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VARSITY

Council endorses permanent counter-terrorism barrier on King's Parade

Iona Fleming
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Deputy News Editor

Cambridge City Council has endorsed a scheme to make the anti-terrorism barrier on King's Parade permanent.

The Council's Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered a report proposing permanent measures on Monday (08/02).

Councillors voted overwhelmingly in favour of supporting the request to Cambridgeshire County Council for Traffic Regulation Orders for the existing controls to become permanent beyond July 2021 and for their effects to be fully assessed.

The £70,000 barrier first came into operation on 16th January 2020 following police counter-terrorism advice to the Cambridge City Council. The police recommended "that steps be taken to protect the many thousands of people who use King's Parade throughout the year, especially during the summer months," according to a press release last week (04/02).

Other councils in tourist hotspots,

including central London, Canterbury, Windsor, York and Edinburgh, were also given police counter-terrorism advice and have consequently installed "similar vehicle access controls and barriers".

The barrier is in operation during the day between 9:30am and 7pm. It was originally intended to be a temporary measure, its operation expiring in July 2021.

Councillors also voted unanimously in the meeting to "note the outcomes of public and stakeholder engagement and consultation, and behavioural monitoring" of the traffic control measures.

The King's Parade barrier is made up of a three-metre-wide swing gate with pairs of ballasted security barges on either side. There is also a 1.2m gap on the King's College side for cyclists.

Councillor Nicky Massey, Executive Councillor for Transport and Community Safety, told the committee there are plans for the barrier to be re-designed, and that the location of a potential replacement barrier is "not fixed," according to *Cambridgeshire Live*.

"The temporary scheme has achieved its objective of keeping the area safe

Full story on page 2 ►



▲ Objections were raised about the terrorism barrier during a recent consultation on its impact on local businesses (SOPHIE HUSKISSON)

News

EDITORIAL

Re-defining Valentine's

Valentine's Day is often described as an overrated capitalist ploy: a yearly ritual where you're told to buy Sainsbury's chocolate, red roses and teddy bear cards for your (romantic) love. The day is wrapped up in stereotypes upon stereotypes; it dictates a certain narrative to us about what love is, who it's between, and how we should express it.

With that being said, we've chosen to make this issue a celebration of Valentine's. Why? Because it *should* be a celebration of whatever we want it to be.

There should be no set of instructions for how to enjoy, express and give thanks to love. In this edition, our writers have commemorated love exactly how they like. Whether that's by writing a love letter to their lockdown hero (pg. 9), or breaking down the science of attraction (pg. 13), or even in writing an ode to coffee (pg. 26). Our experiences of love are numerous, and diverse - literature often best articulates this (pg. 18).

Love is also radical: it is in politics, in social reform, in empathising with people who are living in very different circumstances to our own. Take a look at Napier barracks, and how Asylum seekers continue to be treated as sub-human (pg. 11). Love is not just some warm fuzzy feeling for a significant other but can be expressed through the commonality of human compassion. This form of love can prove immeasurable in fostering solidarity and inciting change for the better - evidently seen in the King's boat club covering one million metres to raise money for homeless charities (pg. 25).

For many, the ability to love has also been a struggle, both today and throughout history. *Varsity* is proud to stand with the LGBTQ+ community in celebrating LGBTQ+ History Month. We are pleased to see that colleges and the university are flying the LGBTQ flag (pg. 3), however, these positive symbols must also be translated into genuine action.

All our love,
Georgie & Gaby xx

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Faculty of History announces plans to hire lecturer in Black British history

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The Faculty of History will hire a lecturer in the field of Black British History for the beginning of the next academic year, it has been announced.

The job advertisement outlines that a successful candidate “will be an expert in the histories of people of Black British, Caribbean and/or African identity and descent in any period of British history since 1780.”

It adds: “We particularly welcome applications from candidates from a Black and Minority Ethnicity (BME) background for this vacancy as they are currently under-represented at this level in our Faculty.”

A second year History and Politics student told *Varsity*: “The announcement is a welcome move that was a long time overdue. The British History modules will be much improved for it.”

Figures published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) last February show that fewer than 1% of professors employed by UK universities



of professors at UK universities are Black

are Black. The figures also show that universities tend not to employ more than one or two Black professors.

Figures from 2019 also show that fewer than five heads of higher education institutions in the United Kingdom were from a BME background, a total of 3.1%.

This announcement follows calls for improved racial diversity in the British education system last year: Lavinya Stennett, founder of The Black Curriculum, told *The Guardian* that Black people are “almost entirely written out of the version of British history taught in schools.”

Currently, Part I History students can take papers in ‘Comparative histories of race, class & culture: Southern Africa’ between 1850-2013 and ‘Religious conversion and colonialism,’ alongside ‘The History of Africa’ from 1800 to present day.

The History Faculty website notes its academics’ “expertise in South Asian, Southeast and East Asian, Pacific, Middle Eastern, African, Caribbean and Latin American histories.”

It continues: “World History faculty seek[s] to understand the historical experience of peoples in the global South on their own terms and through their own sources and languages.”

Elsewhere, initiatives like Target Oxbridge have had great success in increasing BME representation among students in Cambridge University, helping 37 black students gain a place during the most recent admissions cycle.

▼ **The role will include lecturing and supervising undergraduates and graduates** (LOUIS ASHWORTH)



► Continued from front page

through 2020,” the Council noted in the press release. “Although everyday life and the number of visitors has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, it has also delivered benefits to the area, [enabling] local businesses to provide more outside seating for customers and helped people to move around freely in a traffic-free space.”

An online consultation, which was undertaken between 11th December 2020 and 11th January 2021, received 499 responses from businesses and local residents, and found that just under half of respondents support continuing traffic controls on King’s Parade.

Negative impacts identified included the aesthetic appearance of the barrier, the difficulty for vehicles manoeuvring near the barrier and the limited amount of space for cyclists to ride through the barrier.

Respondents also said that it has proved difficult for taxi drivers to pick up customers, and made the entrance to King’s Parade crowded.

While many respondents had no opinion about the barrier’s existing operational times, some felt that timings should be reduced rather than extended.

They also said that vehicle deliveries should be made outside of these times or at nearby loading facilities.

Positive feedback came from respondents who felt that the barrier has made King’s Parade safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and tourists. Others reacted favourably to the reduction in traffic congestion.

Respondents also wanted any permanent scheme to “enhance the street’s

historic character, and to improve the sense of place and support for local businesses,” the press release continues.

Current controversy over the barrier follows a petition to remove it by students and residents, which passed over 1000 signatures.

Many councillors in support of making the barrier permanent cite the current importance of these anti-terrorist measures after the national terrorism threat level in the UK was raised from ‘substantial’ to ‘severe’ on 3rd November 2020.

The threat level has since been lowered to ‘substantial’, which indicates that an attack is ‘likely’.

The East of England Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) considers King’s Parade an area of concern because it attracts over 8 million visitors annually and is a hub for tourists visiting the University.

This new threat level “underlines the importance of giving careful consideration to the police advice on the need for measures on King’s Parade to protect people,” Councillor Massey said in the press release.

“To ignore that advice would be irresponsible...we need to do all we can to protect people when they return”, Councillor Massey continued.

Meanwhile Nick Dean, Chief Constable at the Cambridge Constabulary, said in the press release that this threat “is a reminder that we all need to remain vigilant and take steps to keep ourselves and each other safe.”

“I have recommended that local councils seek to introduce motorised traffic controls on King’s Parade on a permanent basis, and fully support them in their proposals to bring forward a more sensitive replacement solution if one can

“
It has also delivered many benefits to the area, [enabling] local businesses to provide more outdoor seating”

be identified”, he continued.

“Over the past months we have seen how cities have utilised their public realm for outside dining and leisure activities,” Ian Sandison, Chief Executive of Cambridge Business Improvement District (BID) said.

He continued: “As we look towards the summer and, we hope, the steady return of initially domestic and then international visitors, the beautiful King’s Parade lends itself to be a flexible space where more outside dining spaces can be provided.

“When customers dwell longer this invariably benefits local businesses. Now, more than ever, we want to be using our public realm in a more flexible manner and the BID supports proposals for permanent control measures that allow businesses to maintain essential access.”

“It is unfortunate that the pandemic has restricted our evaluation of the full expected benefits of the scheme so far,” said Councillor Massey, “but given the police advice, it is important that we remain focused on ensuring the city centre is a safe place.”

Second-year historian Millie Yule told *Varsity* that she doesn’t mind the barrier due to the limited impact it has on her life. “It’s a bit ugly but then it also streamlines the swarm of bikes going down king’s parade so I’m less likely to be run over on my way to a 9am which is always a positive”, she added.

Meanwhile, second-year Modern and Medieval Languages (MML) student Lily Fox said: “Someone determined to cause irrevocable harm to themselves and those around them are not going to be deterred by a simple barrier.”

Colleges fly pride flag as Cambridge University celebrates LGBT+ History Month

Luke Hallam
Deputy News Editor
Diana Stoyanova
Deputy News Editor

30 Cambridge colleges, as well as the University Library and the Old Schools Site, are flying an LGBT+ flag during February to mark LGBT+ History Month.

Magdalene College is the only college not flying a flag this year, which is the result of a broken flagpole, Magdalene JCR told *Varsity*.

The College has flown a flag in recent years, meaning that 2021 is the first year in which all colleges have committed in principle to flying an LGBT+ flag.

Some colleges, including Girton and Newnham, will be flying a flag continuously throughout the month. Meanwhile other colleges, including Emmanuel, Fitzwilliam and Clare, will only fly a flag on certain days at the beginning and end of the month.

This follows an incident at Clare College last year in which two Clare students raised the flag themselves in protest against the College senior leadership not flying it.

Instead of the standard six-colour rainbow flag, the Progress flag is being flown by a number of colleges, including Girton, Wolfson, Gonville and Caius and Churchill.

The Progress flag was created in 2018 by American graphic designer Daniel Quasar, and incorporates arrow-shaped colours to represent the transgender community and LGBT+ people of colour.

David Sánchez García, LGBTQ+ Officer for Wolfson College Students' Association, told *Varsity* that the additional colours of the Progress flag are "important [...] in the current context, given the big level of mobilization but also

social and legal backlash that members of these groups are facing in the UK and worldwide - and I would speak perhaps particularly of the spike of transphobia in the UK."

A spokesperson for Cambridge SU LGBT+ Campaign told *Varsity*: "A college flying the pride flag only has as much significance as the college is willing to prove through its actions. Those that do fly the pride flag do so because of hard work and pressure from student representatives at the college, so the flag doesn't speak to whether the college actually supports its LGBT+ students."

They referenced the Cam SU *Care+* initiative, launched this month, which lists a number of ways colleges can improve provisions for LGBT+ students.

An LGBT flag is also flying over the central administrative buildings on the Old School Sites, having been flown there in 2020 for the first time.

In addition to the flying of pride flags, both the University and individual colleges have organised various events to celebrate LGBT+ History Month.

Across the University there will be "talks, film nights and book clubs [which] will explore the experiences of the LGBT+ community, discuss significant moments in queer history and honour those who have worked to promote equality and diversity."

These will include the Department of Archaeology's annual "Queer(y)ing the Past" event which features several short talks on the topics of sexuality and gender in the past.

In light of the Channel 4 drama *It's a Sin*, depicting the lives of a group of gay men at the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, Dr. Richard McKay from the Department of History and Philosophy of Science and PhD student George Severs will discuss "gay men's

sexual health in the decades running up to the emergence of the disease" and the rise of HIV/IDSs related activism.

There will also be a LGBT+ Staff Network History Month Film night in which staff will be watching short films from the Iris Prize, LGBT+ film festival, followed by a Zoom discussion.

Additionally, individual colleges have also organised a variety of events. The Christ's College LGBT+ Society and the Christ's Seeley Society are hosting a talk with Cheryl Morgan, who will look at a play, ancient texts and archaeology to examine how gender and sexuality have changed over time.

St. John's will be running a series of talks, with the first one entitled "Does God Hate Queers?"

Wolfson will also be flying the transgender flag on 17th February when they are planning to host a virtual talk with Rico Chase, director of TransActual UK, about trans lives in British history. They have also confirmed three more talks throughout the month.

Liberty Beswick, LGBT+ Officer at King's, has told *Varsity* that she has been sending weekly emails to undergraduates "with information on queer history and notable figures, which will continue this month."

Similarly, Ted Kehoe at Selwyn is sending out an email detailing various events and figures in the LGBTQ+ liberation movement, "especially with a focus on how it's always been an intersectional movement."

At Clare, students have written short pieces "about queer historical figures/figures that they are interested in" which will be posted throughout the month. There is also a queer music playlist put together by the Clare LGBT+ community.

In light of LGBT+ History Month, Trinity have also announced the crea-

tion of a gender expression fund which will allow the Trinity College Students' Union (TCSU) and the LGBT+ officers to "purchase items on behalf of students to help alleviate dysphoria and allow them to feel comfortable in their gender expression." These items can cost up to £80 per student.

A number of colleges have introduced gender expression funds over the past two years, including Christ's, Girton, Robinson, and Clare.

Multiple colleges are also planning to host virtual social events and welfare chats, some of which are inter-collegiate.

Jordan Gerardy at St Edmund's told *Varsity* that "this year the cross-college engagement has been inspiring and a real benefit to help link together LGBTQ+ identifying individuals across the whole of the University."

He added that he hopes this "trend continues [in] post-Covid times as well."

Members of staff have also taken part in celebrations. Dr Diarmuid Hester, who is a fellow at Emmanuel, has created a "free queer audio trail of Cambridge" called A Great Recorded History. In it, he interviews residents, explores queer spaces in the city and honours renowned queer Cambridge alumni like EM Forster and Edward Carpenter.

Frankie Kendal at Clare also pointed out that they thought LGBT+ History Month was especially important "for all queer people to remember the persecution we have faced throughout time and that this is no different. We need everyone to come together and fight for our trans and non-binary community who are being attacked purely for existing in this world, despite the historical proof that gender non-conforming people are as old as everyone else."



▲ This year marks the first time that all colleges have committed to the principle of flying a pride flag (Amy Howell)

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▲ All small Valentine's Day illustrations by Billiana Todorova

News

Zero Gravity: Initiative helps 151 low-income students receive Oxbridge offers



▲ Zero Gravity provides mentors for students to help them access Russell Group and Oxbridge universities (ZERO GRAVITY)

Amy Howell and Cameron White
Senior News Editors

151 low-income students, with the support of Zero Gravity, have been made offers to Oxford and Cambridge for entry in October 2021.

Zero Gravity, which was launched during the first UK lockdown in March 2020, digitally connects undergraduate mentors with state-educated, low-

income students to provide guidance with applications for UK universities. This guidance takes the form of hour-long weekly mentoring sessions to discuss applications, interview skills and subject content.

Joe Seddon, Founder and CEO of Zero Gravity, said in a press release to *Varsity*: “Whilst traditional institutions failed to get to grips with the educational disruption wrought by the pandemic,

Cambridge undergrads got behind their laptops and made a difference.”

Seddon, himself an Oxford graduate from West Yorkshire, founded Zero Gravity in order to “level the playing field.”

The app began as a pilot in his bedroom with the final £200 of his student loan, which has since developed into a full-time team based in London with funding from both HSBC and Facebook to expand the programme.

The company is on course to become the UK’s largest social mobility organisation by the end of 2021, the press release states.

As part of this, Seddon expressed his plans for “investing thousands of pounds into developing our digital platform and deploying hyper-targeted social media campaigns in areas of the country with the worst access stats.”

One of the beneficiaries of the company, Zak Denucci Diarrasouba, from Croydon, received an offer to study Computer Science at St John’s College last month, having been mentored by Gonville and Caius student Izaak Fairclough, whom Zak credits as “the single biggest help to [his] application!” Zak will be the first member of his family to attend university.

Fairclough was “so happy” when Zak received his offer, and stated that the

company is “essential in helping close the knowledge and attainment gap between the state and private sectors.”

Since its launch, Zero Gravity has helped over 1,000 Year 13 students, and one in ten undergraduates at Oxbridge have signed up to mentor on the platform.

Recent evaluation by UCAS has suggested that Zero Gravity almost doubles the chances of receiving an Oxbridge offer for low-income students, the press release continues. Over 2,000 offers from Russell Group universities have been received by mentees of the scheme.

Another mentor, George Baker, an undergraduate in Law at Cambridge, said: “It is a really fulfilling experience to assist a student from the very start of the process, considering subjects and universities, to the very end of that process, hopefully getting an offer.”

“It is a relatively small amount of your time to make a potentially large impact on someone’s chance to study at Oxbridge.”

He continued: “When I found out that Rosie had an offer I shouted to everyone else in my house that my mentee had got in [...] It was exciting to know I might have helped to play a very small part in her success story.”

Rosie, who has an offer to study Law

1 in 10

Oxbridge students are mentors

2,000

Russell Group offers

151

Oxbridge offers



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“Whilst traditional institutions failed [...] Cambridge undergrads got behind their laptops and made a difference”

at Clare College, lives in Doncaster in South Yorkshire, where only 0.3% of university applicants successfully applied to Oxbridge in 2019. She likened the opportunity to work with Zero Gravity as a “golden ticket.”

