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VARSITY

University Library makes public appeal to find Darwin's notebooks

Gaby Vides
Senior News Editor

Two of Charles Darwin's manuscripts, one of which contains Darwin's famous 1837 'Tree of Life' sketch, have been reported stolen by the Cambridge University Library, following the largest search for lost items in the library's history.

The notebooks were first reported missing in January 2001 with curators recently concluding that they have most likely been stolen. For years it was simply assumed that the notebooks had "been misplaced in the vast storerooms and collections" of the University Library.

The value of the notebooks is difficult to estimate but it is thought their worth runs into the millions of pounds.

The University Library launched an appeal on Tuesday (24/11) to try and recover the notebooks. The appeal was intended to coincide with 'Evolution Day', which recognises the anniversary of Darwin's publication of 'On the Origin of Species'.

The appeal follows an extensive search, led by an "expert team conducting fingertip examinations where necessary", and which included "a complete check of the entire Darwin Archive,

which contains 189 archive boxes."

As part of their appeal, the University Library released a video where Dr Jessica Gardner, University Librarian and Director of Library Services, said: "I am heartbroken that the location of these Darwin notebooks, including Darwin's iconic 'Tree of Life' drawing, is currently unknown, but we're determined to do everything possible to discover what happened and will leave no stone unturned during this process."

Gardner emphasised the importance of the public appeal in seeing that the notebooks are safely returned and urged "anyone who thinks they may be able to help to get in touch."

She continued: "We would be hugely grateful to hear from any staff, past or present, members of the book trade, researchers, or the public at large, with information that might assist in the recovery of the notebooks. Someone, somewhere, may have knowledge or insight that can help us return these notebooks to their proper place at the heart of the UK's cultural and scientific heritage."

Cambridgeshire Police have been informed of the disappearance of the note-

Continued on page 2 ►

Covid-19 Watch

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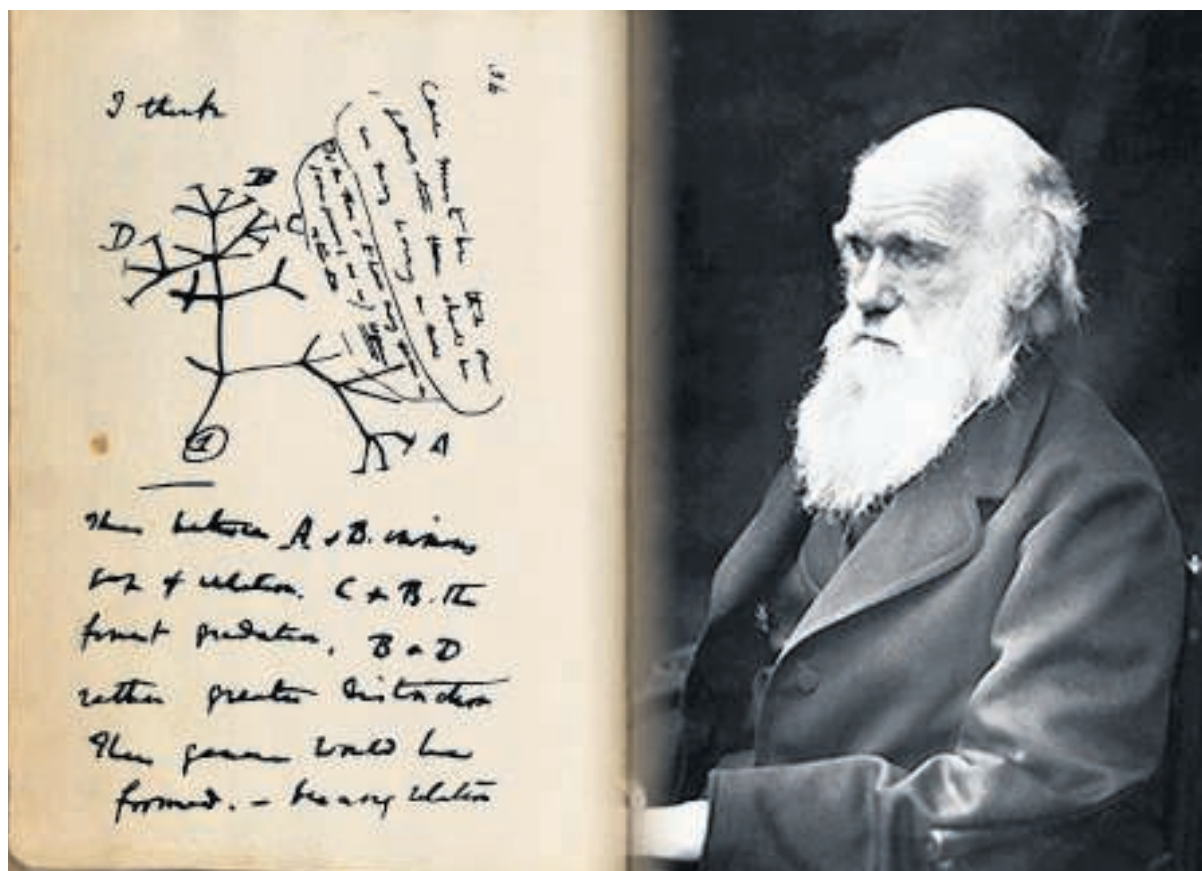
positive
symptomatic
cases

27

positive
asymptomatic
cases

4.1k

total number
of students
screened



▲ The notebook contains Darwin's famous "tree of life" sketch (WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, ALEX LEGGATT)

Survey of College portrait collections confirms legacy of inequality and colonialism

Martha Bevan, Martha French, Kit Treadwell, Olivia Emily and Alex Haydn-Williams

CN: This article contains detailed discussion of racism, segregation, colonial violence and torture, eugenics, and sexism.

A Varsity investigation into the portrait collections of Cambridge Colleges reveals that individuals with ties to eugenics, racial segregation and colonialism continue to be commemorated. Meanwhile, statistical analysis shows that only 1.87%

of individuals depicted are people of colour and only 15.3% are female.

The findings are based on data compiled on over 1700 portraits on ArtUK, as well as information supplied by college archivists. Of the 31 colleges in Cambridge, only Magdalene, Jesus and St Catharine's did not respond to Varsity's request for information. King's declined to offer any statistics on the modern collection and instead provided historic data.

The investigation collected data on

the overall race and gender breakdowns of college collections. Overall, only 32 (1.87%) of the figures depicted in the collections surveyed are people of colour.

By way of contrast, the colleges collectively hold 1682 portraits depicting white people. Meanwhile, 50% (14) of the colleges surveyed have no portrait depicting a person of colour in their collection.

Moreover, though four named women of colour are memorialised across the collections at Girton, Clare Hall and

Churchill, none of them have any ties to the university. There are, therefore, no portraits of female students, alumnae or fellows of colour in any Cambridge college. This is despite the fact that twentieth-century Cambridge alumnae include — as highlighted by 2018's 'Black Cantabs: History Makers' exhibition at the University Library — the first female Black MP, the first female East African barrister in Britain, and the first Black woman to have a composition performed at the Proms.

According to the data compiled, only 15.3% of figures depicted in portraits were women, a proportion that dropped to 9.22% when portraits from Newnham, Murray Edwards, Lucy Cavendish and Girton — the historically female colleges — were not included.

Both Fitzwilliam and Selwyn display no portraits depicting women, according to their ArtUK pages. They are the only colleges to display no portraits of

Continued on page 4 ►

News

EDITORIAL

The end to a messy Michaelmas

As we near the end of term and send off our fifth and final copy of *Varsity* for the term, we are reminded of what a term this has been for all of us, whether we have done it from Cambridge or further afield.

In this copy, we highlight the experiences of our students whether they have been on their year abroad like Jules Graham (Features, Page 10) or studying remotely like David Quan (Lifestyle, Page 20). Moreover, we look more closely at the highs and lows of the term through Emily Moss' review of the term (Violet, page 30) and Isabel Siggers' article on the importance of looking after your mental health (Features, page 11). A common thread throughout these accounts has been the challenges but also the opportunities which this unprecedented term has presented.

Looking to next term, we're pleased to handover *Varsity* into the care of our new co-Editors, Georgina Buckle and Gaby Vides, who are eager to build their team for Lent 2020 (see advertisement below). There is space in the team for all forms of journalism: from writing and editing, to producing exciting video content, illustrations and photography! Whilst experience in journalism is valued, do not worry if you haven't had any, as *Varsity* is a place to learn, experiment, and explore new opportunities. One of our lifestyle Editors for this term, David Quan, testifies to this fact with his article on the experience of editing and applying (Lifestyle, Page 20).

As our thoughts go to the holidays and next term, it is hard to say what will happen, but we hope to keep you informed through *Varsity's* website during the holidays and the physical paper next term.

For the final time this term,

Rich, Meike and Georgie xox

EDITOR Rich Bartlett editor@varsity.co.uk

DEPUTY EDITORS Meike Leonard & Ben Cudworth deputyeditor@varsity.co.uk

MAGAZINE EDITOR Georgina Buckle magazine@varsity.co.uk

DEPUTY MAGAZINE EDITOR Isabel Sebode deputymagazine@varsity.co.uk

DIGITAL EDITOR Tomas Vieira-Short digital@varsity.co.uk

BUSINESS MANAGER Mark Curtis business@varsity.co.uk

NEWS EDITORS Christopher Dorrell & Gaby Vides (Senior); Antonia Harrison, William Hunter, Diana Stoyanova & Cameron White (Deputy) news@varsity.co.uk

HEAD OF PRINT (NEWS) Alex Leggatt

INVESTIGATIONS EDITORS Martha Bevan & Ewan Hawkins investigations@varsity.co.uk

INTERVIEWS EDITORS Juliette Gueron-Gabrielle & Victor Jack (Senior); Bethan Moss (Deputy) interviews@varsity.co.uk

FEATURES EDITORS Elizabeth Haigh, Ashna Ahmad & Hatty Wilmoth (Senior), Nick Bartlett & Akshata Kapoor (Deputy) features@varsity.co.uk

OPINION EDITORS Sawen Ali & Callum Wainstein (Senior); Madeline Anderson & Tu Minh Tri (Deputy) opinion@varsity.co.uk

SCIENCE EDITORS Sambavi Sneha Kumar & Yan-Yi Lee (Senior); Grace Blackshaw (Deputy) science@varsity.co.uk

SPORT EDITORS Bradley Fountain-Green & Thom Harris sport@varsity.co.uk

VIOLET EDITOR Caterina Bragoli violet@varsity.co.uk

ARTS EDITORS Esme Wright & Adam Dumbleton arts@varsity.co.uk

FILM & TV EDITORS Sarah Brady & Alexandra Jarvis filmandtv@varsity.co.uk

MUSIC EDITORS Nadya Miryanova, Nathaniel Warren & Kwaku Gyasi music@varsity.co.uk

FASHION EDITORS Martha French & Lara Zand fashion@varsity.co.uk

THEATRE EDITORS Eleanor Burnham & Helen Turner-Smyth theatre@varsity.co.uk

LIFESTYLE EDITOR Miranda Stephenson & Tiffany Tsoi (Senior); David Quan (Deputy) lifestyle@varsity.co.uk

SWITCHBOARD PRODUCERS Isabel Roberts & Maddie Fisher switchboard@varsity.co.uk

DIGITAL TEAM Misthi Ali, Polly Haythornthwaite, Lucas Maddalena digital@varsity.co.uk

HEAD OF ILLUSTRATIONS Olivia Bonsall magazine@varsity.co.uk

CHIEF SUB-EDITOR Chloe Bond subeditor@varsity.co.uk

SUB-EDITORS Alexia Meade, Oakem Kyne, Rosina Griffiths, Claire Laurence, Aisling Hamill, Lucia Neirotti, Anna Stephenson, Emma Hassey, Inaya Mohmood, Satya Amin, Maryam Dorudi, Hania Bar, Pilar Eche Fernandez

VARSOC PRESIDENT Jess Ma president@varsity.co.uk

ASSOCIATE EDITORS Olivia Emily, Amy Batley, Joseph Powell, Caterina Bragoli, Gabriel Humphreys, Stephi Stacey, Zoe Matt-Williams, Freya Lewis & Orsolya Petocz associate@varsity.co.uk

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CSU calls for University to “equalise accessibility” for international interviewees

Amy Howell
News Correspondent

At the meeting of Cambridge Student Union's (CSU) Student Council yesterday evening (23/11), the council proposed measures to tackle “inequality” in accessibility of interviews for international applicants.

The motion was raised by the Undergraduate Access, Education and Participation Officer, Esme Cavendish, who called on the University to continue the “positive development” in access from previous years. The SU also acknowledged that “online interviews go some way to address the access issues facing international students.”

During the meeting, the SU stated that they will lobby the University to “maintain and develop more extensive online interviewing services beyond the pandemic,” increase “interview opportunities in Africa, Oceania and South America” and require colleges “to give at least three-weeks interview notice for international applicants in normal years when they might want an in-person interview”.

The University has, in previous years,

offered interview opportunities in both Asia and North America, but applicants from the continents of Africa, Oceania and South America are required to travel to Cambridge to be interviewed. Some departments, such as Architecture and Economics, also advise against opting to be interviewed outside of Cambridge.

The motion is intended to prevent international interviewees from being required to spend large amounts of money on travel and accommodation in order to attend interviews in Cambridge. This is particularly pressing as, unlike domestic students, no subsidisation of travel costs is offered to international interviewees. Jasmine Loo, Chair of the International Students' Campaign (ISC) told *Varsity* that this “creates a financial-based disparity in applicants.”

Although the policy motion will not be voted on until the next meeting of the Student Council, members of the council appeared to support the propositions.

The SU has called for interviews to be conducted in such a way that interviewees do not feel “pressured to attend face-to-face interviews in fear of admission disadvantage,” and for the University to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged by “what continent

“
The motion is intended to prevent international interviewees from being required to spend large amounts of money on travel and accommodation
”

they come from.”

Rensa Gaunt, the Disabled Students' Officer, noted that changes to the interview process should also be made for the benefit of disabled students, for whom the process may be physically or emotionally taxing.

Despite interviews being held online, with no students being required to pay for travel or accommodation, international students wishing to be interviewed online from Malaysia, Hong Kong or Shanghai are required to pay a £50 interview fee. In 2017 when Jasmine Loo applied, this fee was £150, and she was “heartened that these fees have been reduced.”

All other international applicants “will be given domestic remote interview slots.” Jasmine Loo also commented that she was ‘hopeful that Colleges and Faculties will be open to communication on this’ on the basis that they ‘have striven to be flexible...for students studying remotely’ this term.

The University declined to comment both on the purpose of this fee or on whether they would be flexible when allocating slots to students in different time zones.

► Continued from front page

books and the theft has been listed on the national Art Loss Register which keeps a record of missing cultural artefacts.

The University Library has also taken advice from external experts in security and cultural asset recovery to help in the search.

Detective Sergeant Sharon Burrell, of Cambridgeshire Police, commenting on the time-lapse since the books were stolen and the start of the investigation, stressed that “information from the public will be very important to this investigation. We have made initial inquiries to trace their whereabouts, including contacting Interpol to place the items on their Stolen Works of Arts Register.”

Gardner detailed that “we [the University Library] keep all our precious collections under the tightest security”.

Professor Stephen Toope, Vice-Chancellor of the University, on the lost works, said: “Cambridge University Library is one of the world's great libraries and home to globally important collections, assembled and cared for over six centuries, and encompassing thousands of years of human thought and discovery.”

“As a result of this appeal for help, we hope to locate the missing Darwin notebooks and restore them to their rightful place alongside the University Library's other treasures, making them available to scholars and researchers in the centuries to come.”

The University Library will not stop searching for the notebooks within the library, however, with over 210km (130 miles) of shelving this will be a feat in and of itself.

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VARSLITY

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December.

UKRI advises PhD students to adjust their research proposals



▲ Students have been forced to reformulate research proposals as a result of UKRI's funding announcement (GETTY IMAGES)

Christopher Dorrell
Senior News Editor

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the largest provider of PhD funding in the UK, announced last week that it was advising doctoral students to adjust their research projects so it is possible to complete them within the existing funded period rather than issuing extensions to the funded period.

UKRI said, on their website, that they were now “strongly advising all funded students to speak to their supervisor about adjusting projects to complete a doctoral-level qualification within their funded period.”

As of this Tuesday (24/11), *Varsity* can confirm that UKRI contacted Cambridge Student Union (CSU) informing them that individual institutions can now apply for block grants which can be granted to the institution before being awarded to students on a case-by-case basis. Students will be invited to apply through their Doctoral Training Programme (DTP). The University are currently in the process of making their application.

CSU commented that “We were disappointed by UKRI’s announcement, as students in all years of their post-graduate studies have faced significant disruption as a result of the pandemic. We welcome the University’s intention to make additional funding available to those who need it, and that this will take into consideration the practical limits to how much any doctoral project can be revised.”

“However, many of the initial concerns raised by students and staff about UKRI’s decision remain relevant, including the onerous administrative burden on students experiencing disruption to document this disruption; the additional work of revising doctoral projects and supporting individual applications

that will fall on already overworked University staff; and the lack of meaningful engagement with students and academic staff throughout the consultation that resulted in this decision.”

The announcement about funding, made on 11th November, caused shock amongst PhD students across the country, particularly those in their 2nd and 3rd year, who were now faced with the prospect of substantially altering their research proposals during the course of the pandemic.

Back in April, UKRI had made an extra £44 million available for those most in need of extensions as well as issuing a blanket six-month extension for students in their final year.

After making the most recent announcement, UKRI clarified that a further £19 million of funding was available to students in the greatest need. This funding was particularly focused at “students who have recently gone into their final year of study (funding end date before or on 30 September 2021) and those with ongoing support needs.”

However, the vast majority of PhD students are not covered by this extra funding. UKRI’s own report itself admitted that 77% of students not in their final year were in need of an extension.

Some Cambridge PhD students spoke to *Varsity* about the impact that the announcement has had on their studies.

One anonymous PhD student spoke of the difficulties of adapting their project during the pandemic, even before the UKRI announcement. The student explained that they were “completely cut off from an academic community for several months as I transitioned from my first project to my second.”

“My supervisor caught Covid and I twice went for over a month between sending emails and receiving a reply. When I did eventually get a reply it was rushed with online video calls also cut

short. The UKRI advice is to talk to your supervisor and adapt, but it’s very difficult for me to make the case with him that a reason for delays is a lack of support from him.”

Regarding the support that the student has received, the student said “it seems like there has been little communication between DTPs and supervisors. My supervisor’s approach is ‘well you should still be able to do everything, it hasn’t been too bad for you.’”

Another student, in their third year of a PhD, said “the problem with ‘scaling-back’ the scope of projects is that for students past their second year this is rarely feasible, as by this point projects are already reduced to a set of achievable and publishable objectives.”

“If I were to change my project proposal so it could be completed on time now, it would require the removal of essential experiments which would probably prevent the work from being sufficiently complete for publication, especially in a high-impact journal. I expect this announcement will lead to a large amount of unfinished research work.”

They continued: “My work is entirely experimental, meaning that throughout the lockdown I was unable to progress on my PhD at all. Even after returning to the work, my access to lab facilities is restricted to certain hours of the week to ensure the department has a sufficiently reduced capacity to facilitate social distancing. I would estimate that the UKRI announcement therefore means that I will have at least 6 months less research time during my PhD than I would have had originally.”

This has had an adverse impact on the student’s mental health, revealing to *Varsity* that they now “work a minimum of 6 days a week, have had days where I work continuously for 12+ hours without rest, and I think have worked between

50-60 hours every week since my return to work...Failed experiments and unproductive days used to feel like learning experiences, now they just feel like wasted time and heap on more stress.”

Another student, in their 2nd year of a PhD studying English, was already “in the unfortunate but unusual position of having completely changed my thesis topic in early March, so I really needed access to the libraries to induct myself in the new field of study, as a lot of the material was not (and still is not) digitally available.”

The change of topic meant that the student would already “have been under pressure to finish on time even under normal circumstances. The decimation of productivity entailed by the switch to virtual and concomitant reduction in resources, coupled with the isolation of lockdown, has decisively slowed the pace of my research...The UKRI announcement has piled more stress onto an already substantial stress-heap.”

The frustration expressed by Cambridge students has been felt by PhD students across the country who have written an open letter to UKRI urging them to “revisit [UKRI’s] decision not to provide blanket funding extensions to doctoral candidates whilst also curbing the level of support available for those Post-Graduate Researchers (PGRs) now in their 2nd and 3rd years.”

The letter highlights that “the refashioning of a PhD project ordinarily requires additional time. In order to change their thesis plan, PGR candidates need to retrain in different methodologies, complete additional literature reviews, conduct alternative data collections.”

It goes on to discuss how “PGR students’ access to resources has been suspended in full or in part for 8 months and may not be reinstated in full or in part for some time, severely reducing the timescale in which to realise a PhD project. These include limited access to crucial university resources (e.g. laboratory space or library collections), external resources (e.g. archives and partner organisations), and the ability to undertake international travel for fieldwork.”

The letter calls on UKRI to issue a revised policy providing “a base funding extension for up to six months for all UKRI-funded doctoral students, while also providing targeted support for PGRs with additional needs in relation to the pandemic.”

In addition to this letter, over 1100 academics from Universities across the country, wrote an open letter, in support of PhD students.

