

# This didn't happen in a vacuum

Trinity Hall's decision reminds me why I didn't report

Opinion 15



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# VARSITY

## Cambridge erases evidence of ties to research group funded by oil and gas companies

Chloe Bayliss, Maia Wyn Davies & Stephanie Stacey

The University removed online traces of links with CASP, a research group funded entirely by subscriptions from oil and gas companies, shortly after Zero Carbon's recent report into Cambridge's connections with such companies was sent out to a range of media sources.

Varsity understands that senior University figures were explicitly made aware of the removal of the CASP website.

In mid-October, Zero Carbon sent an early draft of their recent report, which specifically highlighted CASP as an example of Cambridge's connections with the fossil fuels industry, to multiple media outlets. Some time after this, Zero

Carbon learned that the University had obtained a leaked copy of their report, and had responded to various claims made within the report through a series of rebuttals.

In these rebuttals sent to national media outlets, the University specifically wrote that the suggestion that CASP is "a research group of the Department of Earth Sciences" was "False". However, for at least 18 years – until it was deleted just last week, shortly after Zero Carbon's report was distributed among media outlets – this organisation was explicitly listed on the Earth Sciences website under the subheading "research groups".

CASP's website, also recently deleted, was hosted on a cam.ac.uk web domain. A University spokesperson denied that

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▲ Yesterday, the UCU announced that staff have voted to strike in the coming months (CAMBRIDGE DEFEND EDUCATION)

## Brexit 'It seems like we're never going to stop talking about it'

Oliver Rhodes  
Associate Editor  
Sasi Valaiyapathi  
News Correspondent

After over three years of debate, delay and incessant media coverage, yesterday was supposed to be the day the UK formally left the EU.

In the past week, however, Boris John-

son's government returned from Brussels with a revised withdrawal agreement, the EU agreed to a "flexextension" until January 2020 and Parliament authorised a General Election which will now be held on 12th December.

With the Brexit saga continuing to unfold in confusing and chaotic ways, Varsity approached dozens of Cambridge students to gauge their opinion on what's been going on these past few weeks, and

where the country is headed now.

"Everyone's getting frustrated," says Francesca, an HSPS student at Downing. "I'd quite like to just leave now... and I don't think a no deal would have been as bad as some people made out. There was a lot of scare-mongering."

Brexit-weariness has indeed plagued most students, even if they don't agree on what to do next. "It seems like we're never going to stop talking about it, I'm

confused and exhausted about the whole thing really," says Arthur, a second-year student at Magdelene. "We should never have had the referendum in the first place," says another student.

Looking forward, however, whether to solve the issue with a second referendum proves a tough choice for many students. "We're too far down the line for that," argues Olivia, a second-year at Sidney. "Normally I'd vote Liberal Democrat...

but I'm not a fan of the party's strategy on this," she says. Brexit is taking up "all the government's energy and resources, stopping discussion about other things, like climate change, so let's just get it out of the way."

Both the undergraduate and postgraduate student unions formally endorse a People's Vote. "I see no value in the idea

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# EDITORIAL

## The wrong kind of damage control

*Content Note: This article contains discussion of sexual misconduct*  
Actions have consequences. This is a fairly simple lesson, which most children are taught from a young age.

Less than two weeks ago, the BBC revealed that Trinity Hall had 'readmitted' a Fellow found to have sexually harassed ten students. It transpired that this was not strictly true. Perhaps more damningly, the fellow was never completely formally removed from his prestigious position in the first place, and had been "erroneously" invited by the College to attend a student lecture.

As an anonymous student points out (page 15), decisions such as this do not occur in a vacuum. They have far-reaching consequences for members of the University – past, present, and future – and risk setting dangerous precedents and further compounding the pain caused by perpetrators of sexual misconduct.

In cases such as this, there is no such thing as damage control. Fundamentally, the University's priority should be the welfare of its students, not desperate attempts to mediate reputational damage or avoid complex legal proceedings. But by failing to take a stand against this case, or even issue an explicit apology, the University seems to have demonstrated that its reputation comes first.

This week, when contacted by Varsity reporters regarding Cambridge's removal of online links connecting it with fossil fuel research group CASP following a Zero Carbon report into its links with this industry (front page), a spokesperson for the University expressed frustration at the focus placed on – in his words – "history". Cambridge, the spokesperson highlighted, has recently been undertaking great work to combat the climate crisis, in particular through its new initiative Cambridge Zero. But history bleeds into the present, and undeniably shapes the future, and Cambridge's implicit endorsement – past or present, accidental or not – carries undeniable weight in legitimising the continued existence of destructive industries.

The University must recognise that its failure to take an active stand against harmful cultures and harmful industries essentially constitute an endorsement. And ultimately, as we have seen, this is not a purely abstract endorsement, but one with real-world repercussions.

Maia Wyn Davies & Stephanie Stacey

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## Interviews

# What's the secret to a meaningful life? Chasing happiness

*Jacob Dabb speaks to Lord Richard Layard, the economist who helped double NHS funding of talking therapy and roll out CBT treatment across the UK*

When Professor Richard Layard enters the interview he shrugs off his puffer jacket, removes his bright orange cap and extends a smile to me from across the room. This is the kind of smile one could easily expect from a man who almost single-handedly dragged happiness economics into the mainstream in the 1990s.

Immediately, it's easy to get a sense of the man's character. At 85, he's still more energetic and humorous than anybody else in the room. Granted, that room happened to be a small seminar room in the basement of St John's College Fisher building, and inhabited at that time by just the two of us, but you get the picture. Layard is beaming. When the photographer enters the room behind him, and requests a quick profile, he quickly de-

bates with himself the necessity of a tie. Leaving it on, indeed the one Layard is almost exclusively photographed in, he whispers to me "one mustn't pretend to be what one is not" and winks over his glasses. Chuckling, he sits down and unbuttons his blazer. This is where our conversation begins.

Given Layard's occupation — having written a number of landmark books on mental health and income (such as *Happiness: lessons from a new science* and *Thrive: the power of psychological therapy*), as well as co-writing the UN's annual *World Happiness Report* — his friendliness isn't surprising. This is an economist who helped double the NHS budget for talking-therapy and helped roll out Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) across the nation, and made mental well-being a priority for both the Blair and

Brown New Labour governments

This isn't the first time this Labour Peer and happiness economist has been in Cambridge. Indeed, before entering economics in his 30s, at the London School of Economics (LSE), Layard studied History at King's College after being an officer in the army. This was before converting to medicine, hating it, and returning to the humanities through studying Sociology in his evenings in London.

Overwhelmingly, it comes across that Layard enjoyed his time here: "I spent at least half of my time reading political philosophy and loved it". When it came to the question of what to do after leaving university, however, he began to find it more challenging. "I thought of so many different things," he tells me. Nostalgically, he reveals that he had been pally with E M Forster while the novelist was a fellow at King's and his indecision on the subject of work had led to him doing a week of work experience with a probation officer, a friend of Forster's.

I was curious to know whether the pressures to go into the City out of Cambridge had similarly existed for him in the late 1950s and early 1960s as it seemed to for students today. "When I was here, almost nobody went into banking, except people who were very thick!" he says with an eye-brow raised. "Most people," it had seemed to him, "had instead gone into the civil service." While put quite bluntly, Layard's point — he elaborated





# Interviews

## NEWS

### The 2019 General Election in Cambridge: the race is on

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▲ Daniel Zeichner, left (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

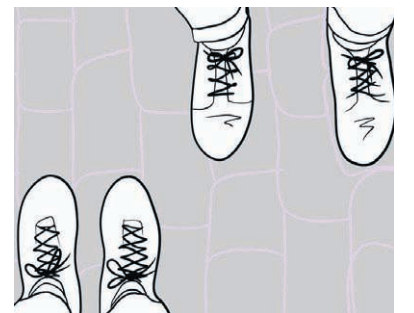
## FEATURES

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▲ Illustration by Alisa Santikarn

## OPINION

### Frankie Kendal

For trans students to feel welcome here, Cambridge needs to do better

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— was that more and more students have been swept up by the individualistic urge to look after oneself and to get ahead that had not existed for his generation in the same way.

“The correct way to think about your job is how you can make the most difference on the happiness of the world,” he explains. “The Thatcher Revolution” – as he put it – has thrown smoke over this. It “established wealth creation as the goal for societies and for individuals”. The reality, that happiness is the most important thing, for Layard, has apparently been lost as relationships thus break down and young people have gradually stopped caring about values that had seemed commonplace to him and his fellow students half a century ago.

It is at this point in the interview that Layard's smile wavers. The first thing to bear in mind, he tells me, is to be sure you would enjoy what you're going into. If the answer is no, he implies, pause your psychometric test, close your laptop, and shut down your application to whatever firm offered you free booze at a networking event.

The second thing is whether or not you're capable of doing it properly. By this, he means having a capability to affect not just your own happiness but that of others as well. The sad fact of the matter is, he sighs, is that the idealistic bunch are now all going into NGOs and independent organisations. “They have

incredibly little influence!” he exclaims. “True power, for good or bad, lies in the civil service,” yet “young people aren't following this route anymore”, he argues.

The solution? “A change in attitudes”. His hand goes to his chest. On Layard's left lapel sits a small badge with the words Action for Happiness boldly written in red. This is a grassroots movement (publicly endorsed by the Dalai Lama, “whom I've had some very interesting conversations with,” he tells me) that Layard introduced after attending Quaker meetings with his wife Molly. Although becoming agnostic, Layard has been vocal in lamenting the decline of values he believes are found in many religions, such as a focus on community and care for the wellbeing of others. The Action for Happiness initiative was thus an attempt to introduce a sort of “secular morality” to encourage values around collective wellbeing to return.

“We have one in LSE and one in Oxford already” he assures me. “What we need is to bring the Action for Happiness to Cambridge. Essentially, it involves a quasi-positive-philosophy reframing of individuals' perspectives. On the movement's website you can find, conveniently enough, ‘10 Keys To Happier Living’. These appear in the form of simple words spanning ‘giving’ to ‘awareness’, ‘acceptance’, and ‘meaning’. At first glance, it all seems a bit wishy-washy. The literature looks like the kind of thing you might expect

to find in the self-help section at Oxfam. I ask Layard to explain to me what it would look like for students. He sits forward in his chair, an infectious and warm smile returning.

“First of all,” he tells me, “returning to your first point, it would affect what jobs people went on and did”. The second way that the Action for Happiness would change students he reveals is through how they would conduct their relationships. “Today”, he tuts and his arms fly up at his sides, “it's remarkable that people don't focus essentially on how they're affecting other people”. To him, how students approach relationships today is deeply disappointing. In his eyes, we're confronted with a highly rationalistic view on coupledness where if a partner doesn't consistently meet all of our criteria, we deshackle and move on.

I ask if this means he believes in the notion of a soul mate. “But of course!” What about if somebody isn't making you happy though? He leans back in his chair. “I've had some very interesting conversations with Thich Nhat Hanh about this”. Thich Nhat Hanh is a globally renowned Vietnamese Buddhist scholar and poet. “I disguised the fact as one does whose problem I was recounting” he chuckles a little to himself “and I felt quite humbled by his answer [to relationship queries]”. He told Layard that you shouldn't even think about changing the other person.

I'm skeptical. “I've never talked to anybody about this,” he continues a little more sheepishly, “but I've found that since I've had these sort of conversations that if somebody, let's not say who, does something that I don't like — I almost automatically experience a liking of them”. While it feels somewhat cold-hearted to find fault with Layard's beaming appraisal of unconditional love, it still seems a dangerous line to take when thinking about unhealthy relationships. He continues his appraisal. “To me, if somebody does something you don't like just love them,” this last bit he emphasises, throwing his hands up and smiling.

But what if something drastically bad happens, I push. “Oh well of course exceptions must be made,” he admits. “People shouldn't sacrifice their whole remaining life with somebody who isn't going to make them happy”.

At this point, the questions I'd prepared run to a close and I switch off the recorder. “I don't suppose you fancy a coffee before my talk?” he proffers. As we walk from St John's to King's Parade, Layard is zipped up to the nose and hidden again under his orange cap. Pausing by a building painted black with the words ‘MERCADO CENTRAL’ emblazoned on the front, just down from Gardenia's, he looks up pointing. “I used to live here with John Bird and Peter Cook,” the lead comedians in the satire era of the 1960s, he tells me, reminiscing.

The impression I get from Layard is that he is fiercely well-meaning, guided by a genuine desire to improve the lives of others. Although some of his initiatives seem either commonsensical (have better relationships) or often misguided (stay with your partner no matter what), it is difficult to find fault with the gist of his ideas. Considering happiness for yourself but more importantly for others around you, when thinking of careers or relationships, may seem simple but is often neglected in place of individual desires. Particularly in Cambridge. As we reach the entrance to Caffè Nero, I turn and ask if he's optimistic about the future of happiness in the UK and for students. With his smile returning to full effect, he replies instantly: “one has to be optimistic,” he pauses for a moment, “always”.

“If you won't enjoy the job, shut down the application to whatever firm offered you free booze at a networking event”



◀ Lord Richard Layard is a leading expert on the economics of happiness (ANDREW HYNES)



# News



## New wave of strikes to occur

Cambridge staff will take to the picket lines later this academic year, UCU announced yesterday. 80% of union members voted to back strike action on pensions, pay, and working conditions, with a turnout of 57%.

(CAMBRIDGE DEFEND EDUCATION, INES LETELLIER)



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TRIN-ISTER STUFF

Ghost child seen in Trinity photo

At first glance the photo, innocently published on Instagram by ‘@prettylittlecambridge’, appears to be simply of a quaint corner of Trinity College. However, looking closely at one of the windows, you will see an alarming sight: the faintest silver outline a ghost child. With Halloween taking place this week, it is unclear whether the figure seen was a terrifying phantom child, a trick of the light, or simply a sleep-deprived student.

PUMPKIN PIE IN THE SKY

Pumpkins on Senate House roof

On the morning of October 30th, a collection of pumpkins were seen on the roof of the Senate House on King’s Parade. Seemingly overnight, a total of four pumpkins appeared, with each having a menacing face carved into it: two are on top of the balustrade in the centre of the roof, with another pumpkin on each corner. By late afternoon, the pumpkins were still proudly sitting on top of the building and showed no sign of being taken down.

FUR-TIVE BEHAVIOUR

Rare black fox spotted

A black fox, one of Britain’s rarest animals, graced the streets of Cambridge last week. The elusive animal reportedly ran through a local car park into the wasteland, sighted by a member of the public. The majority of black foxes have disappeared from the UK since being hunted for their distinctive fur, with only a handful estimated to remain. This is the only black fox sighting reported in Cambridge for the last 7 years.

BEARD IN HEATH-ROW

Academic in airport security ordeal

The airport has published an apology to classics professor Mary Beard after she was asked by “insistent” staff to remove her top in front of other passengers, and was seen in just her “little black vest [and] no bra”. Beard stated that she did not want staff to get into trouble, but wanted to see some “general consciousness-raising.” Heathrow stated that “any passenger is able to be searched in private. We apologise that this did not happen in this instance”.



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## News

# University erases evidence of ties to group funded by oil and gas companies

► Continued from front page

this was due to any affiliation between the University and CASP. They said that they did not “know the history of how [the webpage] arrived” on the University’s web server.

They claimed that recent deletions were simply part of a broader effort to “cleaning” Cambridge’s “internet ecosystem”.

However, when asked, a spokesperson for the University was unable to provide any other concrete examples of website or listing removals which had occurred as part of this “cleaning” process.

Varsity understands that senior figures within the University were actively aware of the removal of the CASP website specifically. The University did not respond to questions on this fact.

CASP, which was formerly known as the Cambridge Arctic Shelf Programme, is currently located at Cambridge’s Madingley Rise Site. It is a registered charity whose research consists of “carrying out field, literature and analysis-based



geological research in prospective hydrocarbon basins”.

Its researchers have led searches for oil and gas in the Arctic, among other regions, and the Scientific Advisory Board

of CASP includes multi-national oil and gas companies BP, Shell, Exxon, Total, Chevron, Eni and Statoil.

Speaking to Varsity, members of Zero Carbon affirmed that both CASP’s website, and its listing as a Research Group on the Earth Sciences website, which they had been reviewing as part of their ongoing research into Cambridge’s connections with the fossil fuels industry, were both taken down by 25th October, 2019.

Web archive data proves the presence of CASP’s listing on the Earth Sciences’ website from at least August 16th, 2000 to at least March 2019 (the most recent date from which archive information is available), and Zero Carbon members affirm having seen the listing in recent weeks. In total, therefore, CASP was listed as a research group on the University of Cambridge’s official Earth Sciences website for more than 18 years, at least.

Both a spokesperson for CASP and a spokesperson for Cambridge denied any affiliation between the two organisations.

However, a since-deleted job listing dating to 2018, which had been listed on the CASP website, stated that the organisation is “affiliated to the Department of Earth Sciences”. Another job listing from 2016 explicitly said: “CASP is a geological research organisation that is affiliated to the Department of Earth Sciences at the University of Cambridge”.

Given that both denied any affiliation, neither a spokesperson for the University, nor a spokesperson for CASP, were able to account for how, or why, the CASP website came to be – and long continued to be – registered on a cam.ac.uk domain. According to the University Information services, a cam.ac.uk domain is usually granted to “University-wide facilities” and “institutions of the University”.

Several CASP researchers have previ-

▲ **Cambridge Zero Carbon blockaded the BP Institute this week** (NIC YAZIKOV)

ously listed their affiliation as the Department of Earth Sciences. In 2018, for example, in the Science Direct journal, one co-author’s affiliation is printed as “CASP, Department of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge”.

CASP was listed as a Research Group for nearly 19 years on the Cambridge’s official Earth and Sciences website.

Although a spokesperson for CASP told Varsity that the group had emerged out of the University, and became “independent and unaffiliated a very long time ago”, a Cambridge spokesperson denied that the group had ever been affiliated with the University.

Asked how they would respond to claims that CASP’s listing on a University of Cambridge webpage could have served to legitimise and endorse the group, a University spokesperson said that they would not call this an “endorsement by the University”, but that “other people are free to make that interpretation.”

They claimed that multiple organisations have “appeared” on Cambridge’s “internet ecosystem”, and that the University is in the process of removing them.

The University declined to comment on whether they had any measures in place to stop unaffiliated organisations from asserting they are affiliated to the University in things such as job advertisements.

Details of CASP’s programmes were outlined in a new Zero Carbon report, published on Monday. The report also found that a research project led by the director of Cambridge’s BP Institute amounted to an estimated annual value to oil production companies of between \$300m to \$3bn (£233.5m to £2.335bn).

A spokesperson for the University said: “The University is in the process of removing the websites of non-affiliated bodies from its internet ecosystem as part of a long-planned overhaul.”