She added that “the biggest challenge I had to overcome was imposter syndrome. I did not believe I would be able to get into Cambridge, let alone fit in with the other people. My mentor has helped me to realise that the stereotypes are not at all true and that it is a great place to live and learn.”

The achievement of the Zero Gravity programme follows other recent outreach success in Cambridge.

Target Oxbridge announced last month (26/01) that it had supported 71 Black students in earning an Oxbridge offer for the 2021/22 academic year, with 37 of those offers for places at Cambridge. This statistic saw Target Oxbridge

equal its record from the 2019/20 admissions cycle despite moving all of its services online due to the pandemic.

The initiative is now maximising its online presence by launching Target Oxbridge Digital, which aims to double the support currently offered to benefit a further 160 Year 12 students during the 2021/22 admissions cycle.

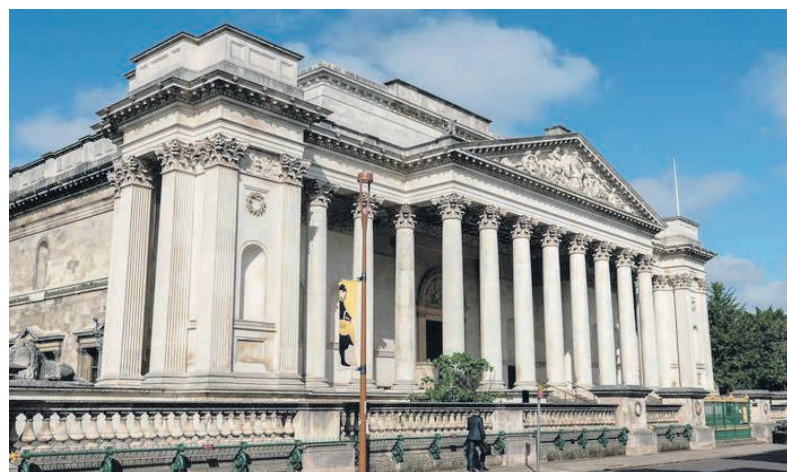
Meanwhile, Trinity College also recently established a new outreach scheme which will provide online academic mentoring for Year 12 students. The scheme will give priority to students from state schools, those who are eligible for free school meals, are in local authority care and those whose studies have been adversely impacted by the pandemic. It will support 20 students through their UCAS applications and interviews at Cambridge, from March until December 2021.

FAST FOOD Deliveroo delights!

The closure of all UK restaurants (except for takeaway) has benefitted Deliveroo’s “Cambridge Editions” kitchen. Part of the scheme launched in 2017, this is a purpose-built facility which caters entirely for Deliveroo takeaways. For example, starting from 9th February you will be able to order a meal from Shake Shack, the famous American burger joint which opened its first UK restaurant in Covent Garden, and has remained London-based until now. Dishoom, also based in London, announced its participation last month. They will both join other chains such as The Athenian and Poke.

CAMBRIDGE PRO-PETS Pet-topia

Coulter estate agents recently carried out a survey of 50 of the most populated towns and cities in the UK to determine which were the most pet-friendly – with Cambridge making number eight on the list! The ranking was calculated using scores across five categories, including the number of dog friendly restaurants, walking routes, and pet-friendly properties to rent. While cities such as Southampton and Norwich topped the table due to their high number of dog walking routes and nature parks respectively, Cambridge still managed to rank one place higher than Oxford.



▲ The annual ‘Twilight at the Museums’ event will be held online this year
(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

MASKING UP Military grade masks?

A Cambridge graduate’s company, Cambridge Mask Co, has achieved record growth since the start of the pandemic: the number of company employees more than quadrupled from 18 to 80, their sales rose by 1,000% and they now provide masks to customers in over 100 countries. Christopher Dobbing founded the company in 2015 to provide masks to protect children and adults from air pollution. The masks use military grade filtration technology designed for situations of chemical, nuclear or biological warfare, with the three layer design offering a 99.6% viral filtration efficiency.

A VIRTUAL DUSK Twilight (away from) the Museums

From the 15th February, coinciding with half term, the University of Cambridge’s museums (and botanical garden) will hold their annual “Twilight at the Museums” event online. In previous years the museums have opened their doors outside of normal visiting hours to let families explore their collections at night. Due to the current restrictions, a series of fun twilight-themed online activities, games and video inspired by their collections will be published on their Facebook instead.

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News

Institute of Continuing Education funds new bursary for postgraduates

Cameron White
Senior News Editor

The University's Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) announced its Next Generation Bursary last week (03/02), which will offer up to 100 students tak-

ing ICE postgraduate courses a maximum of £2,100 towards the costs of their studies for the 2021/22 academic year.

The bursary, which is designed to offer support to those students who have studied throughout the Covid-19

pandemic, will be made available to any postgraduate students at the University of Cambridge who either graduated in 2020 or are due to graduate by 1 July 2021, as well to postdoctoral researchers who are currently employed by the University.

It will apply to students studying for Postgraduate Certificates in one of Practical Science Communication, Genomic Medicine, Teaching Creative Writing or Philosophy, with the application deadline on 31 May 2021.

ICE, based at Madingley Hall in Cam-

bridge, is a branch of the University of Cambridge which acts as "an accessible gateway" for learners approaching higher education for the first time, career-changers and early- and mid-career professionals in order to provide "opportunities to learn in later life." It provides over 250 courses per year, ranging from undergraduate and master's certificates to short online courses and summer programmes, as well as courses on the edX online platform.

Dr James Gazzard, Director of ICE, told *Varsity* that the bursary had been in consideration in light of "the impact of COVID-19 on the global economy and particularly on recent graduates and early career professionals."

A report from the Graduate Union (GU) released last July surveyed 847 postgraduate students on various issues related to communication, productivity and mental health, funding and submission extensions and accommodation. The report found that, when asked to rate the University's response to their issues, 796 respondents returned a mean satisfaction level of 57.51%.

When asked about plans for potential future bursaries, Gazzard responded that there are not any further plans at present, but that ICE is still offering a 25% fee concession for all of its courses for any alumni or current staff members of the University as it does in any non-Covid year, except for Master of Studies (MSt) courses and the International Pre-Master's Programme.

Gazzard clarified that the bursary will be awarded to students on a first-come first-served basis provided that they meet the eligibility criteria, and that it will be deducted from the final course payment instalment.

ICE's Next Generation Bursary follows the relaunch of its Cambridge Thousand Futures Bursary in December, which offers 1,000 people across the UK a £1,000 bursary, and provides a subsidy towards the cost of ICE's part-time undergraduate certificates, diplomas and advanced diplomas. All of these will be delivered online in the 2021/22 academic year.

The Next Generation Bursary also follows an announcement in November by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the largest provider of PhD funding in the UK, that students should adjust their research projects in order to complete them within the existing funding period, rather than extending the period in light of the pandemic. This prompted an open letter signed by 1,127 academics (as of 09/02) across the country in support of PhD students, which "urge[d] that UKRI revisit this decision with the view to providing greater support to emerging researchers who have had their research disrupted."

UKRI has pledged an additional £180m in funding for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years in its COVID-19 Grant Extension Allocation (CoA).

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Negible financial impact on University finances due to pandemic with staff reward schemes to be reinstated next year

Ewan Hawkins
Investigations Editor
Alexander Shytrov
Deputy News Editor

An official report published on 27th January has downplayed the impact of Covid-19 on the University's finances. The report states the "University's income streams are more robust than previously thought" and "the measurable direct net financial impact on the Chest so far seems to have been more or less negligible". However, the report does not comment on colleges finances.

Following this, it was announced yesterday (11/02) that the staff reward and progression schemes suspended because of the pandemic will run as normal next year subject to University Council approval. This follows a campaign by the trade union UCU for the schemes to be reinstated.

The report was published by the Board of Scrutiny, a committee of elected academic staff responsible "for ensuring transparency and accountability in all aspects of University operations".

The document supplements a report published by the Board in November 2020 on the University's central budget, known as the Chest. The Chest, with an income of £516.7 million this academic

year, is used to cover "core recurrent costs of the University in teaching, basic research and associated administration".

The Board of Scrutiny suggests "the University's Covid-19 scenario modelling earlier in the year was, in hindsight, excessively pessimistic and did not highlight a scenario which accurately captured what has, in fact, transpired so far".

The report is highly critical of the decision to suspend "almost all reward and progression schemes", including the Professorial Pay Review 2020, the Grade 12 Contribution Reward Scheme 2021 and the Researcher Increment Scheme 2020/21. These were introduced by the University as a way to reward staff, ensure that their salaries are competitive within the academic labour market and to recognise staff contribution which goes "above and beyond" expectations.

The Board of Scrutiny report notes: "Many staff have had to work exceptionally hard in difficult circumstances throughout 2020 to keep the University's operations going. Given this, the suspension of almost all reward and progression schemes in 2020-21 is exceptionally disappointing to many, particularly as this was justified, in part, by the pandemic."

A Cambridge University and College Union (UCU) spokesperson told *Varsity*: "The report of the Board of Scrutiny makes it really clear: there is no financial rationale for the University to further extend the promotion freeze. As the impact of Covid-19 on the chest allocation has been negligible, we also believe that the University should lift the Recruitment Protocol which has increased workload for both teaching and administrative staff."

They noted: "The Higher Education sector was already understaffed before the pandemic, and UCU members went on strike for 20 days last year over issues including workload. Last summer, the University froze promotions and imposed a recruitment protocol to protect its finances against the potential adverse impact of Covid-19."

"Now that we know University finances are healthier than forecast, staff cannot continue paying for a tragedy that did not occur: the University needs to lift both the promotion freeze and the recruitment protocol".

Despite the limited financial impact of the pandemic, members of the Board are concerned about the "well-documented structural deficit" in the Chest, and, in the Council's October report on allocations from the Chest, propose the refine-

ment of several initiatives in order to generate income.

Nevertheless, the report of the Board of Scrutiny is clear that the "endless hollering out of the salaries and benefits of rank-and-file University employees" is "not sustainable" as a strategy of resolving the structural deficit in the long term.

The October report of the Council criticised "some institutions" within the University, claiming they have "been unable to scale back activity to live within their means".

In response, the Council identified several 'Category 1 initiatives', which aim to cut £9.3 million in University spending immediately. Savings included the suspension of funds used by departments to purchase equipment, as well as "pay and non-pay savings" in the University's Unified Administrative Service (UAS).

The October report nonetheless noted that "austerity measures in recent years" prevent institutions from going "very much further" with cuts "without significant detriment to the University's academic potential".

The Library Syndicate, a committee which supervises the management of the University Library and affiliated libraries, in particular "cautioned against arbitrary cuts to Chest expenditure on

material to support current research and educational needs", according to the October report.

As a result, "over thirty" 'Category 2 initiatives', described as based "predominantly on the generation of income" have been identified across the University.

The October report did not give details of the projects, but proposals include "new or expanded postgraduate taught, executive education and other taught courses", as well as changing "unregulated fees".

Reviewing the initiatives, the Board of Scrutiny states that it "cannot form a view as to their likely success" because "no detail is provided about the potential scale of either cost savings or additional income that might be delivered by these initiatives".

Responding to the conclusions of the Board of Scrutiny, a University spokesperson told *Varsity*: "The net financial impact on the University appears broadly neutral in results for the financial year to July 2020 because it only captures the first few months of the pandemic.

The spokesperson added: "Collegiate Cambridge will come out of the pandemic with reserves materially depleted from pre-Covid projections in spite of the prudent scenario planning that continues to evolve with each new phase."

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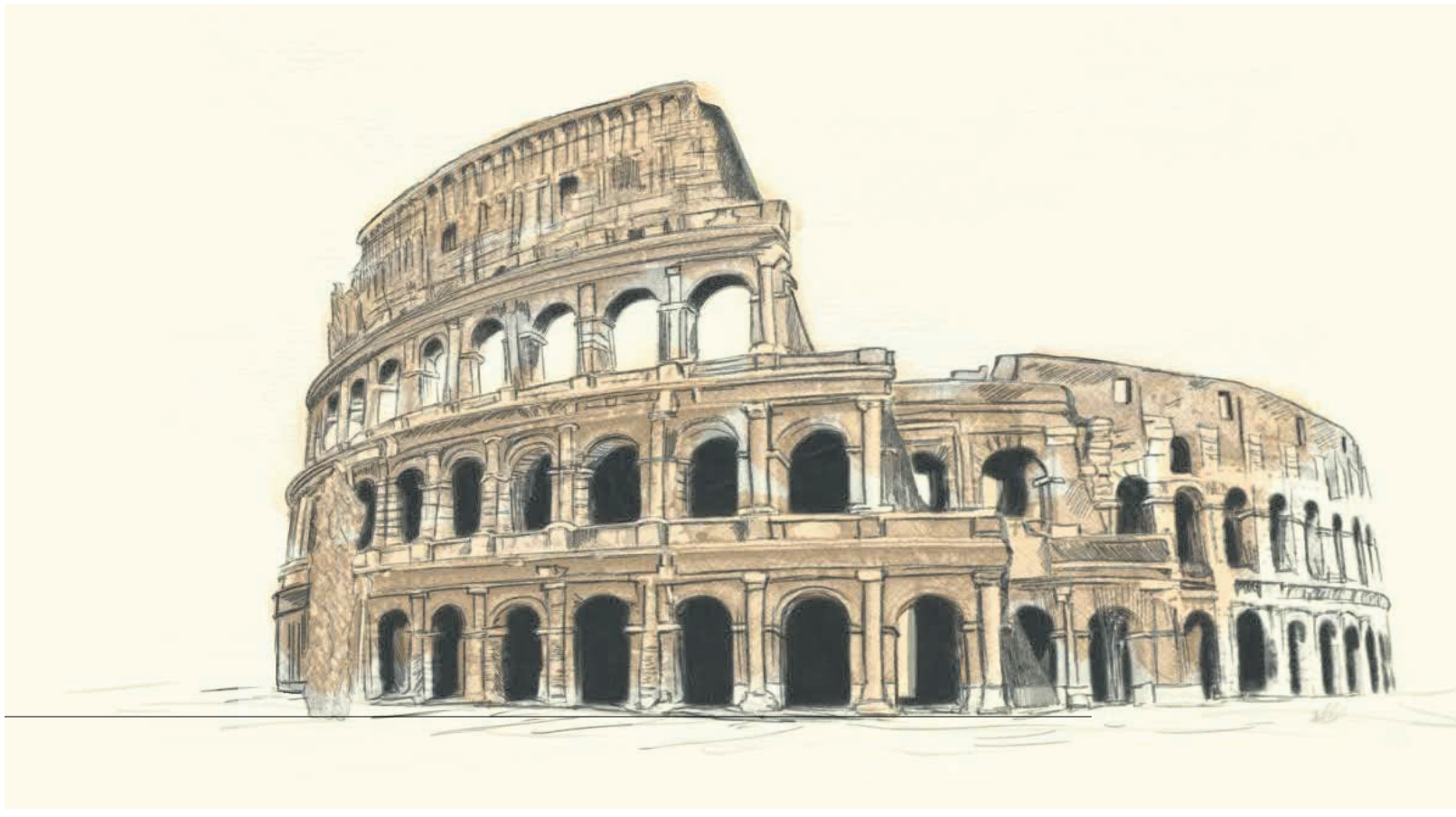
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Features

On Classics, and falling out of love with my subject

Ellie Etches tries to come to terms with her decision to leave Classics, reflecting on what made her love the Ancient World and why she couldn't study it anymore



It's summer, and the backroom window is open, letting in a gulp of fresh air and rare Manchester sunshine. I'm staring at my laptop screen, wondering how long I can linger, hovering over the link to the Zoom meeting that started two, three minutes ago. A notification pops up. An email, asking if I'm having trouble getting into the call and I think, yes, but not in the way you think. I take a deep breath and click 'Join'.

This conversation has been a long time coming. When the call ends, psychologically if not yet in writing, I'll no longer be a Classicist. My relationship with Classics has been short, fraught, and something I've not yet attempted to sift through. This is what I want to do now: sort the fragments, categorize.

Up until Sixth Form, my only opportunity to interact with the Ancient World had been through a much-coveted young adult series (no points for guessing which.) I was one of those kids with a weird fascination with the Ancient Egyptians; who watched *The Lord of the Rings* a few too many times – the Classical Civilisation course I took at sixth-form was a revelation. It seemed as though all of my broad-ranging, niche interests had converged into one course. We started on the *Odyssey*, and I was enchanted.

I'm wary of over-romanticising: I know what the fetishization of the brutal Ancient World can yield (salve, incels).

Historically limited to a Eurocentric field of study, Classics is rife with symbolism now synonymous with colonialism and fascism. But there was another side – that of warrior women, dread goddesses and tragic heroines. And there was the potential for queer theoretical analysis, so intrinsic to the sexual and social cultures of Greece and Rome that this was no longer a marginal approach, but a well-tread and accepted one.

