cambridge regained composure and Andrews' goal would prove to be Oxford's last true scoring chance of the evening. Forwards Reed Macey and Jonas Fiala put unrelenting pressure on Oxford whenever Cambridge lost the puck, while a defence lead by Grega, Goncharov, Taylor Kitchen, and Scott Partington kept the Dark Blues' advances in check. When Oxford did manage the occasional shot on goal, Cambridge goaltender Matthew Neville made the save with ease. The game would remain 4-1 as the second period came to a close.

With twenty minutes left to defend their lead and earn a Varsity victory, Cambridge started the final period with a determination their opponents simply couldn't match. A visibly frustrated Oxford team quickly fell into penalty trouble: Aneel Brar received a five-minute major penalty for checking from behind, and Andrews received a ten-minute penalty for checking to the head, effectively barring him from play for the rest of the game.

Cambridge took advantage of this opportunity, with Proyer feeding a silky pass to Jaroslav Zapletal for a back-door goal which swung all remaining momentum firmly into the Light Blues' favour. Cambridge's Phillip Holbrook returned from

▲ **The Men's Light Blues celebrate a resounding victory** (OLIA ZADVORNA)

his own penalty troubles and scored two goals in quick succession — which brought the lead to an overwhelming 7-1 with less than five minutes remaining. Proyer provided the Cambridge supporters with one last goal to celebrate as he scored his second in the last minute of the game, extending the Light Blues' lead to 8-1.

The late barrage of Cambridge goals put emphasis on the fact that, from the first period onwards, the game's result was never truly in doubt. When it was all said and done, the Light Blues' goaltender Neville had provided a solid and admirably consistent performance between the pipes, while the Cambridge offence rose to the occasion and managed to put eight goals past last season's Varsity stand-out Sivnert. In particular, it's worth highlighting the contributions of Benjamin Proyer, who received man of the match and Varsity MVP for his stellar showing.

When captain Christoph Kehle raised the King Edward VII Cup, the Cambridge team and their supporters could celebrate a thoroughly deserved victory. After a crushing overtime defeat last season, the Light Blues had managed to exact revenge on their rivals and earn a spot in the national championship match. No matter how the mighty Blues fair against Edinburgh, the Varsity victory will surely be a highlight of the season.

In the battle known as ice hockey's oldest rivalry, Cambridge once again reigns supreme.