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# Varsity explains: This December's General Election

**Christopher Dorrell**  
Deputy News Editor  
**Stephanie Stacey**  
Editor

On Tuesday evening MPs voted by 438 votes to 20 to call an election. The election will take place on 12th December, subject to the likely approval by the House of Lords, making it the first election to take place in December since 1923.

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, has been demanding an election for a number of weeks and had previously been denied thrice by an unwilling parliament, which must pass a bill calling an election in order for one to be held. An amendment, proposed by Labour, and supported by the opposition parties, sought to move the date of the election to 9th December. This, they argued, would make participation by university students more likely since it would still be in term time. However, the amendment was defeated.

## Why has an election been called?

The election is a way for Boris Johnson to try and "get Brexit done". In his eyes Parliament have been frustrating his attempts to enact the Referendum result and he therefore hopes an election will give him the mandate to leave on his terms. Labour, on the other hand, hope that they can run a campaign similar to 2017 and direct the national conversation

towards the economy and the impacts of austerity.

Many Labour MPs feel that a Second Referendum should be held before any possible election, a key reason why more than 100 Labour MPs abstained while 11 voted against the motion. This included prominent pro-remain campaigners, such as David Lammy and Margaret Becket, and Cambridge's MP Daniel Zeichner.

All Liberal Democrat and SNP MPs abstained from the motion in protest at the failure of the amendment moving the election date to 9th December. However, like Labour MPs, many of them are concerned about the prospect of an election before a Second Referendum has been held.

## What might it mean for Cambridge?

Since 2015 the Cambridge seat has been held by the Labour MP Daniel Zeichner. He was re-elected in 2017 with over 50% of the vote, a big increase from his share in 2015 when he defeated the Liberal Democrat candidate by only 600 votes. Recent polling by Survation puts the Liberal Democrats ahead on 39% as of 29th October.

It registered a substantial decrease in support for Labour who have slipped to 30%. The other parties are all significantly further behind with the Greens next on 12%, showing a 10% increase from their performance at the last election.



▲ Labour MPs Daniel Zeichner and Emily Thornberry, in 2017  
(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

Thus far only three parties have announced their candidates. The incumbent, Daniel Zeichner, will be the Labour candidate, who has been candidate since 2010. The Liberal Democrats have a new candidate, Rod Cantrill, the Councillor for Newnham ward, Cambridge. Peter Dawe, who sparred with Cantrill in a recent hustings at Selwyn, will be the candidate for the Brexit party, which scored only 7% in the Survation poll. Dean of Emmanuel, Jeremy Caddick is the candidate for the Green Party.

“The deadline for registration is midnight on Tuesday 26th November”

## How can I register to vote?

British, Irish and qualifying Commonwealth citizens who are 18 or over on election day are eligible to vote in this election. British citizens living abroad may also vote, either by post or by proxy (take note, MML and AMES students).

Unlike local authority elections, students from EU countries will not be able to vote. You can be registered at both your university and home addresses, however, unlike in local elections, you can only vote in one constituency. As Michaelmas ends on 5th December, the election will occur outside of term-time. Though you may not be in the city at the time of the election, it is still possible to register for a postal vote, to vote in Cambridge as opposed to your home constituency. You don't need to re-register for every election, but you do need to re-register if you've changed address (for example, by moving to University), or if you've changed your name.

If you registered to vote in the local elections that took place earlier this year in Cambridge, it's likely that you won't need to register again, but it's worth checking by getting in touch with Cambridge's Electoral Registration Office. You can register simply online using your National Insurance number. The deadline for registration is midnight on Tuesday 26th November.

## Boris Johnson 'booed out' of Addenbrooke's hospital during visit to Cambridge

**Molly Killeen**  
Senior News Editor

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson was "booed out" of Cambridge's Addenbrooke's hospital yesterday afternoon, on the day he had hoped the country would depart from the European Union.

Johnson toured some of the hospital's laboratories and met with staff on his trip to the city, which came just days after Brussels agreed to yet another Brexit extension, giving the UK until 31st January 2020 to negotiate a deal. In light of this development, Parliament has voted to hold a general election on 12th December.

Many voiced their displeasure at the visit online. As Johnson departed Addenbrooke's, he faced shouting and booing from staff and members of the public standing by to watch him leave.

In one video posted on twitter, a sixth-year medical student working at the hospital described Johnson's visit as a "PR stunt", saying that "people who work in this hospital know the reality of cuts...we know what cuts have done

to our NHS, we know that the NHS is being privatised."

She also said that staff were not informed of the PM's visit and described Johnson as "too much of a coward to actually speak to any real members of staff."

Jeremy Caddick, Dean of Emmanuel College and Green Party parliamentary candidate, said of the visit, "Neither Johnson nor his plans for Brexit are welcome in Cambridge. Cambridge firmly rejects his damaging plans for Brexit."

"His posturing at Addenbrookes when his party have starved the NHS of funds is beyond irony. The danger is that is he wins this election he plans to sell the NHS, the jewel in our national crown, to Trump's America. We must stop him."

Ian Sollom, Liberal Democrat candidate for South Cambridgeshire MP, tweeted, "Appears Boris Johnson has been booed out of Addenbrookes Hospital on a visit to Cambridge today."

"Cambs has second biggest overspend in England, our residents are being put at risk by this Government's underfunding, with chronic understaffing hitting care hard. #NotGoodEnough"

“People who work in this hospital know the reality of cuts”



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## News

# Brexit: What do students think?

● Love it or hate it, the UK government have wrangled an extension on Brexit until January 2020. This week, Varsity asked students for their views on the situation

► Continued from front page

that it would be undemocratic because referenda aren't binding," argues another.

"People were lied to far too much during the first one and even though that happens during most referendums and elections, this was off the charts. I think another vote is necessary now that the public has seen the negative impact the Brexit process has had on the UK for the last 3 years," says one Physics student. Supporters of another referendum often cited changing demographics in addition to changing opinions, with many young voters now able to vote when they could not in 2016.

Many students, however, believe a second vote would only exacerbate current divisions. "For the first couple of years I held that Brexit was bad for the country, and that it doesn't matter what the so-called will of the people was, however I've come round to the opinion that a second referendum would make Parliament politically bankrupt," says Felix, a History and Politics student at Hughes Hall.

For Cyrus, a second-year at Magdalen, a future referendum should be between different forms of Brexit, not on whether to remain in the EU. "You can't go and ask the same thing before it has happened. We'd just be more split."

Another student agrees that another vote would be "a massive mistake" be-



cause it would undermine trust in the political system. "It would say to the millions who did vote to leave, often communities devastated by neoliberal policy from Thatcher to Cameron, that their vote doesn't matter. This plays directly into the hands of people like Tommy Robinson and the far-right."

While the majority of students Varsity spoke to had voted or intended to vote Remain, Varsity also reached out to students sympathetic to Brexit, many of whom felt frustrated about the way the process has unfolded since 2016.

One female student who would have

voted Leave in 2016 tells Varsity that she agrees with the current government's negotiating strategy. "I'm glad he [Boris Johnson] is trying to quicken the pace so that the country can focus on other things," she says.

Phoebe, a first-year at Corpus who would have voted to leave the EU, tells Varsity that while she agrees democracy should be "a continuous process", "you can't have another referendum just to avoid implementing the result of the first." Much in concurrence with the government's recent statements in Parliament, she argues that "parliamentar-

ians have wilfully frustrated respecting the result of the referendum" and that "the Conservatives are the only party that actually want Brexit done."

Some supporters of Remain were also sympathetic to the current government's strategy. "I can see why Boris tried it [the prorogation]," says one student. "Everyone wants it to be done and over with and no one else was doing anything," argues another.

"It's this perfect limbo of everyone being unhappy because 650 people have suddenly decided that they know more than the other 33 million," says one Chemical Engineering student.

Many others however disagreed with the steps taken to ensure the UK's exit by the end of October, especially the prorogation. "You don't give a house less than two weeks to debate a deal which is the biggest constitutional change in 40 years," says third-year student Emile. Some others decried the government's attempt to blame current difficulties on parliamentarians, describing it as "unfair" and "disingenuous". Most of the EU students who spoke to Varsity were not especially worried about their position in the UK.

Rob, a King's PhD student from the Netherlands, says that so far he has had "no fears for massive disruption due to Brexit" partly because "the university has been proactive in giving the latest updates on how Brexit will impact the university and its [international] students."

◀ "Brexit just feels so distant"

(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

"Brexit just feels so distant" says Lena, a first-year Linguistics student from Germany. "I don't really have concerns because I know the university is looking after its students, for example tuition fees won't increase."

Niki, a second-year studying Chemical Engineering from Portugal, is confident that, whichever outcome, the government "can't kick students out", however he is concerned that "some students who need to do a year abroad don't know if they'll get their Erasmus funding."

Alessandro Ceccarelli, President of the Graduate Union and originally from Italy, similarly praises the university but says the government has "lost credibility with EU students" with its lack of clarity on Brexit.

With a General Election due for December, engagement among Cambridge students seems higher than ever, especially among the majority of undergraduates who were too young to vote in 2016. Some indicated a desire to vote "tactically" in order to undermine Conservative majorities in each constituency.

According to the anti-Brexit group Best for Britain, tactical voting by pro-Remain voters could help swing support away from the Conservatives, who are currently polled to obtain a majority in December.

## 'Not today, not ever!' Protestors rally in Market Square on intended Brexit day

Sophie Huskisson  
News Correspondent

Yesterday, around 60 protestors gathered at the Guildhall for the 'Brexit: Not Today, Not Ever!' rally, hosted by Cambridge Stays. The demonstration featured people shouting "Bollocks to Brexit!" and waving signs which read "We already have the best deal" and "Sod a second referendum, let's have a first honest referendum."

Paul Browne, chair of Cambridge stays, thanked the crowd for coming out "to celebrate no Brexit day part 3". He encouraged people to "not just vote tactically and smartly but to get out and campaign...We can win a people's vote."

Cheers erupted when speakers celebrated that we are still in the EU today and likewise increased at any criticism of Theresa May and Boris Johnson.

Daniel Zeichner, Cambridge's Labour MP, stated "We have marched together, we have campaigned together, and what happened on 29th March? We stayed in

► Protesters rallied in Market Square yesterday evening

(ANDREW HYNES)



the EU. What happened on the 31st October? We stayed in the EU. We will stay in the EU next week, next year. We have proved we can do it."

"I need to say something about our Prime Minister, because so much of this mess is all about him. It was all about him when he wrote those things on a bus. It was all about him when he lied

to the Queen about proroguing parliament."

Lewis Herbert, leader of the City Council, had his speech interrupted by a man swearing "Bollocks!" at the crowd and shouting that "the country has voted." People angrily shouted "Bollocks to Brexit" in response.

Freddie Poser, a second-year Compu-

“The heart of the EU peace project is bringing people together”

ter Science student at Gonville and Caius, made a speech for the Our Future Our Choice on behalf of young people. "As of today, 3 million more young people have turned eighteen...we're clinging on to an invalid referendum instead of putting it back to the people in a second referendum."

Mary Jennings, one of the organisers of Cambridge Stays, stated "Brexit is a tragedy for young people."

"It is the withdrawal of freedom of movement, easy access to study, erasmus."

"The EU is a peace project and it has kept the peace for many years. There's been a lot in the news about tariffs and trade, but it's not about that. The heart of the EU project is bringing people together."

Other notable political figures included Labour City Cllrs. Rod Cantrill and Anna Smith.

Speakers made remarks such as "Happy ground hog day!" or "This is starting to feel quite familiar."

The rally ended with cheers and applause as people chanted in unison 'No Brexit today! No Brexit ever!'



# Student activists call on Cambridge to boycott controversial technology company Palantir

Marie Langrishe  
News Correspondent

Students are campaigning for Cambridge University to sever its links with Palantir, a technology company that supplies software for controversial US government immigration enforcement programmes.

On Monday, students from the #NoTechForTyrants campaign protested a talk, entitled 'Privacy and Civil Liberties (PCL) & Machine Learning', held by senior Palantir employees at the Department of Computer Science and Technology. Palantir directs money towards the Department through its sponsorship of student prizes and as a member of the Supporters' Club, for which it pays an annual fee.

Both staff and students have condemned the decision to allow the university to be used by Palantir as a "recruitment ground". A computer science lecturer commented that the decision to allow the talk was "disgraceful" and "shames the computer science department". An open letter published by the campaign demanding cancellation of the talk and any future events at Cambridge has so far gathered over 90 signatures.

Responding to the complaints, a Uni-

versity spokesperson said, "The tech talk was widely advertised in advance. Those attending were given the opportunity to raise any concerns and debate any issues during the talk itself."

Criticism of Palantir stems from its collaboration with the US government on immigration enforcement programmes, which the campaign argues are a "grotesque violation of human rights". The US Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) uses Palantir's software packages to investigate families and sponsors of children crossing the border and to conduct workplace raids. Workplace raids have reportedly increased by 650% during the Trump administration. The campaign argues that "thousands have been arrested, just for being undocumented, children have been left without parents over night, and people who have lived in America for sometimes decades are being berated, detained, and deported."

Campaigners' demands for the immediate cancellation of the talk at Cambridge University had been rebuffed by the Department, which stated it was "obliged to allow freedom of speech". In response, students handed leaflets to attendees headed 'Cancel their platform: Cambridge is complicit'. They argued that



▲ Palantir offices (FASTILY)

Cambridge, which counts refugees and migrants among its student body, should not enable the "marginalisation of people who fled or are fleeing conflict, persecution and hunger." At the event, when questioned about the company's role in raids, detentions and deportations, the UK Government lead for Palantir Duncan Robertson replied, "There's been a lot of press coverage about that. We work within the legal framework of the state we work

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It shames  
the  
computer  
science  
department  
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within. I believe it's important that our software is being used in legal, compliant, and safe ways."

Pressed on what he meant by safe, Robertson qualified "safety of the law". Next week, following the example of the US-based NoTechForICE campaign in which staff and students from 30 universities urged their institutions to boycott Palantir, #NoTechForTyrants is launching a petition to encourage students to pledge not to work for Palantir. They claim they are joined by Edinburgh University, St Andrews and Oxford University and will be reaching out to other universities.

Palantir's activities are attracting controversy more widely. A report in The Times this week highlighted the company's links to BP, which has also been the target of Cambridge student protests. The oil corporation has formed an alliance with Palantir to help it increase oil extraction.

BP's incoming chief executive Bernard Looney, according to The Times, spoke of BP's "digital transformation", stating that Palantir was "right at the heart of that work". The partnership with Palantir, they estimate, has helped BP produce an extra 20,000 barrels in the North Sea, which amounts to a 10% increase.

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# Features

## In my first term, searching for that sense of belonging

Columnist **Henry Lloyd-Hughes** explores the continuous tensions between academic and social commitments in Cambridge life



▲ Illustration by Alisa Santikarn for Varsity

**H**aving been in Cambridge for a little over three weeks now, the notion of ‘settling in’ is something I’ve desperately been attempting to achieve.

I suppose, I can say that I have ‘settled in’ to life here in a lot of respects: I’ve integrated into a social setting that is supportive with lots of like-minded people to myself, I’ve attended (most) of my lectures, and I’ve handed in all my essays on time, so far at least.

However, to describe any element of life here as ‘settled’ would be wholly inaccurate. What’s become more apparent the longer I’ve been here is just how inescapably turbulent life at this university is.

Cambridge is famed for its academic intensity, but I think there’s often little consideration for how university is about more than pure academic endurance. We tend to overlook how university is a drastic change in all our lives. Many of us will have physically moved away from home and emotionally distanced ourselves from the social safety nets of our friends and family.

While it’s certainly true that colleges provide students with essential support, I think that for a lot of students, the feeling of belonging which is crucial to creating an affinity with Cambridge as a secondary ‘home’ is cemented through developing deep connections and friendships with fellow students.

It’s because of this that I feel like ‘settling into’ Cambridge is impossibly difficult. Forming, developing, and sustaining relationships with other students, is challenging on its own, especially at this preliminary stage of university life, but when combined with the torrent of lectures, supervisions, and deadlines, it can at times feel like you’re a kite in a hurricane.

Of course, how we spin our new social web depends on personality and place. I think it’s easy, given the pressures induced by the suffocating air of prestige and tradition which pervades every corner of this university, to isolate yourself, turn down event invitations, and stay in your room to work.

Of course, for some students, this provides fulfillment and happiness. But socialising and bonding with others is a major aspect of who I am.

Within just three weeks, I’ve had to ask myself multiple times whether to prioritise my academic obligations, after having invested so much time and effort to getting here in the first place, or fulfill my need for supportive friendships.

Then there’s the fact that socialising means something totally different here than it does elsewhere. Last week, I attended my first formal, to celebrate Diwali. Just like how the individualised attention students get from academics is totally new to me, the concept of ‘fine

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My first few weeks here have felt like walking on a tightrope  
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dining’ at formals is equally foreign.

So far, I can’t deny, I have loved feeling very James Bond dressed in black tie, a dress code I have never had to accommodate before. But being served three courses by waiters in waistcoats and white gloves, against the backdrop of a vast and candle-lit hall, was a bit of a culture shock; especially when compared to the local chippy back home which, don’t get me wrong, is amazing, but now just seems to be in a unrecognisably different world. That, and learning to like wine (which actually has more names than just ‘red’ and ‘white’) adds to the blustering feeling of disorientation merged with disbelief.

With barely a second to stand back and appreciate where I am or what I am doing, my first few weeks here have felt like walking on a tightrope, desperately trying to balance studying with socialising. It’s as if I’m being forced to run to keep up with the gale-force speed at which everything here happens.

I feel as if my time here so far has been dominated by the prevailing philosophy of ‘work hard, play hard.’ I have found myself wanting to make the most out of every moment that I do have free, particularly the couple of nights of breezy bliss after submitting my weekly essays.

Yet this, in turn, has also led to another apparent bump in the undulating road of my first term here: the fact that everyone is dictated by different timetables and has their own deadlines.

There’s no one night a week that everyone can uniformly designate to social events. Someone will have an essay due, a supervision the next morning, or any number of endless obligations prohibiting them.

And here lies one of the hardest things to grapple with, an inescapable whirling tornado — the fear of missing out. Especially as a fresher who hasn’t been here for that long, I find myself worrying that everyone *must* be making new friends, having new experiences, and producing new memories without me.

These feelings are magnified whenever I’m sat in my room, struggling to knuckle down and be productive, and instead finding myself bombarded with constant mental images of elated faces, fictitious reminders of how much fun everyone is having. This frustrating cycle repeats itself until I’m just too emotionally tired to continue, having done little work and realising that I may as well have just gone out with my friends.

I’ve come to learn that Cambridge is uncompromisingly restless. Perhaps we’re just being trained for the hectic circus that we call adult life, practising (and failing) to juggle the often conflicting commitments of socialising and working. But I think it’s perfectly understandable to feel unsettled, given the fact we’re living in this whirlwind.

