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# VARSITY

## 'Illogically thought out': Concerns raised about anti-terrorism barrier on King's Parade

**Amy Batley**  
Deputy News and Investigations  
Editor  
Lottie Elton  
News Correspondent

A new anti-terrorism barrier, which will prevent vehicle access to King's Parade, became operational on Thursday 16th January and is to be closed from 9:30am to 7pm every day.

The barrier, which is situated between Cambridge Chop House and Cambridge Wine Merchants and crosses King's Parade towards King's College, includes a 3 metre swing gate and security barges

on either side, which leaves a 1.2 metre gap for cyclists on the King's College side of the street.

Several groups spoke to Varsity about their concerns regarding the barrier, which follows earlier concerns raised by Liberal Democrat councillors about the infrastructure implemented by the Labour-led City Council.

On the first day of Lent term yesterday, Varsity spoke to several students on King's Parade. One student from Christ's said he was "frustrated" that the barrier is going to "restrict movement and cause congestion, making it more difficult for cyclists."

Full story on page 2 ▶



▲ Several groups have raised concerns about the new security barrier (SOPHIE HUSKISSON)

## Target Oxbridge sees record applicant success

**Grace Lozinski**  
News Correspondent  
**Sophie Huskisson**  
Senior News Editor

This week, Target Oxbridge, a programme which aims to help students of Black African and Caribbean heritage apply to Oxbridge, revealed it has helped students secure 32 conditional offers from

Oxford and 39 conditional offers from Cambridge for 2020 entry.

This sets a new record for the programme, created by Rare, a diversity recruitment specialist, and run in partnership with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, marking a 16% increase on their 2019 results where students secured 27 offers from Oxford and 32 offers from Cambridge.

Target Oxbridge applicants enjoyed

an application to offer rate of 44%, which is significantly higher than the average conversion rate for UK applicants.

Aiming to increase the number of UK students of Black African and Caribbean heritage at Oxford and Cambridge, the programme involves visits to each university, subject sessions, admissions advice and mentoring by current and former Oxford and Cambridge students.

Oxford and Cambridge fund the programme which is free for students and hosts Easter residential and summer visits.

A spokesperson from Target Oxbridge said: "I am delighted with this record Target Oxbridge result! We started with just six students in 2012 and so it is amazing to see the programme now supporting over 70 Black British students to secure Oxbridge offers. Working in partnership

with the universities, our community of alumni and mentors and our sponsors has been key to our growing success. I hope to be able to continue expanding our work to close the gap once and for all."

Commenting on these latest figures Jon Beard, Director of the Cambridge Admissions Office said: "Target Oxbridge

News page 3 ▶

# EDITORIAL

## Defining Lent

Between the excitement of Michaelmas and intensity of Easter, the eight weeks of Lent can seem monotonous and uneventful. Whilst we're no longer adjusting to the new academic year and the all important exams still too far out of sight, Lent can feel like an empty space - purposeless on its own, lacking the direction of the surrounding terms.

For freshers, the excitement of a new start may have worn off, the workload increased and routine settled in. Second years begin Lent as the exact midpoint in the journey, with Halfway Halls coming along, an awareness of our fleeting time at Cambridge and the pressure of future plans looming into vision. Fast forward, and we have finalists in their last term of teaching, with the end in clear sight.

The Cambridge bubble can seem oppressive, particularly in Lent term, where the weeks are not broken up with the excitement of Halloween and Bridgemas. With bleak skies and essay deadlines, the Easter vacation seems distant.

However, Lent can also inspire change. It doesn't have to be the continuation of Michaelmas or preparation for Easter - it is a space in its own right, waiting for you to define it and make it your own. Our aim is to reflect this in Varsity. Our fortnightly print will showcase the creativity of our student writers, illustrators and photographers, the dedication of our editors and the passion of our team. With lengthened time and space, we hope to push Varsity forward as a thriving platform of sophisticated discourse and creativity on a wide range of issues, available and accessible to all Cambridge students, as well as maintaining our reporting as one of the most reliable independent sources of information in the university. If you have a story, let it be told in Varsity, as Lent 2020 marks a new turn in our print edition.

Lottie Reeder and Jess Ma, Varsity Editors, Lent 2020

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## News



▲ The barrier will be closed from 9:30am to 7pm everyday (SOPHIE HUSKISSON)

### ► Continued from front page

Mila and Luc, two second-year students from Churchill, who walk along King's Parade everyday to lectures, said "it looks terrible, and could have been made of something less jarring - the yellow sticks out."

Particularly when going into Bene't street, cyclists cut across the pavement. Mila joked that they were "breaking the law."

King's College, as the only college to be within the area enclosed by both the new barrier and traffic barrier in front of Great St. Mary's Church, are "very concerned about the effect of the barrier," according to King's College Bursar, Dr Keith Carne.

Speaking to Varsity, Dr Carne suggested that the barrier "will cause difficulties for vehicles trying to turn adjacent to the Corpus Christi clock and to cyclists trying to negotiate a narrow route past the barrier".

Dr Tim Flack, Senior Tutor of King's College, told students in an email that "the barrier is likely to be a hazard to cyclists", advising students to dismount and push their bike along the pavement rather than cycling through the gap in order "to avoid accidents/injury".

Cambridge Schools Eco Council has joined Cycling organisation, Camcycle, in objecting the barrier, arguing that "at a time when the threats of the climate crisis are greater than ever before" they wish to "encourage people to cycle more" but that this infrastructure "make[s] it harder for them to do so".

John Richards, a Public Realm & Project Delivery Team Leader at Cambridge City Council who is leading this project, explained that the 1.2 metre gap "is to national cycling standards and is consistent with other cycling gaps around Cambridge".

Richards argued that the time of the closure should mitigate cyclist congestion, "we're closing the barrier at 9:30am on a morning because of 9 o'clock lectures. The flow of cyclists on King's Parade reduces a lot after 9 o'clock.

"It is not an ideal arrangement and one that we shall seek to improve should the scheme ultimately become permanent, but we don't anticipate it will lead to the problems that some appear to fear".

Former King's College JCR President, Sophie Georgescu, said "the problem is the idea that anti-terrorism security can simply be imposed upon communities because it's perceived to increase our safety. No one who uses or lives on King's Parade had the ability to stop this barrier from going up.

"I also think it is a massive concern for disabled access as there will be a bottle-

neck created and it will be more difficult to get through in a taxi to the front of kings, or to get through in a wheelchair if there are lots of bikes and people bottlenecked on one end.

"It very much feels like what the Council has perceived is most threatening to us is not actually the everyday concern of the students who live on King's Parade! I think they would be much better using their time and money to support the homeless people who live on King's Parade, for example-if you want to better a community, you should listen to all residents and members about what they need and want on a daily basis."

Another student at King's, who wishes to remain anonymous commented that "it's a beautiful street and the design is really ugly". The student, a third year who lives on King's Parade opposite King's college, questioned whether "it will make moving my things out of college more difficult when the year ends".

Local businesses, whilst recognising the terrorist risk on King's Parade, are concerned that the location of the barrier will cause a "backlog" of pedestrians and cyclists, creating a bigger security risk.

Concerned that the new infrastructure could cause accidents, Max Freeman, Director of Cambridge Chop House, said: "in summer, when footfall goes through the roof on King's Parade, I just think people will be knocked over. I'll be surprised if there isn't a fatality on that corner- either a car hitting a pedestrian or someone hitting a cyclist or a cyclist hitting someone.

"To say it's for public safety is actually a misnomer because all it's going to do is create a kill zone- because in front of the corpus clock and my restaurant, that area gets very congested anyway."

Brett Turner, Chairman of Cambridge Wine Merchants, similarly criticised the location of the barrier, deeming it "illogically thought out" because "that kind of protection is supposed to be installed on the outside of a 'danger zone'".

Both local businessmen suggested that the infrastructure would be better located at the corner of Trumpington Street and Silver Street, just outside of the Eve and Ravenscroft store.

Richards said that Police have raised concerns about crowds outside Corpus Clock but that King's Parade is the primary concern. He added that Bene't Street is used to access the Grand Arcade car park, so it is difficult to place the barrier further along Trumpington Street.

However, he said the Police and County Council are "supportive" of the infrastructure, which has followed a Road Safety Audit undertaken by the County Council, adding that the Council intends "to work

with stakeholders and the public to monitor the installation and review any issues arising from it".

Cambridge Liberal Democrats, however, have questioned whether people's views have been listened to. Councillor Jamie Dalzell said: "It is deeply frustrating that none of the concerns we raised at several Council meetings last year have been listened to and the Labour group have pressed ahead with this poorly planned project".

Lewis Herbert, Labour and Co-op Councillor for Coleridge Ward, said that the new infrastructure on King's Parade arises as "a wider review is underway of movement and public realm in the city centre to develop cycling and pedestrian space, including options on reconfiguring access routes and restricting vehicle access. The King's Parade barrier is going ahead for security reasons, and not specially part of that."

The barrier is intended to be similar to the National Barrier Asset modular infrastructure system which is managed by Sussex Police and has been deployed at temporary events elsewhere in the UK, including the Edinburgh Fringe, Winter Wonderland in London's Hyde Park and Manchester's Christmas Markets.

The King's Parade barrier will initially be 'temporary', installed for a period of 18 months whilst more permanent options are explored.

Many have taken to social media to criticise the aesthetics of the infrastructure, variously describing it as a 'monstrous carbuncle' and a 'sad addition to the King's Parade streetscape'.

Herbert said the Council is seeking a long-term solution for King's Parade which "will enable both a high standard of design assisted by being partly below ground, and aesthetics more consistent with its surroundings, and be subject to further public consultation".

The barrier, road layout modifications, and signage cost an estimated £70,000, covered by Cambridge City Council and the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

Cambridge City Council says the infrastructure is necessary due to the number of pedestrians on King's Parade, particularly during the summer, which makes the area a potential terrorist target. This follows advice from Counter Terrorism Security Advisors who identified King's Parade as a potential terrorism target in Autumn 2018.

The Cambridge Independent has since raised concerns about the quality of the infrastructure, with the high-security gate being secured by "a pretty low-tech five-digit combination lock costing about £60 from a hardware store."

# Target Oxbridge: 16% increase in successful applications since 2019

► Continued from front page

is a truly collaborative initiative between Oxford, Cambridge and Rare, which is supported by subject and admissions specialists, current students and mentors throughout the year. We are delighted to see it improving the opportunities of this historically under-represented group, and contributing to the growing diversity of our universities."

Target Oxbridge's patron Zadie Smith said: "Going to Cambridge changed my life. Nothing I have done would have been possible without it. I want more people from backgrounds like mine to have that life-changing experience. That's what Target Oxbridge is about and that's why I am proud to be its patron."

Aye Omatsuli, who received an offer from Fitzwilliam College to study Law, said: "Taking part in the Target Oxbridge programme was one of the best decisions I've ever made. Before Target Oxbridge I would never have had the knowledge, skills or the confidence that I needed to not only apply to Cambridge, but receive an offer

32

The number of conditional offers secured at Oxford for 2020

39

The number of conditional offers secured at Cambridge for 2020

to study law.

"Before Target Oxbridge, I had never met anyone who looked like me who actually went to Oxford or Cambridge and I had convinced myself that I was not capable of getting in. Through Target Oxbridge, I was able to meet other Black Oxbridge students and learn more about their experiences. It made me feel as though if they could do it, then I could do it too."

These latest offer figures from Target Oxbridge follow the University admitting a record number of Black UK undergraduates last term. A total of 91 Black students were admitted, increasing the overall number of Black undergraduate students to more than 200, meaning that, for the first time in the University's history, the percentage of Black students has risen above 3% (3.4%).

The University has drawn much criticism for its low admissions statistics for BME groups, particularly black students. In 2018, at least 20 courses at the University accepted fewer than three Black students and overall received more Etonians than Black male students.

It is thought that a number of factors are behind the increase in Black students applying and being admitted such as the various outreach campaigns and activities run by admissions staff across the University and Colleges such as the launch of the video campaign 'Get in Cambridge', a series of short films published in collaboration with the Cambridge African Caribbean Society (ACS), aimed specifically at year 12 students from underrepresented groups.

It is thought that the "Stormzy effect" has had an impact as in August 2018, the award-winning British grime artist announced the Stormzy Scholarship, which funds both the tuition fees and living costs of two Black undergraduate students each year for the duration of their study at Cambridge.

Another factor considered to have had an effect is the way in which vloggers, known as "StudyTubers", have made Oxbridge more accessible and encouraged those from non-white backgrounds to apply.

Target Oxbridge have received over 900 applications for the 2020 programme and are in the process of selecting students for the 160 available places.

# Cambridge MP appointed shadow Defra minister

Gaby Vides  
News Correspondent

Daniel Zeichner, MP for Cambridge since 2015, was appointed as a Shadow Minister in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on Wednesday.

Zeichner will work alongside Luke Pollard, the Shadow Defra secretary, in the final months of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership.

Zeichner has served on several parliamentary committees and internal Labour bodies, including the Labour Party's national environment campaign, SERA, and is a Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Climate Change. He is a strong supporter of the European Union, and in 2017 he resigned from his position as Shadow Minister for Transport in protests over the Labour Party's position on Brexit.

As an environmental advocate, Zeichner has particularly championed the protection and stewardship of bees. His appointment follows his campaigning in Parliament for a ban on neonicotinoids (a pesticide) due to their harmful effects on bees, which became an EU wide ban in 2018, and his leading of a debate in Parliament in last June to ban non-recyclable and unsustainable food packaging.

Zeichner commented on his appointment: "I'm a lifelong environmentalist and have an enduring interest in agriculture and food issues and, as many



people know, I'm a bee fan, campaigning to make sure bee-killing pesticides are not used on our fields."

Central to Zeichner's role will be directing Labour's position on the Government's delayed Agricultural Bill. The Agricultural Bill aims to minimise the environmental impact of food production post-Brexit. The Bill is focused around environmental sustainability as well as the sustainability of supply chains for farmers.

Commenting on the process and importance of the Agricultural Bill, Zeichner remarked, "after the heart-

► Daniel Zeichner was re-elected as Cambridge's MP in December  
(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

breaking vote to leave the EU, I am very concerned that the Government has wasted almost eighteen months since the Bill was first introduced and we now have a very short time to get new systems in place, thanks to the foolish decision by Boris Johnson not to seek a longer extension to the negotiations with the EU."

Zeichner may only hold this shadow ministerial position until April, when the next Labour Party leader is selected.

Zeichner was re-elected as Cambridge's Labour MP in December 2019, winning 48% of the total voting share.

NEWS

**Zeichner calls on Home Office to reverse visa refusal to Newnham academic**



► Dr Asiya Islam (ANDREW HYNES)

Page 8 ►

FEATURES

**My time in the military**

Page 11 ►

OPINION

*Millie Morgan*

We need to decide how we really feel about the Royal Family

Page 15 ►



► (FLICKR/BOOK CATALOGUE)

SCIENCE

More valuable than oil: data and the individual

Page 16 ►

VIOLET

**How to find love in Cambridge: a losers guide**

Page 30 ►

## News

# Institute of Criminology defends Master's partnership with Hong Kong Police Force

**Victor Jack**  
Senior News Editor  
**Chloe Bayliss**  
Associate Editor

Cambridge's Institute of Criminology has no immediate plans to end its partnership with the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) in its MSt in Applied Criminology and Police Management, despite ongoing accusations of human rights violation on the HKPF.

Speaking to Varsity, Programme Chair Professor Lawrence Sherman and Director Dr Heather Strange said course coordinators are "acutely aware of the political situation in Hong Kong and the Institute of Criminology and University are keeping the situation under constant review".

But they said "the programme takes an academic and evidence-based approach" to policing and "does not offer practical training" - and confirmed 14 students enrolled for the next intake this year will come from the HKPF, out of a total of around 150.

The HKPF have come under fire in the past few months for the increasingly forceful treatment of anti-government protesters, with 2 deaths so far.

Dr Strang and Professor Sherman

added "during 2020, officers from Hong Kong undertaking research for their Master's theses have been encouraged to focus on topics which touch directly on the concerns currently faced by their peers."

The part-time course runs over 2 years with 6 weeks of teaching time - 3 weeks in Cambridge and 3 abroad - and has a yearly intake of 30.

According to the Institute of Criminology website, it has cooperated with HKPC for this course since 2017, and "is designed to provide training for senior police officers in the study of crime and harm-reduction issues."

The first cohort of Hong Kong senior police officers graduated from the Cambridge Institute of Criminology's on December 3rd, with a view to develop "future leaders in the Force".

Commissioner Tang Ping-keung, Head of the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF), attended the graduation ceremony alongside academic staff from the University and other notable figures from the HKPF.

Following calls for independent inquiries into increasing concerns of human rights violations by the Hong Kong Police force, the Institute of Criminology's partnership has also drawn media attention from Hong Kong news

“  
The police should facilitate peaceful protest, not restrict or disrupt it.  
”

► The Cambridge Institute has confirmed 14 students will still take part in this year's programme (PHOTO © GIVEN UP (CC-BY-SA/2.0))

outlets.

Twitter users in Hong Kong and abroad criticised the initiative, with one branding it "a degree in human rights abuses", and another asking "does this mean a Cambridge degree is totally devalued?"

The Director of Amnesty International Hong Kong, Man Kei Tam, has repeatedly called for "an independent and effective investigation into the police use of force" after a shooting of a teenager during demonstrations in November, and after 287 protestors were arrested by police on New Year's Day.

Commenting on this month's arrests, he noted protestors - numbering in their tens of thousands - were given 30 minutes to disperse before tear gas and water cannons were fired.

He continued, "This in effect prevented people from exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. The police should facilitate peaceful protest, not restrict or disrupt it."

Protests in Hong Kong began in June in opposition to the proposed Extradition Bill, which would allow extraditions to mainland China, but has morphed into a broader movement demanding full democracy for the special administrative region.



# TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

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**Salary: £24,000** (accommodation provided if required)

**Closing Date: 7<sup>th</sup> February**

**Interviews: 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> February**

The application form and job description can be found at:

<https://www.tonbridge-school.co.uk/about/employment-opportunities>

Completed applications to:

**Headmaster, Tonbridge School, High Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1JP**

**01732 365555 • [schooladmin@tonbridge-school.org](mailto:schooladmin@tonbridge-school.org)**



Tonbridge School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure & Barring Service.

# Sir Keir Starmer supported by Cambridge MP in Labour leadership race

Grace Lozinski  
News Correspondent

“Keir encapsulates the best of Britain” and is “the exact opposite of Boris Johnson,” Cambridge Labour MP Zeichner told the Cambridge Independent last week.

Zeichner expressed his support for the Labour leadership candidate the same day on Twitter, retweeting a video produced by Starmer’s election campaign.

The Cambridge MP explained that he is supporting Starmer because he has “gravitas, assurance, and experience”, and that he believes Starmer has the support of local Labour voters.

“[Keir Starmer] has been a regular visitor to Cambridge to help me and the Cambridge Labour Party, and I was struck by how many people on the doorstep spontaneously expressed

the hope that he would one day lead Labour. That is what Labour needs - a leader the country wants. That’s good for Labour, and even better for Britain.”

Zeichner also praised the leadership candidate’s personal qualities.

“People like working with him, and for him, he inspires confidence and respect, he listens. He is exactly the kind of person everyone would like as a colleague, and as a boss - the exact opposite of Boris Johnson.”

