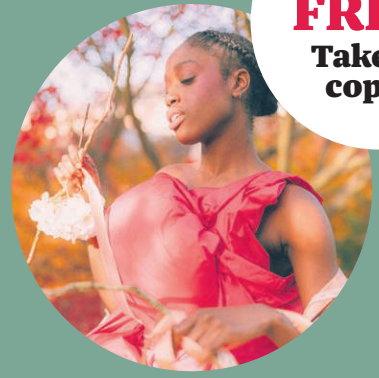


THE FINAL STRETCH



FREE
Take a
copy

The modern pre-Raphaelites

Page 12 ►

No.896
Friday 26th November 2021
varsity.co.uk

The Independent
Student Newspaper since 1947

VARSLITY

Corpus kitchen crisis leaves students without breakfast

Jacob Freedland
Deputy News Editor

Serge Isman
Deputy News Editor

An ongoing conflict between chefs and college management at the Corpus Christi kitchen has left students without the usual number of formals, without breakfast and some without a cafeteria.

Breakfast has been abandoned at the main site, and at Leckhampton, the college's off-site accommodation, catered food has been scrapped altogether despite students being billed for it. While previously, students were billed as part of an "Establishment Charge", this year, it has been integrated into increased rent.

However, the apex of students' discontent is the loss of formals. One student, Zack Hilburn, said this feels like a "loss of the Cambridge experience."

From conversations with former staff members, *Varsity* can reveal what led to this situation.

Chris Le-Vien was the catering manager at Corpus for 10 years, but in Febru-



Story continued page 6 ►

▲ One Corpus student at Leckhampton eats meals at Selwyn (Lucia/UNSPLASH)

'I'm concerned about the impact strikes will have on students' education': An exclusive interview with Graham Virgo

Georgia Goble
Senior News Editor

Bethan Moss
Senior News Editor

Graham Virgo, the Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education, has been faced with the difficult challenge of mitigating significant disruption to students' education over the last two years, moving teaching, learning and exams online at the height of the pandemic. But as life at Cambridge has gradually returned to

normality in the last term, Virgo remains hopeful in his plans to continue moving the University forward.

Last month (12/10), Virgo told Cambridge Student Union (SU) President Zak Coleman in an interview that he was supportive of the SU's campaign for a reading week in the middle of term, for which a working group was set up in June. We asked him what progress had been made, and when we might see a vote in the University Council or Regent House on the matter.

He told *Varsity* that "the working group has prepared a paper that has

been circulated to faculties, departments and colleges for an initial institutional response. We will then reflect on those responses and the proposal may be refined and then there will be further engagement and consultation - I have said I would like that to be with the student body, we certainly do not want to exclude the student body. We will be moving forward with that next term. This is a big change and we need to see where the issues are. There are all sorts of practical issues."

Virgo went on to clarify that the reading week will only be pursued on the

grounds that no additional work is set during this week, and that it will be a time for students to catch up on missed work, whilst taking a step back from academic commitments.

Though he doubted that the reading week would be implemented during the current academic year (2021-22), Virgo "hoped" that the proposal would appear in front of the University Council in this period.

"I would certainly hope so. There would need to be a report prepared which would then be considered by the Regent House, given that it's such a big

change. I'm pushing for the University Council and the colleges committees to formally consider it this academic year. Let's see what the responses are, but that is the plan."

Earlier this month, the results of two University and College Union (UCU) strike ballots were announced, with the Cambridge branch of the UCU voting to strike on both issues: the Four Fights - pensions and pay, unsafe workloads, casualisation and equality failings - and cuts to pension benefits. Strikes will take

Story continued page 6 ►

News

EDITORIAL

The term is almost at an end. Christmas trees have begun to appear across the various college dining halls and many students prepare to return home. Whatever your plans for the Christmas break, we hope it involves a well-deserved hiatus from academic work!

This week *Varsity* reports on the situation at Corpus Christi College where students have been left without breakfast at main site accommodation and where catering has been scrapped altogether at Leckhampton, the college off-site accommodation. Understandably, students have voiced complaints at the kitchen crisis, with one student commenting that they now go to Selwyn College for meals.

In News we also celebrated the twelfth year of Disability History Month. On Monday (22/11), the Disabled Student's Campaign hosted an online speaker's event on disabled activism.

As the topic of strikes continues to prove divisive, the Opinions section present two diverging perspectives. On the one hand, Daisy Thomas and Lauryn Anderson explain that although students have witnessed three years of disruption due to the 2019 strikes and the pandemic, Cambridge's teaching staff have equally been affected. A return to post-pandemic normalcy, they claim, is a return to a world in which academics continue to be overpaid, overworked and exploited. Strikes are therefore necessary for long term change. On the other hand, Freddie Poser and Joshan Parmar criticise the SU for failing to better defend student interests in the midst of the strikes.

After Clare College porters removed the trans pride flag last Saturday (10/11), Deputy Editor, Akshata Kapoor, argues that the refusal to fly the flag is a denial of the visibility of trans students and their right to occupy space. In a bold edition of this week's Comment section, the article correctly calls on colleges to take on the responsibility of flying flags without the continuous struggle and demands from student bodies.

In Theatre, Stanley Lawson sits down with Milo Harries to discuss a series of Climate crisis theatre workshops running in Cambridge this month.

Vulture Editor, Lily Maguire, curates a striking series of portraits, drawing inspiration from the pre-Raphaelites who emphasised nature, literature and poetry. The shoot is a reaction to the white, CIS-gendered feminine ideal.

The Music section, led by editors Maddy Fisher and Mathew Cavallini, has compiled a catalogue of the year's best albums: Wolf Alice's Blue Weekend and Arlo Park's Collapsed in Sunbeams feature among the selected works.

Finally, in Sport, staff writer, Tom Bullivant, implores football teams to boycott the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

It has been a long term! Take the opportunity over Christmas to rest and to recuperate. We'll see you on the other side.

Nick and Isabel

EDITORS Isabel Sebode & Nick Bartlett *editor@varsity.co.uk*
DEPUTY EDITORS Akshata Kapoor & Emaan Ullah *deputyeditor@varsity.co.uk*
MAGAZINE EDITOR Lily Maguire *magazine@varsity.co.uk*
DEPUTY MAGAZINE EDITOR Margherita Volpato *deputymagazine@varsity.co.uk*
BUSINESS MANAGER Mark Curtis *business@varsity.co.uk*
NEWS EDITORS Bethan Moss, Georgia Goble & Louis Hodgson (Senior); Jacob Freedland & Serge Isman *news@varsity.co.uk*
NEWS CORRESPONDENTS Aoife Petrie & Lorna Kimmins
INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR Caitlin Farrell
INTERVIEWS EDITORS Juliette Gueron-Gabrielle, Stephi Stacey & Isabella Todini *interviews@varsity.co.uk*
FEATURES EDITORS Ellie Austen & Inés Magré (Senior); Nabiha Ahmed & Lotte Brundle (Deputy) *features@varsity.co.uk*
OPINION EDITORS Olivia Young & Ramsay Hodgson (Senior); Emily Kelly & Frankie Richards (Deputy) *opinion@varsity.co.uk*
SCIENCE EDITORS Sambavi Sneha Kumar (Senior) & Nieve Brydges (Deputy) *science@varsity.co.uk*
SPORT EDITORS Liam Kline (Senior) & Damola Odeyemi (Deputy) *sport@varsity.co.uk*
VIOLET EDITOR Oona Lagercrantz & Evie Lucas *violet@varsity.co.uk*
ARTS EDITORS Emma Hulse & Famke Veenstra-Ashmore *arts@varsity.co.uk*
FILM & TV EDITORS Magdalena Gabrysiaak, Amber de Ruyt & Holly Sewell *filmandtv@varsity.co.uk*
MUSIC EDITORS Mathew Cavallini & Madeleine Fisher *music@varsity.co.uk*
FASHION EDITORS Olivia Rhodes & Muhammad Syed *fashion@varsity.co.uk*
THEATRE EDITORS Stanley Lawson & Fergal Jeffreys *theatre@varsity.co.uk*
LIFESTYLE EDITOR Amy Howell, Miranda Stephenson & Ellie Wilson *lifestyle@varsity.co.uk*
HEAD OF ILLUSTRATIONS Eden Keily-Thurstain *magazine@varsity.co.uk*
CHIEF SUB-EDITOR Chloe Bond *subeditor@varsity.co.uk*
DIGITAL EDITORS Tilda Butterworth *digital@varsity.co.uk*
ASSOCIATE EDITORS Gaby Vides, Georgina Buckle, Gabriel Humphreys, Meike Leonard, Stephi Stacey, Cameron White, Christopher Dorrell *associate@varsity.co.uk*
VARSAITY BOARD Dr Michael Franklin (Chairman), Prof Peter Robinson, Dr Tim Harris, Michael Derringer, Mark Curtis (Company Secretary), Alan Bookbinder
 © VARSITY PUBLICATIONS LTD, 2021. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior permission of the publisher. Varsity, 16 Mill Lane, Cambridge CB2 1RX. Telephone 01223 337575.

Varsity is published by Varsity Publications Ltd. Varsity Publications also publishes *The Mays*. Printed at Iliffe Print Cambridge – Winship Road, Milton, Cambridge CB24 6PP on 42.5gsm newsprint. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. ISSN 1758-4442.

Cambridge lead Oxford in return of 'BOGOF' contest

Cameron White
Associate Editor

Ryan Coppack
News Correspondent

Colleges at "Camfridge" and "Oxford", as the universities are so called in the race to donate, have once again been going head-to-head for the latest edition of the Great Oxbridge Buy One Give One Free (BOGOF) campaign, an inter-college competition designed to support local food banks in the cities.

Set up by 'Because We Can', a campaign group fighting food poverty, the "BOGOF" campaign encourages students at the two universities to donate as many resources as possible.

Now in its second year, the initiative started on the Tuesday of week six (16/11) and will run until the Tuesday of week eight (30/11). At Cambridge, 20 of the 31 colleges are taking part, while at Oxford 16 of the 39 colleges are participating.

As the competition nears its conclusion, the 36 Oxbridge colleges involved have thus far donated at least 1,880 items to local food banks.

As of this Wednesday (24/11), Magdalene College was at the top of the Cambridge table, with 164 donations, with Fitzwilliam a close second with 162, and Girton third with 106. Two colleges – Murray Edwards and Selwyn – registered 0.

Overall, Cambridge led Oxford by 80 with 980 items, ahead of the latter's 900. Keble College had donated the most items across the two universities, with a total of 241.

The theme for this year is "DTF?", or "double the food", a call on students to donate twice as many items as was donated last year. In 2020's inaugural contest, 10,127 items were donated by 23 colleges across Oxbridge, so if achieved this would total over 20,000.

In the Trussell Trust's food bank network, 2.5 million food parcels were distributed in the financial year 2020/21. This represented a 33% increase on the year before.

Last year, Oxford won the competition, donating 301 more items than Cambridge. With 1,875 items, Clare College donated the most at Cambridge.

A spokesperson for 'Because We Can' told *Varsity* that, with the additional thirteen colleges onboard this year, they hope "to reach even more people in need".

They continued: "The fallout from the pandemic continues to push families into food poverty, and we're working with Oxbridge to address these problems in their local communities for the 2nd time.

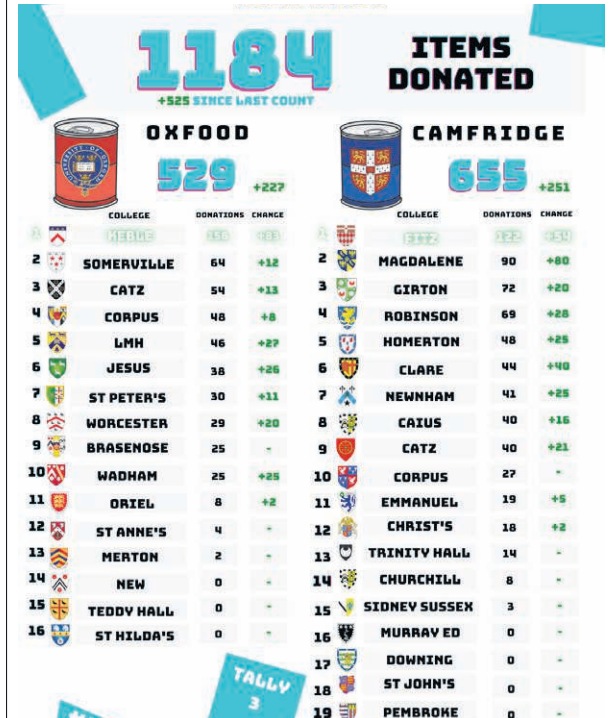
"We were absolutely floored by the success of last year, and the pandemic has made the problem of food poverty so much worse, that it was an obvious choice to do it again. We're hoping that this becomes [a] permanent fixture on the Varsity calendar."

Paying tribute to the student volunteer team of over 40 representatives from JCRs across Oxbridge, the spokesperson confirmed that the campaign will support Cambridge City Foodbank and Oxford Food Hub, who "in turn, support hundreds of families in their local areas."

Also speaking to *Varsity*, the Charities Officer of St Catharine's College's JCR said that participation this year was being encouraged on social media and a box for donations was placed in the mail room.

Meanwhile Lottie Malaley and Yasmin Adam, Charities Officers on the Fitzwilliam JCR, described the way in which the initiative "has been embraced wholeheartedly" by students at the college.

Referencing the College's collaboration with Cambridge Sustainable Food in November 2020 to provide 200 meals for families in need, Malaley and Adam added: "We are extremely proud of our



▲ In the Trussell Trust's food bank network, 2.5 million food parcels were distributed in the financial year 2020/21 (BECAUSE WE CAN)

“
10,127
items were
donated
by 23 colleges
”

college community for always supporting charity and access initiatives [...] there is a real engagement with this brilliant initiative [...] which utilises both the privilege found within these institutions and the age-old Oxbridge rivalry for a truly essential cause.”

The next leaderboard is due to be released by 'Because We Can' on their Facebook and Instagram platforms later today (26/11). The penultimate tables will then be released on Sunday (28/11), before the final leaderboard and champions are revealed next Tuesday (30/11).

Varsity contacted the JCRs of all of the Cambridge participant colleges, and subsequent comments will be added to the online version of this article at www.varsity.co.uk/news.



▲ Leckhampton is 1.4km away from the college main site (SERGE ISMAN)

was exacerbated by the way the kitchen was run following Le-Vien's departure.

Former chefs allege that college management prioritised cost over quality. They told us that "the freezers were stuffed." Fresh ingredients were replaced with bulk-bought food, cakes were shop-bought, and vegetables were pre-cut.

To a team of chefs who have since taken jobs at high-end restaurants, the new management felt like a downgrade.

Sources say that crucial roles, such as pastry chef, were left unfilled despite staff requests that new apprentices be brought in. Despite these requests, personnel gaps were not addressed and frustration within the kitchen grew.

Corpus claimed that these shortages are "small" and "in common with many other colleges."

“
One student now goes to Selwyn for his meals
”

The kitchen has dramatically shrunk in size. There were 13 cooks at the start of summer. Now only three remain.

A Corpus student who lives at Leckhampton told *Varsity* that he now goes to Selwyn for his meals.

According to sources, the situation is only worsening following the departure of popular head chef, Seb Mansfield, two weeks ago. One ex-employee described him as "the best chef" he'd ever worked with, and said that the staff "get up for him."

This reputation allowed Mansfield's kitchen to attract the most ambitious apprentices. Now that he is gone, some fear that the kitchen may be headed for tougher times still.