“
I'm left to
ponder what
could have
been different to
allow me to still
be there
”

I didn't consider myself an Oxbridge candidate. Despite being shoved into various high achievers' groups I never felt I could match my academically gifted

peers, whip-smart students who delighted in their ability to stand toe-to-toe with the teacher. By the time they were embroiled in these classroom debates I'd barely finished chewing my way through the text and deciding what I thought about it. The fear of being called on in class made me sick – I felt like a fraud cowering behind my ability to write a good essay, an imposter who would expose herself as lacking all original thought once called to speak.

And then came my invitation to join a Sutton Trust summer school in Cambridge. Any lingering feelings of intimidation slipped away unnoticed as our small group huddled in a break room with tea and biscuits, pitting our favourite heroes against one another as if playing a game of Mythological Match Attax. At the end of the week, I sat in the back of the car clutching my parting gift (a group signed copy of Tacitus' *Annals*) and felt that I was leaving something precious behind.

By the time the university application process rolled around, I'd started to think I had a chance of making it to Cambridge. There was no time to stop and ask myself if this was what I really wanted. Visiting the Faculty had allowed me to envision myself in that environment, just like my Sixth Form teachers had wanted, and that was good enough.

A stressful results day filled with uncertainty resulted in the loss of the place

I'd earned at Pembroke after interviewing there. But, a few days later, I received an offer to study at Fitzwilliam.

On paper, my first year actually went quite well. I was back in the Faculty that felt so much like home. Our task, to achieve A-level standard Latin and a good foundation in Greek, was actually one of Herculean proportions, but it didn't always feel like that (except I still sometimes wake up in a cold sweat after nightmares in which I'm forced to locate the verb in a Ciceronian sentence.)

But throughout an entire year of managing just fine, there were these tiny, persistent drops of actually-not-fine... Old feelings of inadequacy would resurface in the form of supervision anxiety that left my mind foggy and my words slow, as if my tongue had grown two sizes. When it came to the parts of Classics that weren't art or literature I felt a lack of interest that gave way to huge waves of guilt (you're supposed to enjoy your subject, you know). I tried to convince myself that these were teething problems that would eventually go away if I ignored them and stopped forgetting to take my Sertraline in the morning.

The thing about erosion is that you can never see the damage as it's happening; it was in locked-down Easter term that I realised how much I'd been worn down. We were dealing with family bereavement, so I'd tried to hold the floodgate on the storm that was brewing

◀ “My relationship with Classics has been short, fraught, and something I've not yet attempted to sift through.” (OLIVIA LISLE)

for the sake of everyone else's sanity. It resulted in me looking up from an excerpt of *Reading Greek* and bursting into tears. Sorry, Mum.

A few emails, Zoom talks and stress-walks later, and I was an English student.

And it's two terms into this new identity that I sit writing this, still not knowing if I've made the right decision. I know two others who quit Classics, and I'm sure there have been many more, but this hasn't fully eased my guilt. My subject defined me, and now I feel

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an entire year
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indefinable. I'm no longer a Classicist. But I don't feel like an English student. I'm a second-year, but I'm also a Fresher again. I still feel two steps behind in my classes.

I'm left to ponder what could have been different to allow me to still be there now, enjoying the subject I miss every day. I don't know how else the Faculty could even the playing-field; perhaps the gap between those who already have Latin and Greek and those who don't is just too big to bridge without losing a few along the way. Maybe the problem is with me; perhaps my academic confidence is so shattered now that there's just no coming back from it.

I just don't know.

My relationship with Classics has been changed forever, but that fondness for the Ancient World will never leave me, fractured as it is. When the dust settles, it'll be there: missing a few pieces, perhaps, but just like marble and bronze, permanent.

Lockdown Love Letters: Dear Mum

As part of our lockdown love letters series, Senior Features Editor *Nick Bartlett* reflects on his relationship with his mum



▲ “Sometimes, I wish you were more selfish, so I could be more selfish and not feel bad about it” (NICK BARTLETT)

For as long as I can remember, I have always been described in relation to you. There is a photo of you as a child: a white summer dress balloons in the sunshine, your body angled away from the camera. Short, cropped hair falls just below your ears, swinging above your shoulders, white as sugar. I had the same hair as a child. And, I suppose, people saw this as the first of many parallels.

Lockdown was always going to be difficult for you – difficult for anyone, and everyone, but particularly for you. I don’t say that in an accusatory way. Hear me out first, Mum! Prior to lockdown, and when I was living at home, I would bump into you each week rushing out the door. A hamper, or box of miscellaneous food packages – jams, brownies, biscuits, cheeses, fruits – obscured the bottom half of your face. “Arnie’s Mum is unwell, darling. I’ll be back in an hour.” And, the next day – “Auntie Ann has bronchitis again, you know how much it knocks her around.” Smack. I picked up the bottle of Armaforce – a naturopathic medicine you swear by, placed it in the inside corner of the box and watched you stride out the gate. I marvel at the time and energy you put into the people in your life. It makes sense though; I don’t know a more loved person in this world than you.

In the period from August to September – the harshest of the lockdowns in Melbourne – we fought and we made up and we fought. I was working long hours at the time; taking the difficult overnight shifts at work with Thibault, working from midday one day until early morning the next. I almost always arrived home depleted. Into bed I went. And, bang, went the slam of my door.

You found any excuse to knock on my

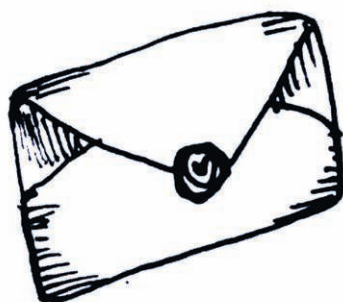
“
You found
any excuse
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door, to interact with me, or to engage with me during the day. “What’s on this morning, darling?” “Darling, just making some tea. Would you like some?” “Do you want to have lunch together, darling? No pressure!”

The little time I had to myself, I wanted to spend alone: not with family, nor friends, or anyone for that matter. “Darling, do you want to go for a walk together?” An exasperated sigh in response – one which I had hoped would be inaudible, but which snaked out of the corner of my mouth, rotated one hundred and eighty degrees and sank its claws into you standing at my bedroom door.

After that, there was nothing else I could say to convince you otherwise. “Darling, you know there’s never any pressure. I just love spending time with you.” “But Mum, I genuinely want to go for a walk with you; I wouldn’t go, if I didn’t want to.” If I said it with enough conviction, maybe you would believe me.

I hated the guilt I felt because I knew it wasn’t a reflection on you, but how do you convey that when rejection is rejection. “When I get home from work Mum, I just want to be by myself,” I said to you after a particularly difficult shift with Thibault. “But I feel



pressure from you to hang out.” And the look you gave me, made it even worse, because, above all else, you understood. I saw you pushing down your own disappointment, the pain you felt at your son not matching your excitement at the prospect of spending time with one another, and, in its place, you elevated empathy. As always, you managed to put someone else’s needs ahead of your own.

Then, there was my departure to university which further compounded the absence of physical interaction in your new lockdown existence. At first, it seemed so far away, an oasis that shimmered in and out of focus, irrelevant so long as it remained on the horizon. But we can’t control time: only how we use it. I knew you were bracing for its impact. Though when it came, there was nothing against which to brace. I was there, and then I wasn’t. There was no one to blame, and nothing to be done. The days came and went, and my bed remained empty. If I had been willing,

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But we
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time: only
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you would have called every day. If it was possible. And, if I had been willing. But you knew that I needed space and freedom, and so you gave it to me.

Every time. Every time, Mum, you find it in yourself to put our needs first. When I left, you cried. And between the tears, you told me how happy you were for me, how excited you were, how this is what I was supposed to do. When I became older, and my personality developed more and more, people stopped comparing us so much on the basis of our physical attributes; instead, they commented on the similarity of our hearts. Though I’m not sure I’m deserving of such a comparison. I don’t think anyone is, Mum.

Mum, I am grateful to you for so many reasons and there are too few words to do them justice. Sometimes, I wish you were more selfish, so I could be more selfish and not feel bad about it. But it’s not who you are, and I love who you are, and I consider myself the most fortunate son in the world.

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Opinion

It's time to start screaming about female pleasure

Ursula Moncrieff

Female pleasure: two words that have risen to prominence in recent years, yet ones that still fail to hit the right spot. For all of the female empowerment of the last few decades, many taboos remain for women, notably regarding the idea of sexual pleasure. Discussion is alive – but absent from where we need it most: in our classrooms.

Recent controversy has been sparked by the exam board AQA's decision to remove YouTuber Zoe Sugg's website from their GCSE media studies course. The website was initially added as a case study to the course in 2017, but has now been taken off after complaints of inappropriate content on the site, namely a recent post reviewing the best sex toys of 2021. The 'mature' content of the site has been deemed 'unsuitable' for GCSE students. AQA has taken pains to point out that this includes not just the 16 year olds sitting the exam, but also the 14 year olds beginning the course.

Reading AQA's statement, I am reminded of my own sex education, in which the topic of female pleasure was not so much censored as non-existent. Whilst boys were taken aside to be told about wet dreams and the process of their bodies' pleasure systems – though largely in the context of function – girls were taught about periods and the far-off notion that one day we might give birth. The diagrams of female anatomy shown in school often do not even include the

“We are deluding ourselves if we think that teenagers will not find other sources of education”

► Zoella was removed from the GCSE media studies course (PITTSTONE/WIKI-MEDIA COMMONS)

clitoris, as pleasure is erased from the dialogue, somehow confined to a separate, unspoken sphere.

Such silence is insidious and leaks outwards. Not only was female pleasure never mentioned in the classroom, but it remained a stifled and taboo topic of conversation throughout all five of my years at an all girls' establishment, between the ages of 11 and 16. Whilst the boys I knew talked happily about masturbation habits and enjoyed universal societal affirmation of their pleasure, there was a culture of silence and shame around the same topics for us.

A Swedish study found that 15% of women aged 18 to 24 had never masturbated before, compared to just 1% of men. Another study showed that almost 30% of college-aged women could not identify the clitoris on an anatomy test. There is a volume of consequence to our silence on such matters.

This is, of course, distressing in its own right. There is no reason why women should not be enjoying their bodies as much as men. However, I believe that the dangers of the pleasure gap and the gulf in our sexual education stretch beyond simply which gender totals the most orgasms over the course of their lives.

Whilst AQA questioned the suitability of Zoella's website for 14 year olds, studies have found that 13 is the average age a boy will first be exposed to pornography. We are deluding ourselves if we think that teenagers will not find other sources

of education in the absence of proper provision in schools. If porn is where most men, and often women too, are discovering their first notions of female pleasure, then I cannot help but feel the future prospects for our understanding of it are bleak.

How can we hope to transform our contemporary 'boys will be boys' culture if male pleasure continues to be a social priority, and female pleasure is either erased or viewed through a male lens? Should we not be encouraging people to understand their own bodies before they engage with anyone else's?

AQA's decision to remove Zoella's website is indicative of the taboo that still surrounds female pleasure in our society. It is not only misguided to think that teenagers are unaware of these topics, but wrong to think that they *should* be. When we remove pleasure from the narrative of education, and reduce sex entirely to function, this does not only

affect female pleasure. It disregards any form of non-heterosexual practise.

In the Netherlands, a comprehensive sex education is mandated for all students from the age of four, beginning with an emphasis on health, tolerance and assertiveness. Pleasure is discussed explicitly for both sexes, alongside a diverse exploration of what sex can mean that aims to break down the heteronormative, patriarchal culture that characterises sex education in the UK.

The result is lower teenage pregnancy, higher reported sexual satisfaction and a greater culture of tolerance and understanding.

The transformation of social attitudes starts in education. Pleasure in sex is not only normal, but good – for both sexes. Female pleasure, in particular, can be complex and take some time to understand. Our silence on the matter is helping no one.



Influencer getaways have united the public, but not in the way they would've liked



Joe Giles

While browsing a discarded glamour magazine on a train journey, a bemused Bill Bryson found himself asking: “why are these people famous? What qualities do they possess that endure them to the wider world? We may at once eliminate talent, intelligence, attractiveness and charm from the equation, so what does that leave?” Leaving aside the relative attractiveness, intelligence and talent of various reality stars, Bryson's curmudgeonly remarks raise a much broader question, one which the Covid-19 pandemic has perhaps shed some light on. Namely, what do the public look for in a 21st century celebrity? What is it that compels thousands to avidly consume the online content they generate? Perhaps more pertinently, how concerned are we by the ethical issues raised in its production?

I must confess, I am not naturally inclined to take much interest in the lives of reality television stars and, like Bryson, I sometimes find myself questioning why other people do. Until recently, I had assumed the clue was in the name: ‘reality’, to me, suggests a relatable figure, someone whose appeal lies in the very fact they seem relatively unremarkable and down-to-earth. Many such celebrities have capitalised on this perception, interacting with fans on social media in a way other public figures have not traditionally done.

What to make, then, of the incessant holiday snaps some jet-setting influenc-

ers have been flooding social media with recently? At a time when foreign travel seems like a distant fantasy for most, such images appear almost surreal, fleeting glimpses of the life we once knew, a life many would give almost anything to live. Naturally, this content has a polarising effect, even among those who actively choose to follow it. Posts are attracting swathes of negative comments, often from people who have been deeply affected by the pandemic. To them, being confronted with somebody else's seemingly idyllic existence strikes of callous insensitivity, and fosters understandable resentment. Yet every photo still receives thousands of likes. Instagram engagement was up almost 50% in the first lockdown, and it isn't difficult to imagine why. Living through a global crisis has required each of us to find a means of diversion, a hinterland far removed from the devastating effects of Covid-19. Perhaps the hyperreality of Instagram offers, for some, a necessary form of escapism, a reminder that there's more to life than lockdown. It is not for me – or anyone else – to opine about the ‘right’ way to cope with a pandemic.

Nevertheless, the production of this content raises some uncomfortable questions. The Foreign Office currently prohibits travel abroad for all but essential purposes. The question of whether being an influencer is a ‘real’ job is largely irrelevant; hairdressers and chefs have ‘real’ jobs, but few would defend a salon or restaurant which defied lockdown by remaining open. Is posting online content

really a means of employment essential enough to require travel? Influencers' pages hardly abound with evidence to suggest so. Granted, bikini snaps from a garden in Essex probably do hold a little less allure than those taken at a luxury Dubai resort. But much health, fashion and lifestyle-based content seems well suited to staying at home, as a host of lockdown-abiding celebrities have proven. To many, influencers appear to be justifying an opulent holiday with a legal loophole, profiting financially as a result.

It's worth remembering that this is a symptom of several far more sinister undercurrents. Priti Patel's recent denunciation of holiday-makers was well-received, but the government she serves has persisted with one of the most porous, least effective border policies in the developed world, failing to require a negative test on arrival and largely ignoring a worrying lack of compliance with travel quarantine measures. Many of the influencers abroad travelled before Tier 4 was introduced in many areas in December, when holidays were advised against but not explicitly forbidden by law. Such negligence seems staggering now. Questions must also be asked of the UAE, a nation with a woeful human rights record which willingly plays host to the celebrity party scene while domestic cases increase. Similarly, brands and television networks have a moral responsibility to disassociate themselves from content which so flagrantly contradicts the spirit of the crisis, though there is

“Brands and television networks have a moral responsibility to disassociate themselves from content which so flagrantly contradicts the spirit of the crisis”

little sign of them doing so.

This is, admittedly, a debate mostly driven by image, but in a time of national crisis the importance of symbolism cannot be underestimated. Numerous psychological studies have found evidence to suggest that our own observance of lockdown measures is motivated largely by how compliant we perceive everybody else to be. Celebrities serve as role models to thousands, and consequently their behaviour is heavily scrutinised. The trite myth of us ‘all being in this together’, pushed by a government seeking to distract from the vast inequality that has facilitated this disaster, is hopelessly exposed when money and status appear to insulate a privileged handful from the effects of the pandemic. When maximum individual sacrifice is universally required, some celebrities' flagrant lack of awareness is irresponsible to say the least.

Some influencers have seen a significant drop in their online following, but whether their long-term popularity will suffer is anyone's guess. Perhaps, in a rush to exorcise every lingering memory of this nightmare, this debate will simply wash away. But when the sheer scale of human loss truly hits, I suspect each of us will ask ourselves how we spent the pandemic. In the meantime, if you find yourself growing disillusioned or resentful, simply avoid the content, and take solace from the fact that the jet-setters will likely have to spend ten days stuck in an airport travel lodge when they eventually return.

Asylum seekers continue to be treated as sub-human, just look at Napier barracks

Gaby Vides



Isn't it now obvious that Napier barracks is simply a quasi-detention centre? Asylum seekers were told they would only be temporarily housed in the barracks, yet many have been confined to the site for months with little or no information on their future in the UK.

The repurposed Ministry of Defence barracks in Kent have been used by the government since September 21st in an ostensible attempt to provide 'suitable' accommodation for asylum seekers while their claims are processed. The 400 male asylum seekers held in the barracks are reportedly crammed into accommodation blocks that house up to 28 people in one room, and only recently have fabric sheets and plywood screens been installed to provide some degree of privacy. Yet these measures still provide the residents with no protection from Covid-19.