The news comes as the first round of Labour’s leadership contest, in which candidates must be nominated by at least 22 MPs and MEPs, closes. The five contenders progressing to the second round, in which they must gain the backing of trade unions and local Labour party groups, are Keir Starmer, Rebecca Long-Bailey,

Lisa Nandy, Emily Thornberry, and Jess Phillips. Labour party members will then elect a leader from the resulting shortlist of candidates.

Starmer has consistently adopted a pro-EU position in his role as Shadow Brexit Secretary, although he now accepts that Britain will leave the EU on 31st January.

With 89 nominations and the support of Britain’s largest trade union, Unison, Starmer is almost certain to be included in the final ballot.

Starmer was previously Director of Public Prosecutions from 2008-13 and was awarded a knighthood in 2014. He was first elected as MP for Holborn and St Pancras in 2015.

The results of the leadership election will be announced on 4th April.

## BITCOIN BONANZA Student wins first bitcoin scholarship

Robin Kohze, a second year PhD student studying human genomics has been awarded the first Bitcoin scholarship, after a series of successful blockchain competitions and hackathons. The Satoshi Nakamoto scholarship - named after the founder of bitcoin - was awarded to him by the Bitcoin Association, which is the first organisation committed to commerce of the virtual currency.

## LE-GO-GO-GO Engineering department hosts lego robot tournament

Trinity fellow and Senior Lecturer at the Engineering Department Dr Hugh Hunt on hosted 200 school-children for a LEGO robot tournament on Tuesday. The event, called the the Institute of Engineering and Technology First Lego League, saw autonomous Lego robots built by the children compete to complete as many ‘missions’ as possible in 2 and a half minutes.

## PEACOCK FLEECOCK Churchill houses missing peacock

Churchill college has taken in a new temporary resident: a peacock. Posters have been put up by the college around town stating ‘LOST PEACOCK - A lost peacock is looking for his owner’. This is not the first time a roaming peacock has taken to the streets of Cambridge, as in 2017, one was spotted visiting Fitzwilliam, John’s and Lucy Cavendish. If this is your pet, please contact Churchill at 0122333600.

## TREE OF THE CROP Cambridge academic discovers tallest tree in Amazon

A group of scientists led by Professor Eric Gorgens, have discovered the new tallest tree in the Amazon rainforest using LIDAR, a form of remote sensing operated by a laser sensor placed on an aircraft. The tree is 88.5metres high - almost three times the height of King’s Chapel, and it is thought the group of trees that includes it may be up to 400 years old, and are all belong to the same species called *Dinizia excelsa*.



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## News

# 'Weird Games' Students and AI face off in today's ultracompetitive job market

**Victor Jack**  
Senior News Editor

When Carla Hill, a final year English undergraduate at Selwyn, recently applied to Unilever's 'Future Leaders' graduate programme, she was troubled by the use of online games in the application.

"I don't always feel you are being taken seriously," she told *Varsity*. She says she "doesn't particularly trust" the scientific backing, which "seems very generalised".

Unilever's Future Leaders programme receives 250,000 applications annually for only 800 places, and around 1.8 million applications a year globally for just 30,000 jobs. It claims this saved 100,000 hours of time assessing candidates, and \$1million last year.

But her concerns are common at a time when artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming ever more widespread in recruiting. AI – broadly, the ability of computers to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence – is increasingly becoming the norm in recruiting. A report [behind paywall] by the Institute of Student Employers last summer surveying 153 global companies determined 59% now use psychometric tests and 10% gamified assessments.

The top five sectors Cambridge students graduate into are health and research, banking, manufacturing and marketing, teaching, and service industries, according to the latest data available. David Ainscough, Deputy Director of the Cambridge Careers Service, says "particu-



▲ Artificial intelligence is becoming ever more widespread in recruiting (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

larly with big recruiters, managing the volume of applications is one argument for automating the process", as well as removing human error.

"One of the major complaints we have is firms just don't get back to students quickly enough ... the fact you can get a very quick response [with AI] is generally well regarded". But he cautions "the lack of familiarity coupled with the uncertainty of what being tested for ... have led to quite a lot of concerns".

Proponents of AI argue it improves the efficiency of the process by up to three times, as well as improving retention rates and the application experience.

One example of a firm using 'gamified' assessments is accounting giant PwC, which hired over 38,000 graduates last year globally, and in the UK whittles

down around 40,000 applicants a year to 1,500 [behind paywall]. After the CV and initial screening, candidates play games, officially termed 'behaviour-based assessments', which test for suitable personality traits. Robert Newry, CEO and Co-Founder of Arctic Shores which runs the tests, explained that they identify the 5-10 "most important" traits from existing employees and managers – "typically" sampling over 100 – matched to around 12,000 data points taken from each candidate in the assessment.

Juliet Merelie, a student from Newnham who got an internship last year, praised the flexibility of using an app and said it "felt less formal and pre-rehearsed" than normal assessments while adding "even expert psychometric assessments aren't proven to be able to accurately

capture personality".

Concerns have been raised that the use of AI may neglect individuality, accuracy and data rights – and lack transparency. One student at King's said: "I don't know if it produces any accurate metrics about how good an employee someone will be. People who are used to playing computer games ... are at a much greater advantage of doing better". She added such assessments can also be "more stressful than normal tests [due to] the games testing reaction times, which got a bit overwhelming". Another at Selwyn argued "applicants have little room to demonstrate individuality, by possessing a trait which isn't coded into the system, and also means companies limit themselves to a cognitively homogeneous set of successful applicants".

Mr Newry insisted "the role of our experienced occupational psychologists is to review the data for its context, suitability and breadth", stating his firm "conducted 18 months of research and validation on all the tasks ... to the quality standards of organisations like the British Psychological Society". The Selwyn student also worried "organisations can very quickly accumulate information and create a complex applicant profile" based on the assessments, a concern shared by Ahmed Zaidi, Chief Technology Officer and Co-Founder of Catalyst AI, a Cambridge-based AI consultancy.

"The raw data is something definitely needing to be discussed. Who owns that data, how it's sorted and used is a question that is relevant and pertinent," he said. PwC's Senior Manager of media

relations Ellie Raven said she "can understand the concerns" but stressed PwC is "white-on-white" on the relevant EU law, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). She added, "We use some of it for things like seeing if we are getting the [desired] diverse range of applicants ... it's definitely not transferred to any third parties or anything".

GDPR imposes no time limit for deleting graduate applicants' data and PwC's website states it retains data of successful applicants – and for unsuccessful applicants, "for a reasonable period of time to deal with any matter which may arise in connection with your application ... and for our legitimate business purposes (for example, to make sure we do not contact an individual about a role they have already applied for)". Further still, a recent report found only 28% of companies are fully GDPR compliant.

Zaidi also commented that "we won't know until a few years down the line when someone bothers to do a controlled experiment on whether these games even work" in the longer term. "Unless academics decide to venture down this path and research it, it's very unlikely that you'll see any research," he argues.

"Companies will say it's proprietary and will not reveal any of the information on these models", meaning we may only know about any issues as models become outdated.

Students are equally worried about this. One recent applicant to a 'Big Three' consultancy firm said he'd "really appreciate more transparency in the feedback process."

## Cambridge MP rebukes Government's decision not to back Erasmus scheme

**Christopher Dorrell**  
Deputy News Editor  
**Sophie Huskisson**  
Senior News Editor

Cambridge MP Daniel Zeichner has accused the UK government of "coldly throwing away opportunities for our young people" following its decision to abandon guarantees for the popular European academic exchange programme, Erasmus+.

The amendment to the Brexit withdrawal agreement, tabled by Liberal Democrat MP Layla Moran, which would have required the Government to seek to negotiate continuing full membership of the EU's Erasmus scheme, was defeated by 344 votes to 254 in a vote last Wednesday.

“It would be a huge blow to the MML degree...”

Zeichner said: "This is another hugely disappointing decision from a Government that seems hell bent on taking us down an increasingly isolationist and self-destructive path."

Describing the Erasmus+ scheme as an "invaluable opportunity for educational and cultural exchange between ourselves and Europe", the Labour MP said that "Casting its future into doubt in this way is nonsensical, and just goes to show what little priority the Government is giving to the future and opportunities of our young people as we leave the EU."

The Erasmus scheme is an EU funded program that organises international student exchanges. Established in 1987, over 5,000 higher institutions now participate in the Erasmus Program across 37 countries.

At the University, the departments of Modern and Medieval Languages (MML), Law, Engineering, and Physics allow undergraduates to participate in the scheme, many more departments allow PhD students to do so.

Lauren, a fourth-year MML student at Magdalene, received two Erasmus grants on her year abroad last year, where she studied for six months in Madrid and six months in Munich.

Speaking to *Varsity*, she said the grants take away the burden of having to "scrimp and save and budget and worry... it will be impossible for a lot of people to get by working OR studying."

When asked how students would be affected if the UK stopped participating in the scheme, Lauren said it would be "a huge blow to the MML degree... My year abroad was definitely my favourite

“Established in 1987, over 5,000 higher institutions now participate in the program across 37 countries”

year so far and such a learning curve - incomparable to Cambridge in terms of language acquisition."

Lauren also acknowledged that, aside from the MML degree, "it's invaluable to have students from other universities do their Erasmus scheme in Cambridge - it breaks the homogeneity of cultural backgrounds."

More than 16,500 UK students studied abroad in 2016-17 thanks to the program constituting over half the total of UK students who study abroad, and more than 31,000 EU students came to the UK.

Spokespersons from the Government said they were "committed to continuing the academic relationship between the UK and the EU, including through the next Erasmus+ programme if it is in our interests to do so."

# New student report rebuts Robinson's Living Wage policy

**Christopher Dorrell**  
Deputy News Editor

The Robinson Living Wage Campaign released a new report presenting renewed arguments to the College about paying its staff the Real Living Wage yesterday.

The report, based on Robinson's 2018 financial accounts, claims the college "been increasing their endowment by millions each year, whilst non-academic staff pay has stagnated since 2012". It estimates based on this data, paying all non-academic staff the Real Living Wage to all the staff would amount to 0.002% of its yearly invested endowment.

In 2018, Robinson paid 128 workers below the Real Living Wage - which in Cambridge stands at £9.30 - more than any other college in the University.

The report comes after the College refused to respond to parts of a Freedom of Information request for employment data of 2019 on the grounds the information could affect future staff recruitment and

student enrollment.

It further rebuts claims from the College that it cannot afford the cost of paying the Living Wage by pointing to the size of recent increases in the college's wealth. Based on these previous accounts, the report claims the College has earned £14.6 million from its investments.

In response to *Varsity's* inquiry, Robinson Finance Bursar Fiona Brockbank stated that they have "provide[d] an explanation that our commercial interests outweighed the public interest for the other questions raised" in their refusal for a full response to the Campaign's request.

They continued that the college "made an adjusted operating deficit of £302,000 in 2018, which is how we measure financial operating performance".

2019 saw a weaker financial year for the college, with a £2 million (3.4%) return on investments, partially due to increased pension costs. However, the report notes the college nonetheless stated in its accounts that it is still in a financially strong

position.

The report suggests these figures mask the true financial capabilities of the college particularly as "interest on a large outstanding loan that the college is paying back has been moved into operational costs, but investment growth has not".

The report further claims Robinson's resistance comes as its warden, the equivalent of master or president, was the highest paid in Cambridge as of 2017.

Brockbank insisted "the Warden has one international trip per year funded by the College." and "would contest the claim that the Warden is the highest paid" in 2020, but did not give details on current salaries.

A spokesperson from the Robinson Living Wage Campaign said "time and time again, Robinson have claimed that they are financially unable to improve working conditions for their lowest paid staff, but our findings show these statements to be nothing more than lies and disinformation."

"We hope that college will take our

report as an opportunity to open up an honest dialogue with students and workers about how our institution can help remedy the stark social divisions in the city".

The Campaign has been given added urgency after Cambridge was named the most unequal city in the UK earlier this week. There is a widespread feeling that the failure of many colleges to pay the Living Wage contributes to this.

A spokesperson from CUSU Ethical Affairs Campaign said that Robinson "actively plays a part in the maintaining of huge income disparity in one of the most unequal cities in the UK" in its refusal to pay the Living Wage. They added "students will continue to work to uncover their [colleges'] unethical employment practices" until the Living Wage is paid across all colleges.

The Robinson Living Wage Campaign is part of the wider Cambridge University Living Wage Campaign which aims to make all Colleges accredited institutions. Currently, eight colleges pay the Living

Wage to all their workers, according to the Taylor's Table released in November. Meanwhile, Queens' and Girton are the only two colleges that are accredited by the Living Wage Foundation.

A spokesperson for Robinson said the college "values its staff and recognises the significant contribution they make to every aspect of College life. We routinely engage directly with staff on their concerns, including around pay, and have mechanisms in place to facilitate this."

The Real Living Wage is calculated by the Living Wage Foundation by using a basket of goods from the Minimum Income Standard and tries to take into account regional differences in the cost of living.

Unlike the minimum wage, institutions voluntarily sign up to become Living Wage accredited. Currently over 180,000 employers have received a pay rise as a result of the Living Wage Campaign while nearly 6,000 businesses have become accredited Living Wage Employers.

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**TIME**  
9.30am to  
16.30 am

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## News

# Zeichner calls on Home Office to reverse visa refusal to Newnham academic Asiya Islam

**Amy Batley**  
Deputy News Editor

Cambridge MP Daniel Zeichner has called upon the UK Home Office to reconsider the visa status of Dr Asiya Islam, a Junior Research Fellow in Sociology at Newnham, who was refused Indefinite Leave to Remain in November.

The Home Office claim that Islam was out of the UK for too many days, in violation of the terms of her student visa. Dr Islam has explained that her travel was necessary in order for her to conduct sociological research for her Cambridge PhD, which she completed last year.

Zeichner argued that “Ministers need to understand that many academics have to work abroad as part of their job”. Regulation for the Tier 2 visa, which international academics employed by the UK receive, have provisions to allow for extensive travel overseas for the purpose of academic fieldwork. However, the Tier 4 student visa, which Dr Islam was living in the UK on as she completed her PhD, does not allow such provisions.

Zeichner has called for UK Home Secretary, Priti Patel, to “think again and urgently grant permission to a researcher to be allowed to continue her academic work at the University of Cambridge”.

“Britain risks being left behind by a mean-spirited box ticking culture with no regard to ensuring the brightest and

best contribute to world leading research,” he added.

A Home Office spokesperson told Varsity that Dr Islam’s appeal “is currently being considered by the Home Office”.

Speaking to Varsity, Dr Islam raised concern that if the Home Office does not reverse their decision on her case, it will have “serious ramifications for the UK’s ability to attract academic talent”.

Over 2000 academics, both at Cambridge and elsewhere, have signed an open letter urging a reversal of the decision, but the Home Office has yet to indicate that it would reevaluate Dr Islam’s case, and Dr Islam has not received further communication from them.

Dr Islam is undertaking a legal appeal of the decision. Her appeal hearing on 27th February “is almost a full month after my current visa expires on 30 January” which, she argues, puts her “in not only a vulnerable, but an impossible position”.

In November, Dr Islam told Varsity, “It just feels like the Home Office is just building more and more walls to block out people as best as it can”, and in an opinion article in Times Higher Education published this week, she wrote that “for more than two months now, I have woken up every day thinking about my visa.” She has since added that it is “vital that the Home Secretary intervenes in my case urgently, particularly if she wants to demonstrate her commitment



to ‘global Britain’.

The University and College Union (UCU) have also written to the Home Office on behalf of Islam. In a letter sent to Priti Patel on 13th January, UCU Gen-

▲ Dr Asiya Islam is a Junior Research Fellow at Newnham College  
(ANDREW HYNES)

eral Secretary Jo Grady raised concern about “the Home Office’s restrictive interpretation of the guidance means we risk losing a talented academic from our higher education sector”.

## Fake HMRC emails place at least ten students at significant financial risk

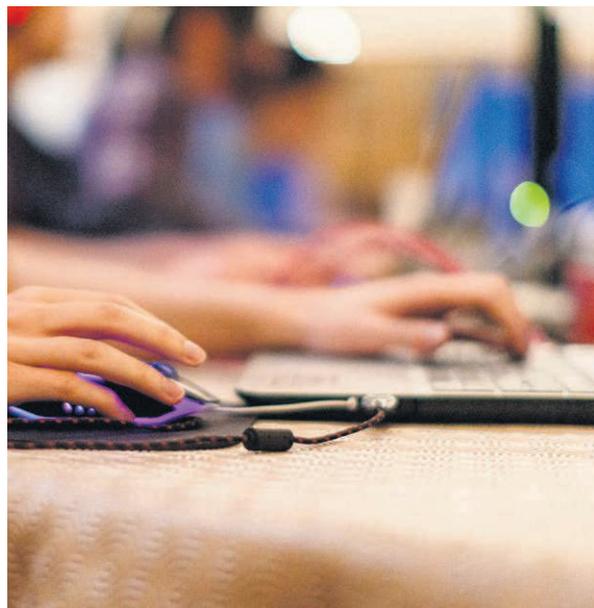
**Zac Ntim**  
News Correspondent

At least ten students are known to have been placed at significant financial risk by responding to well-targeted scam email sent by fraudsters pretending to be HMRC staff over the last two weeks.

The scam email informed students they were entitled to a tax refund - often quoting the sum of £550.44 - and provided a website link for students to input their personal information to receive their refund.

The University has “instigated the removal” of a malicious website associated with the scam and is warning students to be vigilant; to not open attachments or click on any links provided in similar emails.

A University spokesperson said: “Along with other universities, Cambridge was recently targeted by tax-related scam emails. As soon as the threat was highlighted the University worked to cascade



▲ The Chief Executive of Universities UK said students must “remain vigilant and question anything that seems unusual”  
(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

warnings and advice, via email, to colleges, tutors, students and staff.

“A small number of students have reported mistakenly responding to the email. No other University information was accessed in this incident.”

The University did not respond to questions about how fraudsters managed to obtain student email addresses, or what measures have been put in place to keep them safe in the future.

However, a University spokesperson added: “Students receive IT security information during Fresher induction sessions and continue to receive regular updates on potential IT threats throughout their time at Cambridge. “The best protection is student awareness. If an email looks too good to be true, then it is probably a scam.”

Tax-related student scams are common and often take form by sending fake tax refunds using seemingly legitimate university email addresses to avoid detection. Last year over 620,000 tax-related email scams were reported to

“  
The best protection is student awareness. If an email looks too good to be true, then it is probably a scam  
”

HMRC - an increase of 20,000 on the previous year.

First-year students who are new to University and international students who are not familiar with the British tax system are particularly susceptible.

HMRC has written to all British Universities this term highlighting the threat of scam emails.

Depending on the details a fraudster obtains, they could steal money, set up a bank account or even take control of computers - accessing functions such as webcams. Students are advised to forward all suspicious emails claiming to be from HMRC to phishing@hmrc.gov.uk and texts to 60599.

In a press release, Alistair Jarvis, Chief Executive of Universities UK, said: “The message to students is to remain vigilant and question anything that seems unusual. We would encourage any student who fears their account may have been misused to speak to either their university support services,

# Living Wage Campaign questions University claims

**Olivia Mustafa**  
News Correspondent

Cambridge Living Wage Campaign have voiced doubts over the validity of a University statement claiming that 21 colleges are paying at least £9 an hour.

The student-led campaign released a Facebook post on Sunday evening questioning whether this statistic accounts for the wages of temporary and subcontracted staff, and called for the 21 colleges mentioned to seek official Living Wage Foundation accreditation.

The comments, which were made by a university spokesman in a recent Guardian article about inequality in Cambridge, refer to a survey conducted by the University in November 2019.