Varsity reached out to Chris Le-Vien for comment.

Toope among UK Vice-Chancellors receiving pay rise despite Covid

Stephen Toope earned 1.9% more in 2019/2020 despite other staff taking voluntary pay cuts

Caitlin Farrell
Head of Investigations

Vice-Chancellor Professor Stephen Toope earned a net salary of £370,000 in 2019/2020 according to page six of recent financial information published by the University of Cambridge. His net salary has increased by 1.9% from £363,000 in 2018/2019, despite other senior staff earning over £100,000 being encouraged to take a voluntary pay cut to help with University plans for Covid recovery.

Toope also pledged to contribute 15% of his pay to Cambridge's general contribution to the pension provider Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), which was implemented on 1 October 2020.

According to the financial report published by the University, "the Vice-Chancellor's basic salary is 10.9 times [...] the median pay of staff, where the median pay is calculated on a full-time equivalent basis". This calculation includes "over 975 agency staff employed on temporary contracts."

This year, Cambridge spent £949 million on staff costs, which includes salaries and the financial deficit caused

by the USS pension funds.

Of the 352 highest paid staff at the University, 83 earned between £105,000 and £110,000, while 73 earned between £100,000 and £105,000.

Meanwhile, across the UK, data for 2019/2020 from the Office for Students (OfS) has shown that three universities in England - Exeter, Imperial College London, and London School of Economics - pay their Vice-Chancellors over £500,000 per year in combined salary, bonuses and benefits.

Exeter's Vice-Chancellor earned the largest sum at £584,000. A spokesperson for Exeter University stated that the salary "reflected the value and importance of the vice-chancellor's experience, guidance and expertise to the achievement of the university's strategic objectives over several years."

The total sums paid to Vice-Chancellors and other heads of higher education institutions rose at 93 universities (56% of the total), but fell in 60 (36%) and remained the same in 12 (7%).

Despite these rises for senior management, the proportion of overall university staff receiving an annual salary of more than £100,000 fell or stayed the same at 48% of all providers.

In 2019/2020, 1.8% of staff received



▲ Total sums paid to Vice-Chancellors across the UK rose at 93 universities (LOUIS ASHWORTH/VARSITY)

a basic salary of more than £100,000, a slight increase from 1.7% in 2018/2019.

Nicola Dandridge, chief executive at the OfS, said: "These figures demonstrate that, across the sector as a whole, pay increases for vice-chancellors were lower than the increases recommended for all university staff."

"But that should not disguise the fact that some of these salaries, and the differences in pay between vice-chancellors and academic staff, will appear very high. Those universities should not be

surprised to be asked difficult questions about this."

She continued: "Leading a university is a complex and difficult role that requires great flexibility, knowledge and experience, and it is right that those who excel in these roles should be properly rewarded."

"However, where there are instances of an imbalance in pay at universities, it is important that this information is freely available and open to scrutiny."

Strikes continue to divide opinion across Cambridge

Aoife Petrie
News Correspondent

Throughout this term, discourse surrounding strike action has been prevalent among both students and academics. Responses to the industrial action over pay and pensions have varied significantly, with some welcoming the action and others criticising the potential disruption they could cause.

Knowledge about the potential strikes has been circulating for some time, and last week (16/11) the details were set. The Cambridge branch of the University and College Union (UCU) confirmed that their members will strike from Wednesday 1 December to Friday 3 December.

Though the strike action only affects one day in Week Eight of this term, potential further action after the Christmas break "could cause further disruption".

This term, the UCU have twice voted in favour of the motion concerning strike action at the University. The strikes are taking place over issues of "pensions and pay, unsafe workloads, casualisation and equality failings", and are a part of a nation-wide movement.

An academic involved in the organisation of the strikes, Dr Marian Mayer, claimed in a tweet that "casualisation, spiralling workloads & pay inequality blight our sector".

In an email sent last week (17/11) to "inform" students of the strikes, both Vice-Chancellor Stephen Toope and Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor Graham Virgo criticised the movement. Vice-Chancellor Toope expressed how he is "deeply concerned" about their impact following an academic year disrupted by Covid, while Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor Virgo also emphasised his worries over the "potential disruption" to education.

Some of the student body have voiced support for the movement, though there are some loud voices expressing their discontent. A recent survey conducted by the Tab has found that 34 percent of students support the strikes, the greatest percentage in the survey compared to 31 percent who claimed not to know enough about the movement.

The Cambridge Student Union (SU) passed a motion at its fortnightly meeting on 25/10, which pledged to "support striking workers, as well as students affected by strikes". The motion passed with 69% support from council members.

Since this vote, the SU have sent update emails, informing students with details of the strikes, support that will be provided and how students can show solidarity with the movement.

Support from students has been called for by the campaign group, Cambridge Defend Education, critiquing how



▲ Both Vice-Chancellor Stephen Toope and Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor Graham Virgo criticised the movement (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

the undergraduate supervision system "exploits" workers.

Responses to the strikes do not sit neatly on the binary between support and condemnation. Some students do not know what the strikes entail, while others believe in the sentiment of the strikes but fail to support the action in practice.

There are students with a complex relationship with the strikes - supporting the aim of the movement without willing to back the actions that are being carried out. In the previously mentioned survey, 21.9 percent of students "responded that they supported the cause but not the strikes".

While some have claimed this attitude as "selfish", citing the long-term benefits of the strikes for those involved and future academics, others have pointed to how "different students have different stakes" in the campaigns, with MPhil

students allegedly losing out on assignments which determined their final grade during the last set of strikes.

Even among those who are aware of the strikes and what they entail, confusion has circulated around what constitutes as crossing of picket lines, with many students venting their concerns on Camfess.

Not all attitudes are positive or indifferent - some have responded to the strikes with disapproval. A number of students have pointed to the need for academic publication and research to be affected, instead of academic teaching, claiming "academics strike only in ways that harm students".

This year is not the first time the strikes have taken place in the University. Strikes have, and continue to, divide opinion amongst students and academics across the city.

INTERVIEWS

Josef Skrdlik on watching the coup in Sudan

Page 18 ►

FEATURES

To intermit or not to intermit, that is the question



Page 9 ►

OPINIONS

Without short-term strike disruption, there can be no long term change for staff and students alike

Page 13 ►

SCIENCE

The need to protect health in sport



Page 14 ►

VIOLET

Emission Impossible: Part II

Page 30 ►

SPORTS

Steele-Bodger Match 2021: CURUFC 14-21 Steele-Bodger XV



Page 32 ►

News

This week in research...

Louis Hodgson
Senior News Editor

Is social distancing pointless?

For almost two years, the government has been encouraging people to maintain a two-metre gap when socialising with fellow human beings. Thousands upon thousands of flyers, adverts and witty birthday cards have drilled this message into the general population, in a national effort to reduce COVID-19 transmission.

However, has it all been worth it? Are we really safe when we social distance? Cambridge engineers suggest not.

New research from the University of Cambridge has found that the golden two-metre rule may not be as reliable as previously thought, dubbing it an “arbitrary measurement”.

Professor Epaminondas Mastorakos from Cambridge's Department of Engineering led the research, which focussed on quantifying the way in which cough droplets spread COVID-19.

The research found that the amount of droplets expelled by a cough is quite random and varies significantly between individuals. Mastorakos explained: “If I'm coughing, fluctuations in velocity, temperature and humidity mean that the amount someone gets at the two-metre mark can be very different each time.”

The study claims that a two-metre gap does not guarantee one's safety, and stressed that vaccination, ventilation and mask-wearing are key in contain-

ing the virus.

“We're all desperate to see the back of this pandemic, but we strongly recommend that people keep wearing masks in indoor spaces such as offices, classrooms and shops,” added Mastorakos.



▲ A recent study claims that a two-metre gap does not guarantee safety (NICK FEWINGS/UNSPLASH)

Multilingual = academic genius

The ability to speak multiple languages is an enviable trait at the best of times. It helps you to travel the world, experience new cultures, and may even land you a job in MI5.

Much to the despair of jealous monolinguals such as myself, recent research has found yet another reason why being multilingual is great: GCSE scores.

The study looked at over 800 pupils in the UK and found a positive correlation between multilingual students and their GCSE scores.

Individuals who identified as mul-

tilingual outperformed their peers in a number of subjects including maths, geography and science.

Interestingly, pupils who identified in this way did not necessarily speak two languages fluently — therefore, simply valuing a language and different styles of communication may help to boost grades across the board.

Dr Dee Rutgers, a Research Associate at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, commented: “The evidence suggests that the more multilingual you consider yourself to be, the higher your GCSE scores. While we need to understand more about why that relationship exists, it may be that children who see themselves as multilingual have a sort of ‘growth mindset’ which impacts on wider attainment.”

Devastating plagues

Meanwhile, in the land of historical academia, Professor Peter Sarris has argued that the Justinianic Plague had a far more devastating impact on society than other historians would have you believe. The Justinianic Plague hit the Mediterranean world from the 6th to the 8th century, and was the first outbreak of the bubonic plague in west Eurasian history.

Sarris argued that in light of recent genetic findings, ancient texts need to be interpreted differently. Some historians argue that there is a lack of literature surrounding the plague during Emperor Justinian's reign, and therefore its impact on society must have been mild.

In an argument reminiscent of the quality-not-quantity maxim, Sarris asserted that whilst there are limited writings, the ones that do exist are of great significance. In particular, he noted the significance of Procopius, a contemporary historian, who wrote a “harrowing account of the arrival of the plague in Constantinople.”

Sarris also noted a surge in legislation between 542 and 545 CE, which enacted a number of crisis-driven measures to limit the damage caused by the plague. He highlighted a law made in March 542 CE, that Emperor Justinian himself described as being written amid the “encircling presence of death”.

The exact nature of the Justinianic Plague was not known until the early 2000s, when advances in genomics enabled scientists to identify it as bubonic.

Sarris commented: “Increasing genetic evidence will lead us in directions we can scarcely yet anticipate, and historians need to be able to respond positively and imaginatively, rather than with a defensive shrug.”



▲ (KMA/UNSPLASH)

Addenbrooke's Hospital conquers COVID-19

Scientists and engineers at Addenbrooke's Hospital and the University of Cambridge have installed an air filtration device in COVID-19 wards, which has removed virtually all traces of the virus from the air.

The findings have huge implications for improving the safety of hospital wards, as well as having wider implications for setting standards on clean air.

The study measured the amount of the SARS-CoV-2 in the air before and after a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) air filter was installed and found that the device led to a significant reduction in its presence.

Study-lead Dr Vilas Navapurkar, a consultant in Intensive Care Medicine at Cambridge University Hospitals (CUH), said: “Reducing airborne transmission of the coronavirus is extremely important for the safety of both patients and staff. Effective PPE has made a huge difference, but anything we can do to reduce the risk further is important.”

“Because of the numbers of patients being admitted with COVID-19, hospitals have had to use wards not designed for managing respiratory infections. During an intensely busy time, we were able to pull together a team from across the hospital and University to test whether portable air filtration devices, which are relatively inexpensive, might remove airborne SARS-CoV-2 and make these wards safer.”



**GREATER
CAMBRIDGE
PARTNERSHIP**



Consultation now open

Have your say on transforming public transport in our area

MAKING CONNECTIONS
HAVE YOUR SAY ON GREENER TRAVEL
IN GREATER CAMBRIDGE

www.greatercambridge.org.uk/making-connections-2021

If you would prefer a hard copy of the consultation brochure or survey please telephone **01223 699906**

If you would prefer a copy of the consultation brochure in large print, Braille, audio tape or in another language please email: **consultations@greatercambridge.org.uk**

SCAN ME



Cambridge wins two national awards for sustainability and climate policy

Caitlin Farrell
Head of Investigations

Cambridge University won two awards at the Green Gown Awards virtual ceremony on 18/11 for its environmental justice work, announced in a Tweet by Cambridge's sustainability team on 22/11.

The 'Green Gown Awards UK' recognise sustainability initiatives at universities across the UK and Ireland, with award categories recognising universities for taking significant steps to meet climate goals by 2030, offering sustainable food and drink on campus, and publishing impactful research.

International Green Gown awards are also released every year; Cambridge did not feature in this year's international winners.

Cambridge won the Reporting with Influence award, a category that assesses how universities report their sustainability measures and the influence of these reports within institutions.

The judges stated that Cambridge's annual sustainability report was "an engaging read, with honesty about performance and balance in the reporting". They were "impressed by the activity and the involvement, particularly of students and staff beyond the core sustainability team, in driving initiatives".



Professor Stephen Toope, Vice-Chancellor of the University, stated: "Winning this Award is not only an achievement for the University, but also for those who rightly expect institutions with influence to accurately and openly communicate their sustainability journey. We have worked hard to improve our sustainability reporting and communications, and are absolutely delighted to receive this Award."

Cambridge was also highly commended in the 2030 Climate Action category, based on the goals universities set to reduce their emissions by 2030 and the plans they implement for achieving them.

The judges of Cambridge's entry were "impressed by the science-based target approach across this very large and multi-college university. There is clearly rigour in application, and carbon savings being made. At the same time there is action around scope 3 and evident external engagement and sharing of learning."

The award was won overall by Edinburgh University, with Cambridge and Newcastle University both being highly commended. Professor Toope commented: "This celebrates our collective progress and bold strategic direction, while also looking to a net-zero future for the University that puts resilience, innovation and partnership at its heart."

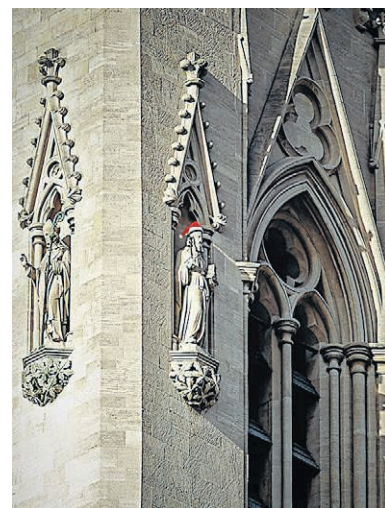
COLLEGE NEWS St John's or St Nick?

Santa hats have inexplicably appeared on three of the statues on the walls of St John's College chapel.

Photographer Martin Bond first spotted the statues sporting the festive headwear at around 11am on Monday (22/11).

He was taking his daily photograph for his online photography collection, 'A Cambridge Diary', when he spotted the unexpected additions to the chapel's 19th century architecture.

Bond took to social media to share his discovery and to share his thoughts on how the hats might have got there: "A rascal student has placed a Santa hat on the heads of figures on St John's College Chapel - so why is it my picture of the day? Take a look at the second picture and ask yourself - how?"



▲ Martin Bond (A CAMBRIDGE DIARY)

SCIENCE Antibiotic-resistant bacteria found near River Cam

'Potentially fatal' antibiotic-resistant bacteria has been found in the vicinity of the River Cam.

Researchers from Anglia Ruskin University have found pseudomonas bacteria in bird droppings after taking swabs from an area within half a mile of the bank of the River Cam over two years.

24 out of the 115 samples contained the bacteria which can be transmitted to humans via cross-contamination. One sample contained pseudomonas aeruginosa, a common hospital infection that can cause serious lung infections in those with weakened immune systems.

Five types of antibiotics were tested on the bacteria samples, with all of them being resistant to at least one type.

However, none were resistant to all five types.

ALUMNI Music photographer and Cambridge alumnus Mick Rock dies

Music photographer Mick Rock has died at the age of 72.

He was widely known as 'The Man Who Shot the Seventies' due to his famous work with David Bowie, Lou Reed, Queen, Blondie, The Sex Pistols and many more.