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Cambridge is uncompromisingly restless  
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# Why I write...



## Writing reminds us of our humanity, writes Sandaleen Qaiser

I grew up listening to my dad speak of his childhood. He spent it in an obscure Pakistani village-turned-tiny-city called Malakwal. Every morning after Fajr, the early dawn prayers, he would carry his wooden slate and ink pot in a coarse sack made of jute fibres and make his way to the open air school. The school consisted of around eleven little boys who would gather sometimes under a mango tree, at other times under the more generous shade of a peepal tree to protect themselves from the scorching sun. They were taught by the single teacher running this establishment; funding not sufficient for walls or a ceiling. They would sit on their emptied out jute sacks, slates on laps, and that was how he learned to write, by scratching ink onto wood, washing it away, scratching ink onto wood over and over again. The teacher, who could have comfortably obtained a well-paid job in a big neighbouring city, instead chose to teach them their alif, beh, pehs and their ABCs.

Dad ran away from home aged sixteen to find a job because if he could write, if he could physically articulate thoughts that seemed vaster than him or the life he was headed towards, surely

he was destined for more than a career of labour and mistreatment. Nearly all of those boys, including my dad, ended up moving away to seek better futures for themselves. It's for this reason that I received an education which would have been completely out of reach had he stayed. I learned to write pencil on paper, marking graphite onto fresh notebook pages over and over again.

Looking back, my knowledge of his circumstances must have played a great part in my almost devotional desire to write. I always sat down with a deep seated belief that I could write my way out of every distressing situation. Growing up I often found myself in situations where expressing things openly would cause too much disruption or even ostracisation. Everything I could not say for the inevitable social repercussions, every joy and sorrow that could not be contained, could be written down as if it had been said, like an affirmation of my existence and a validation of my thought. Being able to write indeed became consequent to being alive; it reflected my humanity back to myself.

The year I was born, over half of Pakistan's population over the age of 10 was functionally illiterate. That figure has shifted to just under forty percent. Although statistics show a gradual increase in literacy in the last two decades, looking at the raw numbers for Pakistan brings it into perspective. According to UNESCO, more than 54 million people over the age of 15 are illiterate, with almost twice as many women than men making up that number.

“The year I was born, over half of Pakistan's population over the age of 10 was functionally illiterate”

Pakistan also has the second largest out-of-school population in the world comprised of 5.1 million children. Of course the sight of bare-foot kids in threadbare clothing who will never get an education is overly familiar; they populate the villages and blend into the background of the bigger city streets. I can think of individual doe-eyed kids who coyly call you *baji* to charm you into giving them some change which isn't going to be theirs to keep anyway, others that stick their tongue out at you in frustration or mischief. But when I try to picture 5 million of those kids it is impossible.

To move to a global scale, 750 million is the most recently estimated figure of the world's illiterate adult population, scattered across the world. According to the National Literacy Trust, around 7.1 million adults in England are functionally illiterate. I try to imagine 750,000,000 people who will never write a dissertation or a poem or a little thank you note to a loved one. But that number is too large to truly perceive when reduced to a faceless mass. It is unfathomable when you are sitting in your cosy accommodation, or in the college library that showcases more books than you could ever read, with a looming deadline that has turned writing into a chore. The disconnect between the academic world and the world that cannot write or read becomes so vast and so unbridgeable in those moments.

When I think about these facts I find myself in a spiral of guilt and passion, but always come out the other end re-

▲ Illustration by Amber Li for Varsity

membering what a privilege it is to be able to sit here and fill the hours of my day writing. It is a bit of a miracle to me. Harold Bloom once beautifully said that Samuel Johnson “viewed writing as a defence against melancholy.” I must have carried this sentiment throughout adolescence only to find it articulated now. As students, we often write because we have to do it and it can become an inducer of melancholy rather than a defence against it. It is perhaps useful to remember every now and then how fortunate we are to have received the gift that is literacy, and how incredible that we have in us the capacity to give it to those who do not have it.

To teach somebody to write is to place mental freedom into their hands. Whether they find themselves secretly writing dissenting opinions in Orwellian circumstances, or whether they find the courage to move closer to better opportunities, that freedom which disguises itself as disruption can only ever lead to happier, more fulfilling human life, even if it breeds this painful self-awareness. So I write to acknowledge that, and I write in the hope that someday I will be able to give what I have received to somebody else, even if realistically it will never be to millions of somebodies. Every time I write, it is an affirmation of where I came from and how far it has brought me, and how far those who devote their lives to teaching and learning to write can take other people. Even when, taking away that grand birds-eye-view of the world, those efforts appear to affect only eleven or so little village boys.

“Every time I write, it is an affirmation of where I came from and how far it has brought me”



## Features

# Finding how I fit into Black spaces

An *anonymous student* considers what it means to be mixed race

Content Note: This article contains discussion of racist stereotyping

Am I allowed to call myself Black? Being of mixed heritage means I have a European mother and an African father. My light brown skin is immediate evidence of that. Even so, though my mother may be white, and I may have grown up without my Black father and entirely in a white setting of family and friends, in the eyes of majority-white Britain, I'm Black — and by extension, 'other.' A woman at a market once asked my mother whether she had "got me from Nigeria". This was a very confusing message to a child. I didn't feel Black, because I knew that my upbringing and family traditions were almost entirely German. I felt devoid of any cultural proof that I could claim a Black identity, despite the white world around me being keen to prescribe me one. This made for a perpetual and painful no-man's land between two communities.

My mother recently asked me when I first became aware of my race. I couldn't place it, but I knew that my hair was the most problematic factor for me from primary school age. Back then, my skin didn't bother me too much — I remember informing people proudly that I had "caramel coloured skin". But where hair

was concerned, I resented mine deeply from the age of seven. It couldn't be tamed into a single plait to fall smoothly past one shoulder like that of my white friends. Instead, every morning at 8:45, my mother would yank and brush my mane to disentangle it — God forbid I leave the house looking too 'wild.' People still tell me today that my hair looks 'wild' if I wear it as an afro. However well-intentioned, these comments serve as a constant reminder that my natural hair is unruly, and needs to be disguised as much as possible. It was only when I was 16 and introduced to box braids that I managed to embrace the stuff that grew out of my head as mine, and as Black. They immediately made me look more African and feel a stronger connection to my Black heritage.

I have rarely had to deal with the sort of overt racism that Black men in particular experience constantly, such as racial profiling by the police. Mostly, it's microaggressions that arise from ignorance: in a German playground, "Why is your skin so dark?"; at high school, as Black American culture reached us over the internet, "Yo, ma nigga!"; questions about my hair that were always variations of, "Do you brush your hair?," "Can you wash it?," or "Can I touch it?," More recently, at university, a girl approached me in a club asking for drugs. I was baffled; at first, I had no idea why she would ask me, as someone who had never taken drugs. To her, though, it was clearly quite logical that someone who looked like me would sell drugs. When I said that I was in fact not a drug dealer, she looked confused. "What? But you look like you

are," she remarked as she tottered off. These comments are never enough to make me feel inferior or uncomfortable in my skin for long. In fact, I've often wanted to be darker, so that I could fit more neatly into a Black identity. I was recently turned away from an all-BME play after various auditions for being too light-skinned. Being rejected because of my skin colour stung. It was like someone had confirmed to me: "no, you're not really part of this group either." I'm treated everyday as Black by the white world around me, but this episode felt like a door was shut between myself and the solidarity of the Black community.

Though I seem to be processed as Black by white people around me, I will often hear racist tropes being used in conversations I'm part of, immediately positioning me as an outsider. On visits to family in Germany and Austria, this has become increasingly apparent as anxieties over immigration have grown. At a family friend's barbecue in Germany, I was informed that non-European immigrants, especially Muslims, just do not fit into German culture. The German *Volk* should not be victim to such developments. On other occasions, I have heard white people use the n-word casually around me, knowing that nobody else will react with any discomfort. And then there are the people who assume I'm "doing really well for someone from my background" because surely I must be "disadvantaged." 'Sympathy' of this sort is humiliating and incredibly disrespectful.

Finding compassion but not solidarity for these kinds of experiences at home, I'm pushing myself to seek out solidarity



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from a wider field. Over the past year, I've still found myself anxious to go to BME-only groups and events, worried that I wouldn't fit in, or would be rejected again as someone who is only half-African, was brought up in a white household, went to a majority-white school, and is ultimately light skinned. Can I describe myself as Black? I'm still chewing on it. What I know is that my experience definitely isn't white. Recently getting box braids done, my hairdresser told me that in Jamaica, where slavery made everybody a different shade of brown, I would never be addressed as mixed race, but simply 'light-skinned' or a 'brown skin girl.' This seems like a much healthier way to self-identify that I will embrace, and for the first time give myself my own race.

▲ Illustration by  
Alisa Santikarn  
for Varsity

# Learning to be a real adult is rocky

Cambridge students aren't being prepared for adulthood, writes Jess Lock

As I stepped into my flat last Wednesday, I was met with something untoward. Upon opening the front door, a stench so nuclear in its ferocity hit my unsuspecting nose. A cloying mix of chemical, gas and burning smells hung heavily in the air.

As I followed the reek to its source, my head began to swim. And there was the culprit: our 6-ft tall fridge-freezer was defrosting all over the kitchen floor. The oil cylinder had exploded. The weekly shop I had done the day before was decimated. The entirety of my freezer stock was obliterated and drooling a sticky substance. The landlady swiftly deemed the flat unfit for overnight stay, and just like that, I was alone in London with precisely £1.18 in my bank account.

The next few days brought additional annoyances. Panicking over my lack of cash and dwindling supply of tinned soup, I turned to vouchers. Deliveroo had sent a friend two £9 vouchers (with no minimum spend!) that he graciously bestowed on me. Combined with another friend's premium membership, I cashed

in on four free meals. Except, not quite. On day two, my deliveries were nicked before they ever reached me.

Had I found myself without safe accommodation, with limited food and a brewing chest infection in Cambridge, I'd know full well where to start. As I'd done before, I'd apply for a hardship fund. I'd use credit to buy buttery food, or ask my friends to cook for me. I'd swiftly book in with the college nurse, and talk to my tutor, director of studies and supervisors to arrange for some leniency.

I'm all too aware of how the pastoral systems in Cambridge can fail, particularly for the most vulnerable people living and working within this institution. Unforgiving staff and bureaucratic mazes of paperwork are all too common, barring those who most need support from accessing it. But as I traversed London on funds borrowed from a friend, with food bought using vouchers, I couldn't help but feel a sense of longing for the security of the collegiate system.

My relative comfort was established on pure luck. The only friend I have in the vicinity of London was able to host me. The very fact I had friends who would thoughtfully offer cash loans or divvy out their stashed coupons, was a privilege. Had I had a physical disability or dependants to take care of, my issues would've been far more challenging.

I won't pretend that the systems in Cambridge aren't prone to failure. I've



▲ 'Adulthood' reminds us of the comforts of student life

(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

experienced first hand the gross failures, inadequacies, and injustices that can occur through the dispersed collegiate system, and the institutionally racist, sexist, ableist, classist university in its entirety. Cambridge can and must do better.

But the disjunction between the codified environment of college and 'real life' is frightening. Newnham provided three

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For three  
years I was  
coddled  
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years of onsite accommodation. The buttery, if I had chosen to use it, catered for two meals a day, with the cafe offering breakfast. In theory, I could've lived my entire degree without having to buy food anywhere other than in my college. And that's without even factoring in the bedders at other colleges, the cleaners who make our kitchens and bathrooms spotless, and the laundry services — smoothing my life over into one devoid of real adult responsibilities.

For three years I was coddled by the knowledge that I had at least three pastoral points of contact I could turn to. And the responsibilities I observed my friends undertake at various other universities, be it privately renting or cleaning their own shit-stained toilet bowls, were swiftly removed by Cambridge's hand-holding.

Learning to 'adult' is rocky and, since graduating, I've clocked just how unhelpful it is for Cambridge to neuter the sheltered exposure to adulthood any other university tends to offer. Falling face first into a week of exploding appliances and limited cash, temporarily losing my place to stay, and having to navigate these without the safety net of my college has been hard. I am torn between craving the comforts of Cambridge, and being irritated by my desire to return to it — adulthood alone has been a far more immersive education than my degree ever was.





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Centre Building



## Features

# We deserve kindness from ourselves, too

**Emma Lézé** shares how she learned to show compassion to herself, amid her anxiety

*Content Note: this article contains detailed discussion of anxiety*

In a high-stress environment like Cambridge, it's inevitable that you will come across some difficulties. There are the usual challenges that everyone is familiar with: making friends, learning to cook, getting work done, and so on. But for those dealing with mental health issues, university can be hard for different reasons. I have had anxiety for about ten years, and this, coupled with a phobia of sickness, has had a heavy impact on my life. Coping with endless worries without the immediate support of my parents during first year has been both a tricky but enlightening experience. I have learned that being honest about my anxiety with friends is surprisingly helpful, for me and for them.

When I was little, I over-analysed everything. My perpetual worrying (and increasing fear of sickness, now my phobia) affected every decision I made. If my best friends from primary school knocked on my door asking me if I wanted to come and play with them, I would almost always refuse. My parents would get frustrated with me; they thought I didn't want to socialise, and couldn't understand why I would choose not to spend time with my friends. What they didn't know was that I desperately wanted to go and play with them. I wanted to so badly that it hurt. The thought of leaving the house without my parents was too overwhelming for me to deal with, and my anxiety won.

In secondary school, I struggled even more. Every morning, I would get to school and lock myself in a toilet cubicle. There, I would frantically text my mum — whom I had last seen only twenty minutes before as I left the house — all of my worries. Silly things like "I've forgotten to bring a pen" caused me terrible stress. I struggled to focus in lessons, and was often worried to the point that I felt ill. I was always on the verge of tears and was so sensitive that even the slightest inconvenience could push me over the edge. I would cry on the phone to my mum, begging her to pick me up and take me home. I was very quiet and probably came across as shy and withdrawn. But I wasn't, at least not really. I seemed distant because I was trying both to protect myself from and fight the anxiety monsters that were always

► Illustration from Pixabay

“When I was little, I over-analysed everything”



raging in my head.

Anxiety prevented me from being myself, and my first years at secondary school are marked in my mind as my darkest times. Not even the amazing support from my parents and the help that I received from my counsellor, who taught me ways to cope with my phobia, could prevent my worries from controlling me.

Once I started sixth form, I was determined to become a new person. I felt freedom like never before when I left secondary school and finally met people who didn't know the shy, scared me from before. My change in attitude, and determination to challenge myself and overcome elements of my anxiety allowed me to become the person I knew I should have been all those years before. I was far from perfect — my anxiety affected me every day, but I became more able to deal with it, precisely because I put myself in situations that proved my fears wrong. I had to unlearn my rigid superstitions.

But I had not yet learned to be kind to myself. Intent on getting into Cambridge,

I worked myself so hard and stressed and worried whenever I wasn't revising. The feeling of not being in control constantly triggered my anxiety. I punished myself with guilt, then punished myself some more by fretting and not spending time with family and friends. Once I got my place at Cambridge, I realised that once again, things had to change. I had improved, but I had a long way to go.

At university, regardless of whether you have anxiety, it is always good to be reminded to look for comfort in friends and in turn offer them your shoulder. Being open is hugely helpful in such an intense environment. I decided to talk about my anxiety with my new friends at university; I was living with them after all, so they'd have to be prepared in case I had a panic attack.

I was amazed at how therapeutic it felt to tell someone about an issue I had always kept quiet about. Our conversations about both my mental health and mental health as a whole were a source of great help. Being open made me feel more genuine. I felt like if I was having a moment of particularly bad anxiety,

“Being open made me feel more genuine”

I could just say so and not feel alone. I was never judged, and never felt the need to pretend that everything was always okay. I could be myself. For those of you with anxious friends, I advise you to talk to them about it, asking them how you can help and what you can do when they are distressed. This can really help to make them feel safer.

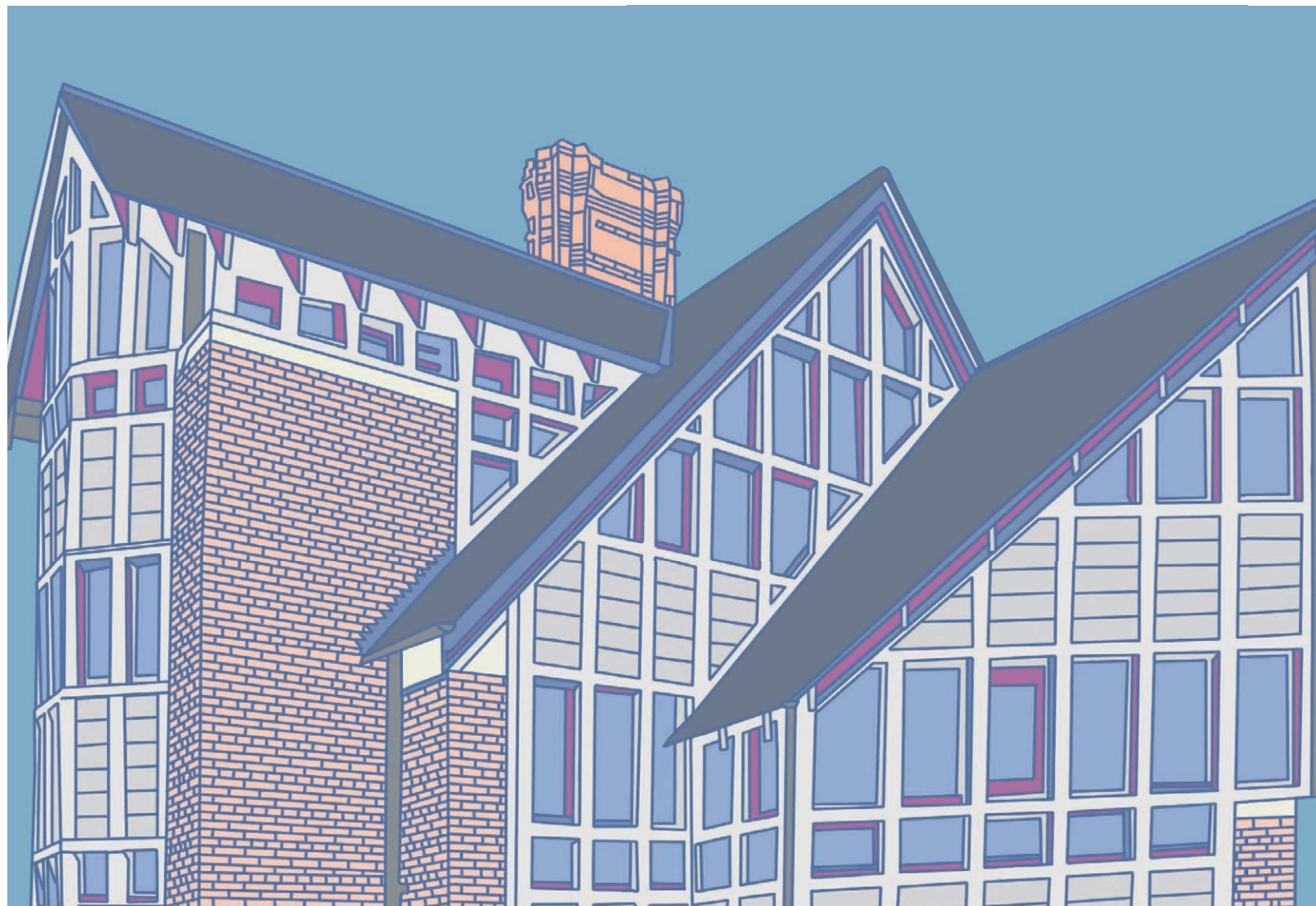
Self-compassion is vital. Essentially, do unto yourself as you would do unto others. We are easily compassionate towards our friends, but we deserve kindness from ourselves too.

