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# VARSITY

# Government disability benefits scheme continually fails Cambridge student

**Sophie Huskisson**  
Senior News Editor

Anna Ward, an MML undergraduate at Emmanuel College, has been battling with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) since April last year after they unexpectedly stopped receiving their Personal Independence Payments of £77 a week.

Although the process should take three months from start to finish, Ward explained they have only received a date for a home visit to assess their eligibility for receiving PIP benefits this week.

This comes after Cambridge MP Daniel Zeichner raised the case in parliament on Tuesday.

Ward was unable to do a year abroad, a compulsory part of the MML degree, due to a requirement of receiving PIP benefits stating that you cannot leave the country for more than 12 weeks at a time. Ward planned to split their year abroad into time periods less than 12 weeks long up until July last year, but had to end this arrangement early when the DWP cancelled their benefits in April.

**Full story** on page 2 ►



▲ Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson, said they are “urgently investigating”

# New funding boost to ‘innovatively’ fight homelessness in Cambridge

**Victor Jack**  
Senior News Editor

Cambridge City Council is set to launch a number of new initiatives for tackling homelessness in the city, after a successful bid for funding from the government.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government’s grant of

£486,457 will go towards enhancing current projects and developing new ones such as the creation of nine new paid roles to support current and former rough sleepers.

A 2018 report found Cambridge is the UK’s most unequal city, with a fifth of the population earning just 2% of the city’s total income. Homeless deaths in Cambridge are twice the national average, while the latest figures show on aver-

age one Cambridgeshire family becomes homeless every five hours.

“We anticipate this will have a positive immediate impact on homelessness in the city,” Richard Johnson, the City Council’s Executive Councillor for Housing, told Varsity.

“It provides enhanced support options for people on the street, new pathways for people to leave... and to stay off the street.”

The funding complements £750,000

already earmarked by the Council for addressing homelessness, and will extend seven existing roles beyond March 2021 in addition to the nine new positions.

“I’m thrilled by the news,” said Roshni Atwal, President of Streetbite, a Cambridge student-run society, which distributes hot food and drinks to the city’s homeless community and aims to develop relationships with them.

Atwal added how important it is that

“more funding is being allocated to services that have been underfunded and overstretched for so long”.

The new roles will primarily support current and former homeless people in 34 new units of accommodation, situated all around the city in clusters of five or six, with the first units expected to be ready by this summer.

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## News

# “Unacceptable”: Zeichner takes Cambridge undergraduate’s case to the Commons

► Continued from front page

Despite being told in 2017 that their benefits would last until the end of June 2019, Ward received another letter informing them that the benefits would actually end early in April 2019. The DWP told them they would send them forms to renew their benefits within two weeks, but Ward did not receive the forms until the end of June.

The DWP were not immediately available for comment.

Ward explained that the forms are a 40-page booklet which you are given one month to complete. All the paperwork has to be done by hand, making it difficult for disabled people. Ward said they had to get someone to write the forms for them.

Once they had sent off the forms, Ward was handed over to the Independent Assessment Services (IAS), which is run by Atos Healthcare, a European multinational firm whose services are outsourced by the government, where they began “battle two”.

Ward’s request for a home assessment was denied; they were told they were a university student and so should be able to get out of the house to go to an assessment centre.

They were given an appointment in an assessment centre in Haverhill, which can take Ward over an hour to get to, having to rely on public transport.

Ward repeatedly contacted IAS to tell them they would not be able to make the appointment and again requested a home assessment. When Ward became increasingly upset on the phone, they were put through to a suicide line, where a home visit was agreed. Ward emphasised to *Varsity* that they had not been threatening to take their own life, but that they had expressed they could not continue without their benefits, and needed them to live, to buy food, and to pay for their wheelchair.

Ward was appointed a home visit in October, 6 months after beginning the process of requesting their benefits. This visit was cancelled less than 24 hours before due to the assessor being ill. Their appointment was rescheduled to December, which was again cancelled because an assessor was not available less than 48 hours before it was due to take place.

Ward said they spent their Christmas feeling very stressed that they would miss updates sent by post to their Cambridge address and regularly called the Emma porters to ask if they had any letters.

Ward wanted to file a complaint in December, but said they never received the paperwork necessary to make a complaint, which they had asked IAS to send. Ward contacted Cambridge MP Daniel Zeichner this January for help and support, who contacted IAS.

The manager he spoke to agreed that the length of Ward’s wait was concerning, pledging to investigate it further by classing it as a complaint.

Zeichner raised Ward’s “unacceptable” treatment in the House of Commons on Tuesday. At the dispatch box, Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson replied: “We are urgently investigating as this shouldn’t be in the case.”

In a press release Zeichner said he received an apology “following the exchange in the Commons”. However, Ward says they have not personally received an apology from the DWP and commented that “the apology given was to [Zeichner] and not to me”.

Zeichner said: “It shouldn’t take an MP asking questions in the Commons to sort out this kind of incompetence which leads to financial and mental stress for disabled people just trying to get on.”

Ward only learned that Zeichner

had received an apology and a confirmed date for a home assessment when *Varsity* contacted. Following this, they rang IAS on Wednesday and were told that they had an appointment for the 11th February which had been allocated to them on Monday, the day before Zeichner had raised their case in the House of Commons.

Ward was concerned that had they not indirectly found out about the result of Zeichner’s intervention, then they would not have contacted the assessment centre and found out about the new assessment date. Although IAS told them they were due to receive a letter, Ward said that letters from IAS can take a long time to process and don’t always arrive.

An Independent Assessment Services spokesperson told *Varsity*: “We are looking into this case however we are absolutely committed to providing a professional and compassionate service for each and every claimant.”

While Ward is pleased they have a home visit confirmed, they said the process is only about halfway through, and that they still have the assessment and decision to wait for, admitting that they don’t have “high hopes.” Ward’s previous benefit claim in 2015 was refused and they had to take their case

to a tribunal at the Cambridge Magistrates’ Court. They won the case and entered a three year benefit scheme.

Between July and September 2018, 72% of people who appealed after being turned down for PIP won their case.

PIP is a government benefit scheme that helps people if they have long term ill-health or a disability, giving them between £23.30 and £148.85 a week if they’re aged 16 or over and have not reached State Pension age. It is run by the DWP, the government department responsible for welfare and pension policy.

Ward explained that gaining PIP was not just about the money but that eligibility for a lot of other support, including blue badges, and disabled railcard and bus passes, often ask for proof of receipt of PIP.

The DWP, PIP schemes, and the outsourcing companies that run assessments have faced much criticism; the *Disability News Service* reported last week that Atos did not make it clear that the disabled person must attend a face-to-face PIP assessment and the DWP lost a court case on Wednesday after it was found to have unlawfully discriminated against thousands of disabled people who were left financially worse off after moving onto universal credit.

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## Prince Charles warns of climate crisis during visit to Cambridge laboratory

**Natasha Dangoor**  
News Correspondent

Prince Charles addressed the issue of climate change as he paid a visit to the University of Cambridge’s Whittle Laboratory on Tuesday.

The visit comes in advance of the establishment of a new National Centre for Propulsion and Power, set to open in 2022, which aims to expand and accelerate research into and the development of decarbonisation technologies.

The Whittle Laboratory itself is partnering with the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL), which the Prince is the founding royal patron of, in an effort to decarbonise the aviation sector to net zero by 2050.

Prince Charles said, in reference to the climate emergency, told students and engineers, “We haven’t got time



▲ The Prince visited the lab on Tuesday ahead of the 2022 opening of a new National Centre for Propulsion and Power (FLICKR/DAN MARSH)

“We have run out of time now to rescue this poor planet from man-made emissions”

to waste.”

“We have run out of time now to rescue this poor old planet from man-made emissions and all the complications we’re now facing, all the challenges we’re facing.

“If you mount a military campaign, because you’re up against it you have to produce the answers, overnight practically. That is the challenge now.”

# New funding boost to ‘innovatively’ fight homelessness in Cambridge

► Continued from front page

These will take the form of modular homes, temporary units housing one person, and shared houses for two individuals.

In November, the City Council announced plans to deliver six of these modular homes in the city, working jointly with development firm Allia and Cambridge homelessness charity Jimmy’s.

Responding to the new funding, Jimmy’s Communications and Communities Officer Barry Griffiths said the organisation “always welcomes new and innovative ideas to support individuals off the streets of Cambridge”.

“We will work with Cambridge City Council and other partners around the City to improve services to those who find themselves on the streets.”

The funding will also go towards a new mentoring scheme that has been created in partnership with It Takes a City, a Cambridge homelessness support network made up of nine

organisations.

The scheme will recruit Cambridge volunteers to develop close relationships upon the basis of shared interests and skills, and integrate rough sleepers into the city’s wider community.

Speaking to Varsity, It Takes a City Chair Mark Jenkin said “just providing a key is not enough” to eradicate homelessness, which requires “the right level of support to make the journey from street to house and then to flourish”.

“A house is not a home unless it is within community, affordable, appropriately supported, safe and suitable. We are looking for the whole community to come together and deliver the housing and support solutions needed,” he added.

However, both Jenkin and Johnson stressed a lot more funding would be needed to achieve these objectives.

“Austerity...has led to public sector bodies like the NHS, and local authorities in particular, being starved of the funds necessary to properly address

the causes and effects of homelessness,” said Johnson.

He warned more “resources and funding to cash-strapped councils and public bodies” are necessary before homelessness is resolved, noting Cambridge City Council no longer even receives regular funding from the government.

Funding priority will also be given to homelessness outreach, in helping rough sleepers access accommodation, and provide street-based health services through employing three new specialist nurses and one substance misuse outreach worker.

Rough sleepers in new tenancies will be given some money too, in line with the Council’s ‘Housing First’ Strategy.

Housing First is a programme first pioneered in the US in the 1980s, and involves immediately moving rough sleepers into permanent homes before addressing other personal issues rather than moving homeless people through different ‘levels’ of housing first.

Cambridgeshire County Council announced on Wednesday it would also receive a separate grant of £230,000 towards implementing its Housing First approach, after a previously successful pilot it had led jointly with the City Council.

Townhall Lettings, the Council’s social letting agency which aims to provide housing for single homeless people, will receive an additional boost by the funding, including introducing a new out-of-hours service for landlords.

Johnson hopes this will both help in “reducing rough sleeping and freeing space at Jimmy’s and the hostels”.

He also argues “there are a number of things that any individual in the city can do to help”.

The Council recommends individuals donate to Cambridge Street Aid, visit the Street Support website for information on homelessness services in the city, and report someone who is sleeping rough via Streetlink at 0300 500 0914.

## NEWS

University pledges to halve “access gap” by 2025

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Divided loyalties: aligning my political identity

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## OPINION

Christian Swallow  
Protesting should be about change, and nothing else

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## VIOLET

Ticketbridge: the highest stage of Capitalism

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# “Golden opportunity”: Lecture Capture scheme to be trialled for humanities

Grace Lozinski  
News Correspondent

The University will soon give humanities and social science faculties the chance to express their interest in joining a new lecture capture scheme.

This means lecturers’ slides and voice will be recorded and uploaded to a centralised system for students to watch at their convenience.

According to School of Humanities and Social Sciences’ Undergraduate Student Representative Farid Aletomeh, who made the announcement to students last week, a university-wide lecture scheme will then be introduced in the next few years.

The scheme has been informed through a pilot already adopted by some STEM subjects.

The boards of each faculty will be given the opportunity to opt-in to the scheme by expressing their interest in three phases running from 2020-21.

However, the successful implementation of the scheme depends on faculty infrastructure, as not all University buildings are fitted with lecture capture technology.

“One of the biggest positives of the lecture capture scheme is the productivity boost for

students as they can pause the lecture and think more deeply about difficult concepts,” Aletomeh told Varsity.

“Lecture capture can act as a powerful consolidation tool and revision resource, allowing for a deeper understanding of the subject material,” he added, further emphasising the greater flexibility it will give students in catching up on lectures.

Aletomeh also highlighted the benefits the scheme will have for accessibility, allowing disabled students to participate in lectures with “much greater ease and access”, while the “ability to re-watch lectures in a relaxed environment can help students with illnesses from falling behind and improve students’ mental health.”

One student from Murray Edwards college who suffers from anxiety, and has a hearing disability, welcomed the news about the potential widening of the scheme.

“During periods of bad anxiety when I don’t want to go to lectures, knowing that they are all recorded would take a lot of pressure off me,” they said.

“Because of my hearing impairment, I already have permission from the Disability Resource Centre to record lectures on my phone but the sound quality can be poor, so professional recording would be really helpful.”

“During periods of bad anxiety when I don’t want to go to lectures, knowing that they are all recorded would take a lot of pressure off me”

But the scheme may have downsides. Aletomeh urged it “may not be appropriate for ... controversial topics and small discussion circles” and the “prospect of being recorded may hinder the incentive for open discussion.”

It may also act as a disincentive for students to attend lectures if they can access them any time.

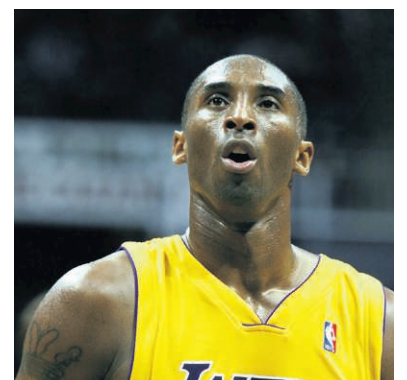
However, Aletomeh stressed, papers have come out recently debunking such concerns.

One example is a paper by Emily Nordmann, a leading academic exploring lecture capture technologies, on “the impact of attendance, lecture recording, and student attainment across four years of an undergraduate programme”.

It found “no compelling evidence for a negative effect of recording use, or that attendance and recording use were related”.

Aletomeh acknowledged that the decision to join the pilot is dependent on each Faculty’s Board.

However, he urged “if this is a technology students truly want and care about - this is the time to speak up ... and through our faculty reps, take this golden opportunity to join the lecture capture conversation.”



▲ (WIKIMEDIA/SGT. JOSEPH A. LEE)

## SPORT

Remembering Kobe Bryant

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## News

# GU President says application for settled status feels “un-British” as Brexit day arrives

**Christopher Dorrell and Alexander Shtyrov**  
Deputy News Editor & News Correspondent

The UK is set to leave the European Union at 11pm tonight.

With the day of departure here, Graduate Union President Alessandro Ceccerelli, who has to prove he has been resident in the UK for five years to achieve settled status, said it felt “un-British”.

EU, EEA and Swiss citizens must apply to the government’s ‘Settlement Scheme’ by 30th June 2021 if they wish to continue living permanently in the UK after the deadline.

Depending on whether these citizens have lived in the UK for five years continuously, they will be eligible for either ‘pre-settled’ or ‘settled’ status. The latter are entitled to longer future residency stints abroad, and automatic British

citizenship for their children.

“EU students and citizens have been entering the country legally, but more and more they feel like they have been treated with suspicion ... I worry that, even with a slightly more liberal regime, European citizens such as myself will always have to prove something, even though we contribute our fair share,” Ceccerelli commented.

“I have just been made a promise by the British Government that they will let me stay in the UK, without being molested by requests to prove it from now on. I am not sure that I can trust that promise, nor do I think that I can control what will happen to me in the next [sic] years”.

The Government passed the Withdrawal Agreement Bill on the 9th January, and the European Parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of its ratification on Wednesday.

CUSU President Edward Parker-Humphreys insisted he has been

“working closely with the University” in the lead-up to Brexit.

“At meetings of the University’s EU Working Group, I have repeatedly highlighted the importance of keeping students up to date with key developments and have encouraged the University to send all-student email communications to ensure access to the necessary information in relation to Brexit”.

On an institutional level the UK’s departure from the EU puts at risk funding the University receives from projects like Horizon 2020, the biggest EU Research and Innovation programme, receiving nearly €80 billion of funding available over 7 years.

In 2017, the University’s Schools, which are groupings of related faculties and departments, received a total of £59,220,000 in research funding from the EU Commission. The EU is the University’s third largest source of such funding, representing 12.7% of Cambridge’s external research income, after UK

charities (30.59%) and Research Councils (31.5%).

The European Universities Association, composed of universities from 48 countries, was optimistic regarding changes to academia and research post-Brexit, stating on Facebook “the way may be winding, but the direction is right”.

Questions still remain over the Government’s commitment to continued academic exchanges, seen by a refusal to commit to negotiating full membership of the Erasmus+ scheme.

Although the UK will leave the EU’s decision-making bodies, it will remain in the single market and customs union during the transition period which is expected to end on 31st December 2020. During this time the UK will participate in all EU programmes as usual.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has described Brexit as a “fantastic moment” in the history of Britain.

Cambridge voted to remain by 73.8% during the 2016 referendum.

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# ‘A Rapist in Your Path’: activists protest abuse against women

**Zac Ntim**  
News Correspondent

*Content note: This article contains mention of sexual and domestic violence*

A group of activists gathered outside the Guildhall on Saturday afternoon for a performance of anti-rape anthem ‘A Rapist in Your Path’ to denounce violence and human rights abuses against women.

The feminist anthem, which originated in Chile, became an international phenomenon after videos of the performance went viral last year. Activists have since performed the song in cities across the world including outside the court during the trial of film producer, Harvey Weinstein, in New York City.

The performance brought together women of all ages, including several students who joined the performance in solidarity, handing out leaflets with information about sexual violence.

Laura Wainman, organiser of the

event in Cambridge, explained that she decided to stage a performance as “an action of solidarity – both with the women who began the protest in Chile and with women everywhere who have experienced violence and oppression.”

“It’s an act of defiance in the face of a system that perpetuates rape culture and the continued violation of women’s rights – as well as being a powerful way of raising awareness on the issue.”

The song was created by Chilean feminist collective, Las Tesis, and is based on the work of Argentinian theorist Rita Segato who argues that sexual violence must be treated as a political issue.

The song is aimed at police forces and judiciary and political power structures who uphold systematic violations of women’s rights, with lyrics saying, “The rapist is you/ It’s the cops/ The judges/ The state.”

In the UK, one in every five wom-

en over the age of 16 has experienced sexual violence. However, only 15% of victims will report the crime to the police and only 6% of those reports end in a conviction for the perpetrator.

Laura said: “It is the oppressive system – perpetuated by the police, judiciary systems, and political power structures – both here and in Chile, that allows the continued violation of women’s rights and in many cases encourages rape culture and victim shaming. This is not only devastating to the women who experience it but is also highly damaging to our society.”

Laura added: “We hope these protests will continue to inspire a global community of women – separated by distance but not by experience. When we act together, in solidarity, and as a single global community of women we have enormous power– and it is through channelling this power that we can dismantle the systems of oppression and end violence against women.”

## CARBON CLEAN-UP Council outlines carbon neutral plans

Cambridgeshire county council has announced a plan for the county to become carbon neutral by 2050. The plan was drawn up by researchers at the Cambridge University Science and Policy Exchange. It includes a massive reforestation project, retrofitting homes to make them more energy efficient, and encouraging the use of renewable energy. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough emitted 6.1 tonnes of greenhouse gasses in 2016.

## DEATH OF DEMOCRACY? Dissatisfaction with democracy at all time high

A study by the University of Cambridge’s Centre for the Future of Democracy – which held its launch event on Wednesday evening – has found that dissatisfaction with democracy is at its highest level in over two decades. The study surveyed four million people in 154 countries. In late 2019, 61% of people surveyed in the UK said that they were not satisfied with the state of democracy, the highest since the 1970s. A similar trend is seen in the USA.

## LGBTQ+ PENGUINS LGBTQ+ tours in Cambridge museums

Cambridge museums are launching LGBTQ+ tours. Volunteers will lead groups in exploring objects which relate to the gender and sexual identity of LGBTQ+ people “from same-sex behaviour among penguins to etroticism in the ancient world”. Tours will last about 40 minutes and will run at seven museums across the city. The Bridging Binaries Tours will run from February to June, in museums including the Fitzwilliam and the Polar.