Rock matriculated at Gonville and Caius in 1964, graduating with a degree in Modern and Medieval Languages.

A statement posted on his website reads: "It is with the heaviest of hearts that we share our beloved psychedelic

renegade Mick Rock has made the Jungian journey to the other side.

"Those who had the pleasure of existing in his orbit, know that Mick was always so much more than 'The Man Who Shot The 70s.' He was a photographic poet — a true force of nature who spent his days doing exactly what he loved, always in his own delightfully outrageous way."



▲ MATHEW DELTORO (UNSPLASH)

TRAFFIC Most dangerous roads in Cambridge

The most dangerous roads for car accidents in Cambridge have been revealed.

Data compiled by insurance company Ageas shows that over 300 serious or fatal accidents have occurred in Cambridge between 2017 and 2019.

According to an interactive map made available online, the most common sites of car accidents in Cambridge city are East Road and Barton Road, which is marked as 'persistently higher risk'.

Other roads across Cambridgeshire have also been marked as areas of concern.

The data comes as part of a nationwide study into accidents on British roads.

DOXA PARTNERS

Are you 'bright, thoughtful and numerate'?



We are seeking an Investment Analyst to research bonds, funds, equities, special situations and themes.

Our ideal candidate:

Reads widely

Is comfortable with numbers

Likes testing hypotheses

Shares our Ethos

doxa.partners

News

Story continued from front cover ►

place from 1st-3rd December, with disruption to faculty-based teaching - but not college-based teaching - inevitable.

After more than sixteen months of disrupted teaching over the course of the pandemic, and four consecutive years of disruption due to strikes beforehand, not to mention discontent amongst striking staff, pressure is mounting on universities to accept the demands of the UCU.

Virgo, however, gave no indication that the demands would be accepted, instead advising students who were concerned about the impact the strikes would have on their education that "advice and support" was available across colleges, faculties and departments.

"I'm concerned about students and the impact on their education, but it is important that we will support students through this."

Though teaching has largely taken place in person this term, and disruption - from the pandemic at least - has been minimal, it was declared in May that this academic year would be a transition year for Tripos exams, with roughly half of all exams taking place online. When asked if he thought online exams would continue to be used in the future, Virgo commented that he was "aware that a lot of students have embraced the new format."

"We need to consider what works -

there seems to be approaching a 50/50 split of those who want to go back to in-person exams, with contingency plans in place if that wasn't possible and others that want to do something different, building on the online format. There is a lot of reflection that is going on. But we are absolutely coming out of the covid emergency period. We need to ensure that we are reflecting carefully on the experience, what we learnt from the pandemic.

"I've been encouraging faculties and departments for a number of years to think about how they examine and whether it is the best way. The knee-jerk assumption that the three hour in-person exam is the only way to examine has changed. If it's regarded as the most apt way on reflection, fine, but others are thinking we can do something different that's more apt for our subject. There will be continued consultation on that."

"It does not follow that the way we used to do things [before the pandemic] was necessarily bad, but if we can enhance in person things with digital tech then we should. We are learning from other institutions around the world, and they're learning from us."

"I am really proud of the way my colleagues have worked so hard and how deeply we've thought about the way we teach and what we teach and making sure it's the best it can possibly be."

Cambridge celebrates Disability History Month



▲ This year marks the 12th year that Disability History Month has been celebrated in the UK (Keira Quirk)

Esmé Kenney
News Correspondent

From the 18th November to the 18th December, events are being held throughout the University and the city to celebrate UK Disability History Month.

This year marks the 12th year that Disability History Month has been celebrated.

On Monday (22/11), the Disabled Students' Campaign hosted an online speakers event on the subject of Disability history and activism.

The meeting had a BSL interpreter, live captioning and an access break in the middle.

Cambridge University Libraries held an online event on Wednesday (24/11) to discuss disability representation in children's literature.

Lottie Mills, a third year English student at Newnham College, spoke at the event. In 2020 Mills won the BBC's Young Writers' Award for her short story 'The Change-

ling', which explored the themes of disability and difference.

PhD candidate Elizabeth Leung, whose research explores representations of dyslexia in children's and young adults literature, also spoke at the event.

The event included a discussion between the two speakers, followed by a Q&A.

On 7th December, Cambridgeshire Constabulary will be holding an online talk to mark Disability History Month.

Cambridge University

Libraries held an online event on Wednesday (24/11) to discuss disability representation in children's literature

This will include an introduction by the police, where they will discuss new initiatives, talks from speakers about their experiences with disabilities, and a Q&A with a guest panel, including people with disabilities, carers, and members of the police force.

Cambridge Disability Heritage are in the process of finding local contributions (including stories, poems and films) for an online history project.

Speaking to Varsity, the Community Development Officer for Cambridge City Council, Ariadne Henry, highlighted the difficulties the pandemic had posed to disabled people.

She expressed hopes to hold more events in spring and early summer, when the risk of Covid-19 to vulnerable groups should lessen.

Disability History Month was first held in 2010. The month also covers HIV/AIDS Day (1st December) and International Day of People with Disabilities (3rd Dec.)

Rowan, a local arts centre and forest school that supports adults with learning disabilities, will be holding a Christmas fair to raise funds and showcase the work of its student artists. The fair will take place on the 1st December from 5:00-8:00pm, and the Cambridge Gospel Choir will be performing Christmas Carols in front of the building.

Rowan will also be taking part in The Big Give, meaning that every donation made to the charity between the 30th November and the 7th December will be doubled.

Professor Lucy Delap, the Deputy Chair of the History Department and Fellow of Murray Edwards College, will be delivering a talk on 'Visible and invisible disabilities in the Welfare State since 1944', in an online event for Liverpool John Moores University. The event will be on Wednesday 15th December from 1:00-2:00pm.

Disability History Month was first held in 2010. The month also covers HIV/AIDS Day (1st December) and International Day of People with Disabilities (3rd Dec.)

This year's joint themes are 'Disability and Hidden Impairments' and 'Disability, Sex and Relationships'.

THE MAYS

The best new student writing and art from
The University of Cambridge & The University of Oxford

The Mays is recruiting team members for our 2022 publication!
Now in its 30th year, The Mays publishes the best of student writing and art from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Credited with launching Zadie Smith's career, previous guest editors have included Kate Bush, Arlo Parks, Stephen Fry, Rupi Kaur, Nick Cave, Patti Smith, Jarvis Cocker, Ted Hughes and Oscar Murillo.

We are currently looking for the following:
Deputy Editor • Associate Editor (Oxford only)
Submissions Officer • Events and Publicity Officer
Social Media Officer • Art Editor • Deputy Art Editor
Poetry Editor • Deputy Art Editor
Prose Editor • Deputy Prose Editor
Illustrations Editor • Staff Illustrator

To apply please send your CV and covering letter with a note of the role(s) that interest you to:
mays-editor@varsity.co.uk

THE APPLICATION DEADLINE IS MIDNIGHT FRIDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2021.

Online interviews will take place in mid-December 2021.
(Student submissions for art, poetry, short stories etc will open in February/March 2022)
www.themaysanthology.co.uk

Cambridge graduate launches reproductive health testing kit



ductive health. This can come in many different forms such as talks, webinars, workshops and so on. If I had half the information I do today I would have struggled a lot less as a student.

“Ideally they would have access to the testing and holistic support that helped me take control of the quality of my life which we now provide under ScreenMe.

She added: “There must also be awareness raised about conditions such as endometriosis and PCOS amongst university staff and admin to allow students who suffer from symptoms of these conditions to be able to speak out and seek help when they need it. I did not think it was acceptable to walk into someone’s office and say ‘I have excruciating period pains, I need special consideration.’”

Prices of the ScreenMe private testing kits range from £159 to £500. More information can be found on the ScreenMe website.

◀ (DR GOLSHIRAZI)

Lorna Kimmins
News Correspondent

A Cambridge graduate has designed a new test kit which can be used to detect reproductive health problems, including ovulation issues and hormonal conditions like PCOS.

Dr Golnoush Golshirazi launched ScreenMe tests after years of struggling with undiagnosed endometriosis, which caused such severe period pains that she

“

I struggled a lot as a student with what I understood at the time to be very painful or bad periods

”

was prevented from completing her final exams in Natural Sciences while at Cambridge.

“I struggled a lot as a student with what I understood at the time to be very painful or bad periods,” the 30-year-old told *Varsity*. “This meant that every month there were days where I couldn’t get to lectures, where I would have to sit in tutorials in severe pain and try and breathe through it as I did not want it to get in the way of my success or worst of worst I would just pray to God that it wouldn’t come on my exam days.

“All of this leads to severe anxiety as you feel out of control. Your body is doing things you can’t change, you can’t explain or talk about and it affects every aspect of your life and as a Cambridge student the worst of that is how it affects your

studies and your grades. And it does.”

Dr Golshirazi was unable to get a diagnosis on the NHS for the condition, which involves the growth of extra tissue in the fallopian tubes and ovaries. She had to pay over £6,000 in order to be diagnosed privately.

The tests, created alongside colleague and university friend Dr Lukasz Ciszewski, uses blood tests, urine samples and vaginal swabs, along with a unique vaginal and gut microbiome test to detect issues such as hormone imbalances and nutritional deficiencies.

The service also offers consultations, medical and nutrition reports as well as recommendations for recipes and supplements.

When asked about what more needs to be done to increase awareness and accessibility of reproductive screening, Dr Golshirazi told *Varsity*: “There needs to be more resources and efforts focused on incorporating hormonal and reproduc-

“

Your body is doing things you can’t change

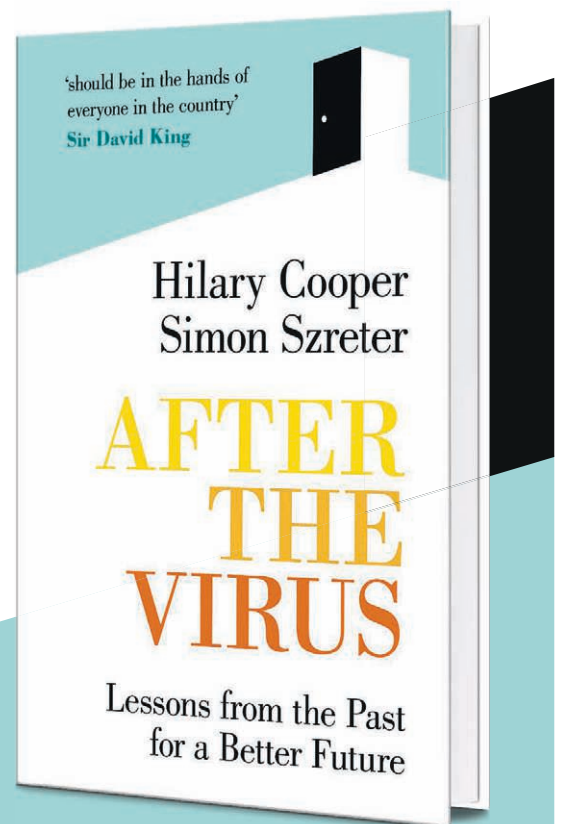
”

tive health into the educational system at every point.

“Women’s health has been treated and thought of as a more complicated version of men’s health and that needs to change. So we need to talk about it more, raise awareness and educate. This includes not just women but also the medical community.”

Commenting on what could be done to better support university students dealing with reproductive health conditions, Dr Golshirazi said: “Students can be provided with better information about their hormonal and repro-

After the Virus is a provocative manifesto for change post-COVID-19. Shining a light on the deep fractures in our society, Hilary Cooper and Simon Szreter reveal why the UK was unable to respond effectively to the pandemic and what we can learn from our own history to forge a fairer, more resilient future.



‘It should be in the hands of everyone in the country, particularly in Parliament, who cares about, and has responsibility for, our future.’

Sir David King, *former UK Chief Scientific Adviser and Climate Envoy, Chair of Independent SAGE*

Join the manifesto for change at
www.cambridge.org/afterthevirus



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

News

Cambridge ranks fourth in world for graduate employability

Times Higher Education released rankings of universities based on graduate employability, and found that digital skills trump academic excellence when it comes to employability

Louis Hodgson
Senior News Editor

The University of Cambridge has ranked fourth for graduate employability in this

year's Global Employability University Ranking and Survey (GEURS).

To determine which universities provide the best career prospects, Times Higher Education (THE) surveyed 10,928

international recruiters and managers across 23 countries.

The rankings are based on a framework of six key factors: academic excellence, digital performance, focus on

work, soft skills and digital literacy, internationalism, and specialisation.

The survey results showed that employers find students with digital skills, soft skills and subject specialisation most

attractive, as opposed to just those with academic excellence.

The United States took six of the top ten spots, including the top three: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, California Institute of Technology and Harvard University. Two UK universities made the cut, with Cambridge and Oxford placing fourth and eighth, respectively.

Other notable ranking trends include that of Mainland China, which has continued to follow a general rising trajectory; Peking University claimed a record position of 15th, whilst Tsinghua University climbed 13 places to 37th.

Indian universities also saw clear improvements in their rankings, following improved soft skills, digital literacy, and technical and research specialisation.

“

Digitalization, specialization or soft skills are increasingly important, much more so than the prestige of a university's name

”

Sandrine Belloc, Managing Partner at Emerging, a company involved with producing the rankings, commented: “[The GEURS rankings] provides [students] with the reasons behind recruiters' choices and shows that indicators such as digitalization, specialization or soft skills are increasingly important, much more so than the prestige of a university's name.

“The resulting rankings provide a diverse range of universities for students to consider when thinking about who to invest in for their higher education to help shape their personal path into a successful and rewarding career.”

Seeta Bhardwa, Content Editor at THE Student, also stressed the importance of this ranking system: “Studying at university isn't just one of the biggest decisions you'll ever make from an education and skills point of view, but also from a financial perspective. Students and their parents want to make sure that outlay will pay off in the long run.

“This ranking provides a means to understand what's important to graduate recruiters and help students think about what they should focus on when choosing a university to give themselves the best possible start on the career ladder.”

The GEURS survey has been running for the past eleven years. For the past five years, it has been the second most consulted university ranking by employers.



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS
BOOKSHOP

20% OFF*

ALL BOOKS FOR HOLDERS OF
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY AND CAMCARDS

SIMPLY PRESENT YOUR CARD IN STORE

WE ALSO STOCK A WIDE RANGE OF CAMBRIDGE RELATED GIFTS AND SOUVENIRS



Illustration by Richard Briggs



1 Trinity Street, Cambridge CB2 1SZ

01223 333333 bookshop@cambridge.org

*Offer can't be combined with other promotions

Features

To intermit or not to intermit, that is the question

Staff writer **Daisy Margolis** shares her story of taking a medical intermission from her degree and why it's important to reach out

The University of Cambridge: one of the best institutions of higher learning in the country — nay, the world. With the likes of Isaac Newton, Emma Thompson, David Attenborough and the world's best journalist and my personal role model, Borat, having cycled over Orgasm Bridge, one cannot help but hope that this wealth of intelligence will rub off on them. However, getting into Cambridge versus actually doing an eight week term are two very different concepts. With Freshers' Week over in two days, the first week starting for some strange reason on Thursday, and essay deadlines already looming, I found Cambridge an extremely overwhelming experience from the start.