In this letter the researchers claim that UKRI’s plans fail emerging researchers and damage the long-term research environment of the United Kingdom.

A spokesperson for Cambridge University and College Union said that “The disregard that UKRI has shown to PhD students is symptomatic of broader issues of dignity and job insecurity for doctoral students in UK universities. At Cambridge alone, PhD students teach approximately 25% of undergraduate supervisions, for very low pay, without secure employment, and without being paid for the training that they are obliged to do before supervising.”

NEWS

Colonialism commemorated

Page 4 ►

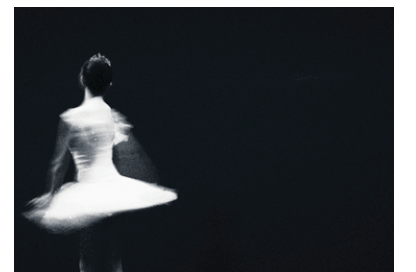
FEATURES

Learning to value emotionality

Page 12 ►

OPINION

The faux outrage over Fatima the ballerina



▲ (MEIKE LEONARD)

Page 13 ►

SCIENCE

Is Science in trouble? An insight into the reproductivity crisis



▲ (MOHAMED HASSAN, PIXABAY)

Page 15 ►

VIOLET

Michaelmas at Hotel Murray Edwards

Page 30 ►

SPORT

Oxford Cambridge Boat Race update

Page 32 ►

News

Colonialism Commemorated

“Colyton had direct knowledge of the British government’s use of ‘concentration camps...’”

► Continued from front page

women or people of colour.

Three colleges, three eugenicists

Among the figures commemorated are Francis Galton, Charles Galton Darwin, and Charles B. Goodhart, memorialised with portraits at Trinity, Darwin and Gonville and Caius respectively.

Francis Galton, who is still memorialised with a portrait at Trinity College, where he studied, was a pioneer of the eugenics movement.

He coined the term ‘eugenics’ in 1883 and was involved in controversial studies of twins and of trans-racial adoption, which sought to prove that heredity was fundamental to human development, not upbringing.

Galton’s unpublished novel *Kantsaywhere* depicted a utopic eugenic religion, designed to build stronger, smarter humans.

This June, University College London chose to rename facilities that honoured Galton.

Charles Galton Darwin, whose portrait is displayed in Darwin College, was president of the Eugenics Society from

1953 to 1959.

In his 1952 book *The Next Million Years*, Darwin wrote that a nation should use “A cruder and simpler method [...] than the animal breeder’s” to select “its ablest people” and avoid the “recurrent degeneration” that he argued happened in societies that did not use eugenics. He further argued that eugenics should become a national religion.

At Gonville and Caius, a bust is displayed of Charles B. Goodhart, a mid-twentieth-century member of the Eugenics Society and friend and correspondent of the prominent Caius eugenicist R. A. Fisher.

Fisher was, until recently, honoured

with a painting and a stained glass window in the College’s hall.

However, both were removed after a lengthy campaign by the JCR’s BME Officer Christine Salami and a petition which amassed almost 1500 signatures.

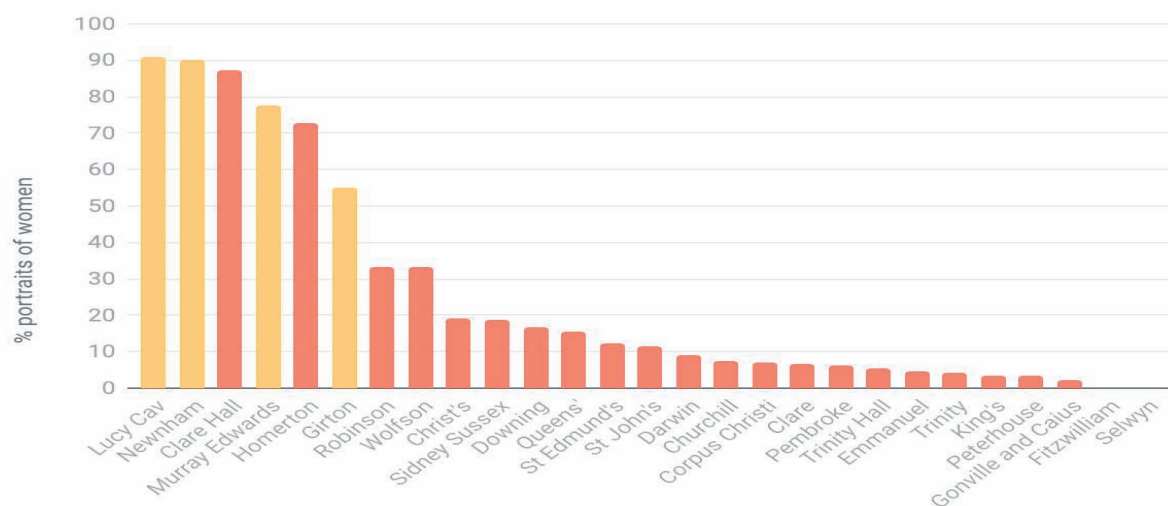
A Minister of State for the Colonies

Lord Henry Colyton, who is memorialised with a portrait in the Gonville and Caius collection, and gives his name to one of the College’s halls, was Minister of State for the Colonies during the Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya.

Colyton had direct knowledge of the

British government’s use of ‘concentration camps’ and ankle chains against Kenyan civilians, defending the camps in Parliament as “measures to re-educate and humanise the thousands of unfortunate men and women who have been led so wickedly and recklessly down [...] evil paths”.

According to parliamentary records, Colyton further stated on behalf of the government that the camps were “training [the prisoners] so that they would become useful citizens again”, and personally refused to provide food for the children of imprisoned Kikuyu men. The Lord Colyton Hall has hosted college fun-



▲ Graph showing proportion of portraits of females in the collections of different colleges (historically female colleges in orange) (ALEX HAYDN-WILLIAMS)



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draisers and private hire events.

In response to *Varsity's* enquiry on Colyton's memorialisation, a spokesperson for Gonville and Caius commented: "Following the College Council's decision to remove the Fisher Window from Hall earlier this year, a Working Group on Representation was established with the wide remit of discussing and making recommendations about [...] diversity of representation within College as a whole and within its governance structures. This includes representation in college artwork and commemorations."

A Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa

Meanwhile, commemorated with a portrait in Christ's College is Jan Christian Smuts, a former undergraduate and the Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa from 1919 to 1925, and 1939 to 1948. Smuts frequently voiced support for racial segregation, arguing that South Africa should become "a white man's land" and avoid "inter-mixture of blood".

He further claimed in 1925 that "if there was to be equal manhood suffrage over the Union, the whites would be swamped by the blacks". As Prime Minister, he used anthropological arguments to justify racial segregation, and played a major role in South Africa's move towards legal segregation.

In his first term as Prime Minister, Smuts passed the 1923 Native (Urban Areas) Act, the first law that separated South African cities into Black and white areas, establishing residential segregation, while the Mines and Work Act, writ-

ten by Smuts as Mines Minister in 1911, brought into law the principle of skilled jobs being reserved for white people.

A page on the Christ's website describes his 'important role at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919', but makes no mention of his role in establishing racial segregation.

In a joint statement to *Varsity*, Howard Chae and Chloe Newbold, the SU BME officer and Women's officer respectively, commented: "College portraits commemorate key benefactors and figures, symbolising the college's ethos, values, and history."

They continued: "The continued commemoration of individuals such as Smuts in Christ's and Rustat in Jesus, among others, are an example of this."

"Colleges need to commit to concrete actions to materially address these ties and create a more welcoming environment for marginalised students by, for example, adopting the recommendations of the End Everyday Racism report, implementing programmes of reparative justice to follow Legacies of Enslavement enquiries, and ending their ongoing complicity in the global injustices carried out by fossil fuel corporations and arms manufacturers."

Jesus, Emmanuel, Trinity, Selwyn, Fitzwilliam and Darwin did not respond to Varsity's request for comment.

Note about statistics: the statistics used have been compiled on the basis of ArtUK collections, for every college except Churchill, Downing, Lucy Cavendish and King's, for which the statistics are based on information provided by college archivists.

MUSIC

Live music lives on in Cambridge Corn Exchange

Socially distanced mini-concerts are set to return to the Cambridge Corn Exchange in January 2021. The programme of concerts includes performances by This Is The Kit, Scott Matthews, Penelope Isles, BD Camplight and Shame. Strict social distancing methods will be enforced, with a maximum of 200 audience members. The reopening of the doors of the largest concert hall in the East of England has been met with delight, with Cambridge Executive Councillor for Communities Anna Smith describing how thrilled she is at 'the first signs of a return to live entertainment'.



▲ Socially distanced mini-concerts set to return to the iconic venue in the New Year (Picasa 2.7, Wikimedia Commons)

PLASTIC

Exchange Pounds for Plant Plastic

The Cambridge University Smart Sustainable Plastic Packaging from Plants project is among the ten university-led projects receiving £8million in funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). With the aim of tackling plastic waste in the UK, the project is researching how to engineer materials with new properties. Replacing fossil-derived plastics with those from naturally-derived sources means that the materials used in plastic packaging will not only degrade more easily, but also can be engineered to have more functional properties, such as improved strength.

GEOLOGICAL

Exhibition shows that women 'rock'

The Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences has recently digitised their exhibition looking at women's contribution to and visibility in geological science. Women have been present on geological field trips since the 1880s, although only admitted to join the Sedgwick club (for geologists) from 1996. This exhibition focuses on the late nineteenth century right up until the First World War, shining the spotlight on women such as Gertrude Lilian Elles MBE, one of the first female fellows of the Geological Society in 1919, who deposited over 3,700 specimens.

QUARANTINE

The word on everybody's lips

The Cambridge Dictionary has named 'quarantine' as their 2020 word of the year, highlighting the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on our lives. Quarantine was the third most looked-up word this year (behind only 'hello' and 'dictionary'), with an extra definition of the word being added to the dictionary to refer to this year's lockdown measures. The publishing manager of Cambridge Dictionary, Wendalyn Nichols, said that "the words that people search for reveal not just what is happening in the world, but what matters most to them in relation to those events."



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Application deadline: 31 October 2020

Summer vacation schemes

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26 July – 13 August 2021

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News

Colleges commemorate Trans Remembrance Day with flags and vigils



▲ Queens' College flew the Trans flag from the Mathematical Bridge for the beginning of Trans Awareness Week (HATTY WILLMOTH)

William Hunter
Deputy News Editor
Christopher Dorrell
Senior News Editor

Last Friday (20/11) marked Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) and the culmination of Transgender Awareness Week, with the University coming together to show solidarity with its transgender students and staff in a variety of ways.

Murray Edwards, St Catherine's, Downing, Newnham, Queens', Emmanuel, and Gonville and Caius all flew the Trans flag in college to mark the celebration.

Some colleges also chose to hold online events to commemorate TDOR. Girton College held an online service, St Catherine's held an online vigil in remembrance, and Hughes Hall held an online panel.

While the Trans flag was flown in Queens', this followed a protracted exchange between senior figures at the College and the student body.

Before the Trans flag was flown from Mathematical Bridge for the beginning of Trans Awareness Week, there were reports of students being asked to take down trans flags from their windows.

In emails seen by *Varsity*, students were asked to remove flags from their windows by the College dean, who in-

formed them that "displaying items, including posters, flags, banners and signs, in or from windows of student rooms is not permitted."

This email confused and angered many students in the College who felt that the College handbook included no such statement.

The current handbook only makes reference to displaying posters, stating: "On no account are posters to be displayed in windows or outside College rooms."

In response to these concerns, a further email seen by *Varsity* was sent to students apologising that "the current position was not explained adequately in the Handbook: the 'College' has a long institutional memory but of course there is a rotating student population that does not share that. The current position is, simply, that no posters, flags or similar may be displayed from windows or in windows visible to the outside. Students may display things inside their rooms as they wish."

The email also stated: "the flag displayed on the Bridge is a collective expression of the College's commitment to equality. This was approved unanimously by the Governing Body in previous years and again a couple of weeks ago, at the request of the JCR/MCR Members. It is a positive, highly visible, all-College statement. The location - the Bridge - was chosen by JCR and MCR Members because it

is so iconic and meaningful and is meant to be a powerful affirmation of our common values. The Bridge is a Cambridge landmark and the place that will carry the most impact. We have further amplified this through social media."

Robbie Boyd, the LGBTQ+ Officer, told *Varsity* that "it is obviously hugely disappointing that College has chosen to remove the pride/trans flags, and with it removing the identity and visibility of students which it claims to protect. In previous years political flags have been hung in windows, and therefore any argument that suggests allowing flags is politically antagonistic will be viewed as redundant."

"Despite my disappointment with some of College's response, we should guard against jumping to the conclusion that they are attacking the LGBT community. The minute there were complaints, senior leadership contacted me and asked what they should do to resolve it. They immediately expressed a willingness to fly the Trans flag from the bridge."

However, not every college opted to fly the Trans Pride flag. Christ's College was one of the many Colleges who have not flown the trans flag this year.

When the Senior Tutor at Christ's was contacted for comment by *Varsity*, he insisted that this was not a deliberate decision on the part of the College. Rather

"any request to fly a flag on the College's Great Gate other than the College flag can be made to the College's Governing Body, and it has been known for such requests to be granted on occasion. But no request has been made to fly the trans flag, to the best of my knowledge."

This year's Trans Awareness Week has also seen better protections for the welfare of Trans students being implemented. This took the form of the Cambridge SU's new Trans Inclusion Guide. The Guide was released by the Trans Students of Cambridge Facebook page last Thursday (19/11) in a post stating "this is by no means an in-depth guide to trans issues but is a minimum requirement that we believe all members of the University should access".

Speaking to *Varsity*, Milo Eyre-Morgan, Cambridge SU LGBTQ+ rep and joint author of the guide, said that "The Trans Inclusion Guide is something we put together in response to feedback from the Big LGBTQ+ Survey. Many students didn't know what University policy was on important issues (e.g. name changes), had been advised incorrectly by staff, and in some cases experienced outright transphobia. We've created a guide that students can use to inform themselves, advocate for their peers, and self-advocate, and one that can easily inform staff on how to support their trans students."

Meanwhile at Girton College, a service for TDOR marks an encouraging development for inclusion and representation of Trans students. The Chaplain of Girton, Dr Boniface, said the following: "Trans Remembrance Day brings to our attention the tragic reality that people's lives have been torn from them simply because of how others judge their gender expression."

"I'm really grateful to the student body for their initiative in putting on this short service. In the midst of such painful remembrance, it speaks encouragingly of the link between Chapel life and the inclusion and celebration of diversity which we as a College community are keen to nurture."

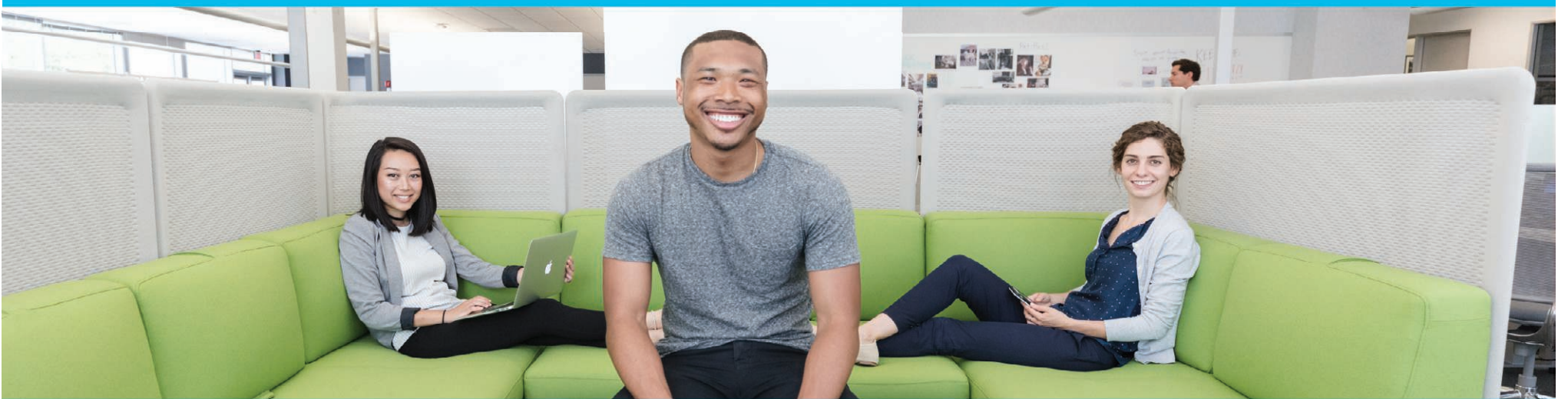
TDOR was originally started in 1999 by transgender advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith to remember Rita Hester, a Black trans woman who was murdered the previous year. Since its beginning, it has been a time to remember those Transgender individuals who have been killed due to transphobia and to reflect on the violence to which Transgender people are subject.

This year's TDR marks the deadliest year for Transgender people since 2013 when Trans deaths began being recorded. By November, 350 trans individuals had been killed worldwide.



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News

Cambridge-led coronavirus genome sequencing effort receives £12.2 million

Alexander Shtyrov
News Correspondent

The Coronavirus Genomics UK (COG-UK) consortium, led by researchers at the

University of Cambridge, has received £12.2 million in funding from the Department for Health and Social Care.

The project was set up in March to sequence samples of coronavirus from

patients across the UK, and is a partnership between the Government, the NHS, and universities. Sequencing a genome involves determining the series of DNA bases of which it consists.

Over 100,000 SARS-CoV-2 genomes have been generated and published so far, constituting 45% of the global total.

The new funding will be used to in-

crease the number of samples processed and strengthen the consortium's infrastructure. COG-UK currently sequences 8,000-10,000 samples per week, but researchers hope to double this number over the following months.

Professor Ian Goodfellow, who leads the local Cambridge sequencing team in addition to his position at the Department of Pathology, told *Varsity* that "there has been tremendous progress".

"The rapid establishment of a national genomics consortium such as this is a great testament to the UK scientific community and their desire to use their skills to end this pandemic," he says.

"This funding allows us to expand our capacity and to begin to turn what started life as a research network into a service that is better integrated in the overall UK COVID-19 response," explained Dr Ewan Harrison, a Senior Research Associate at the Department of Medicine.

The development of rapid and cheap sequencing technologies over the last two decades has made the process significantly more accessible.

Determining viral genome sequences helps in "understanding transmission in hospitals and care homes" where "this has led to improvements in infection control", according to Harrison.

The genomic databases that COG-UK is constructing also allow researchers to track mutations, including those that could affect resistance to future vaccines.

The samples chosen for sequencing "are selected on various criteria," notes Goodfellow, and come from three sources. Samples from all "patients currently admitted to any of the Cambridge University Hospitals" are analysed to "monitor hospital outbreaks". More samples are collected from across the East of England to "get a good representation of viruses that are circulating across the region".

Harrison adds that COG-UK tries "to capture samples from key studies like vaccine trials" and "from patients with the most severe disease".

Further to these sources, the local team has recently started including samples collected from students participating in the University's screening programme. This will help to "understand transmission in the student population", says Goodfellow.

Although Goodfellow is pleased with the achievements of the consortium, he emphasises that the project is "very labour intensive" and "requires significant expertise".

He noted that despite technological advances, he "would not want to downplay the challenges with undertaking this work [...] Generating sequences of patient samples on this scale, in this time frame has never been done before".

Infrastructure created by the COG-UK effort may also "facilitate the formation of a national genomics support service for epidemics other than COVID," he explained.

The new funding awarded to the consortium comes as England approaches the end of its month-long lockdown. The latest figures from the University show that the number of new asymptomatic cases among University members has fallen to the lowest level since the first week of testing.

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Oxbridge colleges go head-to-head to support local food banks

Cameron White
Deputy News Editor

'The Great Oxbridge BOGOF' is a collaborative, inter-collegiate Oxbridge contest encouraging students to donate as many resources as possible to their local food banks in weeks six to eight of Michaelmas Term, under the maxim 'Buy One Give One Free!' when going to the shops.

As of this Tuesday (24/11), the eight Oxford and fourteen Cambridge colleges taking part have donated a combined total of 2,178 items to local food banks, with Cambridge leading Oxford by 1,207 to 971.

This week, *Varsity* spoke to the founder of the advocacy group 'Because We Can', who organised the BOGOF competition, as well as student representatives from four of the Cambridge colleges participating in the group's current initiative.

Food bank usage in the UK has increased by 74% since 2015, with The Trussel Trust estimating that the pandemic could lead to a 61% overall increase in food bank usage in the UK. In this context, Josh Tulloch, the founder of 'Because We Can', believes that immediate action against food poverty is essential, with "the pandemic threaten[ing] to devastate the already devastated".

The former Lady Margaret Hall JCR

President has had personal experiences with life on the breadline, telling *Varsity* that "[he] was homeless for a period of time in [his] early teens and faced situations where [his] family didn't know where the next meal would come from. Luckily, we had the support of friends, charities and local councils. Many others aren't so lucky. So, 'Because We Can' aims to help those who have fallen through the gaping holes in our social safety net."

Tulloch says 'The Great Oxbridge BOGOF' is the first time he has been involved in food poverty-related work specifically, and is delighted by the results of the 'BOGOF' so far.