While the government has pledged to overhaul the "fundamentally broken" asylum system, Priti Patel's political bolstering of reconfiguring the system to make it "firm and fair" seems callous in the face of unfolding events at Napier. Since a fire broke out on the site last month, reports have emerged of no heating and electricity in all but one of the blocks, difficulties in accessing food, and the obstruction of voluntary services, such as legal aid, for the asylum seekers.

The fire was not unpredictable - in fact it was entirely anticipated. Human rights watchdogs, refugee organisations, and medical professionals have been warning of the unsafe, unsanitary, and frankly inhumane conditions of the barracks since their inception. In a joint letter, coordinated by Doctors of World, Freedom from Torture and the Helen Bamber Foundation, and signed by the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Faculty of Public Health, signatories called for the barracks to be closed, de-

tailoring that while "these sites are not classified as detention centres, the sites bear many of the hallmarks of detention and operate like an open prison."

Even though these concerns were articulated by medical and legal professionals months prior to the Napier barracks fire, they were met with little avail. The government also did not change its course despite hunger strikes by residents, numerous suicide attempts, and a Covid-19 outbreak in Napier at the beginning of the year, with at least 120 men testing positive. Instead, the Home Office has sinisterly asked volunteers entering the site to sign confidentiality agreements in an attempt to cover up the horror of Napier's conditions.

So, the question is why? Why is the government so resolved on housing asylum seekers at Napier?

Napier is part of the government's wider criminalisation and stigmatisation of asylum seekers. Inundated with pejorative branding as "migrants" and "service users" by the immigration compliance minister and home secretary, the legitimate claims of asylum seekers continue to be obscured by the government's political lexicon of 'illegal crossings' and 'criminal trade.' As if this divisive polarisation wasn't enough, the scornful brandishing of lawyers who support asylum seekers' claims as "do gooders" and "lefty lawyers" further demonstrates the hatred that our government attempts to whip up. We've shamefully entered a toxic political climate of stopping, pointing, and pouring scorn not just on those in need, but also those who endeavour to help.

The constructed distinction between 'legitimate' - thus perceived to be deserving - and 'illegitimate' asylum claims has been actively deployed by the government to justify its ongoing hostile policies. Asylum seekers currently live on just over £5 a day, many are denied the right to work, and recent

figures indicate that more than 36,000 asylum seekers have had to wait longer than six months for their claims to be processed.

To be clear, there is no such thing as an 'illegal' asylum seeker - this paradoxical conception undermines the unimaginable struggles that asylum seekers must endure to reach the UK. As a letter signed by the 'Asylum Seekers of the Napier Barracks' writes: "It is vital to understand that no one chooses to leave the country that they were born in, no one choose to leave their family and loved ones behind. We came to this country to save our lives." The Home Secretary knows this, yet she continues to construct asylum seekers as suspect characters with cunning plots to subvert British immigration law.

During a time of looming economic crisis, an ongoing pandemic, and an ideologically intransigent government bent on shrinking state welfare, asylum seekers and migrants are yet again the scapegoats of choice. This bruising brandishing was flagrantly evident in Patel's statement responding to the Napier fire, an event she described as "deeply offensive to the taxpayers of this country who are providing this accommodation." Patel went on to threaten "robust" police action against those "putting lives at

risk" and called it an "insult to say that [the barracks are] not good enough [accommodation] for these individuals."

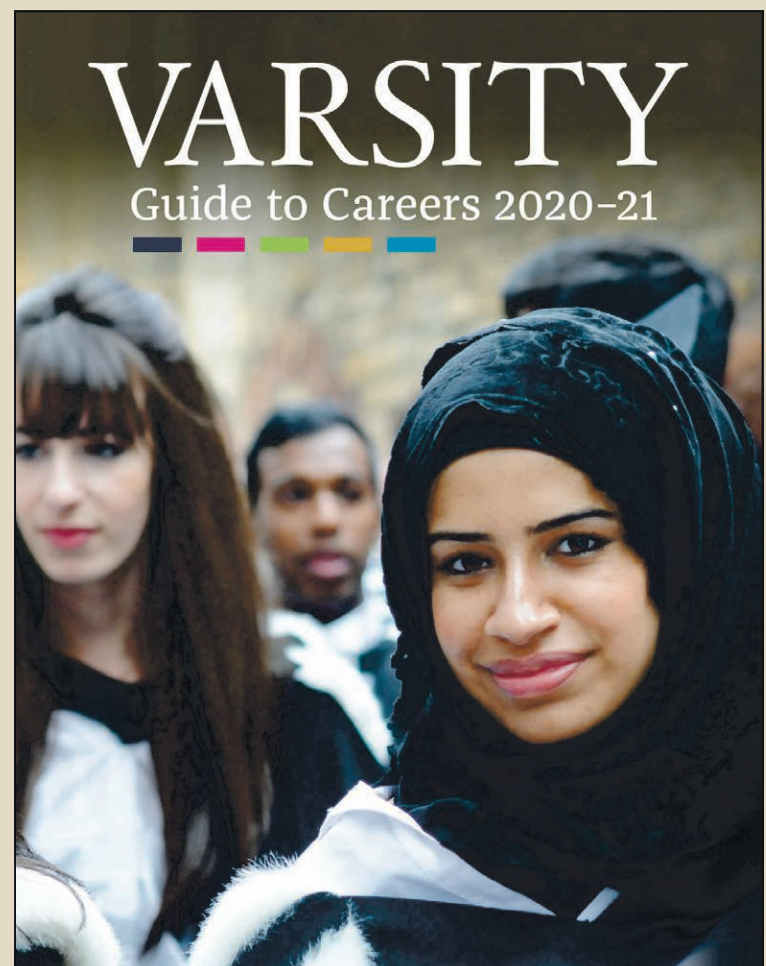
Instead of acknowledging the destitute conditions of the barracks, the Home Secretary has seized the opportunity to use Napier as a mere pawn in the Conservatives' culture war. Patel's nationalistic tub-thumping is a form of gaslighting, deflecting the government's inhumanity onto asylum seekers - again subverting their legal entitlement to asylum into a luxury *oh so benevolently* bestowed upon them by the government. The fact that Patel is engaging with - and actively producing - this moral panic for political capital is an unsurprising disgrace, and not one without consequence: far-right activists have been emboldened to stage protests outside the barracks, continuing on from harassment asylum seekers faced last year.

Napier is not just a symbol of the government's incompetence but also of its unconscionable cruelty. These asylum seekers have already experienced immeasurable traumas. The government should not be treating them with suspension and stigma. So yes, Priti Patel has certainly got one thing right: our asylum system is broken. But let me ask you this: who broke it?

▲ **Humane conditions? Sanitary? Safe? Most would argue not.** (COLLAGE BY ALEX LEGGATT - TWITTER/ UNHCR, TWITTER/ HEARTSOUTHNEWS, TWITTER/RADICAL-HONEYBEE, TWITTER/ FREEFROMTORTURE)

“The Home Secretary continues to construct asylum seekers as suspect characters with cunning plots”

The Varsity Guide to Careers 2020/2021

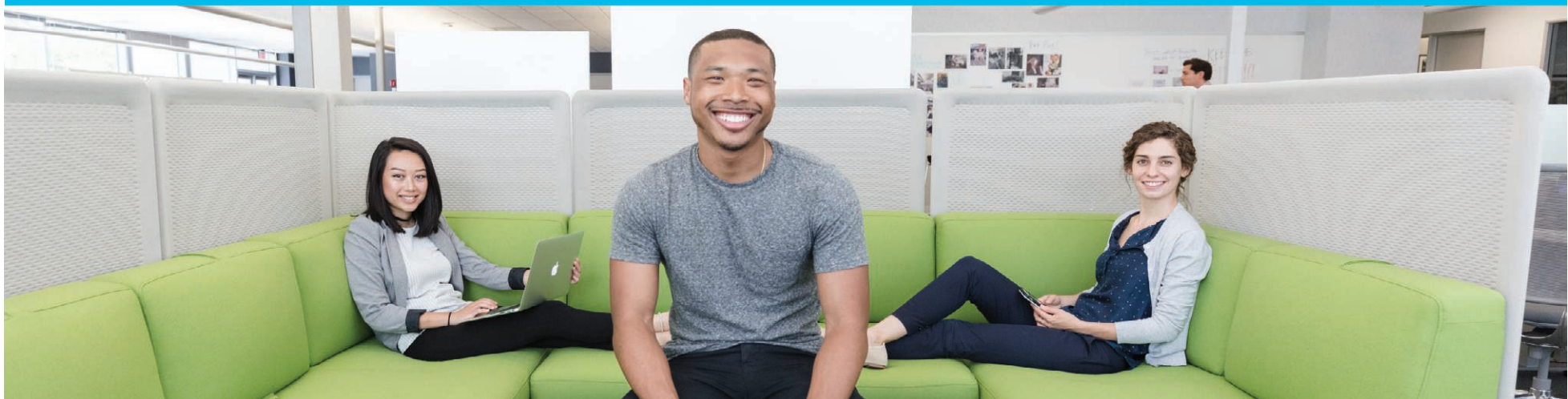


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Science

Varsity explains: The chemistry of chemistry, the science of love

In this Valentine's Day edition of Varsity Explains, **Fatima Eshani** explains the molecular processes behind what we experience as 'love', and discusses what actually drives behaviours of lust and affection

The world we see around us is only an approximation: our brains' best guesses as to what is happening in our surroundings. Our experiences, thoughts, and feelings can all be chalked down to molecules and electrical signals in our heads. So, in the words of the great scientist Haddaway, Varsity poses the question: what is love?

Love can be thought of as comprising three stages: sexual attraction, romantic attraction, and attachment. While there is certainly overlap between stages, individual chemical messengers have been mapped out as occurring in significantly larger quantities during some stages than others.

“
Romantic attraction can occur without lust and vice versa
”

Sexual attraction, or lust, is the product of the hormones testosterone and oestrogen. Contrary to popular belief, both are found in men and women. The hypothalamus in the brain is responsible for stimulating the release of these hormones via what is known as the hypothalamic pituitary gonadal axis. While oestrogen plays a role in arousal – for example, women have increased libido in the period surrounding ovulation, when oestrogen is at peak levels – testosterone is the main driver of lust.

In general, men have seven to eight times more testosterone than women,



typically resulting in an increased sex drive. Studies have shown that men may subconsciously detect when women are ovulating (due to changing body scent and other indicators), making them sexually attracted to someone they perhaps might not have been otherwise. Women with increased testosterone are also thought to have a greater sex drive than women with lower levels. One possible cause for this is PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome), affecting roughly 10% of all women.

Romantic attraction can occur without lust, and vice versa – the important distinction is the triggering of reward-based behaviours i.e., the chase. The reward system pathway, which involves the hypothalamus and other important brain

structures, is responsible for those obsessive thoughts and feelings. When romantic attraction is felt, the reward centre of the brain is stimulated, resulting in dopamine release.

Noradrenaline, a 'fight-or-flight' neurotransmitter that often behaves as a hormone, is also elevated during this stage. The 'honeymoon phase' and its associated euphoria at the start of a relationship can be attributed to dopamine.

Perhaps surprisingly, increased levels of dopamine are also associated with behaviours such as cocaine use; the high associated with increased dopamine makes romantic attraction somewhat akin to the process of becoming slowly addicted to someone.

Interestingly, studies show that dopamine is elevated when one is anticipating a reward; levels actually peak when uncertainty is at its highest. This explains why dating people who give mixed signals may be so addictive, despite us knowing better. It follows that

lower levels of dopamine may be to blame for the loss of the spark in long-term relationships where the anticipation is gone.

Lastly, attachment is felt in both long-term relationships and friendships, and is thought to be mediated by the 'cuddle' hormone oxytocin and antidiuretic hormone (ADH), both produced by the hypothalamus in the brain. That warm feeling of security when you see someone you are attached to? All the work of oxytocin. Oxytocin is released in response to a plethora of triggers, from platonic hugs to physical intimacy – it is even released during childbirth. Studies show that oxytocin increases fidelity and may cause

men in monogamous relationships to socially distance themselves from other a t -

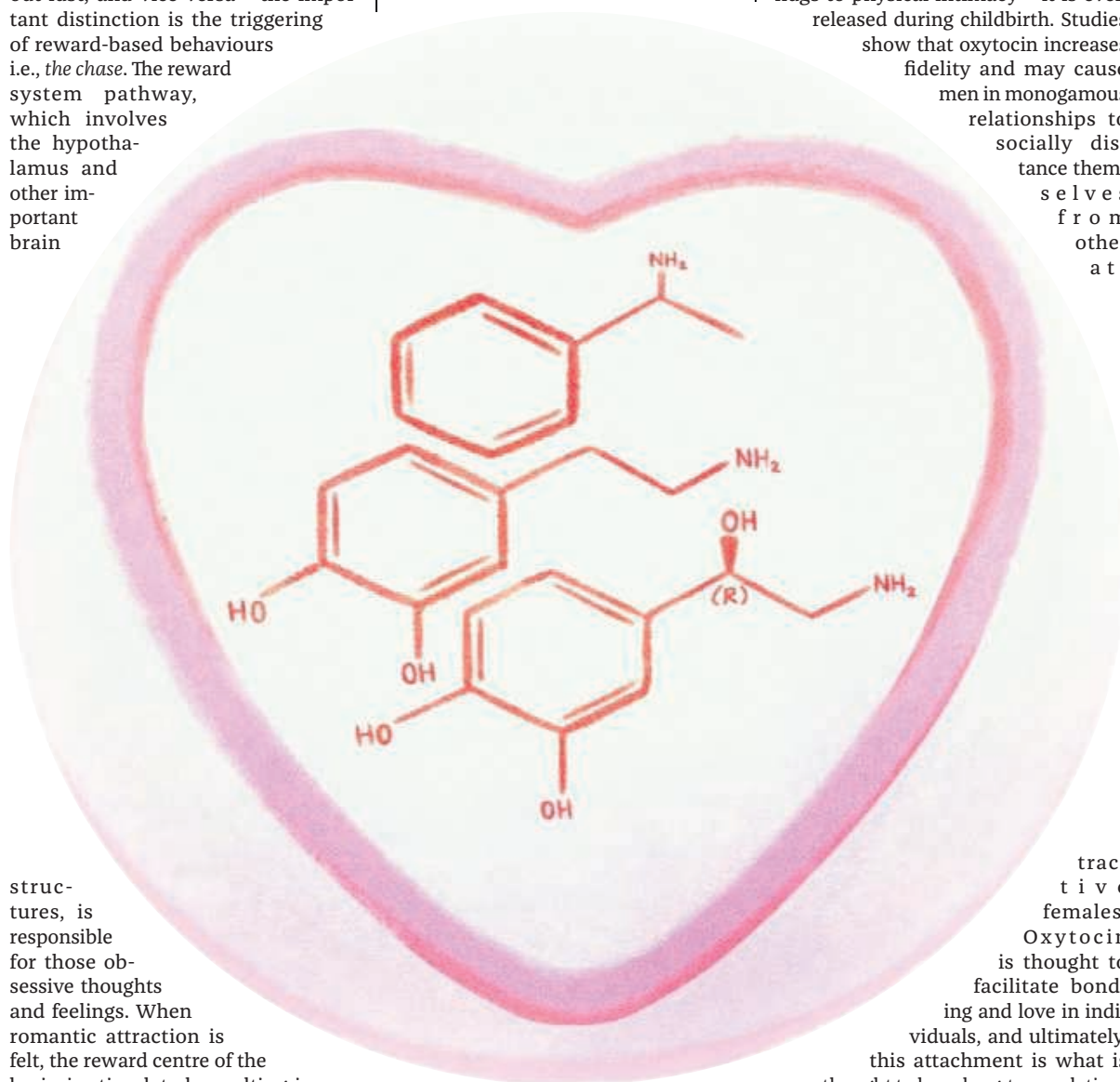


of top-down processing. For example, studies on human vision show that vision can be penetrated by prior information from the brain to modulate what we see. For example, muffins are seen as being larger to those on a diet and figures can take on more frightening interpretations when listening to scary music. Isolation can make people seem closer in distance and make the lightness of a smiling face seem brighter. Theories of top-down processing suggest that the raw information our eyes gather is intercepted by past experiences and emotions from the brain.

“
The loved one before you is not actually who you think they are
”

This modifies what you actually see based on what was useful to see in the past. It is possible to argue, therefore, that the loved one you see before you is not actually who you think they are, but rather a formulation based on what is beneficial for you to see – a explanation, perhaps, for the 'inertia' some people feel before ending a relationship.

For those currently in love, it is a beautiful and complex system involving many brain areas which have power to make physical changes in our bodies. For those currently experiencing heartbreak, it is all just molecules. 'I love you from the bottom of my hypothalamus' – why not opt for a more neuroanatomically correct expression this Valentine's day?