“
The Cambridge world, while being both exciting and stimulating, slowly began to chip away at my already wavering mental stability
”

As someone who was already suffering from a chronic mental illness, the Cambridge world, while being both exciting and stimulating, slowly began to chip away at my already wavering mental stability. With other students spending their nights in the library and keeping on top of their never-ending deadlines, imposter syndrome hit me hard and fast. Without anyone to properly talk to, as I was still trying to present myself as the perfectly happy-go-lucky new friend, my overall wellbeing began to deteriorate. By the end of Michaelmas term, my mind was very much ready to recuperate over the Christmas holidays — but with mocks set for the first few days of Lent term, my relaxing vacation quickly turned into an elongated study session. My Cambridge dream was slowly slipping through my fingers and the prospects of dropping out seemed more and more likely.

But I hear you ask, what is an intermission and how did you find out about it? A medical intermission, as defined by the university, is 'the process whereby a student can take a break from their stud-

ies and 'disregard' any terms in which they are unable to properly engage with their studies due to serious, unforeseen circumstances.' It wasn't until I emailed my DoS, relaying my struggles and my inability to meet any of my deadlines, that the urgency and seriousness of my situation became apparent to those around me. It was only then that I heard utterances of the term "medical intermission." However, it became very apparent that this wouldn't be a quick-fix or straight forward application, as it seemed anyone who was anyone within the college and university system had to be consulted. Having to continuously relay my private mental health struggles and traumas to one person after another was quite harrowing, and not knowing who exactly had access to my medical evidence, which was needed to approve my intermission, didn't make the process any easier. Nevertheless, with the approval of my college and the university, I was allowed to go on a medical intermission for the rest of my first year of Cambridge.

I spent the remainder of the academic year either in my bed or my therapist's chair, neither of which were particularly exciting. While it was paramount that I went on a medical intermission to improve my chronic depression and anxiety, scrolling through my Facebook or Instagram and seeing my new uni friends having what seemed to be the time of their lives without me wasn't easy. Having to move back home with my parents whilst everyone else was enjoying their new-found autonomy and freedom definitely made me more anxious to return back to Cambridge. Will all of my new friends be much closer with each other? Will I still be their friend? Will I fit in? Will I be able to cope and complete a full Cambridge year? Am I Cambridge material? Should I go back?

While it was by no means an easy process, I was able to return back to Cambridge from my medical intermission to attend the 2019/2020 academic year. However, despite having a web

“
It's never okay to suffer in silence
”

page entitled 'Returning from Medical Intermission,' the university's information and guidelines only encompass the admin and academic side of returning to Cambridge; no one seems to actually

talk about the mental and social challenges of coming back from a medical intermission.

I spent the first couple of weeks of Michaelmas getting reacquainted with friends I had made during the previous year and, despite my worries, by the end of the term my social life was finally beginning to flourish. Having been given access to the University Counselling Service upon my return and finding myself able to open up to my friends about my mental health struggles, I began to create a nice, little support bubble for myself. And with my DoS and other academics now aware of my ongoing struggles with my mental health, I felt more confident to ask for extensions and extra help; I began to mould my academics around my recovery rather than sacrificing my wellbeing for my weekly essays. By taking a medical intermission to focus on my mental health, I was able to come back to Cambridge and resume my degree, something that would have been impossible to do without.

The question still remains: to intermit or to not intermit? While the case for every individual will be different, I do believe it is important to take a medical intermission if your physical or mental health is affecting your academics, social life and overall well-being. Whether you decide to intermit or not, talking to your friends, tutors, DoS and the people around you is paramount when undertaking a degree at the University of Cambridge. As Jessie J says "it's okay not to be okay," however it's never okay to suffer in silence.



▲ INSTAGRAM/@CARSONBMAC

J A KEMP

HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT...

**A CAREER AS A
PATENT ATTORNEY?**

Training as a Patent Attorney is a career path that will enable you to combine your understanding of science with legal expertise.

J A Kemp is a leading firm of UK and European Patent and Trade Mark Attorneys with offices in London, Oxford, Cambridge, Paris and Munich.

Applications for our Autumn 2022 intake are now open and applications close on 31 December 2021.

www.jakemp.com/careers



Reading in the margins

Deputy Editor **Akshata Kapoor** reads the scribbles and annotations left behind in the second-hand books she owns

Flip open the front cover of the book. It has just come in the mail and the pages are frayed. Glancing over the top right-hand corner as if it means nothing to me, not sure what I'm looking for, I see a scribble of a name that is not mine, on a page of a book that was someone else's a few months ago. It now belongs, bookmarks, doodles and fading letters and all, to me.

Something catches me off-guard about this scribble, though. Under the unfamiliar name is a familiar word: Medwards. It takes me a moment to realise that this book belonged to someone who studied in another Cambridge college. Somehow, this random Penguin classic secondhand book that I bought for not much cheaper than the original, has circulated its way from Medwards, from the hands of a stressed-out English student, past book depots and warehouses, and back in the hands of an equally stressed-out English student at Emma. Did the previous owner read it efficiently or slog through it? Did she complain about it to her friends and shed a tear or two on those darkened page corners or did she

hold it excitedly with one hand while gesticulating with the other, talking passionately about it? I don't know, at least not yet.

With books, as with clothes and other items, my 'second-hand' possessions fall into different categories. Belongings given to me by (read: taken from) my mum, I consider to be passed down; Depop forms a category of its own (I know the name and reviews of the previous owner but only superficially); the third category includes things I find in second-hand stores and on websites that sell second-hand books. These are my favourites. I know nothing about the owners, there could have been multiple of them, all equally unaware of their predecessor. Sometimes, I like to imagine that my second-hand last collection Zara dress from the thrift store opposite Emma has been passed down by generations of fashionable women, or that my faded, musty copy of Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* has travelled from Istanbul through multiple, heartwarming exchanges. And then, stepping out of these clouds of improbability, I open the pages of my

second-hand books to see tiny scribbles and compulsive underlinings, undone earmarks and encircled words. All I want to do is go over them, tracing lightly with the outer edge of my finger

“
Slowly, I think, I can
maybe get to really
know something about
the previous owners
”

to feel the palimpsest of emotions that have floated over this one page. Slowly, I think, I can maybe get to really know something about the previous owners.

Some give more of themselves to the books than others, letting part of their life, loves, thoughts all become an inextricable part of what is now on my shelf. A collection of poems by Fernando Pessoa begins with a dedication put down in thoughtful blue ink. It says:

*C a m b r i d g e
6/10/2011
For Colin,
My poetical friend*

It is signed off in a scribble too careful for me to discern. In using a pen it seems, to me, that the friend is declaring their unashamed, permanent commitment and love for Colin. How did this end up in a second-hand pile? Did the scribble give too much, only to be discarded by the poetical friend or did the poetical friend appreciate the gesture so much that he passed it on once he was done reading Pessoa's poems? Is there a sad or happy story to be heard before I dive into the book itself? My favourite excerpt from this book is from the poem 'The Tobacco Shop', where Pessoa writes: 'And nothing. And will never be anything / I cannot want to be anything / But leaving that aside, I have in me / All of the dreams of the world'. It

captures quite perfectly what a second-hand book is — it's just a book in one sense, but, in another, it is a collection of dreams that now belong to whoever reads through them.

Pessoa was famous for his use of different heteronyms, which is why I first got interested in his work; he writes under different names, making up intricate identities for each one. Pessoa would have enjoyed, I think, the idea that many different names have owned this book, dedicated to just one.

I love annotations, little thoughts that people had when they read the same words I'm reading, and they are always so different. Sometimes, there are long lines of analysis evoked by the text in front of them, and other times (no, this is totally not me) sleep-deprived comments in which a long paragraph describing different kinds of food is encircled and, insightfully, annotated with 'the author talks about food' — I feel quite bad sometimes for whoever pays for my second-hand books.

Library books are usually different, hand held and coffee stained, but free from annotations apart from the occasional line begun and ended halfway through (again, not me) on remembering the library books are borrowed, not owned. But, one past reader of a book I was pouring over at 11pm, deep in the middle of an essay crisis, had written notes on a piece of paper and forgotten the paper in the middle of the book. It probably served as a bookmark and as a way to take notes without writing on the book pages. For me, it was a piece of a reader left behind in a book that is meant to remain unmarked, a reminder that nothing we touch can truly remain free of markers of our brief interactions.

Not all selves left behind are this expressive but, somehow, they are all meaningful. A note left behind in my copy of *Much Ado About Nothing* has careful calculations on one side, started off in red ink and then overlined in black ink when the red ran out. It seems haunting that I can confidently say this, but it is one of the few things about the note I can discern. The handwriting is really close to my mother's, reminding me of the post-it notes she leaves scattered across the house with important reminders left to the unlikely chance of us finding them. But, I know it's not her handwriting because the other side of the note has reminders, the first of which is 'Emma', the fifth 'Lunch' and the last, 'Sleep'.

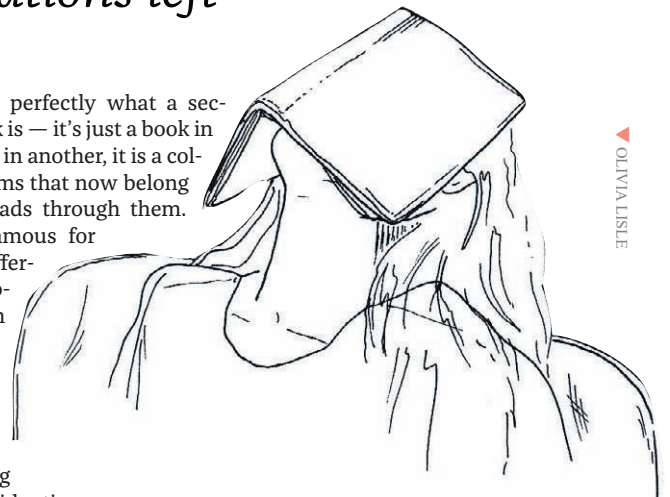
I think how lucky Emma is, to be the first person who came to the writer's mind, before food and sleep and all other necessary functions of life.

As I flip through my copy of *Kundera*, with a dedication that says 'Dear sir, thank you for helping me grow up...', I see another note fall out. It is from some friends, wishing me luck for uni, which I had used as a bookmark and then forgotten about. As the note fell out, all I wanted to do was preserve it within the frayed edges of the book and hope it never left it, even if the book left me. Sometimes, forgetting can be an act of love.

'For my dear Johnny, on your birthday' (24th August — I didn't know anyone with that birthday until now) says the front page of my copy of Leonard Cohen's *Book of Longing*. I think of how, with this one-line birthday wish, the book is dedicated to Johnny, as though Cohen writes for him. One of Cohen's poems goes:

'The light came through the window
Straight from the sun above
And so inside my little room
There plunged the rays of love
In streams of light I clearly saw
The dust you seldom see
Out of which the nameless makes
A name for one like me'

And so, Johnny, Colin, Sir, Graham, Anna, E.L.H. and Alison, thank you for the little pieces of your love you have shared in these books. If I started buying second-hand books because they were far cheaper, I know I prefer them now because they tell me stories beyond the book I buy. They make me feel warm and loved even when everything in my coursework text feels alien to me. Someone has read this before me, someone has loved this before me. Whether or not they were meant to end up in the room of a messy girl who can keep only her bookshelf looking pretty, I don't know. But I promise to love them, name them, coffee-stain them just a bit, and then pass the love along.



OLIVIA LITTLE



PhD in Management Invitation to apply, 2022 intake

Recruit the brightest, most creative minds from around the world from many disciplines.



Train them to become innovative researchers in management and place them in leading business schools worldwide.

INSEAD, one of the world's leading and largest business schools, is looking for 16-18 bright potentials to join its premier doctoral degree for 2022 intake in the following areas: Accounting, Decision Sciences, Entrepreneurship, Finance, Marketing, Organisational Behaviour, Strategy, and Technology and Operations Management.

With the INSEAD PhD, students study in France and Singapore, go for an exchange with Wharton in the US, benefit from the partnership with Sorbonne Université, and receive full funding for the first 5 years of doctoral studies.

Keen to learn more? Talk to us - insead.ad/phd-contact-us-2021

APPLY NOW. Application deadline: 06 January 2022.

insead.ad/why-insead-phd | insead.ad/phd



PXFUEL.COM



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

FULLY FUNDED PHD STUDY AT LSE

- Fully funded studentships for PhD students starting in 2022.
- Studentships are available in any one of our 23 departments offering research programmes.
- Studentships cover full tuition fees plus an annual stipend of £18,000.
- Apply for a PhD by 14 January 2022 (or 17 December 2021 for Economics or Geography and Environment) to be considered.

Search **LSE PhD funding** to find out more.

Opinion

Brazil's Covid-19 failures carry lessons for the UK

Eric Williams argues that the left-wing resurgence in Brazil following the Bolsonaro government's catastrophic handling of Covid-19 shows similarities to the situation in the UK

As we approach the end of another year dominated by Covid-19, the legacy of right-wing governments' handling of the crisis is coming under greater scrutiny.

Last month, Brazil's Senate Committee formally approved a report recommending that President Bolsonaro face charges of 'crimes against humanity' at the International Criminal Court. The report was the culmination of a six-month-long congressional inquiry into the Bolsonaro administration's conduct over the course of the pandemic. The country has lost over 600,000

“
Brazil is an example of how Covid-19 has magnified pre-existing political priorities
”

“
The impact of the inquiry on an already deeply-dissatisfied public opinion in the run-up to the 2022 general election may prove significant
”

people to the virus in the past year and a half, making Brazil the nation with the world's second-highest death toll, and Brazilians have taken to the streets to protest the government's inhumane policies. Bolsonaro has consistently downplayed the severity of the virus, blocked local initiatives to contain its spread, and criticised measures as simple as mask-wearing for what he has called 'the little flu': actions reflective of a disregard for the value of Brazilian lives that has enabled 300,000 avoidable deaths.

Bolsonarismo politics is grounded in a Social-Darwinist belief in the survival of the fittest. On top of physical health, it is seen as natural that an individual's economic and social position should determine how vulnerable they are; the weak

suffer what they must in a worldview that criticises the most basic public health policies as making Brazil a 'country of sissies'. These are the neo-fascist ideological foundations on which Brazil's New Right is built – a reality that existed long before the pandemic. Indeed, its doctrines stem from a long history of right-wing authoritarian regimes in Latin America, with roots in both the US-backed Brazilian military dictatorship of the 1960s to 1980s and the famous neoliberal experiment of Pinochet's Chile. Bolsonaro's Finance Minister, Paulo Guedes, a member of the 'Chicago Boys' and student of Milton Friedman, was instrumental in the Pinochet regime's restructuring of Chile towards export-led growth via the privatisation of public assets, deregulation of natural resource exploitation, and the facilitation of foreign capital. Since the election victory in 2019, Guedes has pursued similar neoliberal reforms at great cost to Brazil's poor. In such a short period, sweeping pension 'reforms', the privatisation of water and sani-

tation, and the dismantling of free higher education, have all been rushed through in Guedes' crusade against Brazil's already-fragile welfare state.

Given this context, we should not be surprised by Bolsonaro's handling of the pandemic. After an initial provision of emergency aid

recognition for Brazil.

Whilst it is unlikely that the President will

face charges or impeachment, the impact of the inquiry on an already deeply-dissatisfied public opinion in the run-up to the 2022 general election may prove significant. Bolsonaro's poll numbers are currently at record lows, with former President Lula da Silva the frontrunner to win next year. Such a result would be of huge domestic and international significance, underlining the recent resurgence of leftist movements across Latin America. Lula, a founder of the Brazilian Worker's Party (PT), brought ground-breaking improvements to the lives of ordinary Brazilians during his time in office from 2003-2010.