"I continue to be amazed by the enthusiasm shown by the JCR Presidents from both Oxford and Cambridge", Tulloch continued. "The fact that students donated 1200+ items within the first 5 days is simply staggering! It's a testament to the organising power of the JCRs across Oxbridge."

After a few "manic" weeks of organisation and a Zoom call with representatives from twelve Oxbridge colleges within two weeks of having the idea to spearhead the initiative, Tulloch believes the 'BOGOF' could become a regular annual fixture in the Oxbridge calendar.

"When people think of the Oxbridge rivalry hopefully the 'BOGOF' will be on the same list as the boat race and the

rugby match". Tulloch also elaborated on his ideas for the future expansion of the project, saying that "Beyond Oxbridge, it would be incredible to take this national, and set up Varsity competitions for universities across the UK."

Elliott Stockdale, a student involved in organising participation in the 'BOGOF' at Queen's, "first heard about the initiative through a friend at Magdalene and [...] felt it was most definitely something [he] wanted to get on board with." Stockdale added: "With the difficulties of this year in everyone's minds, it is only right that we acknowledge the lucky position we are in as students and look after our local community, particularly in the winter months. The food banks are under significant strain and it is only right that we aid them in any way possible."

Similarly, Harriet Hards, Emmanuel College Student Union President, added that "we've been consumed by COVID matters all term, so this scheme has come as a wonderful way to refocus our perspectives and consider how we can be helpful to those outside the college walls. [...] I think most students would be happy to donate to food banks anyway, but the competitive element and regular leaderboard updates might prompt people to give a bit more or a bit more often throughout the campaign, especially if they see that other colleges



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Wednesday 6th Week - Wednesday 8th Week

▲ Oxbridge students have currently donated 2,178 items to food banks.

(EDEN COOK-WATSON)

are doing better than us."

With Girton currently in ninth place with 52 items, Elisha Roberts, a student responsible for organising the 'BOGOF' there, also drew attention to the longevity of the campaign in bringing about a meaningful impact. "I was inspired to take part by the idea that this campaign is not just a two-week long competition that only has a short-term impact", Roberts told *Varsity*, adding that while "[she] would be keen to see a similar campaign run in the future, [she] also want[s] to encourage students to make a habit out of donating to the food bank collection in Sainsbury's."

Meanwhile for Milly Cox, the JCR

Charities Officer at St Catharine's, student uptake thus far has been a cause for celebration. "Households and different parts of Catz have gotten competitive with each other [...] for example, our boxes are spread out across different sites, with some boxes for singular households and others for whole year groups."

Cox continued: "Every time we count up donations, we can see how many donations have been made relative to the number of people living on that site and on a few occasions, single households have beaten sites with over 100 students. The competition, even within Catz, has been really intense!"



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Features

The real meaning of Christmas: festivities, family, France

Inès Magré discusses the possibility of spending Christmas in Cambridge, and reflects on what Christmas means to her

This time of year is usually marked by last minute gift shopping, booking flights to see my grandparents in France and calling my cousins to coordinate Christmas outfits. It's mid-November and I'm in my room in college, no flight home under my name, not knowing which of three countries I am going to spend Christmas in.

Christmas has always felt too artificial to me, the actual night always falling slightly short of the anticipation built up by decorations, Christmas music and TV adverts which all kick in as soon as pumpkins are thrown away on the 1st of November. My large family Christmases make me feel like we are puppets playing the perfect family in a movie, going to church even though you'll never find us there on any other day of the year, eating more food than enjoyable, smiling at the family member you never speak to and pretending to take great interest in their career change. Cue the family drama: whether it's because that one uncle arrived late or the politics talk and old grievances all coming out once my grandparents have had one glass too many. Any other year you could've told me Christmas was cancelled and I would probably have been relieved. This year, the potential reality of spending Christmas alone, with no grand meal or adorned tree, has made me reflect on what Christmas, behind all its superficiality, is really about.

Having always lived abroad from my extended family means I rarely see them -



▲ “The potential reality of spending Christmas alone, with no grand meal or adorned tree, has made me reflect on what Christmas, behind all its superficiality, is really about.” (BEN WHITE)

twice a year being a luxury, once every two years being more of the norm. Sitting down over a meal with people who sometimes feel more like strangers than vital parts of my life reminds me of the strange and unique concept of family. As you grow up, move away, move on, you leave some parts of your childhood behind. More often than not, these are the people and things you wish you could have kept by your side.

I've found family roots to be so deeply entrenched that they don't need as much tending to as other relationships. These

connections are ones which do not simply fade with time or distance. Although we all do different things and live on all sides of the globe, our blood link keeps us interconnected. Seeing my family at Christmas has never been just about eating good food and getting presents, it is a way to reconnect to my French culture, one which my parents work so hard to keep alive in our everyday life living in Poland. Even though we exclusively speak the romance language at home, cook French food and watch our national version of Gordon Ramsey weekly on TV,

having never lived in France, I am sometimes led to question my national identity. However, spending a quintessential French Christmas surrounded by some of the most stereotypically French people I have ever met, reinforces the feeling of comfort that I do belong there.

Even though these traditions of waiting to open our presents before dessert, our family picture on the stairs, and playing Christmas carols on the piano can all feel a bit orchestrated, I've learnt to appreciate that that is what traditions are. We keep them alive to try and recreate the childlike excitement of Christmas, to make the one day every two years that we are all together as special as it can be. Christmas traditions are pure nostalgia, a way to fill the gaps that might have formed over the years. They are what keep people and memories alive, make you realise there is more to life than your day-to-day, what you can countdown to in darker moments of melancholy and grief. This Christmas, wherever I spend it, will be the first one since my grandma's passing. Maybe we'll decide to trade the traditional 'Bûche de Noël' for her famous crêpes, a way of having her with us on Christmas Eve.

The fear of spending Christmas in college is one I brought with me at the beginning of term, simultaneously trying to ignore it with the naive positivity that there wouldn't be another lockdown. Six weeks in, I am very lucky to say that were I unable to go home, I would be spending it with my college family; people who aren't family but who I already

love and care about deeply.

It certainly wouldn't be the picture perfect white Christmas, the best ones rarely are. My memories of family Christmases have been distorted with time, tangled up with idealised versions taken from movies like *Home Alone* and *Love Actually*. The best Christmas I have ever celebrated was sailing with my close family, all squashed in a tiny kitchen, eating tomato pasta with no space in our luggage for physical presents, gifts taking the shape of homemade gift vouchers. The liberating feelings of not having to organise a perfect meal weeks in advance, worrying someone won't like their gift, or work emergencies ripping my parents away, allowed us to be present in the moment, just the five of us. I look back at this memory and see the real value of Christmas; being with people you love no matter the environment surrounding you.

Whether I spend this Christmas in Cambridge, at home with my parents in Poland, or in France with my horde of aunts, uncles and cousins, I know the people I love are healthy and somewhere in the world. The ones who aren't live on through the impact they've had on my life and the traditions they've left behind. The joy of Christmas does not have to solely exist on the 25th of December (or the 24th for my fellow Europeans). Once the world starts regaining a bit of normalcy, even if this is in the middle of a July heatwave, I will have my family reunion - which is the only real reason I count down the chocolate shaped days to Christmas.

Emily in Paris Gets Something Right

Jules Graham talks about how her perception of Paris was changed by some negative experiences and on new realisations from her year abroad

Content Note: This article contains detailed discussion of sexual harassment, and mentions of racism, homophobia, transphobia and abortion.

Netflix recently released the TV show *Emily in Paris*, which follows the life of a young American girl who moves to Paris for work, despite not speaking any French.

It offers a romanticised view of the city; Emily lives in a luxurious apartment in the centre of the city, she always happens to accidentally end up at famous landmarks, everyone's ridiculously nice, and the city looks mesmerising through her @Emilyparis Instagram account. The show received a lot of backlash at the time from French critics for being wholly inaccurate and its use of stereotypes was called out, as was its complete sanitisation of Parisian life.

What struck me more than the response of French critics was the response of expats: a whole host of 'the real life of Emily in Paris' memes sprung up mocking the metro system, the postal service, collocations, the gritty reality of the city. All the undersides of Parisian life that the show didn't even touch upon. But more than just forgetting the daily annoyances of life in Paris, Emily in Paris forgot to

mention what life is like here for people with marginalised identities.

One thing I noticed almost immediately after moving to Paris for my year abroad was the frequency of street harassments. It started with just feelings of being stared at, more openly than I could recall from before. When hanging out with other expats I would casually ask other British girls if they felt this increase too; I wanted to figure out if I was making it all up. Every time I asked the question, it was met with a resounding yes.

The longer I stayed in Paris the more I realised it wasn't just catcalling and being stared at in the street. I had men bothering me every lunch break to the point where I started pretending that I didn't speak French. I had a man follow me for 20 minutes while I went to meet my friends, sitting right next to me on an empty metro and then walking 20 paces behind me once I exited the metro. A man tried to kiss me in a park, telling me I had eyes so pretty he couldn't resist. Another tried to stick his hand down my trousers and even after I told him to leave he continued to stare and call after me. I even had a man kiss my neck and run his hands up my legs while I was very drunk on the metro. I was in a full

carriage, begging him to stop, and no one did anything. My friend texted me she would be five minutes late to meet me; she had to switch metros to lose the man following her.

It still took a while before I fully registered that this type of harassment was just the tip of the iceberg. I only realised this when someone mentioned that there were protests taking place against the new bioethics law.

“It still took a while before I fully realised that this type of harassment was just the tip of the iceberg”

This law attempts to make it legal for lesbian couples to receive IVF and for AFAB people to be able to freeze their eggs. I remember being completely floored, not by the fact people would protest such laws, but by the fact that these laws hadn't existed until now in France. I had thought that moving from one western European capital city to another would be pretty similar in terms of the socially liberal political climate. Especially in a country that prides itself

on “liberté, égalité, fraternité”.

But no, looking more into the current state of French society left me feeling deeply uncomfortable. Respected magazines were publishing articles wondering if the French feminist movement was now bordering on “misandry” and debating whether the “young mother” (read: 15 year old girl) who gave herself an at home abortion would be tried for infanticide. A friend said to me that for a country that prides itself on its revolutionary nature, its insistence on revolt, they've got very little to show for it socially. He's right, I felt like I had been lied to before living here.

People keep asking me if I want to come and live in Paris again once I've graduated. At first my answer used to be a timid 'I'll have to wait and see'. I was in love with the boulangeries, the warm weather, wine by the seine, even the metro. But now it's a resounding no. I don't want to live in the country where a girl I know “has never been called a dyke more in her life” or where my friend is stared down in the street because he's not white. I don't want to live in a society where every time I tell someone my name (because it's a male name here) people will literally make up a different name, because there's a

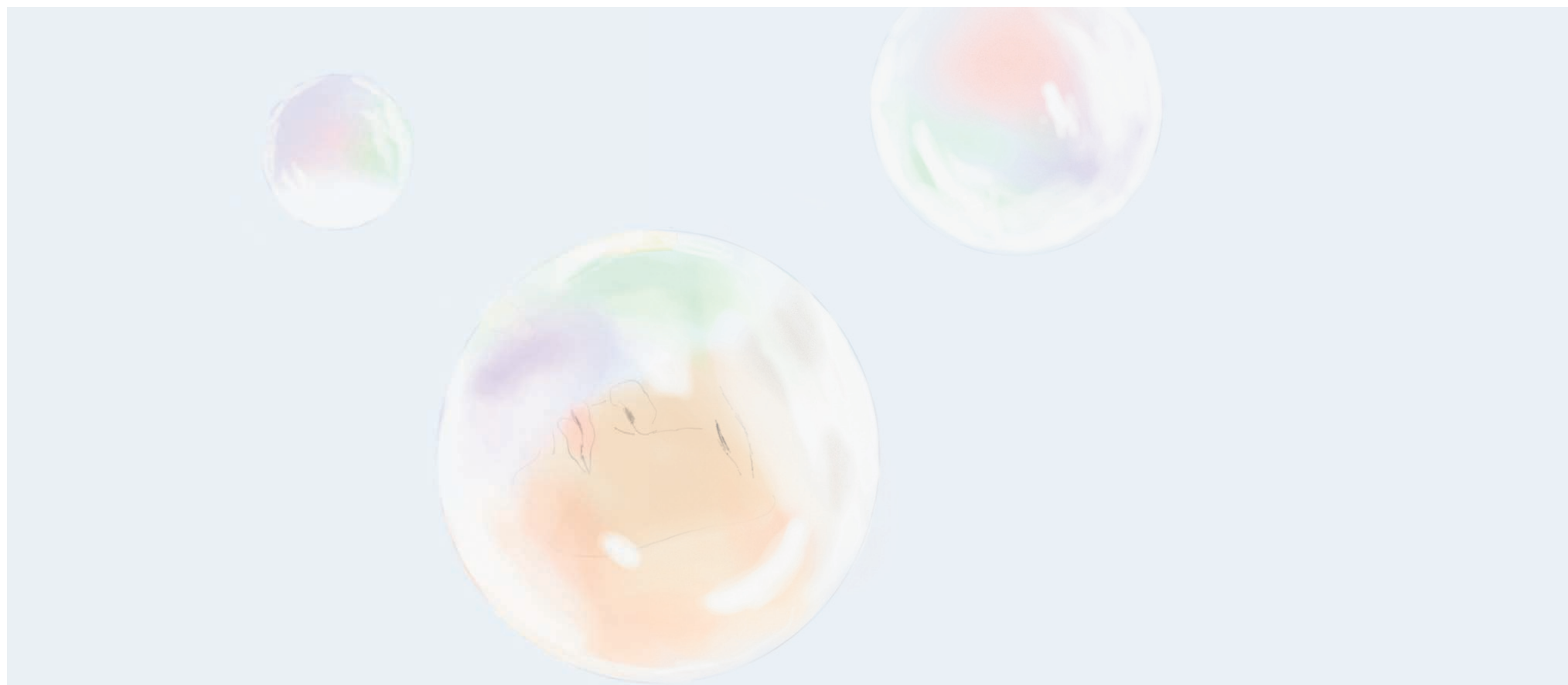
limited concept of gender fluidity. I don't want to come back to a country where as recently as four years ago you had to be sterilised to legally change your gender, and even now after doing so you have to readopt any children you already had. I don't want to live in a country where laws that would ensure queer and women's rights are still protested.

Watching *Emily in Paris* really brought home for me how unaware people are of the socially conservative nature of France, as I was reminded of the romanticisation of life in Paris and France. Emily runs around Paris in high heels, never being harassed, always eating a gorgeous pain au chocolat, accidentally having dinner at Café de Flore, living above the sexiest French man. It's complete and utter fiction, but I think it's almost the best approach, in a sense.

Who would want to watch the real thing? Emily gets harassed on the metro? So, while it may be a misleading romanticisation of life in Paris, Emily in Paris got something right about my experience with the city, in that the best bit of Paris for me was how it looked on my Instagram story.

Every student must give their mental health the attention it deserves

“This is a story of how one term at this University swiftly destroyed every anchor I didn’t even know was keeping me grounded,” writes Isabel Siggers



▲ “Whatever was going on, I didn’t want anyone else to know about it.” (LEONI BOYLE)

When I left home for my first term at Cambridge University, I had the same fears as every other fresher. Absent from this list of worries was my own mental health. The prevalence of depression and anxiety amongst those attending this specific University is quite disturbing, and it only takes a quick Google search to dig up truly alarming testimonials from current and former students. I was aware of all of this as an offer-holder, yet I brushed it aside. After all, I was smart, I was resilient, I’d worked my tail off to get an offer from Cambridge, and I wasn’t about to let concerns about my “mental health” incite me to throw that all away. This is a story of how one term at this University swiftly destroyed every anchor I didn’t even know was keeping me grounded, and what I’ve learned in the uphill battle to regain a sense of normalcy and security.

Before university, I had the incredible privilege of never going through a mental health crisis (an amazing feat in hindsight). I’d always done very well in school, I never got in trouble, and as a consequence I became the rock of my social circle. Supporting others, whether physically emotionally or academically, became my whole reason for being. I was the eldest sibling, the parent, the teacher, the director, the therapist, whatever was needed in any given situation. It was this version of me that started their degree one year ago.

Everything seemed to go great at first. But then the novelty wore off, and the workload began to increase. No big deal right, what’s a little lost sleep? The feedback from the first few supervisions wasn’t promising. Oh well, I’m sure everyone struggles at first.

What’s that? Why wasn’t I at lectures this morning? Oh yeah, I overslept, I’ll watch the recording later today. Wait, these lectures aren’t recorded? It’s okay, I’ll live, I’ve only missed 1 5 10 so far. Everyone’s going to the library tonight? I’m okay thanks, I work better alone in my room. Huh? Oh yes sorry, I’m okay, just the Week Five blues you know!

A missed lecture, the occasional late night, the famed Week Five blues. Individually, not a cause for concern. But all together, getting worse as term progresses? I’m amazed I even made it through to the end of term. I would say I felt miserable, but the truth was I didn’t feel anything - except maybe I felt lost. Whatever was going on, I didn’t want anyone else to know, especially my friends and family. I just needed a bit of time, after all. No point worrying anyone else over something that will surely go away soon.

Anyone who suffers from depression of any variety understands how hard it is to see how far you have fallen until you make it out the other side. It took failing the majority of my mock examinations in January, my college inquiring about my stagnant academic performance, and a global pandemic sending me home for 6 months of house arrest for me to wake up to the gravity of what had happened. With the benefit of hindsight, and nearly another Michaelmas over, I’d thought I’d explain what went wrong, and why it got so bad so quickly.

First were the lifestyle factors. We’ve all heard being physically healthy is great for your mood, but the effect cannot be ignored. This means getting 8 hours of sleep a night, every night. It means eating a healthy diet, or least not eating junk. It means get-

ting regular exercise, a good amount of fresh air. During term time, these are often the first things to go when under intense stress. While some students manage to maintain a healthy routine, most see their sleep schedule in particular deteriorate as term time progresses. Late night work sessions often pair with excessive snacking, and when running on little sleep, very few people will still make that trip to the gym. In practice, most students choose to sacrifice their work-life balance for academic survival.

Second were more emotional factors - and I’m quite confident that these are not exclusive to me. Having always done well in school, my identity and self-worth became entirely dependent on academic success. This wasn’t healthy, but was also never a problem back home. Upon arriving at University, it rapidly became clear that I was of average academic ability in comparison to others in my course. I had to work 10 times as hard to produce work that in my eyes wasn’t nearly of the quality it had been in school. But of course, I couldn’t let anyone know I was struggling. That would make it all so much worse. It became harder and harder to sit down and actually attempt any supervision work, because supervision work served as a constant reminder that I was a fraud, that I didn’t deserve to be here. I had lost that spark, that passion for my studies that had gotten me through the rough times before, and it felt like I was up a creek without a paddle with no sense of direction. Couple this with the lifestyle factors which only amplified my feelings of hopelessness and despair, and it only took a few weeks to fall into my first proper depressive episode.

Digging myself out of this hole took a lot of work, and - especially during these ‘unprecedented times’ - I worry about significant backsliding. My best advice would be to watch out for the warning signs. Resist the temptation to withdraw when stress builds up, seek help if you find yourself struggling, and

remember that your value as a human is not tied to the mark you achieve on exams at the end of the year. Look after your physical and emotional wellbeing as best as you can, and when you feel the most lost, remember that you don’t have to suffer in silence.

RADLEY 

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Deadline for applications is **12 noon Wednesday 2 December**.

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

Features

Learning to Value Emotionality

On the association of rational intelligence with a lack of emotion, and how to reconnect with your emotional side

Hatty Willmoth
and Ashna Ahmad

CN: mentions of mental health and suicide

A friend once told me (Hatty) that I was too clever to be Christian. Some years into our friendship, she confessed that she had been surprised to find out that I was religious, as if faith were incompatible with having an intelligent, inquiring, 'rational' mind. I didn't mind at the time, and now I no longer have particularly strong religious convictions, it's easy to look back in amusement. However, this bizarre interaction picks up on a strange, imagined dichotomy prevalent in my life, in Ashna's life, and in society as a whole: that apparent contradiction between valuing emotionality, for example religious fervour, versus being quietly, coldly, rationally 'clever'.

Like many Cambridge students, I (Ashna) considered my academic performance a significant part of my identity while growing up. It was so often noticed and commented on, in comparison to any of my other traits, that I quickly began to see it as the most notable quality I had: a convenient niche to carve out for myself. In school, where children have their first encounters with social roles, groups and hierarchies, a niche like this can be a crucial step towards knowing where exactly you fit in. So at

some point, I made a semi-conscious decision to sculpt my identity around 'being clever', with all the associations that come with it.

I was always aware that one of these associations was cool-headed rationality. I remember procrastinating during a year 9 IT lesson by doing personality quizzes with my friends, and gleefully exclaiming to them: "I don't feel things; I'm basically a robot!" I delighted in my scores on the 'Systemising and Empathising Quotients' – two tests that plotted logical, systematic thinking against emotional intelligence and sensitivity – which I took as proof that my supremely rational mindset was almost completely unfettered by emotion. Actively devaluing something as fundamental as emotional sensitivity might seem like a pretty obvious recipe for misery. But in fact, I did successfully construct an identity around it for a few years. The 'socially awkward smart kid', whose awkwardness was supposedly a consequence of being too 'smart' to feel or understand something as irrational as emotion, was a role I felt comfortable playing in my early teens – however clearly misguided it might now seem.