For worriers like myself, it is vital to keep in mind that one day the desire to do the thing you want to do will be stronger than the worry about doing it, and that anxiety can be overcome. In this academically brutal environment, it is important that we forgive and accept ourselves.

In this way, we can deal with whatever life throws at us. We should talk about our experiences, be aware that we all face personal challenges, and create a network of compassion so that no one falls through the cracks.



# Opinion



## Trinity Hall's decision reminds me why I never reported my assault

Anonymous student

*Content Note: This article contains detailed discussion of rape and recovery from rape, and detailed discussion of sexual harassment.*

I'm not sure whether the senior figures gave much thought to how their decision to readmit Peter Hutchinson, made last week, would affect students like me: those who have been abused or harassed by fellows at this university. They were probably too busy stuck between the thought of a media firestorm and of an alleged threatened lawsuit to give it much consideration. In the flurry of all that, we may have slipped quietly, uncomfortably by. I can't say I'd be surprised.

In my first year at Cambridge, I was raped by a university academic. Now, seeing Trinity Hall's actions, I am reminded why I never reported the crime.

I have spent years being angry at myself for not reporting what happened to me, but now I am angry with this institution. I am angry with the culture which gives a slap on the wrist to harassers and abusers. I am angry with the 'behind closed doors' protection of those in power. Angry to hear that, time after time,

people are retraumatised, ostracised and mishandled whenever they attempt to report something like this. Angry to hear that it has happened again.

Reporting, to me, had never seemed like a viable option. Although I had experienced sexual trauma before, the fear and shame that overwhelmed me following this incident was completely new.

I went into a state of immediate denial, taking months to tell even my closest friends the full extent of what had happened. When I needed a coursework extension that term, after being unable to focus on my studies, I sat in front of my Director of Studies — a brilliant, kind and supportive woman, who I have no doubt would have supported me should I have chosen to report — and I lied.

I played down what had happened, never daring to mention that it was a university fellow out of fear that she would, through the best intentions, make me report it. My days were spent living in constant fear that it would somehow get out to somebody and I would be put on trial in front of the University. My mind created images of a humiliating interrogation and a public character assassination

▲ Illustration by Kate Towsey for Varsity

“The chances of gaining justice now seem so infinitely small that I'm beginning to doubt if they even exist at all”

by tall old men sat behind a table somewhere in Senate House.

Although this paranoia was exaggerated by my mental state at the time, the root of it wasn't unfounded. It was born out of countless stories I had heard of students attempting to come forward — some close friends, some strangers. Stories of cases being mishandled, individuals who gave testimonies being treated with mistrust and suspicion, colleges begrudgingly taking on cases only to fill them with errors and delays.

Stories just like that of Peter Hutchinson.

Although I am ashamed to admit it, the thought of reporting my rapist and going through that lengthy and re-traumatising process had become even more horrifying than the thought of him being able to continue in his position at this university. So, I stayed silent.

The last thing I want to do is to discourage anybody who has gone through what I have from reporting. There are wonderful systems in place to help you — the Sexual Assault and Harassment Adviser is brilliant, and you even have an option to report incidents anonymously so they can

be added to university data, should you feel unable to come forward and file a formal complaint. I am writing this article in the hope that, by raising awareness of the hostile environment this university has created for people who have faced assault, this hostility can change, a safer space can be created, and people can feel more comfortable in reporting.

The issue for me remains that these wonderful, above-board support networks, the anti-harassment posters hung up around faculties and colleges, seem to be up against something else: the quiet, unspoken, and grumbling presence of college and university higher powers. The men behind closed doors. Those who invited my rapist to exclusive dinners, lauded him as an upstanding member of college life, who laughed along with his small comments about women's bodies and never stopped to consider if there could be something sinister behind them.

Whether they were aware of it or not, they offered him a protective shield, a clear message that he was favoured, that reporting his actions would be an uphill battle that I simply did not have the strength to face.

Even though he didn't hold direct control over me, the indirect control was still enough to be crushing. If I did have a more immediate relationship with him, had to see him around college or even be supervised by him, I don't think I would have been able to continue with my studies at this university.

Seeing Hutchinson's readmittance was a stark realisation for me that, even if I jumped through all the hoops, even if other people came forward and they all jumped through those same hoops, even if we eventually *won* — a feat that seemed so insurmountable I'd barely even considered it an option — in a year or two it could come to mean nothing.

He could quietly slip back in through a back door opened up by colleagues in the hopes nobody would notice. The chances of gaining justice now seem so infinitely small that I'm beginning to doubt if they even exist at all.

Trinity Hall's decision does not exist in a vacuum. This isn't as simple as an abstract ethical debate on Cambridge's policies and practices, but rather is a decision which has immediate effects on the lives of students who have had to endure similar behaviour at the hands of staff members like Hutchinson.

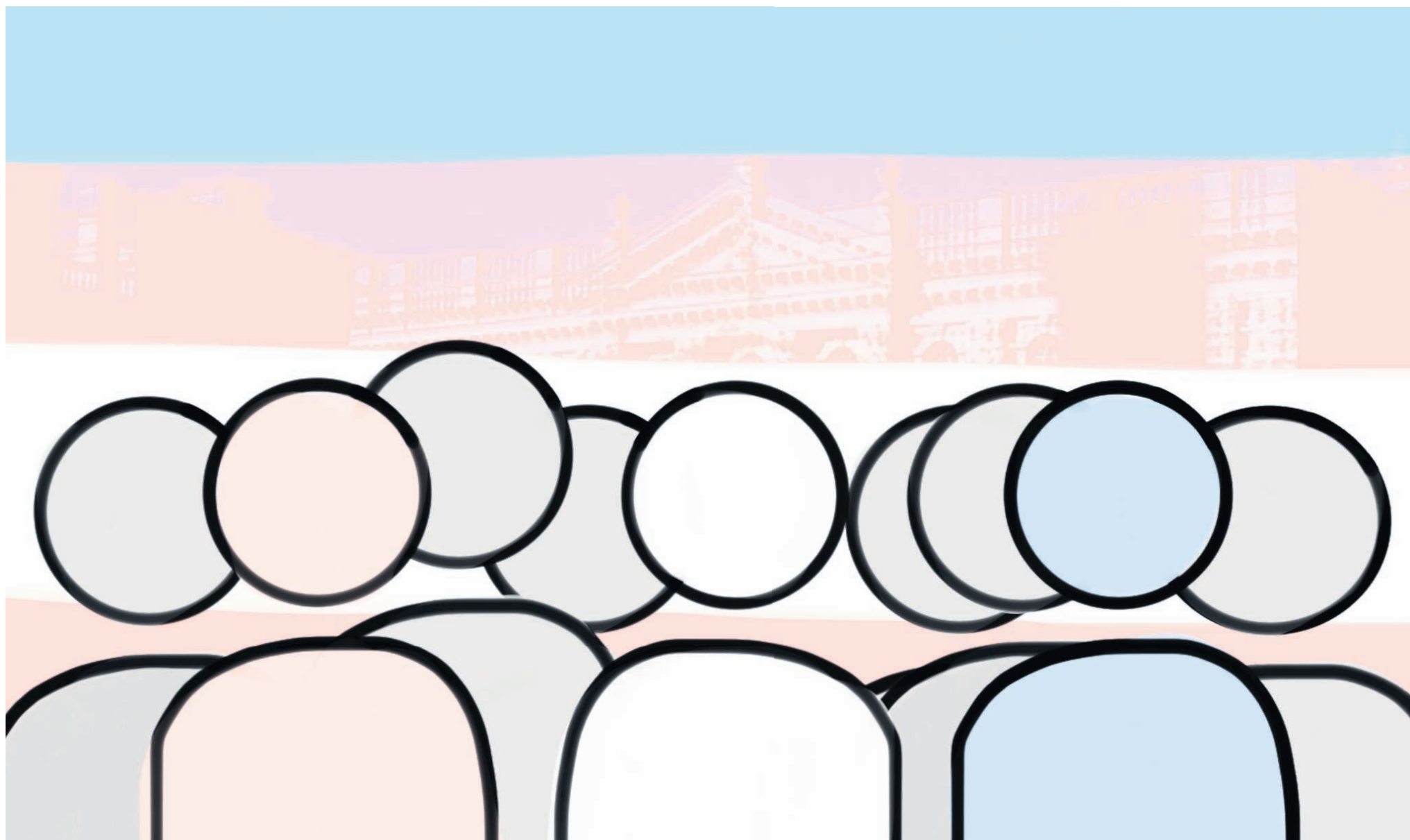
Make no mistake: it was continuous acts made by this university that made me feel as though reporting was never an option, and which allowed my rapist to continue to this very day to be in a position of power at this University, a position he can continue to exploit.

If you are affected by any of the issues raised in this article, the following organisations provide support and resources:

Sexual Assault and Harassment Adviser: specialist University support worker who provides emotional and practical support; Cambridge for Consent; Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre: a charity for female victims of sexual violence; Cambridge Nightline: a confidential night-time listening service; Students' Unions' Advice Service: the University's confidential, independent and impartial advice service.



## Opinion



# For its trans students to feel at home, Cambridge needs to do better

Frankie Kendal implores the University to focus their efforts to make trans students feel comfortable and welcome in every aspect of their experience

Frankie Kendal

**Content Note:** This article contains discussion of transphobia and misgendering, and gender dysphoria

Everyone at Cambridge, and university in general, will understand the overwhelming, exhilarating, anxiety-inducing time of being a Fresher.

For all of the difficulty in starting, the University makes it clear how supported we are, how they understand our qualms, and have our best interests at heart. But for trans freshers, and for trans students across all years, this support is not heard quite as loudly.

Cambridge is, for an institution steeped in tradition, generally progressive and seeking to improve. However, despite trans people having always been members of society, it is only in the past few years that trans inclusion has become a priority within the University. For example, the first policy permitting the admission of trans women to a women's college, Murray Edwards, only came into being in 2017.

When the idea of studying at Cambridge became a reality, I was certainly anxious as to how inclusive my new home would be. I purposefully applied to a college with an LGBT+ society and spent hours poring over the resources available to trans students. The CUSU LGBT+ Campaign has two trans officers, along with a whole campaign dedicated to improving trans inclusivity

across campus. Eventually my fears became excitement for the new prospects that university would hold.

But there was a threat to this excitement before I even walked through the gates of my college. Cambridge's use of the CRSid system as student identification is created prior to the arrival of students. Consequently, they are made with the legal names of students rather than those which are preferred. Setting up my CRSid was, although tedious, a symbolic experience that I had achieved something in which to be truly proud of, and yet this was undermined by the realisation that the initials of my previous name had been used. When I emailed my Senior Tutor to correct the mistake, expecting that the issue would be resolved, I was told that such a change was impossible and that "it won't be an issue". A statement that was intended to comfort my uneasiness in reality shed light on how far Cambridge still has to go in recognising and responding to trans issues.

Incorrect CRSids create a personal stress by forcing students to use an old name, that many trans people have an uncomfortable relationship with, on a daily basis. More so, fellow students will often inquire, out of curiosity, about the incompatibility of one's name and their CRSid, leading to trans students having to engage in conversations regarding their birth name, a topic that many find

distressing.

Even if the impossibility of changing CRSids is genuine, and not just a hassle, the University can rectify this through asking students the initials they would prefer prior to their ID's manifestation – with the incessant amount of forms and questions that are already sent out, it feels that this would barely make a difference for Cambridge, but a large difference for the student body.

Ironically it was the student reaction I was more worried about prior to my arrival. Yet as our generation waves an increasingly progressive flag, students have been often more supportive than I would have expected. For trans freshers, introductions are challenging: you are asking to be viewed and perceived as someone who you may not yet look like. But asking pronouns is becoming a more common occurrence – my favourite thus far has been in the middle of the Cindies dancefloor, proving that having a good time and being trans-inclusive are not mutually exclusive.

As someone who is trans masculine, I am speaking from a place of privilege, and the discrimination against trans women cannot be overlooked. That being said, although unawareness is still prevalent, in my experience, prejudice is less so.

Unfortunately, this inclusivity seems to remain within the realm of students. Such practices have not been adopted by many members of staff, and in fail-

▲ Illustration by  
Lois Wright for  
Varsity

ing to ask for pronouns, supervisors, Directors of Studies and Tutors are failing their students. When walking into your first supervision, the only worry on your mind is academic. Therefore, to have a supervisor misgender you in a space that should be for academic and creative freedom, that room suddenly becomes riddled with dysphoria.

The inability of Cambridge to properly train their staff on how to respect and include trans students, despite being a member of Stonewall's Diversity Champions Programme, is damaging, especially for a University with supposedly the highest proportion of LGBT+ students in the UK.

With an active LGBT+ Campaign and access to trans-inclusive research and policies being widely available, all staff in Cambridge have no excuse not to include trans students and be educated on our needs.

As an institution that is highly regarded across the globe, Cambridge should be ensuring that trans inclusion is taken into consideration in every aspect of University life.

That is not to say that Cambridge has forgotten about trans people. Instead, it is a recognition of the fact that – if the University is to be a place where trans students can feel at home and where they are supported just as much as everyone else – there is still work to be done.

“  
In failing to ask for pronouns, supervisors, Directors of Studies and Tutors are failing their students  
”



# As a working class student, I'm not a class traitor but I do feel a sense of class guilt

*It is a sense of guilt, rather than of betrayal, that can afflict working class students at Cambridge*

Daniel Davidson

I am Daniel. I am a gay man from a former mining town in West Lancashire. I went to various state schools on free-school meals, had the opportunity to go to a grammar school but declined due to family issues – others may have declined due to social pressure.

My parents have been in and out of employment, my father being relatively successful despite falling through the British education system at 15, and my mother struggling with the burden of raising two young boys whilst inconsistently holding various administrative jobs. They split up when I was a child. If a “lower/working” class exists, I believe I fit the bill.

In 2017, I matriculated at Cambridge, a university marketed as a bastion of upwards social mobility. I was the beneficiary of what was termed an “open offer”, the only one in my year and, according to available admissions statistics, the only one in the Economics Tripos for at least the past five years.

This open offer took into consideration my low-income background, a progressive step for a university that prides itself on its traditional interview-based application system.

I believe this was a preliminary move

towards the new 100 conditional places offered to low-income students. But why am I the one to receive this treatment, and not those before me?

Impostor syndrome is experienced for a multitude of reasons. Indeed, self-identity is a complicated issue without the added bizarreness of Cambridge.

The biggest change was how I perceived my friends’ and family’s image of who I was.

The way I was seen, talked to or talked about had changed: the overly proud mother who defines her success by my existence; the younger brother implicitly pressured in his life by the benchmark I have set; or my friends who remained in our hometown believing I had abandoned my home.

I spend barely a quarter of the year at home now. Does this make me a class traitor?

From the off-hand jokes from friends about me spending more time in expensive coffee shops than in libraries, to terms like ‘posh boy’ that have followed me all the way through high school, there is a view that my choice to attend Cambridge is an abandonment of my roots.

Even up to the subtleties of my lack of regional accent, lost way before I ever

arrived here, despite being the grandson of a Huyton gal.

As I approach my final year, I’m beginning to wonder whether I *have* abandoned other working class people.

Did spending £160 on a May Ball ticket make me middle class? What working class kid puts on a gown and prances around in black tie?

In a country where families make the impossible decisions of whether to pay rent or feed their children every month, £160 would be over two weeks food for my family. Does writing an opinion column and moaning about class make me pretentious?

I find the term ‘class traitor’ difficult to assign to myself. I didn’t intend to abandon my roots. Instead, I feel class guilt.

It’s guilt that I am benefiting from opportunities my own family couldn’t conceive of – a guilt that the money I’m given via the bursary, scholarships and accommodation rebates is all reliant on my low-income background, while my friends elsewhere must balance loans and even my slightly more affluent friends in Cambridge feel the squeeze.

I feel class guilt when I walk home to my gated community after a corporate networking event, passing multiple

“There is no obligation to pigeon-hole ourselves into certain societal roles”

people sleeping on the streets.

I feel class guilt as a Cambridge student, being told I’m going to ‘save the world’, but doing little to address the inequality on my doorstep.

I feel class guilt in the job applications I fill out, where the starting wage is more than the combined wages of my family. This guilt comes to fruition in the access work and consistent promotion of Cambridge back home.

The resources provided to me and the opportunities taken by me, would not filter back into my community if I didn’t take them.

It’s better to grab each and every opportunity than allow an unjust system to self-perpetuate. There is no shame in social mobility, and it is after all a sign of a dynamic, open and meritocratic society.

There is no obligation to pigeon-hole ourselves into certain societal roles to meet ever-changing expectations. Personal success can only be judged by you and you alone. But that doesn’t stop this guilt.

However, I have nothing to prove. I have nothing to apologise for. With my place in Cambridge, I intend to do and experience amazing things – but I refuse to forget my roots.

# For less privileged students, the UK education system is rigged against language learning

*Language education in the UK is inadequate and caters especially poorly for those from a less privileged background*

Elizabeth Haigh

No one can dispute that the UK has a shocking record when it comes to learning languages. Yet in a time where political uncertainty is making the study of foreign languages even more important, the rates of pupils taking them is plummeting, with the number of pupils sitting GCSE French dropping by 63% and German by 67% since 2000.

Many students see languages as a hard subject, and low demand combined with the underfunding of schools is leading to many dropping classes in some languages all together.

But it is not as simple as a subject popularity contest. The reality is that for less privileged students, the system is rigged against them, offering no real encouragement or opportunities to use foreign language skills.

During my first year at Cambridge, I, like many other students, was plagued by a constant sense of imposter syndrome.

Having taken French A-Level, I decided to study languages at university in part out of defiance.

Coming from a low-income household, almost all my holidays had been in the UK and I did not know anyone, apart from my teachers at school, who could speak more than one language: English.

Arriving at university, I was eager to start ab initio German, having never even visited a German-speaking coun-

“Who is encouraging those who do not have these opportunities?”

try when I applied.