## THE FIRST DOLLYOLOGIST Cambridge alumnus becomes Dolly Parton expert

The Cambridge alumnus, Helen Morales, has become the world’s first “Dollyologist”. A road trip across Tennessee led the Professor of Hellenic Studies at UC Santa Barbara to publish Pilgrimage to Dollywood in 2014. Since then Morales supervises graduate students who want to study the American singer. The news comes as ‘The Dolly Parton challenge’ has taken social media by storm, with celebrities such as Oprah joining in on the meme parodying social media profiles.



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## News

# Cambridge Refugee Resettlement Campaign's employment program sees first success

**Sam Crawley**  
News Correspondent

The Cambridge Refugee Resettlement Campaign's (CRRC) employment program has recently had its first major success since it was set up last year, with Alaa, a refugee who arrived in the UK from Syria three years ago, being offered a three-day trial period working at a dairy farm near St Ives.

Ann Goodridge, who leads a team of six volunteers running the employment program at CRRC, said that paid work is vital for refugees to be able to integrate into their new communities, learn English, and feel like a valued member of society.

Goodridge said that many refugees have extensive experience in farming, gardening, and catering, but because of a lack of formal qualifications can only find work as cleaners. Alaa, who was a dairy farmer in Syria before coming to the UK, had been working as a cleaner until now.



◀ **Alaa and Paul Kelly, Farm Manager at the University Farm (Cambridge Refugee Resettlement Program)**

Through the program, refugees can get a CV produced for them and receive advice and training on establishing their own businesses at the Business and Intellectual Property Centre in Cambridge Central Library and the Entrepreneur Refugee Network.

Refugees are also offered employment experience with companies that work with CRRC, including construction, manufacturing, and gardening companies as well as National Trust properties. Anglesey Abbey, a stately home six miles northeast of Cambridge, takes on refugees as volunteers, which allows their families to visit the property and its gardens free of charge.

Alaa was previously able to get six-days unpaid work experience at the Cambridge University Farm's dairy enterprise.

CRRC was formed in 2015 and gained charitable status two years later. Its 200 volunteers work with 27 families, most of whom have been resettled from Syria under the

UK government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS). The VPRS was launched in January 2014. It coordinates closely with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and local authorities, including Cambridge City Council, to resettle vulnerable refugees from camps in the Middle East.

Catherine Walston, the head of Communications and Outreach, told *Varsity* that almost all refugees speak only Arabic and often find contact with the healthcare and education systems difficult. CRRC volunteers work to settle families into their new lives in the UK and provide English lessons on top of those offered by the City Council, as well as assisting with driving test preparation and finding childcare and private accommodation at reduced rates.

Other refugees have also benefited from the CRRC employment program, with one securing their food handling certificate, a crucial step in establishing their own catering business.

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## Ancient star discovery could overturn star formation theories, Cambridge study finds

**Alexander Shtyrov**  
News Correspondent

A study involving Cambridge's Institute of Astronomy has discovered unusually high levels of the elements carbon, nitrogen, and oxygen (CNO) in the atmosphere of the ancient star.

The findings provide new insight into how these three elements were formed in the early universe.

The star in question, J0815+4729, was formed only a few hundred million years after the birth of the universe, making it one of the oldest observable stars.

The study's co-author and researcher at the Institute of Astronomy David Aguado told *Varsity* he believes the observed 'CNO enhancement' could "force us to reassess our theoretical models in star formation".

Aguado and colleagues at the Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias (IAC) discovered J0815 in 2018. It is located in the 'halo' of the Milky Way, a diffuse spherical shell of matter surrounding the galaxy.

"These kinds of stars (the oldest in the Milky Way) are genuine fossil

“These kinds of stars (the oldest in the Milky Way) are genuine fossil records of the chemical evolution of the Universe”

records of the chemical evolution of the Universe. The fact that J0815 has a very high CNO abundance makes it a very interesting object," he said.

Using the CNO enhancement along with the observation, J0815 has only a fraction of the metal content of the Sun. The researchers inferred it may have been contaminated by another star collapsing nearby in an event known as a supernova.

While the lighter elements, including CNO, were ejected, the black hole formed from the supernova may then have captured the much heavier metals, in a process called 'fallback'.

The study was a collaboration between the Institute of Astronomy, IAC, and the University of California San Diego (UCSD), and was funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation, and Universities (MCIU).

Cambridge University is "deeply involved with the Spanish institutions" who participated in the study, according to Aguado.

A meeting of the WEAVE collaboration, whose goals include the chemical analysis of stars formed very early in the life of the universe, will take place later this year.



# Town and University groups collaborate to 'carbon map' Cambridge

**Ellie Arden**  
News Correspondant

The 'Cambridge Carbon Map', a joint initiative led by University and town climate action groups, has launched with the aim to produce a public map of carbon emissions in Cambridge.

The interactive map will be available on mobile devices, allowing users to see and compare carbon emissions from institutions and companies in the city, in order to push organisations towards a zero carbon future.

The project is a collaboration between groups including Cambridgeshire Climate Emergency, Cambridge Climate Lecture Series and Big Cambridge Climate Conversation (BC4), a new group of Cambridge residents, students and academics who were inspired by a similar "situation map" created by Cambridgeshire Climate Emergency.

BC4 aims to bridge the gap between

the town and the University in climate action, starting by measuring carbon emissions of all colleges and University departments.

Other groups collaborating on the Cambridge Carbon Map include the Trinity College Ethical and Green Affairs Society (TEGA), the Cambridge Group for Ethics in Engineering and Computer Science (GEECS) and the Leys School.

The groups making the map are encouraging businesses, colleges, University departments, schools and council offices to include their carbon emissions in the map.

Stefan Haselwilmer, spokesperson for Cambridgeshire Climate Emergency, told Varsity that the availability of the map depends on "how cooperative Cambridge colleges are" in providing relevant information, which he said "could take months and months".

The University itself has not collaborated on the project.

"The Cambridge Carbon Map will be a

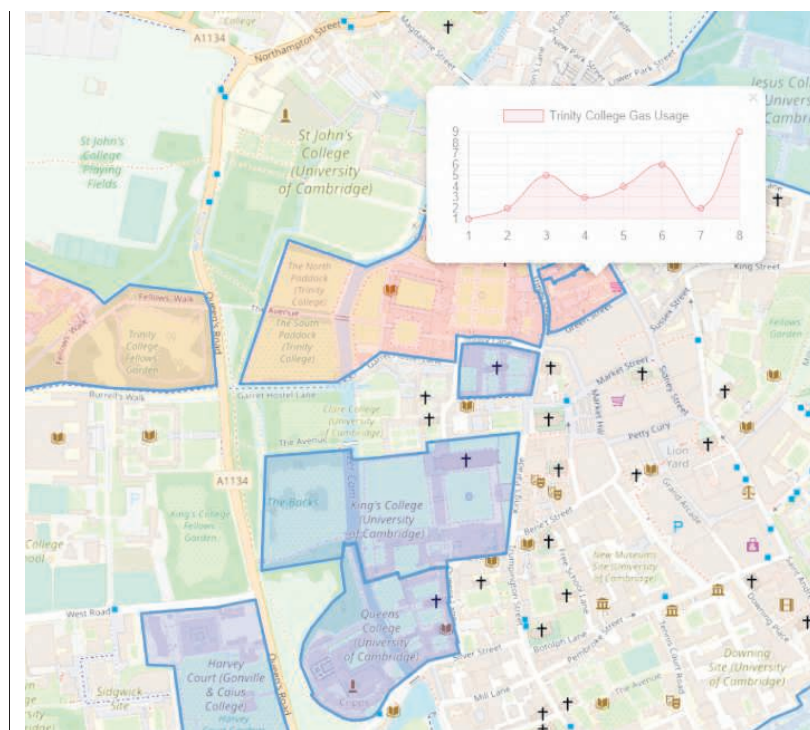
useful tool to track local progress towards a fossil-free future, but in order to tackle the wider climate crisis we must examine its root causes," said a spokesperson for activist group Cambridge Zero Carbon.

"The fossil fuel industry contributes overwhelmingly to climate breakdown, an enterprise which the University supports both directly and indirectly through its investments, research, professorships, recruitment events, and more".

Despite initial support for the map, Zero Carbon emphasised "the climate crisis is a global issue and we have to fight on all fronts for climate justice: this means system change on a global scale".

"Cambridge Zero Carbon Society continues to demand that the University cut all ties with the fossil fuel industry as a crucial step in the right direction towards achieving global climate justice," they added.

Varsity has contacted the University for comment, but received no response.



▲ An initial version of the map to be released soon (CAMBRIDGE CARBON MAP)



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## News

# Oxford professor given security protection after transphobia controversy

**Sophie Huskisson**  
Senior News Editor

*Content note: This article contains mention of transphobia.*

Selina Todd, a professor of Modern History at St Hilda's College, has been given protection by Oxford University after receiving criticism from transgender rights activists on social media.

Student activists say her views on the need to protect "women's spaces" from trans women are unacceptable.

Todd, a researcher in working-class, women's and feminist history, said she felt "vulnerable" and that there was enough evidence on social media to convince the university to provide protection, which includes University staff accompanying her to lectures.

Speaking on BBC Radio 4's Today programme on Saturday, Todd said: "Democracy is under threat. We all have to defend the right of people to have freedom of speech and freedom of debate."



Todd argued that the inclusion of trans women in women's spaces "would take away women's rights."

"This might sound like a storm in a teacup and something that's just about student activists, but students become graduates and Oxford students tend to become

activists who go into things like politics, the media, the civil service, so if they are learning that no debate is the way to run a society, we should all be worried."

Todd said Oxford's history faculty received complaints on a daily basis from activists calling for her to be sacked. A complaint, backed by a Facebook peti-

◀ **Selina Todd is a professor of modern history at St Hilda's College, Oxford** (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

tion, about the comments she made on social media, was previously dismissed by the University.

On Saturday, the University of Oxford said: "When staff raise concerns with us, the university will always review the circumstances and offer appropriate support to ensure their safety and freedom of expression."

CUSU campaigns against feminist movements that exclude trans people. Last year they published a guide to spotting Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists (TERF), defining TERF ideology as "a specific form of transphobia, and more specifically transmisogyny."

The guide explained that according to TERF ideology, "trans women are excluded from womanhood and should accordingly be excluded from women-only spaces. Womanhood is supposedly defined exclusively by 'sex-based' oppression, aka oppression as a result of being what terf ideology terms 'biologically female'.

"This idea weaponises a reductive understanding of 'biology' to argue that 'women' - or those assigned female at birth - all experience gendered oppression in the same way, which erases our diverse experiences of gender as it intersects with race, class, sexuality, disability, and many other structural factors."

Kate Litman, CUSU Women's Officer, said: "Women's spaces should be open to all women on the basis of self-identification. There are plenty of women's services which provide essential support for all women including trans women, such as the Rape Crisis Centre here in Cambridge. Fearmongering about the presence of trans women in women's spaces does a disservice to the women who rely on those services."

"CUSU and the Women's Campaign will always stand up for the rights of trans students. Students are welcome to collect 'Trans women are women' stickers from the CUSU lounge if they would like to show their solidarity with trans students."

Oxford Student Union's Women's Campaign have been contacted for comment.

## University pledges to halve 'access gap' by 2025

**Lottie Elton**  
News Correspondent

The University's "Access and Participation Plan for 2020-21 to 2024-25" (APP), approved by the Office for Students (OfS), pledges to admit more applicants from disadvantaged areas and state schools by 2025.

This plan comes in the context of a new report released by the Office for Students (OfS), an independent watchdog regulating higher education in the UK. Leading universities have promised to pursue the goals outlined in the report, which include halving the "access gap" at Cambridge and other universities within 5 years.

By 2025, the University aims to admit 69.1% of students from state schools, a 5% increase from the admissions plans for 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 which all aimed for a percentage of 62-64%. In the 2017-18 admissions cycle, admissions from state schools made up 65.2 % of the cohort, the highest percentage on record.

Universities Minister Chris Skidmore remarked that despite these improvements, "It is damning for the sector that large gaps still remain."

Some private school heads have

expressed fears that the access measures will mean fewer places for more affluent students. Mike Buchanan of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference, which represents 296 independent schools, said: "Care is needed in starting actively to discriminate against individual young people on the basis of the class they were born into," demanding that Oxbridge increase overall intake.

Students from independent schools still make up a disproportionate portion of the cohort; between 2006-2017, students from just 3% of applying schools made up 44% of the total Oxbridge cohort over the time period.

The new access scheme addresses other measures of socio-economic inequality, including Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) and the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

POLAR measures entry to higher education by age 19 in geographical areas across the UK. It sorts each area into one of five groups - or quintiles - based on the proportion of young people in the area who have entered higher education by the age of 19. POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 contain the 40 percent of postcodes with lowest participation rates in tertiary education.

By 2025, the University aims for 16.6% of its admissions to come from

POLAR quintiles 1 and 2; in the admissions plans for 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019 - 2020 APP, the equivalent target was 10% to 13%. In 2017-18, 12.2 percent of successful applicants came from these areas.

The IMD is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England, calculated on the basis of seven measures including income, employment, level of education, and crime levels. By 2025, the university aims for 21.2 % of the students it admits to come from these areas.

If carried out, this plan will cut the ratio of most-represented to least-represented groups at Cambridge from around 14 to one to around 6.7 to one.

However, inequality is still a serious concern for the University. In 2018, it was identified by the Higher Education Policy Institute as "the most unequal university in the UK."

In the 2020-25 APP itself, the university recognises the urgency of these priorities, and declares its commitment to their fulfilment.

"We will make all reasonable endeavours to deliver on these objectives and by 2035 we expect that one third of our intake will be drawn from the most under-represented and disadvantaged groups."



▲ **The University aims to admit 69.1% of students from state schools** (LOUIS ASHWORTH)



# Cambridge Zero Carbon backs occupation of Oxford College

**Gaby Vides**  
News Correspondent

Cambridge Zero Carbon Society has announced their support for the occupation of the front quad of St John's College, Oxford by environmental groups including the Oxford Climate Justice Campaign.

The students involved in the direct action, which began on Wednesday, are demanding St John's complete divestment from the fossil fuel industry.

Cambridge Zero Carbon commented on the occupation, saying that they stand "in solidarity with Oxford Climate Justice Campaign and all the students currently occupying St John's College."

"Oxbridge are shamefully lagging behind in their refusal to acknowledge their complicity [in Climate change] and instead take meaningful action. We call upon both Oxford and Cambridge, along with their colleges, to Divest Now!"

Zero Carbon's endorsement of the occupation follows direct action by the group, which blockaded the BP institute twice in 2019, and their release of a report in October 2019, detailing the University's ties with the fossil fuel industry.

Zero Carbon highlighted the hypocrisy of St John's for "advertising for a research assistant to aid investigation into the college's colonial past, yet [continuing] to invest in the fossil fuel companies whose practices have proven to be to the disproportionate detriment of people



▲ Activists have been protesting and camping in the College's quad since Wednesday ()

and communities in the global south."

The occupation is planned to last for several days and was accompanied yesterday by a protest outside the College's entrance. Participants will sleep in tents in the quad and have brought with them banners and placards bearing slogans such as "wake up fossil fools" and "direct action for divestment".

The college has responded to the occupation by "phoning the police and cutting off protesters' access to hot water and some rooms", according to a student at the University.

St John's, the wealthiest Oxford col-

lege, is known to have at least £8.1 million of disclosed investments in fossil fuel companies, as well as undisclosed investments from its £551 million endowment.

Oxford Climate Justice Campaign says it hopes "this action will bring some much-needed urgency to the divestment issue at Oxford," and illuminate the injustice "that our wealthiest education institutions continue to profit from the exploitation of the most marginalised - those who are being affected most by the climate crisis."

The occupation of St John's comes just

two days after Balliol College, Oxford committed to divestment and banned all future donations from fossil fuel companies.

Divestment has become a mobilising epicentre for student protest and over 50% of UK universities have now pledged they will no longer invest in fossil fuels. Six Cambridge colleges have withdrawn direct investments from the fossil fuel industry and more

have partially divested. The most recent Cambridge college committing to divestment was Jesus, in September 2019.

A spokesperson for St John's College, Oxford remarked on the occupation that the College's "main portfolio adviser assesses all companies with regard to their ethical, social and governance stance and updates its advice to the College on a regular basis."

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# Cambridge commemorates Holocaust Memorial Day

**Alex Bolot**  
News Correspondent

A number of college and University-wide events were held this week to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day 2020, which occurred on Monday.

Cambridge University Jewish Society held an evening ceremony to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp. Approximately 50 attendees came together to light candles and sing songs and prayers in memory of those who perished in the Holocaust. A minute of silence was also held during the event.

The ceremony saw the Jewish Chaplains for Cambridge and East Anglia Universities, Alissa and Elazar Symon, speak poignantly about re-

membering the victims of the Holocaust. As part of the event, student Josh Daniel read a moving poem that he had written after visiting Auschwitz.

Referencing the Jewish tradition of placing stones at the graves of loved ones, Daniel's poem in memory of the six million Jews killed during the Holocaust includes the lines "stones stay there forever/ They won't just decay/ They won't flicker out and our memories/ won't just go away".

Elsewhere in Cambridge, similar events have taken place to mark the anniversary. On Sunday, Selwyn hosted its first ever event to mark International Holocaust Memorial Day. It was well attended by Selwyn students and involved a talk from representatives from the Holocaust Educational Trust, followed by a minute's silence and lighting of a memorial candle by the college

chaplain.

Pembroke College hosted the 2020 Holocaust Memorial Day lecture on Wednesday, delivered by Dr Ben Gidley of Birbeck, University of London, entitled 'Facing Anti-Semitism: Rebuilding Anti-Racism'.

Dr. Gidley, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Psychosocial Studies focused on the theme of Holocaust Memorial Day 2020, which was 'Stand Together'.

Discussing current received ideas about Anti-Semitism, as well as providing a historical timeline of the persecution of Jews, Dr Gidley suggested that we ought to think of Anti-Semitism in relational terms, "connected to but never identical to other forms of racism." Elaborating on this, Dr. Gidley said that "standing together is enabled when we stand against different forms of racism together."

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## Interviews

# Navigating science and health in an age of fake news

**Andrea Kocsis** sits down with leading geneticist, Dr Giles Yeo, to discuss why fake news is appealing to the public, and why scientists need to speak up

Scientific fake news is more popular than ever: the flat Earth theory, anti-vampire mists and healing hydrogen-peroxide drops are just a click away.

Dr Giles Yeo knows it all too well – as a researcher, a TV personality (*Trust Me, I'm a Doctor*; *Who are you calling fat?*; *Vitamin Pills - Miracle or Myth*) and popular author (*Gene Eating*), he actively engages larger audiences to fight against pseudoscience. Off-screen, he is a Wolfson Fellow and Scientific Director of Genomics/Transcriptomics Core at the Wellcome - MRC Institute of Metabolic Science, studying obesity.

He links the proliferation of fake news to the birth of social media: “In the past, the likelihood that you would find someone who believes what you believe was low, so you kept all those thoughts in your head. I don't think people changed that much, but I do think social media has enabled spreading fake news.” However, this is just part of the truth, as pseudoscience has also begun to take centre stage in mainstream media. A recent example is Gwyneth Paltrow's *The Goop Lab*, released on Netflix this month, which explores a range of alternative and pseudo-medicinal cures – from advising how you can control your energy field to discussing the benefits of magic mushrooms.

At the mention of it, Yeo gets passionate: “It's huge! Enormous! Hundreds of millions of people. I'm amazed they gave her the platform. I do think that we, academics, have some role to play in it in terms of not communicating to non-experts what we actually do and how scientific method works.” According to Yeo, the public see scientists as a bunch of people constantly changing their minds. What non-experts cannot see is that arguing with each other is the researchers' job.