Of course, that didn't last. There is no reason why this trope of rational and emotional intelligence being mutually



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From Shakespeare With Love

Earl Dean Lilly, Jr.

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▲ "Cool rationality is intelligent; intense emotion is weak, ill-thought-out, hysterical"

(RACHAEL REN)

“Being ambitious need not preclude being in touch with your emotions”

exclusive should hold true. Looking back, it's clear that my logical and emotional reasoning were not nearly as separable as this strange stereotype would have you believe, and this certainly isn't unique to me; anyone who has applied their academic intelligence to a subject involving human behaviour or to articulately explaining someone else's motivations or character knows this is the case. We also know, at least in theory, that berating ourselves for experiencing strong emotions or suppressing these feelings often leads to a vicious cycle: the 'rebound effect' which characterises several psychological disorders and leads to a suffocating emotional spiral. Yet still, this association persists. Cool rationality is intelligent; intense emotion is weak, ill-thought-out, hysterical.

These tropes have a long and gendered history. Suppression of emotions is a well-known trait of masculine gender roles; men, taught to shut off their feelings and shield themselves from vulnerability, are less likely to seek help for mental illness and three times more likely than women to commit suicide. Meanwhile, 'hysteria' is a concept tied closely with the historical baggage that reduced women to overly-emotional wombs-on-legs, incapable of rational thought. In order to overcome this barrier, women have felt the need to become more like stereotypical broad-shouldered, blazer-wearing, loud-voiced 'men in charge' that apparently epitomise success. The ambitious may thus get swept up in ideals of 'masculine' cleverness and success, encouraged to leave their 'feminine' emotionality at the door.

Yet, as I (Hatty) have gotten older, I have begun to recognise the strength that can be found in emotionality. Towards the end of secondary school, I started to ask myself why I was too

proud to let myself cry at films, too scared to be vulnerable in front of my friends, too stubborn to be outwardly sensitive. When a particularly tumultuous period of my life came along, it became impossible to keep my feelings bottled up. I found that deep conversations with my friends about how we were 'really' doing helped. Then, I began making a conscious effort to process every wave of emotion that came my way. If I felt stressed writing a suppo essay, I found that it was better to recognise this, focus on something outside, and take a moment to breathe – rather than just 'dealing with it' and powering through. I also got into the habit of writing a daily journal, purposefully and deliberately reflecting on my thoughts and feelings. Building this into my routine is one of the best decisions I've ever made. I now have a record of my recent emotional progress; I can reflect on feelings I only recognise in hindsight, and consciously adapt patterns of behaviour to healthier alternatives. It can take effort to be emotionally savvy.

Intelligence comes in many forms. Devaluing 'feminine' emotionality in favour of the blind pursuit of academic success is damaging to everyone involved. Being ambitious need not preclude 'being in touch with your emotions'. We are taught to be proud of academic success, and it is true that logic and cleverness will open doors and prove vital at Cambridge. However, allowing yourself to feel is a central component of being a healthy, functioning person, despite the fact that little extrinsic value is placed on emotional intelligence. The latter helps us to make deep connections with other people, encourages us to be kind, improves mental wellbeing. Most importantly, these two traits are not mutually exclusive; both help us be better. One thing that both Ashna and I (Hatty) have learnt is that becoming a robot is not a 'clever' thing to do.

Opinion

The faux outrage over Fatima the Ballerina

With the theatre world facing unprecedented challenges, support for the industry is needed, but those in the arts should keep an open mind when looking for work, says Anna Trowby



▲ The theatre world is suffering, with many historic venues at risk of closure. (ROSALIE O'CONNOR PHOTOGRAPHY)

It is no secret that the series of local and national lockdowns in this country has decimated the film and theatre industry. An already insecure environment, where over 90% of actors are out of work at any one time, has become further destabilised by a second national lockdown mandating that people stay at home to stem the spread of COVID-19. Just as theatres and cinemas were beginning to open with new productions, they've been forced to shut down without warning. It's easy to see why theatre professionals are frustrated at the lack of consideration afforded to their industry. Their main places of work have been boarded up and closed – perhaps for good – and they have lost their main source of income. We saw an intense expression of this grievance in their reaction to a particular ad. We all know the one. We can probably quote it by heart from now – ‘Fatima’s next job could be in cyber (she just doesn’t know it yet.)’

The advert, representing a ballerina, took a condescending tone towards the arts to which many in the industry reacted strongly. Upon seeing the advert, I was also astounded that a government with no knowledge or experience of the arts was lecturing theatre workers on what to do with their careers. However, upon careful reflection and further research, I concluded that this outrage was misplaced.

When the advert originally courted controversy online, many critics as-

sumed that it was created during lockdown to encourage theatre workers to enter more ‘viable’ industries. However, the advert was created in 2017 as part of a recruitment drive targeting different workers to retrain in cyber-security. Other jobs targeted included bakers and grocers. The controversy intensified when it was falsely reported by ITV News that Rishi Sunak, our current Chancellor, said that theatre performers should ‘retrain and find other jobs’. ITV retracted and corrected their original statement, framing Sunak’s comments as part of a general drive to retrain workers from all types of jobs. Knowing this, the outrage over the ad seems largely manufactured.

I understand people’s frustrations, but I struggle to see how getting upset over an advert made three years ago before the current pandemic will do anything to save the arts. I have seen some people on Facebook argue that this ad, regardless of its background, reflects a wider culture that devalues the arts and makes it difficult to pursue careers in the creative industries. However, I find this sentiment vain when expressed in response to this advert. Many people across various industries have unfortunately been made redundant as a result of Covid-19 – over 200,000 job losses have been announced across the hospitality, bank, retail and travel sectors since March, yet we don’t see these workers feigning outrage over an ad created three years ago. These industries have been massively disregarded during the pandemic,

but I haven’t seen a single pilot or baker express fury over the government ads in the way that theatre professionals have. Vanity masquerading as righteousness makes creatives seem more out of touch with the working world than we are, and it speaks to a sense of entitlement that our jobs are worth more protecting from the realities of a changing economy more than others those in other industries.

A lot of the same people expressing outrage also contributed to the loss of theatre by clamouring for a lockdown that would inevitably make many creatives redundant for months to come. Instead of having a productive discussion with the government and other professionals in their industry about how best to open theatres again, we’ve wasted our time getting angry at an advert and achieving nothing substantial. It’s also incredibly disingenuous to advocate for something that would clearly go badly for the arts, which thrives on live performance and audience interaction, and then blame others for not appreciating their industry enough. We cannot expect others to respect our industry if we do little to protect it during times of crises. The theatre world is suffering – historic playhouses like the Globe and the Old Vic are at risk of permanent closure and the West End is predicted to lose 97% of its original value by 2024, projecting a fall to £100 million from £4.9 billion in 2019. Arguing over an ad will not improve these dire figures.

The outrage also reeked of classism.

The uncomfortable truth of theatre – as well as many other industries – is that people change jobs. My grandad worked as a taxi driver, lorry driver and builder, while my dad worked as a factory worker, a fruit picker, and a bookstore assistant before becoming an academic. I anticipate that I’ll have to work multiple jobs and retrain if my original plans fall apart, and I have come to terms with that reality while preparing to enter the theatre industry.

However, on my Facebook feed I saw many problematic posts by my fellow performers acting as if they were above changing jobs and the demands of a normal working life. One man called acting a ‘calling’, but I wonder if he realises that this calling also flourishes on a stable income and basic needs being met. A lot of people responded to this advert as if they were above changing jobs – as if their livelihoods were just too important to face the reality of people who change careers. While I appreciate that many people were frustrated about perhaps being told to adopt a new career path during a pandemic, I also feel that a lot of the outrage was not necessarily aimed at the pandemic itself but rather a contempt at the idea of even having to switch careers. Regardless of the pandemic, theatre work is seen as a sanctified profession, an artistic endeavour. This damaging myth obscures the fact that acting is a job like any other. Because of this, theatre work is unfortunately subject to the same fluctuating

economy and career trends as any other profession, and we have to be honest about this reality instead of acting as if we’re better than ordinary people and cannot change jobs for anything. Theatre professionals do change careers and do have to make tough decisions about their career prospects, and being snobbish towards these individuals is incredibly patronising and shows a distaste for working people.

It is normal, even within the theatre industry, to retrain, and to sneer at this is unhelpful. For people to say that their ambitions are too special to change careers for speaks not only to an unrealistic self-belief in an already insecure industry, but also to a middle-class conceit that somehow sets them apart from other working-class people. This response smacks of entitlement and does nothing to negate the reputations of theatre professionals as out-of-touch narcissists. Given that theatre has long had a reputation as a middle-class pursuit, this response merely amplified assumptions about the theatre industry, while reflecting poorly on theatre workers.

If these posts were merely made to defend the arts industry, I would express solidarity with them, but several took this sentiment too far. I saw posts glamorizing poverty – the typical expression of ‘I would rather be poor and live for my dream’ – which was tasteless given how masses of people in this country have been plunged into financial insecurity as a result of the lockdown (The Institute for Fiscal Studies recently revealed that the poorest fifth of society saw their savings reduced by £170 a month). The only people rejoicing in poverty were the ones who had never lived through substantial poverty at all.

I stand by the importance of the arts industry, which many people make huge sacrifices to work in and which contributes to the cultural and financial lifeblood of our society. The theatre industry contributes £11 billion a year to the UK economy, and it provides entertainment for huge swathes of the population. Having said that, I will not be outraged for the sake of it. If you are angry about the state of the arts, I encourage you to use your frustration in a more productive way. Instead of virtue signalling over the faux plight of Fatima the Ballerina, artists and theatre professionals should instead set out practical ways for our industry to reopen. We should be firm in expressing to the government why our industry is so vital and why we need to reopen theatres if the arts are going to survive. We should negotiate with them in forming plans on how to reopen these avenues so that theatre professionals should get to work. We should also come together to discuss how to fairly spend the £1.57 billion grant that our government has given us – a bonus that was much bigger compared to the funding ejected into essential workers’ salaries.

Opinion

The US election's biggest loser? Democracy.

Beth Wright

In the last weeks, Donald Trump has picked out his latest victim in his sustained assault upon democratic electoral processes: the transition of power. A crucial cog in the realisation of democracy, a smooth transition of power allows for stability and gives the President-Elect's administration time to prepare for their term in office. Donald Trump is currently blocking this process, as the Republican administration construct an alternative reality in which America remained red and he won - by a lot! Mr Trump's certainty that he won is based upon the faith in his own unique power of insight into the public psyche, a power that cannot be undermined by a mere act of counting the votes of Americans. To Donald Trump, the five million votes that have propelled Biden into power are simply a hurdle for him to leap over in his attempted coup to hold on to power. But Trump's brazen attempts to remain President of the 'Land of the Free' are not just an attack upon Joe Biden, Trump's behaviour constitutes a war upon America's safety as a nation, the role of democracy in American politics, and the power of the rational values that are intended to govern democracy globally.

This latest advance in Trump vs. Democracy should come as no surprise to us; Trump and his followers have increasingly cast democracy as their enemy. In

“

Trump's assertion of a false reality could lead to damning, tangible consequences

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March, when House Democrats proposed vote-by-mail options, same-day registration, and expanded early voting — a package Republicans blocked — President Donald Trump told the Fox & Friends hosts, “They had things, levels of voting, that if you'd ever agreed to it, you'd never have a Republican elected in this country again.” Senator Mike Lee tweeted: “Democracy isn't the objective; liberty, peace, and prosperity [sic] are.” The Republican Party has been aware for a while that legitimate democracy is unlikely to grant them power, and their actions have reflected this insecurity. Their techniques have gone far beyond simply slandering democracy's name. The Republican administration has gerrymandered congressional states and suppressed likely Democratic voices through declaring the Voting Rights Act unconstitutional. They have butchered the Supreme Court, epitomised through their refusal to hold hearings on Obama's nominee in 2016 on the pretext that the next president should make the appointment and then brazenly rushing through Trump's appointment of Amy Coney Barrett just days before the 2020 election. However, the absurd predictability of a President clamouring ‘Stop the count!’, thus rejecting the role of democracy in the US election, cannot be dismissed as another funny example of insanity radiating out of the Oval Of-

fice. Trump's assertion of a false reality could lead to damning, tangible consequences.

In refusing to allow Biden to prepare for presidency, Trump immediately places the health of his nation at risk. Biden's COVID advisory panel remain barred from communicating with US government health officials and the White House COVID Taskforce. This communication between outgoing and incoming administrations is usually authorised by a letter of ‘ascertainment’, issued by the General Services Administration, which legitimises Biden as the winner of the election. Trump's refusal to concede means that no such letter has been produced, meaning no contact can occur between Biden and government officials. This compromises Biden's attempts to prepare to combat the coronavirus crisis that Trump has never taken seriously enough, he has reportedly not attended a coronavirus task force meeting for months. This is made all the more deadly by the current surge coronavirus is taking in the US, as deaths increase in 31 states. Biden is left unable to work out the logistics of distributing a vaccine or to assess information on stockpiles of essential protective equipment for health workers. Trump's refusal to honour the electoral process is crippling America's resilience to this virus and places American lives in unnecessary danger.

Americans are not the only ones at risk of death thanks to Donald Trump: democracy globally is being battered and bruised by Republican assertions of victory. The USA, with its roseate affirmations of freedom and prosperity, has long been an ex-

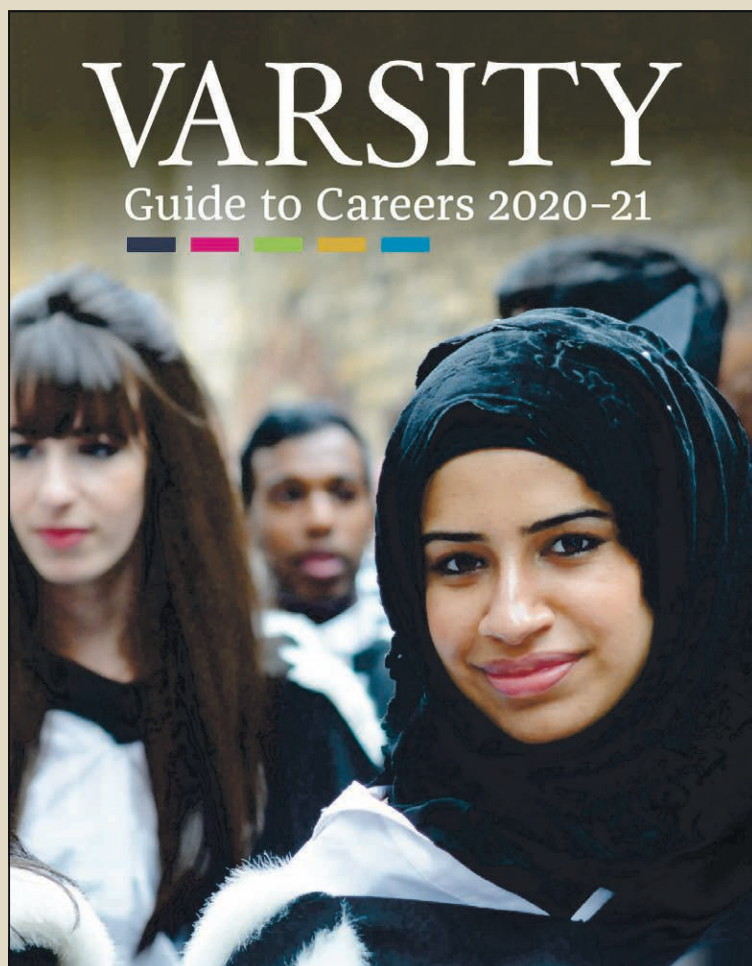
portant elements of developing democracies, and one of the hardest to maintain. Hopefully, in the US, constitutional frameworks and augmenting shouts from the Republican camp for Trump to concede will make Trump's attempted coup broadly non-consequential. However, in states without such provisions, ones which are only just learning the rules of democracy, stubborn electoral losers could render catastrophic consequences in following Trump's precedent. Trump calling the process of democracy into question globally renders the machinations of democracy weak and unstable. Without the luxury of democratic precedents and conventions, nations which copy Trump in refusing to acknowledge democracy and enable the transition of power could fall into violence and unrest - a fate which is not impossible in America. The weakening of the moral authority her example of democracy is a welcome gift to the world's autocrats. Putin, in his two decades of power, has continued to try and advance Russia's influence and power at the expense of the US by dishonouring and sullyng its institutions and values, undermining trust in global democratic systems. In refusing to lose, Trump continues this endeavour for the Russian President.

Whilst we are distracted by the spread of COVID-19, the pandemic of autocracy is spreading through the globe, spearheaded by Russia and China, as immigrants are turned away in Hungary, the liberties of women and the LG-BTQ+ community are suppressed in Poland and Brazil's ‘Trump of the Tropics’ continues to rule by tantrum. We must defend and strengthen our democratic institutions against this disease of modern authoritarianism, or risk authoritarianism becoming the new hegemonic world order.

► “Americans are not the only ones at risk of death thanks to Donald Trump”



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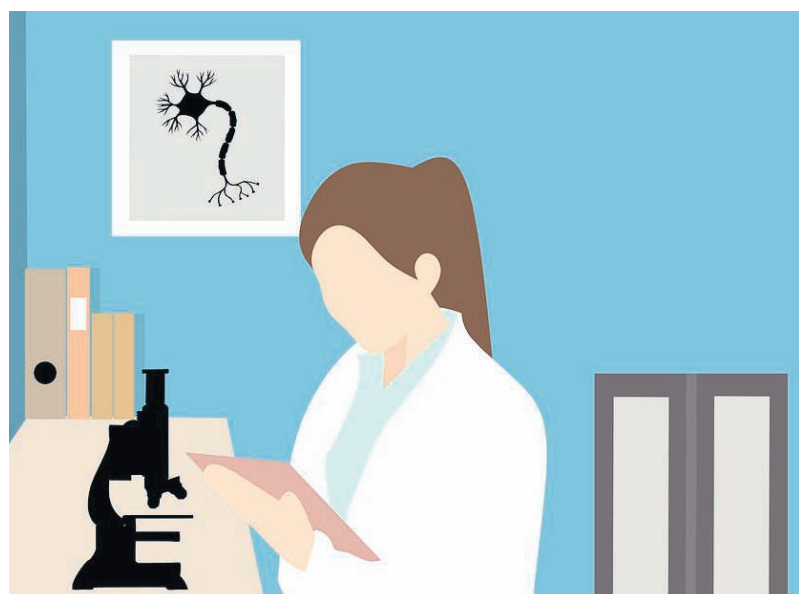


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Science

Is science in trouble? An insight into the reproducibility crisis

Yan-Yi Lee talks about the reproducibility crisis and how it has impacted our conclusions in multiple fields, as well as the recent collective efforts that scientists have shown to address it



▲ Whilst the concept itself is not at all new, the reproducibility crisis (or 'replication crisis') has been discussed more extensively only in the past decade. (MOHAMED HASSAN, PIXABAY)

The world of science has never been void of strong claims. "Calcium protects against preeclampsia in pregnant women." "Ego-depletion is real." "Bilinguals do better in executive tasks than monolinguals." As convincing as these claims may sound, attempts to replicate these findings do fail more often than expected — a phenomenon that marks one of the greatest challenges of metascience today.

The concept itself is not at all new, but the reproducibility crisis (or "replication crisis") has been discussed more extensively only in the past decade. While the crisis troubles all disciplines reliant on empirical (and more so, *positivist*) modes of inquiry, it tends to affect the medical and social sciences more than, say, the physical and mathematical sciences — something perhaps explained by the different nature of "controllable" contextual factors and measurement errors across disciplines. Meta-analytical efforts illustrate it well: in 2012, Begley and Ellis found that only 11% of pre-clinical papers on cancer could be replicated. In the water sciences, Stagge and colleagues explained how data unavailability resulted in an alarmingly low replication rate among 1,989 water management articles published in 2017 (a meager 0.6% - 6.8%, estimated with 95% confidence interval). John Ioannidis, a heavyweight in metascience, went so far as to claim that "most published research findings are false".

So what does this reproducibility crisis tell us about the *nature* of science? What does it reveal about *how humans manage* science? If scientific results are so difficult to replicate, and if the pursuit of truth proves to be so unreachable for

humans, then how much about science can we ever, *truly* know?

It is not difficult to understand why things have ended up this way. As Oxford professor Dorothy Bishop eloquently argues, the reproducibility crisis is mostly created by what she describes as "the four horsemen of irreproducibility": (i) *publication bias*, where studies that yield "no effect" are deemed less favorable and less likely to get published; (ii) *low statistical power*, where the peril of small sample sizes cause existing effects to go undetected; (iii) *P-value hacking*, where researchers misuse data to report only

"If scientific results are so difficult to replicate... how much about science can we ever, truly know?"

parts that are statistically significant; and (iv) "HARKing", where researchers form hypotheses only after results are known. Among the four, publication bias is a particularly dangerous practice; it may misguide high-stakes decisions such as policy enactments and even the designs of medical treatments.