But I soon began to struggle upon realising that many of those around me were not only much more fluent than me (many having learnt languages from a much younger age), but they had been able to spend extended holidays, or even lived, abroad. This was extremely intimidating, both from a language skills point of view and a cultural one.

In speaking to other students from less privileged backgrounds, I know that I was not alone in this feeling. And even having arrived at Cambridge, opportunities to help our language skills are still often limited for poorer students, with support varying widely from college to college.

In no way do I wish to blame people for taking full advantage of the ability to travel abroad.

Inspiring a love of languages in your children is something all parents should seek to do, and what better way than to show them the amazing experiences other countries have to offer? But in the UK, sadly, learning languages comes with a price tag.

Of course, anyone can pick up a book and learn the basics, but we are behind much of the world in the way we teach our young people.

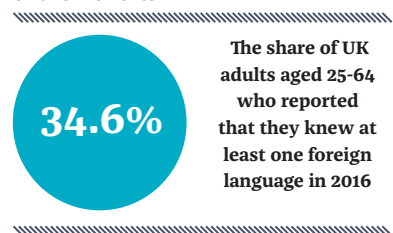
It is easy to understand why languages are seen as difficult. Many students stumble into their first language class aged 11, while we have been learning Maths, English and Science since

we were 4.

Language learning is completely different to any other kind of learning, taking lots of time and effort, with no real end; you can never complete a language in the same way as you can finish reading a book. The fact that language learning first appears so late in the UK curriculum is a travesty.

Students suddenly have to find a whole new approach to studying, at a time when GCSE and A-Level pressure is already looming.

In addition, for poorer students who do not have have the opportunity to travel or go on expensive school trips, it can seem like a pointless exercise for which they will never see the results of their efforts.



According to the European Commission, in 2016 over 80% of working-age EU adults with a tertiary education reported knowing at least one foreign language. In the UK, only 34.6% of adults aged 25-64 reported that they knew more than one foreign language.

The simple truth is that we are stuck in a cycle of monolingualism, where people do not question why foreign

languages are necessary, and therefore do not encourage others to learn them. We should be inspiring everyone, but in particular young people, to study languages.

We should be teaching basic skills at a much younger age, as is done in many countries around the world, rather than offering students just 2 or 3 years of classes before allowing them to opt out.

Almost everyone I have met during my year abroad so far has been able to speak at least some English, plus other languages besides.

But I find myself imagining if they were to come and visit where I live, a small town in rural Shropshire. If they spoke no English, how many adults would be able to help them? How many would even know what language they were speaking? I can assure you that the answer is barely any.

If students have the chances and opportunities to learn languages through trips abroad, private instruction, even private education, they should be encouraged. But who is encouraging those who do not have these opportunities?

My family often joke that they have no idea where I get my language skills from. But this is precisely the problem. We as a country need to change how we view languages and offer everyone equal access to opportunities. Until we do this, languages are in danger of becoming a subject for the elite.



# Science

## Think Vegware's the solution to our plastic crisis? Think again.

**Verner Viisainen** argues for more careful consideration of 'compostable' replacements

In today's world, the desire to move away from conventional plastic packaging that is clearly harming our oceans and marine life has been accelerating. Nevertheless, instead of addressing the single-use waste culture at the root of this global problem, businesses have just swapped plastic packaging for seemingly better 'compostable' alternatives, in a like-for-like substitution. These new alternatives, from companies like Vegware, appear very similar to their conventional plastic cousins, but crucially come with green labels saying that they are '100% compostable'. This allows consumers to feel good about their 'environmentally friendly' purchase, and continue to behave as they always have done since the now ubiquitous throwaway lifestyle was introduced through the aggressive marketing campaigns of the 1950s.

Many of these compostable food and drink containers, are typically made with polylactic acid (PLA), a plastic like material that is derived from plant-based sources, and have quickly been introduced throughout cafés, restaurants and cafeterias throughout the UK, especially so in Cambridge, where they are seen extensively throughout the city and across the University. They require less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to produce, when compared to plastics, and are made from renewable plant sources. The use of this word 'compostable' suggests to the user that they naturally breakdown in any organic environment including a home compost, much like an apple core that is chucked into the soil.

However, in reality this is not the case. The fine print on the products themselves, which few bother to read, says they are certified for 'commercial composting'. This actually means that PLA-based products are certified to only breakdown under very specific industrial composting processes (in vessel composting or anaerobic digestion), requiring specialised conditions and a lengthy timescale (up to 12 weeks) to break down completely under these conditions. If you were to dispose of your PLA cup like your apple core, you would find that much like a conventional plastic cup, it would remain in its current form for a very long time, causing the same environmental problems as the plastics that it is trying to replace. In fact, a controlled study found that over a course of one year in ambient sea water conditions, PLA did not degrade at all,



suggesting a very slow degradation rate under regular conditions.

You might think it is not a big problem because the Vegware you use is sent away to be industrially composted through the food waste stream, right? Wrong! The biggest problem is that across the UK, waste facilities that are adequately able to process PLA compostable plastics are woefully lacking (currently only available in 38% of the UK) and this means that in most councils across Britain, the Vegware you thought was being processed into compost and used to enrich the soils in which your food is grown, is actually sent straight to the landfill along other 'general waste,' as recommended by Vegware.

The complexity of the situation becomes even more apparent in Cambridge, where the City Council, who handles a majority of the waste collection across the city, sends its collected waste to Amey's Waste Management Park in Waterbeach. What I learnt is that this facility is unable to process Vegware because its vessel composting process is too fast for Vegware to breakdown. However, their capabilities for recycling plastics are some of the best in the country, meaning almost all plastic products can be recycled in Cambridge, including those products where it currently states "Not currently recycled," (as this refers to the national average). What this means is that at the current moment, almost all the products that were replaced with Vegware across Cambridge could have

▲ Sidgwick Site cafés serve coffee in vegware cups. But is that the most sustainable way?

(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

“If you disposed of your vegware cup like you would an apple core, it would remain in its current form for a very long time”

been recycled successfully, but the new replacement products end up directly in the landfill. These concerns about the current viability of compostable packaging have been shared in a recent report by the UK's Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee's report in which they conclude that "Although industrially compostable plastic packaging is appealing as an alternative to conventional plastics, the general waste management infrastructure to manage it is not yet fit for purpose."

The reactions I've received upon sharing this information ranged from utter shock to a sense of being cheated. This echoed concerns in EFRA's report, which stated that "we are concerned that consumers are confused about how to dispose of compostable packaging, particularly if there is no dedicated compostable waste bin available. This could result in contamination of dry recycling as well as littering." The most shocking part of this is that Vegware, one of the main companies behind these products, are clearly aware of this lack of infrastructure across the country given that they have set up their Vegware collections close to their UK offices in Bristol and Edinburgh but they do not push to communicate this clearly to their customers or end-users, who are left with entirely the wrong impression about these products. Of course, there is a financial incentive for them to not disclose this publicly as it hurts their bottom line, but given the environmental

“The solution to out-of-control plastic use is not compostable alternatives”

credentials that the company was seemingly founded upon, it seems downright hypocritical for them not to make a bigger effort to inform their customers about their products and not fix all solution to our plastic problem.

Compostable packaging has potential in certain specific situations where food contamination cannot be avoided and thus recycling or reuse is not possible, such as for tea bags, sandwich boxes, food prep gloves, drink cups, among others. Due to the widespread use of Vegware in Cambridge, it would thus be feasible to implement a functioning closed loop disposal and collection into cafeteria kitchens, from which they can be taken to a dedicated industrial composting facility. An initiative is currently being developed through the Cambridge Food Hub to arrange for bespoke compostable packaging waste collection across colleges and businesses in Cambridge that can then be delivered all at once to Envar for processing.

So what does this mean for your May Ball preparations, for which I had initially thought that serving all drinks in Vegware cups instead of single-use plastic cups would provide the most environmentally friendly option. Due to the lack of processing opportunities available to us in Cambridge, for a one-off event and the extensive plastic recycling facilities available through the council, we instead decided to continue with single-use plastic cups and focus on ensuring that these are correctly recycled through the implementation of novel waste sorting stations at the event. This allowed cups to be emptied and sorted by staff as the event went on, thus minimising any contamination and ensuring that diversion from the landfill is maximised. Through this approach, we were able to achieve an overall recycling rate of 70%, which is significantly higher than national averages for such events. The alternative with using Vegware would have meant all these recycled cups would have ended up directly in the landfill, even if the guests might have viewed that as the more sustainable option.

The solution to the out of control use of plastics across the food industry is not the direct replacement with compostable alternatives, as these pose the same exact damaging risks to our environment as conventional plastic if they are not correctly processed. The best way for this would be to have this information clearly expressed on the packaging itself, at the point of use, where it is currently largely lacking. However, as concluded by the EFRA report, the solution, in most situations, to our plastic crisis is simply reducing the amount of waste generated, and this requires a fundamental shift away from single-use products and towards reusable products.



# AI in medicine: who watches the algorithms?

**George Milner** considers the troubling sides of machine learning in clinical practice

Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to transform medical practice on an unprecedented scale. As with any new technology set to be used in the practice of medicine, this requires some cautionary notes, without detracting from the enormous potential of the effective, fair and safe usage of AI-powered technologies in healthcare.

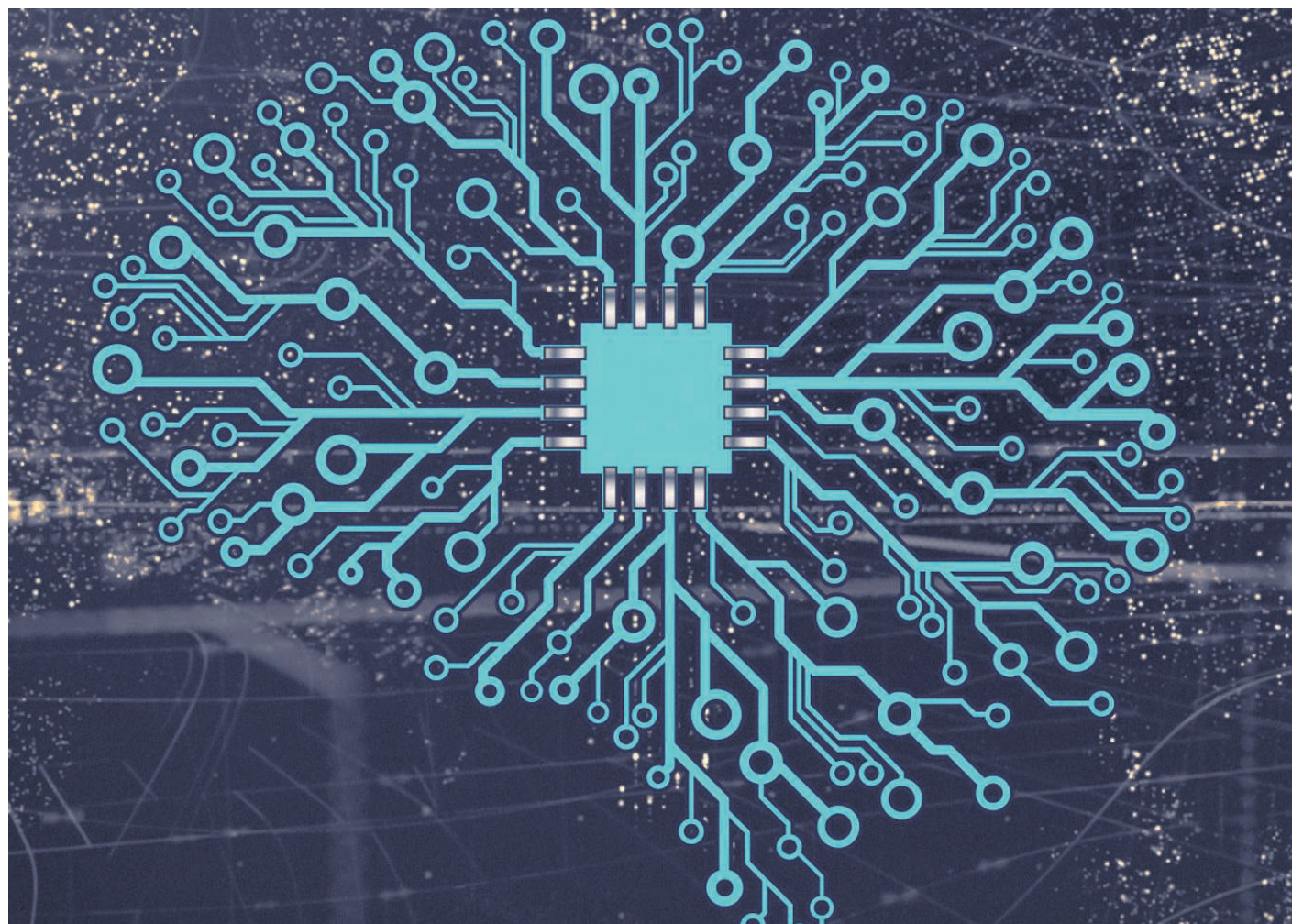
While a strength of AI is its ability to analyse vast amounts of data and integrate it for decision making, this is also the root of a potential weakness. The concept of “garbage in, garbage out” applies here. Machine learning algorithms are only as good as the data which they are built on. Biased data sets, or those formed in the context of out-dated practices, risk perpetuating such approaches. Any incorrect or inconsistent labelling within these data sets, for example a mis-categorised X-ray of a patient with lung cancer, will hamper the accuracy of AI and carries the risk of being replicated.

Furthermore, racial or gender *under-representation* in original data sets, for example, may lead to AI performing poorly for certain patient groups. A 2014 study into racial disparities in cancer mortality in the US concluded that lack of diversity in study group participants played a significant role in poorer cancer outcomes for African Americans. Concerns have also been raised regarding disparities in accuracy of identification of melanomas, a form of skin cancer, between individuals of different skin colours. Underrepresentation can be a result of systematic exclusion from trials and sampling, but also due to patterns in who consents for their data to be used. In addition to leaving such groups out of the benefits of AI, algorithms have the potential to actively harm patients for who are not represented in their development.

Even accurate software risks losing that accuracy when applied inappropriately out of the context in which it was developed. Such ‘out-of-sample’ inputs risk going undetected by clinicians and generating harmful actions. This therefore requires clear guidance on which clinical cases a particular algorithm should be applied to. Similar issues can also apply when the statistical properties of a disease changes over time and no longer reflects the data that AI algorithms were trained on. It can also be revealed when new data is introduced in real time to bolster an algorithm’s performance, a process called adaptive learning, but that data is contextually different or has new associations. Thus it is important that the performance of AI is independently scrutinised over time

► The use of AI in medicine will disadvantage some patients and advantage others  
(MIKE MACKENZIE/FLICKR)

“AI requires clear guidance on which clinical cases a particular algorithm should be applied to”



to validate claims of efficacy. It may be difficult to differentiate between useful clinical tools and woefully inaccurate ones.

Exacerbating these shortcomings is *automation bias*. Decision support systems for healthcare professionals can lead to complacency in the face of incorrect advice, that may not have been followed in the absence of AI support. The hazards of handing over complete control to software without sufficient human oversight are exemplified in deadly crashes involving Boeing’s 737 Max planes in which their automated stabilisation systems were heavily implicated.

AI can also lack transparency. While the inputs into an AI algorithm might be clear, along with the nature of its final output, how it arrived at its answer is not necessarily as well-defined. This feature, known as *black box AI*, can obstruct the identification of flaws such as biases in automated decision-making processes. A famous warning to this effect is given in a story of American researchers developing tank detection software. Supposedly, it transpired that all of the photos with tanks in them were taken on a sunny day, in contrast to the cloudy conditions in the group without tanks. The software had simply learnt to accurately distinguish photos based on the weather. This is a nice illustration of how a lack of accountability of how irrelevant, but predictive, correlations in training sets can

“Decision support systems for healthcare professionals can lead to complacency in the face of incorrect advice”

misinform the behaviour of algorithms in real life. In the same way, if the data was collected from a control group at a different time of day to a group with a condition an algorithm could learn to distinguish between them based on this and irrelevant data. Nevertheless, much like clinicians, some algorithms are able to identify which aspects of input data they ascribe weight to in reaching their conclusions.

Unlike clinicians, however, many machine learning systems provide no indication of the level of *confidence* in their answer, nor are they always trained to balance the consequences of success and failure. A human clinician with a cautious approach to identifying treatable tumours may underperform in overall accuracy, yet outperform AI in patient outcome by reducing the number of crucial cases missed. For AI to optimise decision-making it must be aware of which outcomes it should prioritise. Putting all decisions in the hands of AI could ignore human considerations by prioritising crude survival rates over quality of life, given the available data and programmed goals.

Another issue comes when medical practice guidelines are altered. This is a relatively frequent occurrence as best practice is updated continually as more information becomes available. While rules-based clinical decision making can be updated fairly swiftly, updating vast AI data sets is far more difficult and ex-

pensive. Creating and updating data sets also brings concerns surrounding data privacy too. For example, it was ruled in 2017 that the Royal London Free Hospital breached such data privacy laws in sharing 1.6m patients’ data with DeepMind, a UK AI start-up acquired by Google in 2014, as part of their work with Google Health UK. The more data is anonymised by slimming it down, however, the less useful it is for research. Even anonymised patient data can in theory be cross referenced to allow identification. Security concerns exist too beyond safeguarding sensitive data as AI software must be protected from hacking and manipulation.

Ultimately, an unsavoury fact is that the use of AI in medicine will disadvantage some patients and advantage others. As is also the case with allocating healthcare funding, it is necessary to weigh up the potential for harm with the potential for good in each context in which AI is applied.

All medical practice should be continually critiqued and refined, and the use of AI in healthcare is no exception. An EU commission report lists seven requirements that AI should meet including transparency, technical robustness and safety, and human agency and oversight.

Nevertheless, AI doesn’t have to be perfect to be used in medicine. An unrealistically high bar for safety risks denying vast numbers of people the many potential health benefits.



## Science

# What's the nanotech revolution?

**Charlotte Zemmel** finds out what Girton fellow Dr. Colm Durkan's latest book is all about

**N**anotechnology is in every part of our lives. From particulates in sun cream to UV radiation, to transistors the size of a few atoms that make up your phone, laptop and Google's new quantum computer, nanoparticles are a big deal. But what is nanotechnology all about?

Dr. Colm Durkan's new book is here to explain. Not only is it a comprehensive history of the development of nanotechnology (starting at 4 BCE), but also a beginner's guide to quantum mechanics and atomic theory. He aims to "separate the hype from the non-science" while detailing humanity's 'nanotech' revolution. He wants his readers, from all ages and levels of expertise, to realise that 'this is a way of thinking', and there is "creativity going into nanoscience".