▲“Feelings of attachment may supersede the human instinct to find a more compatible mate” (KERI MCINTYRE)

trac-
t i v e
females.
Oxytocin is thought to facilitate bonding and love in individuals, and ultimately, this attachment is what is thought to keep long-term relationships alive, perhaps even longer than is healthy. Feelings of attachment may supersede the human instinct to find a more compatible mate.

All of this, of course, is dependent on your perception of the person you love. This can be illustrated by the principle

Interviews

“Reports of the journalism industry’s death have been exaggerated”

Georgia Goble interviews journalist Elizabeth Day on the difficulties of a Cambridge degree, the “extraordinarily glamorous parties” of a gossip columnist, and her extremely unfashionable sense of optimism

Queens’ College alumna Elizabeth Day is a journalist, novelist and host of the hit podcast *How to Fail with Elizabeth Day*, and author of the subsequent memoir *How to Fail: Everything I’ve Learnt from Things Going Wrong*.

As someone who spends a lot of time talking about failure, Elizabeth’s wisdom on the topic is something we can all learn from. Despite graduating with a double first, she admits Cambridge sometimes made her feel like a failure. Cambridge’s challenging theatre scene, for instance, led her to lose confidence in her talent for acting. “I acted a bit at school, and I was like, well, I’m good at acting. So I went for one audition for an adaptation of *Amadeus*, and it was awful. I never heard back. Suddenly I realised I was nowhere near as good as other students. I never tried acting again. I felt like a failure. I was still such a perfectionist: if I wasn’t going to be perfect at something, then I didn’t want to do it at all. It’s such a ridiculous way to live.”

After graduating with a degree in History, Elizabeth, who has gone on to write for such publications as *The Observer*, the *Sunday Telegraph* and *British Vogue*, got a job as a columnist for *The Evening Standard*. “I was sort of oddly determined to be a journalist from a young age, and I started getting loads of work experience on local newspapers, and then when I was at Cambridge, I got really involved in *Varsity* and I edited my College magazine. I also had internships during the holidays. All of those things helped me to make that into a living, as I know it’s so [hard] to try and get a job in media. Now, if you’re not lucky enough to come from a wealthy background, you can’t do endless unpaid internships, so my way of doing that was to get my experience up while I was studying. I actually went to a careers evening at Cambridge, and I absolutely hated careers evenings, but the first person that I ran into was

the deputy editor of the ‘Londoner’s Diary’ on *The Evening Standard*. We got talking and then he offered me a week’s work experience in the holidays, which turned into a full time job.”

Journalism has become a notoriously competitive industry, and many people dream of reaching the kind of success that Day has found in her career, especially in the last few years with the vast success of her podcast. So, I ask her, has the journalism industry lived up to her expectations?

“Yes and no. I did have a very romanticised notion that it was going to be like, Lois Lane in *The New Adventures of Superman*, that I was going to be sort of stalking the corridors of power, and when I started my job was essentially that of a gossip columnist so it wasn’t like that. But it was very fun. I used to have to bow up to celebrities and ask them something that would make for an entertaining titbit for the next day’s newspaper. I got to go to all of these extraordinarily glamorous parties, which in the normal course of events I would never have been invited to, all sorts of film premieres, book launches and even Cannes Film Festival. I learned a lot from that job too. One of the main things I learned was what makes a story, how to convey it in a minimal amount of words, and how to write it quickly to a deadline. And all of those skills served me so well in the future. All journalistic experience, even if it’s not exactly what you want to be doing, is really useful for the future.”

“Now I have my own column (in *You Magazine*) and that is really beyond my wildest dreams. It’s just so nice to have a platform, to be given total freedom. And the one thing that really has lived up to expectation is the incredible people I’ve met along the way. When I was working for *The Sunday Telegraph* and *The Observer*, I would be sent sometimes to interview people at really difficult points in their life and they would invite me into their homes to tell me their stories, and that’s an incredible honour.”

With newspapers selling fewer and fewer copies, and a trend towards a reluctance to pay for journalism, the future of the industry is often viewed with cynicism. Elizabeth, however, doesn’t share this sense of pessimism.

“I’m unfashionably extremely optimistic. I’m a huge believer in two things. I’m a believer in talent. Good work will always find an audience, in whatever format. I’m also a believer in the fact that people want increasingly well-curated content. Although there is so much information out there, and we’re constantly being bombarded online, there’s so much to be said for a really smart publication or website that has a consistency of tone, which curates quality content for its audience. I always cite *The New Yorker* magazine as an example of a print publication whose circulation is rising,

and you may think *The New Yorker*, which is pretty dense looking, and doesn’t have photos, wouldn’t appeal in today’s world. You would think there would be no appetite for that because everyone wants a TikTok video now. But actually there’s loads of appetite for it. So, I think reports of [the journalism industry’s] death have been greatly exaggerated. The key is to keep evolving.”

These days, the thought of graduating into a full-time job at a newspaper seems like a miracle, yet, Elizabeth says, those leaving university now shouldn’t let their fears get the better of them.

“I think a lot of young people are more worried than ever about failing, especially as they

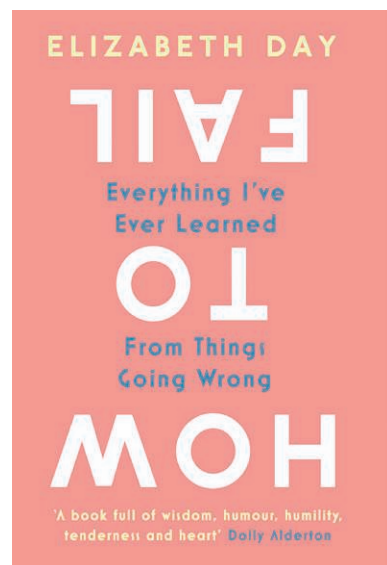
leave university. But I think the problem with a fear of failure is that it means that you often don’t take the opportunities that are presented to you, and you don’t take the risk because you’re so worried about what might go wrong and how you might be perceived. Keep trying, because eventually the right thing, I promise, will come to you, and you will look back and feel grateful for all the things that you learnt along the way. As Gloria Steinem (whom Day interviewed last year) said: ‘fear is often a signifier of growth.’ What we’re fearful of is the unknown, but we need the unknown as a space in which to grow.”

“We need the unknown as a space in which to grow”

“I had a sort of romanticized vision I would be stalking the corridors of power”



▲ “I’m unfashionably extremely optimistic. I’m a huge believer in two things. I’m a believer in talent. I’m also a believer in that people want increasingly curated content.” (JENNY SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY)



◀ **How To Fail** is Elizabeth’s first non-fiction book (ELIZABETH DAY)



ILLUSTRATION BY LOUISE KNIGHT

Lifestyle

Facetiming Friends

It's probably an understatement to say that we've all been video calling more than we would like recently. This week, Lifestyle Editor **Scarlet Rowe** explores what the sudden influx of Facetime into her life has taught her

If you'd have told me a year ago that I'd be spending a significant amount of the next year on FaceTime, I'd probably have scoffed in disdain. No way, I would respond, and take a sip of my tea to comfort myself at such a horrifying prospect.

FaceTiming has always been (and will always be) an object of terror to me. Seeing my face lurking in a tiny rectangle is enough to plunge me into an absolute crisis of confidence: *OMG, look at that spot*, you'll often hear me exclaiming – two octaves higher than my normal tone. My hair is sOoooO frizzy today is another favourite of mine. Even if I don't utter such comments, I can guarantee that I am saying them internally. In supervisions, you'll find me juggling half-developed thoughts about economic exchange systems with fully-developed concerns about my hairstyle, while trying desperately to only verbalise the former.

Largely against my will, then, this pandemic has forced me to give FaceTime a go. The blissful days of being able to ignore its existence completely are buried in the past. So now that I have hundreds of FaceTime hours to my name, I have a few thoughts that I'm sincerely hoping you will be able to relate to.

Lesson 1

Whenever you and your friend agree that you will 'only call for five minutes' because you both have 'SO much work to do' and you're 'literally in the middle of an essay crisis', know (in the kindest way possible), that you are lying to yourself. If you are in the middle of an

“FaceTiming has always been an object of terror to me.”

essay crisis, then there is nothing better than finding comfort and solidarity in someone else who, like you, is also throwing their degree away in exchange for gossip and procrastination.

Face-

Time understands and accepts that your destiny is an impressively inadequate essay. And the truly beautiful thing is that it will **always** be there to support you through your various stages of denial.

Lesson 2

No matter how close you are with your friend, ALWAYS expect a deeply awkward 'hello, how are you? etc' sequence. In my humble experience, FaceTime has a remarkable ability to make the first minute of calls utterly cringe-worthy. I haven't found a way around this yet, *but* I try to vary my first words from 'hello' to 'hi' to 'hey' to '(insert person's name) ever so enthusiastically!!!'

just to shake things up a little bit. I haven't broadened my horizons to 'hiya' yet, but who knows what will become of this principle by the end of this perpetual lockdown.

Lesson 3

Don't give up on the call just because the first minute is enough to launch you into questioning the meaning of life. After minute one, I've found that things tend to start looking up. Once it is established that no, no-one has anything to say and no, there's nothing to add, then the conversation *really* gets going. Because, if there is absolutely *nothing* to talk about, then suddenly a whole world of conversation opens up.

Lesson 4

If your WiFi is anything like mine, then you will have to resign yourself to the fact that it

will inevitably crash at the most crucial moment in conversation. It always happens that just as I am about to find out whatever happened to that boy whose name I can't remember who I sat next to in GCSE Biology – the call cuts out. Queue the awkward call back and the 'hahaha my WiFi is awful... what's that?... I knowwww it always crashes... lol, yeah aha' (while internally crying) response. The moment is lost, but the show must go on.

Lesson 5

Finally: is it just me, or is it impossible to say goodbye concisely on a call? Whenever my friend or I say 'I need to go', it always takes a good ten minutes before the call actually ends. I've had calls before where-

by for two out of the three hours,

we acknowledge

the fact that

we 'should go' but

then proceed to stay.

A remarkable

amount of conversation

can be concocted out

of saying goodbye numerous times.

So whenever the calls actually do end, I've probably said 'bye', 'farewell', 'tally-ho', 'love you' and or 'miss you' about twenty times each.

Aaand, that's about it. This is as comprehensive as my lessons from FaceTime get. Using the word 'lessons' is ambitious, because as is probably clear, I haven't really learnt a thing. But, if you have been through and/or are going through similar ordeals – know that you are not alone, and that thousands share your plight.



Ask Vulture.

Bob:

I'm sure you don't need me to tell you that this Valentine's Day is going to be a little bit different (I can't even bring myself to say the word unpr*cedented), but that shouldn't mean that we write it off completely. In fact, I say let's make 2021 the year when we change the whole Valentine's tradition for good! For single people, Valentine's Day can be a difficult day even in normal times. That dreaded day each year when you're forced to watch schmaltzy rom-coms, and wade through mountains of teddy bears just to get to the biscuit aisle at Sainsburys. That day when, while the whole world is apparently falling in love, you end up feeling lonelier than ever. Well, this year, when so many of us are separated from our loved ones, be it family, friends, or partners, it seems to me the perfect moment to make a change.

This Valentine's Day, let's make space to appreciate love of all kinds. Take stock of the things or people in your life that make you happy. Perhaps it's the person who delivers your post, who'll never know how much you love them when they arrive with your latest impulse buy. Maybe it's that cat-shaped mug that your friend got you for your birthday. Or maybe now's the time to send some love

your own way, and take a moment to appreciate all the things you've done just to help you survive these frightening, lonely times. Everybody has love in their life, if they are just able to see it and, if you're in need of some empowering inspiration, just pop on Legally Blonde! You can't go far wrong.

Amber:

If Valentine's day is your favourite day of the year (if fluffy heart pillows are *really* your thing), or if you think it's just all a capitalist sham; this year it shouldn't matter. I say all you need to do this Valentine's is have a good old boogie, by yourself, or with anyone willing to join you in the chaos.

Recommended Bedroom Boogie Playlist (other songs are available):

'The Best' – Tina Turner
'Take Another Little Piece Of My Heart' – Dusty Springfield
'Together You and I' – Dolly Parton
'Twist and Shout' – Deacon Blue
'Good as Hell' – Lizzo
'Ex's & Oh's' – Elle King
'Like a Prayer' – Madonna
'Love Really Hurts Without You' – Billy Ocean
'Do I Love You (Indeed I do)' – Frank Wilson

'Ain't No Mountain High Enough' – Marvin Gaye, Tammi Terrell

Judy:

Life is already so tough, so don't forget to engage in some romance to make yourself feel better. Even if you can't meet each other in person, there should still be a sense of tradition. The essence of guaranteeing a long-term relationship lies in the little things in life, but occasional festive celebrations are also important. You could order your partner a bunch of roses, a chocolate cake, or a surprise gift on that special date. Alternatively, you could sing a lullaby before they go to sleep, or record a love song on the guitar. If you are too busy for those, a simple voice call with your partner to remember all the good times is good enough. Maybe you are not in a romantic mood during term time, but Valentine's Day is the time to let your partner know that they are deeply loved. Don't let future-you regret being too stingy to say I LOVE YOU to your important one.

Rowena:

If I had to give my answer in one word, it would be: don't. Valentine's Day is irrelevant in the grand scheme of things. Celebrated really only in the West, and only in the way we know it for the last century, I feel it has become an utter sham. Ignore the cards in shop windows, the heart shaped balloons and couples' meal deals.

Do something fun with someone you love – a friend, a family member... a significant other **if you really have to**. I'd definitely recommend doing a digital detox too – social media is bound to be teeming with grandiose declarations of love and, let's be honest, none of us actually care.

My advice would be just to treat it as any other day. If you really are desperate to celebrate something, save up your energy for International Women's Day on the 8th of March!!

An Unprecedented Valentine's? Hardly

Lifestyle Editor **Alexandra Jarvis** examines the means by which they've lost faith in the traditional cishet, capitalist form of Valentine's Day, and how this is no bad thing



▲ INSTAGRAM/GEORGIAMAYDESIGNS

Obligatory – I'm not in a relationship this Valentine's. Thank God. My ideal vision of the day has changed tenfold over the past few years, but my thoughts when writing this article kept coming back to one simple fact: I don't have to worry about getting a gift. This easy ambivalence that I now have towards Valentine's Day, though, has been hard won. I've gone through all the stages of grief. From realising that there's a chance I'll never again have a Valentine, to denouncing the day as a holiday in honour of all things cishet and capitalist, to fervently hoping someone might somehow know my address and send me a card – believe me, I've done it all.

Once upon a time, I was always assured of a Valentine's gift. Back in primary school, I would exchange cards and some chocolate with one of my classmates, the son of my mum's friend. This petered out after a few

“Gone are the days when I would watch *Miranda* and lament along with her”

years, when I realised that I was not involved in the greatest love story of all time. This was and remains my sole experience of receiving a Valentine's gift (we gloss over the year in Sixth Form when my mum coordinated a pity card for me from the family...), so I have no real wisdom to offer here on that front.

What struck me this year was that I haven't

been at home for Valentine's Day in a while. Last year, I had my RAG blind date and cycled back to college through Storm Dennis, to have a takeaway and watch *Mamma Mia* with a flatmate. The year before I was au pairing in France, and was probably up to my knees in snow shovelling the front drive for half of the day. Back when I was at home on the 14th of February, the day itself would usually be marked by my sister (younger) appearing with a gift, or ten, from boys at school. One brave soul in year 6 even ventured to our front door, where he handed over chocolate for my sister and his best wishes to our dad. This year, then, our plans are really quite simple in comparison: *Pride and Prejudice*, choice excerpts from *The Vampire Diaries*, and a Domino's.

I think these plans epitomise the more relaxed attitude I've recently taken up. I'm just really not that fussed. My sister claims she isn't either, but there's time yet for a distanced drop-off of some chocolates or other at our front door. Our experience of the day at home will be focused around our parents. My dad will no doubt buy flowers for my mum; they'll probably order a takeaway together. They'll watch *The X-Files* (my mum's currently on season 6, and has long lost any leg to stand on when she criticises us for binge-watching a series). It's these simple things that have comprised my entire lockdown experience, and will continue to.