However, the Living Wage Campaign claim that their own research from Freedom of Information requests, dated July 2019, reveals that “only eight colleges were eligible for Living Wage accreditation”.

The post claims that “It is unlikely that in such a short period of time all 21 colleges have now included casual and agency staff in their self-defined policy”, as their survey found that only two have official accreditation with the Living Wage Foundation.

The campaign told *Varsity* that, “The content of the survey quoted by



▲ The University claims that 21 colleges pay their staff £9 a hour, a figure the living wage campaign disputes (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

the University is both deliberately vague and problematic in attempting to portray college’s as operating a fair living wage policy.”

Further details of this were given to by the Living Wage Campaign, who told *Varsity* that, “We do not know the exact contents of the survey that colleges filled out, but the

statement given to the Observer claims that 25 colleges are operating on a ‘living wage policy.’”

“We sent out a Freedom of Information Act request to every college in July 2019, and only eight reported paying the living wage to casual and permanent staff with a few noting an upcoming increase.”

“In light of this, we have some doubts that the ‘living wage policy’ that colleges were surveyed on is in line with the Living Wage Foundation’s qualifications for accreditation detailed above- thus they are not paying the living wage.”

In a statement to *Varsity*, a University spokesperson said: “The Colleges are separate legal entities to the University and control their

own finances. All institutions in the collegiate University, however, seek to engage collectively in reviewing and delivering fair employment to their staff,” and maintained that 21 colleges “were aligned to at least the Real Living Wage, valued at £9 an hour at the time of reporting.”

The Real Living Wage is currently set at £9.30, having risen from £9 in November 2019.

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# Vigil to be held in memory of Cambridge PhD student Giulio Regeni

**Grace Lozinski**  
News Correspondent

A vigil, co-hosted by Amnesty UK’s Cambridge City Group and Cambridge UCU, will be held in memory of Girton PhD student, Giulio Regeni, on the 25th January on King’s Parade to mark the anniversary of his disappearance in January 2016.

Regeni went missing on a research trip in Cairo in January 2016. His body was found on 3rd February of the same year, showing signs of significant mutilation and torture.

Italian authorities have been investigating Regeni’s death in coordination with Egyptian officials but no one has been charged four years after Regeni’s disappearance.

Italian prosecutors accused Egyptian officials of attempting to mislead the investigation into Regeni’s death.

Prosecutor Sergio Colaiocco said that: “Fake stories were fabricated to throw off the investigation” almost as soon as Regeni’s body was found.

Regeni’s friends and family have long alleged that the Egyptian authorities were involved in the student’s killing, but the Egyptian government denies the claim and has offered other explanations, including that Regeni was killed in a car accident or by a criminal gang.

Regeni was conducting his research on Egyptian trade unions, which is a controversial topic for the country’s military regime as trade unions played a role in toppling the dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak in 2011. The new government cracked down on union activity in the country as a result.

Regeni may have come to the attention of the authorities as a result of the meetings he organised with union leaders over the course of his research.

In November 2018, Italian prosecutors named several members of the Egyptian national security agency as suspects to Regeni’s alleged torture and murder.

Egyptian officials have admitted that security services were monitoring Regeni but have denied that he died in custody.

The University was criticised in 2017 by the Italian government for its alleged refusal to cooperate with the Italian investigation into Regeni’s death.

Posting on Facebook, Cambridge University Amnesty International (CUAI) wrote: “This is a very important event to mark the fourth anniversary of the disappearance of Giulio Regeni. CUAI will be co-hosting and it would be great to see as many Cambridge students as possible.”

A minute silence will be held at the vigil at 6.41pm, when the last communication was received from Giulio.



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# Features

## Learning to live with loneliness



**Betty Townley** explores the inevitability of loneliness

In my very first month at Cambridge, my shiny new friend gifted me a copy of *The Opposite of Loneliness* by Marina Keegan, a beautiful essay written by a Yale student on the eve of graduation – a rich snapshot of the years she spent at Yale: ‘It’s not quite love and it’s not quite community...When the check is paid and you stay at the table...when it’s four a.m. and no one goes to bed.’

Head over heels in love with my own new *Mallory Towers* existence, the essay resonated perfectly with me. Now in my second year, while I still recognise the giddy euphoria of running around drunk in fancy gowns and the safe contentedness of sitting up until the early hours in a friend’s room talking, I also see a coexistent flipside of the experience. Be it the sickening sense of being the ‘only one’ not good enough, the

“It’s not quite love and it’s not quite community”

heart-rending Camfess posts or the drunk girl in Market Square running round yelling into the night sky in the empty hope it unfurls to wrap her up and love her – loneliness is woven into the fabric of our lives here.

Just metres from each other in our little box-like rooms, most of us are less ‘alone’ than we’ve ever been, and yet, isolated. The discussion of loneliness experienced by young people, however, I believe is far too binary – either over-medicalised or over-romanticised, and too often confused with being alone. The experience of loneliness at university is both collective and taboo – a shared emotional experience that should unite rather than isolate. I spoke to students about their experiences, and their stories illuminated a cohesive narrative, one where each person felt hesitant to admit to feeling lonely – perhaps because, as one student remarked, it can be ‘associated with inferiority or a lack of likeability’. Their stories progressed similarly as they learnt to adjust to living alone. One student commented that, in their first year, ‘every evening I wasn’t spending doing something felt like a personal failure’, and most agreed that while the initial loneliness of

having left home dissipated with time, it did not entirely disappear. One student explained, ‘I still can feel lonely, but I just no longer correlate this directly to being on my own.’

I am, of course, not trying to monopolise collective loneliness as a ‘Cambridge problem’, but I wonder if there are some factors of the highly-pressurised experience that contribute to this complicated emotional reality. Perhaps it is influenced by the amount of time our workload requires us to spend alone, or the individualistic currency of success – grades, theatre, sport... So many people around me seem to be violently addicted to personal achievement and competition that, in the end, only isolates. Does the entry requirement of top exam grades create an unhealthy concentration of people with a propensity to locking themselves up alone, inside their subjects and minds?

Balancing a healthy emotional state and consistent dedication to academics is, as has been endlessly documented, far from easy, and in the eight-week sprints I find it hard to stop my emotional and academic life from swilling together, re-reading literature essays and to

▲ “Loneliness is woven into the fabric of our lives here”

(BETTY TOWNLEY)

“I don’t think we need to ‘cure’ loneliness, even if we could”

find them saying a lot more about my tangled mind rather than their supposed subject.

Every time I return home for the holidays I find myself gushing about the poetry and community of my life in Cambridge, and, strangely, I find moments of loneliness a comforting and integral part of this mythology. In *Adieu to Norman, Bon Jour to Joan and Jean-Paul*, Frank O’Hara writes, ‘It is good to be several floors up in the dead of night / wondering if you are any good or not’, a line that captures a unique mood I associate with Cambridge terms. There is a calm to sitting at the only desk lit in the library at 2am, a happy melancholy to a cold early morning walk on your own. There might be a camp tragedy to sitting in a 19th century stone staircase crying the glitter off your face, but in the moment, it’s horrible. Romanticisation has its limits, and many people that I’ve spoken to linked their worst experiences of loneliness with the ‘party lifestyle’, thought to be the ‘social pinnacle of one’s life’. One student encapsulated this with thoughtful clarity: ‘I think there is an expectation of young people to never feel lonely and be out all the time, especially in University culture. It doesn’t really leave space for feeling lonely when surrounded by people. I can find clubs extremely lonely and yet they are seen as the height of feeling like you belong somewhere.’ ‘Feeling like you belong’ seems to pervade as one of the most coveted feelings in the popular imagination, and one of the most difficult to ever fully satisfy.

Prominent psychoanalytical theorist Melanie Klein describes loneliness as ‘a ubiquitous yearning for an unattainable perfect internal state’ tracing the feeling of complete belonging and understanding to the non-verbal connection between mother and baby in early infancy. She concludes that loneliness can never be entirely eliminated because it demonstrates a notional connection with the world, a wish to connect with others – the ability to feel lonely means we’re part of the cosmic social structure of the human population. I don’t think we need to ‘cure’ loneliness, even if we could, but to accept it as an inevitable facet of the human condition.

I can’t offer a way to banish feeling lonely, but I hope that we get better at talking about it. Tell your friends you love them. Keep crying in turrets and club toilets – it’s something that we will, one day, walk away from and never get back.

# My time in the military

*Jonathan Chan* reflects on the lessons he learned from his days in the military

*Content Note: This article contains detailed discussion of violence and life in the military.*

**I**t's been three years since I left the military.

On my last day of service, I reported to my unit's office to collect my pink identification card. The office itself was vacant — the troopers I'd had under my charge were at the airport getting ready for an exercise in Thailand. Retrieving one's identification card represents reentry into civilian life in Singapore, not least because it is replaced by a military identification card when one enlists. The last day is often one of inexorable relief, an alleviation to the crushing monotony and weight that most Singaporean boys feel during their two years of compulsory service in the Singapore Armed Forces.

At any given point in time, there are at least 45,000 conscripts, all at the precipice of adulthood, who have enlisted. They perform duties ranging from clerical work to security patrols, warfare training to technical maintenance. Some enlist into the police or civil defense force to fight crime or fires. A family friend once called it an experience defined by sacrifice, in which one is forced to give up one's time, education, work, and wages for a greater purpose.

It is in common parlance in mature colleges to exchange stories of what one did before arriving in university. Given that all undergraduates must be 21 on the day of their matriculation, it is invariable that every person has a different experience to offer in conversation. Recounting my military experiences to my British counterparts in Wolfson was often met with a mix of awe and curiosity, something that became a source of bemusement to me. Perhaps that attests to the militarisation of Singaporean culture, one in which trading army tales is a normal way for men of any age to establish a sense of rapport.

I've often heard remarks that Britain should consider reinstating a policy of national service as a way of cultivating civic-mindedness and helping to dismantle the increasingly ossified boundaries of class and race. A friend suggested other forms of public service apart from the military — two years as a sanitation worker, for instance. Given the long shadow cast by British militarism, one that sustained centuries of colonial violence and, more recently, evidence of torture in the Middle East, that sounded like a palatable alternative. It was one pursued by friends I made at Wolfson in places such as Finland and Denmark.

I was the first person in my immediate family, as well as my entire generation, to serve in any kind of military. My parents never had such obligations to their home countries of Malaysia and South Korea. The



“The last day is often one of inexorable relief”

same can be said for my cousins, most of whom are either naturalised American citizens or female. There was a fear that welled up inside of me the day before I enlisted. I'd seen friends from school and church go through the process and received their counsel. An uncle in Seoul who'd served in the Korean army told me that everything would be okay. While their words offered some comfort, I could not stop trembling on the day that I received my rifle.

A friend in Cambridge once told me that I had a 'military resilience'. It seemed to help me cope with the stresses of managing my academic and extracurricular commitments, allowing me to 'soldier on'. Perhaps it was the choice of metaphors that I found striking, but more surprising was the recognition of the indelible imprint that conscription had left on my life. With most of my weekdays spent in camp, I was forced to be efficient with what little time I had. I remember being chided by my fellow commanders for falling asleep with books on my face, forgetting to switch off the lights in our bunk. I remember filling my weekends with the warmth of family, friends and my church, with reading and university applications. I remember the dread that used to accompany every return to camp and the inevitability of living on regulated time, compelled to responsibility by the authority of my rank.

Sometimes I think that resilience was forged in the absurdity of a nineteen-year old taking charge of soldiers one, three, even four years older than him. It is likely that im-

▲ **The first in the family, and an entire generation, to serve in the military**

(JONATHAN CHAN)

“I remember the dread that used to accompany every return to camp and the inevitability of living on regulated time”

poster syndrome struck me then, way before I knew how to describe those feelings of inadequacy. In my early days as a sergeant, leading soldiers during exercises in the jungle, I tried to mask my uncertainty with the veneer of confidence.

This past Michaelmas, I studied for the Tragedy paper, a compulsory module for Part II of the English Tripos. I wrote an essay on simulated violence — instances in drama and art where the artist displaces or relocates the site of violence to the mind. It is the violence of Ajax falling on his sword hidden from view onstage, or the violence of Medea's children being slaughtered behind closed doors. It is the violence of imagining Lavinia's appendages being lopped off, and the violence of watching the Duchess of Malfi gaze upon the wax corpses of her husband and children. It made me confront these macabre instances of violence and attempt to articulate why they made me so squeamish. It brought me back to the same fear I experienced when I first learned to shoot a rifle — when I was told that I would be taught to kill.

In the military, I was posted to the army's aggressor unit, a company where we played enemy forces during wargames. It was a novel posting, one that never fails to raise eyebrows. The idea was to bring soldiers as closely to the site of violence as possible without actually encroaching on it. To achieve that, we utilised the 'Tactical Engagement System', a complex network of sensors that we affixed to our helmets, vests, and rifles. When one fired a blank, the sensor would emit a laser. Each soldier on the battlefield carried a 'game boy', a device that indicated one's physical status during the skirmish. If we were hit by a simulated round, our sensors would emit a high-pitched ring and our game boys would dutifully inform us that we were suffering a 'penetrating wound through the left eye' or that our 'right leg' had been 'blown off'. I used to be in charge of collecting and distributing these sensors.

As time went on, I began to find that those initial apprehensions to combat had been inured by experience. We would go out to the field at least two to three times a month, to attack or be attacked by another unit. It was vital to begin to think of it all as a game, one with its own sportsmanlike conduct and integrity. Simulations were meant to equip people for the real thing. Yet, we could never be led to envision the pain of real violence.

Singapore's military exists for defense. The island is small, and it has had an unfortunate history of suffering attacks by terrorists and insurgents. Its small population makes it difficult to maintain a defense force without civilian conscripts. It develops defense systems in the event of the unthinkable. A military is necessary to enforce a policy of

deterrence, one that strives to uphold the Westphalian conception of state borders. Diplomacy and negotiations must work in tandem with it. These are the things I've become accustomed to saying when people express confusion at the need for military service in Singapore at all. It has sometimes been difficult to maintain this hard-edged pragmatism in conversations with friends campaigning for the demilitarisation of the university.

I left the military three years ago with some measure of ambivalence. I will always be grateful for the few lessons that have stuck with me. It was a time that shaped my Christian faith, teaching me to trust God through trying, exhausting circumstances. It was my faith, in turn, that led me to chafe against the military's conception of leadership. I'd seen other officers and sergeants lead by coercion, forcing their subordinates to action by dangling the threat of punishment. It was the *modus operandi* of an autocratic system, one filled with people who did not want to be there. I faced the cognitive dissonance of learning to reconcile the aggressive nature of our responsibilities with a mode of compassionate, honest, and open leadership.

I came to believe that God had given me responsibilities to discharge for the benefit of my troopers, and that the least I could do was try to make the experience meaningful for them. I got to know their fears, their worries, and their aspirations for what would come after their service. I did my best to listen and learn, especially given the diversity of my platoon. (It's an open secret in the Singaporean army that those with foreign affiliations or Malay ancestry are more than likely to get chucked to the infantry. It's a vocation that requires very little exposure to sensitive information. I knew I would be in the infantry from the day that I enlisted.) We laughed, fought, and sang together. I learned afresh what it meant to build trust, to give and receive respect. I grew through my mistakes with my fellow commanders, and, when the time came, tried to impart this sense of compassion to my successors.

There is no such thing as a homogenous experience of national service in the military. It differs sharply between Singaporeans, especially given the variety of vocations we were assigned to. I've traded stories with friends who served their time in Cyprus, Israel, and South Korea. People tend to get as much out of their time in the military as they're willing to put in. The ethics of learned violence are always complicated. My time as a sergeant taught me what it is to remember God. It was a lesson sown in tears and desperate prayers in the jungle, assailed by thunderstorms. I continue to reap it in ways I could not have foreseen.

# Opinion

## Veganuary should only be taken on for the right reasons

We need to encourage conversations about why people are adopting plant-based diets - and whether it's for the right reason

Millie Morgan

**Content Note:** This article contains detailed discussion of disordered eating.

These days, more and more people are boycotting the meat and dairy industries and choosing to invest in more sustainably sourced, plant-based foods. According to the Cambridge University Vegan Society, in a recent email, there has been a three-fold increase in membership this year alone, indicating an increasing prevalence of veganism amongst our student community. But the environmental principles which are fundamental to a vegan lifestyle are somewhat overshadowed by the misconception that veganism is 'more healthy' than eating an animal-based diet.

According to the UK Vegan Society, "Veganism is a way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as is possible and practicable, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose." To a vegan, any health benefits they receive from abstaining from eating animal products are secondary to the environmental impact which they actively aim to create. By this definition, when people go 'vegan' to lose

“Despite what the media might try to project, veganism was not designed with health in mind”

▶ (INSTAGRAM PICKUPLIMES)

weight or improve their health, they are not becoming vegan at all, but simply adopting a plant-based diet.

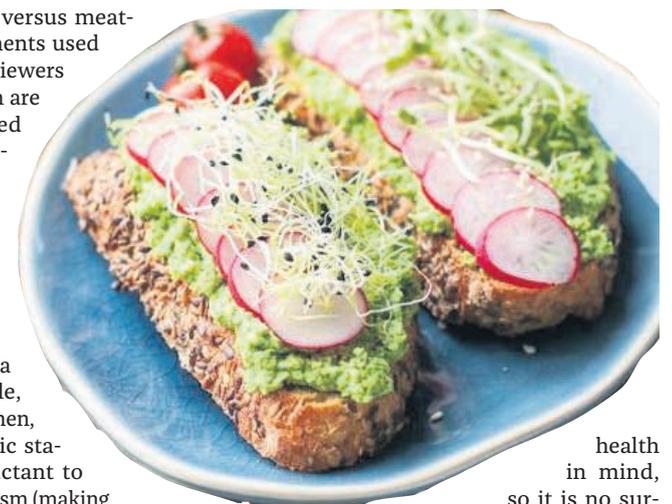
The plant-based diet (often misleadingly referred to in the media as veganism) is perceived as healthy because fruit and vegetables are low in calories and high in nutrients. In contrast, meat and dairy are calorically dense and high in saturated fat, which can cause a rise in cholesterol and lead to an increased risk of heart disease and stroke.

The Netflix Documentary, *The Game Changers*, has convinced many meat-eaters to embark upon a 'vegan diet' by exploring the health benefits of eating plant-based. The documentary detailed miracle recoveries and career rejuvenations experienced by elite athletes which they attribute entirely to their conversion to veganism. I do not doubt that some people are very well suited to a plant-based diet, but the documentary promotes a one-size-fits-all attitude towards diet in general which is unrealistic, and can be dangerous when those who are convinced to give the sensationalised diet a go are misinformed. The documentary does not make explicit what these elite vegan athletes are eating on their plant-based diet, and a lot

of the vegan versus meat-eater experiments used to shock the viewers into veganism are self-disclaimed to be non-scientific.

It can be said that *The Game Changers* has been effective in broadening the appeal of a vegan lifestyle, especially to men, a demographic statistically reluctant to take up veganism (making up only 13% of Veganuary participants last year). This is perhaps due to the historical marketing of meat as an essential to any masculine diet, as discussed in the documentary. Any promotion of the vegan industry over the meat and dairy industries is surely beneficial to the environment, but it shouldn't be the case that this benefit is a side effect of a misinformed health craze.

Despite what the media might try to project, veganism was not designed with



health in mind, so it is no surprise that a plant-

based diet can actually be quite damaging to one's health, when not done properly. Vitamin B12 for example is only found naturally in animal products, and a deficiency can cause the production of abnormally large, dysfunctional red blood cells, leading to deprivation of oxygen in cells. Furthermore, particularly active individuals with a high metabolic rate may struggle to meet their daily caloric needs on foods with such low caloric density, without the professional guidance which is abundantly available to the elite athletes depicted in *The Game Changers*.