Professor Bishop's analysis echoes powerfully with Professor Chris Chambers' celebrated book *The Seven Deadly Sins of Psychology: A Manifesto for Reforming the Culture of Scientific Practice*. As a passionate advocate of scientific rigour, Professor Chambers took the initiative to encourage the practice of "registered

reports" (RR) in leading academic journals. In essence, these "registered reports" are not unlike what PhD students at Cambridge undergo at their end of their first year. As opposed to sending a final manuscript to a scientific journal, researchers submit a draft of the study they intend to do to *before* the study commences formally, delineating aspects such as the background literature, the research questions, the overarching hypotheses, the methodology, as well as any preliminary work that might have already been completed. It is at this initial stage where peer assessors decide whether or not to accept the study. The power of the registered report lies in the opportunity for scientists to publish their studies *regardless* of ultimate findings. One can reasonably argue that such an approach not only eliminates the bad practice of cherry-picking, but it also paves the path for a more comprehensive outlook of science. Since its first formal implementation in 2012, registered reports are becoming increasingly valued in psychology and neuroscience. The life and social sciences have also begun to pick up their pace in adopting this format.

Most importantly, funders of science seem to be conscientious of the problem themselves and are asking for more rigorous descriptions of methodological methods. Recent years have seen funding bodies supporting the replication of studies; the establishment of specialised units such as the Centre for Open Science by notable funders likewise hint at the hopeful beginning of an ethical scientific revolution.

So what's next? With growing awareness of this current crisis, we must strive to do science with as little influence as possible from academic politics — as difficult as that may

seem. We must come to accept that science is only as good as the rigour implemented while doing it, and "no effect" is

"We must strive to do science with as little influence as possible from academic politics"

by no means a hindrance to the advancement of humanity. As of now, registered reports have yet to become the norm in mainstream journals of some scientific

disciplines, which signals the need for more interdisciplinary discussions on metascience. Whether "unreplicable studies" necessarily signifies "contested science" is another tricky question to consider.

Journal-publishing may be a modern-era practice, but reflections on humans' limited abilities to capture reality could be as old as scientific practice itself (see Greek philosopher Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*). Even with today's advanced methodologies and technologies, it is still inevitable for scientific misconceptions to develop sometimes in the collective pursuit of knowledge. As such, it is instrumental for the scientific circle to acknowledge current unhealthy scientific practices and approach science with a more unbiased lens — an investment that would likely save us gigabucks on flawed research down the line.

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Interviews

Making Cambridge accessible to students from war-torn backgrounds: an interview

Sophie Macdonald discusses Jacqui Cho and Yomna Zentani's experiences with the founding and expanding of the Rowan Williams Studentship, and the importance of spreading the stories of Rowan Williams scholars

When Jacqui Cho and her group of ambitious friends were embarking on their degrees at Cambridge, they had no idea about the barriers they would have to break, and the transformative impact their determination would have on the lives of students from zones of conflict.

Flash forward a few years, and they helped set up a scholarship for students from zones of conflicts. Cho now works for the United Nations.

Initially, while believing that education can open new doors for those who have had their education disrupted by conflict, seeing something like the Rowan Williams Cambridge Studentship (RWCS) being established, for Cho, seemed an unattainable dream. However, her passion and help from other equally committed students and fellows was what would eventually manifest into RWCS, which has now led to an inspiring platform for Rowan Williams scholars to share their own stories.

The RWCS supports around ten students, annually, who have faced severe educational barriers due to conflict, instability and other political and humanitarian reasons to study at the University of Cambridge.

Campaigning for the cause, however, was far from easy. A pivotal moment for the Cambridge Refugee Scholarship Campaign was when, in May 2018, they were contacted by a Syrian offer-holder, Abdullah Katineh. Despite pushing through multiple glass ceilings and obtaining an offer from Cambridge, Katineh was lacking funding and would not be able to begin his studies at Cambridge.

Responding to this, CRSC, with CUSU, wrote an open-letter to the University asking for their support. The letter gained over 600 signatures in just two days, and shortly afterwards, the student received news of full funding. Katineh went on to read Natural Sciences at Corpus Christi.

In a subsequent meeting with the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education and other University officials, the University committed to providing around ten scholarships a year for students from refugee/war-torn backgrounds; a first testament to the groundbreaking work done by CRSC.

Crucially, despite it seeming like an uphill battle, Cho was adamant on allowing people from conflict-affected countries, who were not already residing in Britain, to be eligible for this scholarship and hopes to inspire other universities to do the same. This was one of the battles that Yomna Zentani, a Libyan citizen who benefitted from this scheme and is now taking a driving force behind the newly launched website, was forced to face when applying for scholarships in other universities.

Zentani had always wanted to pursue postgraduate studies and explained how disheartening it was to stumble

“What is unique about the RWCS is that it is open to all students from zones of conflict, regardless of whether they are recognized refugees in the UK”



▲ Jacqui Cho and Yomna Zentani (left to right) (JACQUI CHO)

upon scholarships aimed at students who shared her background, but were limited to those who have already gained entry into the UK. She shared how uplifting it was to initially see efforts made by universities to increase diversity and inclusion but felt as though her claims to education were being hindered. Despite sharing the background, trauma and experiences of someone from a war-torn background, she was still on the outside looking in, as an international student educated abroad. That was until she stumbled across the Rowan Williams Studentship, which allowed for people from conflict areas or third countries to access a Cambridge education.

Subsequently, the Rowan Williams Studentship received over fifty eligible applicants in their first year, emphasising the demand for accessible education, and showing the University the importance of this cause. The Rowan Williams Studentship allowed Zentani to tell her story and pursue her academic goals, alongside nine other students who shared her ambitions.

Highlighting the importance of widening inclusion, Zentani explained that “what is unique about this studentship is that it is open to all students from zones of conflict, regardless of whether they are recognized refugees in the UK or not and enables them to apply for funding to access further education.” Of course,

“We owe it to the Rowan Williams scholars of the past to keep spreading their stories”

where there is progression, there is always more to be done. The lack of initial awareness about the unique experiences and burdens that recipients of this scholarship might carry has been identified as an obstacle, and led to a disparity in support on both student and collegiate level. CRSC continues to work to ensure that adequate support structures for scholars are in place once they arrive at Cambridge.

Embarking on her MPhil in African Studies in the same year that Zentani was pursuing her Master of Law, Jacqui was able to view the tangible, positive outcome of her perseverance, and become part of the Rowan Williams community that she helped to welcome into Cambridge. Jacqui and Zentani's time together at Cambridge resulted in their amazing new initiative: a collaborative outlet for Rowan Williams Scholars and a platform for such scholars to share their stories.

This website, and campaign, targets a very unique gap in accessing further education and we, as students, owe it to Jacqui, Zentani and the Rowan Williams scholars of the past, present and future to keep spreading the word about their cause, and joining them in their plight to make Cambridge a more accessible dream for refugees and people from war-torn backgrounds.

By creating this website, Cho and Zen-

tani hope that this would send a message of courage, strength and hope to future applicants and nudge them to apply. They also bring real stories and faces to the narrative around students from conflict areas and add nuance to our stereotypes of what that might be. While shedding light on the pressures that come with being from such backgrounds at such a renowned institution, they also offer glimpses into truer – perhaps messier but beautifully complicated – realities of resilient students from difficult backgrounds; it provides a narrative that is much-needed.

Looking towards the future, Cho currently works at UN OCHA's Regional Office in Nairobi, hoping to respond to people in need who are living amidst the many forgotten crises in Southern and Eastern Africa. After completing her Master of Law at Cambridge, Zentani is now focusing her efforts on future projects to encourage diversity in the legal profession. Collaboratively, both Cho and Zentani spoke of their dream in turning their powerful website into a book, and are constantly searching for more ways in which they can spread awareness for the Rowan Williams Cambridge Studentship.

I urge you to explore the Letters from the Rowan Williams Cambridge Scholars' website. May these stories gain the audience they deserve.



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Interviews

‘Hibernating’ through the crisis: how Sweden’s government approached university policy in 2020

In the first article of our series exploring how education ministries across the world are handling the pandemic, **Victor Jack** talks unemployment, mental health and tuition fees with Matilda Ernkrans, Sweden’s Minister for Higher Education and Research

Plastered across headlines all over the world and unable to escape international attention, Sweden has been 2020’s unexpected media star, for better or for worse.

With its ‘lighter touch’ approach standing out from most other European countries and the US, Sweden drew praise and criticism in equal measure for its initial pandemic response.

But like everywhere, this year was tough on Swedish university students too. After shutting their doors in March, universities partially re-opened in autumn, allowing some first year students to attend in person to get to know their campuses, alongside students with no-remote alternatives such as those doing laboratory work.

Even though distance learning now makes up the largest share of university teaching, Sweden’s Minister for Higher Education and Research Matilda Ernkrans is determined not to repeat the full campus shut-downs which took place in Spring.

“My ambition is to keep education at universities going as long as we can,” she stresses, “because it’s important students get their education and that we keep on educating nurses, police, doctors, engineers, because we need them in society and we need them to fight the pandemic as well.”

But last month, Ernkrans told Radio Sweden students should to “focus on their education not partying” after more than 200 people tested positive for Covid-19 following large student parties.

“Of course it’s tough for them to reduce their social gatherings,” she tells *Varsity*, “but they need to do that because that’s what we need to keep our universities and education going.”

“Younger people in general feel more immortal than older groups,” she adds, stressing the “vast majority” have abided by restrictions, and “it is extremely important that they continue to do so [since] the situation in Sweden is worrying.”

The small Northern European country’s more voluntarist approach meant bars, restaurants, shopping malls and primary schools stayed open in Spring - with no legal lockdown in sight.

“I am quite proud of the Swedish decision to keep elementary schools open,” says Ernkrans. “I think that it’s good for the children and good for society.”

“We don’t have any regulations stating that you have to wear a face mask,” she adds, “but we have other strict regulations that people need to follow and actually did in Spring.”

But in fact, while some pundits held Sweden up as an example of how to balance economic considerations with pandemic-related restrictions, the government was constitutionally prohibited from enforcing legal lockdowns which would violate the right to free movement. But mobile phone data suggests citizens showed similar levels of compliance with work-from-home and travel recommendations to other European countries, where lockdowns were compulsory.

“I must say it’s not, it’s not at all sort of the same society in Sweden as normal. It’s a very, very different society,” insists Ernkrans.

But with over 6,400 deaths and counting, the second wave has hit the country hard. Hospitalisations are sharply on the rise, and its 14-day cumulative number of cases of 616 per 100,000 people is above even that of France and Spain, some of Europe’s worst affected states.

On Sunday night, Prime Minister Stefan Lofven urged Swedes to comply with restrictions in a rare national address, which follows new rules announced limiting gatherings from 50 to 8 people.

But despite all the pandemic-related interruptions, Ernkrans insists this hasn’t prevented her from working towards fulfilling her key policy ambitions for the Ministry since she took office last year.

“Being a social democrat, it’s important for me to make sure higher education is available for the many, not only for those whose parents have been in academia,” she says, arguing this a “tough” issue to resolve given its “deep structural roots” in Swedish society.

She argues the pandemic will inevitably lead to a more precarious job market for graduates but has highlighted the need for healthcare workers, making increasing access to higher education even more crucial now.

“If we can get people to actually ed-



▲ Matilda Ernkrans is a Social Democrat and Sweden’s Minister of Higher Education and Research since 2019 (KRISTIAN POHL)

“*Being a social democrat, it’s important for me to make sure higher education is available for the many*”

ucate themselves through this crisis,” says Ernkrans, “we hopefully can build a stronger society after the pandemic than we had before.”

She is also continuing work on her policies to bolster the protection of free speech and reduce harassment at universities.

“Free speech and research-based knowledge is more important than ever to tackle the pandemic, but also to meet our societal challenges.”

Just like the UK, mental health is a critical issue facing universities in Sweden. A study published last year found rates of depression among young Swedes are the highest among all EU Member States, with 41% of 18-24 year olds ‘at risk’. Ernkrans says this is something the Ministry has been paying attention to this year.

“Distance learning is something that can affect your mental health, of course, so we have actually put a little bit more money into student health facilities, which are present on all campuses, so they can better [support] the students,” she says, “and into student organisations so they can work [more closely with] students.”

“We have done a little bit, but I think we will have to stay focused on this through the pandemic and do even more.”

A tough job market is a concern for Swedish graduates too, especially as unemployment levels soar to 10% by the start of 2021, according to some estimates. Ernkrans says the Ministry has poured funds into new up-skilling courses this summer as an alternative for young people unable to find a job.

“We’re also building more opportunities for master’s degrees,” she says. “This is a way to sort of hibernate dur-

ing the crisis and [then] hopefully you’re stronger when we’re out of this. But on the other hand courses and education can give you a chance to get another job on the labour market.”

When asked whether countries should reconsider tuition fees during the pandemic - a topic that has recently stirred controversy in the UK - Ernkrans says it is “difficult to compare” countries due to their “different preconditions”.

But she admits Sweden, with its “very robust student financial system”, plans to keep its tuition free. The Ministry has also introduced ways to “pause” or pay less in repayments if graduates’ expected income levels end up being lower due to the pandemic.

Sweden also gives out numerous generous grants to students. Ernkrans stresses that if illness or other coronavirus-related disruptions hinder students’ work, they “don’t have to be worried” about not receiving their grants this year.

Ultimately, she says, student loans in Sweden are designed based on “possibility” of repayment, not to be “a burden”.

As for her thoughts on whether the pandemic will change anything for good in Swedish higher education, Ernkrans argues new steps such as accelerated digitalisation of education represent “a step towards something new”.

“I think that at universities, as in society at large, it will be difficult and not even desirable to go back to how we did things before.”

Sweden gave more people the opportunity to study at university this year in professions such as medicine, nursing and teaching. “Hopefully,” quips Ernkrans “this will in a few years time have a positive effect on our welfare.”



▲ Sweden’s Parliament House in Stockholm, home to its national legislature, the Riksdag (PXHERE)

Illustration by
Alisa Santikarn

Vulture.

► **LIFESTYLE**

TAKE-OUT REVIEW: AROMI • 21

► **MUSIC**

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BLUES • 22

► **THEATRE**

THE POWER OF MUSICAL THEATRE • 23

► **FASHION**

60'S MOD CULTURE • 24

► **FILM&TV**

CHRISTMAS IN THE CARIBBEAN • 28

Lifestyle

Editing down under

Whilst editing Lifestyle articles remotely from Australia, **David Quan** explores how he balanced his role in Varsity with the pressures of an unusual Cambridge term, hoping to encourage others to apply to the role



▲ "Breathing the hot and dry heat of the scorching 'Straya' sun", David's first term at Cambridge has been highly unique experience (DAVID QUAN)

Breathing the hot and dry heat under the scorching 'Straya' sun, just 10 000 miles away from the Varsity office, I find myself, perhaps both physically and metaphorically beyond my comfort zone, serving as one of the three Editors for the Lifestyle Section. From the initial ironies, confusions, and adjustments, to the ensuing collaboration, learning, and interactions, taking on this responsibility as a fresher in the land down under has been one tremendous blessing. As this three-month-long journey soon concludes, I can't help but contemplate both the personal moments of embarrassments and gratitude, and also the collective sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. I hope that these reflections and memories not only provide an insight into the otherwise ambiguous editing process, but also, most importantly, encourage more people – including hesitant yet curious freshers – to also apply to become a Lifestyle Editor!

“
I remember finding the extraordinary folder of documents, handbooks, and guides to be both informative and overwhelming
”

The Indecision: To apply or not to apply?

Choosing extracurricular commitments can be complicated when there are so many activities available – there's always that familiar, oppressive fear that no matter which society

you sign up to, you'll be missing out on a better opportunity elsewhere. On the one hand, my motivation to join Varsity was inspired by a curiosity and desire to learn from different people and to get involved with the Cambridge community. Applying was an obvious decision! On the other hand, I doubted my qualifications. This worry was only amplified when the application form demanded lengthy 'critiques' of the respective Varsity sections and individual articles. I had no idea what a critique entailed. I was very discouraged, as I had never been involved in previous editions and lacked an understanding of even the basic conventions of the newspaper. However, I was lucky that the Editor-In-Chief Rich Bartlett (who also happens to be an Aussie) took the time to selflessly guide me through the editing process. His encouragement and kindness was the tipping point for me to apply.

The Passive Start: Learning and Doubts

Eventually securing the role was exciting yet daunting; upon reflection, my passive start, for both valid and 'my-fault' reasons, was disappointing but memorable.

I remember finding the extraordinary folder of documents, handbooks, and guides to be both informative and overwhelming. Despite experiencing moments of paralysis – not quite knowing how to effectively digest and apply the hundreds of pages of information, whilst simultaneously packing for the then-exciting, now-cancelled overseas move to Cambridge – I marvelled at the foundations and structures that have been established by the previous student contributors.

Moreover, the Senior Editors' expertise, clarity, and vision demonstrated in the Zoom welcome meetings were inspiring and impressive. They actively shared their experiences either writing, editing, or working for Varsity in previous terms – in contrast, I had not yet even gained access to

my Cambridge email and account logins! Surely, I reasoned, it would be most appropriate for a fresher like me to just listen and learn. That was, of course, not in itself a decision to regret: each Facebook message, Zoom call, Slack comment, Teams notification, and email incrementally informed me of the traditions, terminologies, and traits that define Varsity.

The problem, however, was that only passively absorbing information without having the courage to brainstorm and propose ideas can undermine the effectiveness of what is necessary for the role. For example, my first couple of emails to writers requesting vital changes featured various disclaimers that, ironically and practically, invalidated my highlighted edits and comments. I would tell writers that I was a fresher, that I was studying from Australia, that I had never actually been to Cambridge, much less written for Varsity myself before. While I was confident in my stylistic and grammatical suggestions, the writers' works were immensely impressive, so I worried about giving the false impression of discrediting their efforts. Why would a talented first-class English finalist who is writing her 30th article for Varsity accept detailed feedback from a fresher, just because he holds an 'Editor' title?

Gaining Confidence: Appreciating the Interactions

Eventually, I came to embrace the role and its freedom. From communicating ideas on Slack and Teams, vetting columnist and staff writer applications, and promoting our innovative AskVulture initiative, to conversing with writers, searching for accessible illustrations, and posting and designing weekly commissions for the Facebook groups, my engagement blossomed. Finally, I felt like a somewhat productive member who was not burdening

or slowing down the team!

What changed was more my attitude, as opposed to any rapid transformation in ability. I realised that what matters most is not about being right or wrong or better; instead, the ultimate measure of an Editor concerns the courage to appreciate an active dialogue. With this mindset, I become more encouraged to suggest thoughts even to those who I would consider far better than me as writers and communicators; raising feedback and challenging choices does not invalidate the writers' creativity, but actually enables them an opportunity to argue and reconsider their presentation. Many writers even expressed their appreciation. This mutual open-mindedness for one another's perspectives in the polishing process towards publishing has been one of Varsity's most enjoyable and enriching features. I am so thankful for the talented writers, who anyone would no doubt enjoy interacting with in an editing capacity in the future!

“

Choosing extracurricular commitments can be complicated when there are so many activities available- hopefully my reflections on the role of Lifestyle Editor encourage more freshers to get involved with Varsity!

”

Virtual Teamwork

The only genuine disappointment this term is not being able to meet and work with the Varsity team in person, which, dare I say, truly sucked! However, working virtually did encourage flexibility. When I learnt that I will be studying remotely just a few days before term, the other members did not just give up or laugh at the irony of a Lifestyle Editor not even living the Cambridge lifestyle. Instead, they offered support, committing themselves to adapt to the circumstances. When glitches in the uploading processes puzzled me, Vulture Editor Georgina Buckle almost always responded instantaneously to resolve the problem, even during odd hours. When one of us had a hectic week with multiple essay deadlines, or missed out on certain instructions or changes, we tried our best to step up for one another.

The Senior Lifestyle Editors Miranda and Tiffany, in my view, most successfully epitomised this selfless team-first attitude; I am very grateful for how they meticulously guided me throughout the term, and willingly accepted the additional responsibility of managing all the in-person behind-the-scenes layout planning for the physical print editions.

In retrospect, notwithstanding the 10.5 hours' time zone difference, the journey has been fun. As hoped for, I learnt a lot! . Hopefully, my reflections on the peaks and troughs of my first term with Varsity shed some light on how acting as a Lifestyle Editor offers an enriching lifestyle in itself.

Seriously, when applications open, why would you not apply?

Take-out review: Aromi

Lifestyle's restaurant reviewer **Lottie Reeder** adapts to COVID-19 circumstances and recommends her favourite take-out meals

This is going to be more of a love letter than a review. Geographically, I am as close as I could possibly be to Aromi (Corpus is, in fact, on the same street) and I have tried the vast majority of what it has to offer, including the gelato flavours. My first birthday of first year was celebrated in Aromi; it became a haven in the trials of second year and was my first post-lockdown meal out. On the last day before the new lockdown, we went to Aromi.

Whilst I'm sure the vast majority of Cambridge students have visited one of Aromi's three fantastic cafes, my review comes alongside new rules and a new way of life. With this, we have shifted into the takeaway realm, a still thriving sector and something to brighten the next four weeks with your household. There has never been a better time to recommend Aromi's not one, but two, delivery services.

If you're not in the mood for a takeaway from the

store, if you use *foodstuffcambs* (my go to service for all of the Cambridge independents), you can have all of the classics cycled to your plodge. Aromi's cafe has two main options: their pizzas and their

focaccia sandwiches. Their sourdough focaccia is exceptional, fermented for

48 hours, which gives it an original texture. They

offer a variety of flavours, but I have

narrowed down my favourite to their

pancetta focaccia. The

balance of sweet peppers and

salty pancetta is mouth-watering.