“I know lots of colleagues of mine who think that public engagement is a waste of time,” touching on a particular nerve in his field. “But I don't think so. It is rather our duty for a number of reasons.” Yeo claims that the low number of people reading scientific papers calls for popular explanation. Secondly, he fears that if scientists themselves do not communicate, then someone that is less of an expert will do so in a poorer way. “And then who are we to complain?” he asks conclusively.

Yeo advises that all scientists should engage as the opportunity arises. “Everyone can do it to different degrees using different methods: writing, TV, going to the primary school, presenting at the science festival. The only way



▲ Dr Giles Yeo is a geneticist and a fellow of Wolfson College. (FIONA GILSENAN)

we can fight this degradation of truth is standing up, telling the truth and pointing out when people are talking bullshit.”

The problem is that it takes time. “I study obesity, other people study cancer, but there are people with cancer, with obesity, with any other disease, and they want to be cured now. So there is this vacuum of people looking for answers, and things like *Goop* fill the space,” Yeo says, pointing out that

“  
The only way we can fight this degradation of truth is standing up, telling the truth  
”

the increase of bizarre pseudo-science cures is a natural response to a society demanding instant results.

He does concede that there can be a humorous element to some scientific fake news, no matter how exasperating they may be to trained experts. “Like *Goop* and their jade eggs. Do whatever you want with the jade egg,” Yeo shrugs his shoulders. Yet, in some situations,

it becomes dangerous. Yeo's classic example is the anti-vaccine movement. “You can sell all kinds of lotions and potions, if all that people are doing is wasting their money. But when people are actually dying or harming themselves, it is a problem.”

When it comes to diets, there is a similar dilemma of fake news. “The tip of the iceberg is, for example, Robert Young's alkaline diet.” Young believes that, since our blood is slightly alkaline, we must therefore eat alkaline foods in order to stay healthier. However, from a scientific perspective his argument is completely wrong; it dismisses that our acidic stomach acts like a barrier, and his classification of what alkaline is makes no sense. As an example, Young considers a lemon, which is full of acids, as alkaline.

But, despite all the scientific criticism, the alkaline diet does, in fact, work for a lot of people. Why? “Because it is very close to being vegan: very low on meat and dairy products,” Yeo explains. “So people eat it, lose weight and get healthier, because as you lose weight, you lose the risk of different diseases.”

Yeo is hesitant when being asked if veganism is a healthier way of life: “If you are doing it properly, it's fine, but you shouldn't impose your diet on other people.”

He becomes even more reluctant when I ask about vegan children. He answers slowly and considerably: “Personally, I believe that children should be given the best food possible. Including meat, milk and eggs and everything, then allow to make their decision once

they passed the rapidly growing phase. Veganism, unless you are very careful with it, is not a great idea for kids.”

The elephant is still in the room: what's the harm in meal plans like the alkaline diet, when it seems to be working? Yeo expects the question: “The problem is when you start taking things to the extreme. Like Robert Young did.”

Yeo explains this harmful chain of mistaken arguments: “First, Young

“  
I don't think people changed that much, but I do think social media has enabled spreading fake news.  
”

thought that acids were bad, therefore diseases must be acidic, and since cancer produces a lot of lactic acid, therefore cancers are acidic. So he suggests infusing sodium-bicarb into the blood to neutralise the acid. I am not even kidding you. He started a clinic in California to cure cancer, by telling people to come off their chemo.” Therefore, it works as a kind of a gateway drug: via

pseudoscience, you can get from arguing about eating more vegetables to giving up cancer treatment.

Yeo thinks that fixing our diet is necessary for a healthy life, but eating foods like turmeric, ginger or garlic will not cure the disease. Yet what ‘health’ and ‘obesity’ means is different in each individual case. “In a population you can be fat in many sizes, but for the individual there is no health at every size. Someone who is bigger can be far healthier than a skinny one. The trick is trying to identify where that line is where you become ill. Health is not an SI unit,” he summarises.

Thinking about body positivity versus fat shaming, Yeo prefers to differentiate between pointing out the problem of carrying too much fat and blaming the person for the problem. “I think that we as a society, should take those two things apart. I understand the body positivity movement, because people with obesity have been judged and called out all over their life, so they react. But we also have to understand the science underlying it: if you do carry too much fat exceeding your limits, it is unhealthy for you.”

He also warns us that the beach-body ideal does not correspond to the health requirements. “Losing weight for health very seldom coincides with how you look. So it is unlikely to end up looking like Gwyneth Paltrow when you look in the mirror [even] after a diet to get healthier.”

After catching a few minutes of *The Goop Lab*, Yeo's disagreement that body size can automatically indicate health is a comforting thought.



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# Features

## Let's talk about Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

**Maya Yousif** sheds light on a hormonal condition affecting women around the world

*Content Note: This article contains detailed discussion of body image and mental health.*

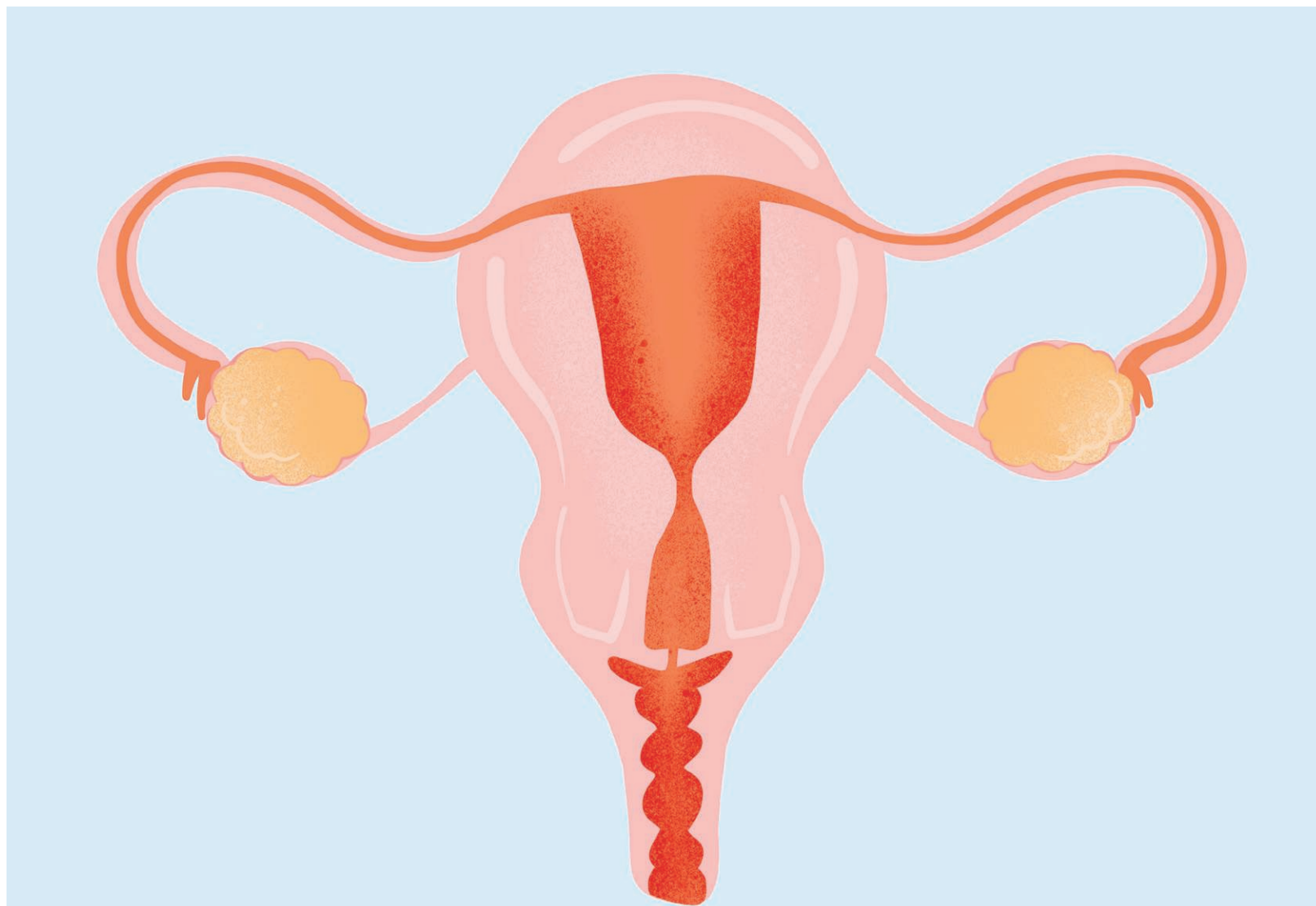
**P**olycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a common hormonal condition said to affect 1 in 10 women across the UK. It is incurable, and often (but not necessarily) diagnosed around puberty.

Whilst living with PCOS can be challenging, it is ultimately far more manageable than its rather frightening name would initially suggest.

When I was diagnosed aged eighteen, I was devastated. I'd never even heard of this condition before, so, naturally, I began to fear for the worst. I was both reassured and confused upon being told of its notably high prevalence among young women: if it is indeed so common, then why is it not taught in schools? And why aren't more people aware of it?

This is in part due to a failure of our education system in its impractical (and often absent) teachings on sex, health, and wellbeing. PCOS is caused by elevated androgens (male hormones) in women, and this can cause higher levels of facial and body hair, irregular periods, non-existent periods, fatigue, ovarian cysts, weight gain, acne, sleep apnoea, irritability, depression, mood swings, and infertility. Not everyone experiences all symptoms, and many experience them to varying degrees.

The manifestation of these symptoms



▲ **“Let’s keep the conversation going.”**

(ILLUSTRATION BY ALISA SANTIKARN FOR VARSITY)

“many feel embarrassed about their symptoms”

in pubescent women without sufficient education can cause feelings of shame and social embarrassment. As we are all well aware, mainstream culture has popularised a standard of female beauty that is already unattainable by women.

Our incessant exposure to images of slim, clear-skinned women with little to no body hair has popularised an ideal that is both deeply desirable, and fundamentally impossible. The pressure for teenagers and young women to conform to such an ideal is heightened for those exhibiting symptoms of PCOS, and girls without a diagnosis can look to their own developing bodies with an elevated sense of self-consciousness, frustration, and anxiety.

This can feel alienating: you are in a perpetual battle with puberty, and always feel that your body is not quite right.

A lack of discussion and awareness around hormonal conditions combined with this pressure to conform to a particular aesthetic means that many feel embarrassed about their symptoms

and turn to dangerous practices. One study in particular has shown that the number of women with eating disorders and PCOS was over four times the rate of eating disorders among women without PCOS. Statistics like this are emphatic in their demonstration that there is a significant gap in the way that schools teach issues of sex, puberty, and well-being. Young women are taught that there is a normative, monolithic experience of female health. At around age 11 we're told that one day we'll menstruate once a month. In following years, we are taught about STIs, and then we learn how to put a condom on a plastic phallus. That tends to be the extent of it. So, when we don't discuss irregular menstruation, mental health, or the variegated experiences of puberty with young women, the statistics concerning disordered eating and PCOS unfortunately make sense.

When we learn about hormones, it's often hard to remember that they are not simply answers to GCSE biology questions, but real things that

“Young women are taught that there is a normative, monolithic experience of female health”

form a vital part of our physiologies and impact on both our mental and physical health.

Women with PCOS are 40% more likely to experience anxiety and/or depression, but are not taught the multitude of ways in which this can be managed. Many turn to the pill, which is an oft-espoused treatment of PCOS due to its regulation of periods. However, many girls report mood swings, irritability, anxiety, and depression. There is not one solution for all. While the pill may work for some women, many studies show the overwhelmingly positive impact of regular exercise and a balanced diet on managing symptoms of PCOS. On the arduous path to understanding my body and my condition, I've had to learn these things through trial and much, much error.

I am optimistic for a future in which sex education will make room for such discussions, meaning that teenage girls who struggle with PCOS or similar hormonal conditions will feel less alone in their struggles. For now, let's keep the conversation going.



# Hypocrisy is the best policy

**Stephanie Christenson** says that we should take pride in “the good enough,” and not be scared of being a hypocrite

Content Note: This article contains discussion of eating disorders and dieting.

**K**nocking someone off their perfect pedestal is an unparalleled delight. It's that glorious ‘HA!’ moment we all dream of. It's why so many of us had to stifle a giggle at Ricky Gervais' now infamous speech. The same happened when newspapers published the holiday habits of the oh-so-environmentally-minded Harry and Meghan. The best part is that there's endless scope for identifying inconsistency. There's the leather boots some haughty virtue-signallers snuggle their toes into, the mountainous air miles on some vegan foods, or just the time the ‘nice’ person wasn't actually that nice.

While I would never condemn harmless bitchiness behind closed doors, I do think that, if we're to make any progress at all, it's necessary to start taking a different approach, especially when it comes to our moral compass. I've had many friends, for instance, try Veganuary only to discover milk powder in Alpen products and abandon it entirely. That's the perception nowadays: you can either be perfect, or abandon the pursuit altogether. But I would argue quite the opposite. Hypocrisy is not only more approachable in the short term, and sustainable in the long term, but it's also far more heroic.

I know from my own haphazard dieting attempts that ridiculously high expectations only set you up to go quite the

other way. At school, I didn't just want to be slim, I wanted to be Victoria's-Secret-level thin. And, inspired by my skinny colleagues who had begun only eating leaves, I knew it would have to be the same for me. A single biscuit would unravel all success. But a life of leaves never really appealed. So I never actually started. Worse than that, I told myself each day that my diet would start the next, so I'd wolf down whatever I could squeeze into my stomach, fearing each marvellous meal would be my last. As it happens, those ‘last-ever’ evenings became a habit. The irony was that, when I developed this mastermind plan, I was actually quite skinny to begin with. But, under the pressure of unrealistic expectations, I went quite the other way. I've never gained as much weight as I did trying to be a purist about my diet.

The same applies to socially conscious eating habits. Intimidating ideals send people in the opposite direction. So many people sympathise with vegan ethics but, put off by its purism, continue to slap meat on their plates three times a day. Why even attempt something so unachievable? The ideal of the perfect gets in the way of the good enough.

I call myself a vegan because it's a close-enough description of my diet, though many have leapt up with their pitchforks to disagree. Since my grounds are environmental, and since I'm desperately drawn towards forklifts of pork, I allow myself the odd loophole, whether it's meat that's about to be thrown away

or the odd bite of something I haven't financially contributed to. Yes it's flimsy and fallacious, but it works. It keeps me going. It means that I - an individual with the willpower of a teaspoon - have stuck with it for over a year now. Shouldn't that be what counts? Shouldn't the direction of travel matter so much more than being a purist about every step we stake? There's no need to denounce the vegetarian who buckles at bacon's best. The same goes for the vegan who surreptitiously sips her friend's cow milk cappuccino. Both are going in the right direction. That in itself ought to be cause for celebration.

To avoid hypocrisy, on the other hand, is to avoid setting standards for yourself altogether. It certainly makes life easier. Someone who identifies as a bad person has no expectation of good behaviour to live up to. Someone with no values cannot be accused of breaking them. In my own experience, it stems from a lack of faith that you'll be able to maintain the standard you set for yourself.

To strive for something, knowing you're unlikely to succeed but trying anyway for the sake of a greater cause: that is the essence of real heroism. In fact, although I've shed many of my religious beliefs, it's the one idea that keeps my little toes trotting up to communion - that we inevitably fall short, but we strive anyway, and that is what makes us good. What could be more human? What could be more heroic?

I'm a vegan who snaffles her mother's

chocolate supply. I'm also a feminist who will have a bad day if her hair tresses don't fall quite right. I'm a firm believer in complete transparency and yet will occasionally pathologically lie in order to maintain my own privacy. I'm proud to be a hypocrite in almost everything I do. It means I have values. It means I'm finally trying.

“To avoid hypocrisy is to avoid setting standards for yourself altogether”



▲ (ILLUSTRATION BY ALISA SANTIKARN FOR VARSITY)

# Divided loyalties: aligning my political identity

**Issac Fung** elucidates the entanglements of his dual sense of belonging in British politics

“Yes, him! I want Corbyn to win, because then the British economy will crash.”

This, in any other context, would be sarcasm. But my mother, who was lecturing me about the British General Election, was dead serious. “The party with the red colour - what is it called again? They don't know how to run the economy properly. So, when pound sterling drops in value, we can buy more. Better value for money. Ai, we spend too much on your tuition fees anyway.” Needless to say, I did not agree with her. After all, it all seemed rather selfish. But

our conversation made me realise my own unique relationship with British politics. As an international student from Hong Kong, I've always had conflicting loyalties. On one hand, I have my ‘English’ political views, where I think with Britain's best interests in mind and take a side accordingly. On the other hand, I have my ‘Hong Kong’ slant on British politics, where I think about how British politics would affect my family and my home in Hong Kong.

It is an interesting case of self-imposed political doublethink. To a great degree, having two sets of political ideologies is

like having two costumes. With my English friends, I put on my first costume - that of a disaffected Tory - and argue against the four-day work week and the abolition of private schools. I argue that a Tory victory - despite all its flaws - would end the political stalemate over Brexit, and so should be preferred over a hung parliament. But when I'm with my Chinese relatives, the discussion goes rather differently. We talk about which party would allow more Hong Kong emigrants into the country, the relative merits of foreign investment opportunities, and whether each party would be good for Hong Kong. Much of my family, for example, wanted the Liberal Democrats to win, but not because they believed in Remain. Indeed, many of them thought Remain supporters were bad losers. Instead, they wanted the Lib Dems to come out on top because they were the only party who supported a pathway to full citizenship for British National Overseas (BNO) passport holders. “At least they know a thing or two about colonial responsibility!” grumbled one relative. “I've got a BNO passport, and it's time Britain stopped treating me like a second-class citizen!”

A lot of people might find such an approach to politics selfish, or even mildly amusing. But for first-generation immigrants from Hong Kong, or people like myself, such conversations are part of a larger

“Real global awareness does not come from a detached, rarefied and ‘cosmopolitan’ air”

discussion about our own political identity. This is because the Hong Kong diaspora has to juggle between two very different sets of priorities: they must ensure Britain remains prosperous so their immediate family can thrive, but they also want to ensure Hong Kong and their extended family remain safe. The concept of loyalty cuts both ways, and navigating the rocky shores of identity becomes an intrinsic part of existence.

For a long time, I was afraid that my contradictory political identities were a product of false-consciousness; the result of the residual colonial structures and fetishization of Western mores within Hong Kong. I was also, to a great degree, anglicised by a lifetime speaking English and going to schools with Western teachers. But I have also grown to realise that my existing within two different paradigms of politics is the price I have to pay in being a responsible global citizen. Real global awareness does not come from a detached, rarefied and ‘cosmopolitan’ air. It comes from being intimately connected to the local politics and culture on the ground.

Even as the General Election ended with a resounding Tory majority, and the hubbub of political discussion fades, I will cherish my contradictory impulses. There are no easy answers to the questions I ask myself. But this is what makes politics so interesting.



◀ “As an international student from Hong Kong, I've always had conflicting loyalties.” (SILVERMET-ALS/WIKICOMMONS)



## Features

# Sex Education Season 2 is better than sex education in the UK



For more information on HPV and local sexual health services, I recommend the following:

**On HPV specifically:**

. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/human-papilloma-virus-hpv/>

. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/genital-warts/>

**On LGBT+ sex education:**

. <https://lgbt.foundation/sexualhealth>

**On local sexual health services (in Cambridge, Lime Tree Clinic)**

. <https://www.icash.nhs.uk/where-to-go/icash-cambridgeshire>

◀ "HPV is a multi-strain STI that a worryingly small number of people know much about." (NETFLIX/SEX EDUCATION)

An *anonymous student* discusses their personal experience with HPV, the shortcomings of UK sex-ed classes, and the effects of sexual health on mental health and personal relationships

It's a Monday evening and, like most students, I'm sitting in my room doing anything but the work I should be doing. I open my laptop, log into Netflix and decide to start watching Season 2 of *Sex Education*, a Netflix series that sees comical teen angst collide with some of the deeply serious issues that many young people face. However, two episodes in, I have to pause. On a slightly-blurred, 90s-style chalkboard, I can just make out a mind map of different STIs.