What's most concerning is that the weight-loss attribute of a vegan lifestyle is perceived by many as its most attractive quality. Veganism is being used to disguise disordered eating as it allows individuals to cut out food groups which they perceive to be unhealthy, using ethical principles as an excuse. It is difficult to prove this empirically, since affected individuals are likely to deny these intentions, but many studies link higher engagement in ethical food consumption to increased orthorexic tendencies, particularly amongst female students. This is an issue we must address and discuss in order to keep ourselves - and our peers healthy.

Veganism should be a lifestyle motivated by morality, not a diet motivated by calorie restriction. While any endorsement into Veganism is hugely positive for the environment (and animal welfare), it should not be at the cost of anybody's mental or physical health. It is preached by countless dieticians that those seeking a healthier diet and lifestyle should sooner add more variety in the form of nutrient dense fruits and vegetables than to avoid entire food groups, and should listen to their own body's needs. We should appreciate and adhere to the way of eating works best for us as individuals.

## Hollywood's Jester: Who's laughing at whom in Ricky Gervais' comedy?

Eliza Pepper suggests we shouldn't be deceived by Ricky Gervais' Golden Globes speech; he, and Hollywood, knew what they were doing.

Comedy and satire serve a fundamental role in our society providing indirect means to challenge social convention. The media cycle moves on, but Gervais' jibe at Felicity Huffman's college admission scandal, the allegations against Weinstein and the death of Jeffrey Epstein reminds us that these stories are ongoing. His suggestion that an 'In Memoriam' section would be unworkable as it would not be diverse enough not only provoked a laugh, but also highlighted an aspect of Hollywood's immorality: the underrepresentation of BME actors and directors.

Gervais received particular criticism for arguing that celebrities shouldn't use their acceptance of awards as a "platform to make a political speech". Whilst he argued celebrities are in "no position to lecture the public about anything", he himself used his platform to highlight

the moral bankruptcy of Hollywood culture. This 'hypocrisy' is justified because comedy fulfils a role that the media cannot. By taking us outside of our comfort zone and challenging social convention, jokes elicit laughs and, importantly, sell, which is something today's media dreams of doing. Reporting on the complexities of Epstein's trial eventually ceases to provide the grabbing headlines that the media needs to sustain itself, leaving it to comedy to continue public awareness of the issue.

More often than not, it is through testing the limits of issues that comedians achieve this. Gervais made his intention clear when he mocked his Golden Globe audience: "let's have a laugh at your expense." The offence his comments have provoked in the public is perplexing. Too many tabloids and Twitter accounts have praised or criticised Gervais for his "daring" challenges to Hollywood celebrity;

forgetting that this is a job he is paid to do and has been asked to undertake for five years. Those offended by Gervais' comments must be reassured that, as Gervais put it, "the richest and most privileged people in the world", were not hurt by his jokes.

What is more concerning is the side of the public who believe that Gervais' comments were an affront to, as one Twitter user called them, "pompous Hollywood twats". Gervais argued that Hollywood "know[s] nothing about the real world", but they certainly know enough to pull off an effective PR stunt. His critique of Hollywood was nothing more than part of his script. The darlings of the Hollywood Court only accept this criticism as long as it fulfils their own purposes.

Whilst Gervais' following statement ended "make jokes, not war", the truth is he was hired to create the conflict

that has transfixed the media. In a week where 1.5 million acres of Australia is engulfed by bushfire and global diplomacy faces rising tensions between Iran and the US, a comedians' monologue dominated the headlines. The Golden Globes was traditionally a precursor to the Academy Awards, overshadowed by the latter's superior ratings. The arrival of Gervais, the jester to Hollywood's court, gives the Twitter audience something to talk about. The public hasn't engaged with any of the serious issues that Gervais' Golden Globes monologue was highlighting, giving Hollywood all the more reason to play along and leave Gervais as the focus of any criticism.

We are all too eager to see Gervais as a fellow outsider to the Hollywood; the comedian benefits from playing both parts. Whilst the public get to have our laughs, it is Hollywood who will be laughing all the way to the bank.

# English Faculty: Where are the women?

In response to the announcement of Lent term lectures, Jess Molyneux, critiques the lack of female authors being discussed

Jess Molyneux

As an English student whose very favourite thing is nineteenth-century novels penned by women, I'd been eager to study what's affectionately known as 'the long eighteenth century paper': running from 1660 to 1870, it has a lot to be excited about, including the Romantic movement, the rise of the novel, a national surge in literacy, and an explosion in female authorship.

And yet, this year, there are eight lecture series looking exclusively at male authors. There is one which focuses on a female author (Jane Austen). Of four further series which include both male and female authors, only two individual lectures focus on women alone, and six have a mix. That leaves a majority of lectures – even in the integrated series – with a male emphasis. In total, there are twenty-eight lectures on male authors, six on female, and six mixed. More worryingly, if this term's teaching is blatantly androcentric, then it's even more astoundingly white-centric. As far as I can tell, there are only two writers of colour being taught, and both are squeezed into one lecture alongside Aphra Behn, a white woman whose novel about a slave is more than a little problematic. This is part of the only series (three lectures) which deals with colonialism.

What baffles me most is that replacing just one male-centric series, or integrating a few non-white authors into series on general topics, so easily done, could have taken a big step towards levelling these eye-wateringly obvious gender and racial imbalances. You can count the female authors whom the department has

“The faculty also has a responsibility to rediscover the writing which history, hindered by the inequalities of past centuries, has left behind”

selected to bring to prominence from this two-century period on one hand. Samuel Richardson's unrealistic construction of femininity, *Pamela*, occurs in more lectures than the real-life female authors, excluding only Austen. Percy Shelley alone, explicitly featuring in seven lectures and sure to be mentioned in others, gets more treatment than race does in a period which saw the abolition of the slave trade in Britain.

Despite the limitations of educational imbalance and legal and cultural double standards, women still managed to impress in this period – which the English faculty chooses to ignore. Three decades in, Mary Wollstonecraft pens the seminal proto-feminist *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, which, far from anomalous, chimed with increasingly active contemporary agitation for universal education. Six decades in, her daughter, Mary Shelley, publishes one of the most culturally impactful novels of the last two hundred years: *Frankenstein*. Across the eighteenth century, popular sentimental novels were churned out by several female writers. By the time we approach the end of the paper's span, Jane Austen has published her six nationally-beloved novels, the Brontës are whipping up a storm, Elizabeth Gaskell's factory novels are engaging with imminent socio-political realities as well as Dickens, and George Eliot is beginning to make a name for herself.

Neither do the Faculty's selections accurately represent the contributions of non-white people to the literature and culture of the period. As well as a wealth of autobiographies and essays by people

of colour who were or had been slaves, the first publication of a volume of poetry by an African American woman, the brilliant Phillis Wheatley in 1773, is in the centre of the paper's time span.

The problem is the faculty's unhealthy emphasis on the Romantic movement, which itself had an unhealthy emphasis on men. Of course, we need to be taught the texts deemed great by posterity, but the faculty also has a responsibility to rediscover the writing which history, hindered by the inequalities of past centuries, has left behind. What about the dozen female poets who also engaged in the Romantic cultural milestone? There's also no reason why this movement should overshadow the novel, a female-dominated form, whose rise was down to the factors which shape our modernity even more forcefully than Romanticism has, such as the emergent economic forces which changed people's leisure (and therefore reading) time.

Obviously, it's not entirely fair to critique any individual lectures before having attended them. There's every chance that they will be nuanced, critical and aware, and individual supervisors might be doing their own work to combat this oversight. And, yes, the more important work for English students is the discovery which they do for themselves in the library – but this is so often informed by lectures, or what members of the faculty are recommending.

In the Faculty's recent statement on its work to decolonise the syllabus in response to well-articulated criticism by the student Faculty Representatives, revising 'the individual paper reading lists

at Part I and Part II' was championed as a successful strategy 'to draw attention to the historical presence of writings and cultures other than those represented by Eurocentrically white canonical authors'. But reading lists are, in reality, a weak force against the prescriptions of supervisors or the recommendations of lecturers, as the Faculty concedes in the same report: 'while [students] are promised openness of possibility to writing beyond a 'western canon', that proves difficult to access or initiate at college level'.

Given the intense focus on the weekly essay for exam papers, you rarely have time to come up for breath and explore options outside of the parameters which are encouraged – even if they are not the only ones which are technically allowed. Like the lecture series on post-colonial studies last term, which the Faculty claims placed 'postcolonial questions front and centre in the Tripos', the totally unintegrated series on Jane Austen and 'Writing New Worlds' are laughable: far from centralising and emphasising such authors or critical approaches, it others them, perpetuating the entrenched perception that they're novel, exotic, and isolated from, rather than integral to, the trajectory of literary history proper. Lectures aren't everything – especially for English students – but they're an important signal as to what the faculty feels it's important to highlight and point us towards. Whether you choose to attend them or not, you still read the document which tells you that the work of your sex and/or race is either all-important, or not worth prioritising.

# Moving back to the centre will not solve Labour's problems

Labour needs to stick to its socialist principles

Reuben O'Connell Booth & Poppy Coburn

There is no denying that the result for Labour on December 13th 2019 was utterly devastating. Why was it that Labour was incapable of winning at the ballot box? Luckily, it would seem, there was no shortage of 'political experts' claiming to answer this question.

Despite the overwhelming evidence otherwise, this was not a Brexit election, they claimed: no, this was a referendum on socialism itself! Indeed, as soon as the exit poll released, New Labour stalwart Alan Johnson was on ITV shouting "I want Momentum gone." Many on the Labour right argue that this election was the electorate crying out for a return to the centre. While Nineties fashion may be back in style, the decade's politics are assuredly not. The Conservative party lurch to the right, and with demagogic, anti-establishment rhetoric, gerrymandered the election among Brexit lines. In contrast, Labour's capitulation to the moderate left facilitated a universally unpopular Brexit position. This gave a gleeful Conservative Campaign Headquarters grounds to paint Jeremy Corbyn as an out-of-touch, vacillating elitist. The Labour leadership and all those advocating a so-called 'People's Vote' did not comprehend how powerful this sense of a democratic decision being ignored was. Voters distrusted the flip-flopping of Labour, which created fruitful condition for hollow sloganeering to

thrive. Is this evidence the left of the party must be cast back out into the political wilderness?

To answer this, we would invite the pundits to look into the other great disappointments of the night. The failure of the Liberal Democrat campaign is a cautionary tale: their simultaneous defeat is a staunch rebuttal of the argument of the opportunistic Labour right. Let us not forget that, in October, the Liberal Democrats were confidently predicting upwards of 100 seats would be won. If we must move to this hallowed center-ground in order to win, why was it that Jo Swinson wasn't storming to success? Why did the Nandos-eating, salt-of-the-earth centrists of the 'Independent Group' not win a single seat?

The argument that most voters are long-suffering centrists waiting with bated breath for a 'Blair type' to reunite our country under a programme of triangulation and neoliberal economics is entirely disingenuous. The Tories are not racing to the collapsed center, and neither should we. Polling consistently shows that radical, innovative left-wing programme as an electoral asset for Labour – public ownership of the railways, water, energy and the mail; free personal care for the elderly; a green industrial revolution; a £10 minimum wage and income tax increases for the wealthiest are all extremely popular proposals. The next leader must continue

and extend Corbyn's policy legacy, and not be frightened to defend the strides already made.

Which candidate is best positioned to carry this out? Keir Starmer would have us believe that he is a candidate of the left – but we have good reason to call this into question, despite Starmer being the subject of many a gushing op-ed in liberal publications. His choice to fill many of his staff positions from the right of the party, including several staff who worked on the Owen Smith campaign, begs critique. Equally damning is his record on welfare: in 2013 as DPP he decided to increase the maximum sentence for benefit fraud to 10 years and in 2015 he abstained on the Conservative's Welfare Reform bill. It is no surprise that many of his nominations come from self-styled Blairites in the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP), as well as an endorsement from Alastair Campbell.

Soft left candidates abound in this leadership race. Lisa Nandy and Emily Thornberry are cut from a similar cloth, and their leadership would likely lead to a watering down of the 2019 manifesto. But these candidates are failing to resonate with members to the same extent as Starmer and Rebecca Long-Bailey, meaning they remain firmly in the 'second tier' of contenders. It is likely that their supporters will gravitate towards Long-Bailey or join the Labour right and establishment press in closing ranks around Starmer. The

“Labour must insist upon an unapologetically left-wing programme”

clear candidate of the left is Long-Bailey. She has the strongest socialist credentials, being the architect of Labour's Green Industrial Revolution, a prominent front-bencher and a member of the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs. Her campaign has gotten off to a strong start, leading with environmental issues and pledging to scrap the House of Lords as well as receiving endorsements from prominent Corbynites, John McDonnell and Momentum. However, she must go further. She must demand greater party democracy, particularly mandatory reselection of MPs, in order to blow the cobwebs out of the PLP. Her campaign would also benefit from considering the damage the soft left Tom Watson was able to do to Corbyn as Deputy Leader and endorse an ideological ally, preferably fellow Socialist Campaign Group member Richard Burgon for the position, rather than soft left candidate Angela Rayner, who has already declared she is 'not a Corbynite'.

Defeatism must not overcome us on the Labour left: this is not just a case of following on from Corbyn, but spearheading a growing mass movement that is lurching farther to the left. Labour must insist upon an unapologetically left-wing programme, and standing up against the right-wing rags and out-of-touch establishment. Only a genuinely socialist leader who has learnt the lessons of the last election can win the next.

## Opinion

## Cambridge's notoriously short terms aren't working. Something must change

To improve the mental and emotional well-being of students, Cambridge should have longer terms

Tilly Harrison

Last term, my friend asked me to come to a lecture with him, on the grounds that “we’ve known each other for so long.” It was Michaelmas of our second year; we’d barely known each other for a year. Once I made this point it was quickly dismissed: “Cambridge time is different - in Cambridge time we’ve known each other for ten years.” Just as dog years pass faster than their human equivalents, it’s normal to get to the end of a Cambridge term feeling as though many more than eight weeks have gone by.

Terms at Cambridge are not only unusually short, they’re also unimaginably intense. For humanities students, weekly deadlines — often halfway through the week — perpetuate an ongoing cycle of stress. By the time you’ve handed your weekly essay in and been to the supervision, you’re unlikely to find a moment to take a break before you start the next one.

The unconventional ‘Cambridge week,’ beginning on Thursday and ending on Wednesday, adds to this. Placing the weekend in the middle of a busy week means that it’s effectively redundant, and we are rarely able to use it to recuperate. Instead, students work and use

their rare free time for extracurricular activities, which are now viewed more as a responsibility than a means to relax by doing something you enjoy. For those who have contact hours on a Saturday, the weekend barely exists at all.

Cambridge’s eight-week terms sometimes feel just as much a part of the experience as matriculation, formal dinners and May Week — another quirk to become accustomed to. However, the intensity of these brief terms fuels and exacerbates the scale of mental health issues in Cambridge: something needs to change.

The term length at Cambridge is unique, matched only by Oxford, and provides yet another factor that makes life at Cambridge so different from other universities. Typically, universities designate ten or eleven weeks per term, with some offering a ‘reading week’ in the middle. Similar to a half-term, contact hours stop, offering the opportunity for students to catch up on work, and take a well-deserved breather before completing the second half of the term. Cambridge also works its students a lot harder than other universities, cramming more of everything into significantly fewer weeks.

*Feeling Blue*, the student-led investigative report into mental health at Cambridge offers a glimpse into the nature of the University’s mental health problems. Although it found that levels of diagnosed mental health disorders remain relatively similar to national levels, the report underlines a widespread issue of “background” levels of stress.

*Feeling Blue* portrays an “endemic” level of situational stress brought on by the workload at Cambridge. Although diagnoses are not above average, student surveys show a disproportionate number of students reporting feelings of immense stress and anxiety. The report cites one survey conducted by *The Tab* in 2013, where 46% of students reported feeling depressed, be that diagnosed or undiagnosed.

In the *Feeling Blue* report, these results are linked inextricably to Cambridge’s intense workload and lifestyle. Many cite the insurmountable amount of work as a major factor that affects their well-being, and the report states that “a large number of students reported experiencing feelings of anxiety or depression” linked to “academic pressure.”

Clearly, the University has an issue with student wellbeing; in a 2017 Mental

“Cambridge works its students a lot harder than other universities”

Health Survey by the Tab, Cambridge came only 27th in student mental health satisfaction, despite coming 3rd in terms of welfare spending per student.

Term-time at Cambridge can feel like a desperate sprint to the finish-line, but it doesn’t have to be so crammed in. Relatively little justification for the shorter terms is given to students; they’re packaged as a fact of life that must be expected.

Extending term-time by even a week, be it a reading week in the middle or an extra week total to spread out deadlines and contact hours would majorly transform Cambridge life. The latter would decrease the need for Saturday lectures and supervisions, but either option would make a massive difference. Not only would it alleviate workloads and reduce pressure, more down-time would mean students would actually have time to address personal problems that arise.

Whether it’s giving students more time to seek treatment for serious conditions or simply offering an extra week to catch up if they’ve been bedridden with Freshers’ flu or missed an essay, the benefits a longer term could bring to student well-being are boundless.



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# We need to decide how we really feel about the Royal Family



## Lauren Pilley

*Lauren Pilley argues that we should question our opinions of the royal family in light of Harry and Meghan's recent announcement that they intend to step down as senior royals*

**T**he Royal family is special: not just in terms of their right to rule (illogical or divine, depending on your stance), but also in the moral conundrum they can present to members of the public. For many, despite their awareness of the issues surrounding the monarchy, the family itself is a soft spot.

The monarchy is anachronistic in many ways, but, nonetheless, I felt a definite warm glow when watching the recent royal weddings, and I know others who paid a large amount of postage to obtain the Australian copy of *People* magazine which published William and Kate's honeymoon pictures.

Contrary though they seem, these guilty-pleasure attitudes can be easily explained by psychologists as a natural fascination with our fellow species members who reside at the top of the social group. The rise of social media has only exacerbated this by giving us unprecedented access into their lives, in turn forcing our perception of the family to evolve in a contemporaneous fashion. For those fascinated by or fond of the royal family because they are human, Harry and Meghan's "shocking" move seems entirely unremarkable.

On the other hand, some support the family because of their apparent transcendence of the human condition. They are something more: a symbol, a brand, a pillar of continuity. There is still an expectation that monarchs exist within a sharply delimited set of parameters - on limited edition china, on balconies, in Sandringham, with dress codes, which is certainly the attitude on which many of the most ridiculous media responses to "Megxit" have been based.

This is partly a reflection on the inflexibility and conservatism of the palace over the years - back in 1936, the mere idea that King Edward VIII might marry a woman with two living ex-husbands shattered the parameters of the constitution and forced his abdication. 60 years later, the Sussexes' measured and sensitively worded explanation of their very human need for respite has caused similar chaos. The responses from the palace itself as well as media outlets have been suffused with words like "emergency" and "complicated".

Among the public, similar confusion reigns. Comments on an Instagram post picturing Harry and Meghan at a community kitchen after their announcement include those asking "thought you weren't royal anymore?" and others imploring them to "choose" or "make their mind up".

This conflation of the royal role with certain qualities, and the neat separa-

tion of these qualities from the human being once the role is relinquished, is incredibly outdated. It harks back to a medieval theory which proposes a separation of the king's natural, mortal body from his immaterial "body politic", which consists of policy, government and power and simply transfers to the next ruler after death.