When it comes to dolci - that's the

Italian for dessert - most flock to the cannoli.

My preference, however, is the

chocolate and pistachio biscotti (vegan) or the

torta pistachio. It shocks me to think back to a time

where I didn't rate pistachio; anyone who tries to

deny that pistachio is the best flavour will surely be swayed by Aromi's gelato.

“

Whether it's an essay crisis or a celebration, I'll probably be in the queue that extends along Benet St.

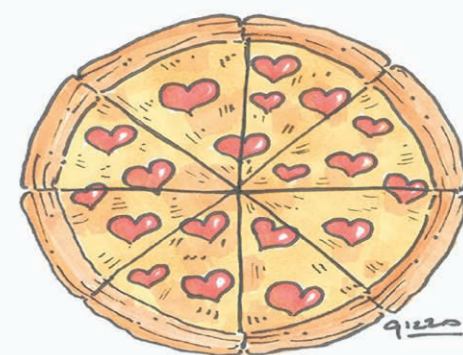
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For those of you, who, like me, are already old fans of the standard menu, Aromi has also launched a new service via Deliveroo. This service offers whole pizzas in the classic Aromi flavours, alongside smaller focaccias and sweet pizzas. This has opened up a whole new opportunity for Aromi fans like myself. Where the Aromi classics may only satisfy your appetite at lunch, the new Aromi pizzas are the perfect size for dinner. My choice was the Sicilian classic Caponata pizza, which takes the Aubergine agrodolce stew to a new level. I also tried their olive

focaccia which lived up to my high expectations. On the menu, there's even a pistachio spread pizza, as well as a Nutella pizza which will be on my next order.

Ultimately, when it comes to authentic Italian cuisine, Aromi is the front runner. Aromi began as Caffè Cipriani in Sicily in 1957 and came to Cambridge in 2013. For me, it has become a highlight among the Cambridge cafes and whether it's an essay crisis or a celebration, I'll probably be in the

◀ **Aromi's famous artisan coffee, back in pre-Covid times.** (LOTTIE REEDER)

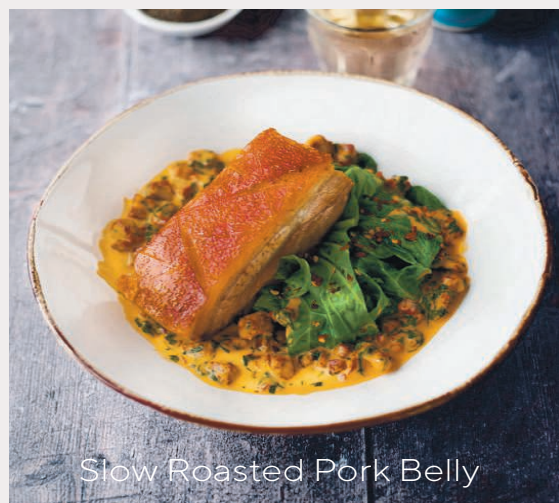


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Music

To the Delta Backwards: A brief history of the blues

Olivia Robinson describes the development of blues music and its global influence

Vulture's BLUES PLAYLIST



We hope you're doing well and enjoying the last few weeks! Grab a cup of tea and listen to these tunes to get you through the end of term!

for that festive feeling...

Blues for Christmas
John Lee Hooker

for the household celebration...

Rip It Up
Little Richard

for the last minute rush...

Nobody's Fault But Mine
Sister Rosetta Tharpe

for that last cycle back...

Didn't it rain
Sister Rosetta Tharpe

when your supervisor wants the final essay...

You Can't Rule Me
Lucinda Williams

for that end of term mood...

Roll Over Beethoven
The Beatles



I came to the blues backwards. As a child, I had the privilege of being played a few John Lee Hooker numbers, but if you asked me about blues more than five years ago, I probably wouldn't be able to tell you much beyond what you get taught in GCSE history. So, what do I mean by approaching the genre backwards? I came to blues through rock'n'roll, and part of what motivated me to get to know blues music was hearing people like Keith Richards talk about Muddy Waters in a tone usually reserved for religious icons. Five years down the line, my blues obsession is alive and well, hence my enthusiasm to put across a conception of how the blues developed and outline some of its key figures, whilst touching on its global outreach.

Development

Both in the terms of its rhythmic and lyrical patterns of call and response, blues music can be traced back to various forms of West African music, and these influences were brought to America through the slave trade. These influences later combined with African American work songs and spirituals that led to the development of blues in the American South. One of the earliest known styles of blues is Delta blues, played by artists around the Mississippi Delta, often involving the use of harmonica and slide guitar. Important artists in this movement include Geeshie Wiley, Son House, and perhaps most famously Robert Johnson. Although what is probably most famous about Robert Johnson is not so much his music, but the legend that he sold his soul to the devil in exchange for a suspiciously quick acquisition of the ability to play the guitar.

Chicago Blues

Delta blues then blended into Chicago blues, as many Southern African Americans left places like Mississippi to escape both extreme poverty and racial discrimination and move to places like Chicago, where the blues sound developed through the use of the electric guitar. One of the first blues players to go electric was T-Bone Walker, who can also lay claim to being the first person to play electric guitar with his teeth. Also important

Muddy Waters' voice sounds like it should have its own atmospheric field

were Buddy Guy and his resident harmonica player Junior Wells, as well as Muddy Waters. Known fittingly as the King of Chicago Blues, Muddy Waters is arguably the most influential of these Chicago blues players, both in terms of his fantastic songwriting and performing abilities. He was also responsible for getting Chuck Berry his first record deal, and his voice sounds like it should have its own atmospheric field.



▲ARTEM BRYZGALOV

"The blues had a baby...and they named it Rock and Roll"

– Muddy Waters

The development of blues into rock'n'roll can be exemplified through artists like Bo Diddley and Sister Rosetta Tharpe. If you've never heard of Bo Diddley, it is pretty likely that you've heard the distinctive rhythm he deployed: 'shave and a haircut, two bits', a

"Sister Rosetta Tharpe blended blues and gospel strains in her vocal style"

rhythm that draws heavily on Afro-Cuban influences, is now widely used in rock, pop and hip-hop music. Another important musician in the development from blues to rock is Sister Rosetta Tharpe, who is now unjustifiably overlooked in many accounts of this transition. The Godmother of Rock and Roll, Sister Rosetta Tharpe blended blues and gospel strains in her vocal style and played a huge influence on more well-known rock pioneers Little Richard and Chuck Berry. Just look up her performance of 'Didn't It Rain' or 'Up Above My Head' and you'll get why she was so brilliant and influential. If this wasn't enough, she was also a fantastic guitar player, and reportedly one of the first to use heavy distortion on her electric guitar (a Gibson SG for any guitar nerds), which perhaps contributed to Jimi Hendrix's wish to "play like Rosetta".

Ramblin' Blues

It is impossible to overstate the huge influence blues music has had on the world and its music: from Britain to Iran, blues has influenced an extremely diverse list of artists. In Europe, 'American Folk Blues Festival' tours brought blues artists like Sister Rosetta Tharpe, John Lee Hooker, and Muddy Waters to Britain. One stop on this tour in 1962 was a performance in Manchester (featuring T-Bone Walker) and turned out to be a legendary event in the development of British rock'n'roll. Think of any of the most influential bands of 1960s and '70s Britain, and it's likely at least one member attended one of these festivals. Moving away from Europe, Malian bands (e.g. Tinariwen) cite artists like Jimi Hendrix as an influence and combine these American blues influences with musical traditions of the Tuareg people of the Sahara. There have also been amazing collaborations between American blues artists, like Taj Mahal and Malian kora player Toumani Diabaté, as well as recent collaboration between Mo Rodgers

I loved rock'n'roll – but then we found the blues

and Baba Sissoko in an album entitled *Griot Blues*. Blues music has equally touched many Iranian artists including Rana Farhan, who combines blues with classic Persian poetry in an excellent album *I Return*.

Though I've described the history behind blues' music, my guess is that the genre will continue to provide a never-ending source of passion and inspiration for musicians all over the globe. To reference once again that apparently immortal philosopher Keith Richards: "I loved rock'n'roll – but then we found the blues".

Theatre

The Power of Musical Theatre

Columnist **Isabel Burns** defends the effect of this too often overlooked theatrical form

Musical Theatre undoubtedly divides opinion. Recently, my housemate and I debated our opinions on the different versions of *Les Misérables*. She likes the TV version (the one with no singing or Aron Tveit), which I find incomprehensible. While we were talking, she made a comment that encapsulated most peoples' problem with musicals: 'why are they singing all the time? People don't do that in real life.' Well, no, they don't. But my response to this is always 'wouldn't everything be more fun if they did?'

It's difficult to write about theatre at the moment. Live performances are on hold due to the current national restrictions, and streamed theatre has lost some of the momentum it had during the first lockdown. Capturing the effects of musical theatre in a recording has always had its limitations anyway, as there are so many challenges in editing a film of an on-stage performance. There is so much to be encapsulated in a live stream, for instance, the quality of the music and the special effects. And then there are the problems posed by editing; balancing the presence of the chorus with the ultimate centrality of the main actors... the issues are endless.

*These songs have power,
they encourage empathy;
they're loud enough,
emotional enough, that
they refuse to be ignored*

Despite this, during my two weeks of isolation I have found the escapism offered by musical theatre's searing solos, cheerful group numbers, and all absorbing sentiment impossible to match. As a child, I first came to musical theatre through the Original Cast Recordings of shows I'd never seen - I would listen to them and fill in the gaps, imagining both the staging and the plot. Finding myself (again) in lockdown, and unable to see any theatre live, I am rediscovering these albums. With headphones on and the volume high, I have journeyed deep to the underworld (*Hadestown*), danced around my room with cheerful orphans (*Annie* and *Newsies*) and, on the days when my lockdown frustration peaked, helped JD kill the dinosaurs (*Heathers*).

None of these shows are realistic (if you want gritty drama, go to Netflix). But realism isn't why people watch musical theatre. The aim of all theatre is not to exactly mimic life; we're all aware, as we sit there watching the stage, that this isn't what the world looks like. But when reality looks like it does in



▲ ILLUSTRATION FOR VARSITY BY ELLIE ETCHES

2020, why would you want to see it as well as having to live it? Why wouldn't you occasionally embrace the absurdly theatrical?

There is sometimes a perception that musicals are shallow. This is partly snobbery; West End musicals, although just as expensive (and occasionally more so) than their music-less counterparts, are a great deal more popular than other forms of theatre. The perception is also partly down to a belief that the key elements of 'the musical' obscure artistic truth; that all the singing, dancing and flying through the wings somehow makes these shows less emotionally genuine. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Who could fail to be moved by Eliza Hamilton, cradling her son's lifeless body whilst realising her husband is to blame? What better testament is there to the pain

of lost innocence than Fontane's 'he took my childhood in his stride, but he was gone when morning came'. It is no coincidence that pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong used 'Do You Hear the People Sing?' to encapsulate the refusal of youth to bow to tyranny. These songs have power, they encourage empathy; they're loud enough,

*Musicals take what
everyone feels - those
feelings we hide when
we shrug and go 'I'm
fine'*

emotional enough, that they refuse to be ignored. This intensity is their greatest strength. Musicals take what everyone feels - those feelings we hide when we shrug and go 'I'm fine', or mutter 'he doesn't like me like that', or write angry diary entries and WhatsApp messages. They take these underplayed but universal emotions and blow them wide open. The highest highs and lowest lows of human experience are expressed, not just through the actors' performance, but also through music and dance, and this combination gives musicals an unparalleled emotional intensity.

I know not everyone can be convinced to back team 'Musical Theatre'. For many they're just a bit much (too much 'performativity' for some to find it engaging or entertaining). But, equally, I know I'm not alone in my love of the musical. And if there was ever a time to surrender to the music, turn up the volume and dust off those Old Cast Recordings (or at least rescue them from the bottom of your Spotify playlists) then surely it's now.

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Fashion

Music, miniskirts, and motorbikes: '60s mod culture

Fashion Editor **Lara Zand** maps the mass appeal of mod culture, which epitomised the Swinging Sixties in Britain and saw fashion, music, and art intersect



▲ CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: INSTAGRAM / BESTDRESSED; INSTAGRAM / RETROFASHIONPHOTOGRAPHY; INSTAGRAM / MUSIC_ALBUM_ REVIEWS; INSTAGRAM / HUNGONYOUBOUTIQUE

Twiggy, posing in a jersey dress, coloured tights and brogues, has come to be the face of women's fashion in the 1960s. And not without good reason: if there was a womenswear trend, Twiggy was probably photographed wearing it. But the shortening of hemlines, the cropping of bobs and the advent of The Mini Skirt are constituent parts of a much bigger movement: mod.

The mod subculture surfaced in the late 1950s. The name itself is an abbreviation of 'modernist', owing to the original mods' penchant for modern jazz. Jeff Noon, author of *The Modernists*, explains that the movement sprung from a lifestyle created by a community of working-class men in post-war London, who drew inspiration from cultural revolutions taking place in Europe: namely Italian neorealist cinema and the existentialist movement in France. Club culture, music, fashion and art came together to birth a movement defined by youthful hedonism and rebellion. By the mid-1960s it had swept the whole country, providing an escape from a decade of gloom following World War II in Britain.

The original mods listened to Miles Davis and Charlie Parker, but the movement is best remembered for its association with the 1960s' pop-rock bands. Groups like The Kinks, The Beatles and The Rolling Stones not only boasted big followings among the mods, but themselves adopted a mod look in line with the cultural revolution around

them: the 'Beatle boots' became a 1960s menswear staple. Bands like Small Faces and The Who emerged almost directly out of the movement, with Pete Townshend of The Who famously declaring: "We stand for pop-art clothes, pop-art music, and pop-art behaviour." Pop art, then, was in its heyday: at once inspired by artists like Warhol and Lichtenstein across the pond, but equally distinct as a British movement. Artists like Eduardo Paolozzi, Richard Hamilton and Peter Blake came to prominence; the latter designed several album covers for The Who, as well as the cover of The Beatles' 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band'.

“
A movement defined by
youthful hedonism and
rebellion
”

By the late 1950s, Britain was starting to see a revived interest in clothes and a return to the high street. Carnaby Street and King's Road in London became the hubs for trendy, up-and-coming boutiques catering to the young and hip. For the first time, the brands-to-know were those selling

relatively affordable clothing that appealed to the masses, a world apart from the proudly exclusive realm of haute couture. Mod menswear involved sharp tailoring, US-Army style parkas, Beatle boots, French Nouvelle Vague-inspired hair styles and an Italian-made motorbike to finish the look (a Vespa or Lambretta, preferably). John Stephen, known then as the 'King of Carnaby Street', was the go-to choice for menswear, boasting a client list of the era's biggest bands; he famously dressed The Kinks, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and The Bee Gees. He was known for his flamboyant and daring designs: coloured pinstripe and plaid suits in particular.

At the end of the 1950s, mod womenswear was no different. The style was androgynous, embracing the movement towards sharp tailoring and adapting men's blazers and suits. This was before the arrival of Mary Quant on the scene. Often credited with popularising the miniskirt, the British designer's first Ginger Group collection was mass-produced in 1963 and led to women of all social strata flooding her King's Road boutique. Her staples were the sleeveless shift dress, the tunic, the rib-knit sweater and brightly coloured tights; she had a penchant for jersey fabric, Peter Pan collars and PVC. And her brand wasn't all hotpants and miniskirts; she continued to challenge the traditional notions of 'womenswear' with collections full of tailored trousers, dungarees and breeches. Her 'Chelsea look' was more of a lifestyle - brought into vogue by Twiggy and other British 'It' Girls, Quant famously claimed that 'the fashionable woman wears clothes, the clothes

don't wear her.'

Some of her styles had already been pioneered in France by haute couture designer André Courrèges, the 'inventor' of the miniskirt, who also brought Go-Go boots à la mode and, like Quant, worked with PVC, geometric prints and primary colours. But Quant's achievement went further; she democratised the decade's fashion, and her clothes would represent every woman.

“
A world apart from the
proudly exclusive realm of
haute couture
”

The influence of the mod subculture on fashion is ever-present today, in the very existence of items like parkas, knee-high boots, PVC outerwear or shift dresses on our high streets. It was a movement that stopped looking to the runways, to the Diors and Chaneels of the day, and started creating for itself, to meet the demands of the era's young, dynamic consumer. That was mod's biggest sartorial triumph.

A very short history of fur in fashion

Claire Shenfield explores changing attitudes towards fashion's most controversial material, finding hope in the industry's recent response



▲ TWITTER / BBMCONCEPTS

Having said that up to 17 million mink would have to be culled in Denmark in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Danish government has now decided that their order for a cull was not lawful. Mink farms there have been infected with the disease from farm workers, and there are concerns that the infected population of mink could make a future vaccine less effective for humans.

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If we are asking why it's abhorrent to cull these animals, might we finally be starting to ask why the industry exists in the first place?

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After seeing pictures of the bodies of hundreds of mink across news channels and social media, a sense of disgust and outrage builds, as does at any

sight of mass death. But this disgust is misplaced. As many have pointed out, these animals would have been killed anyway - not for the good of public health, but for the noble cause of high fashion - it is harvest season for mink fur. If we are asking why it is abhorrent to cull these animals, might we finally be starting to ask why this industry still exists in the first place?

The only logical conclusion is that it is the loss of the fur (and the revenue it represents) that is being mourned, a material that has a worth that has outgrown that of the life of its original owner. As with so many materials, fur has created its wealth through association with the upper classes.

This goes back to when 'sumptuary laws' were introduced in England which dictated which social class could wear which animals' fur until well into the 17th century. The softer, more beautiful animals' fur, like mink, was reserved to be worn by those at the very top of the hierarchy.

Fur has always been a particularly useful material, due to its warmth and durability, but mink fur in particular is intrinsically entangled with aesthetics. A mink is a very small animal, it is not economically advantageous to make coats out of multiple animals which require high quality care to breed and produce a fur which needs much maintenance.

Mink fur has always been a status symbol, something which represents excess, luxury and wealth, all things which have been the most desir-

able traits of pieces of high fashion since anyone can remember.

Fur in general first gained its association with femininity through the popularisation of mink. It doesn't take a huge leap to conclude that this is ingrained in the uselessness of the stuff - what could be more feminine than something beautiful, cruel and completely impractical? Women wore mink to perform this femininity, just as people wear fur because of a fascination with status and, by extension, a performance of class.

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What could be more feminine than something beautiful, cruel, and completely impractical?

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Fashion understands that performance is almost always fun, and fun is almost always good, but this fun at the sake of cruelty should be hard to justify. Fortunately, as with most things, it is thanks to a new generation of women and fashion lovers that

it now is.

In a world where Women Don't Owe You Pretty and the most unique clothing is a result of charity shopping and Depop hunting, fur garments retain their associations, but those associations aren't fashionable anymore. What was once luxury could now be considered bourgeois, and what used to be the epitome of femininity is now obsolete, as the wonderful opportunities that breaking down clothing binaries provides are being exploited and explored in the best ways.

If the fur industry rests on the idea that the aesthetics that fur garments provide are worth more than the cost of the animal cruelty involved to make them, then it hasn't got long left to exploit those who still literally buy into this.

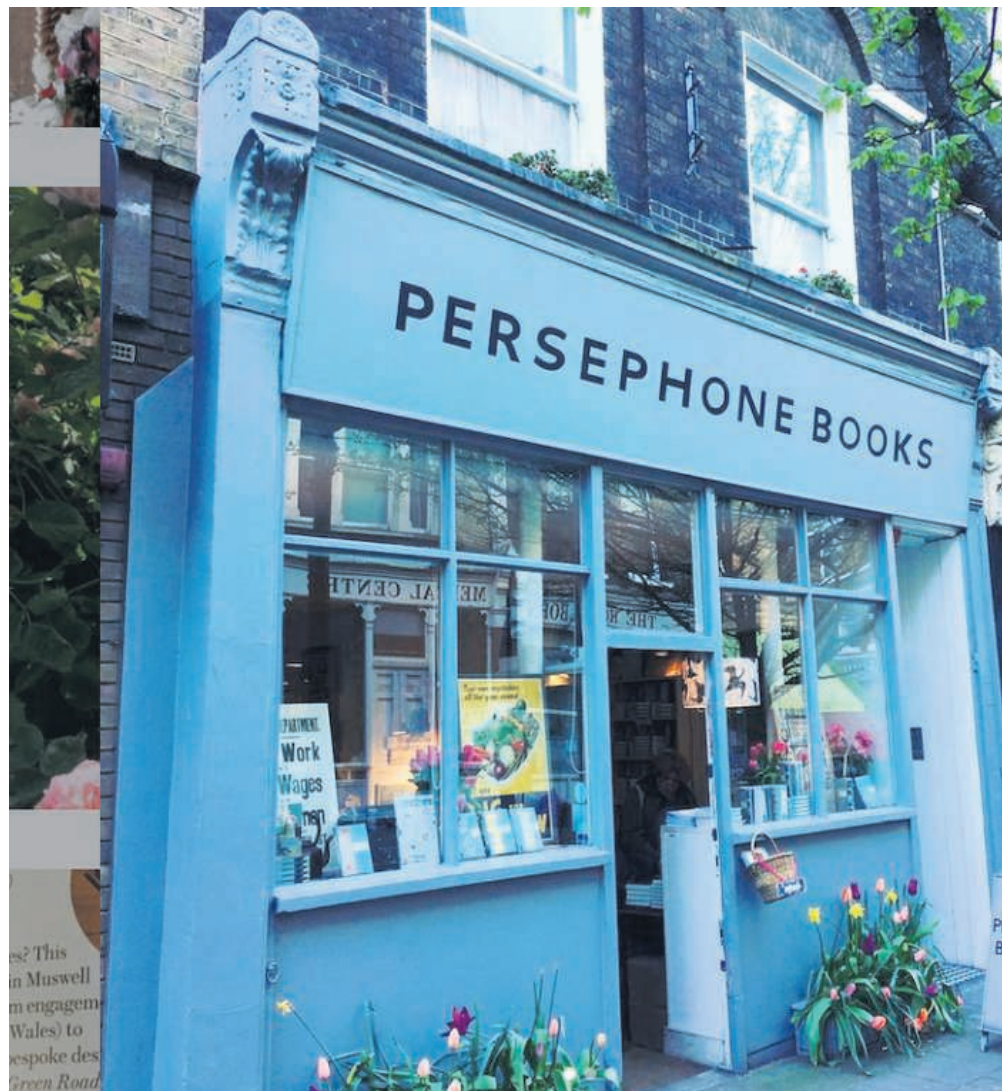
The old guard of those who believe in the absolute ultimate of aesthetics is dying out, even the biggest fashion houses have internalised the idea that fashion must be answerable to the inequalities and structures that make up the modern world. Now, even the aesthetic element of fur has lost its prestige.