When talking about nanotechnology, there really is no one better to listen to than Durkan. A fellow of Girton College, Durkan heads the scanning probe microscopy and nanoelectronics group at the Engineering department's nanoscience centre. I was lucky enough this week to hear him at his Waterstones' book

“Packed full of tiny things that could change the world”

launch in conversation with Luke Robert Mason, the director of "Virtual Futures". The conversation that followed ranged from the possibility of 'labs on a chip' to the impossibility of tiny self replicating deadly nanobots, and the puzzle that quantum theory remains to be.

Nanoscience encapsulates any discipline that deals with length scales of up to 100 nm. A nanometer is a *billionth* of a meter, and the atomic spacing in any material ranges on the order of 3-5 nm. Durkan explains that on this range, materials can be altered according to their quantum properties. The physical macro properties are a manifestation of their quantum properties and so the advantage of working at this level is that all physical attributes of a material can be made-to-order by nanoscale manipulation. Strength, colour, hardness, reactivity, malleability and conductivity are all adjustable variables on this scale, making the possibility of new material development endless. As Dr. Durkan put it, "at the nanoscale, we can just do more".

Mason kicked things off by asking Durkan what got him so interested in nanotech. While studying physics at Trinity College Dublin, Durkan came across the iconic photo of the IBM logo written out in individual atoms. He was fascinated by the endless possibilities in technology brought about by manipulating materi-

“At the nanoscale, we can just do more”

als on the atomic scale. One great example of the supermaterials created as a result of nanomanipulation is graphene, the carbon allotrope that is the world's strongest and most conductive material. The applications of graphene include lightweight strength coating on aircraft, or heat sinks in electronics. Andre Geim and Konstantin Novoselov won the 2010 Nobel Prize in physics for the discovery of graphene, bringing nanoscience to the focus of cutting edge research.

Durkan is deeply fascinated by nanoscience's potential for revolutionising medical diagnosis and treatment. He discussed chemotherapy created out of protein nanoparticles that bind to cancer cells and destroys them one at a time. Such treatments are under clinical testing as we speak.

The idea of a 'lab on a chip' also took up much of the discussion between the two science enthusiasts. When asked by Mason to explain how this would work, Durkan describes an incredibly simple device that could run 30 different blood tests simultaneously and instantly. A small chip with grooves can be constructed to fit into a handheld device operated by the doctor. A blood sample coats the grooves which each have a different nanosensor embedded inside, and the results can be printed on the device within moments. No more

extraction of vials of blood that have to be sent off while the patient has to wait for weeks to send out their results. It is breakthroughs like this that make Durkan exclaim that "nanotechnology is underpinning science".

Durkan's hope is that this book will counteract the notion that the average person cannot access high level science. He wants to bridge the gap between superficial knowledge and a detailed understanding of nanophysics. Too often the media fail to give people the potential to understand, by "treating people like idiots". In an age of increasing technological innovation where some unqualified practitioners can feel isolated from the advancing world around them, it is refreshing to know that top researchers are conscientious about those they may be leaving behind. Durkan and Mason's commitment to science communication and education is a much needed contribution to today's scientific community.

Durkan is passionate about getting as many people as possible excited about the endless possibilities in nanotechnology, making his new book engaging and packed full of tiny things that could change the world. It will be a welcome contribution to an aspiring engineer's popular science collection, or indeed an insightful documentation of this growing field for the experienced physicist.

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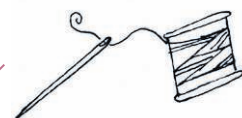
Illustration by  
Chloe Marschner

# Vulture

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# Fashion



## How powerful is protest dressing, really?

**Francesca Cosslett** discusses the progress of protest dressing, and whether it has lost its power in an age dominated by popular and commercialised activism



*Content Note: This article contains brief mentions of sexual assault and the holocaust*

“Make the words so big, you can’t not see them from a distance. Then when you read them, you’ve had it. The words are inside your brain, and you’ve got no defences.”

In 1984, Katharine Hamnett met then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher at Downing Street wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the words: “58% don’t want pershing”. The figure was taken from a Europe-wide poll on the proliferation of American cruise and nuclear missiles, which had sprung up across the continent with no consultation of the electorate. The now iconic protest wasn’t planned, but was in fact a spur-of-the-moment decision. Until earlier that afternoon, Hamnett hadn’t even been planning to attend the meeting at all.

Famously anti-war, pro-environment and

pro-gay rights – not to mention anti-nuclear weapons – she told *Vogue* she “couldn’t stand Thatcher”.

At the last moment, she changed her mind, stitched the words onto a t-shirt, and made history.

*At the last moment, she stitched the words onto a t-shirt and made history*

Over 20 years later, Hamnett is still making provocative slogan tees, and has inspired countless other designers to do the same. The line of “Cancel Brexit” T-shirts she brought

out in 2017 are still sold out on her website, as is the line calling for a “Second referendum now”. Following in her footsteps, Maria Grazia Chiuri’s debut collection as Dior’s first female creative director featured a T-shirt reading “We should all be feminists”, a reference to the TEDx talk and book of the same name by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

Prabal Gurung was next, with “The future is female” and “This is what a feminist looks like”, and during the 2017 Panorama Music Festival, Frank Ocean asked “Why be racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic when

*Dressing in solidarity means little without action, legislation or change*

[you] could just be quiet?”

Wear a T-shirt like that, and the world knows what you believe. But whatever you wear, the world knows who you are. Words aren’t always necessary – colours and symbols are charged with meaning.

Wear white, like the women of the US Democratic Party during Trump’s State of the Union earlier this year, and you harness the weight of the history of the Suffragettes. Still today, the colour remains a sign of female power and protest. All black or a white rose marks you as a part of the Time’s Up movement, standing in solidarity with survivors of sexual harassment and assault.

The pink triangle, a symbol sewn onto the shirts of gay men during the holocaust, marked a watershed moment for queer visibility in 1980s America after six gay activists in New York City reappropriated it to draw attention to the AIDS crisis.

The tradition of symbolic defiance through fashion stretches back even further. A decade earlier in the US, the counterculture had positioned their long hair and loose clothing in opposition to the severe uniform of the US military.

Across the Atlantic, Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren’s tartan, safety pins and mesh shaped the Punk aesthetic of the anti-establishment.

In the 15th Century, Joan of Arc famously wore men’s armour. In the 1850s women’s

rights activist Amelia Bloomer urged women to discard their corsets and floor-length skirts for “bloomers”.

A 1934 edition of *Hollywood* magazine declared: “Revolution has hit the Hollywood ranks!” when Katharine Hepburn dared to wear dungarees. Even in 2019, a woman wearing a trouser suit is still a statement.

And yes, this is superficial. Dressing in solidarity means little without action, without legislation, without change. Anyone can put on a t-shirt or pick out a particular colour. Hepburn wasn’t considered “the patron saint of the independent American female” just because she wore jeans.

On the other hand, James Franco’s past didn’t prevent him wearing a Time’s Up pin in January 2018. How many people who bought a “This Is What A Feminist Looks Like” t-shirt from Whistles in 2014 followed through on its political sentiment?

Protest dressing has its flaws. It’s certainly not enough on its own. Hamnett herself concluded in the *Guardian* in 2018: “A million T-shirts later, I’ve come to the conclusion that to really alter things – from climate change to women’s rights – we need legislation.”

Protest dressing can make the echo chamber concrete, and lull us into forgetting how much still needs to be done. But it’s a start. As Krista Suh and Jayna Zweiman, founders of pussyhatproject.com, pointed out: “the more we are seen, the more we are heard.”

♥♥ Hamnett’s slogan t-shirts are instantly recognisable (INSTAGRAM/@KATHARINEHAMNETT)







# Lifestyle

## Be kind and compassionate to yourself and others

Let go of judgement towards yourself to improve your wellbeing, writes **Charlotte Newman**

**A**re you kind to yourself? Often, we are very good at giving love and showing kindness to others but not to ourselves. Loving kindness and compassion are two states of being, and of being kind to ourselves. They are the most important actions we can practise in order to discover who we are and achieve a sense of peace. Loving kindness is about being gentle to yourself and being able to offer happiness to yourself and others. Compassion is about understanding your own suffering and then, from that understanding, being able to transform this suffering.

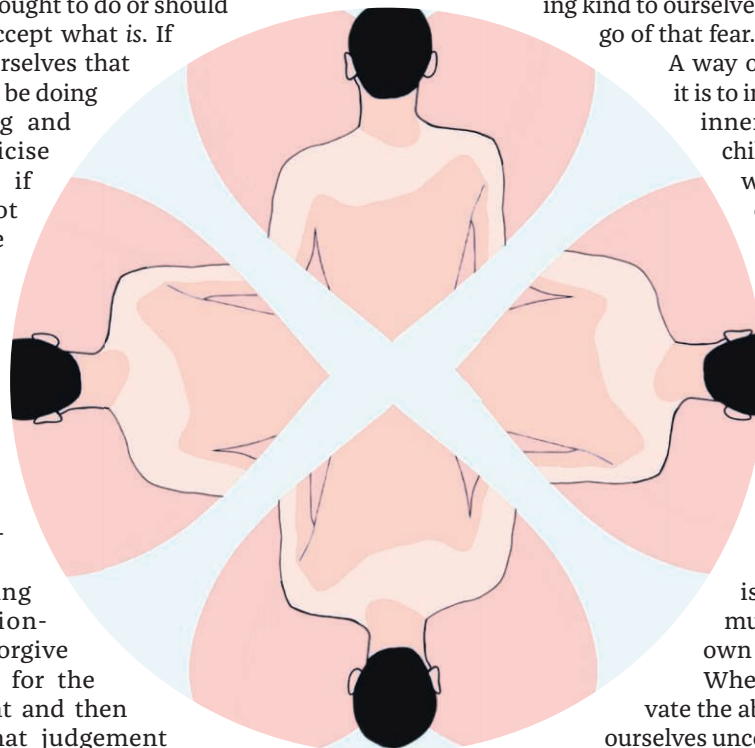
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We must love ourselves  
unconditionally for who  
we are  
”

An important way of being kind to ourselves and showing ourselves compassion is to let go of judgement. Are you judging yourself against an image of yourself and against your idea of others? Do you judge yourself if you do not complete the work you think you 'should' have done? In an environment like Cambridge, it can seem as though comparing yourself to others and judging yourself according to what you think you should be doing is

inevitable. The first step in cultivating loving kindness and compassion for yourself is to let go of this judgement, to let go of what you think you ought to do or should do, and accept what is. If we tell ourselves that we should be doing something and then criticise ourselves if we cannot do it, we can then become anxious, agitated and worried, and risk feeling unhappy with ourselves.

By being compassionate, we forgive ourselves for the judgement and then we let that judgement go – we accept what is in the present moment and show ourselves loving kindness by accepting the present situation. Letting go of judgement also comes with letting go of fear. We are conditioned to fear things, to fear failure, being alone, not meet-

ing people's expectations: the list of fears is unique to each individual. By loving ourselves completely in the present moment and being kind to ourselves, we can let go of that fear.



A way of looking at it is to imagine your inner self as a child – if a child was scared or upset or angry, you wouldn't judge them and criticise them – you would comfort them and show them love. This is what we must do to our own inner self.

When we cultivate the ability to love ourselves unconditionally for who we are deep down and to be kind to ourselves when we make mistakes, it can bring us peace.

Life is a process of learning different lessons again and again through experience and inevitable mistakes; we are learning in the

process, and we must be kind to ourselves and love ourselves as we undertake our own individual journeys.

In Cambridge, grades can seem to be the be-all and end-all. Yes, grades are important, but they are not who you are as a person. We must love ourselves unconditionally for who we are, without the conditions of achieving good grades – without the external conditions we believe will make us happy.

It is about loving ourselves deep down, the person that no one else truly gets to see, and giving compassion and love to that person. If you can show compassion to yourself, if you can love yourself before everything else, you can begin to enjoy things that may have previously seemed hard and uncomfortable.

The essay you did not want to start because you believed it would not go well – if you let that judgement of ourselves go and treat ourselves with kindness and compassion, you could find more peace and enjoyment in your work.

To try a loving kindness meditation: sit quietly and comfortably, focusing on your breath and then either read silently or aloud the following words, letting them sink in and resonate with you:

May I be full of loving kindness.  
May I be happy.  
May I be peaceful and at ease.  
May I be well.

ILLUSTRATION BY LISHA ZHONG FOR VARSITY

## A delightful, if pricey, bite at Maurizio Dining & Co.

**Anna Stephenson** finds the Mill Road Italian eatery to be an exciting independent visit

**S**peaking as that person, that friend whose favourite part of eating out is doing a 20-minute deep dive on the menu online two days before, a full specials board almost sends me over the edge. They leave my best-laid ordering plans in disarray, but choosing off the specials menu lets me feel that bit spontaneous – and yes, embarrassingly – adult.

Maurizio's Dining & Co. on Mill Road cuts all the extraneous bull from its lists of specials. I like how a changing set of dishes can let chefs take more risks, and encourages seasonal thinking. But, honestly, it can sometimes become a contest of who can spell the most unnecessary Frenchified term in chalk, or who's foraged for chickweed in the dead of night in a full chef's outfit. Aside from the regular menu, this restaurant has the pizza specials board (on once a week), and the pasta specials board. Done.

The food has no delusions of grandeur. As someone who knows her way around a vegan menu, I've experienced one too many not-so-

superfood salads. I'm an unrepentant sucker for somewhere that puts carbs over concept. Food trends come and go, but a good bowl of pasta is eternal.

I wouldn't go for the pretty pricey salads at Maurizio's, but the antipasti boards can be ordered with a drink deal. Watch out for the 2 for £10 on all cocktails deals on Thursdays.

Our chilli relish is hot, a nice surprise, and perfect with the generous bread, olive oil and balsamic vinegar. I don't think we do enough with white beans in Italian restaurants in the UK, so I'll take any opportunity to order them, regardless of context or personal cost. I wouldn't have the power to resist a dish with just cannellini beans and olive oil, so I'm not the most neutral of observers here.

The highlight of so many meals is garlic bread; it's not a dish that needs to be well made to be enjoyed. Somehow, though, this one is brighter, crisper and simply *garlick-ier*. Any sauce on your plate will be lifted by liberally dipping chunks of this into it.

A plate of rigatoni alla norma we share has

such an appealing resistance to it, it almost bites back. I like it this way, but if you prefer your pasta less al dente, you might want to stick to the antipasti and pizzas. The pasta is dressed without too much fuss; the aubergine gently dissolves into the tomato sauce, but I'd have liked some added texture or brightness on top.

For £13.50, it has great technique but I just needed that bit more bougie for my buck. A large aubergine pizza at Aromi, which is, admittedly, a much more cramped environment, costs just over £5 and is pretty much as good.

Go just that little bit out of your way and you'll be rewarded with ever-changing independent Italian cuisine.

While I'd recommend it if you're looking to take advantage of a deal or order fairly light, if you want to go all out, you might be left regretting the bill.

In an impromptu swoop of delicious idiocy, we order another load of garlic bread. It's too much, but so often the best things are.



▲ Maurizio Dining & Co. (INES LETELLIER)



# Theatre

## It's okay to be an amateur

From Camdram credits to creative cocktails, **Helena Fox** reminds us that, in the almost overwhelming intensity of Cambridge theatre, being an amateur is allowed



▲ Helena Fox has found her 'graduation' from collegiate drama to the Corpus Playroom and ADC Theatre to be one of manifold possibilities, and unforeseen pressures (LOIS WRIGHT)

I walk into the ADC Bar. Immediately, I am hit by a wall of sound and heat as I wave to familiar faces across the room. I pick my way through sweaty bodies and loud voices to reach the bar and decide which £4 cocktail to try this time, or, indeed, whether I'm in it for the long haul and should get two stamps on my loyalty card with the double-cocktail deal. Be it an evening spent deep in conversation with friends – having snagged the sofa, the bar's prime real estate – or jumping between groups of acquaintances until the inevitable arrival of the inebriated John's Gents at the Maypole's closing time, the ADC bar, like the rest of the Cambridge 'thesp' scene, carries a certain weight. Even the cocktails' cleverly show-themed names serve as a pressing reminder that this is *The Theatre*.

The first two shows I did at Cambridge were collegiate – I performed first at Robinson's Brickhouse Theatre and then at Magdalene's Cripps Auditorium, both of which involved giggling backstage (and sometimes onstage) and friends providing a solid chunk of the (not always that large) audience. I then 'graduated', as is the proper thing to do, to Corpus and ADC shows at the end of my first year, and I sensed a certain changing of the guard. There seems to exist a silent hierarchy which states that college theatre is somehow 'lesser', and, despite it providing some of the best experi-

ences of my time in theatre at university, and many of my closest friendships, I now feel it would be odd for me to 'go back' to it.

Having said this, there does appear to be some movement in this area. The success of last year's *Revlon Girl*, originally staged at Robinson, and the exciting set of shows set to be performed at the college this Michaelmas seem to indicate a rising awareness of the potential of the Brickhouse Theatre.

However, I felt, newly involved in the ADC, that whatever we were producing had to have a certain clout to it – it had to pass the test of the *Varsity* reviewers, fulfil the ticket sale expectations of the funding body, and

“  
You are enough  
”

must avoid being – God forbid – *amateurish*. Of course, shows in Cambridge are ticketed (at a price), so audiences arrive with certain expectations, while productions have the potential to yield enormous and important social capital; this term's *The Convert* and last year's *The Children's Hour* spring to mind as shows that deserve every inch of spotlight the Cambridge name can bring them. Moreover, it is obviously no bad thing to have high

aspirations or aim for quality execution, but it sometimes feels, as I navigate the complex personality politics and relentless hamster-wheel of Cambridge theatre, that it would be good to remind ourselves that, actually, we are indeed amateurs.

Part of my discomfort with Cambridge theatre is its all-or-nothing nature. You're either in, or you're not. It can, if unchecked, become all-consuming. It is common to poke fun at the rowers who rise early for an outing, yet it is the accepted (and even expected) norm to skip lectures and classes for rehearsals or get-ins, and to stay up throughout the night, sometimes even until 6am, to complete get-outs, before stepping onto the treadmill of another show and another week of a Cambridge degree.

We must recognise that it is incredibly alarming that the bar is licensed until 8am for show after-parties. This is not healthy.

Cambridge theatre has a hefty history. Many people – both internally and externally – view it as a career launchpad. Countless reviews from both professional and student papers reference the starry alumni of the ADC, and I've heard people discuss who of our peers is going to 'make it'. You cannot even visit the bathroom without seeing Sam Mendes' quote that he would not have gone into directing were it not for the ADC. It mounts a certain expectation that we should strive, and should

want to strive, to be the next Olivia Colman or Mel Giedroyc, and that anything less than this is not enough.