Chlamydia...Gonorrhoea...Herpes... and then, right in the corner, I see them: those three letters beginning with 'H' and ending in 'V'. Almost instinctively, you might have filled in the letter 'I' in between, but you would be mistaken. The letter you are actually looking for is 'P'.

I can feel my body clench, my breath becoming shaky and my eyes beginning to glisten from the tears forcing their way out. It's been a year since I was diagnosed with HPV, and at times like this I feel completely and utterly distraught – and not because of the HPV itself. It is because I am reminded of the past year dealing with the consequences of a horrifyingly inadequate system that has, frankly, failed me.

For some context, HPV, or the Human Papilloma Virus, is a multi-strain sexually transmitted infection (STI) that a worryingly small number of people know much about. It often has no symptoms, and is spread by skin-to-skin contact

of the genital area, which means even non-penetrative sex puts you at risk. As in my case, it can be easily passed on even if you or your partner is wearing a condom. As one of the most commonly contracted STIs – that's as common as the common cold, with roughly 80% of sexually active adults having the virus at some point in their lives – it is troubling that I only found out about it at university.

Though most people clear the virus themselves within 2 years without experiencing any issues, those of us who aren't so lucky can develop serious problems. Some less harmful strains lead to growths known as genital warts, while other strains can develop into cancer. What's more, it cannot be tested for easily, which means most screenings you get from a GUM clinic or a home self-test kit are useless when it comes to HPV.

'Surely something is being done about this?', you might ask. Well, you may recall in your secondary school days when waves of girls would leave their classes to be given a vaccination designed to combat cervical cancer. That vaccination is called Gardasil, and it protects against certain strains of HPV.

The problem is that HPV affects all genders, given that certain high-risk strains can lead to other forms of cancer such as throat, anal, and penile. But despite the vaccination being introduced in schools over 10 years ago for girls, it has only now just been introduced for boys. Sadly, for me, it's too little too

late.

Sex education in UK schools is generally abysmal. Maybe a total of 2 to 3 hours was devoted to Sex Education during my 7 years at secondary school. For young LGBT+ students, the situation is even more dire. When I was in school, LGBT+ relationships were not included in the already very limited class time dedicated to sex education. Moreover, given that MSM (men who have sex with men) are at a higher risk, the need to both vaccinate men as well as women, and to address the serious shortcomings in our education system, is vital. There is always a risk when you engage in sexual activity, but I was not adequately equipped with the tools and knowledge necessary to protect myself and others. This is simply unacceptable and I am living proof of the consequences of these shortcomings.

My experience with HPV has been very mixed to say the least. On the one hand, it has been extremely difficult. My then partner abruptly broke things off with me, and bouts of treatment ranging from cryotherapy to excruciating courses of podophyllotoxin and immunomodulators left me mentally and physically broken. I couldn't walk, sit, or sleep without feeling agonising pain, and dark thoughts clouded my mind when treatment would persistently refuse to work despite countless trips to clinics, hospitals and surgeries – all while trying to study for a Cambridge degree. Dealing with the internalised

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stigma attached to STIs was also very challenging and emotionally draining.

Failures within the NHS were also brought to my attention as I was frequently given poor and conflicting advice as well as being subjected to homophobia by individual health professionals. HPV destroyed some of my later relationships even after treatment and it has forever left me deeply traumatised, so much so that I couldn't hold back the almost hysterical tears when my treatment, nearly 6 months since being diagnosed, finally began to produce results.

On the other hand, this experience has been a turning point in my life. I have developed a strong support network with friends who were very supportive throughout my treatment. I no longer feel awkward discussing my sexual health openly and honestly with partners, friends, family, and health professionals. I have been able to educate others about vaccination against HPV and general sexual health, particularly in the LGBT+ community.

If, like me, you've never had an STI before and countless screenings have come back clean, the last thing you expect is to go to a GP appointment and leave in a state of utter confusion, shock, and helplessness – especially when such a situation can so easily be avoided. I urge everyone to take their sexual health seriously, to get vaccinated against HPV if you haven't already done so (it is free if you are MSM), and to always be honest with your partners.

HPV can and must be dealt with. Right now, however, not enough is being done. For the moment, it is up to us to educate ourselves and each other as much as possible. We cannot be relying on a Netflix comedy series to do the job.



# Opinion



▲ King's Chapel lawn is set to become a meadow this spring/summer. SIMON LOCK

## We should support King's, a meadow will aid struggling ecosystems

**Sarah Ibberson** describes how the King's meadow will aid Britain's wildlife and ecology and encourages other colleges to follow their example

**K**ing's College is leading the way in forging a new Cambridge tradition. After 300 years of pristine, well-kempt grass, the college intends to refashion its famous lawn into a meadow "in a bid to tackle climate change."

In the face of calls for divestment from fossil fuels and arms industries, this environmentally motivated move may seem tokenistic. Nevertheless, it should be lauded as a significant step in recognising the need for rewilding areas of land in the UK, a conservation issue that is often overlooked in the pursuit of more holistic environmental concerns, such as reducing carbon emissions and fossil fuel usage.

King's is far from insincere in its efforts to restore a habitat under serious threat, and other colleges should take note of this example. Meadows accommodate vital – yet vulnerable – ecosystems within the UK, and the Cambridge

backs, as they currently stand, are an ecological disaster.

While the pristine grass may look idyllic, it serves absolutely no significant ecological purpose and sustains little to no wildlife. Meadows, on the other hand, are equally picturesque, and are havens for thousands of species of plants and animals. Our colleges should seize the opportunity to contribute to the restoration of a severely undervalued habitat that has been obliterated over the past century. Since the 1930s, 97% of wildflower meadows have been lost in the UK and, nowadays, meadows cover just 1% of the UK's land area. The beautiful fields of flora and fauna that were once a feature of every village have been lost.

The traditional meadowland that remains in the UK can be found predominantly in Yorkshire and the Pennines, with little coverage in the South of England. Turning the Cambridge backs into an Eden for wildlife could mark an in-

novative step in understanding the need for a revised approach to managing our rural landscape. Over 150 different species of flower and grass are supported in meadowland, which sustains a myriad of insects, mammals and birds. Rare wildflowers could be cultivated, and pollinating insects would thrive. The beloved bumblebee is just one example of a creature that would benefit from this new habitat; their population has been in decline over the past 80 years, with two species becoming extinct. Smaller mammals could prosper in the long grasses, sustaining birds of prey – such as kestrels and owls – that are finding it increasingly difficult to survive on our crowded island.

Extensive agriculture and the lack of any truly wild landscapes have decimated the habitats of so many of our native species that once thrived. It is hypocritical how, as a nation, we lament the deforestation of the Amazon

and the destruction of habitats across the globe when we don't even realise that extensive farming across the British Isles has contributed to our own national ecological disaster.

Even our national parks cannot be acknowledged as truly wild. The mountains of the Lake District would ordinarily be covered with trees and plants, providing a haven for wildlife, if it weren't for the livestock grazing them. In contrast, conservation projects in Scotland – where the deer population has been reduced to allow the landscape to recover from their extensive grazing – has seen trees return to the glens, and insects and animals benefit from these efforts.

Meadows remain among the most biodiverse habitats we have in the UK; indeed, few habitats match the diversity in the plants and animals it can sustain. While some may understandably be cautious in hailing King's decision as a progressive combatant towards

climate change, any accusations of tokenism should not demean the fact that transforming their famous lawn into meadowland will quite rightly thwart tradition to set an example for issues of land management that are frequently ignored in the UK. More colleges should cultivate this new and potentially vital tradition for posterity.

“While the pristine grass may look idyllic, it serves absolutely no significant ecological purpose and sustains little to no wildlife.”



## Opinion



► File photo (CREDIT: LOUIS ASHWORTH)

# Protesting should be about wanting change, not about personal identity

*Christian Swallow argues from personal experience that when protesting, students should remember the cause of the protest and not use it merely for an individual self image*

Christian Swallow

Emma Goldman famously wrote that “If there won’t be dancing at the revolution, then I’m not coming”. In Cambridge, it seems like the attitude is “If the protest isn’t seen by my friends, I’m not coming”. Protest in Cambridge is as old as the University itself. The University, spawned from a group of breakaway scholars from Oxford, was born from protest. Today, however, it seems that protest is less for change and more for enunciating the individual protestor’s identity. As Lent Term begins, the prospect of a second round of strikes for this Academic year looms. The UCU had 8 days of strikes in 2019 and may choose to enact another general strike this term.

In the 2018 UCU General Strike, I helped fly-post the city, and construct the infamous red fence that blocked off the Senate House entrance. It was good fun - but I was also a first year itching to establish myself with a distinct brand in the view of my peers. This performativity in the protests swept up all those around me - during the strikes, everyone was a socialist, right up until they started worrying about their grades.

Performativity is crucial to striking.

This is the concept that we can create meaning through the very utterance of what we say. By protesting against pension reforms in 2018 and 2019, the students were declaring their disdain for the changes. In this way, the protest itself is a force for change. However, protest is also a performance that is seen by others and helps display one’s own identity. It turns student protests into an opportunity to display ourselves as “activists” or “woke”.

The issue here is whether you are protesting for the cause or protesting so as to be seen protesting. The psychology of our generation is one of external validation and abstract factors that define the individual. Marks from exams purport to represent intellect, awards and prizes to vouch for sporting ability. This is corroborated by a social structure of quantified interaction - for example, the quantity of likes on a photo equates to levels of popularity. Every aspect of our existence is mediated by the observation and judgement of others.

In this landscape of signs and figures representing us, to appear at a protest takes on a form of currency - it means you are political, whether or not you

actually believe in what you’re protesting for.

The historian David Swift observed this trend in contemporary politics, from 2015 (with the rise of Momentum) to present day haranguing “tory” behaviour. He argues that politics and protest are often performed by people for leisure, and that many self-identified Leftist activists are “there through choice, to campaign for abstract issues that don’t affect them or anyone they know”. Whether or not we empathize with the cause we protest for, there is always the nagging sense that we’re also doing it for ourselves. What’s worse, those who don’t protest are deemed unsupportive of the strike, regardless of any personal circumstances that might make joining the strikes impossible.

Within protest, there is also the logic of protesting for those who can’t protest for themselves. Alongside this is the idea that protesting is dangerous, and that to support a cause you must first make yourself vulnerable. But the University doesn’t care whether you protest or not, nor who you empathize with. Every hour you stand outside Senate House, the monetary sum you repre-

“during the strikes, everyone was a socialist, right up until they started worrying about their grades”

sent to the University is uninterrupted. While not every Cambridge protest is centered around the university, showing dissent against the University does not interrupt the harsh economic reality that we are mere sources of revenue to the Senate House. If you really want to send a message to the University, you should probably refuse to pay your fees. But that doesn’t quite have the same exhibitionist value as being on a picket line.

I wholeheartedly support the fundamental right to protest. But the agency we have in 2020 to enact change is circumscribed by the ever-present, anxiety-inducing need to brand yourself, and powerlessness with which we are entangled in the economy of the University. For these reasons, I chose to help out in 2019 (and will carry on doing so) by making sure my fellow Architecture undergrads don’t get stressed out, pressured or intimidated by the strikes. Authentic solidarity starts with the personal. As strikes loom again, our actions should be centered on the change we want to enact, not the brand we want to create.



# Social media is ruining our mental health – something needs to change

In the wake of Ian Russel's calls for new laws regarding technology giants and their data, it is time for the severity of social media's negative impact to be properly addressed

Sarah Ibberson



**Content Note:** This article contains detailed discussion of mental health and graphic images.

**1** 4-year-old Molly Russel took her own life in 2017 after viewing content promoting depression and suicide on social media platforms. This tragedy extends beyond her death, for she is one in a long line of young people driven to suicide after viewing harmful content online. Four school-age children die each week from suicide in the UK and this trend is growing.

The first generation of people to grow up with social media are just reaching adulthood, and so the long term effects are equally just being realised. The regrettable truth is that it often takes the action of those like Ian Russell, Molly Russel's father, to follow up on their own personal grief for any change to occur. His recent appeal calls for new laws that would force technology companies to share their data to facilitate research on the cognitive effects of frequent social media use.

Tech giants make their revenue through advertising. Instagram, for instance, received \$9 billion in advertising revenue according to eMarketer in 2018. Algorithms ensure users view material based on its relevance rather than chronology. Users are presented with material designed to increase views and advertising revenue. This algorithmic framework incurs a very serious problem: as soon as someone turns to the internet after contemplating taking their own life, they are fed a stream of content that, rather than discourage, only rationalises their self-harming thoughts.

The tragic death of Molly Russell drastically highlights the immediate threat that harmful online content can pose to young people. Moreover, it opens up a wider argument on the effects of social media on society's mental well-being in general. Even viewing supposedly safe

content can have potentially harmful consequences that do not become immediately apparent.

Ostensibly harmless material buys into the notion of projected happiness; that is, a virtual façade displaying only the best facets of peoples' lives. This often invokes feelings of negativity and inadequacy among viewers by comparison. Indeed, the modern-day pursuit of happiness has been distorted by the influence of social media and its projection of genuine emotional stability where none may exist. The longer users engage with this process, the more dangerous the emotional and mental effects can become. Stress, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem are just a few of the insidious complications that social media can give rise to.

Although 91% of 16 to 24-year-olds use the internet and social networking sites regularly, the long term effects of social media are remarkably underestimated. In preliminary research, Twitter has been identified as a platform that can significantly increase levels of stress, and correlations have been drawn between symptoms of anxiety and increasing social media usage. Indeed, a study from 2017 suggested rates of depression and anxiety in young people had risen by 70% over 25 years. Even Facebook, which has 1.49 billion daily users, has acknowledged that social media can be bad for mental wellbeing, such as in

“The longer users engage with this process, the more dangerous the emotional and mental effects can become.”

their 2017 blog post, though even in this they advocated more active rather than passive usage.

However, this growing body of evidence still lacks the concrete research needed to back up its conclusions. The rapidity with which we have welcomed technology into society, with little regulation, has resulted in the perpetuation of an endless cycle of problems, including the deteriorated mental health of millennials who are increasingly living their lives through screens.

With so much time, money, and effort put into making our world a better place, it is ironic that our online world is left behind. Paradoxically, social media is encouraging users to move more of their lives into the digital and out of the real world. When the very real consequences of our digital lives materialise, it can be difficult to extrapolate these existential problems to origins in a virtual space.

Technology, the internet, and social media will remain. If used and regulated responsibly, it could become a much more positive platform. However, in its current state, its usage is not sustainable for the population's well-being. For now, it will continue to be inhibited by its insidious consequences.

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# VARSLTY



# Science

## Hack Cambridge: 24 hours and 300 hackers, designers and programmers

*Participants from Cambridge and universities all around the world took part in the hackathon held at the Corn Exchange last week,*  
**Vianca Shah** reports

Last week, computing enthusiasts were tasked to code a project, potentially with people they had never met before, in a mere 24 hours at Hack Cambridge, the annual hackathon run by the University. Teams of students work together to solve a problem by building a prototype, bringing thoughts to life as they collaborate to realise a vision that could potentially have a large social impact.

This year was the fifth year running with more than 300 hackers, designers and programmers from Cambridge and universities all around the world taking part in the hackathon held at the Corn Exchange. Apart from the coding experience, students learn lots from each other and the new friends they make.

Tim, the manager running the event, explained that, for many students – particularly those studying Computer Science – the hackathon provides good exposure to computing in a theoretical way. It is a chance for students to use this theory collaboratively, and in a way that develops their academic skills but also their own drive and passion for computing.

This year marked a step forward for the event with diversity as a key point on the agenda. One of the organisers, Sumaiyah Kola, described how they used a “new algorithm that [aimed] to accept more women without affecting the quality of hackers,” and how they reached out to various university societies that encourage diversity and empower minority groups in tech.

Within just 24 hours, teams produce high-standard projects with potential commercial value; this year in particular, many teams focused on environmental challenges. One team I spoke to were producing a prototype that analyses the carbon footprint of any consumer item, allowing people to be more conscious of the food they eat and the impact of their actions as a consumer. The team – Wassil Jansen, Zhe Xuan Chua, Felicia Tai and James Thompson – went on to win the event with their app, “carbon-calculator”.

“One team I spoke to were producing a prototype that analyses the carbon footprint of any consumer item”

I ask Ben from Jesus (here at his second Hack Cambridge) what advice he would give to other students, whether they be computer scientists or simply programming enthusiasts. He says that everyone should just go for it. He explains that he has met so many new people over the two years, and loves putting himself forward to be in a new team full of people he doesn't know so he can meet even more people and improve his skills further.

23 hours in with 1 hour left to go, despite their fatigue, everyone was working hard to add the finishing details to their project. It had been a long night but everyone was excited to see each others' projects and have their own out on display.

Once time is up, submissions are cut off and the judges evaluate the projects and make their decisions. Every group, no matter whether it was their first or their third Hack Cambridge, have made the most of every minute there and created incredible projects that showcase their skills and expertise.

Even for those who are experienced in Hackathons, teaching and sharing knowledge with the newcomers is an invaluable way to share what students have gained. On the flip side, even those who are experienced are pushed out of their comfort zone in every Hack Cambridge.

Hack Cambridge involves students with a variety of skills and interests. As Tim explains, you don't even have to know how to code to be part of the team! They are focused around projects where computer science skills are needed, but information technology, engineering, social sciences and even medicine have been useful in all sorts of projects to use the computer skills the students have to implement something that will benefit the community and the environment.

For many, this is a chance for them to use their skills to create something to give back to the community and, as Tim remarked, this year the focus shifted markedly towards the place for computing in the fight against

“This year the focus shifted markedly towards the place for computing in the fight against climate change”

climate change.

A massive congratulations should go to everyone in Cambridge who participated in the event. For many, the event is a source of inspiration – many leave the event with new goals and ideas for the future.



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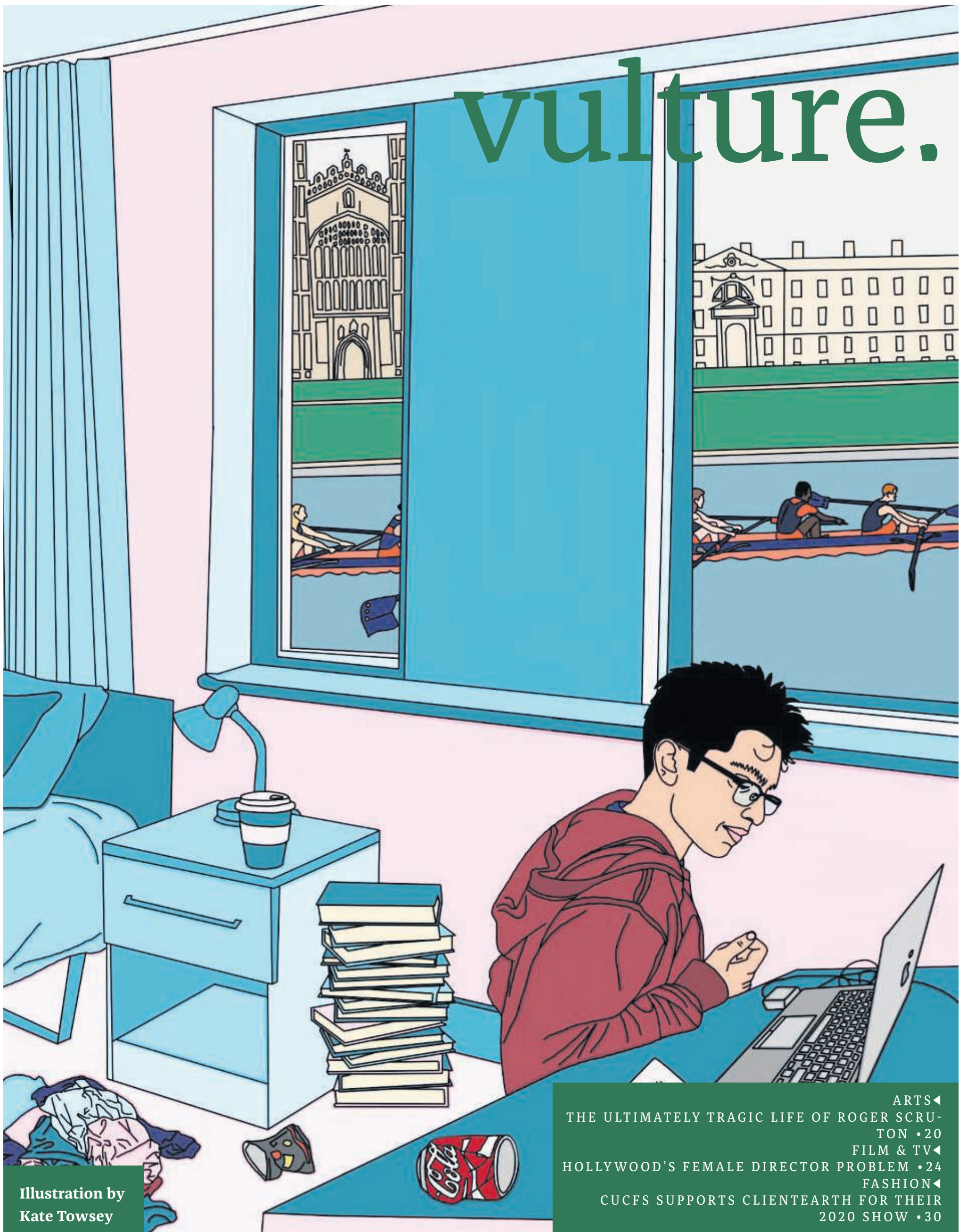


Illustration by  
Kate Towsey

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## ARTS

# The ultimately tragic life of Roger Scruton (1944-2020)

**Harry Goodwin** paints a picture of the man who argued for the absolute importance of beauty, and, to his downfall, that of politics.