To perpetuate class inequality by performing status is no longer fashionable, to do so at the expense of cruelty to an animal is abhorrent, and this is not a radical viewpoint anymore. Justification for the fur industry is on its last, fragile legs, and that's what Denmark should be taking away from this tragic event.

Arts

Persephone's books: the power of publishing

Arts Editor, **Esmee Wright**, interviews the creator of Persephone Books, Nicola Beaman, and discusses using publishing to project women's voices



▲ The pandemic might be keeping us from the store, but Persephone Books are still here to provide you with all the lockdown reads you could possibly want (PERSEPHONE BOOKS//INSTAGRAM)

Somehow, despite going to an all women's college, the first time I heard of Persephone Books was at a talk at St Edmunds. Currently situated in Lamb's Conduit Street, London, the publishing house was founded by Nicola Beaman, as she realised that the narrow – and male-heavy – reading lists she had had while reading English at Newnham simply did not represent the true breadth of English literature. Twenty two years and one hundred and thirty nine titles later, it would be difficult to say that she was proved wrong. I spoke to Beaman over the phone a few days after the event, and we discussed the importance of a company like Persephone in the current climate, where hashtags like #publishingpaidme and #workinpublishing are revealing the biases – and opportunities – in the world of book production.

Persephone Books has a very specific focus – not just writing by women, but books focused on the world of women, particularly at the beginning of the twentieth century; for Beaman, whether it was a growing access to education or the experience of returning to

the home, and relative inactivity after being so vital in the war effort, the interwar years were an “extraordinary period for women's writing.” She has even written a book about

Despite the extra distance, Persephone Books seem to have built a very strong group of readers around them, and not just because of their incredibly Instagram-able shopfront.

it, available alongside the writers she admires so much at Persephone Books. Yet while some might expect this specificity to be constricting, for Beaman it provides a whole world of opportunity. They even publish a few books by men, so long as they are still writing on the experience of the domestic, in a way that is relevant to the experience of being a woman. E.M. Forster is Beaman's favourite writer: as she says “We are not obsessed with women [exclusively], but we are obsessed with the domestic, with what you might call women's issues, and in that way writers like Forster write about them very much.”

And it isn't a “cozy little reading group” either. Although she would describe her books as carefully “middle-brow”, she refutes the idea that this means the shop is anything like the “cozy, teatime, holding my tea cup with my little finger crooked” sort of femininity. To Beaman, a focus on the domestic does not preclude the possibility of adventure for the protagonists, nor that their readers are exclusively stay-at-home mothers: as she says, the grey cover is simply a promise to each reader that the book within will be a quality read, however that reading may fit into your schedule.

For Persephone Books, though bringing people entertainment through the words of ‘forgotten’ writers is their main aim, lifting these writers out of their undeserved obscurity is also vitally important. Beaman expresses her belief that “everything starts from academics”. In the world of literature, they are the ones who chose the canon, and if they could get themselves out of the “rut” they have been in for years, people might change their opinion towards female writers on a meaningful level. Alas, while things have improved from Beaman's time at university, when you were not even allowed to study Virginia Woolf, there remains a sad lack of people looking to do their PhD on Dorothy Whipple. At the University of Cambridge, reading-lists remain male-dominated; as a medievalist, I somehow have more women on my reading lists than many of my friends studying the 20th century, something which Beaman finds fascinating.

Beaman makes no bones about how physically demanding running a bookshop can be. As she says “people think we sit around discussing which endpaper to choose or which book we're going to do in 2 years time, that we have editorial meetings discussing this, that and the other. The truth is most of the time we are discussing how to fix the franking machine and which type of padded envelope to use.” And in lockdown, the issue of envelopes has only become more important for the company which started as a mail-order business. When we spoke, Persephone had received 100 new orders in a day, quite a lot for a shop with two members of staff present at any one time. Despite the extra distance, Persephone Books seem to have built a very

strong group of readers around them, and not just because of their incredibly Instagram-able shopfront. As Beaman says, although it had never really been intentional, they have built a good community thanks to the way people identified with their writers and the values that they held – for “the books are really about values”. She uses the example of Dorothy Whipple, who “is not political in the way we normally mean, but she says so much about values, and the importance of goodness and kindness,” that people feel drawn in in a truly pleasant way.

And though she does say a few times that they feel they ought to be doing more online content in these innovative days (she mentions the shop Instagram and Twitter, as well as the power of podcasting several times), the shop's online presence, with daily posts and regular letters, feels very comforting in

Alas, while things have improved from Beaman's time at university...there remains a sad lack of people looking to do their PhD on Dorothy Whipple.

these tumultuous times. Indeed, the interview ends because the new puppy, whose arrival you can keep up with in the shop's monthly letter, needs a bath; despite the lockdown, you can tell that there is still plenty happening at Persephone Books to keep everyone entertained.



▲ The new shop puppy even has a literary ancestry, with a distant relative once belonging to the celebrated Scottish writer Jane Carlyle (THE PERSEPHONE LETTER)

The art that isn't there...

In her third column, **Piper Whitehead** looks at the art that you just can't look at

You might be forgiven, in viewing the many, many rooms of the National Gallery or the Tate Modern, in thinking that public galleries (and private collections belonging to the kind of people who like to let us look at their stuff) have captured pretty much all the important things that have happened in art history. Yet, a lot of what informs our understanding of art in the past is missing.

Sometimes we know what happened to it. Art is often the victim of accidents as localised as a botched restoration or as wide-ranging as war. Sometimes it is deliberately destroyed. Often, it's simply lost to time through carelessness or decay. After all, most of us won't be hanging onto posters of One Direction, or postcards from our gran because we're thinking about how future art historians will need a few good examples of 21st century ephemeral visual culture. We could hardly have expected people from hundreds of years ago to do the same. A lot of things simply aren't seen as important enough to keep. But what's more, many artworks that were considered important or valuable even back in the day aren't in galleries or in private collections with any kind of public access. They haven't been destroyed, at least not to our knowledge. They're simply gone, and we don't know where they are. This is, the art that isn't there.

Of course, there's undoubtedly someone, living or dead, who knows where each artwork has gone. But even hugely significant works can be deadly difficult to keep track of. Take Duccio's *Maesta* from 1308. Shiny wooden altarpieces taller than a human being are difficult to lose, unless of course you're a person in the 18th century and you decide to cut it up and sell the pieces. A lot of parts ended up in galleries. But not all. Like missing people, someone will know where they are, even if they don't know what they're looking at. But there's no guarantee that they'll make their way back into the public eye.

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In trying to understand art of the past, our story will always be incomplete, because of the actions of a few

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Many, many paintings have been victims of an enterprising person taking a look at them and thinking they would fit perfectly somewhere - if they were just a little bit smaller.

For something closer to home, you can visit El Greco's St John the Evangelist in the Fitzwilliam museum, but he's one hand short of the full (or half length) saint. This was not accidental. In the words of 2020's most celebrated art historian, Hannah Gadsby, 'That was a decision!'

Art also leaves us when someone decides to "liberate" it from a gallery. The largest art theft of all time was from the Isabella Gardner Museum in 1990 - A curious event for many reasons, not least because the thieves ignored some of the most valuable paintings in the museum in favour of admittedly still very valuable Rembrandts and a Vermeer. Maybe they were just fans of Dutch art? So, the art is stolen. But where does it go?

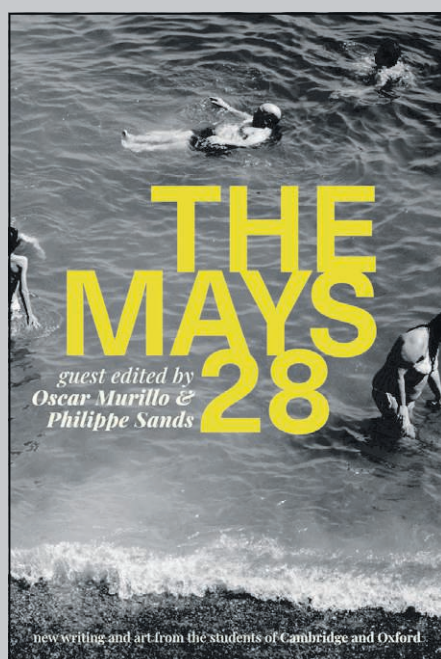
Suspicion in this case has fallen on various Boston gangs, who may have intended to use it to negotiate with the police for release of their members from prison. After all, who can actually display stolen art? How do you profit from such a venture? You can't just sell the Rembrandt you nicked on the open market, so the work loses value as soon as you take it, unless you're lucky enough to find an interested oligarch or mafia boss. Artworks are clearly different from most things you might steal, in that most of them are valued for being one-of-a-kind, or for being by a specific artist. In other words, they're only worth anything

because they are recognisably themselves.

According to the FBI, a lot of art thieves are just that stupid. They suddenly find themselves in a situation where the only ones who'll buy the art are the people who they stole it from in the first place. The Isabella Gardner put up a hefty reward, but it is still much less than the actual value of the works. The only safe thing to do then is keep it. So, the mafia ends up with pretty stellar art collections, almost by accident.

But it's not just stolen art that disappears from public consciousness. Leonardo Da Vinci's *Salvator Mundi* became the most expensive painting ever sold in 2017, and its current location is unknown. Best bet is that it is on the yacht of the crown prince of Saudi Arabia. Or in Switzerland somewhere. We have some guesses about where the *Salvator Mundi* is, but we might never see it again. The reality is a lot of artwork bought by big investors end up in warehouses. There they can appreciate in value without the burden of being appreciated. So much of the art in this world is divided, lost, stolen, or simply kept away. It's important to remember that in trying to understand art of the past, our story will always be incomplete, because of the actions of a few. We can only do the best we can with what is left to us.

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Film & TV

Christmas in the Caribbean

Film and TV editor, **Alexandra Jarvis**, reflects on the “poetic cinema” of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* trilogy, and why this is exactly what we need in these uncertain times

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN SPOILERS

Faced with the uncertainty of when we’re heading home, what form the Christmas holidays are exactly going to take in this time of a pandemic, and a bleak possibility of a third lockdown when we return, I was trying to think about what I could look forward to about going home, besides seeing my dogs, when my prospects of staying sane seem better here. I thought of what films I could watch to get me through, and I immediately thought of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* trilogy – then, in order to procrastinate some more, I began to unpick exactly what it was that draws me time and again back to these films.

It used to be a tradition in our house that my mum would often go and visit my grandma on a Friday and stay the night, leaving my dad to look after me, and my younger brother, and sister. This meant only one thing: a film, watched late into the night (realistically about 9pm), and a trip to Blockbuster.

I should elaborate, perhaps for the benefit

▼ **Geoffrey Rush dressed... as a privateer?** (TWITTER/CINEPORHORA)



▲ Jack Sparrow at the beginning of *The Curse of the Black Pearl* (2003) (TWITTER/EPILOGUERS)

of those who might not have had the joy of experiencing Blockbuster on a Friday night (the fact that I have just turned 21, and that I remember *Avatar* being available to rent for the first time, has not escaped me). It would involve me and my younger brother racing through the stacks trying to find a film that both we and my dad would enjoy. It was a tricky task.

We would often return home without a

“
Iconic scenes, stunning cinematography, and an immense soundtrack
”

film, to be faced with a more feasible decision; which of our oft-watched family classics would we return to? It often came down to either the *Pirates of the Caribbean*, or a *Lord of the Rings* – the latter being just as excellent, but a bigger investment of time. There was something about a trilogy of films, and these ones in particular, that just *worked*. It seems that it’s still working for me, over a decade later.

The *Pirates of the Caribbean* (my undeniable favourite) repays close attention. The development of the characters over the three films is miraculous; a long series of multiple episodes will, most of the time, pay you back for your investment of time and attention, but it’s often a lot of material to get through. I wholeheartedly believe that a good series of films will do the same thing, but with much less angst involved. Iconic scenes, stunning cinematography, and an immense soundtrack, paired with some amazing characters – ignoring on occasion Keira Knightley’s jutting chin – make this initial trilogy *epic*. (I’m entirely disregarding any subsequent film from this nostalgia trip; although the mermaids of

Stranger Tides were captivating, the overall plot was lacking, and Geoffrey Rush dressed as a privateer was disturbing in the extreme).

What isn’t there to love about a film that keeps on giving? *Dead Man’s Chest* (2006; the second of the three, for the uninitiated) does just that. From our introduction to the Flying Dutchman and the terrifying Kraken that lurks in the depths, to the hunt for the grisly heart of its master, this film is as hilarious as it is clever. I’ll admit, when I was younger, I was less interested in the Elizabeth Swann–Will Turner–James Norrington love triangle than I was in the prospect of *that* particular sword-fight that takes place in and around a moving water-wheel. The character development is impeccable, leading you to develop a genuine affection for and interest in them as people (to say nothing of the costumes, acting, locations, and the artistry of certain shots).

As a case in point, see Captain Barbossa. We met him in the first film, when we mostly felt

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What isn’t there to love about a film that keeps on giving?
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sorry for him only at the end, when he was shot just before escaping from the curse of immortality that plagued him and his crew. Absent from most of the second film, by nature of being dead, he returns nonetheless at the end – a swelling of music and a masterful camera pan sees him coming down the stairs, apple in hand, a monkey on his shoulder, apparently raised from the dead and ready to set sail to rescue Jack and the *Black Pearl* (currently trapped in Davy Jones’ locker).

If that’s not enough, see perhaps Jack’s iconic entrance to the entire franchise, stepping onto the pier from a flooded boat, or the countless moments when he swings from ship to ship amidst a cannon fight (if memory serves me correctly, it inexplicably happens more than once). That, or his infamous escape from the Pelegostos tribe. Or perhaps the bittersweet moment when Cutler Beckett is *finally* lost for words, descending to the main deck of his ship, which is currently sandwiched between the Dutchman and the *Pearl* and being blown to pieces.

Poetic cinema.



It’s moments like these that I can picture in detail whenever I listen to the soundtrack (more often than I care to admit), and make me genuinely excited about watching it again soon. Everyone has nostalgic films that mean something to them; for me, this trilogy seems to define an overwhelmingly large part of my childhood, considering that I know for a fact that my mum didn’t visit my grandma all that often, as it was a special treat when we got to watch a film late into the night. Equally, my sister is just as invested in these films, despite being five years younger than me, and having much dimmer memories of Blockbuster (I’ll let it go eventually, I swear). It’s as Jack Sparrow says, in a more poignant moment of the film, “Not all treasure’s silver and gold, mate”. Some things are just that important that you remember them for a long time, however old you get.





▲ I was in need of some comfort
(ILLUSTRATION BY VICTORIA CHONG
FOR VARSITY)

“
Is there
something
to be made of
connecting
with people
through our
windows?”

“
If nothing is going to happen, we'll have to invent our own stories. Luckily, the courts of Cambridge colleges are the perfect place to do so. Almost exactly as in the film, our windows face one another; with the early sunset, each room (and student within) is lit up for hours. To make this the perfect comparison, my college (Queens') even has a rooftop garden like Hitchcock's flowerbeds, in which his neighbour Lars Thorwald buries his dark

▼ Jeff amusing himself in lockdown (TWITTER/COLEYBOY)



▼ Jeff amusing himself in lockdown (TWITTER/COLEYBOY)

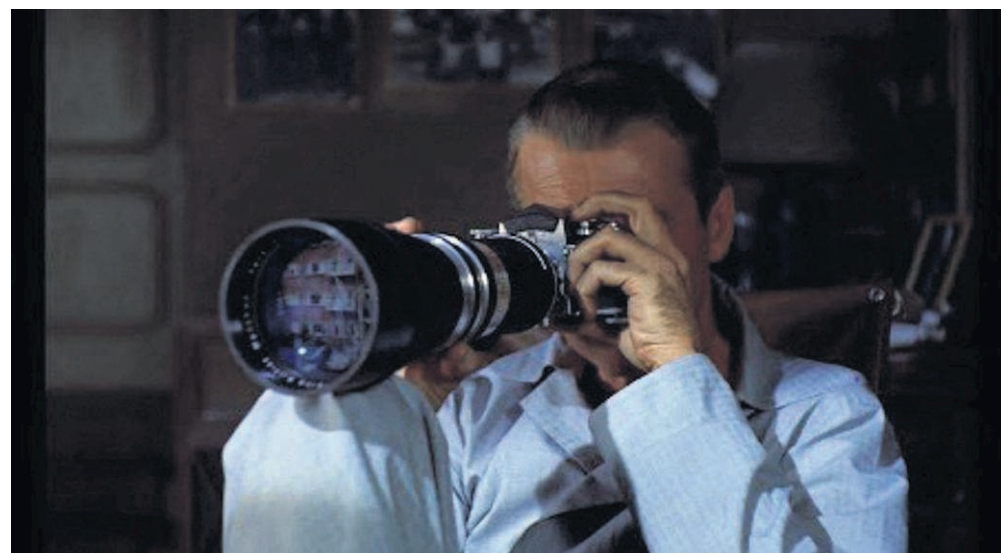
Rear Window Ethics: Procrastination Turned Voyeurism

Having spent so much time in her room this term, **Charlotte Holah** notes how involved you can get in the superficial aspects of other people's lives, and wonders if we'll ever be the same again

Picture the scene: you're stuck inside with nothing to do. While this is an all-too-familiar concept for the student of 2020, Alfred Hitchcock's exaggerated image of isolation in *Rear Window* (1954) takes boredom just a little further. We meet L.B. 'Jeff' Jeffries, who is confined to his apartment for a week while his broken leg heals. With nothing else to do apart from watching his neighbours, we are taken along on a journey that delves into the lives and secrets of those around him.

The detail of John Michael Hayes' screenplay creates an intensely personalised narrative. We see and hear only what Jeffries does, almost becoming a character of our own in the film. It is, then, easy to empathise with Jeffries, and even wish for a similar adventure to his. It's almost the third week of lockdown now, and I feel like nothing exciting has happened for months, aside from a few anonymous Camfess arguments that I've enjoyed watching pan out. We have all become desperate for something fantastical – I wouldn't go as far as murder, but some drama would be nice.

If nothing is going to happen, we'll have to invent our own stories. Luckily, the courts of Cambridge colleges are the perfect place to do so. Almost exactly as in the film, our windows face one another; with the early sunset, each room (and student within) is lit up for hours. To make this the perfect comparison, my college (Queens') even has a rooftop garden like Hitchcock's flowerbeds, in which his neighbour Lars Thorwald buries his dark



▲ Jeff amusing himself in lockdown (TWITTER/COLEYBOY)

secret. I have been watching the plants, but so far I can report they seem to be growing consistently.

What about the film's characters, then? In *Rear Window*, the neighbours around the apartment complex become defined by their routines, turning into their own tropes. I can't help but consider the freshers living in the accommodation opposite me in the same way. One girl dances along to an online class in front of her window. Perhaps she is Hitchcock's character 'Miss Torso', a ballet dancer whose elegance is constantly silhouetted by the bare lightbulb she practices beneath. The eternally closed curtains of some rooms also remind me of 'The Newlyweds', consummating their marriage for the entirety of the film. Yet I know that these characters are not entirely realistic. The dancer disappears once

her class is finished, while the curtains open in the afternoon for a bored and lazy face to peek out and look at the sky. It may be easy to define those living around us by the actions we see, but in real life our characters are not so romanticised as Hitchcock imagined.

The glorification of everyday life in the film is enhanced by the use of photography. Jeffries' job is to capture dramatic moments for a local newspaper, but his photographic equipment quickly becomes the way in which he can spy on his neighbours, reducing them to the gossip of tomorrow's Page 3. Lockdown has turned us into Jeffries, taking photos of what would normally be perceived as mundane, in the name of wholesome memories. Walking down King's Parade for my daily exercise, I find myself surrounded by disposable cameras; we have come to view ourselves only through the photographs we take of ourselves and each other.