The stark intensity of Cambridge theatre was highlighted for me recently when a new postgrad remarked that, at their previous university, they had staged a production of *Chicago* which was in rehearsal for four months. At

“  
It can, if unchecked,  
become all-consuming  
”

Cambridge, the same show is being put on in around five weeks, and yet the standards will be undoubtedly just as high and the results impressive. This, to me, emphasises how Cambridge seems compelled to do what everyone else does, but a million times more.

I do not for a second dispute the undeniable talent in Cambridge, nor the staggering wealth of opportunities available to us, which are both peerless and priceless for those looking to gain experience in theatre, and for which I am incredibly grateful. But I feel driven to remind all of my fellow 'thesps' that sometimes, you are allowed to be an amateur.

You are enough.





# The people behind the Pantomime

**Norm Levinson** takes a break from his day job as a butler to sit down with Seth Jordan and Adrianna Hunt, the writers of this year's CUADC/Footlights Pantomime

I meet Seth Jordan and Adrianna Hunt, writers of the 2019 CUADC/Footlights Pantomime: *Red Riding Hood* in the foyer of the Ritz hotel in London on a drizzly autumn afternoon. They're both late.

Jordan rushes in from the cold, cheeks red, clutching a first edition copy of 'On The Road' and sipping a double espresso. "Good to see you!" he screams, louder than he seems in photographs.

Hunt arrives shortly afterwards, dressed to the nines in a Juicy Couture tracksuit, wearing sunglasses, as always. Hunt nods brusquely to Jordan, who is by now slouched on a leather chaise-longue. This is one of the only acknowledgements they'll make of each other throughout the interview.

Intrigued by this clearly fraught dynamic, I ask how the experience of writing the pantomime has been for the pair. Hunt lurches forward, and exclaims, "Wonderful!". She perspires a little. Jordan looks on, his slouch becoming almost horizontal.

"It certainly was," he agrees.

There is a silence. I ask the two how they came to write the pantomime this year. They both gesture for the other to answer, a process that takes nearly three minutes, before they say in harmony "We pitched it in May".

"We wanted the panto to be a fun, family show, working within the traditions of the genre but doing some fun new stuff too," Hunt muses. "It's really quite revolutionary."

Jordan perks up. "Have you heard of Brecht?" We move on. I ask them about their summers and how the writing progressed. Hunt looks me in my blue eyes and says that writing, to her, and to Jordan, is much like the water that she so gracefully pours into her beige KeepCup.

"It's a fluid process. Things change."

"Indeed," slurps Jordan. "If you looked back at the script in June, or July, or indeed August, or indeed September, you think it had been written by different people."

"And it had," says Hunt.

Then together - "Our past selves."

I inquired about where they wrote, if they wrote together in person, or via the tradition 'Google Doc' system, which dates back to pantomimes of the early Tudor period.

Hunt scoffs. Jordan scoffs. Then in unison they reply, "Shaftesbury. Bristol. Berlin. Both East and West. We also used a Google doc regularly, thank you very kindly."

"Berlin?" I ask.

"Yes, we wrote Act II there. We needed to get into a new space, and we found the Berghain to be a real creative diuretic."

I baulk slightly but move on, but not before Jordan has a chance to show me an album of polaroids of every picture he'd taken in Berlin. They were entirely comprised of portraits of old women who he found 'moving' to capture. He weeps for half an hour and Hunt busies herself with a game of Solitaire in the meantime. "A metaphor," she remarks.

I ask them about their feelings now the pantomime is cast and beginning to take shape.

"It's extraordinary," quips Jordan. "I had no idea this would happen at the end of the writing. I'm shocked but I'm delighted."

Hunt concurs, solemnly. She removes her sunglasses to shed a single tear then locks horns with me and says, "At least we get paid. In satisfaction. The only true currency."

They are dead behind the eyes. I decide to end the interview. I leave, and Hunt and Jordan sit staring forward, mouthing silently the entire pantomime script in synchronicity.

**WRITERS' NOTE, from Seth Jordan and Adrianna Hunt:**

On a genuine note, we couldn't think of many interesting things to say about the writing process so wrote that splurge of a mock interview you just read. In reality, our writing process consisted mostly of us sat in rooms together periodically crying with laughter then staring blankly at our laptops. It's been really fun and we're so excited to see what it becomes in the hands of the wonderful cast and crew. If you do come, we hope you enjoy it!



▲ The writers of this year's CUADC/Footlights Pantomime (ADRIANNA HUNT & SETH JORDAN)

## Towards a new media landscape?

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# Arts

## Semilore Delano ‘I can’t do any work this weekend – I just need to paint!’

Arts Editor **Lydia Bunt** speaks to Semilore Delano, the first Cambridge undergraduate to have their work displayed at Kettle’s Yard while still a student



▲ Semilore Delano (LYDIA BUNT)

Cambridge students often have talents that range far beyond their studies, but third-year architecture student Semilore Delano rather exceeds that generalisation. At 21, she’s the first ever student to have works exhibited at Kettle’s Yard, Cambridge’s main contemporary art gallery, while still a student. Two of her pieces have been shown in the gallery’s recent exhibition, The Cambridge Show, featured alongside that of 21 other established Cambridge-based artists.

When we meet for coffee on an autumn afternoon, Delano is as put-together as all this suggests (then again, I’m downing a hot chocolate in my sweaty gym clothes, so there’s not much comparison). As we speak, it becomes clear that she is consistently grateful for the opportunities that have come her way – but, equally, deliciously firm in her conviction that, sometimes, her degree comes second when the creative juices begin to flow.

Delano is in her third year at King’s College; before coming to university, she completed a foundation course at the Royal Drawing School. It’s clear from our conversation that she loved it – a “year of drawing, painting, visualising” appears quite the dream. So, why Cambridge instead of a degree in fine art? “Although I do love fine art and visual art, I also really love the balance and the practicality of figuring out how this can actually exist in a physical form”, Delano explains. It helps that her father is an architect: she grew up surrounded by drawings and architectural quips, not to mention in a house that he designed.

Other influences on Delano’s work stem from her background – she grew up in Niger-

ia, moving to the UK when she was 13. “My compositions surround my everyday experience of life”, she muses. Her work is centred on the real: family life, going to markets, sitting down and eating with friends. While questions of culture and of, in her words, “difference” may not explicitly permeate her work, they undoubtedly shape her viewing process. And straddling nations has lent her a “dual character”, which influences her her

“  
I can’t believe I didn’t  
paint or draw for a year!”  
”

work.

But (and it’s no unusual confession for a student here) Cambridge hasn’t always been a smooth road. “The last three years have been super eye-opening in terms of realising what my passion really is”, Delano reveals. She deferred her entry for a year before starting university, wanting a bit more breathing space to explore her fine artistic interests.

Reality hit when she arrived. “I didn’t realise the extent to which I was going to struggle with such a new platform at Cambridge”, she explains. “After first year, I was in this frenzy, thinking to myself, ‘I can’t believe I didn’t paint or draw for a year!’”

It was in second year that Delano started pushing herself to create her own art, reaching beyond the confines of her architecture degree. She started submitting pieces to competitions in King’s and eventually achieved her first solo exhibition in its Art

Rooms. This exhibit, Retelling Retrospect, took place in May this year, planned and curated by Delano herself.

And then, the big time hit. Delano went to see the Oscar Murillo exhibition at Kettle’s Yard last May, and got chatting to its director (Andrew Nairne OBE). He encouraged her to submit work for The Cambridge Show, and two of her pieces – ‘Saturday Brunch’ (2019) and ‘Lekki Market at 4.53pm’ (2017) – were accepted. “Both of them navigate an everyday space for me, one with my family and the other with my cultural environment in Nigeria”, Delano explains. She works with oils on canvas, merging spaces together and drawing on influences from everyday life. “It’s been just amazing to be in the same gallery as so many of these people and in the same gallery as artists who I’ve loved”, she says.

One could say that, in general, Cambridge has been a productive environment for Delano. She painted ‘Saturday Brunch’ at 5am in her room in King’s, but remarks that “the rigour of Cambridge makes me structure my day better”.

Apart from this, painting in a place which is geographically and culturally different to the location of her works focusses her attention, paradoxically, on that which is not there. “Because I can’t see my family right there, I rely more on memory and my emotion connected to the space”, she expands. “That sharp contrast hones my own identity.”

But studying in this city has also influenced Delano’s artistic work in new and previously inconceivable ways. At first, she felt like art and architecture were just smacking each other head on, persistently refusing to mesh. But, actually, she explains, “architecture has made my painting more meaningful to me.” Last year, there’d be days when she’d sit down with her architecture supervisors and say, “I can’t do any work this weekend – I just need to paint!” Within the Cambridge bubble, Delano cites ArcSoc’s life drawing classes and support from the team at King’s Art Rooms as important creative outlets. For this student artist, though, inspiration is clearly all around. As we talk, she gestures to a woman sitting by the window in the café, mentioning how the light is framed around her. We both glance over for a second, distracted. “I don’t find many things

visually boring”, Delano explains.

What advice would she offer students looking to give their own creative work a broader platform? “Don’t stop making the work you love to make”, stresses Delano. “Cambridge always makes you feel like you have to choose between what you want to do and what you have to do, but when it comes to creating work, one of the worst things you can do is just let yourself stop.” When she explained to her supervisors and friends that she was struggling to balance the demands of her degree with her impulse to produce fine art, real results emerged – namely, the chance to get involved at Kettle’s Yard. “Tell people what you like”, De-

“  
I don’t find many things  
visually boring  
”

lano says as we rise to leave.

It’s easy to prioritise work over play when you’re a student here. Delano, though, is engaged in the subtle merging of the two, to impressive ends. So, when you’re floundering on a latest essay and feel like banging your head against a brick wall in a futile search for inspiration, just remember: “There is always time in the day to make art.”

▼ ‘Saturday Brunch’ (SEMILORE DELANO/KETTLE’S YARD)





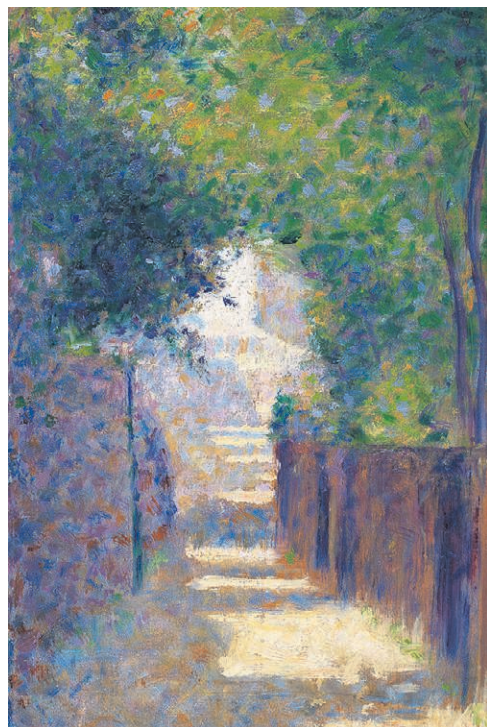


# Fitz Favourites: 'Rue St Vincent' by Seurat

**Damian Walsh** explores one of the Fitzwilliam Museum's lesser-known works

If, on a cold afternoon, pushing against the wind, you turn off Trumpington Street and into the Impressionist Room at the Fitzwilliam Museum, craning your neck to look for Monet or Renoir, or Seurat's much more famous study for 'Sunday Afternoon on La Grande Jatte', you might miss a tiny, portrait-sized painting of a street. Hanging above a richly decorated table, and bracketed by blank space on the wall around it, it looks almost apologetic in its smallness. Easy to overlook. Maybe that's appropriate: it's a painting of a narrow, unremarkable street that you might just as easily miss in your rush from one place to another. How often, after all, do you really look at King's Parade as you hurry down it, 5 minutes late for a lecture?

And yet, Seurat's 'Rue St Vincent, Paris, in Spring' is one of my favourite paintings in the Fitz, and (I like to think) an invitation to pause and notice the small details around us. A shadow of feathery leaves perches atop a lamp post; strips of sunlight falling across the path seem to form a stairway towards some vague white shape in the middle distance, shining with an almost ethereal brightness



▲ The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

into an otherwise ordinary street.

To get more technical, it's one of the few paintings in this room displayed not on canvas but on a wooden panel. There's a wonderful richness to wood-based paintings that you don't find on canvas: shadows appear deeper, light glows in a very different way. I also can't help but feel some grand transhistorical connection back to the painters of Byzantine or Orthodox icons, who traditionally used panels to produce their glittering works of devotion.

Seurat, admittedly, probably chose wood for his 'Rue St Vincent' because it was cheap rather than for any grand spiritual significance. At the start of his career, he often carried small panels around with him, which he used to produce around seventy oil studies. He called these his *croquetons* (little sketches). He even painted on cigar boxes at times. Still, I think there's some resonance in this solid medium.

We probably know Seurat best as the 'pioneer of Pointillism', but he never liked the term, preferring to call his theory by the verbose title of *chromoluminarism* (quite a mouth-

ful). And it's the luminosity of this piece that makes it so arresting: light of all sorts of hues seems to shine out from unexpected places, thanks to Seurat's distribution of coloured strokes. The spring leaves glow gold and blue; the left-hand wall a mosaic-like mixture of indigo and brown. It's exciting to think that, as he painted the 'Rue St Vincent', Seurat was quietly devising - honing and trialling - what would become his new theory of art.

Seurat's spring street might be far removed from Cambridge's arctic winds; Bohemian Montmartre might be 285 miles away (thank you, Google Maps), but maybe we can apply the same willingness to see our local streets in a new light. (And personally, the painting always reminds me of Burrell's Walk near the UL, but maybe that's wishful thinking.)

We're in the privileged position of being surrounded by art in Cambridge, spoiled for choice. I'd like to look again at works we're all too guilty of overlooking - small works, hidden works, or ones that are just easy to stop noticing. Spend some time on Seurat's 'Rue St Vincent' - maybe you'll see the not-too-dissimilar Cambridge streets in a new light.

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by Amy Folkard

## Recently Played



On Repeat  
Made For Varsity  
PLAYLIST



Repeat Rewind  
Made For Varsity  
PLAYLIST

▲ Illustration by Bella Biddle for Varsity

### Monday

I'm Beginning to See the Light  
Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington

### Tuesday

Real Love  
Carly Rae Jepsen

### Wednesday

Bleecker Street  
Simon & Garfunkel

### Thursday

Walk of Life  
Dire Straits

### Friday

Crosstown Traffic  
Jimi Hendrix

### Saturday

Don't Go Lose It Baby  
Hugh Masekela

### Sunday

It's You  
Sam Kim, Zico



◀ Carly Rae Jepsen  
(TABERCIL)

## Music and activism: King's Bunker x Cashu

**Kate Robertshaw** reviews Cashu's King's Bunker set and considers the wider power of musical activism

On the 14th of October, Cambridge boomed with the sounds of São Paulo's alternative music scene, as the DJ Cashu, part of the Mamba Negra collective located in São Paulo, Brazil, took to the decks for a transcendent night at Fez, organised by King's Bunker.

The music itself captured the crowd. DJ Cashu fluctuated between styles to create unexpected and sonorous moments, accumulating in a two-hour set which entranced the whole of Fez and creating a sense of freedom and liberty which was woven within the very fabric of the music itself.

Cashu, along with Carol Mattos and Mari Herzer, answered questions about their work, music and the political situation in Brazil at a panel event in King's College's Keynes Hall prior to her set. They revealed the philosophy behind their work and the essence of São Paulo's electronic scene.

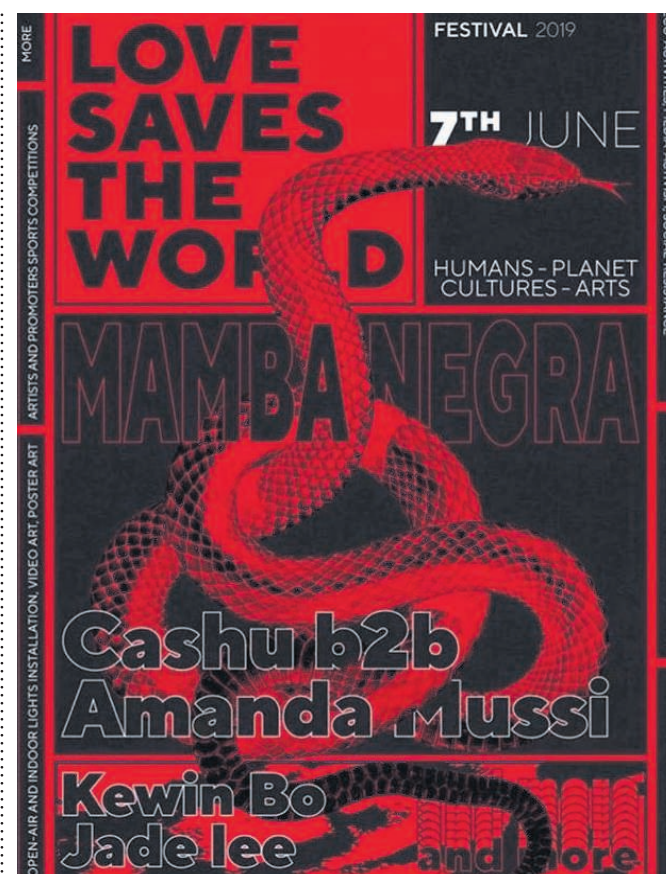
Set against the backdrop of São Paulo, a city of extreme inequality, Mamba Negra's mission was to decentralise the dance scene and encourage people to reclaim their space. At the foundations of their success is their ability to create spaces infused with liberty and openness, blending the boundaries between music, art and activism. The collective was formed at a time when the political situation in São Paulo began to escalate, with leftist riots occurring in response to the increase in the rate of public transportation, resulting in the largest demonstration in Brazil's recent history. Electronic music was gaining currency outside of the club scene, and it became Mamba Negra's way to respond to the political situation, fuelling their anti-capitalist spirit.

Since launching in 2013, Mamba Negra have occupied a central position in São Paulo's queer electronic music scene. They are a diverse collective founded by Laura Diaz, musician/singer, and Carol Schutzer, the DJ Cashu. They have expanded to become an agency, label, radio station and a staple in São Paulo's electronic rave scene.

Mamba Negra's mission was to create a space in which community and respect were at the forefront of the rave scene. They fight for female, non-binary and queer representation, whilst simultaneously placing sexual and gender freedom at the core of their message. By encouraging people to reclaim their space, they hope that their ideal space could then inspire others to create the same sort of space. In this way, their influence might extend beyond the realms of their parties.

The anti-establishment nature of Mamba Negra's music and beliefs feed into their events. They frequently throw illegal raves in disused downtown buildings, as well as block parties.

Their reclamation of public spaces places



▲ A Mamba Negra poster from earlier this year  
(INSTAGRAM/@MAMBA.N)

them at the heart of downtown São Paulo, a more industrial setting, away from the signs of a right-wing government and the gentrification increasingly taking place in Brazil. Thus, the rigid and obscure background of warehouses and abandoned factories provide a stark contrast to their vibrant and diverse events.