Meghan is not the head of state, but the expectation that she is a vessel for a larger, immortal tradition is cited every time she is judged for diverging from tradition (by putting her hands in her pockets, or closing her own car door) or chastised by a journalist writing from the perspective of the Queen or Diana's ghost.

Of course, the real danger with this outmoded tendency is the incredible ease with which it can be used, consciously or subconsciously, as veneer for blatant racism.

This racism, endemic throughout the British press, has fuelled Meghan's treatment - producing headlines linking her avocado consumption with mass murder (Kate's avocado consumption was previously celebrated as a cure for morning sickness) and articles which call her DNA exotic. It is easy for a journalist to criticise Meghan's behaviour against the plethora of trivial standards and traditions which constitute the royal brand, and allows them to avoid stating outright that Meghan's African heritage does not tally with their expectation of a princess.

Until this bizarre insistence on a royal prototype is torn down, it is all too easy for the media to use the family as a canvas for their racism and hypocrisy. This will be tricky, given the wider family's determination to maintain the unvarying, uniform image which stirs and bolsters the subconscious prejudices and expectations of those observing it.

Nonetheless, the more human they become - the more distinguishable from fairytale archetypes and their cold, dependable Madame Tussauds waxwork figures - the bigger the gap between those who like Harry, William, Kate and Meghan and by extension the royal family, and those royalists for whom the reverse is true.

As the royal "scandals" pile up, the former group will find it harder and harder to justify their indulgence in the pomp and parades, whilst the latter group will be forced to confront the real reasons they support the royal family.

Once they can no longer herald it as a symbol of unity and inspiration, they will be forced to admit they support it as a symbol of elitism, prejudice and colonial power.

“  
*It is easy for a journalist to criticise Meghan's behaviour against the plethora of trivial standards and traditions which constitute the royal brand*  
”

◀ On 8th January 2020, Meghan and Harry announced they would be stepping back from their royal duties

(DACKLEPRINCESS/  
FLICKR)

# Science

## More valuable than oil: data and the individual

*The Cambridge Analytica Scandal gave us a glimpse of the data-driven future, but, asks **Grace Field**, what does this mean for us as individuals and what responsibility do scientists bear?*

**A** Conservative-majority government now controls the future of the UK, at the end of what has been called the most significant election campaign of the century. But, in the wake of the Cambridge Analytica scandal, with our eyes opened to just how much political consultancies are able to influence election campaigns using personal data, many of us are asking: who really won December's election, and are we comfortable with how they did it?

The Cambridge Analytica scandal has made data privacy one of the biggest ethical, political, and legal issues of our time. As Facebook is hit with a flurry of antitrust investigations, the British government is criticised for allowing Amazon access to NHS data, and the US faces another divisive presidential election, it is more important than ever to look back on what really happened at Cambridge Analytica.

Just over a month ago, a forward-looking group of physicists at the Cavendish Laboratory hosted a film screening of *The Great Hack* – a Netflix documentary that goes behind the scenes of the scandal, following some of the biggest players in the company through the drama that ensued as the firm came under legal and political scrutiny, and ultimately disintegrated.

The film paints Cambridge Analytica as an immaculately marketed and highly effective political consultancy firm, whose success was based on breaching barriers with data privacy that their competitors either did not dare, or did not have the necessary technology, to breach.

Organizers Dr. Paolo Andrich, Dr. Tiffany Harte, and Dr. Elizabeth Tennyson hoped the screening would encourage the public, scientists, and experts to confront the far reaching effects of the Cambridge Analytica Scandal and tackle questions of scientific harm and accountability.

Although most of the media coverage in 2018 focused on Trump and Brexit – two Western-centric campaigns – the film shows how Cambridge Analytica's influence went much further with it and its parent company, the SCL Group, influencing election campaigns all over the world. Using personal data to generate “micro-targeted” messaging, they

“*The Cambridge Analytica scandal has made data privacy one of the biggest ethical, political and legal issues of our time*”



aimed at swaying the political views of undecided voters they called the “persuadables” and rolled out schemes to do so in countries across the globe, from Malaysia to Lithuania to Nigeria.

In one example, provocative because of its colonial undertones as a subversive continuation of Western meddling in international politics, the film demonstrates how the SCL group was hired by the United National Congress, one of the political parties vying for power in Trinidad and Tobago's 2010 election.

The firm designed a targeted movement to suppress voter turnout among the young Afro-Trinidadian population, which resulted in a 40 percent difference in voter representation between 18-35 year old Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians on election day. This margin was enough to swing what would otherwise have been a close vote in the UNC's favour.

Despite the impulse to sensationalize the whole operation, the film reveals the exact opposite: in some ways, it is the apparent normality and transparency of Cambridge Analytica that is most unsettling. The company did not hide what they were doing with data – they were proud of it, publicly claiming to have 5,000 data points on every American voter. They were different, they said,

▲ **Data is fast becoming one of the most valuable assets for a company**

(FLICKR/BOOK CATALOGUE WWW.SHOPCATALOG.COM)

because they used more data and better data analysis.

As whistleblower Brittany Kaiser emphasizes in the film, data is now considered a more valuable asset than oil.

Cambridge Analytica is not the only company using data in this way, however, which makes it less than simple to pinpoint blame, or to figure out what we should be doing now to protect our data in the future. Before the film screening, 21 percent of the 237 attendees at the Cavendish event believed that the data analysts and researchers at Cambridge Analytica should be held accountable. After the film, that figure dropped to 5 percent. By the end, most of the audience agreed that the data providers – like Facebook – and the analytics companies – like Cambridge Analytica – rather than individual scientists should be held responsible.

Surely individuals should be encouraged, or even expected, to stop and think about the morality of the tools they are building in their company's name. And if it is not the individuals at fault, then how can those very same individuals work to protect our data and our democracies?

In the post-screening discussion, Paul Hilder, the writer featured in the film, encouraged all of the young data scientists out there to “think very carefully about how you use your talents and your skills...

when we have a huge number of social problems that need to be solved and data science could be a huge part of solving them.”

Dr. Julian Huppert, a former MP for Cambridge and current Director of the Intellectual Forum at Jesus College, explained why he hopes that individual scientists will move towards publicly questioning the ethics of their work, pointing out the leverage that individuals have: “when it becomes hard to recruit because you are doing things that people don't like, and the good people you have start leaving, that is actually possibly more of a problem than some negative press stories.”

While Huppert argued that micro-targeting should be banned altogether, Julian Wheatland, Cambridge Analytica's former COO and CFO, disagreed. Rather than individual scientists being held responsible, he argued, the emphasis should instead be placed on enforcing ethical and transparent corporate governance.

“If you're running a company, and you don't give people any tools or any structures or any guidance or any boundaries in which to consider ethical questions of the work that they're doing [then] to expect the data scientists or the psychologists to be able to put their hand up and say this is where we've crossed an invisible line, is not very reasonable.”

Perhaps most radical is Brittany Kaiser's position. Since turning her back on Cambridge Analytica in 2018, she has been campaigning for individuals to monetize their personal data, arguing that the big tech companies should be paying us for using their services, not the other way around.

Whether or not monetizing personal data is the solution, her stance motivates us to adopt an empowering change of perspective. In thinking about how we as individuals can protect our data and our democracies, we need to fundamentally change the way we think of ourselves and our personal worth.

We have been conditioned to identify as customers and users – of Facebook, Amazon, Google, and every tech giant out there. But we are not the customers, we are the commodity, and we are not the users, we are what they use to make their profit. With that in mind, we can remind ourselves that we are not powerless in this game.

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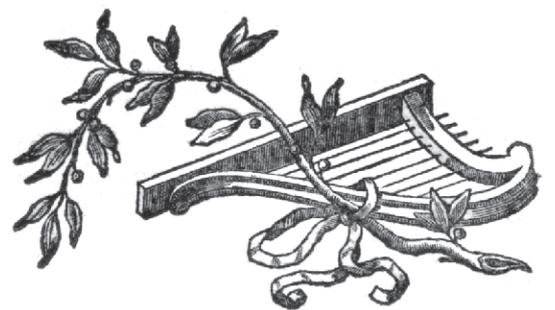
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# The UK and the new space race

Slow to get started, British interest and investment in space has come a long way, but there's still some catching up to do, argues **Daniel Gibbon**

In 1971, the satellite Prospero was placed into orbit, launched from Australia aboard a Black Arrow rocket. This was a monumental moment for the UK, as Prospero was a British satellite, Black Arrow a British rocket, and this was the first time a British launch vehicle had successfully placed a satellite into orbit, marking the UK's initiation into the exclusive group of nations with their own orbital launch capability.

However, this achievement was overshadowed by an unfortunate detail – the decision to cancel the Black Arrow programme had already been made. This was to be the first, and (as of now) the last time a British rocket would venture beyond the Kármán line and into orbit. To this day, the United Kingdom is the only nation to have developed, and then abandoned, its indigenous launch capability.

This unfortunate episode seems to be a microcosm of the early British attitude towards spaceflight; reserved and not wholly dedicated. The British were a founding member of the European Space Agency (ESA), but initially didn't take part in its

manned spaceflight programme. The first Briton in space, Helen Sharman, wasn't even funded by the British government, and, until recently, the British didn't contribute any funding towards the International Space Station, having deemed it 'not worth it on a value-for-money basis.'

This all started to change in 2010. The United Kingdom Space Agency (UKSA) was formed, replacing, and streamlining the complicated bureaucracy of, the British National Space Centre (BNSC).

These may seem like superficial changes, nothing more than a new name and some managerial shuffling. But alongside this, another change occurred that was much more important: a change in the UK's attitude towards space.

In 2009 Major Timothy Peake, a British citizen, was accepted into the European Space Agency's astronaut corp. In 2015, funded by the British government, he went on to board the International Space Station – the same International Space Station that had been described as "not worth it" just over a decade earlier.

Though the government has been steadily increasing the UK's space budget

since the establishment of the UKSA, it still lags far behind other large European nations. In 2018, the UK spent \$894m on space, less than half of France's \$3.16bn or Germany's \$2.15bn.

The British government has, however, begun developing the legal framework needed to let the private sector make its own advances in the industry, for instance through the 2018 Space Industry Act, which sets the legal groundwork for the launch of satellites from British soil by private companies.

This is part of a push to begin the establishment of a commercial spaceport in the UK, with the A' Mhòine peninsula in the Scottish Highlands already selected as the location, its high latitude being ideal for placing satellites into a polar orbit. While construction has yet to begin, it is intended to host a rocket named Prime, manufactured by British company Orbex, with launches potentially taking place as soon as the "early 2020s".

If the project goes through to completion, this could be the first time since 1971 that a British rocket places a payload into orbit. However, in this project the UK is di-

verging from mainland Europe, which has almost exclusively invested in ESA's Ariane and Vega rockets – programmes which the UK has decided not to take part in.

Another development is that of Reaction Engines Limited (REL). REL, based in Oxfordshire, received £60m from the UKSA and ESA in 2016, along with considerable private investment, to develop a ground-based demonstrator of what they call the SABRE engine.

A proposed application for SABRE is the Skylon spaceplane, an ambitious single-stage-to-orbit launch vehicle that would take off and land on a horizontal runway. SABRE looks promising, but with development costs in the order of \$12bn, Skylon is unlikely to be realised without commitment from the government.

We also need to address the elephant in the room – Brexit. The UK's space industry is greatly overshadowed by that of mainland Europe and it is hard to foresee the incentive for foreign investment in the UK with such a large market stationed just across the channel. The UK will continue to be part of the European Space Agency post-Brexit, as the ESA is a separate entity

from the EU, but with the EU as the largest single contributor to the ESA budget, tensions are rising over the UK's involvement in EU-funded projects.

This has culminated in the UK being denied access to parts of the Galileo programme (the European equivalent of the American GPS), and eventually withdrawing from it – losing the £1.5bn that they had already invested. The British government has begun to investigate the possibility of developing its own replacement for Galileo, but this is doubtful given that the costs would completely dwarf the UK's current space budget.

The private sector will likely play an important role for the UK in the new space race, but there is no substitute for dedicated and reliable government backing. To avoid missing out on its future in the sector, the British government needs to make up for its history of tentative interest in space and provide the industry with the funding and support that is desperately needed for it to catch up with the rest of the world. If we are to avoid being left behind, there is no better time to make this move than now.

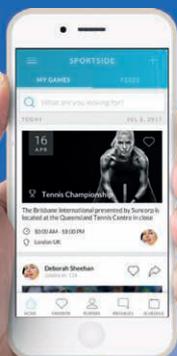


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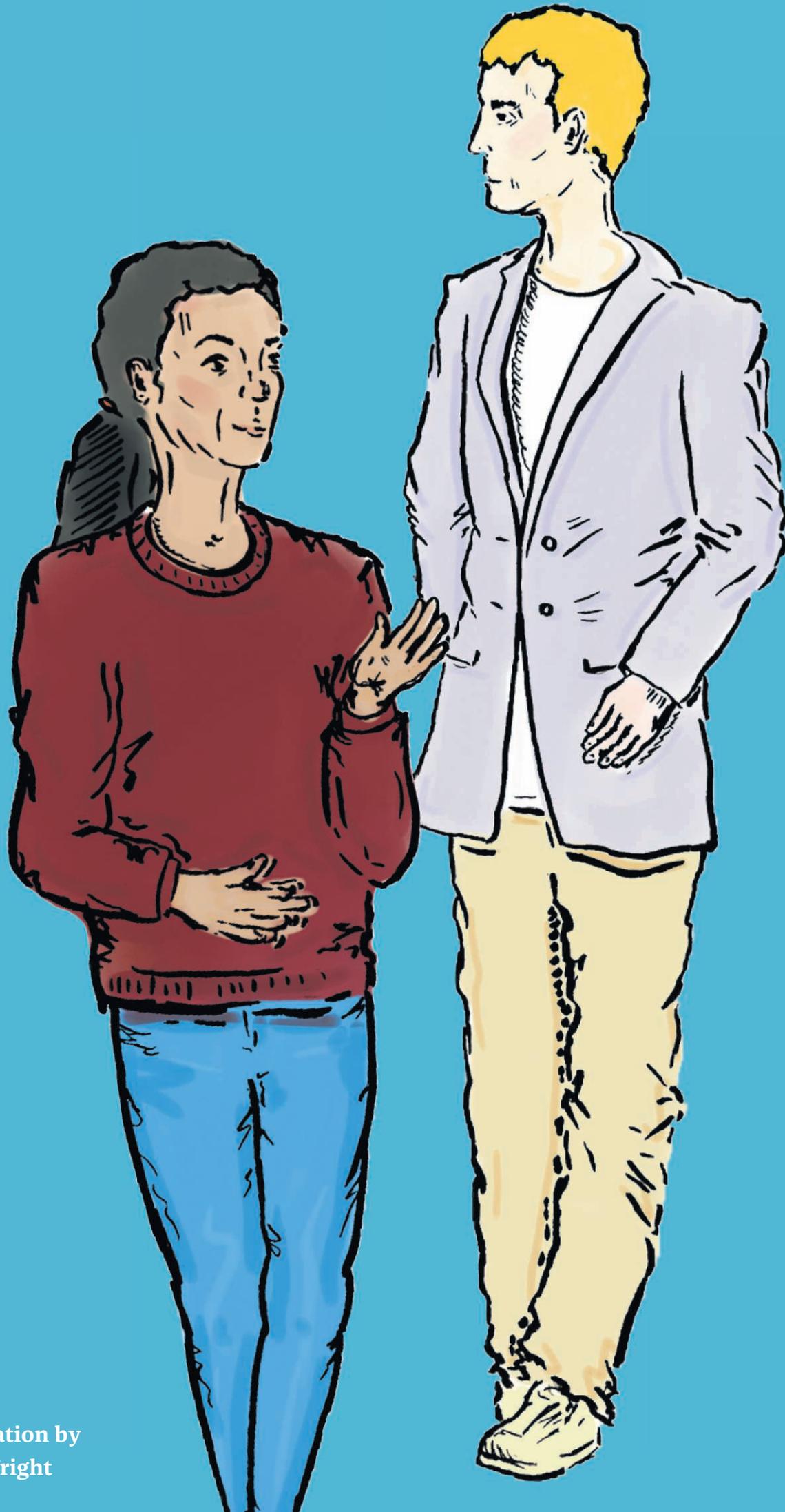


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Lois Wright

FASHION ◀  
VOGUE ITALIA GOES PHOTO-LESS • 23  
LIFESTYLE ◀  
CAN MINIMALISM SPARK JOY? • 24  
THEATRE ◀  
WHAT ABOUT STEM STUDENTS? • 27

# Vulture's Lent 2020

## Cultural Preview

With term rolling towards us once again, follow our cultural cheat sheet for the most exciting new releases, premieres and exhibitions of the term

Finally, the long slog of Lent Term is upon us. Gone are the heady days of Bridgemas hedonism, and the all-out let-go attitude of May Week still feels far, far away. You could be excused for seeking some (at least temporary) escapism, and what better way than submersing yourself in something cultural, either from Cambridge's rich offerings, or from the real world beyond the bubble.

There's no better way to forget the looming shadow of essays, deadlines and a full Hermes inbox than taking just a couple of hours to separate yourself from work and remind your sleep deprived brain that Cambridge is a real city, with more to offer than anxiety and stress.

From the stage to the museum to the runway, 2020 is already bringing some exciting highlights, and there really is something for everything, whether you're looking for a night out to lose yourself in trance music, or a Netflix night in.

### Arts

If you're looking to lose yourself in galleries for an afternoon, then the Fitzwilliam is the perfect place. Entry is completely free, and you can browse their impressive permanent collection of everything from armour to prints and porcelain, or visit one of their temporary exhibitions. Food, art and eating culture come together in the multi-sensory Feast & Fast (see our review on Page 28), including full-scale recreations of a Jacobean sugar banquet, a European feasting table and a Georgian confectioner's workshop. Later on in term, get a glimpse into the complex conservation process, as replica painting go on display alongside their originals in *Sharpening Perceptions*.

Kettle's Yard continues its diverse range of exhibitions with its current *Homelands*, exploring migration, connection, and resettlement in South Asia, before showcasing the work of Linder for *Linderism*, exploring not only her photomontage work, but also a set of new commissions intended as 'interventions' throughout the gallery.

If you're keen to get creative yourself, submissions are now open for the Queens' Arts Festival *More Future!* and for Issue 61 of *Notes* - plus keep your eyes peeled as Vulture will be showcasing more student work through the term! If you're looking for something a bit more crafty, ArcSoc has teamed up with Art After Dark to run a Potato Print Workshop to satisfy all your primary school nostalgia, and the legendary Love Art After Dark will be running at the end of February, offering a glimpse of the Fitzwilliam after hours.

### Fashion

If you prefer the catwalk to the tiled floor of a gallery, Cambridge still has lots to offer. Stay up to date with all the latest trends from London, Paris, New York and Milan with fashion month, and if you're more into sustainability than the next big fad item then check out Hughes Hall's Clothes Swap for Green Week, or one of the myriad Vintage Kilo Sales finding a home in the Guildhall this term.

Join the Cambridge University Modelling Group to get involved in shoots in front of or behind the camera, and watch out for Vulture photoshoots coming soon! The end of term will see the biggest fashion event of the year - Cambridge University Charity Fashion Show. This year's theme, Flux, explores the ever-changing face of the fashion industry, with a focus on the push for sustainability. Plus, keep an eye on Vulture for an exclusive announcement from CUCFS very soon!