The fact that I remain rather nonplussed about the whole affair stems from my changing understanding of my ideal partner over the past few years. I now face this day geared up to couples with less animosity; gone are the days when I would watch *Miranda* and lament along with her, hoping that “St Valentine died alone, surrounded by couples.” This uncertainty and, potentially, fear of being left behind used to concern me, but I've managed to work through this. I won't go into the problematic myriad of stereotypes surrounding the spectrum of sexuality, as to even mention them is to perpetuate it. One person's experiences

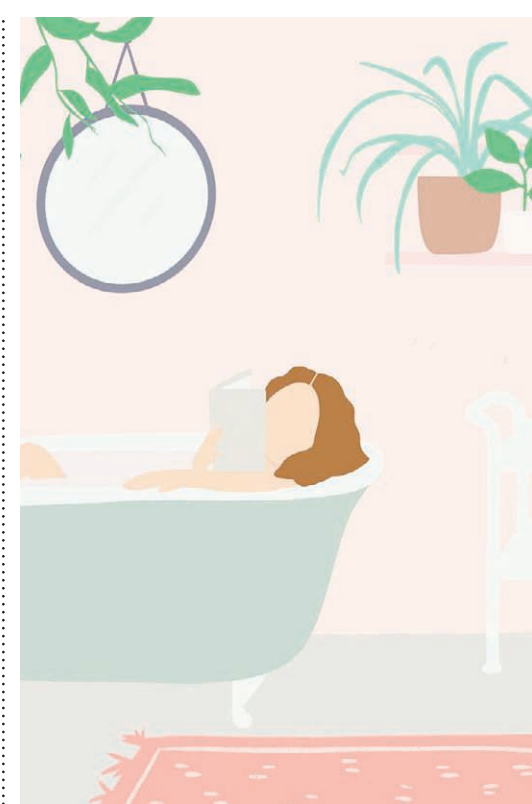
will never match another's, and that's the beauty of it all. Safe to say I've dealt with my fair share of hang-ups. This is far from any kind of relationship trauma, though –

“One person's experiences will never match another's, and that's the beauty of it all.”

you're speaking to the CEO of short-lived, oft-regretted talking stages – as this was a highly personal process, that sees me on the other side, happy to be single while everyone else is taken, still working on my highly changeable plans for the future.

While far from a universal suggestion, I'd argue that being in a relationship should be your last concern. I won't deny that I don't watch *Mamma Mia* and wish for even a tiny little bit of what either Sky or Sophie have – after all, I'm only human.

However, I believe that there is so much more to life than simply ending up with someone. This constant shift of attraction, of what I want to do with my life and my time, and how I dress for my Zoom classes in order to garner the most Queerbridges,



▲ INSTAGRAM/GEORGIAMAYDESIGNS

depends on nothing but me – for once, I'm happy with that.

In short, Valentine's is by far from the most important day of the year for me. Not least because I'm not in a relationship – but because I don't put much stock by the hike in prices in chocolate and roses around the week comprising the 14th. Work smarter, not harder, and at least get a Valentine's gift (for yourself? Why not?) the week later, when the chocolate's all half-price.



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Alumnus of Pembroke College



Arts

The Literature of Love

In time for Valentine's Day, Varsity Editor **Georgina Buckle** hand-picks five texts which muse on love, in all its multitudinous expressions

Time and again, writers and readers return to the theme of love. Love seeps into the crevices of our everyday lives: it is in family, in friendship, in our bond with pets, with literary figures, and in romance. The myriad of ways that we experience love is often best articulated in literature. Here, I have selected five beautifully different texts – spoilers ahead! Collectively, they explore a diverse range of relationships and how love is at the essence of human life. Love, in its varying forms, is our reason for being. As Victor Hugo writes in *Les Misérables*: “To love or have loved, that is enough. Ask nothing further. There is no other pearl to be found in the dark folds of life.”

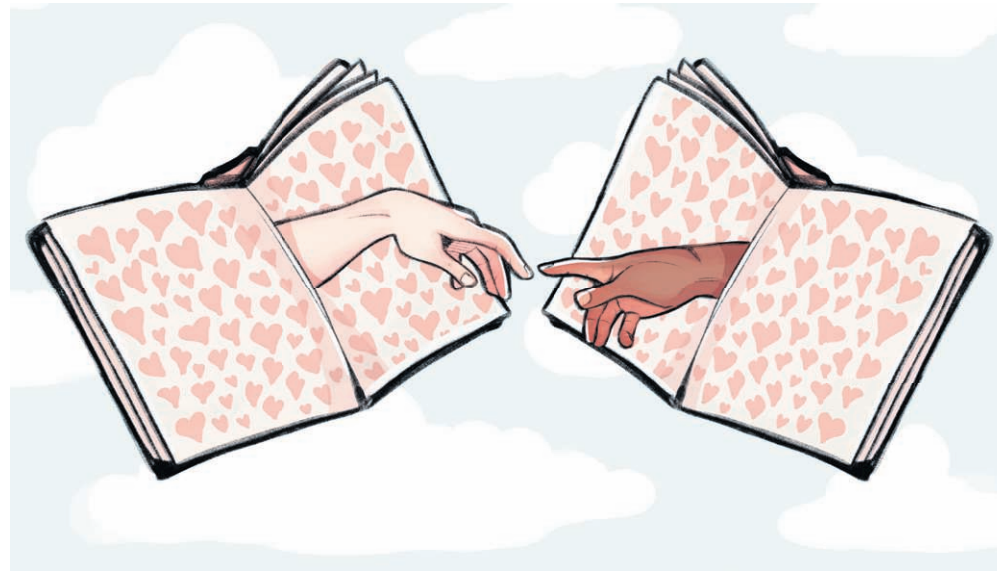
The Age of Innocence

by Edith Wharton

The *Age of Innocence* is partly a story of forbidden lovers: Newland Archer has his life dictated for him by the upper echelons of New York society, but the arrival of Countess Olenska muddies his plans. By the unwritten, tribal laws of their society, the two are not to be. And yet, they fall irrevocably in love:

“Each time you happen to me all over again.” They know they must sacrifice each other and in one vignette, an aggrieved Newland bends to kiss Ellen's satin shoe. The scene is drenched in sorrow, for it is the chaste kiss of unconsummated, forbidden passion.

The novel shows that true love involves protecting the other person, even if you must surrender them to another: as Ellen says, “I can't love you unless I give you up.” In fact, Wharton wrote an alternate ending where they run away together, are eventually unhappy and separate. Wharton demonstrates that sometimes love isn't sustainable in the real world – it is far more perfect preserved in memory. In her life, Wharton also deeply craved a long-term companion-



▲ “The myriad of ways that we experience love is often best articulated in literature” (All illustrations by KERI MCINTYRE)

ionship that she never found: one where sexual desire, kinship and intellect all coincide. Like Newland in the novel's closing, she may have realised what she was missing: “the flower of life”.

Mrs Gaskell and Me

by Nell Stevens

Sometimes the fiercest adorations are for people we have never even met. In this case, for the writer Elizabeth Gaskell. The Guardian aptly describes Stevens' novel as a ‘partly autobiographical romance, [and] also a

love letter to Elizabeth Gaskell.’ It opens on the author as a post-graduate working on a thesis about Gaskell. Under the pressure

of fulfilled love in the re-imagining of Gaskell's life. Her writing becomes suspended in the hazy area between fact and fiction: where does Nell's life start and Gaskell's end? When Nell crumbles, her idolisation of Gaskell is what remains strong. Stevens' novel explores how literary love is as real and unwavering a love as any other.

Black Vodka

by Deborah Levy

Deborah Levy has said that most of her work is about narratives with holes – she is never trying to heal these holes, but instead to understand them. Her short-story anthology *Black Vodka* does exactly that. The ten short stories are about romantic and familial relationships in all their flawed, broken and diverse ways. Levy's writing cuts to the quick of modern love and how our interactions with others are simultaneously a strange, confused dance with ourselves. One story titled ‘Pillow Talk’ deftly writes about a cheating partner. Rather than escalate the plot into melodrama,

Levy magnifies how detached their relationship is; Ella and Pavel are dislocated from one another, physically and emotionally, but also dislocated from themselves. Levy's work keenly evades boring or easy story lines. Read *Black Vodka* if you want to see love through a kaleidoscope: constantly changing, never expressed in one simple way.

‘Funeral Blues’ (1936)

by W. H. Auden

The poem ‘Funeral Blues’ was initially written by Auden as a mocking satire of a dead politician. But the meaning of Auden's words have since been completely spun on their axis by the 1994 film *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. This iconic British film has instead immortalised the verse as a heart-breaking dirge to a lost loved one. Now, it's hard to read it any other way. The poem does not only express grief, but testifies to the immeasurable greatness of the love that the two people had – it was everything they once breathed: “He was my North, my South, my East and West, / My working week and my Sunday rest”. The verse bluntly conveys the pain of realising how colossal love is in the passing of everyday life. Without it, it does not make sense for the world to go on as normal: “The stars are not wanted now; put out every one”.

Open Water

by Caleb Azumah Nelson

Published just last week, *Open Water* is Nelson's debut novel about the relationship between two young Black British artists. Their bond is set amidst a complex background of race, masculinity and identity, where they struggle to make sense of the world but find solace in each other.

Nelson shows how effortless love is. The novel's epigraph, quoting Zadie Smith's *NW*, encapsulates that: ‘There was an inevitability about their road towards one another which encouraged meandering along the route.’ Nelson's writing is imbued with a gentle lyricism that traces the curves and contours of true love. The two artists just fit together “like it is an everyday”. *Open Water* illuminates a simple truth about love: it is an easiness, a returning home.



Fashion



That's So Raven on style and self-love

As part of a new series on fictional fashion icons, **Zarah Ali** recounts finding a role model in the star of the noughties sitcom

With the launch of Disney+, it has never been easier to dip back into our favourite childhood shows. For me, this has meant working through the 100 episodes of *That's So Raven*, reliving my tween memories of her warm and confident character and obsessing over her iconic outfits.

Gifted with the power of clairvoyancy, Raven navigates sticky situations alongside her best friends, Chelsea and Eddie, with the show using a significantly Black cast for mid-00s Disney. Despite the Atlantic Ocean-sized gap separating me from Raven's world, I felt, and often still feel, as though Raven is my cool older cousin – a Black girl to look up to.

Her trendsetting noughties style has had a resurgence, and throughout the show, there are examples of Y2K outfits that any teen today would definitely appreciate. Raven's bold orange and teal outfit with an Afghan coat to match in the opening sequence establishes her as stylishly confident – and she knows this, quipping “yup, that's me” at the end. Many of Raven's funky outfits are designed and handmade by her, a pleasant display of a Black girl enjoying her creativity.

It isn't just my love for Raven's expansive collection of flared jeans that makes the show so amazing to me. Its exploration into ethical issues facing Black girls and women is what makes it influential to this day. Through the medium of a vivacious and imaginative Black teenager, the show is able to open up discussions pertinent to its audience such as ones about self-image and discrimination within the fashion world. What distinguishes this show, however, is its ability to unpack these topics without the need for traumatic or painful storylines.

Whilst the plots vary from being juvenile and re-

able to totally comically outlandish, the two-time Emmy nominated show succeeds in creating entertaining and didactic experiences for its viewers.

In *True Colours* of Season 3, Raven experiences workplace racial discrimination at a clothing store. Despite her extensive skills in fashion design and her bubbly personality making her perfect for the job, Raven is

Her character has paved the way for other Black girls to joyfully exist on prime-time TV

rejected from the role of sales assistant. It is through this rejection that Raven makes the painful realisation that life as a Black girl in the predominantly white fashion industry means facing racism and she expresses the hurt this causes her with little equivocation. In typical fashion, Raven, through the help of Chelsea, is able to capture the manager admitting that they “don't hire Black people” and justice is served with the manager being fired.

This restorative ending is important; it clearly shows young Black people that racist people, especially in influential positions, should be called out and suffer the repercussions of their behaviour. It is worth noting Chelsea's role in this episode wearing a hidden camera in order to record the managers racism – a playful way of displaying the supportive nature of successful allyship.

Part of the beauty of *That's So Raven* is the fact that

Raven is a full-figured Black teenager and, unlike other contemporary Black shows such as *Moesha* and *Girlfriends*, this doesn't become a source of jokes and ridicule. The show addresses Raven's weight in *That's So NOT Raven* of Season 2 with Raven's psychic powers revealing to her a scene where she sees that her body had been photoshopped into a smaller figure in a fashion show magazine. In the nine seasons of the show, this is pretty much the only time that audiences witness Raven's confidence rocked as she turns to an excessive exercise regime in order to rapidly lose weight. However, with the loving words of her family and friends, Raven realises that there is absolutely nothing wrong with her appearance.

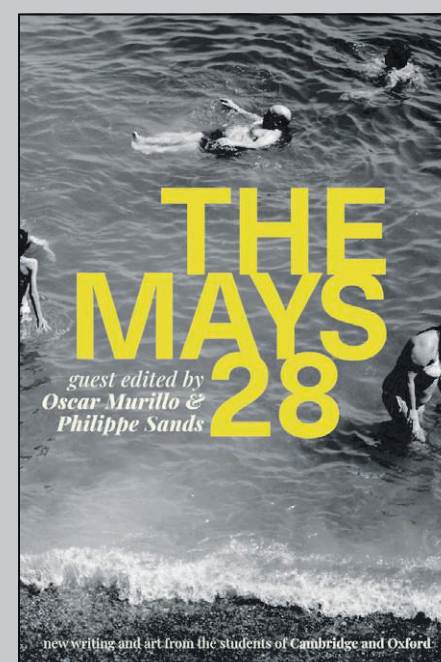
This episode commendably addresses body shaming and self-esteem issues in the fashion world and the dangers of trying to lose weight fast – as well as tackling sizeism towards Black girls and women. As someone who can deeply relate to Raven in this episode, it is comforting to know that in the same way I felt the all-embracing love and acceptance by the end of the episode, other young girls also experienced it too. This can be felt throughout the seasons of

That's So Raven and the messages instilled in many episodes are incredibly validating for me as a young Black person, as I watched it before and as I rewatch it now.

The premise of *That's So Raven* isn't an unusual one; there are countless other tween sitcoms with a supernatural theme. What distinguishes the show is Raven's charm and uniqueness which beams through her clothes and her behaviour. Her character has paved the way for other Black girls to joyfully exist on prime-time TV like Keke Palmer and Skai Jackson who continued to maintain the legacy of well-dressed Black girls on Disney Channel. The character of Raven returned to our screens in a new show called *Raven's Home* as she tackles single motherhood and divorce in a way which its younger audience can appreciate exemplifying the eternal relevance of Black characters on our screens.

I appreciate *That's So Raven* for all the happiness it brings in its display of Black joy and for the wistful tone with which it educated me. To this day, I aspire to have wardrobe as cool and authentic as Raven's and the ability to wear it with the beautiful coolness that Raven did.

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Film & TV

Unhappy Together: Wong Kar-Wai & the Melancholia of Romance

In the run-up to Valentine's Day, **Anika Kaul** delves into the work of director Wong Kar-Wai, the master of bittersweet romance



Some things don't need to be said. In a medium teeming with saccharine dialogue and almost comically exaggerated gestures of passion, the filmography of Wong Kar-Wai serves as a breath of fresh air. As intimated in the above-mentioned quote from *In the Mood for Love*, in which Maggie Cheung's Su Li-zhen enlightens Tony Leung's Chow Mo-wan on the futility of verbosity, Wong Kar-Wai's films disregard gushing Hollywood dialogues and

tunities, unfulfilled chances and suppressed desires saturate his works with a sense of romantic fatalism. Set in 1960s Hong Kong, the critically acclaimed and emotionally devastating *In the Mood for Love* chronicles the impossibility of love between two neighbours who, upon discovering that their spouses are maintaining an adulterous affair with each other, grow close, yet refuse to replicate the passionate immorality of their other halves. A movie suffused with ravishing beauty and an infinite sadness, the story ends with an enigmatic coda, in which the couple fail to reunite due to botched communication and timing.

Leung's character, riddled with unspoken feelings of guilt, grief and passion, whispers his secret anguish into a hole in Cambodia's Angkor Wat rather than confessing to another being. Here, the isolation of love is palpable: the only source of emotional release is located in an inanimate object.

This sense of loneliness is further intensified upon viewing *2046*, a loose sequel to *In the Mood for Love* in which Chow, now reimagined as a sleazy womaniser, attempts to fill the void of his lost love with numerous vacuous flings. The characters, backgrounds and settings have all been vastly altered in the futuristic, sci-fi world of 2046, but the overarching message of the original tale remains unchanged. Through his two-part, multi-dimensional tragedy, the viewer understands that, with Wong Kar-Wai, the only true certainty is heartbreak.

While Wong Kar-Wai is devoted in his depiction of Hong Kong, the director recognises the universal experience of urban alienation, captured perfectly by long-time collaborator Christopher Doyle, whose cinematography of blurred and frantic crowds juxtaposed by solitary shots perfectly captures the paradoxical notion of loneliness in a crowded city.

In *Chungking Express*, the romance is more offbeat and light-hearted, yet still engulfed by this concept of solitude in company. Here, the characters struggle for a chance to escape isolation through finding real connection. Faye

(Faye Wong), a spirited shop worker, attempts to woo Cop 663 (Tony Leung) while he pines for a previous lover, oblivious to the possibility of newfound passion. Wong's use of voice-overs solidifies this ambience of solitude, as introspection manifests itself in monologues due to the characters' lack of social interactions. Although eventually Faye and Cop 663 unite, it is after the anguish of unrequited love and plentiful occurrences of miscommunication, thus tainting their alleged happy reunion with remnants of past sorrow.