*Content note: This article contains brief mention of suicide and extreme violence*

**S**hoes on the Danube Bank, an iron sculpture on the east bank of the Danube in Budapest, is one of the more beautiful artworks I've seen. It commemorates the 20,000 Jews who in 1945 were shot and dumped in the river by Hungarian fascists. I saw it in 2018, during a Hungarian election in which Viktor Orbán maintained his hold on power partly by peddling unhinged, anti-Semitic conspiracies.

“  
His life spanned extremes of  
beauty and ugliness  
”

Roger Scruton, the conservative intellectual who died this month, was as eloquent a defender of beauty's importance in life and art as Britain has ever known; he was also among its most shameless apologists for Orbán's gutter nationalism. His life, like the sculpture, spanned extremes of beauty and ugliness.

Scruton's childhood was overshadowed by his drunkard father, a socialist who stopped speaking to his son when the latter got into Cambridge. Adolescent rebellion made a Tory out of Scruton. When he was a young academic, left-wing colleagues considered Scruton's lukewarm support for Margaret Thatcher a blatant act of treachery. In life and on the page, Scruton never lost the air of awkward vulnerability his formative years gave him. His first marriage ended in heartbreak and near-suicidal depression.

As if to escape it all, Scruton threw himself into the struggle to support dissidents in Communist Czechoslovakia. He risked detention and torture in his efforts to help the underground education network, and came to love the 'shy, cynical' Czechs. Watching dissidents sacrifice everything to preserve Europe's cultural inheritance instilled Scruton with a similar passion. His was, however, far more striking in its intensity. Unsubdued was his hatred for celebrity intellectuals like Eric Hobsbawm, who achieved fame by excusing

the Soviet Union's worst savageries; yet he accepted the blessing of the British establishment with knighthoods and the like.

Long after the Berlin Wall fell, the Cold War coloured everything, Scruton wrote. He was as enthusiastic penning hatchet-jobs of hip left-wing thinkers as he was working towards an elegiac Tory philosophy of everything: art, freedom, God, sex, England. His fellow Tory intellectual Maurice Cowling, a far greater thinker and a far smaller man, observed that Scruton's commitment to high culture had become a kind of religion.

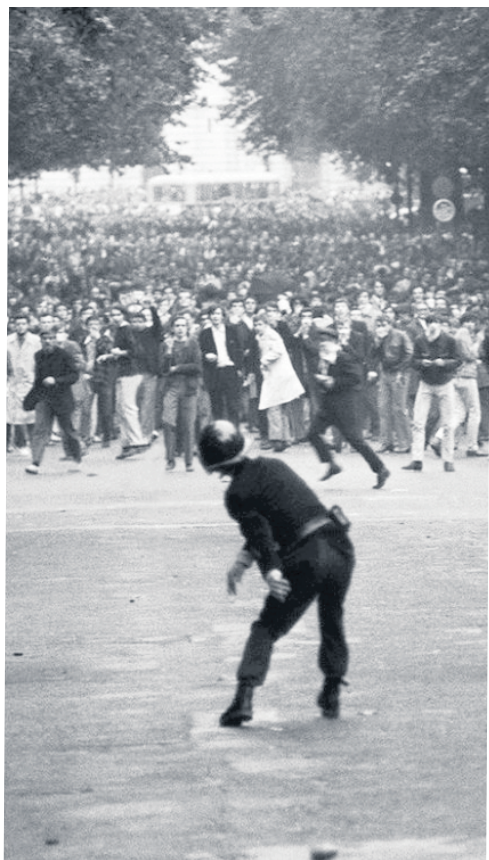
Scruton's books – he wrote over fifty – are charming, learned and fun. They are sometimes even persuasive, though persuasion was never really the point. I used to love them, until in the months after my visit to Hungary, Scruton became more and more strident in his apologies for the country's racist, hypocritical and historically revisionist regime.

“  
Politics was the main current  
of his life. Beauty knows no  
greater foe  
”

He failed to see through the former dissident Orbán's schtick about Christian values and national autonomy, just as he failed to see through the *New Statesman* journalist who consciously distorted Scruton's ignorant prattling about Hungarian politics to give the impression that Scruton was himself an anti-Semite. The same journalist later bragged in a champagne-swilling Instagram post that he had ended the career of the 'right-wing racist and homophobe Roger Scruton'. Scruton's immense body of work contains outrageously stupid comments about many topics, race and sexuality included. But his friend Douglas Murray was right in calling him bigger than the age.

Bigger, but not, ultimately, great. Scruton's writings never surprise, a tell-tale sign of lazy and dogmatic thinking. Nothing about Scruton was more noble than his articulate,





▲ The May '68 riots in France sparked Scruton's unique brand of political drive. (TWITTER/ID\_COMMUNISM)

sensitive and uncompromising insistence that beauty matters. "Beauty can be consoling, disturbing, sacred and profane; it can be exhilarating, appealing, inspiring, chilling." Roger Scruton, a writer of beautiful prose, was all these things. The issue was that he saw beauty everywhere in European high culture, and nowhere outside it. The predictability of it all betrayed the absence of an authentic and alert aesthetic eye.

Scruton always refrained from defining beauty. Charles Baudelaire thought it a spark between something fleeting and something timeless. I like that. You can see it on some misty Cambridge mornings, and on wet London evenings when the lamplight glistens on the pavement. You can see it in the works, and ultimately tragic life, of Roger Scruton.

I remember seeing beauty one evening in Paris. It was the summer before I went up to Cambridge, and I was visiting the city for the weekend with my best friend. Hungover out of our minds, we slunk up to Montmartre to see the Sacré-Coeur. There we listened to the nuns sing vespers, before sitting on the steps outside the church and watching the sun set over Paris. We've since grown up a little, and in different directions.

Edmund Burke called everyday beauty "the unbought grace of life". He thought it died in Paris in 1789. Roger Scruton liked to claim that watching Marxist students rip up cobblestones in the Latin Quarter made him a conservative. Politics was the main current of his life. Beauty knows no greater foe. ●

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# The Mays 2020: More revolutionary than ever

Caterina Bragoli explains why aspiring artists and writers shouldn't be put off by the anthology's prestige

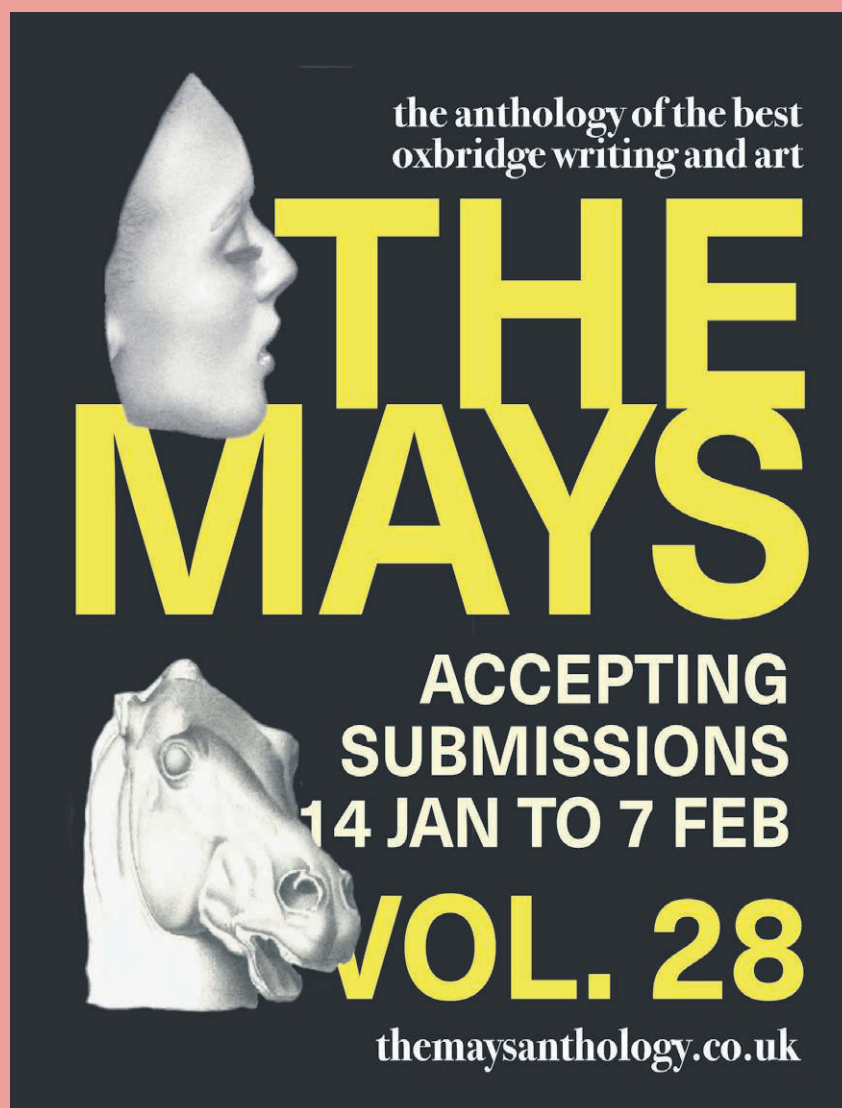
Content Note: This article contains discussion of trauma and rape.

Maybe in a few years this lot will have me out of a job," Zadie Smith famously quipped in the 2001 edition of *The Mays*, which she guest edited. Smith's astounding literary career was in fact launched by *The Mays*, an anecdote the majority of Cambridge students will be familiar with. Employing the same wit that shapes works like *White Teeth*, her remark feels summative of *The Mays*: in its showcasing of some of the finest new writing and art from Oxford and Cambridge students, we are treated to a whole host of work that surpasses any preconceived expectations of student writing.

Since its conception in 1992, *The Mays* has been dedicated to providing a platform for burgeoning writers and artists, taking works that have been archived into notebooks or diaries and showcasing them to a broad readership. It stands firmly amongst the most notable student-produced anthologies, falling into the hands of every major literary agent each year, as well as making its way into bookstores across the country. With a prestigious reputation like this, it is no wonder that *The Mays* can feel intimidating, or inaccessible: in addition to this, the catalogue of previous guest editors casts a hefty shadow. Patti Smith, Nick Cave and Ted Hughes are just a snapshot of the leading figures hosted by *The Mays*.

The demystification of the anthology is a priority for this year's editor, Zoe Matt-Williams, and the entire Mays team. "We're just keen to hear a variety of voices and genres," says submissions officer Maya Yousif. The lack of a running theme or specific standpoint means the anthology is open to any and everything, and the only way to make the collaborative project a reflection of Oxford and Cambridge is to represent the variety of students they both hold.

Last year's anthology, *The Mays XXVII*, was the most important to date. It tackled some of the most stigmatised yet relevant



▲(LINDA YU)

topics; Joanna Kaye's *After*, a prose piece with a mystifying mise-en-page, discusses life after rape. The fragmented arrangement of the prose is reflective of the passing of time after trauma; the process of recovery is not straightforward, but often isolating, perplexing and incomprehensible.

*The Mays XXVII*, for the first time, also included an online supplement of additional material from students, creating an easily accessible digital anthology, and reflecting its constant revolutionary cycle. Some of the rawest work was exhibited using this forum of expression, particularly through photography, illustration and moving imagery. Muhammad Babar Suleman's *Unfeeling: a moving image* was the piece that captivated me the most. The black-and-white aesthetic felt unyielding, stark and stern, especially when juxtaposed against the subject of the moving image: a young man, slowly unfurling his emotional state, reaching breaking point and succumbing to his tears. This heartfelt dedication to male vulnerability in a climate

of hypermasculinity (particularly resonant considering the piece was shot in a military-backed institution in Pakistan) was exactly the mode of expression we are seeking to capture within *The Mays XXVIII*: with an unfiltered, unembellished and unapologetic attitude.

Matt-Williams and the editorial team have acknowledged the power of this newfound digital platform. "This year we're hoping to place more focus on the visual side of things," says Matt-Williams, who herself contributed a piece of artwork to the previous year's anthology. Considering *The Mays*' previous literary-orientated take on showcasing student work, this development is crucial in broadening the range of the anthology, and including as many art forms as possible: after all, it is through visual art, whether paintings or motion picture, that we are able to access candid depictions of real-life emotion.

Whether you are a poetry novice or you have reams of paper stashed away, *The Mays* is the perfect platform

to present your work to an eagerly awaiting, literary and art-obsessed audience. It's limitless in terms of scope, being defined not by genre or format, but by the submissions received.

“The demystification of the anthology is a priority for this year's editor”

sions received. Constantly revolutionizing itself, the anthology is seeking to include even the most abstract of topics or formats. Contribute to *The Mays XXVIII*, and play your part in shaping the next anthology of bright new work.

*The Mays*, Vol. 28 is currently accepting poetry, prose and art submissions until 7 February. ●



# Sensing history at Dennis Severs' House

**Alex Haydn-Williams** uncovers Georgian sensibilities in this most unusual museum

The saddest thing about history is that we'll never smell it. There is a place, however, where you can get close to smelling, hearing, and thinking what the Georgians would have smelt, heard, and thought. In *Notes on "Camp"*, Susan Sontag claimed that the rarest and best type of history tells you about the sensibilities – not the events – that define an age. At Dennis Severs' House in Spitalfields, East London, you don't just learn about these sensibilities and smells: you inhabit them.

Severs was an eccentric genius who came to London from his native California with no money and a dream of old, atmospheric British light. In 1979, he took over what was then a derelict Georgian townhouse amidst light industry and sweatshops: abandoned and unrestored since the Victorians left.

By candlelight, he transformed each room into a living still life of eras from the early eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth. But this wasn't a National Trust job, anally restoring rooms to exactly how they looked, and stripping away how they felt in the process. This was to be the home of an imagined family of Spitalfields weavers, the Jervises, who would always remain just out of a visitor's sight as they passed from room to room and through the generations.

Severs worked backwards, buying household objects from markets and uncovering the sensibility that united them; building an image of an era out

of its stuff. He wasn't researching facts, but instead collecting what he called "auras: signposts to the thinking of other times". He took them back to 18 Folgate Street and slowly assembled the exquisite, dark rooms that are my favourite place in all of London.

A visit to the house doesn't tell you anything: you won't find any wall captions; tours are conducted in silence. But on a pitch-black January evening, it tells you everything, gathering all your knowledge about the Georgians and Victorians (from history books, Dickens, Blackadder) and turning it into a suggestion of a lived experience. A tour group

discovers the past through their senses. We see the candles dance in the oozing reflectiveness of the hall's black paint. At

Christmas we smell real mince pies, cooked in the 1730s kitchen with 1730s implements to 1730s recipes. Everything is done authentically; the curator, David, still assembles the Christmas display by candlelight, because that's how a Christmas display would have been assembled.

You can't see the Jervises, or the tea-leaves inside the teapot on the withdrawing-room table, or the cat that slinks about the house and hides from tours, but their presence is essential. The magical togetherness that makes this house special relies on it. David recently spent £10,000 refurbishing the antique carpet which the table sits on, but visitors are allowed to walk on it, because the Georgians would have done. There's none of the reverence that usually accompanies heritage, English or otherwise.



(COURTESY OF MATT BROWN)



▲ Inside Dennis Severs' House (COURTESY OF TWITTER/ SHARYNJACKSON)

This all means that you can actually begin to live in the intimate spaces of the past, not admire them from afar; you sense the proximity of the cups on the dresser and the lowness of the ceiling. And so, you can feel what Severs was trying to make you feel: an atmosphere he called "the space between". His friend Peter Ackroyd described it beautifully: "the air between objects which becomes charged with their presence, that intangible and ineffable 'aura' which holds being together in its capacious embrace".

Severs passed away a week before the millennium, but his personal history in the house is still entwined with its Georgian inhabitants. In a tea caddy under a table sit banks of polaroids taking in these rooms, starting in the '80s. Like the gloriously camp Harry and Meghan mug placed alongside old coronation souvenirs on a Victorian shelf, it's an object that sums up this house's mysterious double life. The Jervises and Severs live alongside each other now, as memories, restored every time a visitor crosses their threshold.

When I visited the house at the start of the year, I found my breathing slowing as my mind left the present behind. I forgot about a world that's always switched on, always streetlit. By the end, I'd begun to believe that every house around was like this, candlelit and gezellig, that it was truly dark outside. The centuries between were yet to happen. In my mind's eye, I stepped out of the door and saw the stars once again. ●





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# FILM & TV

## Hollywood's female director problem

The film industry is beset with deep-rooted sexism, says *Beatriz Valero de Urquia*, but the future of women filmmakers is not without hope.



▲ *The Farewell*, for which Lulu Wang failed to make the Oscars Best Director cut (TWITTER/INDIEWIRE)

The Oscar nominations were announced last week, and the announcer at the ceremony congratulated ‘the men’ who had received a nomination for Best Director. By doing this she stressed the fact that, once again, no women have been nominated for this award.

In fact, since the Academy Awards first aired in 1929, only five women have been nominated for Best Director at the Academy Awards: Lina Wertmüller (*Seven Beauties*), Jane Campion (*The Piano*), Sofia Coppola (*Lost in Translation*), Kathryn Bigelow (*The Hurt Locker*), and Greta Gerwig (*Ladybird*). Only one of them won.

This is, however, a problem larger simply than award boards failing to recognise female talent. What it demonstrates is a re-

sistance towards granting women access to decision-making roles like that of director. According to the 5050x2020 initiative, 96% of Hollywood film directors are male.

While the film industry has no prob-

“  
There is hope, as the industry begins to react to challenges  
”

lem hiring actresses, it is much more complicated for female creatives to obtain a leadership role behind the camera. Those women that manage to become directors then fail to be recognised for their work

The Chair of Time’s Up UK, Dame Heather Rabbats, gave the BBC two reasons for the lack of women in directing roles. First, ‘people tend to recruit in their own image’: the majority of directors are men, and they hire men. Secondly, ‘[directing] has not been a role where women have seen many other women role models’.