The normality of isolation and boredom in lockdown makes me wonder just how much everyone else feels like this. Lisa Fremont, Jeffries' girlfriend, announces at one point that she's "not much on rear window ethics". Well, Lisa, neither am I. Should we all really hide away in our rooms until this is over, or is there something to be made of connecting with people through our windows? Perhaps, even as I am writing this, somebody is looking into my room and trying to imagine just who I am. Personally, I've been dealing with the fear of being watched like any normal student would; I invested recently in flashing LED lights to draw attention away from the windows around me. Still, in a few weeks this will all be over, and we can get back to our busy, self-obsessed Cambridge lives. Or perhaps we'll suffer the same fate as Jeffries: a return to a longer isolation just as the first one seems to be over. Either way, I can safely say I'll be enjoying my view from my rear window a while longer.

▼ One of the greatest, most dynamic sword fights in cinematic history, *Dead Man's Chest* (2006)
(TWITTER/ STREEEEEEP)



Michaelmas at Hotel Murray Edwards

Emily Moss takes us through a term spent isolating, avoiding the kitchen and the overwhelming amount of time spent on ‘nighttime walks’

I have to start by saying that this was the most overpriced hotel I’ve ever stayed in! When I arrived, it looked nice enough from the outside, slightly like the Barbican on steroids, but that didn’t bother me, because I did grow up in one of the ugliest towns in northwest England. What I didn’t know when I checked into Hotel Murray Edwards was that I’d be spending much more time in my room than I was expecting, but given the extortionate room prices, that was an advantage.

The room itself was fine. It was just fine. It had a bed. It had a desk. It had windows. It had a sink (which I may or may not have occasionally had a wee in so I’m glad it was a deep sink). On that note, why is it when I have a wee in my sink when I’m not in self-isolation, I’m “disgusting” and “unhygienic”, but when I wee in my sink when I’m self-isolating, I’m “heroic” and “saving my household from COVID”?! Anyway. I was allowed to decorate the room according to my personal tastes, so naturally, that included fairy lights, photos of me and my friends (to prove to everyone on my Zoom lectures that yes, it’s true, I have friends) and a tasteful Mandala tapestry from Etsy, as seen in the bedroom of every teenage girl attempting to look like she’s edgy™. However, after a total of four weeks of self-isolation spent in my room, no amount of Pinterest worthy decor was going to stop me from feeling like my room was HMP Medwards.

Meanwhile, the kitchen was, in the words of one famous Scottish mother of YouTube fame, DISGOSTENG. In fact, I was overjoyed when I had to self-isolate, because at least it meant I no longer had to pick penne pasta out of the plughole before I washed up. Instead, I was provided with a mini-fridge, kettle and microwave, which ensured that I was able to exclusively live off Sainsbury’s ready meals, microwaved pasta and rubbery mug cakes. Still, it was better than the e coli I would have contracted from the kitchen. Overall, though, I thought the accommodation was a satisfactory place to spend my self-isolation - even if the cuisine was so malnouritious that I now have a Vitamin B12 deficiency - although I do wonder if I would have had a nicer (cheaper) stay at the Premier Inn down the road.

However, something I was UNSATISFIED with at Murray Edwards was everything else apart from my accommodation. Firstly, the entertainment was not to my taste. I was expecting more of a social life than going for “nighttime walks” on Jesus Green with a maximum of five friends. I did not like waving forlornly at friends from my window. I did not appreciate the pure faff of pre-booking every pub or restaurant I wanted to go to so that I only managed to get to the pub three times in four weeks. I missed the sweaty sweating sweatiness of Friday Fez more than I ever thought possible. I missed studying* (*eating cake) in coffee shops.

It only went downhill even more when the lockdown started - how am I



▲ “No amount of Pinterest worthy decor was going to stop me from feeling like my room was HMP Medwards” (EMILY MOSS)

“*I was overjoyed when I had to self-isolate, because at least it meant I no longer had to pick penne out of the plughole before I washed up*”

supposed to select one friend at a time to go for a walk with? Having to tell one friend that I was going for a walk with another friend so I couldn’t go for a walk with them made me feel like Boris picking which advisor he wanted to sack and which one he wanted to save. I never knew whether I was Cummings or going and I’m not gonna lie to you, it wasn’t a Priti sight. And I appreciate that all this was not Murray Edwards’ fault, but as is the gold standard for disgruntled TripAdvisor reviewers, I will still blame them for every single thing that went wrong anyway because I love scapegoating people for my misfortunes more than Camfess loves Stephen Toope memes. Overall, then, poor entertainment. I knew my social life had taken a turn for the worse when, during my second bout of self-isolation, I started to scream at strangers out of my window, just to feel something. But I did not feel anything. COVID had not just deprived me of my sense of taste and smell: it also deprived me of emotions. I don’t want to make this the Hunger Games of COVID Induced Suffering, but if it was, I’d be Peeta: a sexually frustrated, blonde sad-boi, yearning for friends.

Still, for all of my grumbles, my stay at Hotel Murray Edwards was somewhere between yellow and crimson phases on the Cambridge University Traffic Light COVID-19 system. Michaelmas term was memorable in its own way, if not in a way that I want to remember until I’m at least forty and have forgotten enough of it to remember it nostalgically. I had some fun. I cried. I laughed. I howled. I became proficient at wearing the same pair of M&S thongs for three days because I wasn’t allowed out of my room to do my laundry in self-isolation. I am now

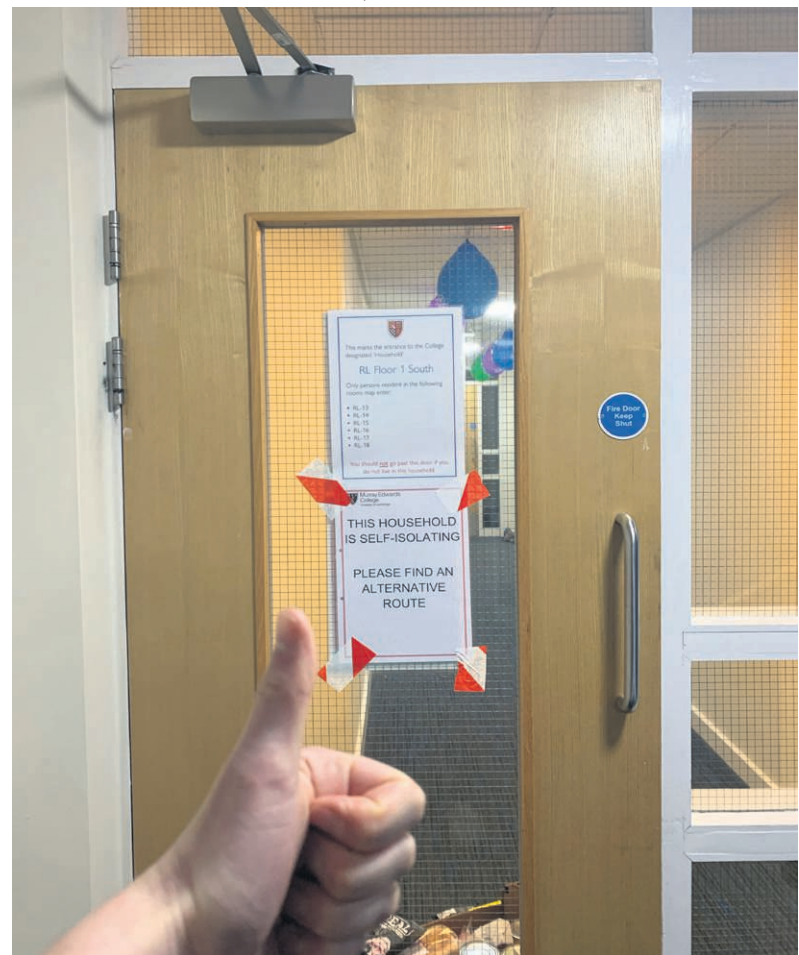
“*I cried. I laughed. I howled. I became proficient at wearing the same pair of M&S thongs for three days because I wasn’t allowed to do my laundry*”

an expert in microwaving pasta (I offer video tutorials on OnlyFans for the low low price of £27), although I still haven’t quite mastered mug cakes. I suppose I’d recommend it, if you like solitude, Sainsbury’s ready meals and 1960s brutalist

architecture. Otherwise, I’d recommend cryogenically freezing yourself and being defrosted in October 2021, ripe and ready to start Michaelmas afresh.

OVERALL RATING: 6.5/10

▼ “The room itself was fine. It was just fine.” (EMILY MOSS)



Violet

By VARSITY

Trying to make a home out of Cambridge

Columnist *Scarlet Rowe* writes on being homesick and making Cambridge a home in spite of it

For anyone who comes from a city, Cambridge will probably strike you as a doll's house town. Or actually, on revision, for anyone who comes from anywhere, Cambridge will strike you as a doll's house town. This is partly what appealed to me about it: when there, it almost feels like you are in a make-believe world which operates on its own plane. Of course, the reality is that it is not, even though it feels like it sometimes. And although the centre is undeniably charming and quaint, maybe it is just a little too quaint? Just a little too polished for comfort?

In Leeds (where I am when not in Cambridge), I get a huge sense of vibrancy and life and real people feeling real things and living real lives. Not that this doesn't happen in Cambridge obviously, but I find that Cambridge often feels silent and even lonely. The nights in particular are eerily silent and that's the case even in a non-pandemic world. I think this is partly an architectural thing. For example, although the colleges are undeniably beautiful, they are also deeply intimidating. I feel quite small and irrelevant when walking past King's Chapel with my frizzy hair and eye bags and tea spilt over my trousers. Or when walking into Caius, I half feel as

though I am in the wrong place.

I think (though I can't confirm just yet) that I like Cambridge. As a student, I definitely get the sense that I am part of a university, especially seeing as teenagers and twenty-somethings are at every corner in the centre. I also definitely feel lucky to be there (but maybe not at 3am when I still haven't finished my essay reading). However, it lacks something for me, though I can't quite place what it is just yet. Maybe the isolation I sometimes feel roots from the fact that students are everywhere, so if I'm ever alone, I feel acutely aware of my lone-walking status. Or maybe I just don't feel comfortable enough in my own skin, you choose!

I also vividly remember feeling such a wave of intense relief last Michaelmas term when I left Cambridge for the first time. I went to Canterbury for the weekend via London after a breakup just to get away from everything. I remember walking along the Thames with the lights twinkling in the night and just being absolutely staggered by the skyline. I had completely forgotten that skylines even exist, and I was in complete awe of it. I hadn't realised how claustrophobic I had felt (sorry to use a cliché) until I was out of Cambridge. I had escaped the 'bubble', and oh it felt good! The variety of the buildings impressed me too; one minute

I was in Georgian England and the next I was placed firmly in the twenty-first century. I felt a part of something more real and tangible than Cambridge somehow. The pace was quicker, and there was none of that sleepy sense that Cambridge sometimes emanates.

Coming home one weekend early into term (and yes I did last a total of three weeks in Cambridge so far this year), I felt that wonderful feeling of being home. There's nothing quite like it. Perhaps Cambridge's key crime is that it will never be home like home is, if that makes sense? Even my room in Cambridge just feels a little lifeless with its plain walls and carpet. I can't help but get a half restless sense when I'm there. Maybe I also associate Cambridge too much with work. When I am there, I know I will be inundated with essays. It's not all bad, but it can get overwhelming at points. It just means that whenever I'm home, I can look forward to some peace and quiet (excluding the fact I have 5 siblings and the youngest is 6 years old).

So, now for a shameless promotion of Leeds, seeing as the North does not get enough credit in Cambridge (although some people foolishly do not class Leeds as the north, they are wrong). Leeds doesn't intimidate me in the same way as Cambridge does. It has a more wel-

coming air somehow. I don't know, maybe because it's not home to one of the most selective universities in the world. (I still can't believe I go to one, it makes no sense at all). But also, I really get the sense that Leeds has been through hard times and survived. And even though I am sure Cambridge has too, it feels less written into the history somehow. It's like Leeds has a sort of nobility because it has been through a lot and it's still standing.

It also helps that home is where the heart (my family) is. I am very lucky in that I really love being at home. I'm always surrounded by chaos and love, which I don't always feel in uni halls. Or

I can sense the former, but not always the latter. Home certainly feels more permanent to me, as when I am in Cambridge I always know I will have to move out again in a few weeks. That sense of not being able to settle has definitely pervaded my Cambridge experience. It hasn't spoiled it at all, but it is always lingering.

However, please do not let me add misery to your day! I do of course like and appreciate Cambridge quite a bit. I just miss home quite a lot whenever I'm there. Even though homesickness isn't very cool or in right now (it never has been really), it is definitely normal. So if you're feeling it, I promise you that you are not alone. I, for one, feel it a lot.



▲ "When walking into Caius, I half feel as if I am in the wrong place" (VARSITY)

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Sport Oxford-Cambridge Boat Race to be held in Ely

The decision was made due to the difficulties in running a high-profile event with continuing Covid-19 restrictions, writes Christopher Dorrell

This year's Oxford-Cambridge Boat Race will be held on the Great Ouse at Ely rather than its normal location in London.

The decision, taken by the Boat Race Company Limited (BRCL), reflects the challenge "of planning a high-profile amateur event around continuing Covid related restrictions as well as uncertainty regarding the safety and navigation of Hammersmith Bridge", a press release detailed.

BRCL revealed in the press release that the decision was taken after consultation with long-term partners in London, East Cambridge District Council, and the Environment Agency. They said they "are delighted to have strong local support, enabling us to hold the world-famous races in Ely."

The Men's Boat Race has previously been run once at Ely, in 1944, when the war made it impossible to stage in London.

BRCL is now working with local authorities to ensure a safe event for the local community, crews, and coaches, as well as the volunteers and contractors helping to stage the races.

Dr George Gilbert, Chair of BRCL's Race and Operations Committee: "Everyone is facing significant challenges right now, especially students up and down the country. Organising sport safely and responsibly is our highest priority and moving The Boat Race to Ely in 2021 enables the event to go ahead in a secure environment. While we are sad not to be able to welcome the usual hundreds of thousands of spectators along the course, we will be inviting our communities and

wider audience to get involved via our social media channels, and to enjoy the historic event on the BBC."

The race, to be held in April of next year, will see the 166th Men's and the 75th Women's boat races.

Athletes preparing for the Boat Race have been training under the Covid-19 guidelines laid down by British Rowing, University sports departments and the Government.

The crews had two months on the water before the November lockdown was announced. They have since had to begin training at home on rowing machines.

The annual Oxford-Cambridge University Boat Race was first raced in 1829 and is now one of the world's oldest and most famous amateur sporting events.

Cambridge has won the men's race 84 times and Oxford 80 times, with one

dead heat. In the women's race, Cambridge has won the race 44 times and Oxford 30 times. Cambridge has led Oxford in cumulative wins since 1966.

Last year the race was cancelled due to Covid-19 pandemic, but Cambridge won the male and female race in the two previous years.



▲ "This year's Oxford-Cambridge Boat Race will be held at the Great Ouse"

Cambridge City F.C: A Community Club

Cicely Norman speaks to Chris Cox from Cambridge City FC

Cambridge City Football Club (est. 1908) play their matches in the Isthmian League Division One North (level four of the non-league pyramid), and are currently based at Bridge Road, just a short cycle out of the city centre. Shortly before lockdown I spoke to Chris Cox, the club's Media and Communications Director, to learn a bit more about the club and its work on and off the pitch.

We started by talking about what the last few months have looked like for the Lilywhites. When lockdown first hit back in March, the team had gone seven games without a loss (or a goal conceded), and were eyeing up promotion slots. And, while in terms of football, the league's suspension 'came at a really bad moment', it was clear that the club was immediately focused on how it could help during the pandemic.

Chris describes how City is 'a community club, we've always prided ourselves on our community, so we kind of turned coronavirus into a positive' and were 'really just doing what we could'. The club started advertising and championing local businesses, and 'took some time to focus on [its] volunteers - everyone at the club is a volunteer'.

Although it was never possible to resume the 2019/20 season, the Lilywhites, classed as a non-elite club, were able to have up to 400 supporters at their opening home matches of this campaign. This was 'really beneficial both for the club and for the fans as well', and it was clear to Chris how the fans 'coming through the turnstiles really just appreciated that they could see their friends again and get out the house'.

Of course, that all changed with the most recent lockdown, which has seen

the league suspended yet again. In the few months of competition that could take place before the shutdown, Cambridge City had put together their best FA Cup run since 2012 after reaching the fourth qualifying round (where they eventually lost 2-0 at Darlington).

This success has really boosted the club, not only because of 'the prize money for that, but also just that feel-good factor' - City's last home Cup game, a 2-0 victory against Halesowen Town, was witnessed by a celebrating sell-out, and socially-distanced, crowd.

Chris is keen to emphasize that alongside their men's first eleven, Cambridge City has thriving ladies', youth, girls', and ParAbility teams. The ladies' and girls' teams run from Under 11s through to the senior team, which competes in the FA Women's National League (Division 1 South East) and has won the Eastern Region Women's League Cup and Premier Division in recent years. The two girls' U15 teams play in a boys' league.

Each of the ParAbility teams have enjoyed success recently, too: the Championship (level 2) team were league champions 2018/19, and the League (level 1) team have won their competition in three of the last four seasons. These teams have been particularly affected by the pandemic, with many players being in at-risk categories, so Chris is looking forward to 'being able to get them back on the pitch' as soon as it is safe to do so.

Lower-league and grassroots clubs, where people often attend and play football matches for the first time, are hugely important in shaping the values of the game at all levels. Alongside the ParAbility teams, Cambridge City has been focusing on its inclusivity in other

ways, too, recently appointing Roger de Ste Croix as Equality and Diversity Lead and backing the FA's Equality in Football Leadership Code. The club was already a supporter of the 'Let's Kick Racism Out Of Football' campaign, but was keen to do more.

'We were monitoring what was happening with the Black Lives Matter movement' and 'working out where we fitted in it', explains Chris. The club was aware how 'it's easy to see it on the telly and on the news', but they wanted to make sure that they made an informed and effective response, guided directly by the views of the club's black members.

Through speaking to, among others, Neil Midgley, Assistant Manager and Head of Youth, City 'decided to pre-empt the stuff that was coming out of the FA and form our own equality and inclusion group'.

This group has 'got representatives from the ParAbility team, the ladies', the youth, the first team, and fans, and it's really taken off and they're working together to really make sure the club's a club for all. Going forward into our new stadium as well, we want to make sure that we arrive and people feel welcome - that's the main thing for us'. Chris describes how getting to the point where the Lilywhites are a 'role model for other clubs' would be his 'ideal situation'.

These aspirations are also evident in the fundraising work Cambridge City has been running for many years, but particularly over the last few months. The Supporters Trust is a 'key element of the club', in charge of 'everything from running the volunteers to liaising with people in our future home of Sawston,

to running fundraising events'.

Every year the club has a different charity partner, and after supporting CPSL Mind last year (and joining in the Duke of Cambridge's Heads Up Campaign), City are now fundraising for Cambridge City Foodbank. They ran collection points after the men's and ladies' first team matches, and it has 'been really fantastic to see' the supporters get involved, says Chris, and bring along items to matches clearly bought specifically for donation.

We then moved onto talking about the ongoing story of the Lilywhites' new stadium development. City left their home at Milton Road in 2013 (they had played there since 1922, and it could hold over 12,000 people). After this they shared with Histon, then St Ives Town, and now they are back with Histon. A move to a new stadium in Sawston has been mooted since about 2010.

After some planning battles and various other obstacles, Chris says they are now at the point where 'the land's there, the surveys have been done, we're just waiting to have all our grants rubber stamped by things like the Football Foundation, to make sure the facility we build is not just perfect for the club now but sustains the future of the club'.

The new stadium is intended to benefit everyone at the club and also locals. 'As well as the main grass pitch there's going to be an artificial pitch that will support our ladies', youth, and ParAbility teams'. The Sawston ground will also provide 'revenue streams for local clubs to use' and 'a social hub - function rooms, a bar, and catering facilities', alongside creating 'a huge area for [Sawston Parish Council] to put sports pitches on'.

I asked Chris what it has been like sharing a ground with a team that was once the Lilywhites' main rival, and although some fans have found it 'a challenge', he acknowledges how in fact coronavirus has 'brought the clubs together...and that can only be a positive'. They have worked together to get through these difficult times.

We finished by talking about how the league has gone so far this season. City, managed by former player Robbie Nightingale, sit 17th out of 20 at the moment, with at least one game in hand over nearly all other teams. It has been a 'mixed bag' so far, but Chris is optimistic that the Lilywhites are 'the horse just sort of lulling at the back, just minding its own business, and we're hoping we'll canter through and push to the front'.

Fingers crossed, then, that the league will be able to resume soon, and City have a successful re-start. When matches return, Chris emphasizes how 'students are always welcome down at the club'.

If there are some good footballing things to come out of the pandemic, the reminder of how important these community-focused, local clubs are is definitely one. Since coronavirus first hit, Chris says 'we've done our best - that's all we could do, and I think that we've done it'. I would agree.

You can listen back to the full interview on the Cam FM website.

December 2nd now also marks the long awaited return to stadiums for all areas not classified as 'Very High Alert' - do your bit to support your local sports teams (and get back to a bit of normality) by buying a ticket and watching a live match.