### Film & TV

The last couple of months have brought us some unexpected cinematic news, with the entirely unexplainable *Cats* debacle and the runaway box office and award show success of *1917*, the new year is set to bring some exciting new releases to both the small and big screens. Romantic meddling comes in the form of a new film adaptation of Austen's *Emma* (we'll see if Anya Taylor-Joy can match up to 90s Gwyneth). *Bombshell*, a searing ex-

amination of one of the defining moments of the #MeToo era, hits cinema screens this week, while the dark and moody *The Lighthouse* is out at the end of the month. Netflix continues its slew of quality content with a second series of the masterfully crafted *Sex Education*, and a sixth series of the poignant *Grace and Frankie*. The widely lauded *Parasite* is also set for its UK release this month, and the Arts Picturehouse is hosting a Q&A with auteur Bong Joon Ho, as well as a screening of Yorgos Lanthimos' *The Lobster* with live score at the end of term - both not to be missed.

### Lifestyle

Start off the term right with a Feminist Bar Crawl, courtesy of a collective of college feminist societies, engage in healthy discussion at the *What about men?* event, hosted by Murray Edwards and the University Library, examining the engagement of boys and men in gender equality, and look back at Cambridge's past of gender equality with a showing of *As is your due*, which records the celebration of the 50th anniversary of women's admission to the University. For some end-of-term fun, Girton are topping off their 150th anniversary celebrations with their Spring Ball - it's 'Arthouse' theme promises to provide a colourful night of music and entertainment, perfect to send you off into vacation bliss.



## MORE ONLINE: THE DECADE IN REVIEW

### Music

The new year is bringing some exciting new musical releases too - synth pop-sensation La Roux's (aptly named) *Supervision* is set to be their first album in six years, and 80s icons The Pet Shop Boys continue their prolific careers with *Hotspot*. If you're looking for some live music, Cambridge Junction will be hosting the unique sound of the cross-genre Portico Quartet, while Kettle's Yard explores the compelling work of Bryn Harrison with *The Fabric of Music*. If you're looking for a somewhat different scene, Turf will be soon be staging its 8th birthday celebrations, and after a sell-out party last term, Duende are hosting their second night at Fez in late February.

### Theatre

As ever, theatre continues to flourish in Cambridge, both at the ADC and beyond. *God of Carnage* at the Arts Theatre is sure to bring Yasmina Reza's play joyously and chaotically to life, and *All Wrapped Up* offers a more experimental take on the theatrical at Cambridge Junction. In the spirit of the upcoming pride month, queer narratives are taking to stages across Cambridge, from Part Two of *Angels In America*, to an adaptation of E.M. Forster's *Maurice* and a queer reimagining of the acclaimed *Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons*. And for those with a musical penchant there are bumper offerings as usual, with both *My Fair Lady* and *Guys And Dolls* finding a home at the ADC this term, alongside the gritty but tender *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice* ●

## Pantone Colour of the Year 2020: Strong and stable in Classic Blue?

*In a turbulent world, we need colours that inspire action, not encourage complacent nostalgia, argues Gabriel Humphreys*

Every year since 2000, Pantone, colour monopolists of the world, have released their Colour of the Year. It is the subject of much discussion and secrecy prior to its release - the colour itself is chosen by a group of representatives from various nations' colour standards groups, who meet in secret, biannually, in a European capital. This is the Illuminati of colour we're talking about.

The thoughtfully anointed colour is chosen specifically to reflect the cultural, political and social zeitgeist - be that dismay and disruption, or hope and continuity. It is also tasked with looking forward as well as back, hoping to invoke where we will be going in the year to come, as well as acknowledging our shared past. It's a trend forecast with an extended mandate, and is often portrayed as an antidote to the turbulence of current affairs - a soothing swatch to combat our discontent. As the announcement of the 2011 colour, Honeysuckle, affirms, "In times of stress, we need something to lift our spirits."

But its power goes beyond the symbolic and somehow oddly philosophical. The much-publicised announcement is paired with the colour's feature in PantoneView, the company's annual trend forecasting tome, which covers everything from fashion to interior design. This year's offering contains eight "trend palettes", Pantone's 72 forecasted colours for the year, and will only set you back a cool £300.

Sometimes, Pantone has got it so right. In 2016 the title was split between Rose Quartz, a subtle nod to the unavoidable Millennial Pink, and Serenity, a cool mid-blue. This was a pairing that both recreated and deconstructed the binaries that govern society: it felt like a welcome rebellion, albeit a symbolic one. 2019's Living Coral also sat well - a lively, warm, golden pink that also came with an edge of the environmentally conscious. But it was just an edge, and a seemingly tokenistic one at that. Not once does Pantone's press release mention the extensive and catastrophic deaths of vast swathes of coral colonies caused by global warming, making only one veiled reference to "our continually shifting environment".

But this year's choice, Classic Blue, falls completely short. It is perhaps telling that it has received quite such vicious critiques from an unprecedented number of journalists - the colour usually draws more listicles with what to buy in the shade than opinion pieces on why it is so vile and outmoded.

As for my own hot take? I feel like I stared at the Pantone website for days, just trying to find



▲ (INSTAGRAM/VOGUEMAGAZINE)

something positive to say about this colour. Searching for some connection to the present, I thought first of the catwalk - but so many blues seen recently have been brighter, lighter, more vibrant and alive. Classic Blue seems to sit in an odd middle ground between a deep Navy and a striking sky blue, and in doing so it doesn't really make any statement at all.

Pantone claims the shade instils "calm, confidence, and connection", and "highlights our desire for a dependable and stable foundation". It would be hard to deny that both politically and culturally the world seems more unstable and divided than ever, but is this attempt at a stabilising nostalgia really the right approach? Painting over our problems and divisions is hardly likely to heal them, save superficially, and even worse is a passive waiting for things to return to some sort of 'normal' as this reliance on a "Classic" seems to suggest. There is also something almost sinister about the emphasis on the "timeless and enduring" nature of the colour, that seems to align itself with that favourite hard-right rhetoric of a return to an elusive, glorious past in which things were simpler and better.

This year, rather than exposing the flaws of a society it seeks to characterise, this colour chooses to placate or ignore them. You might think I'm placing a lot of pressure and responsibility on just the meaning and intention of a single colour - and I am. But Pantone sets out to capture a zeitgeist, and passivity and nostalgia are hardly the prevalent sentiment in so many creative industries at the moment. Protest, conflict, upheaval, action - above all that is what we're seeing, and that's what the Colour of the Year should reflect. Give me an impassioned red or a flaming orange - yes, a hope and desire that things will get better, but never a complacent one. ●



# MUSIC



## The Secret Lives of Lecturers: Polly Paulusma on teaching Shakespeare and playing Glastonbury

**Joanna Heywood** talks to the musician-scholar about her life, work, Cambridge in the 90s, and the measure of success

One day my friend was effervescing about her English supervisor-cum-musician who had “played Glastonbury.” My ears pricked up. “She’s an academic AND a rock star? How cool. I wonder how she does both.” Finty sends me her email address. Polly Paulusma. (“Is that a stage name?”, I wonder.) I send Paulusma a message, and she invites me over for tea one Sunday afternoon at her home in East Cambridge.

Pulling up in her cul-de-sac, all the houses are identical except one, fronted by window boxes brimming with red flowers. Surprise, surprise, it’s hers. I reach the front door and can hear tweeting and chirping. I look down to discover I’m stood on top of an aviary of birds underneath the porch. An equally chipper Paulusma opens the front door and welcomes me in. I meet the family: husband, two sons, dogs, cats and brass instruments to boot. The house is covered in artworks and there is a freshly baked chocolate cake cooling on the kitchen counter.

By day, Paulusma teaches students to kill the author and focus on the words. By night, she’s a folk singer-songwriter. Amongst the artists she has supported are Bob Dylan, Jamie Cullum, Coldplay, Marianne Faithfull and Gary Jules.

We go down to her garden shed. It’s an office-type space filled with books and various string instruments in different shapes and sizes. It doesn’t take long for me to realise that the shed is Paulusma in room form. She tells me that she taught herself to play guitar aged 14, but swears to never to have learnt properly. “I have no idea how I’m playing music. I don’t read it. I just take my guitar to crazy places that just sound nice. If people ask me what key I’m playing in I have no idea, it’s so intuitive, like you’re flying in the dark.”

Paulusma graduated from Murray Edwards College, then known as New Hall, in 1997, where she read English. I ask her what Cambridge was like in the 90s.

“As a town it was an absolute dump. We’re talking ’94 to ’97, so before the biotech explosion, before the Grand Arcade. There was nowhere to eat, nowhere to go out. I mean literally the restaurants were all just horrible. There was one really upmarket Chinese place just opposite St John’s which was the place. No one could afford to go to it of course but we always used to stick our noses against the window.”

She spent her university days playing in ten-member soul funk covers band Uncle Shrunken.

“Being in that band was an absolute scream. That last May week ... we did thirteen gigs in eleven nights! We could be seen running up and down King’s parade with drum kits and tambourines back and forth between different balls. My friend, Claire, who’s an actor



▲ Amongst the acts Paulusma has supported are Bob Dylan, Jamie Cullum, Coldplay, Marianne Faithfull and Gary Jules. (TWITTER/POLLYPAULUSMA)

now, and I both got firsts but we were both so naughty! We were never really there ... There was a lot of slight disgruntlement that these two quite naughty girls had done well. And whenever I was playing I was thinking ‘well this is the extra-curricular fun bit’, but in hindsight that whole experience of being in that band was absolutely as much of my education as my degree was.”

Degree in hand, Paulusma moved to London where she landed a “dream job” working as a researcher for the six o’ clock news on the BBC World Service. But she soon grew disillusioned.

“I just felt like a battery chicken, laying my egg every night at six o’clock. You came back in the following day and it was like Groundhog Day – you’d start all over again. Over time you’d get a deep understanding of Northern Ireland or the Israeli-Palestine conflict with iterations, but day to day there was just no time to get your head into anything. The trajectory was up and up into a kind of boredom. The management level were all hideously depressed and I just thought: ‘I don’t want to give my life to these walls.’ Yuck! I remember the looks on peoples’ faces when I handed in my notice.”

What followed was, in her own words, “a bit of a muddle”: she was doing music, had written a novel, now wrapped up and banished to the confines of her attic, never to re-appear, she tells me, cringing.

“My parents didn’t like this roaming around in the woods. My dad found it very upsetting. I was trying to do something. I didn’t really

know what. But throughout all this time I had been doing music, it was one of those constants and it had never occurred to me to try and do it properly.”

I asked her when this finally occurred to her.

“There was a definite moment: some friends had asked me to backing sing on their record so I went into the studio for a day and that was it. I was like ‘Yep. This is it!’ It’s like a humming, or a tuning fork you hit and just go ‘ahhhh God!’ From that moment it took me three years to get signed to a label. It was a long battle with dragging guitars up and down escalators. In the meantime I just thought ‘fuck it, I’m going to get on with it’ and made my first record alone in my garden shed.”

Since then, her career has taken her on tours across Europe, America and parts of the Middle East, which she tells me about between bouts of infectious belly laughter.

“I did two tours of America, coast to coast. That was amazing. Going across that big middle bit is quite scary ... ‘cus it’s big ... and there are a lot of people ... that are really scary! And lots of touring in Italy, which was also great. Of all the places in the world to do loads of eating and singing Italy’s quite a good one.”

Along the way she accumulated a family of string instruments, which she gets out and introduces me to one by one.

“This is Pablo, the Mandolin from South America; Molly, the Martin I bought in Cambridge when I was first starting out. I would run back to save her from a fire; Alexis the bog-standard but beloved Stratocaster, and

gender non-specific; and Mustafa the cümbüs from Istanbul. I got him when I was playing the jazz festival there. There was a power cut in the middle of our gig, all the lights went out, all the instruments went dead apart from my (acoustic) guitar and it was just beautiful. Everyone huddled to the front and it became candlelit.” Academia fell to the wayside, and music became Paulusma’s “100% thing”.

“That period of time only really came to an end because of children. I didn’t want to be on the road anymore, so I took a step back from music. Then the academia sort of bubbled up naturally, like it was stepping into a gap that had opened up. It made complete sense and provided a really nice balance. When you do music all the time, you run out of things to say. You need to live in order to be able to create stuff, and you can’t do that if you’re stuck in a tour van all the time.”

Over the course of our conversation, Paulusma had shared a great many reflections which resonate with all those trying to maintain similar balancing acts of life and career.

“For years I had thought that music and academia were these two irreconcilable sides of my life and that were always going to be slightly at war with each other, but they’re actually very compatible: studio work and research work, they’re the introverted side to both things whereas gigging and teaching are these extrovert activities; they’re part of the same palate. Once your energy’s up for one you can do the other quite well. So the axis actually cuts across them. It’s to do with the atmosphere of the activity.”

“When you pick a slightly unconventional path in life, it’s always a bit of a struggle, but I don’t think you have much choice. It’s like you’re following a scent, you can’t really control it, you know ... you’ve just got to follow your nose. It looks chaotic from the outside but it feels right on the inside.”

I asked her how she can tell when something’s right.

“It’s the skin. I’ve always trusted my skin as this organ of truth. When I hear a beautiful song or read something beautiful, all my hairs go ‘phwoom!’

“Whether I’m capable of actually having two ‘full’ careers like that ... this is the thing: you start feeling like you’re somehow amputated. You have to have a kind of tunnel vision to really succeed in Life with a capital L, in that way that people measure success.”

And just how does she measure her own success?

“I guess by the overall sense of satisfaction I get over the course of, say, five years of swinging around between music and academia and then coming out the other side and thinking: ‘yay!’. Not through promotions and salary grades and all that stuff. If you’re that kind of person then whoopee-doo, life’s a lot more straightforward.” ●

## FASHION



# Vogue Italia to forgo photos in the name of sustainability

With the announcement of the first solely illustrated issue of Vogue Italia, **Caterina Bragoli** explores the impact of such a radical statement on the industry

Since its birth in 1892, Vogue has been the ultimate source of news for all things fashion. We flock, even now, to the glossy pages, seeking inspiration and words of wisdom from icons like Anna Wintour or Edward Enninful, hoping to emulate some of the untouchable glamour and sophistication that accompanies any editorial role on the Vogue team.

Whilst Vogue reaches all corners of the globe with its various international subdivisions, there is one particular edition that is famed for its avant-garde quality: Vogue Italia. Its covers tend to be free of cover lines and enticing language, rather focusing our attention on the striking cover image, that, more often than not, plays with the boundaries of convention. Although magazine regulars like Kaia Gerber and Elizabeth Grace feature as cover stars, their Vogue Italia images veer towards the theatrical, exaggerated and unorthodox. Supermodel Kendall Jenner graced the February 2019 cover, in an ode to 60s Italian cinema, wearing an expression of romantic

shock as her main accessory. They've also featured inanimate objects on covers, with a triumph of this being 2009's 'The Black Barbie Issue', paying homage to the 'forever icon', as the sole cover line read.

It only feels fitting that Vogue Italia are the ones to take this transgressive approach to covers even further. The magazine has decided to make its January issue photograph-free, in a mission to reduce the effects of "traveling, shipping clothes or polluting". We, as eager consumers of the magazine, receive the final cover without knowing the extensive production process that was required to produce it.

Editor-in-chief Emanuele Farneti hoped to raise "significant environmental impact associated with publishing a fashion magazine", both through these covers and the content within the magazine, marking another bold move from the publication. It was estimated by the Vogue Italia editorial team that its September Issue, the fashion Bible's most crucial issue of the year, took over "150 people" and "20 flights". The words 'sustain-

▼ Cover by Yoshitaka Amano (INSTAGRAM/VOGUEI)



▲ Cover by Cassi A. Namoda (INSTAGRAM/VOGUEITALIA)

ability' and 'fashion' are rarely heard without each other's company, yet facts like this are rarely revealed: perhaps we need to shift the discussion away from garment production, and towards mammoth publications.

It is the way that Vogue Italia have chosen to counteract the issue that is the most inspiring: the cover photography has been replaced with illustrations, echoing the Vogue covers from decades past. Whilst this marks Vogue Italia's first foray into the world of illustration, it is something that Vogue, particularly the British and French editions, is no stranger to. Renowned covers, such as the woman on the moon, drawn by George Wolfe Plank for the November 1917 issue of British Vogue, can be located on many bedroom walls (mine included).

The illustrations place each magazine on its own artistic plane, providing something ethereal and unique to look at, and have the ability to transport you to a vintage cabaret or the streets of Paris in 1949.

The commissioned artists are all strikingly different from each other, which is what makes this venture all the more exciting. We will be treated to the works of the Japanese illustrator Yoshitaka Amano, who has previously worked as a costume designer, a character designer and a film scenic designer.

The cover produced by Amano manages to preserve the same vintage feel as covers produced a century ago, with a mystical close up of Lindsey Wixson, drawn primarily in blue. Mozambique-born painter Cassi Namoda, who credits "the most colourful things" as her inspiration, paints Ambar Cristal Zarzuela with tears streaming down her face, wearing Gucci. I wouldn't be crying wearing Gucci, but each to their own.

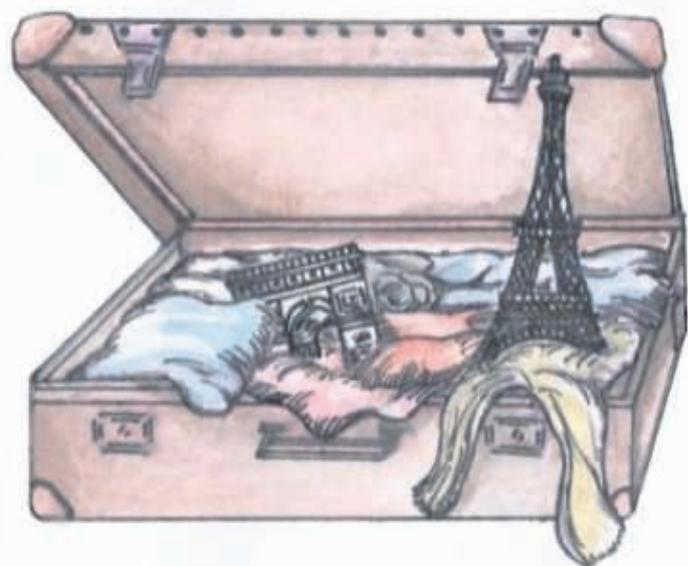
In any case, it's an eclectic cover, featuring clashing colour against a washed-out backdrop. Other artists included Vanessa Beecroft and Milo Manara (who said his cover was inspired by none other than Michaelangelo's David).

The worlds of fashion and art have coincided in a spectacular vision of colour, design and exploration. Vogue Italia's latest experiment has paid off massively: the sustainable fashion debate has been rejuvenated for 2020, with a technicoloured transformation. Vogue's return to illustrated covers, whilst temporary, marks a preservation of the values that fashion has always stood for: timelessness and adaptability. What's more, Farneti has promised that the pecuniary gain resulting from the lack of photoshoots will be donated to the Fondazione Querini Stampalia restoration fund, a historic Venetian building that was damaged by the city's November floods. ●

# LIFESTYLE

## Is minimalism the only way forward on your year abroad?

**Esmee Wright** wonders if minimalism in a tiny Paris apartment is the best way to spark joy



▲ **“How do we fit our life into a suitcase?”** (REBECCA ALGIE FOR VARSITY)

As we move into the new year and promise, however insincerely, to become better people, many are seeing new potential in the big trend of 2019. Minimalism – the art of having less and being happier.