In the 2015 documentary *Half the Picture*, Amy Adrion called out deeply-ingrained sexism in the entertainment industry. ‘You realise what a loss it is that [women] haven’t been able to contribute to our cul-

ture as much as they should.’

In that documentary, Catherine Hardwicke shares the experience of directing *Twilight*, and how she was told that she’d never make more than the popular *The Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants*, which made

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\$29 million. Even after the movie grossed \$393.6 million, Hardwicke was paid half as much for her next film and was not offered the three-picture deal to direct the rest of the franchise that is so often offered to men.

Even those women that manage to become directors then fail to be recognised for their work. There was certainly not a lack of female candidates for this year's Best Director Academy Award. Lulu Wang (*The Farewell*), Lorene Scafaria (*Hustlers*), Marielle Heller (*A beautiful day in the Neighborhood*), Olivia Wilde (*Booksmart*), and Greta Gerwig (*Little Women*) could all have been nominated - none of them were.

The Academy is not the only award committee that has excluded female directors from its list of nominations. Barbra Streisand still remains the only woman ever to win a Best Director Golden Globe, and only four women have ever been nominated for it. Last year, once again, no female directors were nominated in this category. Rebecca Goldman, chief operating officer at the Time's Up, responded by saying that 'who directs feature films matters. It affects what stories are told - and how - with far-reaching implications for women across the film industry and our broader society.' Despite

more women-led features and more films by female directors, women - especially women of colour - continue to be sidelined. 'It is an industry-wide crisis.'

There is hope, however, as the industry begins to react to challenges.

The Cannes Film Festival is one festival

“  
Those women that manage to become directors then fail to be recognised for their work  
”

trying to better recognise females behind the camera. Their 2019 selection included four films by women filmmakers among its 19-strong lineup: Mati Diop's *Atlantique*, Jessica Hausner's *Little Joe*, Celine Sciamma's *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*, and Justine

Triet's *Sibyl*. Overall, 13 female directors are represented in the 47-film official selection. This list of female nominations follows the festival's 2018 commitment to the 5050x2020 gender parity initiative.

But this change has been created only by pressure and protest. The commitment came as a response to the 2018 red carpet protest of 82 of the film industry's biggest names. The Cannes jury president Cate Blanchett read their statement: 'we stand together on these stairs today as a symbol of our determination and commitment to progress.'

More festivals are committing themselves to the 5050x2020 initiative, such as Berlin, Locarno, Venice, TIFF, DOC NYC, and London. Even smaller festivals like the Hamptons, Mill Valley, Annecy, Oxford, Rome, Stockholm, and Goteborg have signed the pledge. Some festivals have even managed to achieve near-gender equality: women directed 46% of the competition films at last year's Sundance Film Festival, and 40% of the ones at the Berlin Film Festival.

The change the 2018 protest sparked, and the potential for change that it heralds, leaves us room to be hopeful about future prospects for the recognition of female directors.



▲ Ben Whishaw stars in the Cannes Festival nominee *Little Joe* (TWITTER/LITTLEJOEFILM)

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# MUSIC

## Interview: Beabadoobee

Following a sold out show at The Portland Arms on the Dirty Hit Tour, **Lottie Reeder** and **Alex Bolot** talk to Beabadoobee



▲ Beabadoobee has released five EPs with Dirty Hit, each with a different theme, establishing a strong fan base (INSTAGRAM/RADVXZ)

**I read that you were inspired by film soundtracks, could you explain a bit about that?**

B: I like the fact that you can attach a song to a certain scene and you can imagine so many things just from listening to a piece of music. I think that's what I find so interesting about soundtracks. Like *Good Will Hunting*'s soundtrack is fricking amazing, and obviously the *Juno* soundtrack with Kimya Dawson who I think is a genius. When you think of 'Treehouse' by Kimya Dawson you automatically think of that movie (*Juno*), and I think that's really cool.

**If you could pick one film that your music would be the soundtrack of, which film would you pick?**

B: Hmmm... probably a coming of age movie like *20th Century Women* or *Ladybird*. Or probably another *Scott Pilgrim*... that would be sick. Anything with Michael Cera in it, basically!

**How do you come up with your art ideas?**

B: So I think a lot of it comes from the music I listen to and the people I look up to, such as Pavement and Miki from Lush. When it comes to shooting music videos, I like collaborating with my boyfriend and his best friend to come up with really cool ideas. I also work with Elliot Bech who does all my merch and the cover art for my music, who's super cool!

**What's the inspiration behind your music videos?**

B: Me, Soren and Amir always think of ideas together and we all have the same exact film taste, and we're all inspired by the same things. I really trust their opinions, they trust my opinion so we kind of base it off each other. They're very conceptual so they always think of the storyline within the music video.

**Where do you see your music and creative ideas going in 2020?**

B: I think I'm going to branch out more. My discography goes from *Patched Up* to *Loveworm* to *Space Cadet* and they're all completely different EPs. I think I want to mush them all together and create this journey in an album, because obviously right now i'm in this kind of phase, a Space

Cadet era, and there are loads of people who miss my acoustic stuff, but I also want to go full on crazy and do band-y shit, so I'm just gonna do a mixture of everything.

**How has your music and identity as an artist developed from your new release, *Space Cadet*?**

B: I think I had the same influences from *Patched Up* when I did *Space Cadet* but I guess when I was starting out I was used to playing my acoustic guitar in my bedroom by myself. I managed to get the resources and my band together and got this opportunity to record in a studio with a producer. That's when I was like 'Ok, let me start making the music that I've always wanted to make', like music that people can vibe to. Each year I've had a very distinctive phase, and I think *Space Cadet* was the blue hair phase where every song was pretty vibey.

**Who are your music inspirations?**

B: Elliott Smith, Daniel Johnston, Kimya Dawson are probably the people who have inspired me to actually make music. In terms of the type of music I make, I have a lot of influences, I know I talk about Pavement a lot but I just really like the guitar tones and the way he plays... it's such a distinctive style and that has kind of inspired me to develop my own distinctive style and be myself. I didn't have any guitar teachers... but it's my own way of doing it.

**You're going on tour with *The 1975*, how are you feeling about that?**

B: Yeah.... I can't lie, I'm shitting myself. I'm really excited and really grateful but also terrified. Being 19 and getting thrown into playing arenas is crazy. It's exciting as fuck and I hope people vibe with it and appreciate that I'm doing it at my age. But I'm fucking excited, it's such an experience!

**How did you get signed to Dirty Hit?**

B: I released music with Oscar Lang, I used to record stuff in his bedroom. We didn't really expect anything of it, but these labels started getting interested, and that's how it really happened. I initially saw it as a side thing, as I really want to be a nursery teacher! When I got signed Oscar got signed very soon after, I think he's a very talented guy, he's helped me put my music online. At the beginning he was like my lawyer/manager/person putting everything online/everything!

**What's your dream venue?**

B: This beach hut in Boracay in the Philippines. I'd love to play there as you can just see the sea, right in front of you. I went there with my family and my boyfriend and was like 'imagine playing here'. I wish!

**Who's your style icon?**

B: I wouldn't base my style on anyone in particular. Anything that's clean and smells alright! I do look into inspiration from Stephen Malkmus and bands from that decade like Miki from Lush, I mean I dyed my hair red to look like her!

**What advice would you give to someone starting out making music?**

B: Do music because you love music, not because you expect anything in return. Keep creating and keep getting inspired, go out of your way to find things to inspire you.

**What inspires you apart from film?**

B: Loads of my music influences, my boyfriend, my friends, my past experiences growing up, everything I go through right now. Music is a good release for me, every time I feel shit I write a song and feel ten times better after because I get gassed about the song! I do it for myself really, but if people fuck with it and get it and understand and it helps them, then that's just like, you know, win-win.

**How do you want people to respond to your gigs?**

B: I just want them to have fun! If you wanna go and get fucked, if you wanna go and just vibe and chill just do whatever you want! I want people to feel really comfortable and feel like they can make friends in the crowd. This is our first headliner back in the UK and me and the band have been so used to playing shows in the US, so I don't know what this is going to be like! I'm nervous to see if people fuck with it! And hopefully it will be OK.

**Where are you most looking forward to playing on this tour?**

B: I'd say Bournemouth, loads of my friends go to uni there. And Brighton, and Cambridge!

**Who would be your Desert Island Discs (one song, one album, and one artists discography)?**

B: I never get tired of *Spit on a Stranger* by Pavement. K's Choice, *Almost Happy*. *Good Morning*.





# Does Music Still Have a Place in Politics?

Looking back on recent years, *Harry Taylor* isolates politicisation and social awareness as notable trends for the future of the music industry



▲ The old face of political music - Bob Dylan with Joan Baez (ROWLANDSHERMAN/WIKICOMMONS)

Music has always been political, and rightly so. In recent years, this has been present around the world as protests have erupted and spread through social media and the internet – the same vector by which music has become more available than ever. But the music itself has become increasingly angled towards the political. Not content for their work to act as an escape from the present, artists are attempting to effect political change through their songs.

This is tied to visual exposure, as seen most clearly in Childish Gambino's *This is America*. The attention that this release attracted had at least as much to do with the video, uploaded at the same time as the song's first public performance, as the record itself. It received 12.9m views in its first 24 hours on YouTube and attracted numerous commentaries. It is quite hard to imagine one without the other. This skilful use of the music video adds immeasurably to the song's power. Not only are Childish Gambino's themes explored in further, often disturbing, depth but the video also gave the song even more traction online. This boost in the ability of an artist to convey a political message is very much a project of the social media revolution that has defined the last decade.

Though in many ways thoroughly modern, this is the latest phase of the long history of the protest song, something which the current crop of musicians seem well aware of. However, though 'protest song' normally evokes Bob Dylan's cawing, derisive voice and twangling chords, in a contemporary update, artists deploy samples to add layers of meaning to their music. Kendrick Lamar's empowering 'i' is built around an Isley Brothers sample, the band who originally recorded 'Fight the Power' among other protest records. This link goes further as the music video features a cameo from Ron Isley who quotes funk legend George Clinton, himself no stranger to politicised music. Particularly when talking about ingrained injustice, this sense of inheritance adds to the strength of the message.

Communal singing has immense power and

therefore it is natural that movements from 1960s Civil Rights to 1980s anti-conservatism to 2010s Black Lives Matter have been accompanied by distinctive soundtracks. For instance, Kendrick Lamar's *Alright* has become a common chant for the latter movement. A song from an album steeped in politics and meaning, this anthem again demonstrates how the 2010s were a decade in which popular music has consciously been at the forefront of popular politics.

Indeed, it has almost become expected of musicians that they express political opinions or else risk alienating their young fans, as in the case of Taylor Swift. In November 2018, she released a statement endorsing two Democratic candidates in her home state of Tennessee during the midterms. This broke years of silence that had produced headlines such as 'An envoy for Trump's values?'. Though she had spoken out on certain issues before she had previously been avowedly neutral on general politics. This shift perhaps suggests that in a world that is increasingly polarised, and with a vocally political music industry, it is not sustainable for artists to avoid going public with their opinions.

The recent increase in political music has also attracted well-established artists, and even some to come out of retirement, eager to use their platforms to exercise influence. A Tribe Called Quest released their first album in almost 20 years in 2016 just days after Donald Trump was elected. The lead single from the album, 'We the People...' is staunchly political, featuring parodies of Trump's campaign, mirroring the themes of the rest of the album. In this country, and arguably on the less visible side of things, veteran ska act Madness have released singles such as 'Bullington Boys' that call to mind their late 80s campaigning against Apartheid.

In fact, it has almost become a sign of maturity to write a political song or album. Stormzy has always been outspoken and open in his political views. The last twelve months saw this extend as far as ever with *Heavy Is The Head*, following a Glastonbury headline performance which attracted great attention for

its themes. His wearing of Banksy's Union Flag stab vest was a highlight for many, emphasising his position as an artistically varied and politically aware performer. Similarly, over the course of the decade Beyoncé became increasingly outspoken on a range of subjects from presidential politics to police brutality in both her music and other statements. This began in earnest midway through the decade and marks a noticeable move away from her earlier style. That all this can occur whilst continuing to produce number ones and working on more classically pop songs speaks to the way in which politics and music can coexist.

The internet has helped this. With the wide range of channels open to artists it has never been easier for them to broadcast opinions. This has also facilitated discussion of issues that whilst perhaps not strictly political, fall under the umbrella of protest. Here we might look at the dialogue around mental health being encouraged by many musicians. Ariana Grande, for instance, has entered into candid discussions around depression and anxiety at

the same time as continuing to produce essentially apolitical music. Nonetheless, she is still part of the same trend of using her platform to effect change.

These trends seem to have accelerated towards the second half of the decade. In Britain there was some opposition to austerity from artists such as Sleaford Mods from quite early in the 2010s, but this was nothing when compared to the conversations being had in and around music by the end of 2019. Likewise, the nomination and election of Trump intensified the feeling of an already active political music scene, drawing ever more musicians in.

Music and politics are therefore as close as ever, certainly closer than they were ten years ago. Not only are musicians seeking to make their voices heard on more traditionally political issues, they are also helping to shape broader conversations about problems such as mental health and climate change. It is therefore possible that we are in the middle of another great era of politically inspired music, where protests and anthems unite to try to bring change.

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## LIFESTYLE

# The life-changing magic of doing something you're shit at

**Maya Yousif** finds joy in utterly un-instagrammable running

I'm not being self-deprecating when I say that I am truly abysmal at running. The mere mention of a bleep test is enough to send me into sweats – and not the good kind. Our relationship with exercise is so often formed by our experiences as children. If your experiences, like mine, involved finishing last in practically every athletic event, this isn't good news.

For context, I was a tiny, dyspraxic 11-year-old who possessed the unfortunate combination of great enthusiasm and very little coordination. At school there was a kind of social currency in being athletic; a bizarre correlation between those in the Netball A team, and those who got to kiss boys. I'm sure you can imagine which side of the graph I was on.

It wasn't for lack of trying (with both athletics and boys) – I certainly gave it a go. But after years of being picked last for sports teams and routinely coming last in swimming, I resigned myself to failure in the athletics department, and instead found comfort in drama classes and books. Since then, I have avoided exercise like the plague. To exercise would take me right back to being that 11-year-old year girl who simply could not run and looked like a

fool for trying.

However, I've carried a niggling jealousy of athletic people, particularly runners. It is impossible to avoid the pervasive narrative that runners are fitter in both mind and body. Running improves concentration, lowers your risk of heart disease, strengthens your bones. The positives are endless. In today's sedentary society where disease is on the rise, improved physical fitness is universally hailed by specialists as necessary to give yourself the best chance at longevity, health, and happiness.

I've also just picked up a copy of Bella Mackie's *Jog On* and am astounded by the benefits of running on mental health. She writes that taking up jogging after years of mental health difficulties provided her with a space to silence intrusive thoughts. If you haven't read it, buy it – or listen to her discuss the book on a podcast. She's totally inspirational without being preachy, and still extols the virtues of wine and ice cream – my kind of hero.

After years of resenting my inability to run, I finally decided to bite the inevitable bullet and give it a go. I realised I had literally nothing to lose, and besides, running sounded like a more productive way of procrastinating than watching vine compilations.

Before my first run, I did a visualisation ex-

ercise (close your eyes, and imagine the *Thing you Don't Want To Do* in order to mentally prepare yourself for it). Well, I had catastrophic visions of me flailing about with my phone in one hand, and my love island water bottle in the other. My keys? Lord knows where. Dignity? Can't see it either.

So, I went to Decathlon to get kitted out and I'm not going to lie, I felt incredibly smug. I walked straight past *New Look* and headed into the hitherto uncharted domain of a 'real life sports shop' and bought myself a small water bottle, a wristband to hold my keys, and a strange phone holder which you wear around your upper arm. Very modern and very swish, indeed.

Fast forward, three weeks later, I've been on twelve runs. I cannot believe I'm saying this, but I think I'm beginning to understand the hype. My ability to focus has improved, I have more energy, and my fitness levels are already improving. I've tended to run early in the mornings in order to avoid the harsh glare of Mill Road's inhabitants as I huff and puff up and down the pavement.

For any of you aspiring joggers, I would thoroughly recommend the *Couch to 5K* app to guide you through these arduous first weeks. I have a tendency to either work myself too

hard or not enough, and find a lack of structure incredibly frustrating: as such, I've found something incredibly soothing about Sarah Millican telling me to stop, start, stop, and start again.

“

*I have found so much joy in something I am so terrible at*

”

But it isn't just that. There's been a consequence I didn't expect or aim for: I have found so much joy in something that I am so terrible at. This morning I watched the sunrise on the bridge looking over the train tracks during the time I'd usually still be in bed. I've discovered the bliss that is running to Amerie, Christina Aguilera, and Chaka Khan as I plod along with an ever-increasing speed.

I'm slowly learning that running doesn't have to be competitive or traumatic, or even glossy and Instagram-worthy. Instead, it can simply be a way to show your body and mind kindness. That's more than enough for me. ●

▼ 'I didn't imagine I would find so much joy in something I am terrible at' (FLICKR/KOSALABANDARA)

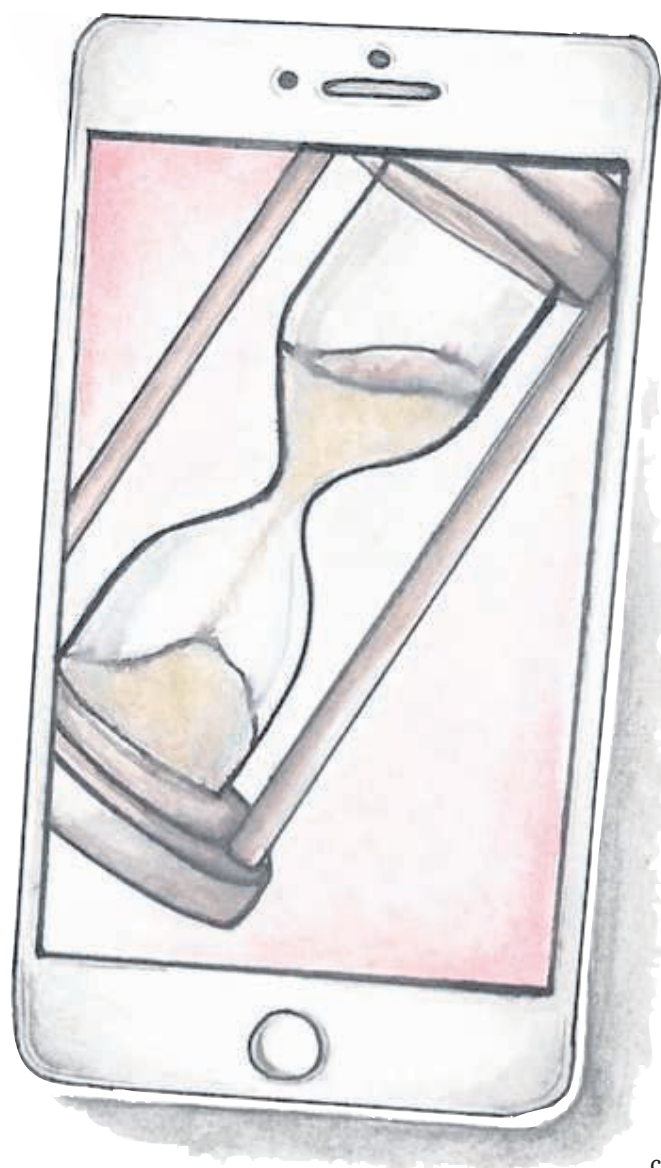




# Sorting out your digital life

**Chloe Fitzgerald** discusses the changes she made to her internet use in order to have a more positive and productive relationship with social media

▼ (REBECCA ALGIE)



had been before. I didn't even feel like I'd missed out on anything particularly important. What I realised is that social media isn't something you have to do – it's a luxury, and therefore something that's only worthwhile if it's bringing positive things to your life.

According to the Office for National Statistics, 87% of adults use the internet daily, with most of them using it for social media. And these numbers are steadily growing. Its ubiquity makes it difficult to completely give up social media – and I myself haven't. But I have made big changes to the way I use it, which I thought I'd share here.