After decades of widening inequality, increasing poverty, and malnutrition, Lula's variant of the pink tide (a wave of left-wing Latin American governments in the 2000s) made significant social transformations during a period of international hostility

to left-wing politics. Amongst other features of his comprehensive programme to combat the wretched living conditions facing the nation's poor was the Bolsa Família programme, a monthly cash transfer to low-income mothers, which lifted 40 million people out of poverty. In a dramatic pre-election twist, Sergio Moro has announced his intention to represent Brazil's socially conservative Podemos party in a Presidential run against Lula and Bolsonaro. Moro was the judge in the Carwash Investigation case that sent Lula to jail in 2018, before leaked correspondence revealed collusion between Moro and the prosecution, enabling Lula's release from a politically-motivated imprisonment on appeal in 2019. In recent polling, Moro's attempt to reach Brazil's third-way vote has not broken 10% of the electorate; meanwhile, Lula consistently leads Bolsonaro by over 20 points.

The UK has much to learn from these currents in Brazil. Our experience of the pandemic has been similar, with political and economic conditions exacerbating the crisis. It is worth noting that in the same month that the Pandora papers revealed Paulo Guedes to be profiting from offshore accounts whilst 112 million Brazilians faced food insecurity, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards found Conservative MP Owen Paterson guilty for breaching paid advocacy rules. As we look back on a second year of the NHS being overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients, it is vital to keep the decade of Tory healthcare cuts at the forefront of our minds. In Latin America, it seems that the pandemic has triggered the embrace of a political alternative grounded in respect for each human life. As the sleaze crisis hurts the polls, the Labour Party has a huge opportunity to capitalise on what should be a period of reckoning.

▶ MATEUS CAMPOS FELIPE



Without short-term strike disruption, there can be no long term change for staff and students alike

Daisy Thomas & Lauryn Anderson

In his latest email to the entire student body, Graham Virgo wrote that, concerning the UCU strikes, he is ‘extremely concerned at the potential disruption’ to our education. He made a note of the ‘20 extremely difficult months’ we’ve been through, and then made clear that students should act ‘as normal’, in a University that will operate ‘as usual’ during ‘the days affected’.

Graham Virgo is right: we have had three years of disruption through the 2019 strikes and then Covid-19. But, *crucially*, so have Cambridge’s teaching staff. The twenty difficult months many of us spent struggling through online supervisions, financial disruption, and ill-health were just as bad for those teaching us. For every Zoom seminar, supervision, and lecture, our lecturers have also had to familiarise themselves with new technology, and have been expected to deliver the same quality of teaching as if nothing has changed. They have struggled through the pandemic with just as little clarity from management about what to do next.

These working conditions are, however, just one symptom of the wider diseased system of higher education. The 2019 UCU strikes were a response to issues that haven’t gone away over the past year, but have

instead been exacerbated – issues that include casualisation and insecure contracts, pay gaps for BME and female staff, unsustainable workloads, and cuts to pensions. If we seek a post-Covid return to business ‘as usual’ or ‘as normal’, we seek a world in which academics are still underpaid, overworked, and exploited by the University and its colleges.

Moreover, many of those going on strike are students themselves. Our postgraduate friends and peers who teach or research for the university are treated as easy labour and it is in the interest of the student body to campaign for a better future for them. A PhD supervisor from Royal Holloway, Aimée Lê, recently wrote about her experience lecturing while living in a tent: ‘students had every expectation I was receiving a salary for my work. I think that is what students everywhere assume: that we are lecturers on proper contracts. I did tell them that wasn’t the case, but I thought telling them I was living outside was a step too far.’ This is a situation far more common than one would hope, but Lê’s experience shows the utterly unlivable conditions in which many academics are forced to work whilst not on fixed, salaried contracts. The UCU’s ‘Justice4College Supervisors’ Campaign fights for the recognition of this ex-

act issue, which Virgo’s reference to ‘strong feelings on issues of pay and pensions’ clearly doesn’t do justice to. Of course it is stressful as a student to miss contact hours – but, if academics aren’t treated fairly, then what model of higher education are we really working towards?

By writing that he is ‘extremely concerned’ about disruption, Virgo and his fellow members of university management attempt to pit students against staff, and fail to take any accountability for their own role in creating the conditions that are forcing disruption. Crucially, however, they also refuse to take accountability for the power they have to stop this disruption: that is, the power which university management has to respond to the demands of UCU, and to prevent strike action.

Industrial action has been shown to work in Cambridge already. After the 2019/2020 strike, the University agreed to: review 700 fixed-term contracts (both academic-related and assistant staff), and to identify those who could be transferred from fixed-term to open-ended roles. University management also agreed to consider the transfer of hourly paid teachers to employment contracts, where these workers have been teaching and lecturing on a regular basis for some time (an estimated

500 people were affected by this change).

The last round of strikes also brought Cambridge UCU – the only UCU branch in the UK *not* recognised by its University – much closer to recognition. With recognition, university employees will finally have a collective voice in critical decisions at the university level; without it, employees do not have a full say in their own working lives. Change *has* been effected, but there is a long way yet to go.

As described in UCU’s latest branding message, ‘we’re at breaking point’. The higher education system is entirely unsustainable for its staff, and if they don’t strike now, things will only get worse. A future that continues ‘as normal’ or ‘as usual’ is one where life as an academic is increasingly financially unstable, insecure, and inaccessible to marginalised students and staff. The supervisors and lecturers you care for most will be unable to keep teaching. Your peers who want to continue into academia will be dissuaded. The higher education system as a whole will continue to crumble. To strike is to cause momentary disruption; to *not* strike is to cause a lifetime of it.

“University management attempt to pit students against staff”

Cambridge SU is wrong to give UCU a blank cheque

The students’ union must look out for students, not faculty or abstract notions of solidarity

Freddie Poser & Joshan Parmar

Members of the Cambridge branch of UCU, alongside staff at Universities across the country, have voted for a strike. This means that sometime soon, despite the incredible disruption of the last two years, student lectures, seminars and teaching will once more be cancelled. There are legitimate grievances between staff and management (though, as past years prove, they are not likely to be solved with a strike). But regardless of what you think of the action itself, it is clear that Cambridge SU, the body that is meant to represent *us*, is failing to stand up for our interests.

At the last Student Council meeting a motion proposed by the current sabbatical team was passed, committing the SU to supporting the strikes with no conditions, *no matter what* – giving UCU a blank cheque. This was the wrong move. Instead of defending our interests and trying to strike a balance between students and staff, the SU has taken an outmoded idea of solidarity and applied it uncritically and inappropriately.

Strikes mean missed contact hours, lost teaching and missing out on valuable content. They mean students missing out on the practical skills they should be learning in labs. They mean students not getting the lectures, labs and seminars hours we are paying massive amounts of money for. There is no situation in

which fewer contact hours for students doesn’t negatively impact the student experience.

None of this is to say that lecturers and academics do not have good reason to be angry with university management. UCU exists to represent these academic staff to the university, and if they have decided to call for a strike that is their right. But as well as the interests of academics, the interests of students must also be taken into account: industrial disputes affect our education and our learning. Cambridge SU should be standing up for students during these strikes, and fighting to mitigate their impact on student experience; instead, out of a mistaken desire to show solidarity, they have been reduced to simply repeating UCU’s points, leaving students with no real representatives.

In response to this, many have trotted out the line – familiar to third and fourth years from the last round of strikes – that the strike is in the long-term interest of students as well as staff. We are sceptical of this claim: it seems that strikes in the past have resulted in no long-term victories and no lasting change to the student experience. But even if it were true, we do not live in the long term. Most of us are at this university for only three years, and changes that come after the end of our degree cannot possibly make up for the losses imposed on us. It

should be the job of the SU to represent us during the strikes and mitigate their impact on students; instead, mistakenly trying to take the “long-run” view, they are throwing away any chance students had to get a seat at the table.

Students were subjected to a round of strikes just two years ago – third-year students will have had just one term that hasn’t been disrupted. In previous rounds, an SU sabb called for disabled students to avoid going to vital appointments at the DRC because it was behind a picket line; students were openly called scabs for prioritising their education; some were even harassed as they walked past picket lines. Despite positive changes this time round ensuring that pressure won’t come from the very top of CamSU, the febrile atmosphere of name-calling and blaming students who “cross picket lines” has already started. We cannot trust that our elected representatives will in any way stand up for students who have the “wrong” political opinion on the strikes.

In a *Varsity* article defending CamSU’s move, an anonymous student quotes Niemöller’s famous words about the rise of the Nazis. The idea that the situation of academics at Cambridge is even remotely comparable to that of Jews in the Third Reich is deeply offensive, but it goes to show the degree to which many

“It should be the job of the SU to represent us during strikes”

have lost sight of the realities of the situation. As it happens, there truly is no one left to speak for students. The people we’ve entrusted to stand up for us are looking out for UCU. The Student Council has allocated hundreds of pounds *not* to supporting those of us impacted by lost teaching, but instead to “posters, flyers and picket line support”. Our money is being used to buy Gregg’s for striking lecturers. Amazingly, the motion calls for the SU to “*educate*” us as to how we can support the strikes, and not (for example) as to how we could catch up on our lost learning.

None of this is to say that UCU is necessarily wrong to strike. That is a different discussion for a different article. The issues at hand are complex and affect both Cambridge and the whole UK University sector. But despite what the name might suggest, students’ unions are not trade unions: their purpose is to represent students and look out for *our* interests, not those of workers. They should be using their budget to support student welfare, they should be using their energy to stand up for students, they should be passing motions condemning the fact that students are collateral damage in fights over pensions. CambridgeSU should let UCU stand up for staff; their job is to look after us.

Science

The 'female athlete triad': the need to protect health in sport

Senior Science Editor **Sambhavi Sneha Kumar** explains what is meant by the term 'female athlete triad', and why it can be so dangerous

Content Note: This article contains discussion of eating disorders

Mary Cain, often described as the "fastest girl in her generation", spent much of her school years running at a national and international level. With a glowing career in athletics beckoning, Cain joined the Nike Oregon Project in 2013 at the young age of 17. The same year, she was the youngest American track and field athlete to make a World Championships team. The success didn't last forever, and things started to go wrong within just two years. Suddenly, Cain was no longer the golden girl in the media. Articles at the time scrutinised everything from her bodyweight, to her inability to transition from life at home to life at college, to a lack of confidence. The truth? Cain was partway through a battle that led to broken bones, an ab-

sence of her menstrual period for years, and extremely low energy.

The female athlete triad, sitting within the broader classification of Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S) is a syndrome characterised by three key hallmarks: decreased bone mineral density, amenorrhoea/oligomenorrhoea (loss of a menstrual period, or irregular menstruation in those who menstruate) and disordered eating patterns leading to decrease energy levels. Essentially, athletes are not eating enough to support their high energy expenditure. There is often some underlying motivation; in the case of Mary Cain, who was set a goal weight by her coaches that she later reflected was far too low to be sustainable or healthy, the idea that a lower bodyweight can correlate with faster running speeds was a likely driver. Perhaps unsurprisingly, reports of athletes suffering from RED-

S tend to come largely from sports where aesthetics is arguably a focus, such as ballet or gymnastics.

Disordered eating patterns in sport are, unfortunately, common. Estimates suggest that the incidence may be as high as 6-45% in athletes identifying as female, and up to 19% in athletes identifying as male. The effects of prolonged under-eating can be severe, but



▲ FLICKR/TABLEATNY



WHY CONSULT WHEN YOU CAN LEAD?

Manage a multi-million pound marketing budget.
Lead a sales business worth £100 million

Omar, Assistant Brand Manager, Tampax



Alumnus of Emmanuel College

Zoe, Sales Manager, Febreze



Alumnus of Robinson College

Rachel, Product Supply Start-Up Leader, Gillette and Old Spice



Alumnus of Pembroke College



will likely initially present with low energy availability that will most likely compromise their sporting success, a likely explanation for Mary Cain's slump.

Other effects include abnormal patterns of menstruation. The menstrual cycle and the ovulation within in are governed by the hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal axis: the signalling relationship between the hypothalamus in the brain, the pituitary gland at its base and the gonads themselves. This is initiated by pulses of gonadotrophin releasing hormone (GnRH) secretion from the hypothalamus, which can be affected by a range of factors – for example, fluctuations in bodyweight due to excessive exercise and/or a restrictive diet can prevent this hypothalamic output. The subsequent lack of secretion of ovarian hormones may lead to a disrupted menstrual cycle. Whilst many athletes experiencing this are likely young and

focussing primarily on their careers, a disrupted menstrual cycle over a long period of time does have implications for an individual's future ability to have children, should they so wish.

Athletes experiencing RED-S frequently suffer stress fractures, despite often being clinically underweight. For example, a study investigating the incidence of stress fractures in a relatively small sample size of ballerinas found that the majority of dancers who had suffered recent fractures were also underweight, reporting a lower fat intake and a greater focus on low calorie-density foods than a matched control dancer. As well as compromising their health, such fractures can also be detrimental for a young sportsperson's career. Though osteoporosis is typically seen as a disease primarily affecting elderly women; however low oestrogen levels combined with poor nutrition can mean that broken bones can affect athletes in their prime. One of oestrogen's many functions is to regulate apoptosis (cell death) of cells called osteoclasts, which are responsible for bone resorption. If circulating oestrogen concentrations become much lower than physiologically normal levels, osteoclast activity can increase at the expense of bone density. The naturally high oestrogen concentrations in females mean that they tend to be more susceptible to this. This is especially concerning as bone density for the duration of an individual's life is thought to peak somewhere between the ages of 18-25 years old, which may well correlate with the ages between which an athlete is put-

ting themselves through an extreme diet to 'make the most of their prime', leading to long term damaging effects on bone health.

Finally, the psychological effects of RED-S cannot be ignored. Pressure – whether put on an athlete by themselves or by a coach – can be jarring. On top of the chaotic lifestyle of being an elite athlete at such a young age, Mary Cain had to battle with a coach weighing her in front of other athletes and berating her for the number. Cain recalled engaging on a "self-destructive path" upon being told that the reason for her decline in performance was that she was "five pounds too heavy".

Not only was her talent likely compromised by simply having not enough fuel in the tank, her mental and physical health were endangered. She is not the only athlete to be in this position: whether on an international level or simply within a school or university sports team, it is unfortunately far too common for athletes around the globe to have their wellbeing and performance damaged by RED-S.

The world of sport is getting better at taking care of its athletes, but there is still a long way to go. RED-S is well recognised as a serious concern, but is still of alarmingly high prevalence, with many athletes perhaps reluctant to seek help. It is always admirable to push yourself in your chosen field – but athletes, and the support team around them, need to prioritise their physical and mental health alongside their performance.

“
The world of sport is getting better at taking care of its athletes, but there is still a long way to go
”

'Blue-balls', blood, and biological truths: when science isn't what it seems

Deputy Science Editor [Nieve Brydges](#) explores how science supports guilt-tripping, mansplaining, and gaslighting people into bed

Content Note: Pressure to have sex, sexual violence

Sex education - that most awkward of biology lessons. The birds and the bees. Asking for 'tea'. Overly detailed descriptions of STDs. Narratives peddled by Sex Ed teachers may give the impression of certified scientific 'facts' and thus an entirely objective account of our reproductive systems and their operations, but these biological 'truths' are just as vulnerable to dogma as any other.

“
There remains an undue expectation on people to submit to the wants of male anatomy
”

Just because we slap the label of 'medical science' onto ideas about the "remarkable" rate of sperm production, the "decay" and "wastage" of the uterus lining, or the varying 'sex drives' between male and female bodies, doesn't mean that they're accurate descriptions of bodily functions. We could just as easily describe the millions of sperm produced by the male reproductive system each day as a 'colossal waste' of biomass and reproductive potential. Or picture the menstrual flow as a desirable product for a young person aiming not to get pregnant. Instead we allow culturally-imbedded descriptions of male and female anatomy to privilege certain processes - and thus certain people - over others.