As a reaction against a world whose voracious consumerism is already leading to our planet crashing and burning around us, it does seem to make sense. No fast fashion, no unnecessary purchases, only 17 million Instagram posts of #minimalism; all white walls and pale young things in monochrome outfits. Good for the planet, good for your wallet, good for your soul.

Everyone and their cat now knows the Marie Kondo phrase, “Does it spark joy?” and if you

haven’t procrastinated watching many videos of youtubers attempting to “extreme konmari” their living spaces you are a far better person than I. But does living with less really lead, as so many have promised, to some sort of more ‘authentic’ life?

Minimalism does have its limits. I may want to pack light, but can I afford to leave behind things that are only semi-essential and certainly do not spark joy? The bare minimum might be freeing, but it gets rather more complicated when the button comes off your favourite shirt, the cupboard door has unscrewed itself and your washing machine has shrunk all your clothes – and all you brought to solve it was a daybag of slate grey.

Engaging in fast fashion and constant con-

sumerism clearly isn’t the ideal lifestyle for most people. But neither is the aesthetic absolute minimalism that you so often see on #minimalism, where bloggers only own one really good pen. I may admire it, but I am not so blessed in time or money (or functional memory) not to need at least twenty pens in my room at all times.

I have never consciously attempted a minimalist lifestyle, but I have now moved to Paris. My entire living space, bed, bathroom and kitchen, occupies an area of 16m<sup>2</sup>, and I am one of the lucky ones – even if my ceiling is only at waist height in half that area. Certainly, my cupboard space would encourage a breakup with fast fashion, if I had ever had the funds to have a relationship with it in the first place.

My difficulty lies more in the thousand-and-one pieces of memorabilia, nicknacks and pictures which I have accumulated over the course of my studies. I am a proud Russian student, and this means that the idea of living somewhere without my poster of Master and Margarita is a horrifying thought, even if it is slightly taller than my walls. And yet I would never want to leave it behind, even in the name of being reasonable, because yes, okay, it does spark joy.

This is the problem with university living, and with renting in general; it is hard to make a room feel homey when the only thing in it you own is the toothbrush and even the bedsheets have to be given back. So you are encouraged to fill your life up with objects to show your “true” personality. And yet capitalism continues to ruin everything (yes, Russian student, I warned you). One of the rising cultural icons of the past decade has been Frida Kahlo, a Mexican artist of the early 20th century, although I

am sure you all know at least something along those lines by now – “Fridamania” has also been on the rise. Indeed one might hope to believe it peaked when Sass & Belle released, apparently unironically, a set of Frida-themed tweezers just in time for Christmas last year.

Even ignoring the many problematic aspects of this new found cultural mania for Kahlo herself, this commodification of an artist initially

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*It is hard to make a room feel homely when the only thing in it you own is the toothbrush*

”

celebrated for her individuality highlights the difficulty of building a space around you, comfortable for your own needs and idiosyncrasies. Do you want to be a minimalist? Wonderful. There are thousands of guides to buy and millions of images to look at on Instagram and Pinterest which will tell you exactly how to do it properly.

And if you don’t? Well, we also have guides on how to be an individual, and all the necessary paraphernalia. In such a world, what more can you do than binge watch Marie Kondo at 2am, hoping finally to realise one’s aesthetic goals alongside the rest of society? zero-waste is rarely going to be more convenient choice. But that doesn’t mean that we can’t all pitch in to make it more manageable by being more conscious of our buying and chucking choices ●

## What to drink if you want to save the planet

Amid the almond milk controversy, **Zhiqi Wang** gives us the best eco-friendly drinks

At this time of year there’s an overwhelming focus on Dry January. But if a month off alcohol isn’t something you’re up for, looking for eco-friendly drinks is a thoughtful alternative to giving anything up.

**1. East Green: Adnams’ carbon neutral beer**  
Heading to Cindies with your mates? Try out this carbon neutral beer for a change. East Green is the UK’s first carbon neutral beer and this is no mean feat. To achieve this, Adnams’ has to open a new modern brewing facility that features an Energy Recovery System that recycles all of its steam used to brew beer. The brewer has even gone one step further, sourcing their barley exclusively from nearby Suffolk, which greatly reduces the carbon emissions. On average, a pint of conventional beer produces 750g of carbon dioxide which adds to global warming.

**2. Waste Not: surplus food fruit juice**  
Food waste is a massive issue in the UK, making up more than a third of all food produced. This is a huge source of carbon emissions since our modern agriculture techniques are highly energy-intensive, from the use of machinery to the synthesis of fertilisers (NatSci students can verify this). This juice makes use of wonky fruits and vegetables that is usually discarded and landfilled. In order to introduce it to shoppers, Tesco works with major produce suppliers, G’s and AMC to rework their supply chains to make this juice possible. Help make the planet healthier and try out some of the juices today. Available in selected Tesco stores.

**3. Powdies: powderised fruit juice**  
Powdies is a newcomer in this area. They’re pioneering a new type of fruit juice: one that comes in powdered form that can be rehydrated prior to consumption, Powdies helps

the environment in two ways: it makes use of wonky fruits and vegetables from G’s and reduces transport emissions by 90%, as much of the product is made of water. Powdies provides a quick healthy fix for busy students like us, rushing from lecture room to lecture room. Powdies is launching soon and will be available both online and in retail outlets.

**4. Oatly: plant-based drinks (oat milk)**  
Oatly is an original Swedish oat drink company, turning liquid oats into food and drinks with maximum nutritional value and minimal environmental impact. Oatly was started by a food scientist who noticed the lack of alternatives to milk and wants to provide one for his children. Although tasty, milk produces a large amount of carbon emissions due to methane production by the cows. Oatly has created quite a stir in the cafe scene of Brooklyn, New York, leading to severe

shortages in many of these cafes. Recently, Oatly has introduced a range of Barista Edition drinks that foam up in coffee like milk.

**5. Toast Ale: made using bread**  
Another beer doing its bit: this beer is taking a different approach to tackling the climate issue. Toast Ale is tackling an interesting question: what happens to the ends of sandwich loaves sent to sandwich makers? The disappointing answer is that all the ends of the loaves are discarded. So the founder of the beverage brand gave himself a challenge to turn these food waste into a meaningful product. Indeed, he did: introducing a beer (nothing could have been better if you ask me) that reduces food waste and makes celebrations that bit more special. I have personally tried a bottle and frankly it’s pretty nice with a hint of doughy flavour. Available in supermarket and speciality drinks outlets. ●

MORE ONLINE:

THE CAMBRIDGE TRAVEL BUG



# We need to talk about the unhealthy ways we discuss food

Many people have triggers around food - **Miriam Clifton** calls on us to be more careful, loving and considerate with each other

*Content Note: This article contains detailed discussion of disordered eating.*

As a general rule, my friends from home and I don't engage in 'body talk'. When our internal monologues become too loud, we don't indulge, we critically examine. Negative thoughts are honoured ("It's okay and understandable to feel that way") only so that they can then be properly scrutinised ("Where might that come from?").

It's all rather wholesome, and I'm hugely grateful for my utterly unqualified pseudo-therapist friends, who help make my world feel a little safer. (Don't worry - they don't serve as a substitute for my actual therapist.) I am immensely privileged to have this support network, as well as the friends I have made since moving to Cambridge in October.

But admittedly, I was too sheltered in my assumption that body and diet talk were universally taken-for-granted as subjects to be avoided. Eating disorders can be isolating, so eating surrounded by friends in college has been refreshing for me. Rumour has it my college has a Michelin-starred chef - this luxury hasn't changed the fact that meal times can sometimes be fucking hard.

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We need to be able to talk about things that are distinctly unsafe  
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It's impossible to ignore comments about how you're "hungry today" (no, I'm just eating more because I bloody well ought, need and want to) when it was stressful enough making a conscious choice to get more food.

Often it's a case of someone who still struggles with approaching life through a disordered frame of reference (read: me) interpreting innocent remarks out of context - and I want to emphasise that ultimately it is my own responsibility to manage these triggers. The problem with having an eating disorder is that you tend to be excruciatingly receptive to comments that are casually thrown in any direction within a ten-metre radius. You become ridiculously good at applying them to yourself.

But regardless of my own hypersensitivity, when comments do veer more explicitly into diet territory, surely it isn't good for any of us to talk about what we eat as if it should ever be a legitimate source of shame or guilt.

I'm by no means proposing that we all pledge to never again speak about food except in an entirely neutral way. Food is

rarely devoid of all meaning, and my recovery is slowly helping me to see that there is something quite beautiful about enjoying food with a group of people you love. My point is that we should all be a little more careful about the things we say, for we can never fully know our audience. It is up to us to set firm boundaries and speak up when something bothers us, and not the fault of

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Food is rarely devoid of all meaning  
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new friends who don't have miraculous intuition about our entire mental health history. That doesn't necessarily mean 'calling someone out' over dinner (there's a time and a place, and mealtimes are rarely the time nor the place) but rather making an active effort to have more honest conversations.

Let's not wrap ourselves in an insulating safety blanket of warm words; to make our worlds truly safer and more compassionate, we need to be able to talk at times about things that are at first distinctly unsafe - things that are uncomfortable or painful to admit about our own inner voices and anxieties.

I've also learnt that we should try to be more compassionate towards ourselves - a lot of us flex our feminist credentials and claim a significant degree of wokeness, but continue to be both privately and publicly cruel about ourselves. All of us deserve to eat, not because we're enlightened social justice warriors or rowers or netball players, but because we're alive (a criteria far less demanding than that set by Cambridge admissions). We all deserve to enjoy the food we eat. More than that: it can be a wonderful experience to eat for the sake of pleasure alone.

In short: let's all try to be a little kinder. Yes, to our new friends, who may just not understand. But also, I beg, to the people we sit with in hall, who just want to eat their food in a little more peace. ●

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▲ Fitzbillies (INSTAGRAM/FITZBILLIES)

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# FILM & TV

## Enthusiastic about Enthusiasm

Ahead of the release of the tenth season of *Curb Your Enthusiasm* later this week, **Jake Boud** avows that this is the underappreciated sitcom you need to catch up on

What does the bog-standard sitcom look like? Generally, a handful of character tropes lurch around a perpetually-unchanging set, usually a flat or an office, cracking unfunny one-liners and achieving nothing in particular throughout. All before the sound of a bundle of people incomprehensibly cackling with laughter. Or so I thought.

For a long time, oppressed by these illusory preconceptions, I shied away from the majority of sitcoms - especially US ones.

*Curb Your Enthusiasm* is an intriguing name for a TV show. It's ostensibly counter-productive; a sort of an 'anti-name', and deploys an unusual, harsh-sounding verb in an unusual context.

With the viewers' curiosity piqued, the show begins in a similarly-tempting manner. We are thrust immediately and without background or prologue into the world of our protagonist, the fictionalised Larry David, with a story about a misinterpretation over the bunching-up of Larry's new trousers. We get all the major characters from the outset, very few 'jokes' per se, and no distracting au-



▲ Larry and Cheryl encounter a ticketing issue (INSTAGRAM/CURBYOURENTHUSIASM)

dience laugh track.

It is, then, the individuality and memorability of the show's central character that fires the audience through the first few episodes. Larry is immediately impudent, pugnacious and cantankerous - traits that will only heighten over time. He speaks what's on his mind: though a worrisome expression, the show takes time to demonstrate that this is all in a self-aware, irony-heavy spirit. He's an old, white, rich man - one of the successes of the programme is that invites us not only to

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It's like witnessing a kind of artistic process, and it's thrilling  
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laugh with him but also at him. It's a show that seemingly defies odds to hold up in the face of all the social and political changes of the last two decades.

Any of Larry's most minor interactions and inconveniences will be analysed and deconstructed to death; it's impossible to detail the thousands of dinner etiquette-related situations this show has turned a forensic eye to over the years. (What can you say when your friend's tap water is absolutely undrinkable? How do you react if someone uses 'the worst swear word' at a dinner party? Do you have to queue if you're going back for seconds at a buffet?)

So it was that *Curb* slowly grew on me, and I came to appreciate just how well-rounded a sitcom it manages to be. In many ways, it's completely classical: the escapades; the observational comedy; the character tropes. It also manages to achieve a remarkable level of

meta. It tackles, with a dry, cynical tone reminiscent of certain subsections of classic British comedy, not only day-to-day affairs, but also big issues: racism; religious antagonism; a 'fatwa' (of Season 9); Israeli-Palestinian relations - always in a manner curious above all, and dependably amusing.

Perhaps the outstanding feature of this comedy, however, is its ability to construct near-perfect episodes. At its best, a *Curb* episode weaves together the threads of seemingly-unconnected events and storylines into a tapestry whose picture only becomes completely clear in the very last moment of the half-hour. This moment always immediately precedes that famous theme. It's like witnessing a kind of artistic process, and it's thrilling when it pays off. In a personal favourite episode, the Season 3 finale, a series of random occurrences to various chefs (a chef firing related to baldness; another's freak dodgeball double thumb-break; the accidental hiring of a chef with severe Tourette syndrome) culminates in one perfect, ecstatic moment.

All this is not to mention the incredible number of cameos from celebrities and comedians. Larry stabs Ben Stiller in the eye with a wooden skewer; gets in trouble with John McEnroe at a concert; competes with Rosie O'Donnell for a woman. In Season 9 alone, Bryan Cranston is a wonderfully-deadpan therapist who 'gets the better chair' than his client, and Lin-Manuel Miranda stars in 'Fatwa: The Musical'.

So, twenty years after the release of the show's first season, 43 Emmy nominations and countless glowing critical reviews later, *Curb Your Enthusiasm* returns this week on HBO. For my money, it's one of the best sitcoms ever, and criminally-unknown among UK audiences. Watch it, laugh heartily, and forever suffer the urge to shout the phrase, 'pretty, pretty, pretty good...'

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# THEATRE

## What about STEM students?

**Though STEM student timetables are busy, supervisors and students alike can take steps to make them feel more welcome, writes Georgia Rawlins**

STEM and theatre seem to be seen by the vast majority of both camps as incompatible - my fellow physicists are often shocked and occasionally horrified by the amount of extra-curricular drama I take on (and don't even get me started on the supervisors!) It is so rare to find a fellow non-humanities student on the theatre scene that we all seem to know each other, as if we have some sort of STEM-dar. It can be difficult and occasionally lonely to try and balance the two, but there are some simple steps we can take to bridge this gap.

Natsci, like all STEM subjects, is not conducive to theatre for many reasons. Contact hours are long, compulsory, and non-negotiable for the most part. As a second-year physicist, my typical week contains nine hours of lectures, an eight-hour lab, two and a half hours of computing, and three supervisions. Outside of contact hours, we have three deadlines every week for each of which at least three hours of work are expected. The lectures are dense and the content cumulative and so I need an hour or so after them to go through and check I understand. All in all, this is typically over forty hours per week of academic work. In the Physics Department's own words, "it's not going to be easy".

Of course, this is not to say that humanities subjects do not have heavy workloads. STEM subjects have reduced or even no reading lists as compared to humanities, and at least in physics, the longest piece of work is a 3000-word lab report once a term. So why the imbalance in the theatre scene?

In my opinion, one of the main problems facing STEM students is actually the attitudes of both academics and thespians towards theatre. With most science supervisors, it is often genuinely less painful to lie and pretend you forgot the work than admit it is late because of a show. We were told upon arrival to do "one thing outside your studies only" and supervisors can often be quite derogatory about anything outside of their subject. This stems (excuse the pun) from an attitude in physics and other sciences that the arts are inferior and easy. They should only be approached as a hobby, and should never take priority over academia.

Meanwhile, humanities students sometimes assume STEM students won't have time or aren't invested in shows due to their time constraints - and they're often not wrong. Better results are achieved by excluding under committed teammates.

There is also a certain camaraderie that goes with shows - you can't not develop a team spirit when you spend so many hours rigging and drilling and painting and rehears-

ing - but it is easy to feel left out if you have to miss a get in for a lab or a rehearsal for a supervision, and it's easy to assume people who can't make their calltimes green aren't pulling their weight.

But Cambridge Theatre notoriously takes itself too seriously, and we have to remember that we are students. A student theatre that excludes half its students is not doing a very good job.

Most shows I've worked on have not felt exclusionary at all to me personally, but there is always a pair of nagging voices in my head when doing a show. One tells me I'm not working hard enough and the other tells me I'm not committed enough to the show to be there. Shutting them off is easier said than done.

One way to get around this is by choosing positions with lower time commitments. Indeed, in the pit bands, through which I entered the Cambridge theatre scene, almost every player is studying either music or some STEM subject. Pit bands are great fun and a comparatively small time investment, and they come with perks like not having to do get ins/outs.

However, as I moved on this year to larger creative roles such as composing and MDing, I found the time issue more pressing. I couldn't make half of the tech run of *Funny Girl* despite co-MDing it, and Thursday shows are nightmares because I have to come straight from labs, without time to eat or collect myself. This can impact my performance both in the show and academically.

All of the above having been said, it is possible to make it work, and I have some tips for both STEM and other students:

First, organisation is key! Calendar apps, reminders, timetables, colour codes - however you want to do it, keeping yourself organised is imperative to balancing any degree and hobby.

Second, STEM students, give yourself a break. You are doing theatre for so many reasons - you love it, it relaxes you, it takes your mind off work, it makes you happy. If a musty professor who has never set foot in a theatre tries to tell you that one piece of work is more important than your sanity, try and hold your ground. Easier said than done, I know, but you only have three or four years here, in one of the best student theatre environments in the world. In fifty years, you won't remember your optics lectures but you will remember the friends you made and the art you inspired.

And if giving yourself a break means going for an ensemble or a pit band or smaller backstage role, that's okay too! These are all



▲ Theatre in Cambridge requires a huge time commitment - often an issue for STEM students. So can more be done? (GABRIEL HUMPHREYS)

integral to any production. You don't have to be the main part to belong in Cambridge Theatre.

Non-humanities students can help by generally being aware of the time issues and supporting their STEM production members. Scheduling rehearsals in the evenings and weekends can help, as well as trying to be understanding - most STEM thespians are re-

ally trying their absolute best to make all the rehearsals.

Cambridge Theatre is a vibrant and ever-evolving scene and has enriched my uni experience to no end. If we can help make it more inclusive for non-humanities students, we open up brand new avenues and exciting new projects, and take ourselves to the next level of amateur theatre. ●

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# Fitz's Feast & Fast: Enticing, but not satisfying

**Harry Goodwin** asks whether food-themed artworks can evoke the culinary mores of their times without losing their timeless emotional appeal.

Taste, not sight, is the test of good food. Visual art centred around depicting food, then, denies us the sensory satisfaction it would appear to offer. We are tempted, enticed, absorbed – but never satisfied.

Jan de Heem's 1646 *Still Life* is the first piece we encounter in 'Feast and Fast', showing at the Fitzwilliam Museum. This Flemish painting draws us into a simple ecstasy of naming; we register figs, cherries, grapes and lemons, recalling the elemental flavour of each in turn and marvelling at de Heem's evocation of their moist fullness. Stepping back to view the picture as a whole, however, we're disappointed: it is crowded and unbalanced, less than the sum of its parts.

So it goes for this exhibition, which never decides whether it is aiming for historical education or aesthetic resonance. It makes for a muddled experience: we have to drag ourselves past endless tawdry replica banquets and shelves of old niche-interest crockery, only to be spellbound by individual wonders. This confusion is particularly acute in the room displaying Dutch allegorical engravings.

Approaching these as art, we're let down: they're muddy and washed-out, their efforts at realism botched. Straight away, it puts us in no mood to appreciate the history-minded blurb decoding the symbolism of each figure and object.