In the spirit of the event and of Mamba Negra itself, the night's proceeds went to São Paulo charity Casa1, which provides a safe haven for LGBT+ people through a social centre focused on cultural diversity and a clinic providing psychotherapeutic care.

Hearing the issues deeply rooted within São Paulo's institutions highlighted the importance of their work and its tangible spirit. That feeling of reclamation and power protruded from their music, as the mixture of psychedelic sounds and heavy techno produced an atmosphere of other-worldliness, to which all were invited.

The dystopian excitement that fuelled the night acted as a reminder of the importance of public spaces, where safety and creativity are the founding pillars. Mamba Negra were equally successful in communicating their political message as they were in their craft, providing a vibrant night filled with rhythm and reclamation.





# Film & TV

## New horror – brutal & beautiful



▲ In Ari Aster's *Midsommar*, Dani (Florence Pugh) is thrown headfirst into a Swedish cult (YOUTUBE/A24)

**Emily Sandercock** reflects on the genre's new creative heroes, and their combination of violence, beauty, and moral confusion

Content Note: This article contains brief mention of suicide

Now that Halloween is here, with the chill winds and crunching leaves of Autumn, I'm thinking, even more than usual, about horror movies.

Horror has been a beloved genre of mine since I was about 12, when somehow a silly horror movie had my friends and I theorising on the plot into the very early hours of the morning. Where had the evil mutants come from? Had the teenage son secretly been infected by them the whole time? Did this all have something to do with the Cold War?

**“**  
Making moments of evil beautiful and seductive...  
**”**

More recently, I have become as obsessed with the work of nouveau horror auteurs Jordan Peele, Ari Aster, and Robert Eggers as I was with the horror movies of my pre-teen years. These directors have formed their own distinct sub-genre in the horror sphere. While their movies differ vastly in setting and focus, I am not the first to point out the similarities be-

tween them. They have a comparable style, using shots that blend picturesque backgrounds with violent foregrounds. This is present, for instance, in the graphic ritual suicide and murder Aster contrasts in *Midsommar* with sweeping shots of flower-decked dresses and the idyllic Swedish countryside. Peele constructs a genuinely balletic, yet brutal, fight scene between the protagonist of Peele's *Us* and her evil doppelganger. The beauty and the horror of these scenes blend together, and each heightens the other.

**“**  
Characters gain power and apparent agency. They have also joined murderous cults.  
**”**

The movies are darkly funny, heavily symbolic, with foreshadowing that seems obvious on a second viewing but is mostly inconspicuous the first time around. In Eggers' *The Witch*, the main character yells semi-jokingly to her younger siblings that she is the witch who lives in the woods. By the end of the movie, she has indeed joined a coven of witches, and runs away with them to the forest.

Explanations for the main events of these movies are left vague, never answering our persistent, pathetic question: 'why on earth have these bad things happened?' *Get Out*, in which the main character successfully escapes from his kidnappers (not without brutally exacting his revenge upon them), is the only one with a 'happy' ending. The endings of the others are, to varying degrees, conflicted.

On one side of that spectrum is *Us*, in which the family we have been cheering on defeats

the doppelgangers who have been hunting them. However, it is revealed in the last moments that the mother is in fact a doppelganger herself, who switched places with her 'real' self when they were both children. On the other end is *Hereditary*, in which the demon that has been plaguing a family throughout the movie successfully kills them and possesses one of them as his host.

*Midsommar* and *The Witch* fall somewhere between these. At the end of each, their main characters, Dani and Thomasin, respectively, have gained power and apparent agency. They have also each joined murderous cults.

After these movies came out, many people online (particularly on websites like Tumblr) were delighted by these often shocking endings, talking about them as sources of empowerment and as works of fantasy. This attitude is understandable.

As much as these movies mix beauty and gore visually, they also do so in terms of their story, making moments of evil beautiful and therefore seductive. It is seriously beautiful

when Thomasin flies into a moonlit sky with the other witches, and when Dani smiles in a flower crown, surrounded by cultists. They have left behind, in Thomasin's case, a miserable and repressive family life, and in Dani's a toxic relationship. It is what the audience has wanted for them from the start and masks the fact that they have both become trapped. The good and the bad are intertwined, and these films explore the places where it is difficult to tell them apart.

**“**  
The good and the bad are intertwined  
**”**

That is where the horror comes from, in the mixture of freedom, evil, and entrapment. I'm still trying to untangle each of those strands — I'm not sure that I ever will.

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Violet
 By VARSITY

The five stages of an all-nighter

Sure, you could be responsible, manage your time well and stop procrastinating, but hey, asks **Gabriel Humphreys**, who's got time for that?

Q

I've recently split up with my boyfriend and we go to the same college. I'm pretty worried about going back to uni and having to see him all the time, any advice?

A

First, try and think about all the things you have to look forward to at uni - one person shouldn't make you worry about going back. Whether the split was amicable or not, your life will be easier if you can spot him without panicking. The first meeting could be awkward, so try and get that out of the way. When you see him, try and take the initiative. Give him a friendly hello, engage in some small talk, then make your excuses and exit. This friendly interaction should set the tone for any future meetings. Remember that the awkwardness only lasts for a short while and after this, you'll feel much better.

If the split was hostile, you'll still have to find a way to be in his presence given that you are likely to see him. Perhaps ask to meet him briefly to explain that even though you may not like each other, seeing each other is probably unavoidable; thus, it would help if you could be around each other in a non-confrontational way. Don't rehash any of the relationship drama, and hopefully he will agree that being respectful towards each other is the best course of action. If he doesn't want to meet or is rude - well, you broke up for a reason and best practice would be to put him out of your mind as far as this is possible. Your friends could also help remove you from situations where you might have to interact. Although this situation can be intimidating, Cambridge life is so busy that soon you'll be too preoccupied to worry about bumping into your ex!



Got questions?  
Get in touch at  
violet@varsity.co.uk

8:00PM: Denial

You sit down to write your first essay of term. It's on something you enjoy, it can't be that painful, right? You've got 1800 words of notes, and a solid plan. What could possibly go wrong? You'll be done in a few hours and in bed by midnight, maybe I am at a stretch.

10:00PM: Anger

You've read your notes. You've reread them. It seems that you wrote them in a zombie-like state of sleep deprivation, and in a shorthand you can no longer remember. You feel yourself starting to sweat, made worse by the apparent comedy set going on downstairs. Don't these people know *this is a library*? Your music is not helping you remain calm. Britney Spears' *Womanizer* comes on shuffle, and you rip out your headphones in sheer disgust at the song's upbeat nature. I mean, really! At a time like this?

00:00AM: Bargaining

You're writing, and things are moving, but very slowly. The library has emptied entirely, and you almost wish the mystery laugher/crier had never left. You tell your future self that you will

“

You're not sure if it's sleep deprivation, but your best ideas seem to crystallise at this moment

”

work much faster if you just get those few books you left in your room. You tell yourself that if you can write 1,000 more words in the next hour, as you should absolutely, definitely be able to, then you can eat the Galaxy you have stowed away. This is the incentivised academia you were made for. An hour passes, and you have most definitely not written another 1000 words. You eat the Galaxy regardless.

3:00AM: Depression

Your best friend texts to say they are going to bed. It all feels a bit *Day After Tomorrow* — alone in the library, eating enough snack food for an actual meal, facing a sense of uncontrollable doom.

5:30AM: Acceptance

Out of nowhere, you get the energy to press on: you're not sure if it's nervous energy or sleep deprivation, but words are pouring out, and bizarrely some of your best ideas seem to crystallise at this moment when you should definitely be in bed. Simultaneously, you wonder if a single line of this will make any sense when you read it back. It's too late now, your brain is on a powerful autopilot incapable of stopping.

How to find love in eight weeks or less

Katey Parker shares her advice on making time for love in a hectic term

The easiest option for all you lazy lovers out there is College. Maybe you'll catch each other's eye while searching your pidges. Or perhaps you'll trip on one of the cobbles of court, seductively dropping your essay work (is that possible?) and prompting them to help you pick up the dishevelled papers. What could feel more romantic than hands *accidentally* touching? Alternatively, branch out a little and infiltrate the other colleges. Think of all the possibilities this could offer - you might secure yourself a soul-mate AND an elusive ticket to that May Ball you've been desperate to go to since your own college ball turned out to be £150 for a burger and one court's worth of fairground rides.

Or perhaps you'd prefer to be off your face on Sainsbury's Basics Vodka when you encounter a potential partner. In this case, clubbing is your best bet. After successfully reading a quarter of your reading list, treat yourself to a night out at one of Cambridge's world class clubs.

In events ranging from Glitterbomb to Life, frustrated students from across the university are thrown together, shouting into each other's ears in the hope of getting some later that night. Potentially not the ideal spot for anything long-term (who knows - prove me wrong!), but at least it broadens your horizons.

That being said, the hectic life of a Cambridge student means, at times, actually venturing out into the real world is unrealistic. In this case, I present to you: dating apps. And it's not all about getting laid (although if that's what you're after then go ahead!) There are, perhaps surprisingly, folk looking for actual relationships.

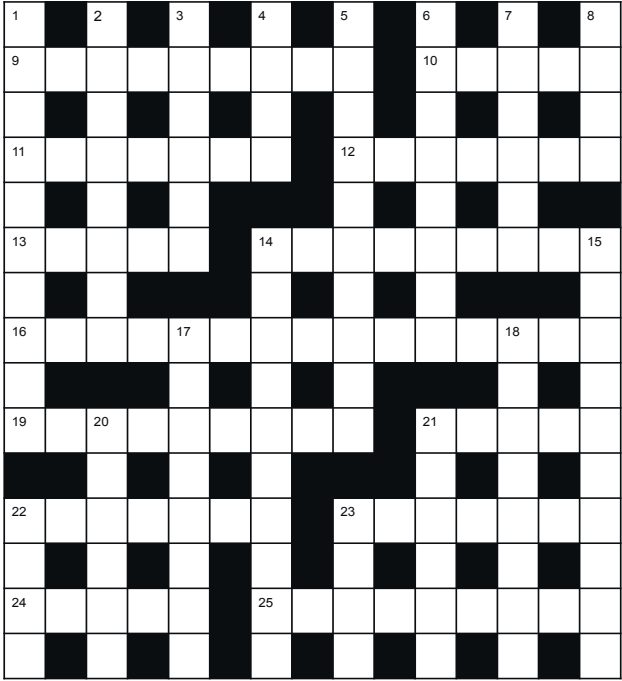
My advice: it's a left swipe if there's no bio, avoid those with dead chat and, no matter how cute their dog is, don't let a Labrador rope you into an awkward date.

Whether you're longing for that someone to share your deepest fears with, or merely a convenient hook-up, there's something for you. Just please don't start swiping mid-seminar.

And whoever you're looking for, make sure you communicate what you want and enjoy yourself.

“Don't let a Labrador rope you into an awkward date”

Cryptic Crossword #4  
bv Pitt\*



ACROSS

- 9 Growing uneasy, end soccer (9)  
10 Student in management college (5)  
11 Bug calm? No way! (7)  
12 Graduate caught by an olly (not I!) freak (7)  
13 Slip away with crop between borders of Europe (5)  
14 A French short-term partner hugs two sweethearts - heartless (9)  
16 Always score for home counties outside of university - very friendly on the nside (6-4-5)  
19 No good trying - blah! - confusing maze (9)  
21 Boat for swirling ocean (5)  
22 With map, doctor spies how water travels (7)  
23 Goes round king's circular galleries (7)  
24 Son's friendly bee collection (5)  
25 Boy enthralled by a niche cooked Mexican dish (9)

DOWN

- 1 Old Chance lost his head in Western (10)  
2 Spring over good job! (4, 4)  
3 Plan to travel over snow heard by Pitt (6)  
4 Animals warbled back (4)  
5 Best hand for Windsor waste disposal (5, 5)  
6 First, speedily caught looters, without luck initially, as they go fast (8)  
7 The Spanish go back for French friend - and sausage (6)  
8 Worst three grades - why text and disobey? (4)  
14 Peacekeeper's fiendish anagram is incomplete (10)  
15 Redheads sleep on this snack (10)  
17 Dull and drunk Rose caught in time (8)  
18 Supply Etna vine for Italian (8)  
20 Complain that prohibition restricts emo (10)  
21 Intoxicating plant limit surrounds the northern island initially (6)  
22 Expel some from bijou street (4)  
23 People compete (4)

Find the answers online at varsity.co.uk!

\*Pitt is a pseudonym



# Opinion: Football is in crisis – but not in the way some might have us think

*The recurrent narrative of football clubs in ‘crisis’ obscures the structural issues plaguing the sport, argues Posy Putnam*

**M**uch like the Cambridge student who always claims to be so far behind, and yet completes all their supervision work to an impeccable standard football pundits love a crisis. It doesn’t matter whether it’s real or not, if it’s just one bad week or not, pundits are drawn to them like an overworked rower is to Huel.

Take the example of Tottenham. Last May, they reached the Champions League final for the first time in their history. However, with a less-than-ideal start to the season, including only three wins from their first ten games, Tottenham are now treated as if they are on the brink. Never mind the quality of the team itself and the shrewd managerial

style of Pochettino, focus on that embarrassing loss to League Two Colchester, and Brighton’s 3-0 rout.

Tottenham are only one point behind Manchester United; their progression to the next stage of the Champions League is not yet compromised, and a place in Europe next season is still looking reasonably achievable. So, why the need to paint a crisis? Put simply, it makes for a great talking point. Football’s success comes from the entertainment it provides, which need not be restricted to the pitch. Talking up a ‘crisis’ is a sure-fire way to generate clicks and views.

Arsenal Fan TV knows this well. The YouTube channel has over one million subscribers and consists largely of fan reactions and post-match analysis. However, most of these views are from frustrated rants lamenting the team. Indeed, while a video discussing Arsenal’s recent loss to Sheffield United has close to 800,000 views, the most popular reaction video to the previous match – a 1-0 victory over Bournemouth – has only 330,000 views. There is certainly

an element of *schadenfreude* to the phenomenon. As a football fan, you do love seeing your team win – but you also love seeing your rivals lose. Football fans now have more ways to communicate than ever. Once any hint of ‘crisis’ has spread to social media and the tweets begin pouring in, the topic trends and all of a sudden the ‘crisis’ is real!

While fans may deplore the managerial merry-go-round and the emphasis on short-term success over long-term projects, nothing encourages a sacking more than a string of poor results morphing into an avalanche of tweets and news articles declaring: “FOOTBALL TEAM IN CRISIS!” Matches become ‘must-wins’ and managers become interrogated prisoners of the media’s own making. But this focus on clubs in ‘crisis’ has a more insidious effect. Crises become tied to clubs or individual managers, removed from the sport as a whole. This narrative leaves no space for more structural crises, such as racism in football. Fans feel removed – the crisis is limited to one area – rather than complicit

themselves. They, and the media, do not feel the need to examine their own actions, words and behaviour. Instead, they can criticise someone else’s.

Even with the recent abandoning of the Haringey Borough versus Yeovil Town FA Cup qualifier due to racist abuse, the reporting surrounding the event has largely focused on one match. This incident of despicable behaviour has not been linked to Bradford City’s own investigation into racist chants, or the racist banner on display during Liverpool’s most recent Champions League match. These narratives are more insidious than a simple media spin, a way of monetising and encouraging our love for sporting drama. Rather, they obscure the real crises in football. It’s easy to whip up a quick, click-bait-y article about Tottenham’s woes, but less so an interrogation of racial abuse and discrimination in footballing culture. The FA may condemn all instances of racism, but by treating these incidents as isolated, the result of a small group of fans at specific clubs, football as a whole remains complicit.

“Talking up a ‘crisis’ is a sure-fire way to generate clicks and views”



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**Is football in crisis?** Media coverage obscures the sport's structural issues, says Posy Putnam **31**



**Cambridge** 2

**Coventry** 0

# Men's footballers secure first league win of the season in feisty comeback

**Ben Phillips**  
Sports Reporter

A first half penalty from Nick Gallagher and a last-kick-of-the-game wonder strike from Sam Ernest ensured that the Cambridge Men's 1sts gained all 3 points in their match against Coventry Men's 1sts on Wednesday at Clare College Sports pitches.

Cambridge went into this game on the back of a defeat in their opening league fixture last week. Coventry, who as a side are newly promoted to the division, also hadn't won in their opening league games.

It was the opposition who started the brightest once the fixture got under way, following a delay due to the official not turning up.

Coventry played some good football in the first 20 minutes and moved the ball around well.

Cambridge's greatest chance came down to defender Oduma Adelio, who

was unlucky not to put the home side up with a well-taken volley on 30 minutes, which Coventry Goalkeeper Mohammed Otuyo did well to hold onto.

Cambridge began to move the ball quickly and exploited the flanks to get the ball in behind the Coventry defence, working the ball into the opposition's box. Shortly after, Luke Killen made a brilliant darting run into the box but was brought down by a Coventry defender who caught his boot when Luke went to take his shot: the stand-in referee awarded a penalty to the home side.

This decision proved controversial with the visiting side crowding the referee and appealing the decision. The delay in the spot kick being taken didn't faze the Light Blues Captain Nick Gallagher, however, who calmly finished the penalty to put the home side up with not long until the break.

Cambridge's penalty seemed to change the game, and Coventry were unlucky not to score early on as they

▲ **The Light Blues came out victorious** (BEN PHILLIPS)

made a couple of unsuccessful attempts at the Cambridge goal once the second half began. They forced a great double save from Cambridge's Goal Keeper who kept them out.

The game became very scrappy as both sides were subsequently determined to try and find an opening.

Cambridge went on to have good spells of possession and solid build-up play and dominated large periods of the second half, which saw the ball being moved around well in the oppositions. The Light Blues maintained their position discipline and shape and battled well in the second period.

Trying to spur his team on for an equalizer late on in the match, Coventry's Goal Keeper often flew out of the goal mouth to receive the ball and kick it deep into Cambridge's half. But this proved to be of no effect and Cambridge's defence dealt comfortably with the long ball tactic, with Ernest capitalising on this Coventry style of play in the 89th

Minute when he received the ball within his own half: seeing the goalkeeper nowhere near his goal line, he dispatched a brilliant strike that found the net with the last kick of the game. Cambridge thus recorded their first home win of the season, at 2-0.

Commenting on this turn from their loss last week, Gallagher noted that the "tough test last week prepared the team well going into the Coventry game and that as a team Cambridge matched the opposition's work rate and physicality".

At times "we struggled to play our way into the game", he continued, "but as a team Cambridge had the better quality on the day that was needed to get the win".

Cambridge's manager, Allan Cockram, said that he was "happy with the team's performance". Looking to the future, he noted that the home side "will focus on keeping shape and discipline to win games".

“Cambridge's penalty seemed to change the game”