Even when relationships are attained, they are tinged with an unmistakable sense of sadness. Such is the case of the unfortunate protagonists of *Happy Together*, played by Leslie Cheung and Tony Leung Chiu-wai. A rich, lovelorn odyssey shot both in colour and black-and-white, the film depicts the turbulent romance between Lai (Tony Leung) and his boyfriend, Ho (Leslie Cheung), two Chinese immigrants adrift in Buenos Aires, where they seek a better life both financially and romantically. Throughout the duration of their relationship, they undergo numerous break-ups and reconciliations, resulting in an almost abusive toxicity between the pair. Ultimately separated on the basis of promis-

Culminating in heartbreak on all sides in multiple geographical settings, Wong Kar-Wai establishes the resounding universality of pain borne via love.

cuity and distrust, both Lai and Ho find themselves estranged from home and each other. Although the film is labelled a romantic one, its content is arguably more a tragedy than anything else. Culminating in heartbreak on all sides in multiple geographical settings, here Wong Kar-Wai establishes the resounding universality of pain borne via love.

Wong Kar-Wai's films, though at times unbearably distressing, employ the entire lexi-

“Viewing a Wong Kar-Wai film means entering a different realm, one daubed in heightened emotions, evocative sound and dreamlike visuals.”

con of cinema more effectively than those of any other filmmaker. The camera assumes a human-like quality, lurking and hiding in various corners, to the point of almost spying on Chow and Su Li-zhen in *In the Mood for Love*. The auteur also utilises sound excellently, with each musical choice perfectly capturing the zeitgeist of the era as well as the spirit of each character. A notable example of this melodic mastery is in *Chungking Express*, in which The Mamas and Papas' *California Dreamin'* serves to reflect the wanderlust experienced by Faye, while simultaneously acknowledging the prominence of Western culture in Hong Kong.

More of a pioneer than a mere director, his ability to mould every element of his film into perfection has helped him to create his own cinematic language for romance. Viewing a Wong Kar-Wai film means entering a different realm, one daubed with heightened emotions, evocative sound and dreamlike visuals which recount unforgettable tales of ill-fated romance. As a director, skilled in filmic seduction, he is able to beguile his audience just as mesmerizingly.

A profound sadness sweeps through these films as individuals are left unmoored by romantic grief, loss and betrayal. However, this traditionally burdening emotion is transformed into something beautiful in each of these films. Even when heartbroken, each character possesses a bittersweet quality, with their suffering intensifying their feelings, heightening the cinematic atmosphere for the audience. Through Wong Kar-Wai's beguiling visual language, the viewer is reminded that there is a strange sense of beauty even in romantic despair. Never before has heartbreak looked so enchanting as it does through the eyes of Wong Kar-Wai.



▲ A forlorn Faye Wong in *Chungking Express* (TWITTER/JCALONDON)

their happy endings, instead favouring emotionally acute examinations of love, loss and regret.

An auteur who appreciates the understated, his filmmaking has been labelled as visual poetry, capturing romance in its sensuous imagery rather than through cliché discourse. Whilst his works fluctuate in tone, varying from quirky to sentimental, they ultimately all share a common theme: the sorrow and alienation of love. There exists a prevalent sense of grief, invariably caused by loss, isolation or longing, which permeates each of his films, ultimately imbuing them with a unique concoction of bittersweet romantic melancholy.

Wong Kar-Wai's fables of missed oppor-



▲ The isolated dystopia of 2046 (TWITTER/CINELANDER)

To all the Rom Coms I've Loved Before

Film and TV Editor *Charlotte Holah* tells us why modern rom coms have yet to match the charm of the classics

It's no secret that the plot of the classic romantic comedy is a thing of the past. Even before COVID-19, meet-cute potential was significantly restrained by our increasingly digitalised world, in which coffee shops and library dates find themselves redundant. But attempts to modernise these vintage love stories have, for me at least, flopped.

I think the main thing that always drew me to classic rom coms was the ages of the characters. I had no interest in watching teenage girls cry to their parents about the one boy who

would definitely be there forever, or the portrayal of high-school prom as the pinnacle event in each character's life. No: for me, love always seemed a bit more interesting when found between two adults, who then had to try and meld together two completely opposite lives. The dilemmas of losing jobs, trying to raise children and difficult families were infinitely more fascinating to me than a piece

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For me, love always seemed a bit more interesting when found between two adults, who then had to try and meld together two completely opposite lives
”

of maths homework due on Monday.

In the most typically tragic way, I have always loved Nora Ephron's movies. Seeing *Sleepless in Seattle* for the first time with my mum, aunt and sister, 13-year-old me was convinced that I'd find the love of my love atop a large building in the most ridiculously romantic way possible. Destiny and true love collided in the perfect Valentine's Day expectations. However unrealistic they might seem, her movies just *work*.

When I then watched *You've Got Mail* shortly afterwards, I had high hopes for the future of rom coms. Ephron seamlessly introduces technology into the romance, albeit in the form of an annoyingly slow email chain. It seemed to me that no matter how intrusive technology became, we would still get glori-



▲ **Kissing Booth** (TWITTER/GIBBOANXIOUS)

ous scenes like Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks' final meeting in the New York gardens. Not even Ryan's questionable haircut could dissuade me from idolising the tropes of films like these.

Now don't get me wrong, I see why these films don't fit in our modern society. The characters fill painfully stereotypical gender roles, with the women having an almost masochistic tendency to endure men telling them what they need. All the relationships are hetero, white, and boring. The rom com genre is large, and going into recent years there was a sizable gap to be filled.

But many of the most recent rom coms have utterly let me down. *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* was such a success that I was sure I'd enjoy it, but I had to stop watching it after the first half an hour. It was a sweet idea, but carried out awfully. Similarly, *The Kissing Booth* showed promise: a hot older brother, a friendship just waiting to be betrayed, and a high school ritual none of us actually took part in. But yet again, I was let down. Was this really the best that Netflix had to offer?

I have realised that ultimately, the disappointment of these films lies in an obsession with modernisation. Not everything about

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I have realised that ultimately, the disappointment of these films lies in an obsession with modernisation.
”

Ephron's classics needed to be changed. The stories of adults with existing problems, set in landmark cities and characterised by slightly extravagant visuals, are ones that could easily be empathised with in 2021.

With a few adaptations to controversial characters and an effort to diversify storylines, I have high hopes that the modern rom com could once again reach the reputation of a Valentine's Day classic. But for now, I'll be binge-watching Ephron's originals with a large bottle of wine and an expectation for 2021 to do better.



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Music

Vulture's VALENTINE PLAYLIST



It may be a slightly different Valentine's than we're used to, but at least Vulture has you covered for all your music needs: from the heartfelt hits to the most miserable melodies! Happy listening!

For the old school lover:

That Old Feeling

Chet Baker

For the V-Day breakup:

Motion Sickness

Phoebe Bridgers

For the unrequited lover:

911/Mr. Lonely (Feat. Frank Ocean & Steve Lacy)

Tyler, The Creator

For the cheesiest of Valentine's hits:

My Heart Will Go On

Celine Dion

For the better off alone:

Yer Killin' Me

Remo Drive

For the virtual coffee-shop date:

Manoir de Mes Rêves

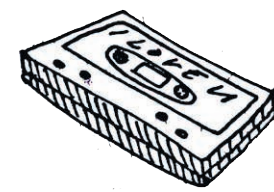
Django Reinhardt



▲ Illustration
by Juliet
Babinsky for
Varsity

▲ Django
Reinhardt
(Jeremie
Blum/
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'Edelweiss': How the Classic Song is More Relevant Than Ever



Music Editor *James Mitchell* examines how the von Trapps' plight resonates with today's pandemic-scarred world

I, like many other people, was recently saddened by the death of celebrated Canadian actor Christopher Plummer. To many people, Plummer (when not busy replacing 'problematic' actors) is most famous for the role of Captain von Trapp in the 1965 film of *The Sound of Music*. Arguably his defining moment in the film is when, on hearing the children singing to the Baroness Elsa Schraeder, he joins them with the song 'Edelweiss'. Plummer's death brought this song back into my mind, frequently featuring on the news coverage of his obituary. Listening to it again, I realised that this song is perhaps more relevant now than ever before.

'Edelweiss' was one of the final additions to the musical, as well as the final song that Oscar Hammerstein II ever wrote. The song was designed to showcase the folk-singing talents of Theodor Bilek, the Broadway originator for Captain von Trapp. The titular edelweiss is a flower which grows on the steep, rocky cliff-faces of the Alps. Given the extreme conditions the flower grew in, as well as its rarity, bringing one back for a partner became a romanticised symbol of true love and the flower has become a symbol of the mountains. The flower also had strong military connotations, it was the symbol worn by the various German alpine units both before and during the war, as well as an insignia of the Edelweiss Pirates, an anti-Nazi youth movement who had evaded the Hitler Youth.

In the original musical, the song occurs during the von Trapps' performance at the Kaltzburg Festival (relocated to Salzburg in the film). The captain is being forced to accept command of a Nazi naval unit, the Nazis having recently annexed Austria; after discussion with Maria, he decides to flee Austria with his family rather than take up the role. Using the festival provided a chance to escape, the family sings 'Edelweiss' and a reprise of 'So Long, Farewell', before surreptitiously fleeing the festival and hiding at Maria's old abbey, eventually escaping to Switzerland. The song is therefore laced with dramatic irony: the Nazis, unaware of the planned escape attempt, do not initially recognise the song's anti-Nazi sentiment.

In a world torn by the pandemic, the lyrics have a particular poignancy. They speak of a flower "small and white, clean and bright", a sign that beauty can flourish even in the most inhospitable conditions. Von Trapp clings onto this symbol of hope, telling the flower to "bloom and grow forever". The edelweiss even assumes a semi-divine status, with the captain calling for the flower to "bless my homeland forever", invoking the plant's protection as though it were a deity. Von Trapp has to trust in the same belief that many of us have to today: no matter what adversity may come, there will always be light at the end of the tunnel.

Those familiar with the film, however, will



▲ Captain von Trapp (Christopher Plummer) singing 'Edelweiss' to his children in *The Sound of Music* (Twitter/AnnieMinoff)

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No matter what adversity may come, there will always be light at the end of the tunnel

”

probably have realised it uses the song to a greater extent than the musical. In the film, the captain first sings the song upon hearing the children sing themselves, having been taught to do so by Maria. Up until this point, the captain has been treating his children like soldiers, emotionally distancing himself from them, partly due to the death of his wife (occurring prior to when the musical begins). This moment is the first time the captain shows any connection to his children, it is also the first time he himself has sung in many years. With covid keeping everyone housebound, these themes of death and family connections are uncomfortably pertinent to today's world. However, von Trapp's successful reconnection with his children through music provides a glimmer of hope, a powerful example that familial bonds can withstand even great tragedy.

The song is therefore perhaps more relevant even than when it was originally released, with the recent pandemic tearing peoples' lives and even countries apart. The lyrics also capture multiple different kinds of love: a love for your country, a love for your family. With Valentine's Day almost upon us, 'Edelweiss' invites us to consider these different types of love, and how they are equally, if not more, important than love in the romantic sense. Plummer himself was one of the most stubborn refuseniks of *The Sound of Music*, describing his role as "so awful and sentimental and gooey" and even going as far as refusing to attend the film's 40th anniversary events. In these unprecedented times, however, perhaps this gooey sentimentality is exactly what we need.

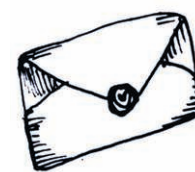


▲ The titular edelweiss with its distinctive white petals (Pixabay)

Theatre

Theatre in translation: To the ends of language

Columnist **Margaux Emmanuel** discusses the inherently complex nature of translating theatre



A few years ago, I listened to Ladislav Chollat discuss adapting Florian Zeller's play *Le Père*, for the Japanese stage – without speaking Japanese. I remember him admitting how it was mostly through a process of trial and error with his translator; if the actors around him didn't laugh when he would have expected them to do so, he knew that something was wrong. This example clearly shows that translating theatre is a hefty task, surpassing the mere translation of units of senses and syntax.

In retrospect, the translator's role was probably the most crucial in this performance; his task wasn't transactional, giving a mere equivalent of a term to convey meaning, but he had to recreate an impression through language. Language becomes the principal actor on stage, whilst the translator is the vector of the performance. The director was completely relying on his translator to understand the implications of every written word. In theatre, the notion of translational accuracy shifts; conveying meaning is not enough – the translator needs to convey life.

Actors Christophe Brault and Jean-Paul Dias once said "We are extremely exposed, almost naked. We exist exclusively via language, we can't cling onto anything else" in the French premiere of *Par les routes* by Noëlle Renaude (Cristina Marinetti and Manuela Perteghella Roger Baines in "Staging and Performing Translation"). The translator becomes responsible for the theatricality of the play,

▲ "Language become the principal actor on stage"
(Odessa Chitty for Varsity)

“Cultural implications mustn't be forgotten either, as they are central to the recreation of this dramatic impact”

surpassing the plot and characters – it cannot simply “make sense” or, in the case of prose and verse translations, recreate an equivalent. The theatrical work strives for performability; the director needs to be able to interpret the work in the way he wishes, yet to call *Romeo and Juliet* “*Romeo and Juliet*”, there needs to be a binding element in the language itself.

Theatrical performance bases itself on the malleability of the written text – whether it is *Romeo and Juliet* performed at the Royal Shakespeare Company, on a stage in Spain, in the desert or in space, the play remains *Romeo and Juliet* – there is still a flexible, yet existent, tacit pact between the director and the original work. The work needs to be recognizable, and needs to be in line with a tradition of performances, especially for canonical works like Shakespeare's. But can “Wherefore art thou Romeo” be performed the same as “Pourquoi es-tu Roméo”, or “Oh Romeo Romeo ¿dónde estás?”? Will the dramatic impact be the same? Is the meaning the same?

Cultural implications mustn't be forgotten either, as they are central to the recreation of this dramatic impact; whether it be in China, Germany or England, it doesn't have the same meaning. The initial example of Ladislav Chollat's difficulty at translating jokes clearly shows that the dramatic perform-

“Perhaps language isn't a barrier, but gives us the perfect space and occasion to innovate and defy borders”

ance's pretension of 'recreating life' can sometimes be unconvincing, or it is not simply performativity for the sake of performativity, but also managing to recreate a compelling performance for the new audience.

The issue is similar in any written work, and famously, poetry – would Edgar Allan Poe have grimaced at Baudelaire's translation of his works? Hemingway would have certainly been shocked if he had read the controversial French translation by Jean Dutourd of *The Old Man and the Sea*. Yet theatre goes even further – it needs to give life. The issue of translating theatre pulls at the thread of linguistics, but also of language as a means of existing – it can seem as if a moment in one language cannot be recreated in another. We cannot consider theatre as an art form for isolated phenomena. But viewing language as hermetic would be incorrect, as well as reductive. Perhaps language isn't a barrier, but gives us the perfect space and occasion to innovate and defy borders.

A few years back, The Grønnegård Teatre in Copenhagen, Denmark produced *Twelfth Night* in Old Danish. The linguistic approach of having translated the actual text to not only Danish, but Old Danish was particularly intriguing. There was obviously an attempt to recreate the relation of the Anglophone audience to Shakespeare, with the Danish audience. Translating *Twelfth Night* to modern Danish just wouldn't ring right.

Translating theatre is therefore also recreating an experience. If we speak a lot about texts being “lost in translation”, we must also lose ourselves in the translation, taking a dip into another culture, in another time that also becomes ours.



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Sport

London 2012, the BBC and Selwyn College: In Conversation with Roger Mosey

Sports Editor *Jack Wadding* speaks to the Master of Selwyn College and former Director of Sport at the BBC about the Olympics, broadcasting rights and the beauty of collegiate sport.

Roger Mosey's story is an interesting one: born and brought up in Bradford and educated at Oxford, he went on to have a long career with the BBC, spanning four decades and including such roles as Controller of Five Live, Director of News, Director of Sport (2005-2009) and Head of London 2012's coverage (2009-2012). Speaking via Microsoft Teams, Roger took me through his journey and what he achieved along the way.

"I'd always grown up as a Bradford City fan", he tells me as I notify him of the discrepancy between his Wikipedia page and his Twitter account, "but my godson was a big Arsenal fan and we started going to Arsenal in the mid-90s. Then in the 2000s I got a season ticket". Having grown up in the heartland of Rugby League, he explains that his sporting upbringing was especially diverse. "My dad and my uncle were a little bit fickle in their sport so we went to see Leeds United during the great era in the late 60s, Huddersfield Town a bit... and I always used to love going to see the cricket at Headingley and Park Avenue". Despite the richness of his sporting upbringing, Roger tells me that he was never necessarily 'sport-mad'; he had minimal sporting commitments at University and "went through a period in [his] 20s and 30s where [he] didn't watch much sport and certainly didn't do much sport".

Given this measured approach to sport, he explains, understandably, that "some of the family were a bit taken aback when I became Director of BBC Sport". However, he believes that this is precisely what allowed him the opportunity to take up the role, saying "I think it was because they wanted somebody who really liked sport but not to the exclusion of everything else". He went on to tell me how the majority of those among the BBC Sport ranks "would think you were crazy if you didn't take *Strictly Come Dancing*

off when the Snooker second-round match was over-running".