With these frustrations comes food for thought. Can food-themed artworks evoke the culinary mores of their times without losing their timeless emotional appeal? Or are they doomed to descend into a whirlpool of particulars, exquisitely rendering this fish and that fruit without achieving an overall aesthetic coherence?

A pair of seventeenth-century English pastoral embroideries make a lovely mockery of both doubts. The first depicts a kind of absurdist Arcadia, with supersized songbirds bouncing around a shrunken piper

and his wife. Gentle comedy, sharpened by a deadpan cottage-pie palette, makes it work as a holistic artwork. The second portrays biblical scenes of abundance suffused with anxiety: Eden, Cain and Abel, Abraham and Isaac. Food-as-art is tantalising, tempting our tastebuds with stitched threads and layered paint. The illusion frustrates, but it also chides: only the inauthenticity of the food before our eyes stops us from succumbing to the temptations which undo these Old Testament grandees.

The embroideries open up a world of

sensory experience charged with menace and unease. Landscape with Shepherds, by the Venetian Francesco Bassano, seems at first glance a banal countryside painting. The snoring shepherd in the foreground induces complacency in the casual viewer. But look at the black clouds; the gaunt, downcast cows and sheep; the spectral pallor of the undergrowth. What fruits nature offers, it can wrench away. Jan Weenix's 1706 painting *Dead Game and Fruit* is hard to like and harder to dismiss.

We are confronted with a sensuous, larger-than-life

“  
A world of sensory experience charged with malice

”  
depiction of a pheasant and a rabbit, both slain and strung up. Weenix's eye for detail beguiles. We're charmed as much by the bird's stiff feathers as by the bunny's golden fur. But there is blood dripping from the rabbit's nose: this still life is still only because of human violence. *The Fowl Market*, a huge Flemish piece, resonates as a precocious vegan Guernica. A calm, ruddy butcher looms over a heap of animal bodies, while a grinning cat and baying dog await their fill.

These are charmless, chastising works, which is what they're meant to be. I much prefer Gillray's 1797 *Guard-Day at St James's*, with its sharp depiction of British officers gorging themselves on sweets while Europe burns offstage.

Most winning of all is Gian Domenico Valentino's 1678 painting of a maid filleting a fish in the most orderly and well-stocked of Italian kitchens. Beneath her, a little boy is running to bother the kitchen dog: all hell is about to break loose.

We can delight ourselves with the fun, pretty, enticing mainstream in the art of food, or we can step up to the moral challenge posed by its counterpoint in Weenix and his ilk. Brueghel the Younger's *Winter Landscape with Bird Trap* captures the aesthetic dilemma with aplomb. Skaters are having blameless fun down on a frozen river; up above, little birds are about to fly beneath a hunter's trap. Do we stop and stare, or do we skate merrily on over a torrent of unease? ●



◀ 'Still life with rotting fruit and nuts on a stone ledge', Abraham Mignon, c.1670 (Fitzwilliam Museum) (COURTESY OF INSTAGRAM/FITZMUSEUM\_UK)



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# Violet

By VARSITY

## All I wanted for Christmas... was to be back in Cambridge

Negotiating the festive thrills of the holiday isn't as easy as it may seem, as **Anna Feest** found out

We may all crave to go home for Christmas, but the holidays aren't always as thrilling as we hope, as I brutally found out...

### Week 1

The first week of the holidays actually creeps in before term reaches its desperately-awaited end. But, instead of flopping out on the sofa at home, I'm having to prop up my hungover self to receive my DoS' review of the term, which is peppered with snarky remarks about how little work I actually did. Very little more is done over the next few days, especially with obligatory boozing to be doing.

The final Wednesday Cindies is of course honoured, the ceremony complete by getting with someone I'm going to instantly regret getting with. Fast forward to the next morning and we're all nursing hangovers in front of an audience of bulging suitcases.

Then there are the endless Facebook uploads. Do I need to see post-Van of Life pics? No. Will I look through an album of near-strangers' smoking area

photos? Of course! After all, what else is there to do for entertainment other than gaze obsessively at the beige fields surrounding my house in the middle of nowhere. Home sweet home.

### Week 2

Ah, sleep. A glorious activity I don't practice enough - or, rather, didn't during term. But give me a few days off from responsibility and I'm already on four naps a day. That is until I have to face that this is, perhaps, exactly the last thing I should be investing 50% of my time into.

The other 50% I spend refreshing my emails and Camfess as if I'm suffering withdrawal symptoms. One way to curb those Cambridge cravings - do some actual work. So begins a trek into town, followed by spending my entire student loan on parking fees.

I end up sharing a table with another Cambridge student, proving that there really is no escape. All of my other friends go on extravagant excursions before spamming the group chat.

Me and my home friends? We make PowerPoints on our last three months

and present them over mulled wine.

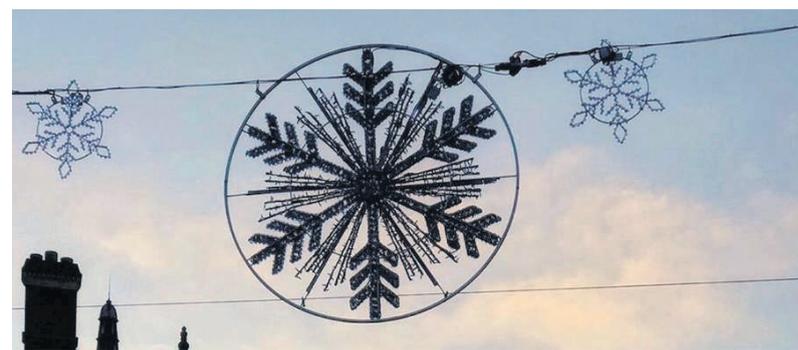
### Week 3

Christmas Day makes its triumphant arrival, as does my youngest sister at a frankly inhumane 7am. In all fairness, she does bring the coffee I am now fiercely hooked on after enduring a Cambridge term.

Did I feel more festive at Bridgemas? Hard to say. It feels like a dream now - or a nightmare. Christmas dinner is incomparably better than college Christmas formal, but admittedly the company is somewhat less raucous. We play the standard family games which end about five days later.

We have now reached the weird part - the bit in which time ceases to exist. The bit where you look at the table at family gatherings and realise you can only identify a quarter of everyone there. A \*questionable\* night out at my town's only (even more questionable) club livens the week up.

I rock up the next day at a family friend's house who, despite knowing me as a baby, has never quite seen me produce the quantity of vomit I



▲ Did I feel more festive at Bridgemas? Hard to say. (INSTAGRAM: @CAMDIARY)

managed in my hungover state. Happy Christmas.

### Week 4

Week 4 begins with New Year's Eve and the countdown to midnight. Or, more importantly, the countdown to being back at Cambridge! The new decade doesn't feel like an oncoming bus, but the realisation that I have one week to fit in four weeks of work certainly does. A degree in procrastination is attempted first, but the steady stream of Camfesses have dried up, and the only emails I get are reminding me of

deadlines. Or tax reimbursements. In my last few shifts at work, I calculate how many hours would fund a term of Cindies tickets or my college bill (5.8 or 182.9, for the record).

The three inches of dust on my unopened books must eventually be scraped off. The reading must begin. But, two hours in, and I've already gone for a stress walk and searched the house for the last Ferrero Rochers. Do I really need to go back?

But then I buy my Grandma Groove ticket and my fate is sealed. Secretly, I cannot wait.

## Overrated/Underrated: Libraries Edition

**Anna Stephenson** reminds us that all libraries are not created equal

Cambridge libraries can be intimidating places. They are sources of knowledge, endless fines, and equally endless despair at still not getting a Crushbridge despite sitting there for five hours with freshly done nails and your best 'smart but approachable' fake thinking face.

Similar as they may seem to those like me who barely glance at the shelves, all libraries are not created equal. Here is Violet's guide to the overlooked, the overly-hyped (if a library can ever be described as 'hyped') and everything in between.

### Underrated: Newnham Library

The grounds are open to all, and the Iris Cafe has been infiltrated by the booth-hogging 'cafe boys'. But in the sanctuary of the library, outsider men must be signed in and chaperoned at designated times -

this may be a faff, but makes it an underrated space for true peace free from manspreading.

### Overrated: Law Library

If you get in early enough to nab a good spot, you can get views of King's College chapel, and what with all the glass, working here in the rain is a visual treat. Yet it feels like the soulless open-plan office you'll inevitably end up working in, and it's law, so the associations with the outside world and a 'career' just get too real. When you leave, you'll find five random aspiring corporate lawyers have added you on LinkedIn.

### Underrated: AMES Library

So many plants! Plenty of greenery to add moisture back to your dry winter skin should be a requirement of any self-respecting study space.

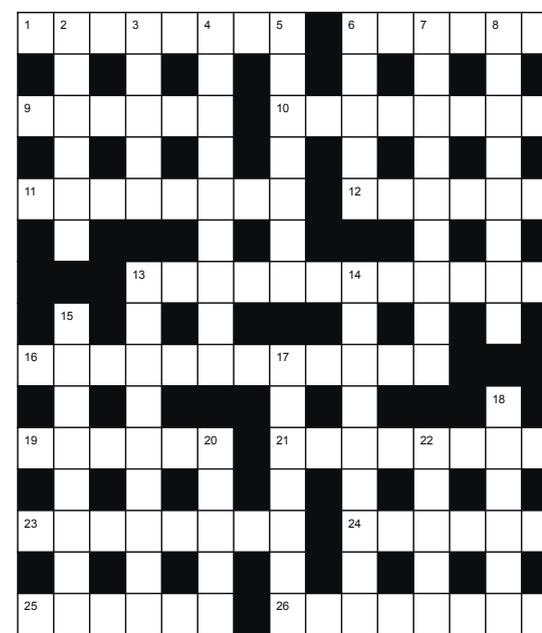
### Overrated: UL

Love it or hate it, the UL has a fearsome reputation. From the lockers for which you can never remember the code, to the dark and endlessly confusing bookshelves (does anyone really need that many?), the UL is an experience all Cambridge students should endure exactly once, and then do their best to never repeat.

### Underrated: St Edmund's Library

With floor-to-ceiling windows and views over Cambridge, St Edmund's Library is a great study spot that has the advantage of being a bit under the radar. It also has that all-important spiral staircase for waltzing up and down like you're in an interiors magazine when you're actually just bored and pretending to look for another book you won't ever read.

## Cryptic Crossword #7 by Pitt\*



### ACROSS

- 1 Reserve to print part of wider area (8)  
6/5 Wow! Discharge religious figure in front of one college (6,7)  
9 Russian region without peak is European peninsula (6)  
10 Engineers see cougar, say? Begin to excitedly move! (8)  
11 Is able to steal terrorists' drug (8)  
12 Stable - horse area for Eastern yankee (6)  
13 One city, after a spell, is in irregular state (12)  
16 Squeeze, let go - this'll get in the news (5,7)  
19 Netted disco redeemable hosts (6)  
21 Cambridge University student, going the wrong way, checked out blind alley (3-2-3)  
23 Without ecstasy, a duff nerd high with little flakes (8)  
24 Plant head girl (6)  
25 Protection for crotch, it's said (6)  
26 Books subs (8)

### DOWN

- 2 Optimistic model after athletic achievement in UEA (6)  
3 Northern Irish dead end backfires for city (5)  
4 Improvise and pay bleary doctor (4,2,3)  
5 See 6 Across  
6 Rings everyone in Computer Science (5)  
7 Concerning communists to hug republican - rare (9)  
8 Good enough for partner who is fashionable (2,2,4)  
13 Confidently slays rude criminal (9)  
14 Late trains are meant to be here and they pile up! (9)  
15 Equip leader with seat (8)  
17 Devil butchers 'fir' clue (7)  
18 No good mixing meat with egg and egg? (6)  
20 University Challenge in river is neck and neck (5)  
22 Set foot in two hospital departments (5)

\*Pitt is a pseudonym

Find the answers online at [varsity.co.uk](http://varsity.co.uk)!

# A loser's guide to finding love in Cambridge

*Rachel Imrie details the ups and downs of trying to build genuine human connections when surrounded by a pile of essays*

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a Cantab in possession of romantic desire must be in want of a distraction from supervision deadlines and looming loneliness. Such pursuits often produce results along the lines of lifelong companionship and happiness. Or, more often, hundreds of wasted hours, disastrous heart-break and a total distraction from what we're actually meant to be doing here. Y'know, that pricey thing called a degree.

Whether it's the mutual doublethink that that regrettable freshers' week hook-up never really happened with your fellow staircase resident, or avoiding eye contact with your ex when choosing be-

tween Weetabix and Coco Pops in Sainsbury's, the Cambridge dating scene is, let's face it, an absolute train wreck.

Sure, there are those few happy couples who we'll call smug, if only to mitigate our own jealousy: that one long distance couple who didn't immediately lose touch and cheat on each other as soon as they got to their respective universities, the pair that got together once in Cindies and both felt the elusive 'spark' as ABBA rang out in the background, and maybe even an impressive Tinder success story.

The rest of us, however, must bumble along. We persevere in Cambridge's veritable minefield of dating apps, hook-up culture, and vague

Crushbridges that could maybe, possibly, potentially, be about us (hey, you wore a blue top once and have occasionally been known to wander the plains of Sidgwick). All the while, as we sift through all the good, bad and ugly that Cambridge has to offer, we find ourselves slowly giving up on the notion that we'll meet the love of our life at university.

Sometimes it feels as though Cambridge is set up for us to fail in this respect. For one thing, we have only eight weeks to cultivate another's interest, hopefully laying the soil for a romantic connection which still has only a slim chance of blossoming. For another, what kind of social anarchist thought it would be a good idea to put thousands of Type A individuals

in a small, high stress bubble with minimal connection to the outside world? Not only that, but let's actually encourage them, via media and engrained cultural expectations, to fraternise and reproduce. It's like Love Island with more therapy.

Yet we continue to hope that we will find eternal love in our early twenties. We idealise the great romances of yesteryear, when people married younger and standards were, quite frankly, lower. Once upon a time, courtships were limited by the restraints of geography and population sizes. But now, with the advent of dating apps and the hordes of people alive, there is an apparently infinite number of options, and thus a far less pressing need to compromise.

That is unless, of course, you have received the demoralising notification that 'there's no one new in your area', attaining the new, unenviable low. Even Tinder is telling you to stop punching.

And perhaps we should. Maybe realising that perfection doesn't exist, and that compromise is not only necessary but beneficial, is the key to finding love at Cambridge. Or maybe we should wait ad infinitum for that special someone. At the end of the day, I'm just a girl, standing like a lovelorn madwoman in the middle of King's parade, quickly realising that none of us know what the hell we are doing anyway. As with the work at Cambridge, we've just got to hope for the best and see what happens.

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# Sport

## Exclusive: Spurs Chairman

### Daniel Levy speaks with *Varsity*

● Sports Editor **Joseph Powell** talks to the Sidney alumnus about his time in Cambridge, the business of football, and its future

The last few years have certainly been varied for Tottenham Hotspur. A seemingly endless self-imposed exile at Wembley concluding with a homecoming at their very own stadium.

The highs of Champions League glory in the summer heat of Madrid giving way to Carabao Cup defeat in the autumn breeze at Colchester; the understated assuredness of Mauricio Pochettino replaced by the brash swagger of Jose Mourinho: Cambridge's closest Premier League outfit (all of 10 miles nearer than Anglian neighbour Norwich) have offered plenty to gaze upon from the outside.

Behind all of these, however, has been one constant - the notoriously shrewd Chairman and Sidney Sussex alumni Daniel Levy. After graduating in 1985 with a First in Economics and Land Economy, Levy went to work at his family's clothing retail business before moving into property development and eventually sports and media.

Having replaced Alan Sugar as Tottenham Chairman in 2001 (making him the Premier League's longest serving chairman by some distance), Levy's brand has grown considerably as he has gone on to forge a reputation as one of the most unflappable negotiators in football while simultaneously remaining enigmatic and private, rarely providing interviews beyond pre-released media statements.

But what role can Cambridge be said to have had in the development of this canny operator? What drew him into a love of the game in the first place? And what does he make of Saturday afternoon broadcasting rules? Levy revealed all with *Varsity*.

**What was your involvement with sports before you arrived at Cambridge?**

The first team I ever went to watch was Tottenham. My great-uncle took me and that's how I became a Spurs fan. I started to go and watch Tottenham from when I was about eight years old. The first game I went to see was against QPR. I was never particularly athletic when I was at school, so I only ever really participated in what was necessary but nothing more than that. It was the same when I was at Cambridge. I was never really a great sportsman even though I have always enjoyed skiing and abseiling.

**Were you involved with any non-sport societies at Cambridge?**

▶ "Anything is possible with hard work"

(GETTY, TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR FOOTBALL CLUB)



I used to go to the debating society. I went from a state school and then into Cambridge - my focus at Cambridge was to get a decent degree because I saw it as a means to getting a good job, that was where I concentrated all my energy. I thought that I had been given a great opportunity and I was determined not to mess it up. I enjoyed my time at Cambridge, but I wouldn't say I lived the typical student lifestyle.

**How much were you involved in college life at Sidney?**

I had a group of friends at Sidney and we used to have dinners together as a group but nothing more out of the ordinary than that.

**How much has Cambridge impacted your professional life now?**

Any university can give you a good grounding for your future career, but it doesn't guarantee anything. My experience at Cambridge was really about believing I could achieve anything. I went there to get a degree, but I never thought I would do as well as I did there.

When I took my finals, I honestly

thought I had failed. I remember working every hour in the last few months leading up to them and thinking that I just wasn't good enough. The way you received your results, you had to go and look at a big board, which was in grade order. I remember looking at it - third, two two, two one, and I couldn't find my name. Then I saw I got a first and I was honestly on the floor. I was stunned. It proves that anything is possible with hard work.

**What is it that captures your interest in sport?**

It's the challenge. The business of sport, and a football club is one of the hardest things to run. If you analyse it, within a football club you are running lots of different businesses, whether it be catering, merchandising, licensing or ticketing but the heartbeat of it is clearly the football and what happens on the pitch. That's the one aspect that's not possible to control. You can have some influence on it in terms of your recruitment policy and coaches, among other things, but you can't control it. I have always enjoyed a challenge.

“

*Within a football club you are running lots of different businesses... but the heartbeat of it is clearly the football and what happens on the pitch.*

”

**What are your thoughts on the recent debut of Amazon as another broadcaster for Premier League games?**

The fact there is now a third domestic broadcaster in the UK is great for competition. Any new broadcaster coming in will always look at things in a different way. The way they've been doing their live broadcasting has created quite a bit of attention so I think other broadcasters may also look to adapt the way they produce their coverage too. Competition is good for everyone.

**What are your feelings toward the current rules prohibiting football broadcasts on Saturday afternoons?**

Personally, I'm not so wedded to something that is so historic. Just because it has always been there doesn't mean it needs to be there forever. I think it is something that could be looked at in the future.

**With the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium recently hosting an NFL game between the Chicago Bears and the Oakland Raiders, can you ever see PL games being held abroad?**

It's important that we are always open-minded to anything that is proposed. We are in an industry where we are competing for talent, viewership and sponsors with other leagues across the world alongside other sports so we can never rule it out completely. In Spain, they are playing the Supercopa in Saudi Arabia this year, so we've got to be conscious that there needs to be a balance.

**How do you view the FIFA Club World Cup? How can its status be elevated in the UK?**

I suspect there will be more clubs from the UK participating in the future and that in itself will elevate its profile in this country. It's possible that it could be a substitute for pre-season games in certain territories around the world one day too. I can certainly see it becoming more important in the future.