All science is produced in a cultural context. Such naturalisation of cultured narratives can have dangerous impacts on individuals, as it impacts the way we understand our choices and operate in the world. Nowhere is this more apparent than in reproductive health.

Prevailing narratives would have us believe that the meeting of egg and sperm is some strange reiteration of your classic boy-meets-girl romance. Let's set the scene shall we? The passive, patient egg lays dormant within her comfy chamber, comfortable in the luxuriant womb linings and contented by the cushioned interior. Far far away, the resourceful and much-enduring sperm is a Homeric hero in his own right, traversing hostile waters, racing home to prove his worth amongst myriad other suitors - powerful and unrelenting, he fulfils his destiny.

In this myth of the trials and tribulations of this pint-sized hero, exercising autonomy over our bodies forces us to play the all-too-familiar role of

the villain. A savage and selfish figure; intent on separating these star-crossed lovers. It is wrong that anyone should have to feel like a rogue subject in their own body. A re-examination of the language we're using, and the tropes we rely upon, to explain biological processes is well in order - as it stands, we're perpetuating a culture in which contraceptives represent a violation of social orders both inside and outside the body. For as long as heterosexual narratives in a society 'out there' continue to be associated with the biological happenings 'in here', they represent a means of perpetuating heteronormativity and regimes of power over people with uteruses.

Worryingly, these ideas take hold even before sex takes place. For example, dominant ideas about men possessing a high 'sex drive' or being victim to the torment of "blue balls" are biologically-based dogma which serves the purpose of guilt-tripping, mansplaining, and gaslighting women into bed.

Blue balls are a contested phenomenon and represent - at best - a mild pain caused by built up blood. Not enough for you to feel guilty at not having 'finished the job' (they can do it themselves if it's such an issue!) As for having a 'sex drive' - there's no such thing. A biological 'drive' describes something required to protect you from death. Food, shelter, warmth, getting your weekly Jacks gelato... Yet the assumption that men 'have' to have sex and that you're the one they've chosen

“
A re-examination of the tropes we rely upon to explain biological processes is well in order
”

to do it with is woven into the fabric of every pop song you've heard since you got your first iPod. The misnomer of 'sex drive' leads people experiencing desire to feel they are entitled to sexual satisfaction, which can have dangerous consequences in situations in which there are unequal power dynamics, or in which some parties have more influence over another e.g. in cases of drugs, alcohol, or abuse.

The grounding of this discourse around agency and consent within 'biological' contexts serves to uphold the patriarchy on 'objective' and 'natural' truths. If using contraceptives is to play villain in the love story of the century, or if exercising your right to say no is to deny someone their biological 'need' to sex, then the construction of our personal boundaries represents an imposi-

tion or inconvenience. Our comfort is imagined as an affliction upon the natural processes of the body.

Notably, all of these farcical accounts of what's really going in there - whether we're horny, menstruating, or getting it on - represent a frightening alignment with imperatives of the state. The UK government - amongst other European states - has expressed concerns over our current fertility rate of 1.58 children per woman. Population decline represents, in the state's imagination, economic stagnation. Though current UK plans are to stick with the status quo, currently 28% of countries already adopt an explicitly 'pro-natalist' stance to reproductive legislation. Considering how powerful our present 'objective' scientific narratives are in generating feelings of guilt, we can see how current deployment of biological 'knowledge' is conducive to the government's desire to increase birth rates. Now it'd be misleading to suggest that the government will suddenly impose a sort of mass regime of pro-natalist indoctrination, but it's worth thinking about how existing 'science' can be exploited to assist certain political ambitions. Until efforts to reframe these processes are successful there remains an undue expectation on people to submit to the wants (not needs) of male anatomy.

It is the responsibility of 'science' to generate knowledge which aren't lead astray by these expectations.

▼ PHOTOGRAPH BY PLEASUREBETTR - PLEASUREBETTER.COM



THINK
AHEAD

We are facing one of the toughest mental health challenges of all time. If ever there was a time to make a difference, it's now.

If you are a compassionate graduate or career-changer, remarkable enough to make a real difference, now could be the perfect time to become a mental health social worker with Think Ahead.

Through our two-year fully funded training programme you will:

- Empower people living with mental health problems to truly flourish, working on life issues together like relationships, living arrangements, and employment – all of which can have profound effects on mental wellbeing.
- Train on the job, working alongside clinical professionals in NHS Mental Health Trusts and Local Authorities.
- Gain two qualifications: qualify as a social worker and gain a master's degree from Middlesex University.
- Join one of the Times Top 100 Graduate Employers.

It is vital that the mental health workforce represents the people it supports. We encourage applications from people from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse communities, disabled people, and those who identify as being part of the LGBTIQ+ community. We also encourage men to apply, who are underrepresented on the workforce.

Find out more and apply to our fully-funded training programme today.

www.thinkahead.org

Help disrupted learners be



brilliant

Paid opportunity for PhD researchers and Postdocs

Check out our long and short-term tutoring
programmes to suit your schedule.

Apply now at thebrilliantclub.org



The
Brilliant
Club

Comment

No flag is a red flag

Deputy Editor **Akshata Kapoor** explores the significance of flags to identity, and criticises the approach of colleges towards flag raising

▲ CECILIE JOHNSON

Clare College porters took down the trans pride flag last Saturday (20/11) after it was raised over Clare's Old Court by students to honour Trans Day of Remembrance.

The College had denied the Union of Clare Students (UCS) permission to fly the flag "without giving any reasons why," according to a joint statement from the College's UCS and MCR LGBT+ Officers.

The students who raised the flag, who wish to remain anonymous, said in a statement to Varsity: "The refusal of Clare College to fly the trans pride flag on the Trans Day of Remembrance, just as they had previously refused to fly the LGBT+ flag on other occasions, is an abhorrent and disgraceful political statement."

Trans Day of Remembrance commemorates those who have lost their lives as a result of transphobic violence. Many colleges – including Queens', Murray Edwards and St Catharine's – flew the trans pride flag to mark the date.

Colleges' past reactions to, resistance against, and strained conversation about flags being flown is an implicit recognition of the importance of these flags. I was understandably surprised when my request to my college to raise the Pan-African flag at the start of Black History Month (which has been done for some years now), was met with an assenting response alongside an unnecessary reminder that the flag is just a 'small element' of a more significant commemoration. Of course, a flag is a small part of larger movements and awareness campaigns, but the act of raising a flag is an important act itself, and the denial of this raising an even bigger sign.

The absence, the forced removal, of the Trans Flag raised by a group of students for Trans Day of Remembrance after Clare College denied the Union of Clare Students (UCS) permission to fly the flag probably felt much more significant to trans students in the college and University than a 'small part' of their identity. It is a denial of their visibility as trans students, their right to occupy space and remember the historical oppression of trans people. The students who raised the flag that was then removed said they did so "to remember trans and non-binary people lost to bigotry," and that the "refusal of Clare College to fly the trans pride flag on the Trans Day of Remembrance, just as they had previ-

ously refused to fly the LGBT+ flag on other occasions, is an abhorrent and disgraceful political statement."

Even when colleges grant permission, that JCR's across the University have to seek permission in the first place, year after year, for pride flags to be raised on the same important dates is ridiculous. Just as colleges raise their college flags regularly on matriculation and other days, and raise their flags at half-mast on the passing away of Fellows, can they not routinely raise flags on the handful of important dates that their student communities have already fought for years to even be recognised?

Flag raising cannot ever be said to be an insignificant act. Political signs and symbols on flags come attached with historical and political affiliations, national flags are loaded with political, cultural, and sometimes problematically jingoistic connotations, and sports teams flags can similarly inspire positive emotions and negative energies. Whether they are misused and manipulative or used positively, flags have the power to draw people together in their identification with what it represents.

However, I don't think the malleable, uncontrollable meanings behind national and political flags can be compared to the significance of most liberation flags. To be affiliated with a political party is not an inalienable, intrinsic part of your identity, but your sexuality certainly is. Where most flags represent a psychological unity with others who recognise the flag, liberation flags serve this purpose while also reaffirming ones individual identity, a pride in their gender or sexuality or race that is recognised as existing in and of itself. LGBT+ and Trans flags represent a community established along fundamental aspects of their identity, in awareness of the problems they face, and in commemoration of the oppression faced by others who identify similarly. When an institution raises this flag, they simply recognise all these rights of the affected minority group, and the only political message they champion is one of equality and human rights.

When, earlier this year, Jesus College asked students to remove all flags and banners, liberation flags were targeted alongside other flags. Considering that the distinction between political and human rights causes can be made with a quick

meeting, it feels careless on the part of colleges to champion a blanket ban of flags as a solution to any controversies arising from them. And if Jesus could "waive the section of a standard room license agreement which prohibits any flags to be flown for safety and maintenance reasons" during Pride month, there seems to be little reason to continue the role for the rest of the year.

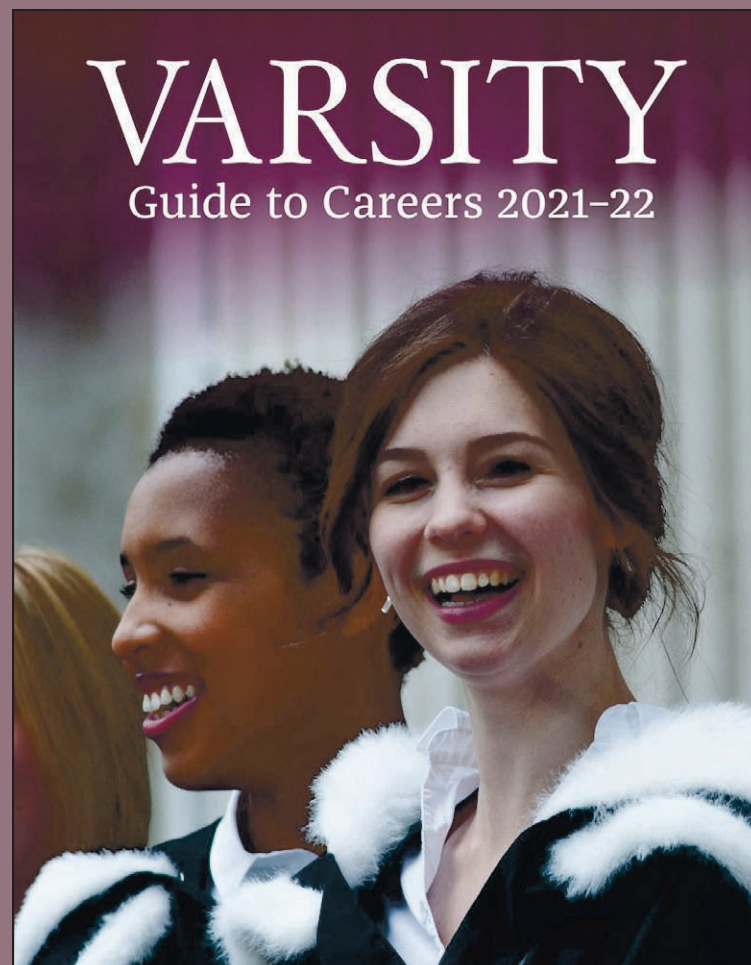
In fact, it is unique to liberation flags that they are not flags, unlike nationalistic and other flags, of exclusion but rather of inclusion. These are not governed by a set of criteria that alienate those who don't fall under those remits, but instead form spaces of inclusion for historically marginalised communities. For members of trans and queer communities, seeing a raised flag is a recognition that their rights will be protected, that they belong to a safe space, one that recognises the validity of their identity. For members outside the community, the flag raises awareness about the existence, rights, and problems faced by the community, a crucial reminder of everyone's responsibility to learn the meaning behind the flag. In many ways, flags like the Trans flag play an important role in defying the prevalence of 'debates' that still take place regarding identities that should not be up for discussion. Milo Eyre-Morgan, the Women's Officer for the Cambridge SU, said in an interview with Varsity that "It's always very frustrating to hear it referred to as... 'The Trans De-

bate' [...] because it's not a debate or a thought experiment - it's our lives and existence." By raising a flag, institutions assert the indisputable, important space of minority community. Still, for people who choose not to recognise or learn about the flag, it does nothing to attack or even infringe upon their identities and politics.

From LGBT+ history month to Trans Day of Remembrance, a common theme across the flying of flags on important dates seems to be that the onus is always on students and JCRs: they have to fight for permission to raise flags, and if they fly them anyway, they risk getting rep-

rimanded, if not worse. Clare College remains one of the few colleges to have never given permission to fly an LGBT+ flag on their pole, despite the hypocrisy pointed out by its students for using the flagpole for other flags. For colleges that have been raising these flags for some years now, it only right that they take on the responsibility of raising these without continuous reminders from their student bodies. If they are truly committed to the purpose of the flags, colleges would realise that raising the flag is a sign of them caring about minority students in their community, not about students having to protect themselves.

The Varsity Guide to Careers 2021/2022



If you missed the print edition you can still download a free copy here: www.varsity.co.uk/paper-edition

Interviews

Josef Skrdlik on watching the coup in Sudan

Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle speaks to a former Cambridge Master's student about the military takeover he witnessed from Khartoum

On the 25th of October, the military arrested Hamdok, the prime minister of Sudan. The arrest was led by General Burhan, the head of the security council, who was due to step down from his role this November.

Following the arrest, the World Bank, the African Union, and the United States froze their aid to the country. Civilian protests intensified. During their repression, at least 40 died. Sudan had been led by a civilian government, working with the military, ever since General Omar Al-Bashir was overthrown by mass civilian demonstrations in 2019.

This Sunday (21/11), Hamdok was reinstated and made a televised announcement in support of a power sharing agreement with the military. As of Monday (22/11), the civilian government has not been reinstated.

The following interview was conducted days after the coup of the 25th of October, as Hamdok was still under house arrest. Skrdlik is a former master's student at Cambridge. He was travelling across the horn of Africa when he witnessed the military take over. He watched his friends get beaten up.

"I woke up and the streets were completely deserted. Everyone in my hotel was gathered around the TV watching the news. Someone told me that the prime minister had been arrested," Skrd-

lik tells me of his experience of the coup in Khartoum.

The coup was preceded by protests against Hamdok's government. "This was the week before the coup. In front of the presidential palace, several hundred people — around 3000 during the biggest gathering — were calling for the military to take power. But that is 3000

“
The military might be trying to instil fear in people. The whole country is against them. Especially young people
”

in a country of 44 million. How representative is that?"

"I went to a sit-in in the area to talk to the protesters. Nobody even had a clear and convincing answer to why they were there. What I heard was a mix of conspiracies about Hamdok's alleged connection to Freemasons and scepticism about 'dangerous democracy experiments'."

"The political preferences of Sudanese



JOIN US!

We are always looking for writers, reporters, illustrators, videographers and photographers.

There has never been a better time to get involved!

Varsity is the independent student newspaper for the University of Cambridge, pursuing quality journalism since 1947.

Whether you'd like to pen a one-off article, or become a regular contributor, we'd love to try and help you make your voice heard.

Visit: www.varsity.co.uk/get-involved to find out more.

www.varsity.co.uk

people became clear on 21st October, the anniversary of the October Revolution of 1964 which overthrew the dictatorship of General Ab-

“
The situation can escalate quickly. I was unlucky to get caught up in one of the more critical situations
”

boud," says Skrdlik.

"Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets to defend the civilian government against the prospect of military rule. It was obvious: nobody wanted the coup. But then the coup happened on Monday, to everyone's surprise."

"Everything got closed, the network was down and it was impossible to leave the country. Like everyone else, I was spending my days drinking tea in the street and waiting for things to come back to normal. People were unhappy but not many were willing

to get involved in the protests."

"Attending a protest in Sudan means you might get killed. One of my friends, who took part in the 2019 revolution, decided to stay home this time. In 2019, he found himself in a crowd the military was shooting at — the people around him got killed. He said it was just too dangerous to go to the streets."

"After the coup, there were protests every day. Omdurman, a city attached to Khartoum, basically became a battlefield. There were barricades everywhere, people were burning tyres on the crossroads to block the traffic and would throw rocks at passing by military vehicles."

"The situation can escalate quickly. The danger is omnipresent. I was unlucky to get caught up in one of the more critical situations. I was peacefully drinking tea with friends in a street cafe. Suddenly we heard shooting in the distance and a sound of military trucks. My friend noticed I was getting nervous because I was not used to the situation and told me everything was going to be okay. To ease the tension, he chanted the refrain of Bob Marley's 'Everything's gonna be alright'. We all started laughing."

"Then the soldiers appeared in the background, shouting something in Arabic. We heard shooting and everyone around yelled 'run, run'. We started running. People in the café were panicking, trying to get out. I thought the situation was going to get explained. I was trying to say that I was not doing anything wrong, that no one was doing anything wrong. But the soldiers were out of control of themselves, full of anger. They just went after us with sticks and rifle butts."

"I was lucky to get away with only a few punches. Two soldiers were about to beat me but another one stopped them. I guess they were too afraid to touch a foreigner because it could create a scan-

▲ A mural of Hamdok reading 'Thanks Hamdok' and 'Just step down', likely from the 2019 Revolution

JOSEF SKRDLIK

dal. But my friends got beaten up very badly."

"They also ripped my friend off his phone and cash. He was not even surprised — soldiers seem to be allowed to do pretty much anything, as long as they are willing to clamp down on opposition."

Skrdlik thinks that "the military might be trying to instil fear in people. If you get bashed up even when you are

“
After the coup, Omdurman basically became a battlefield
”

just drinking tea, you are going to think twice before going to a protest. They are also getting paranoid. The whole nation is against them, especially young people.

"No one knows where this is going to lead. The military is betting on the people getting tired, but that does not seem to be working out."

"Now there is still no internet it is extremely hard to gather information about the situation in the country. General Burhan, the leader of the coup, said the network would stay cut off until the civil unrest stops. I can't even check on my friends in Sudan to see if they are okay."

Vulture



Lifestyle

What's a year abroad really like, anyway?

What happens on the year abroad stays on the year abroad? Not anymore: **MML students** tell stories from across the sea

Alastair Smith – French and German (Post A-Level) – Munich

I had been warned before moving away that year-abroad romances do not work – and yet this did not stop me from promptly downloading Tinder upon my arrival in Munich (supposedly the singles-capital of Germany) and swiping away. Alone in a new city, all I wanted was to meet people and immerse myself in the local culture – the prospect

“

In my desperation to have an ‘authentic’ German experience I had forged a romantic connection with someone I was completely incompatible with

”

of falling in love (and getting some distance from less successful romantic ventures back in England) was just a bonus.

Very soon, I found myself in a bustling Biergarten with a rather attractive, interesting German whom I had met through the app. It was only after a few weeks of casual dinner dates and Bavarian-brewed beer, however, that I noticed something strange: when the two of us spoke in German, I was keen to carry on the conversation; when we spoke in English, I questioned whether the two of us had any chemistry at all. Was I interested in the person, or simply in their language? Soon, I was forced to admit to myself that, in my desperation to have an “authentic” German experience (and, of course, improve my language skills), I had forged a romantic connection with someone I was completely incompatible with, all because their mother tongue was the language I happened to be learning. I realised that this German – a very decent person – must feel completely and utterly used, and thus our relationship fizzled out with no small amount of guilt on my part. But at least I learnt the word for “cheesegrater” along the way.

Nadya Miryanova – French and Latin – Paris

Studying the relatively niche degree of French and Latin (it does exist, I promise!) left me with a choice in second year: I could either stay on a pure Classics three-year course or I could go on a year abroad and stick with MML.

I always knew that I’d opt for the latter, and consequently chose to stay in France – specifically Paris – for the full year (the Vatican and ancient Rome were unfortunately unavailable destinations). I’m currently working as an editorial assistant at Hermès International, where I edit and translate a wide variety of their communications materials, including press releases, invitations, brochures, city guides, and even dinner menus. Though I was initially nervous about being plunged into a fully French working environment, it’s been an amazing experience; my co-workers are incredibly kind and welcoming, and there’s a lovely community of interns!

Miranda Stephenson – German (Post A-Level) and History – Hannover

I remember attending a year abroad Zoom meeting, about six months before I shuffled my way on board a one-way flight to Hannover. This was a meeting run independent of the MML faculty, where returning students bestowed their hard-won wisdom on unworldly MML second-years, and absolutely no questions were barred. In that meeting, one student told the story of how he’d found himself homeless for two weeks in Paris. I’ve actually thought a lot about this story over the past month, because the apartment I initially moved into is only available to rent until the end of November, and finding a new place to live in Hannover isn’t easy. Finding a new place to live in Hannover as a foreigner during term-time? Trust me, that’s harder still.

The typical German living arrangement for people in their 20s is called a “WG”, which is essentially where you move into a shared apartment with a group of people who hope to function as your new best friends and surrogate family for as long as you carry on living together. What that means is that I’ve spent the past month writing application after application to prospective WGs, attending dozens of hour-long getting-to-know-you sessions with potential flatmates. It’s been a long slog, but I’ve met some unforgettable people along the way: a 35-year-old man who only wanted to flatshare with women 25 or younger, an international table football champion, and an 18-year-old Belarusian art student who sang me her national anthem before I’d learnt her name. Now that I’m finally about to sign off on an apartment that’ll last me until June, I can look back on the whole WG search with a funny sort of pride. I was pushed to take responsibility for myself in a very ‘real-world’ way, competing with native German speakers to sell myself as someone interesting to be around. I would say, though, to anyone preparing to go abroad, do try and sort out long-term accommodation as soon as possible. Trust me again: you’ll save yourself a lot of stress.

India Marshall – Spanish (Post A-level) and Portuguese (Ab initio) – Madrid

So far, I’m having the absolute best time in Madrid. The visa situation definitely made

getting here a little more difficult than anticipated, and enrolling in the university here (Complutense) was a bit of an administrative nightmare – but even so, the workload is almost nonexistent compared to Cambridge. This leaves me with lots of spare time to explore the city, see friends, and travel (so far I’ve been to Barcelona, Seville, and Malaga, among others). And I am even in France right now visiting friends from Cambridge! During the summer, I was worried that Covid-19 restrictions would make it a pain to get around and socialise, but everything is open as long as you wear a mask indoors. I feel really safe in Spain, and I’d say that Madrid is an ideal year abroad location, as it’s a city but still feels quite “Spanish”.

Emily Moss – French and German (Post A-Level) – Paris

My experience so far has surpassed all my expectations. Yes, Paris is intimidating sometimes, not to mention expensive, but it feels like such an enriching experience. It’s invaluable for learning life skills that I’ve never been able to learn in Cambridge, like paying rent

“

In a few short months, I already feel like I might have grown up more than I did in two years at Cambridge

”

and bills, dealing with landlords, and doing all of my own household chores. Making friends hasn’t always been the easiest, since being a part of the international student community at ENS often makes it harder to befriend French students, but the other international students are in the same boat, so I’ve made some lovely friends from Germany, Switzerland, the US and the UK (oops), and share a flat with two other Cambridge students. The endless things to see and do in Paris are sometimes overwhelming, but it also means life is never, ever boring, and I’m always busy doing something fun. In a few short months, I already feel like I might have grown up more than I did in two years at Cambridge – I guess living in the big city does that to you! I’d whole-heartedly recommend Paris (especially ENS) to any French students looking for a few months of fun (and very little work...!)

▲ ILLUSTRATION BY AISH MITTRA



Theatre

'A context not a topic': Climate Crisis and theatre making

Theatre Editor **Stanley Lawson** interviews Milo Harries about a series of Climate Crisis theatre workshops running in Cambridge this month



looking into in theatrical terms. Finnigan, for example, talks about an iterative process for theatre in response and as part of the climate crisis; one which offers some hope, a kind of positive process of figuring out and revealing the direction for the next move.

So what's next after the workshops? Are you planning any kind of continuation beyond the COP26 period?

I'm also organising to do some R&D sessions this term with student actors, to try dig into the detail of some of these texts and see what emerges out of them in longer more intensive sessions. I think more long we'll be looking to put on some kind of performance, maybe late next term or early Easter, but what form that might take is very much dependent on the process

You're staging out of not knowing?

Exactly! I just hope people get something out of these sessions, and we give it the momentum to do more of this kind of work later this year.

◀ MILO HARRIES

Where did the idea for the project come from?

About 50 playwrights have been commissioned to write short pieces in response to the climate crisis, and these are available for most of the duration of COP26 to be performed for free – I'm taking four of these pieces (all of which are just one performer) and workshopping one each week in November. I especially want to focus on the interaction between the attendees at the workshop, the actor and the text, to see what emerges out the encounter between the three

So, the workshop format is perfect what you're trying to do?

Yes, I really enjoy workshopping text and the open format often suits what I'm trying to explore, in terms of both in encounter and in character. There's a brilliant 'between-ness' in workshops between audience and performer. **What's your background in theatre – where do you come to running these workshops from?**

I'm a PhD student in the field of climate crisis and theatre, studying here in Cambridge. In terms of performing my experience is mostly in contemporary opera, but the workshops won't involve any operatic elements.

How will the workshops run as open and interactive sessions?

I'm thinking it'll be like a cross between a rehearsal and a seminar – the people in the room other than myself and the actor will be both director and class and teacher. The attendees will be invited to contribute to what the actor is doing with the text, I've been inspired by the conversational workshop techniques used by theatre companies like Coney. It's the kind of exercises which are trying to alter the angle from which people approach their beliefs and attitudes, especially when interacting with other people, whilst always primarily speaking to their own experience

and knowledge.

Any other inspirations for the kind of work you'll be doing in these sessions?

David Finnigan – who's written one the pieces we'll be working on – is has a lot of really interesting stuff to say in his work about theatre and the climate crisis. I think, and he's not the only one talking about this, the idea of the climate crisis not as a topic for theatre but a context for all theatre makers at the moment, and will be for the moment, is a really vital idea which emerges out of Finnigan's work, as well as others.

“

I think these crumbling assumptions translate really well into theatre

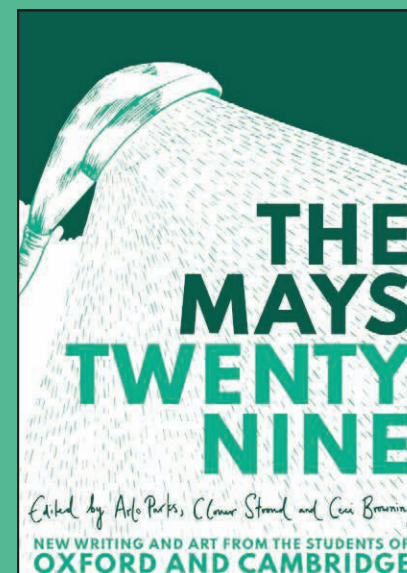
”

How does the Climate Crisis affect theatre making then – if that's not to flippant a question?

Well of course it affects, or will affect, every aspect of our lives. Our conception of future time is inextricable from the climate crisis – or at least it ought to be that way now. My horizon, your horizon, shared horizons, all of these are built on assumptions of stability that are completely false. Even if you're not talking about the climate crisis specifically, or explicitly, if you are talking about the now and the future – which theatre always is to some extent – then you are still talking about the climate crisis. I think these crumbling assumptions translate really well into theatre, a few practitioners talk about 'staging out of not knowing' – which is a brilliant way of thinking about this really unstable future we're

The Mays 29

A book of the best new student writing and art from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.



Guest editors: Arlo Parks and Clover Stroud

Available from all good book stores and online now:

<https://shop.varsity.co.uk/shop/the-mays>

Arts

The Interview: A Short Story

Patrick Russell shares a short story, set in a futuristic version of Cambridge

ILLUSTRATION BY TIERNEY WAIT



The lift ascended smoothly and elegantly with ear-popping speed; within seconds he had reached the 73rd floor. The doors opened to reveal a featureless lobby painted dove grey, with one window, one door, and no signs except the bald notice on the wall opposite the entrance stating: "TO CHECK IN, SCAN YOUR WRIST IMPLANT HERE." The room was bare, cool and functional, it had all the charm of an operating theatre. After checking in, he wandered over and looked idly out of the window, where tiny motes of dust were illuminated in the late morning shafts of light. He looked out over a panoramic view of endless olive and citrus groves stretching far into the distant Fens and on towards The Wash.

The journey from London had been uneventful, with the usual mixture of tourists, locals, and, of course, students. There was one particularly noisy group of overseas visitors, from South-east Asia he thought, tightly-packed into the seats adjacent to him in the cramped Monopod. They chattered excitedly, taking seemingly endless Digi-Pics of everyone and everything. Despite the fact that it was February and that there was ostensibly air-conditioning, the pod was stifling. Air-conditioning was rapidly becoming a thing of the past – too energy-greedy, the authorities said. He could see an orange-brown haze hanging in the sky through the window as they shot at high speed past the faceless urban landscape.

One good thing about this 50-mile journey, though, was that it was mercifully short in duration – they would reach the outer, outer London suburbs within a few minutes, and shortly after that, they would be starting to slow down prior to the smooth glide into their

destination – the ancient university city on the edge of the Fens that was, these days, the centre of excellence for a world revolution in science, medicine, and technology.

The penultimate stop was at the outskirts of the city, close to where the old railway station had been. The story went that in the days of the coming of the railways, the powerful colleges had lobbied for the siting of a station to be well away from the medieval centre, and so it had been. He decided to get out and walk the final couple of miles to his appointment. He needed air and time to think about his application and the forthcoming interview; he was becoming more nervous by the minute. It was still warm outside but the east wind, that people in the city said came directly from the Urals, afforded a little freshness – despite

the metallic tang in the air. Many years ago, this same wind would have given rise to Siberian conditions, especially in February, but not now. In the distance, he could see the multitude of slender high-rise buildings that were squeezed between the medieval colleges. The skyline was totally dominated by these towering pinnacles looking like fat needles on a gargantuan pin cushion.

Deep in thought, he suddenly jumped as the one door in this cheerless room slid open with a metallic scrape and a disembodied female voice commanded him to enter. Interviews in this august place were notoriously difficult and their quirkiness was legendary, so he entered the room with some trepidation. If the featureless décor, along with the multiple security checks he had been through since arriving at 'S.S. Tower 2', not to mention the officious porters he had encountered, were all designed to put you on edge, then they had surely succeeded.