## 1. Unfollowing people

Simple, but highly effective. The first step for me once Lent was over was, as you might expect, unfollowing a LOT of accounts. I went through the lists of people I was following on each platform and asked myself if I really wanted to see what they were posting. It surprised me how many accounts I swiftly unfollowed. To avoid drama, it was mainly celebrities and brands that I unfollowed.

But just to be clear, you should unfollow anyone who you don't think adds anything beneficial to your social media feeds.

## 2. Ask yourself the difficult questions

This brings me on to my second point. You need to be in control of your own social media use. It should be consciously used for things like keeping in touch with family and friends, for example, or reading about interesting things. But so much of the time I used to (and still, sometimes) spend on it is mindless – mindlessly scrolling, mindlessly reading random things, mindlessly looking at random posts. A massive change I've made is trying to only use social media when I can ask myself why I'm using

it and answer with something other than "because I'm bored and ignoring all the other things I could be doing."

## 3. Find other relaxing activities

I found that often I was mindlessly scrolling through social media apps because ultimately, it's relaxing, and it doesn't require any skills or effort. So I needed to find other enjoyable and relaxing things that could be equally as easy to do. This step is easier said than done, but I do try to always have a podcast on the go. I'm particularly enjoying Nicole Byer and Sasheer Zamata's

*Best Friends* at the moment, as it covers any and every topic in the way that my Twitter feed might once have done. I try to have a book on me too.

I think the main thing that's important with social media is using it in a conscious way. Social media firms use incredibly sophisticated technology to make sure we spend as much time on their platforms as possible, no matter what we're doing – Facebook, for example, makes 1 cent for every minute that an individual user spends online. And they have one billion users. So to be fair on us, fighting social media is never going to be easy. But following people you like, using it for things you want to do, and essentially, reaping its benefits is one way to start. ●

A few years ago, I gave up social media completely for Lent. I chose to do it to see if I could manage spending 40 days social media free, but what I found really surprised me: I enjoyed my life without social media. I didn't want to go back to using it as much as I had before. I was noticeably happier after Lent than I

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# FASHION

## CUCFS supports ClientEarth for their 2020 show

*In an exclusive interview, Vulture talks to members of the CUCFS team as they reveal the charity they'll be supporting for their 2020 show*



Whilst Cambridge University Charity Fashion Show's models, designers and fashion are up to par with professional runways, their approach towards extravagance distinguishes CUCFS from the 'serious' industry – their combination of fashion and charity, art and ethics, renders it one of the major creative events of the year. Since their first show in 2015, CUCFS has become established as a distinguished and respectable event: rightfully so, considering the figure in excess of £50,000 pounds it has donated to charities so far.

This year, the fashion show is showcasing designers under the theme of 'Flux' to explore "both this material process of transfiguration as well as the changes currently taking place in the fashion industry" through the "breaking with traditional norms". With this theme in mind, CUCFS has decided to partner up with the charity ClientEarth – a charity that "uses the power of the law to protect the planet and the people who live on it."

During a time in which the world is literally burning, companies are mindlessly wasting and our awareness of our own environmental destruction has not managed to significantly reduce it. Instead, environmental law uses the judicial system to try to enforce the changes that still may never come to fruition.

Scrolling through social media, I have

“sustainable and ethical production doesn't limit artistic expression in any way, but rather allows for new and different forms of creativity”

noticed the discrepancy between our increasing awareness of having to reduce wasteful fashion consumption and the continuation of fast fashion's mass consumerism. "Fast fashion," says CUCFS, "despite being convenient at face value, has basically no redeeming features." One of the many problems are the synthetic fibres, "which release microplastics into the water system with every wash, and which won't decompose when they're inevitably thrown out in favour of newer styles." In that aspect, I suppose fast fashion does have some longevity – at least in our environment.

We met with Sophie Weinmann and Ollie Winters (Co-Presidents), Valentin Foley (Fashion Assistant) and Clara Balon (Beauty Director) to talk more about their views on the fashion industry in our current environmental crisis and the decisions CUCFS is making in the name of environmental consciousness, especially with their choice of ClientEarth.

### **Why have you chosen ClientEarth?**

The total greenhouse gas emissions from textile production are higher than the emissions of all international flights and maritime transports combined. It therefore only felt right to also pick a charity with a strong environmental focus. Client Earth was one that stuck out to us because of its unique approach to combatting climate change – they are made up of lawyers and environmental experts using the law as a tool to protect the planet and the people that live on it.

### **What distinguishes ClientEarth from other charities?**

What really stuck with us in that approach is that it allows Client Earth to address a variety of different sectors and aspects of climate change – from defeating national governments in court over clean air regulations to working to protect forests and oceans.





▲ (ALL PHOTOS: SARIKA DATTA; MAKE UP: ESMA GUNDUZ; CREATIVE DIRECTION: OLLIE WINTERS)

### **How is sustainability reflected in the design of the clothes and your choice of designers?**

We decided to make ethical and sustainable production an essential criterion when searching for designers, while also keeping an eye out for designers that used their collections to make political statements or raise awareness around environmental issues. We are incredibly excited to be showcasing designers that creatively address a plethora of environmental issues: from a collection that takes

aim at the cut flower industry - a massively profitable business that destroys billions of flowers daily - to a designer whose work is made entirely from recycled festival waste.

### **How can environmentally conscious fashion decisions be transferred from the runway to students' wardrobes?**

It's about buying less often, choosing items for both physical and aesthetic durability, getting the most out of the clothes you buy for your sake and the planet's. Most sustainable brands cannot compete with fast fashion retailers' prices and sales. This is definitely an

institutional issue that needs to be addressed on a structural level. However, there are definitely options for students to be more environmentally conscious around their consumption choices. In collaboration with NU Wardrobe Cambridge we recently put together a guide for students to be more environmentally conscious on a student budget. Some of the ideas we came up with were borrowing or renting pieces on vintage platforms or using online marketplaces like Depop or Vinted to buy pre-loved items.

In order to showcase the accessibility of and variety of styles that students can make through shopping sustainably, CUCFS chose

to team up with Jemporium Vintage in their charity release shoot. Through this photo-shoot, they're highlighting how students in particular can remain 'fashionable' and reduce their damaging impact on the environment.

It is certainly safe to say I am looking forward to see what CUCFS is going to stage this year, especially considering their choice of ClientEarth. Perhaps this student production may be a hopeful glimpse into a future where the right laws enable the mass consumption industry to understand that "sustainable and ethical production doesn't limit artistic expression in any way, but rather allows for new and different forms of creativity". ●











# Fashion as art: the beauty of uselessness

From runway to nowhere - the fast fashion antithesis? *Isabel Sebode* comments on the concept of unwearable fashion, its beauty, absurdity and necessary irrelevance



▲ Edward Mohny's "camp surrealism" (Vogue) in the CSM MA autumn/winter 2018 ready-to-wear show (INSTAGRAM/ FLASHARTMAGAZINE)

Flying back to Cambridge at the beginning of the term I picked up the German magazine *brand eins*. Skipping through the articles, one particularly caught my attention: 'aristocratic punk' - an interview with designer Odély Teboul on unwearable fashion.

Looking at the pieces presented in CUCFS or shows by up-and-coming designers, one thing seems to be common: the more provocative, unwearable and questionable, the

better. Recent years have brought with them a change, as many independent brands choose to construct their fashion shows in a highly performative way, rather than using them as occasions to provide inspiration for the average person's closet.

In her interview with *brand eins* magazine, designer Odély Teboul (from the brand 'Augustin Teboul') comments on why she designs clothes that no one will ever wear. For her, the function of fashion extends beyond the wearable. She is "fascinated by the material, the techniques of the craft and making something new out of the old". The production process and the creative visions behind the production are what becomes intriguing, not solely the final product. Teboul is creating and showing: selling items for them to remain unworn, or to grace the cover of a magazine.

Teboul is aware of the controversy of her craft: "it really is egotistic, just like it is egotistic to produce music or write poetry. On the other hand, one does not want to live in a world based solely on functionality. Perhaps my art has a value in that aspect?" The key word is art. Teboul distinguishes between the unwearable and the wearable pieces, both of which she includes in her collections, thereby fusing art with clothing under the grand label of 'fashion'.

Teboul's pieces are unique and her fashion shows provide a stage for these items, thereby presenting them as more than clothing,

but as objects of artistic value. Regardless, the message sent by avant-garde fashion is controversial. On one hand, it opposes brands such as Primark, H&M and the like, whose main focus is production - as much, as quick and as cheap as possible, without regard for environmental consequences.

Yet similarly the outcome of fashion shows is waste, simply for a presentation of clothes that will most likely remain in a showroom forever - perfectly installed, yet never worn. Or perhaps they will be bought by the rich minority, where the single piece of art drowns in a heap of clothing. From this pessimistic perspective,



▲ Sculpture by Kris Lemsalu (INSTAGRAM/ RADIATOR\_MAG)

useless and functionless fashion seems to be solely fueling consumerism in a different way. Teboul acknowledges this, saying that "the grand contradiction of the fashion industry remains: it is based on endlessly selling something new to those that have everything".

With our current concerns about sustainability and reduction of waste, the question arises as to what extent unwearable art can be justified. Whilst we might not be able to say that 'unwearable fashion' engages in the fight against fast fashion and wastefulness, perhaps this is not even the point. In fact, like other designers, Teboul does not focus her collections on the unwearable; she too has to make a profit. The need to sell remains in any industry, and designers use these unsellable pieces as their chance to engage in their craft, experiment with textiles and free themselves from the pressure of fashion to serve a purpose.

Observe it, reject it or feel inspired - use-

“  
To renounce unwearable  
fashion for redundancy  
would be to  
renounce all art

”

less fashion is forcing no one to wear anything. It is simply the transformation of materials into art. We are not required to understand a modern sculpture, such as by artist Kris Lemsalu, instead we simply look at it without the pressures of attributing a function to it. The main need is the need to distinguish: unwearable fashion does not need to serve a political, practical or environmental purpose, but it is the manifestation of the natural, egotistic desire to create without restrictions.

Unwearable fashion is visual art, whereas wearable fashion exists to clothe. Brands like Reformation or Veja begun the movement against harmful production, and high-end brands such as Sea NY contest the fast fashion movement. To renounce unwearable fashion for redundancy would be to renounce all art, forcing us to live in a somewhat apocalyptic world in which our awareness of climate forces us to suppress culture. Perhaps, the problem of 'unwearable fashion', 'absurd trends' and 'pointless clothing' is not its existence and purpose but the labels attached to it. Classifying it as art offers it the freedom it desires: the freedom to exist independently, instead of serving others. ●



▲ Edward Mohny's "Camp Surrealism" (Vogue) in the Central Saint Martins MA autumn/winter 2018 ready-to-wear show (INSTAGRAM/ FLASHARTMAGAZINE)



## THEATRE

# Not just a Fringe Issue

*Cerian Craske discusses the worrying prevalence of harassment at the Edinburgh Fringe*

*Content notice; This article contains detailed discussion of street harassment*

I went to the Edinburgh Fringe this year for the first time, along with half the population of the Cambridge Theatre Facebook group, and it was a fantastic experience overall. I had no idea what to expect when I went - I usually end up behind the scenes in theatre, but on this occasion I was acting in a comedy musical about pirates. Somehow, I'm still not entirely sure how that happened to me, but I loved it. Our show seemed to attract audiences of mostly children and elderly people, all of whom seemed to have a fantastic time in each performance; particularly memorable was a woman who once sat on the front row and gasped and laughed incredibly loudly at every panto-esque innuendo. However, my Fringe experience was not entirely perfect. I was introduced to flyering (bothering people on the Royal Mile to try and get them to come to our show) for the first time - I'm naturally fairly extroverted, so I wasn't too worried about having to chat to people and bothering them into coming to see the show.

“

*Harassment is not something you should ever have to expect anywhere, and that includes the Fringe.*

”

A couple of people emphatically told me to fuck off when I gave them flyers, but fair enough, I was flyering early in the morning outside a pub. Our director had decided it would be a great idea for us to flyer dressed as pirates, talking to people in character - what could possibly go wrong? I learnt very quickly that the phrase “Be ye looking for a pirate adventure?” works fantastically on children, and works entirely too well on a certain kind of man. I said it twice to older men and got the response of “only with you, sweetheart” or “only if you're offering”, and then quickly changed my strategy.

I then found out that I didn't even need to engage with these men in order for them to find me. I was sitting under the arches to the side of the Royal Mile one day, taking a break and scrolling through Twitter, when a man wandered towards me.

“Are you flyering for a show?”

Never one to miss an advertising opportunity, I replied: “Well, not right this second, but

yes,” and attempted to hand him a flyer. “What's it about?”

I explained that it was a comedy musical about pirates.

“Do you play one of the pirates?” He asked, taking a step closer.

I replied that I did.

“In that case...” He stepped forward again and raised his hands in mock surrender. “Can I be the victim?” There's a lot to unpack there. I laughed nervously and he went on. “I'll take a flyer... if I can take a picture of it with the most beautiful pirate.”

I made some excuse as to why I no longer wanted him to have a flyer, and he left.

Firstly, “can I be the victim” is neither the best nor the most relevant comment which could be made about being a pirate. However, most importantly - why do people think this is okay? I heard similar stories about this kind of behaviour from other women (and men) at the Fringe; people seem to forget that just because you're playing a part, doesn't mean you're not a person underneath it. The comments I got were, at times, fairly funny, such as the multiple pitiful attempts at pirate-themed pickup lines, but it all had the same creepy undertone. Harassment is not something you should ever have to expect anywhere, and that includes the Fringe - you're there to have fun and to put on a show, not to get leered at by old men (I can do that quite easily at home without paying for a train ticket to Edinburgh).

I had a fantastic time flyering at the Fringe as a whole - turns out there are a lot of elderly women who get very excited when you ask them if they want to take over as Pirate Queen. Additionally, my friends and I got into the habit of letting each other know when there were friendly dogs on the Mile, a method of destressing which I would thoroughly recommend. I discovered mac and cheese pies (incredible) and bagpipe music (less incredible) and also got concussed by someone with a keyboard (funnier than it sounds). I will never forget the memories I made but when I go back I'll definitely be warier of what I say and where I flyer. I'll also be fully aware that no matter how innocent I think my comment is, there will always be someone out there (inevitably the person I've just tried to hand a flyer to), who will think it's an invitation to flirt or harass. Even if it's 9 am and someone is playing bagpipes very badly across the street. ●



▲ The Royal Mile at Fringe time (DAVID DIXON (CC-BY-SA/2.0))

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# Violet

By VARSITY

## Ticketbridge: the highest stage of capitalism

In the manic market of Ticketbridge, **Lucas Pringle** reflects on the lengths we will go to secure a night out



▲ Sunday Life, less sought after than Wednesday Cindies, but a worthy competitor (INSTAGRAM: @VINYL/CAMBRIDGE)

At a university where library desks are a second home, and where isolation is laughed at as 'what we signed up for', the Cambridge Facebook pages play an integral role in university life, offering small communal windows into the lives of the student body. Yet putting aside the forlorn love songs of Crushbridge and Camfess's secret confessions (and overused memes), Ticketbridge will always be my virtual home.

At first glance it appears to be just a ticket exchange, but it is truly the marketplace of our age. Ticketbridge doesn't have the energy of a calm weekend grocery stall, but rather the desperate chaos of the stock exchange, the frenetic energy of the bazaar. To look deep into this page is to understand the sheer desperation that Cambridge nightlife can cause.

The stories, of course, are familiar. You are 'that guy/girl': Fez lineup for the next five-to-eight months memorised, in depth knowledge of boiler-room performances with >5000 views, a zany pair of sunglasses ready for any moment. But when it comes to the big day, you find the college rep is MIA. Your wrist is undeniably wristbandless. After so many nights listening to 'NOW that's what I call Oxbridge!' anthems, pretending to have a good time, the thought of missing a guaranteed 'sick night' is unbearable. With hours to go, only one option remains. Facebook is

opened and the Ticketbridge begging begins.

But alas, the marketplace is in anarchy. You scan over the desperate calls – "Fourteen Cindies Tickets please!!" – knowing that in some room in Cambridge (with a pres in motion), your fellow Cantabrigians are praying for deliverance over Facebook messenger. It's time to thrust yourself into the market, screaming for someone to make that sale. You write your first draft:

**"Two cindies tickets. £10"**

You suddenly know how your supervisor must feel each week, looking in disgust at your work. How can you hope to catch a seller's eye with such bland and inoffensive information? Drawing on the 'takes themed nights too seriously' energy within you, you try again:

**"!!!!DESPERATE!!!! in need of two of your finest cindies tickets sir/madam, one for myself and the other to finally bring [insert here your preferred 'partner in sesh'] on a night out, god help us. £123,456,789"**

You gaze at your creation, and see the smile form in your own Mona Lisa. The semi-ironic tone eloquently disguises your desperate desire to buy overpriced jaegerbombs listening to tech-house, and the comedically large price is sure to impress all readers with

your wit. But masterpieces require masterstrokes, and you need these tickets. Yet do you dare go the extra step? Do you test the limits of 'Cambridge irony'? The voices of past alumnus whisper in your ear: be the visionary your college wants you to be, change the paradigm, break the mould!

And so with the deft hands of a prodigy and an entirely misplaced sense of confidence, you attach a photo of yourself wearing wacky glasses.

It's perfect. There is nothing more to say or add – it's uploaded, and after securing the tickets in a hastily performed bank transfer, you head out into the night...

**[12 HOURS LATER]**

A night that can charitably be called underwhelming is recalled in drips as you check your pockets. No Camcard, no ID, no coat, no keys, no phone, no wallet, no recollection of awful decisions and questionable amounts of dignity remain in your possession. But ultimately, this is no problem.

You crack your fingers and open your laptop.

**"[LOST ITEMS] pleeeeeeeeeeaaaaae help a cindies legend out :((((((( £98765431242069"**

And thus the marketplace rages on.

## Describing the indescribable: the end-of-term summary

Trying to explain Cambridge to your nearest and dearest? It's a near-impossible task, writes **Maverick Fraser**

Returning home from my first term at Cambridge, one of my first ports of call was the comfort of my grandparents' home. Their almost infectious enthusiasm and pride in having a grandson who studies at Cambridge manifests itself through the torrent of questions about my university life before the kettle has even finished boiling:

**"Who are your new friends?"**

My grandma beats my grandpa to the first one, referring immediately to the variety of content that she has seen me post on social media with my newfound pals. Indeed, she is a cool, Instagram grandma. My grandpa points to each picture and is keen to know their names, where they are from, and what they are studying.

**"And have you found yourself a wife yet?"**

My grandma dives in for a second one – and it's a biggie. She's joking (I think), although she herself was engaged to my grandpa aged 17, so I'm already worryingly behind schedule in her eyes. I nervously laugh it off, saying that I haven't yet found a girlfriend. The next few seconds involve me gazing into space trying to remember if, in the buzz and excitement of all those Wednesday Cindies sessions, my future wife has somehow passed me by.

As it was Christmas time, we were scrolling through the TV guide, and my grandpa's eyes lit up at the sight of 'Carols from Kings College Cambridge' being broadcast by the BBC.

**"Is he your friend?"**

My grandpa asks, pointing at random at one of the members of the choir on screen. I respond in the negative, followed by an overwhelming feeling of shame at my failure to become a BNOC.

I say goodbye to my grandparents, and a few hours later I am having dinner with my close friends from home, who are now studying at various universities across the country.

**"So how's Cambridge?"**

Let the questions begin.

"Yeah, it's really..." And before I answer, I take a sudden pause. How do I describe Cambridge? What do I tell my friends? What do they actually want to hear?