Roger, on the other hand, rather stumbled across the industry of sports media. Having worked mainly in news beforehand, he told me: "the thing that pushed [him] in a sport direction was becoming Controller of Radio Five Live", which had, and continues to have, such a strong reputation for sport coverage.

As Director of Sport, Roger oversaw a period of modernisation at the BBC. This was characterised by the executive decision to cancel the institutional sports programme, *Grandstand*, in 2007, after 49 years of regular broadcasting. Having admitted to having never seen the show, I was told that it had fast been becoming an outdated model of sports coverage. "It's really difficult to imagine now but in the classic days of BBC Sport they would do twenty minutes of a test match, and then they'd go to the 14:35 horse race at Haydock Park, and then they might go to Wimbledon for half an hour and then back to the test match. That was the consequence of terrestrial channel scarcity", he explained. While this worked in the days when you could count the number of TV channels on one hand, "what people now want is a test match

live all

“Sports behind a pay-wall are watched by fewer people”

day or Wimbledon live all day”.

At the time, given its longstanding regularity, "there were people who were very devoted to it" and as a result, "it was an unpopular move and [the BBC] got a fair bit of flack for it". However, Roger tells me that he has no regrets; "I think sometimes you look back on decisions and know you were wrong but I think in this case we were so completely right".

This modernisation was also evident in the BBC's approach to the London 2012 Olympics. Broadcasting an Olympic Games is always a sizeable feat, as shown by the fact that the BBC's team for Beijing 2008, of which Roger was a part, comprised 437 different employees from the UK. At the time, "it was the BBC's biggest ever foreign outside broadcast". Around this time, however, Roger explains that the idea arose "that we should make the [London] Games available in their entirety so you could watch every minute



▲ Jack Wadding speaks to Roger Mosey over Teams (JACK WADDING)

of every event". As many of you may remember, this was precisely what the BBC achieved with their 24 dedicated Olympics channels. "It's a 'both-and' thing," he says. "People really want the big moments on BBC One – twenty million people would watch the 100m final – but you may want to go and watch handball on BBC 23". As is always the case with the Olympics, you often get into a sport you've never seen before and this is precisely what Roger and his team facilitated.

Tied up in this period of modernisation, however, is the competition provided by large commercial broadcasters like Sky and, more recently, BT Sport. As we have all seen over the last decades, the ability of the BBC and other terrestrial channels to retain major sports broadcasting rights is limited. However, perhaps characteristically, Roger is unfazed. "I'm ok with an equilibrium – what I think would be a disaster would be to have the whole lot behind a pay wall", he tells me, fairly confident in the fact that a certain number of sporting events will remain accessible via terrestrial television.

He explains that there remains an attraction for sporting bodies to continue selling broadcasting rights to the BBC, since, while paid subscriptions provide greater income, terrestrial TV is a guaranteed way of reaching a bigger audience. "Golf is a good case in point where the Open would be watched by 6/7 million people on a good year [on the BBC] and maybe 1/1.5 million on Sky".

Fortunately, "Wimbledon, the World Cup and the Olympic Games have generally wanted to be on free-to-air TV because they get the biggest audiences". Perhaps it is no surprise then that these are the biggest sporting and cultural events in the UK.

Interestingly, cricket has recently reversed the visible trend in that The 100 and One-Day T20 matches are now being shown on the BBC again and the England vs India test match is currently being broadcast by Channel 4. "The problem with cricket ten or so years ago was that it just went completely behind the pay-wall, which means if you can't afford it, you don't see it, and that *does* have a consequence on the sport... and cricket has recognised that", Roger tells me. So perhaps there is no need to despair – we may yet see more sport on the BBC.

Having left the BBC in 2013, Roger became the Master of Selwyn College, a position in which he has been able to indulge his sporting interest. He tells me that he follows Selwyn's sport teams with enthusiasm, having been to watch them play in the hockey final as well as the (football) Cuppers Plate Final in 2017, "which I think secretly is a bit like the UEFA [Europa] League, but we won that which was great".

Upon discussion of the balance between academics and sport, Roger explained that "what [he] really [values] is the 'mid-level college sport' where people participate" for the sake of collegiality and sociability. "I think it's great for people's wellbeing" and, referring to a University study covered recently by *Varsity*, "sport certainly doesn't detract from your academic performance and, arguably, might add to it". Ultimately, Roger believes that "sport isn't valued as much as it should be in Cambridge but I think it's not valued as much as it should be by the nation either".

As I finish up our conversation, Roger wishes me, and vicariously Cambridge, a speedy return to sports. "Maybe in March?", he suggests optimistically. Until then, we can only watch and wait.



◀ Roger Mosey: BBC Director of Sport from 2005-2009 (SELWYN COLLEGE)

King's Boat Club cover one million metres for charity

Despite being strewn across the country, King's W1 captain Amanda McHugh tells *Beth Wright* about the team's charitable endeavours

Boat clubs across Cambridge currently lie empty; eights, fours and sculls sit dry and scattered across the country, once close-knit teams. However, at King's, the women's side has decided to take Covid-19 rowing into their own hands, by covering one million metres for charity, led by their captain Amanda McHugh. *Varsity* spoke with Amanda to find out more about the fantastic work going on off the River Cam.

Amanda describes the project as a relatively straightforward group distance challenge, but one that her team have reimagined in their own unique way. The team's task is to complete one million metres over four weeks through various methods, ranging from roller-skating to rowing. This mammoth task runs alongside their goal to generate money for three homeless charities based in Cambridge: Cambridge Cyrenians, Winter Comfort and Jimmy's Cambridge.

This challenge captures the unique nature of rowing as a sport. Team members complete individual runs, rows and cycles, hitting personal milestones and targets on the way. However, the goal that matters is how these distances accumulate as a team. Separated from

their teammates by miles and masks, the King's women remain accountable to their crew.

With a relatively small club, and ever-changing government and British Rowing guidelines, the King's women's side was left fragmented and without clear direction. The 'One Million Metres' challenge has changed this, as rowers, united by Facebook group chats and Strava accounts, accumulate metres together. The challenge began with just the members of the W1 boat, yet thanks to their success and enthusiasm, the rest of the women's side have got involved, allowing King's to integrate freshers into their rowing community – something many clubs have struggled with.

Thanks to King's College, many of the rowers have access to ergs – meaning most of the metres have been accumulated on rowing machines. With much of the women's side in Cambridge, pairs from the Club have been able to go on cycles, runs, roller-skates and 15 km walks together – of course while observing government guidelines.

In just a week, 291,278 metres had been accumulated and, with less than a week to go, the rowers have only 24,102 metres left to cover: the equivalent of

walking the length of King's College Chapel 274 times.

Amanda spoke of how visible homeless people are in Cambridge, yet how often they are treated as invisible. In comparison, Cambridge rowers, travelling through the city every morning, are a consistently recognised feature of Cambridge's external image. Amanda and her teammates are working to use their visibility to champion the invisible, acknowledging their privilege as heavily subsidised rowers as they do so. The King's women's side recognise where they stand in the community, and have used their ability as athletes to help make homelessness more visible and alter the lives of those without homes throughout the city. To Amanda, the 'One Million Metres' challenge has proved to her that you can always make a difference, and that difference can be all the more remarkable if it is achieved within a team.

The forecast for rowing at Cambridge under the cloud of Covid-19 remains uncertain.

Yet to Amanda and her crewmates, Coronavirus has fostered a new found love for the sport. Amanda

spoke of a general greater appreciation of simply being out on the water that she is sure will no longer be taken for granted.

Considering rowing's financial costs, our position in Cambridge to have consistent and inclusive access to rowing is a distinct privilege, and one that Amanda believes we should be far more grateful for.

Alongside the phenomenal fundraising benefits of this challenge, the 'One Million Metres' campaign generates many advantages for both the women's physical and mental health. Lockdown(s) have left many people, particularly athletes, feeling unanchored and adrift, without clear goals and targets for development.

'One Million Metres' changed this for the King's women side. With a clear goal and target, the women are pushed to do something and are motivated not only for themselves and their team but for a good cause. In Amanda's words, this



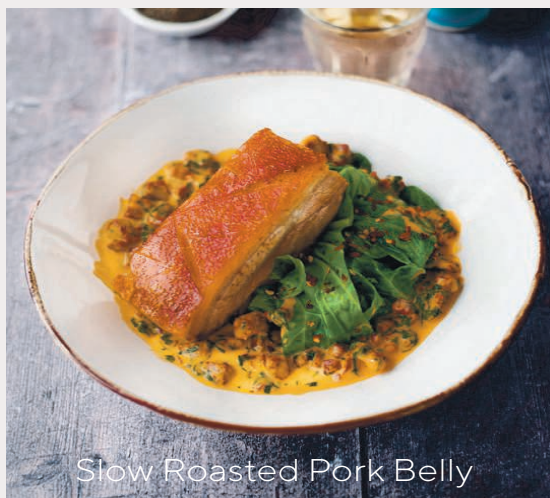
most recent lockdown has been particularly deleterious, as people have felt unable to make a difference with cases ever-rising, and the light of hope dimming at the end of the tunnel. King's women, however, have refused to give up hope and have proven, from ergs in their kitchen and footsteps along the Cam, both the ability and responsibility of sports teams to fundraise.

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Violet

By VARSITY

Shoot that poison arrow (to my heart!)

Violet Editor **Lotte Brundle** reflects on the sharp sting the prick of Cupid's arrow can cause and the bittersweet aftermath of first loves



▲ "Call me?" (ARTWORK BY OLIVIA LISLE)

I remember my first breakup (see: I fancied him immediately, he was cool and wasn't interested in me). And it hurt. It hurt a lot.

The realisation dawned on me that I would be forever alone on the train to London (back in the good old days when trains were still "allowed"). I had braces, medically diagnosed acne, not a lot of charisma, and a tendency to blurt out something sublimely inappropriate whenever I was confronted with the cute barista that I fancied in my local Pret.

As I wallowed in my unattractiveness, what would later become my go-to "breakup song" came up on shuffle on my Apple Music. It was not a heartfelt ballad, like Celine Dion's *My Heart Will Go On*. It was not the 1990 smash hit by Sinéad O'Connor that, bafflingly, is written partly in txt speak: *Nothing Compares 2 U*. It was not the warbling heartbroken lyrics to Adele's *Someone Like You*, *Make You Feel My Love*, *Set Fire to the Rain* or, indeed, any Adele song.

No, as I sat heartbroken, looking out of the train window, it was none other than the sweet 80s New Wave/Post Punk/Pop beats of ABC's *Poison Arrow* that flooded my eardrums, soothing my teenage angst.

I was astonished. It was like the lyrics were speaking directly to me. "Who broke my heart? You did, you did / Bow to the target, blame Cupid, Cupid / You think you're smart, stupid, stupid." Drummed into my ears through my half-broken earphones and straight into my heart like an anthem, a declaration, a promise.

"Someone else understands how I'm feeling," I realised, astonished. (17-year-old me hadn't yet gathered that I was not the only person on the planet to have their poor, delicate teenage heart broken cruelly by someone they'd only met in passing a few years ago at a school disco.)

Catchy 80s music aside (really - who's not a fan of that song?) I learnt a lesson about love that day, as that dingy South-

“
It the
sweet
80s New
Wave
/ Post
Punk /
Pop beats
of ABC's
Poison
Arrow
that
flooded
my
eardrums,
soothing
my teen-
age angst
”

Eastern train rounded the corner to St Pancras International.

I learnt that it's not something that's avoidable. Whatever your age, whatever your gender, that first young love absolutely blindsides you. It's like being run over by a bus, gunned down by an AK-47 or whacked with the full force of a Nerf Gun bullet right between the eyes. (Which is more painful? You decide.)

"Alas, I die," you declare dramatically, as it feels like you're being stabbed numerous times, again and again with a plastic prop knife in a Shakespearean tragedy.

Love is so flipping painful.

And that's probably because scientifically it alters your whole body chemistry...

Three Parts of Falling in Love According to Science (a loosely factual description of your brain's biochemistry)

Based on Helen Fisher's research at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

Attraction:

It's driven by adrenaline, dopamine, and serotonin.

Adrenaline - the reason why the moment you see your crush in the University Library your hands get sweaty and you forget to breathe. You're literally experiencing the brain chemical that keeps animals safe from predators in the wild. Fight, Flight or Freeze? It's like having two strong coffees, a Red Bull and a Pro Plus (wouldn't recommend, it's like seeing through the eye of a needle and a surefire route to cardiac arrest). That's how strong seeing someone you fancy is. And this also proves that having a crush literally stresses us out! Unbelievable. Oh God and don't even get me started on pheromones...

Dopamine - present in the brain's "reward" system. Released when we do things that feel "good" (eg being with the ones we love, eating, and having sex.) High levels of dopamine are also released during attraction. That's why

you smile like a giddy school girl when you get a text from that special someone. Dopamine is also highly present during addiction, eg a cocaine "high" produces dopamine in much the same way as attraction does - addicts going through withdrawal symptoms are not too dissimilar from forlorn lovestruck people who cannot obtain the object of their affection.

Serotonin - being attracted to someone actually seems to lead to a decrease in serotonin - the stabilising mood hormone that makes us happy. Serotonin also helps us with sleeping, eating, and digestion. That's right - having a crush can actually make you tired! Infatuation is a powerful beast.

Lust (ooh la la!):

Hellooo Sexy Town! This cheeky element is governed by both testosterone and oestrogen (the baby-making hormones). While these hormones are sometimes believed to be correspondingly male or female, as it turns out, both hormones are present in both genders. Also, sexual arousal appears to turn off sections in our brain that control critical thinking, self-awareness, and rational behaviour. That's right, as you get turned on, they get turned off (uh oh...). Ever done something stupid when you really wanted someone? This is why.

Long-term attachment:

Governed by oxytocin, known as the cuddle hormone (can I get an "aww!") and vasopressin which encourages bonding.

Oxytocin - produced by both sexes during an orgasm (good luck getting any oxytocin, ladies!) and promotes bonding between adults who are intimate together.

And these three stages can feel even more powerful for those witnessing love for the first time. See: this is partly why I was so heartily crying my eyes out to Poison Arrow, on my way to London, all those fateful years ago. So yes - a first crush: it's immobilising; it's all-consuming; it's confusing, and I wasn't being dramatic (Dad) when I said my heart felt like it was breaking because, hormonally, it was kind of a battlefield in my 17-year-old brain. To steal some apt words from The Bard:

"The wounds invisible that Love's keen arrows make." Why then, do we choose continually to be struck down by love, lust and all that lies in between?

Perhaps because it is out of our hands.

So, do you stay away, hoping never to be attracted by the pheromones of someone who has the power to break your heart or, do you give in to Cupid and, like ABC melodiously repeats, declare, with caution to the wind, "Shoot that poison arrow!"

Because, in my opinion, it's better to have them all: serotonin, testosterone, oxytocin, dopamine, vasopressin - I'd rather have this madness-inducing, heart-breaking, biochemically dangerous love cocktail and take my chances with heartbreak, than miss out and never get the chance to know love at all ...

"I'm addicted to you" - A caffeinated ode

Shakespeare wrote of loves both great and bold,
Star-crossed lovers, or so the tale is told.
But my affection, be it greater still,
I must express't in verse - by God, I will!

Cupid's arrow has untimely struck,
Now, I quench my thirst from the devil's cup.
I love you hot, I love you cold,
My love for you will ne'er grow old.

When I think upon the one I love,
I shake and sweat - great Heavens above!
Determined, an ode to you I write,
It's you that keeps me up all night.

My love fair goes by many names,
Lady 'Arabica' she's often famed.
Or sweet 'Robusta', beauteous 'Java',
I love you, even when you scold my tongue like lava.

Hark! My great source of inspiration,
My pure, unfailing motivation.
I'm up night and day because of you,
Our frequent encounters give me déjà brew.

Forever dark and mysterious,
You mocha me delirious.
You make me unbelievably frappe,
With you, I could never be unhappy.

Your sultry tones, your beans divine,
The thrilling rush - for you I pine!
The anecdote to lethargy,
Know always: my heart belongs to thee.

Dearest love, you keep me grounded,
Without you, I'd be dumbfounded.
Soy, oat, or almond; skimmed or lactofree,
There are many different ways you bring joy to me.

We make a Brew-tiful, dutiful duo,
Your absence only gives me woe.
For you my love doth only grow,
Don't leave me! It would be too much of a blow.

We meet five, six, seven times a day,
You are my one and only bae.
Spiced, frothed, milky and roasted,
I like you many ways, as I've just boasted.

Mocha, Cappuccino, Flat white, Espresso,
Without you all I'd be depresso.
Cortado, instant, Macchiato, Latte,
Life with you is always a party.

Other drinks just aren't the same,
You are my love: Eternal Dame,
It's only you I wish to woo,
To put it simply - I love brew!

I hope our love will never end,
Because you and I are the perfect blend.
You make my heart beat double time,
Dear coffee, will you be my Valentine?



By Violet's resident poets: Alex Castillo-Powell, Lotte Brundle and Nadya Miryanova