With a friendship group containing members who attend the nightlife-laden universities of Nottingham, Birmingham, and Leeds, is it really a good idea to tell them I once queued 90 minutes for a club that never ceases to play High School Musical songs? How about telling them that one of my favourite nights out is going to a Wetherspoons on the weekend because there's a dance floor inside, and the DJ plays some absolutely incredible remixes? Or maybe the time I stayed up until 2am in a questionable attempt to write an essay on Russian linguistics? No, they won't want to hear that.

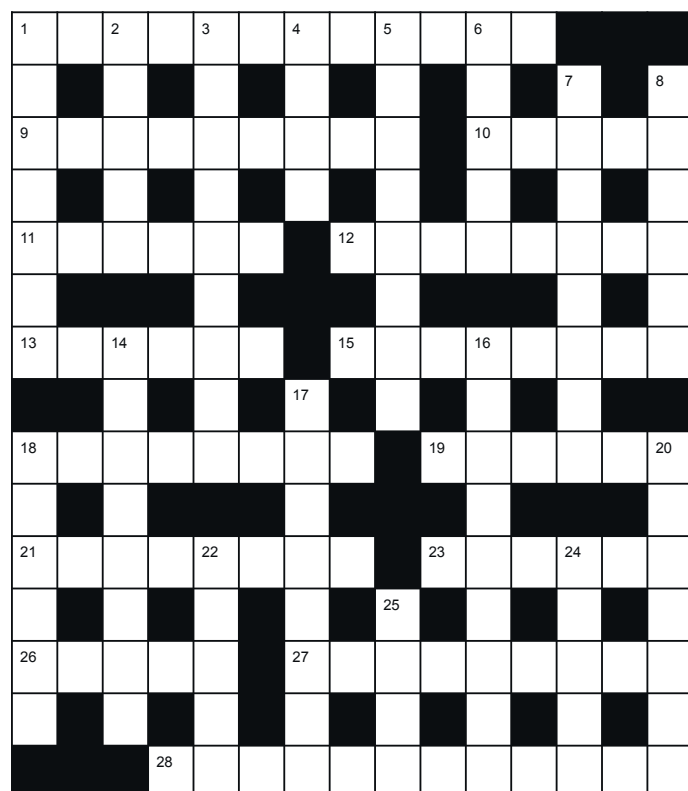
"...it's lovely, the people are genuinely really great," which, to be honest, is both the most important thing, and also the truth. I genuinely am convinced that the college system is outstanding for encouraging mixing amongst various year groups, subjects, and societies.

"I now DJ at my college parties as well," I say, throwing a flex into the conversation when it's due. It is true, to a certain extent. I do choose the music, even if it's solely by pressing the 'play' button on Soundcloud.

The great thing about Cambridge is, whether you're a professional or an amateur, you can get involved. There really is no pressure, and doing something just because you 'feel like it' is a valid reason, and sometimes even the best reason for doing something.

When the term ends, I find it an amusing enigma to speak concretely about the entirety of term. The beautiful blur that exists as a result of the late nights spent working, the early hours outside the Van of Life, and all the sport, drama, music, art, and societies that are compressed in-between is one that is truly treasured, even if it's nigh-on impossible to capture it entirely.





## Cryptic Crossword #7

by Pitt\*

\*Pitt is a pseudonym

### ACROSS

- 1 Those that change voltage destroyed 'Nam fortress containing resistance (12)  
9 The French in sloppily managed college (9)  
10 Yellow pooch retriever covers (5)  
11 Trick old posh fool (6)  
12 Battered? Take drugs beside journalist! (3-5)  
13 Also like spring (2,4)  
15 Game of Pitt's: after drink, drink! (3,5)  
18 A spy cuts wandering mild-mannered person (8)  
19 May, perhaps, in home counties, begin to sell sweet treats (6)  
21 Ballot replaces Right with Left in assembly (8)  
23 Nun is exception during that which is suitable for men and women (6)  
26 See 17 (5)  
27 Local university ends coverage of old naughty insinuations (9)  
28 Sooo...rips toes - snapped due to bone problem (12)

### DOWN

- 1 Doctor stuck in dupe: a raffle (7)  
2 Dread a good person seizing new golf (5)  
3 Quarrel one friend concerning geometry (9)  
4 Exercise in running competition (4)  
5 How to remember married men rejected working in charge (8)  
6 River edge flower (5)  
7 R.E.M. in after the instrument (8)  
8 Late? Drained looney - lethal! (6)  
14 Waiter is high climber (8)  
16 One who spins yarns: artist, tory, begins to tone Eastern ancient city (9)  
17/26 Beating conservative at working in alien area: one liberal success to start with (3,1,4,5)  
18 Fetching game comes across dry (6)  
20 Bigots exist amidst Nazis (7)  
22 With long sharp things, son displaces king amongst Turks (5)  
24 Army unit admitted overdose of drinks (5)  
25 Crack shot (4)

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

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# Violet

By VARSITY

## A journey to cycling success

Being in control of two wheels and a bell can sometimes be asking for trouble, writes **Sofia Johanson**

The phrase ‘it’s as easy as riding a bike’ used to cut me to the very core. This is because I, unlike the rest of the universe, could not remain upright on a cycle before coming here. However, I was determined to change this. I wasn’t about to let something with two wheels and a bit of rust defeat me.

First things first, I had to buy a bike. So off I went to the cycle shop, dragging my parents along for backup. After revealing myself to be an amateur, the staff members demanded they see the spectacle with their own eyes.

There are few moments more mortifying than, as an 18 year old, having your father stabilise you on a creaking old frame, all whilst your mother humiliatingly captures the moment for eternity with a video posted immediately on her Facebook. Perfect. Now imagine the sheer embarrassment flooding over me as an eight-year-old glides past, smirking irritatingly as she pedals over the horizon. Yet, despite developing some mild trauma from the whole occasion, I did bag myself my very own bicycle.

The first week with my new equipment was, however, no less than harrowing. New friends hurtled away from me as I clung onto the handlebars, dreading any traffic lights, vehicles, or right-hand turns. In fact, any stretch of road occupied by any other person or object posed a serious threat to my physical (and mental) stability.



▲ “I don’t remember the last time I walked anywhere.”  
(INSTAGRAM: @BOB-BINBICYCLES)

I almost caused numerous accidents in those early days, back when I was fuelled by a cocktail of pure panic and adrenaline. From leading a convoy of students the wrong way down a one-way street to misjudging the length of my bike and therefore cutting up (almost literally) someone as I swerved into Sidgwick, I was a liability.

Fast forward to today and you wouldn’t even recognise me. Although I still rock a hideous helmet, I am now an accomplished cyclist. In fact, I’m so confident in my pedalling that I float effortlessly amongst the traffic, ignoring the abuse hurled at me, claiming I’m “on the wrong side of the road”, that I’m “going to cause an accident”, or that I’m a “\*\*\*\*\*” and a

“\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*”. I’m sure they’re all just jealous.

Maybe you’ve even seen me with your very own eyes. I was probably swerving between unaware pedestrians on King’s Parade, or shooting the wrong way down Trinity Lane whilst mocking those who actually walk to lectures. All of this is executed with one hand resting on my lap, just because I can. There’s nothing like the thrill

of being an absolute irritant, all whilst occupying the moral high ground – at least my form of transport isn’t killing the planet.

Seeing as bike shelters are overrated, I opt for chaining my bike to a lamppost. I then pull it round so that it obstructs the entire pavement, or better yet, splays across the road, forcing cars to swerve around my precious hunk of maroon-painted metal. I unlock my bike, judging everyone around me for the crime of being foot-bound, and mount it for the 30 second journey from Mainsbury’s to my accommodation. Again, just because I can.

I don’t remember the last time I walked anywhere; as far as I’m concerned, the council can scrap the pavements and convert the roads into one hefty cycle lane. Then, at long last, the true athletes of this place can unite as everyone else faces the onslaught of whining bells and squealing brakes closing in on them.

Please excuse my manic arrogance. The last 5 weeks without Brenda the Bike, and the self-worth that comes with her, have been rough. I’m frankly thrilled it’s now time to pump up her wheels – and my ego.

▼ “Negotiating the waves of wheels flooding Cambridge’s streets can be tricky business”  
(MARIO SANCHEZ PRADA)



“ Although I still rock a hideous helmet, I am now an accomplished cyclist ”



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# College Football Weekend Round Up: 25th-26th January

Sam Ernest  
 CUAFL Chairman

The weekend before the Cuppers final brought plenty of drama yet again in the college leagues with key results at both ends of all league tables. One of the most hotly contested games of the weekend took place on Fitzwilliam pitches where the hosts first team battled to a 1-0 victory over rivals Queens' I on Sunday afternoon. Fitzwilliam kept the ball for long periods of the game, but the Queens' defence were solid, and it took a special long-range volley from Joe Young to break the deadlock.

A red card for Fitzwilliam saw Queens' pushing on for the last 20 minutes, agonisingly hitting the post with the last kick of the game. The result keeps Fitzwilliam three points clear at the top of the table with a healthy goal difference, whilst Queens' hopes of challenging for the title are all but over after three straight league losses.

Fitzwilliam's closest rivals for the title remain Churchill I, after a feisty 3-2 fightback against Johns I keeps them within touching distance of top spot. After Churchill conceded a scrappy goal and a penalty their opponents were 2-1 ahead leading into the final five minutes. However, captain James Burdock's second goal of the game followed by Max Turney's last minute back post header secured Churchill's third successive 3-2 victory and another important three points.

There was also drama at the bottom of the table with Robinson securing their first win of the season (5-2) against Trinity as their attempts to pull off a Watford-esque great escape continues. The pick of the goals here came from Lawrence Atkins, whose half volley from the edge of the box soared high before cannoning in off the crossbar. Trinity remain winless and pointless in 10th place.

Robinson's win, along with Sidney Sussex's unconvincing 0-4 loss to Downing, sets up a vital game for the fellow strugglers in two week's time at John's playing fields. The other result in Division 1 was Caius's 3-1 win over in-form Homerton.

In Division 2, Pembroke's emphatic 7-2 win over Trinity Hall leaves them only two points away from guaranteeing promotion with two games in hand whilst simultaneously dampening Trinity Hall's own hopes of promotion. Christ's remain rock bottom and pointless after their 7-2 loss to St Catherines which will leave them relegated come the end of the season if Girton pick up any points over their final four matches. Elsewhere in the

division Emma beat Jesus 3-0 after a superb performance.

In Division 3, Kings I came out 3-2 winners against Darwin I to keep their hopes of promotion back to the second division very much alive as one of five teams within three points of second place. After their 7-3 victory over Johns II, Selwyn I have both hands on the division title with seven wins out of seven and a seemingly unsurmountable lead of 9 points.

In Division 4, CCCC stay in the top spot with Emma II remaining in second despite only managing a 1-1 draw with Girton II. Elsewhere, Selwyn II keep their hopes of avoiding relegation alive with a 4-2 win over bottom side Queens' II.

38 goals in just four Division 5 matches provided much for the spectators, the two highest scoring games being Peterhouse's 11-6 victory over Fitzwilliam III and CATS riotous 13-0 win over Johns III.



▶ In Division 4, CCCC stay in the top spot (ANNIE HUANG)

### CUAFL PREMIER LEAGUE RESULTS

Downing I 4-0 Sidney Sussex I  
 Fitzwilliam I 1-0 Queens I  
 Gonville & Caius I 3-1 Homerton I  
 St Johns I 2-3 Churchill I  
 Trinity I 2-5 Robinson I

### CUAFL SECOND DIVISION RESULTS

Emma I 3-0 Jesus I  
 St Catherines I 7-2 Christs I  
 Trinity Hall I 2-7 Pembroke I

### CUAFL THIRD DIVISION RESULTS

Churchill II 1-2 Magdelene I  
 Darwin I 2-3 Kings I  
 Gonville & Caius II 3-0 Jesus II  
 St Johns II 3-7 Selwyn I  
 Trinity II 2-3 Clare I

### CUAFL FOURTH DIVISION RESULTS

Emma II 1-1 Girton II  
 Selwyn II 4-2 Queens II

### CUAFL FIFTH DIVISION RESULTS

Christ's II 1-4 Robison III  
 Fitzwilliam III 6-11 Peterhouse  
 St Johns III 0-13 CATS & CSVPA  
 Trinity Bruces 2-1 St Catherines II

Full tables, fixtures and results can be found on the FA website.

“A red card for Fitzwilliam saw Queens' pushing on for the last 20 minutes, agonisingly hitting the post with the last kick of the game”

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# Sport

Inside: College Football Weekend Roundup

## Remembering Kobe Bryant: A legacy from the court to the cutting room

Sports Editor **Joseph Powell** examines the life and career of a sporting titan

**K**obe Bryant's tragic passing on Sunday, alongside his 13-year-old-daughter Gianna and seven other passengers, has forced the world to reflect on the unparalleled legacy of one of the biggest global icons in sport, let alone basketball. As a sport far from the levels of status or familiarity it possesses in the US, it is testament to Kobe's magnetism and transcendence that his passing should receive the wall-to-wall coverage that it has in the UK. He was a truly enigmatic talent, able to reach beyond the walls of the STAPLES Centre fortress of his beloved LA Lakers and around the world.

Preliminary reports suggest foggy conditions (conditions which led the LAPD to ground its aerial fleet) contributed to the helicopter in which the former shooting guard was travelling to plummet to the ground near Calabasas, California.

But it is not this tragic ending to the esteemed life and career of Kobe Bryant that will define it, as a global icon is remembered.

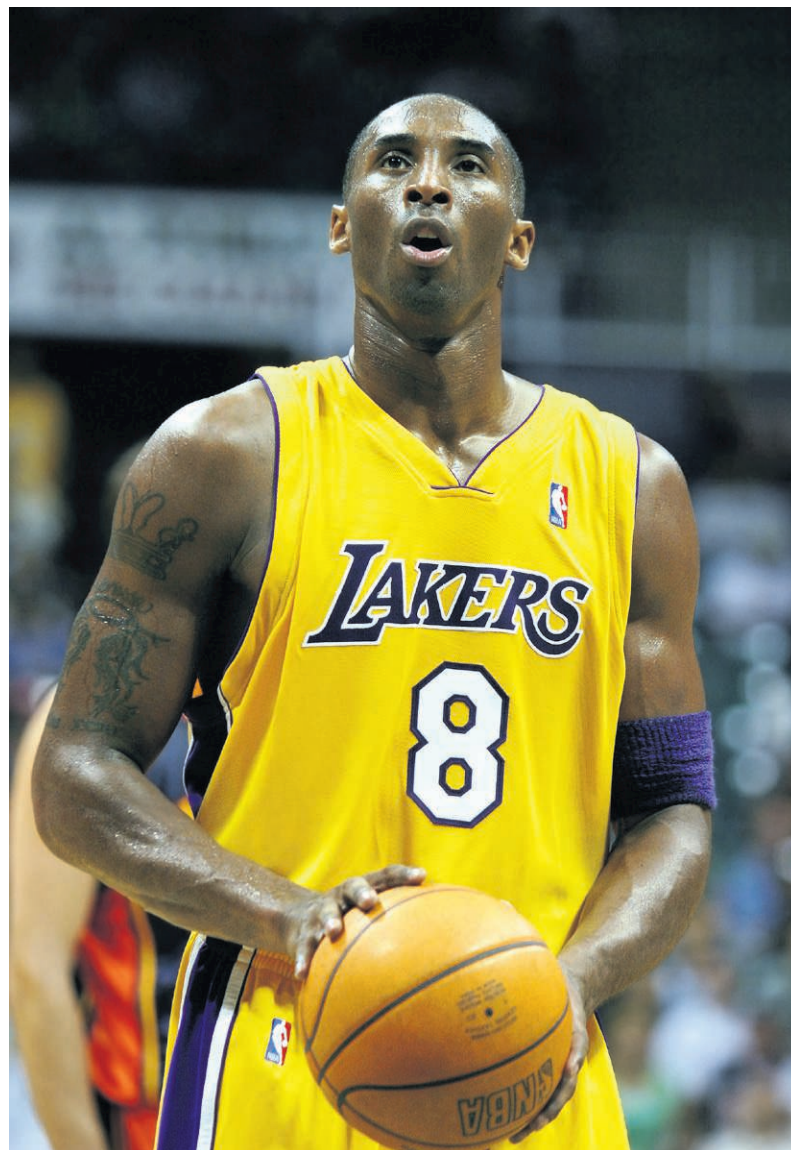
Born to former NBA player Joe 'Jellybean' Bryant and Pamela Cox Bryant, Kobe's childhood was always likely to be one built around the game he would make his own. Although initially raised in Philadelphia, the family moved to Italy during his childhood so that Joe could continue to play professional basketball. There, the young Kobe acquired a fondness for A.C Milan and a fluency in Italian which would later allow him to conduct interviews and press conferences in his adopted language.

After returning to Philadelphia, his nascent talent began to flourish whilst playing for Lower Merion High School, where he would make the exceptional move of representing the school as a freshman and go on to play all five positions during his time there. Although highly sought after by the country's most reputable basketball colleges, Kobe opted for a characteristically unorthodox path as he followed Kevin Garnett directly into the NBA from high school, playing for an LA Lakers team he would spend his career with.

It was there that Kobe's precocious talent would soon take centre stage. After three seasons on the peripheries, he was able to break into a team characterised by the equally eminent

► Kobe Bryant poised to shoot for the LA Lakers  
(WIKIMEDIA/SGT. JOSEPH A. LEE)

“A truly enigmatic talent, able to reach beyond the walls of the STAPLES Centre fortress of his beloved LA Lakers and around the world”



Shaquille O'Neal. The two were able to form an unmatched shooting partnership that would bring consecutive titles back to LA in 2000, 2001 and 2002. These titles were only the first in a ceaseless list of accolades; NBA MVP 2008, two more championships in 2009 and 2010, a record of four All-Star MVP awards and an unparalleled 18 consecutive NBA All-Star Game appearances.

The magnitude of all these awards can be condensed into the intriguing fact that Kobe is the only player in NBA history to have had two jersey numbers retired by the same team; the Lakers choosing to venerate this superstar in a rich vein of American overstatement as old as the hills.

The tragedy of his untimely pass-

ing necessarily prompts fans to wonder: 'what could have been?'. With his dominance on the court a matter of historical record, Kobe was beginning a challenging move into a post-sporting career phase. Recently pondered by ex-footballer Peter Crouch and his team, this long-neglected area in the wellbeing of sports professionals is now receiving far greater consideration in the UK.

Kobe's first footsteps here were certainly promising, claiming an Oscar in 2018 for his heartfelt love letter to the sport which gave him everything, 'Dear Basketball'. Watching the short now represents a premature epitaph, not the sign-off and new beginning its author intended.

But the real answer to the question

posed above lies with the other confirmed loss in Sunday's tragic episode. Gianna was poised to carry her father's basketball legacy forward, aspiring to play for the University of Connecticut and eventually enter the WNBA. Her involvement in the sport captivated her father, who coached her high school team and accompanied her to contests nationwide, including the youth tournament which was the helicopter's final destination on this fateful trip.

This father's pride in his protégée was clear. Speaking on Jimmy Kimmel in 2018, Bryant said of his second-born that: "The best thing that happens is when we go out and fans come up to me, and she'll be standing next to me and they'll be like: 'You've got to have a boy. You and [wife Vanessa] have got to have a boy, someone to carry on the

“[Gianna's] involvement in the sport clearly captivated her father, involving himself intimately by coaching her high school team and accompanying her to contests nationwide”

tradition, the legacy.' And she's like, 'Oh, I got this. You don't need no boy for that, I got this.' He affirms, "That's right, yes you do. You got this."

Just one day after LeBron James overtook him as the third all-time highest-scoring NBA player in history wearing shoes emblazoned with Bryant's shirt numbers and 'Mamba' nickname (his tweeted response to which would prove to be his last), Kobe would meet a dramatic end that has left his family and fans distraught.

But through James and others like Carmelo Anthony, Kevin Durant, James Harden and all those who grew up idolising and emulating Kobe's on-court exploits, his presence in his beloved sport is far from at an end.

Just as one legacy comes to an untimely conclusion, another rushes further forward.