He had been surprised at the invitation to interview, not that he doubted his own academic ability; it was more to do with the subject that his higher education assessment programme (HEAP) had come up with – apparently the first recommendation of this kind in many decades. He didn't imagine that there were still courses available in his particular area of interest, let alone at one of the world's leading universities. He had applied more in hope than expectation. Very few universities offered degrees in 'non-essential' subjects. It was all

Bio Terra-Forming, Genetic Manipulation, or Gravitational Engineering these days. He had never had any interest in anything remotely to do with science, technology or medicine, which put him at a distinct disadvantage. He guessed that this was because of his background. He had grown up in an unusual and distinctly 'bookish' family in north London. The word 'bookish' itself was an anachronism as printed books only really existed in *librarch vaults* and were as rare as a temperate summer's day in London. As a boy, he was surrounded by multiple volumes of the real thing and subject-wise they could not have been more eclectic – but had definitely veered towards the Arts, Philosophy, and the Humanities. This was the legacy of his five-times great uncle who had been a university don here, and a world-famous figure in his day. His family culture was definitely one of wide-reading, scholarship, and musings about the meaning of existence – rather than one producing generations of doctors, scientists, or engineers. That said, his ancestor was a mathematician, as well as a philosopher, and mathematics was revered in this age of technology and science.

A young woman in her early thirties, with a half-shaved head and wearing the standard university dress of a black two-piece suit, white shirt, college tie and academic gown, introduced herself as Dr Voight-Kampff and asked him to sit down at a desk and rest his chin on a machine with a laser-like pointer, which, when aligned, shone a light directly into his right pupil. She shuffled momentarily in her seat, "You'll forgive the response verification appliance – it's standard procedure at all interviews, I hope you're ok with it? Right, let's begin..."

Gliding back into London, later that day, the air thickening by the mile, he re-ran the interview over and over in his mind. Initially it had been far more straightforward than he imagined, but it became more difficult as things progressed. He strongly sensed that his interviewer felt a total lack of enthusiasm and commitment for his application. She seemed mystified that the system had thrown up this young man with his desire to take a redundant subject.

At one point she had asked him bluntly why he would want to bother studying such a ridiculously outmoded, and frankly useless, subject as History? He had stumbled his way through some kind of response, about how it was important, in his view, to keep the past alive and about how an understanding of the past can be a key to the present. Surely, he had said, we owe a debt to those who have gone before? The generations that have lived, loved, and suffered in order to deliver us into the present? Haven't many key events in the past ultimately led to improvements in society? He continued. Where would our parliamentary democracy be, for example, without the contribution of, say, Oliver Cromwell who,

in the mid-17th century, had revolutionised the relationship between Parliament and the Crown, albeit in the most revolutionary and ultimately tyrannical way possible. Hadn't Cromwell attended the very college attached to this tower? Hadn't he also served as MP for this city?

She seemed less than impressed with the Cromwell example and responded that the

past was full of mistakes and regressions in progress, and we never learned anything from them anyway. She had continued that studying subjects like History or Philosophy would not get our climate under control, or produce more food and ultimately wealth for the developing nations of the planet. Or indeed keep the interminable, pesky world pandemics at bay.

Momentarily he felt a slight prickling at the back of his neck and he couldn't work out whether it was nervousness or anger?

He kept his trump card until last, shamelessly dropping the name of his illustrious ancestor and pointing out the contribution to philosophy, language, and learning that he had made to the advancement of knowledge way back in the middle of the 20th century. The fact that he had been a mathematician too would only strengthen his case, he thought.

After the big reveal, she sat in silence, mulling over what he had said. For the first time, he noticed some tiny dark tufts of hair sprouting from a mole on her chin. Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, she broke the silence and asked in a genuinely puzzled voice:

"Who was Ludwig Wittgenstein?"

“The skyline was totally dominated by these towering pinnacles looking like fat needles on a gargantuan pin cushion”

“It was important, in his view, to keep the past alive”

The Wall Street Immoralism of American Psycho

Sophie Long examines the 1991 transgressive novel *American Psycho* and its relationship to Wall Street culture and society

New York's Wall Street is undoubtedly the epicentre of the financial world, bringing with it the figureheads of immoral, money-hungry narcissism: stockbrokers. The social stigmatisation of stockbrokers is timeless, and occurs from Wall Street's very beginnings in the late eighteenth century as an exclusionary collection open only to the professional, male financier inhabiting Manhattan's Southside. However, as popular culture began to use Wall Street as a backdrop for social commentary, figures like Jordan Belfort (*The Wolf of Wall Street*) and John Self (*Money: A Suicide Note*)

Street has its roots in profiteering from dehumanisation, as this image conveniently continues until it reaches its height in Bret Easton Ellis' *American Psycho*, where violence and degradation becomes synonymous with the success of the stockbroker. However, it must be determined if Ellis' fictional stockbroker can be a reflection of the setting of real brokerage in Lower Manhattan's trading systems. Can psychopaths walk among us, amassing wealth while topping the food chain of capitalism?

The titular 'American psycho' in this case is Patrick Bateman, one of the most heinous literary antagonists of the last century. Hidden behind his suave, Wall Street persona is a demented, solipsistic serial-killer that seeks pleasure in the destruction of those inferior to him — the man in the tailored Armani suit. The common thread between Wall Street's financial beginnings and its evolution into a literary symbol is its associations with moral decline and degradation. Just as the Buttonwood traders profited from the slave trade, Bateman earns his wealth alongside committing violence against women, the unhomed and members of the LGBT+ community. It becomes increasingly obvious — if we use Wall Street as the focus — that where there is significant wealth, there must also be poverty and immoralism. Bateman, in one chapter, can

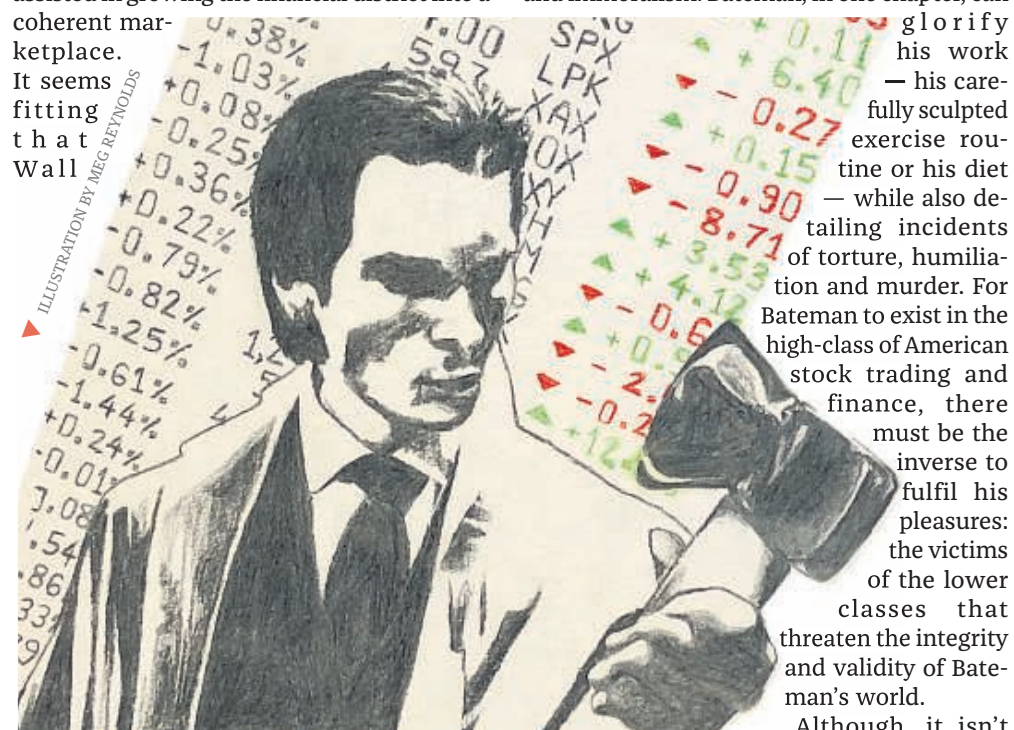


“Can psychopaths walk among us, amassing wealth while topping the food chain of capitalism?”

exemplified the hedonistic lifestyle of the glamorous financial district.

The Buttonwood Agreement of 1792 placed the New York Stock Exchange on Wall Street, acting as the home of domestic trade for the city's current markets. Initially consisting of twenty four of New York's finest brokers, it was the first instance of an organised group controlling the input and output of stocks and trade. At this time, the active trade occurring on Wall Street was that of the American slave trade, which provided the city with tax and assisted in growing the financial district into a coherent marketplace.

It seems fitting that Wall



glorify his work — his carefully sculpted exercise routine or his diet — while also detailing incidents of torture, humiliation and murder. For Bateman to exist in the high-class of American stock trading and finance, there must be the inverse to fulfil his pleasures: the victims of the lower classes that threaten the integrity and validity of Bateman's world. Although, it isn't

necessary that Bateman must kill in order to maintain his position on a social pedestal; it is rather his familiarity with violence that comes as a package deal, a freebie with the purchase of his sleek business cards or matching Hugo Boss cufflinks. Wall Street, in all its glamour, is a catalyst for Bateman's lapse into psychosis. When insignificant moments of inferiority among his Wall Street colleagues damage his self-confidence, he must respond with inflamed episodes of violence. Therefore, is it fair to conclude that Bateman is a product of his surroundings, or must we accept the inherent nature of a contemptible — yet imaginary — antagonist? Ellis is undoubtedly satirising the culture of Wall Street as he saw it in the late nineties and formed his novel upon the basis that readers will identify

populate high society and in return earn fortune and fame, hence why Ellis decides that Bateman can be exposed as he is at the height of evil hidden in the fiscal world — a

“It seems fitting that Wall Street has its roots in profiteering from dehumanisation”

world in which Bateman fits and remains undetected throughout the novel. The reader is asked to decide whether Bateman actually did kill his victims, or if it is a form of escapism from the vacuum of Wall Street monotony. Is the demonic fantasyland of Wall Street just an imagined world of Ellis' creation? A psychopathic playground

that exists only as a mental fabrication in the mind of Bateman? Or, does the real life Wall Street breed a violence that began with the profits of the American slave trade in New York City?

▲ ILLUSTRATION BY TIERNEY WAIT

ADVERTISE WITH US.

To advertise in any of our print publications or online, please contact our Business Manager:

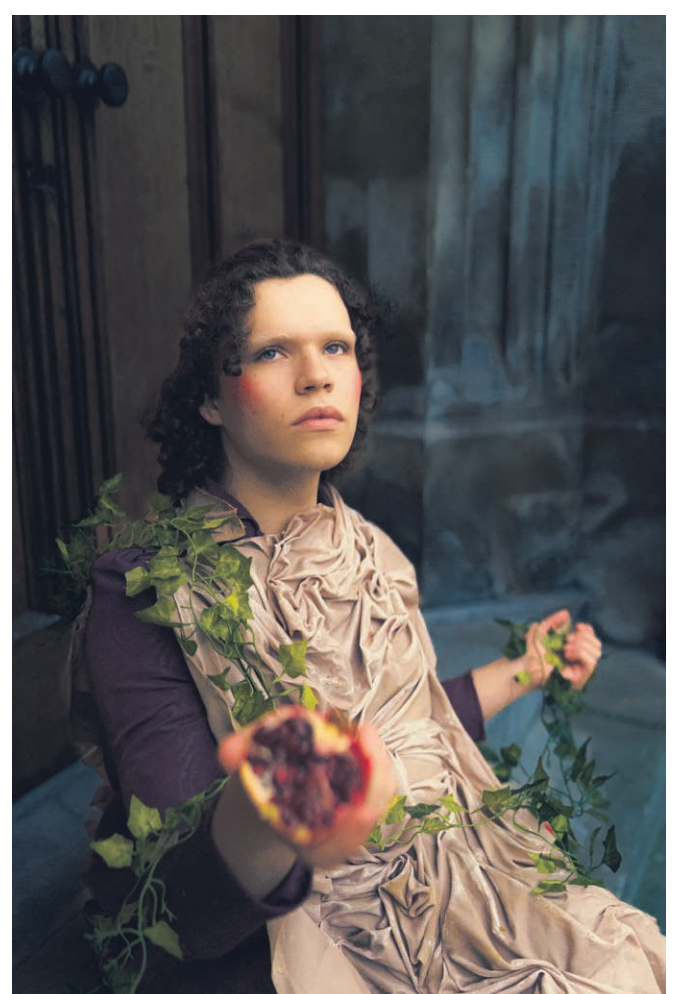
VARSITY

tel : 01223 33 75 75
email: business@varsity.co.uk
web: varsitypublications.co.uk

Fashion

The Modern Pre-Raphaelites

Creative Director **Lily Maguire** and Photographer **Nana Ama Konadu Otuo** disrupt the white cisgender feminine ideal in a radical reworking of pre-Raphaelite paintings





▲ LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM: ZARA WEARS CAROLINE HUSBAND AND ANNA-SOPHIE LIENBACHER. EXCEL WEARS HEBE BYRNE & LUZAN ROBINSON AND SOFIE MO. JACK WEARS DELPHINE AND OLIVE HARDY BULLEN. PRIYA WEARS CAROLINE HUSBAND, OLIVE HARDY BULLEN AND DELPHINE. NABHA WEARS KA WAI LAM, OLIVE HARDY BULLEN AND FLORA MAE. REUBEN WEARS ODILE SHI, ALOISE MAHE-STEPHENSON AND DELPHINE. NAPHYA WEARS ALL ALOISE MAHE-STEPHENSON. SHARLEEN WEARS ALOISE MAHE-STEPHENSON AND ANANSIE DALLASTON WOOD.

▼ NABIHA WEARS CAROLINE HUSBAND & OLIVE HARDY BULLEN & SHARLEEN WEARS ALOISE MAHE-STEPHENSON AND ANANSIE DALLASTON WOOD



Creative Directing: Lily Maguire @lilymaguirexox. **Photography:** Nana Ama

Konadu Otuo @amakotuophotography

Styling: Anna Chan, Ella Fraser, Anna Chandler de Waal, Talulah Thomas, Carmen

Mas Franco. **Set Design:** Ella Lowden-Hampshire, Bernadette Carter

Modelling: Zara Salaria (she/her), Priyanka

Voruganti (she/they), Sharleen Opia (she/her), Excel Ebere (she/her), Jack Ward (they/
she), Reuben Mason (they/them), Nabiha Ahmed (she/her), Naphysa Awuah (she/her)

Designers: Hebe June Byrne @hebe_june and Luzan Robinson @luzan.robinson,
Caroline Husband @rollinginfabrics, Anansie Dallaston Wood @anansie.create, Ka
Wai Lam @ka.wai.lam, Anna-Sophie Lienbacher @annalieni, Aloïse Mahé-Stephen-
son @aloise_mahestephen, Olive Hardy Bullen @olivehardybullen, Odile Shi
@odile.shi_costume, Delphine @phi.elphi, Sofie Mo @sofsmo, Flora Mae @floramaeart

Thanks to: Josh Osman, Akshata Kapoor and Juliette Gueron for helping transport
30 garments from London to Cambridge, Markete Vasickova for securing 9 London
designers, and Hebe Byrne & Luzan Robinson for custom making a garment



▼ JACK WEARS ALOISE MAHE-STEPHENSON, DELPHINE AND OLIVE HARDY BULLEN, NAPHYSA WEARS ALOISE MAHE-STEPHENSON, EXCEL WEARS HEBE BYRNE & LUZAN ROBINSON AND SOFIE MO.



▼ REUBEN WEARS ODILE SHI AND ALOISE MAHE-STEPHENSON, ZARA WEARS CAROLINE HUSBAND AND ANNA-SOPHIE LIEN. PRIYA WEARS CAROLINE HUSBAND, OLIVE HARDY BULLEN AND DELPHINE.

Film & TV

Reviewing *The Chair* in the time of Union controversy **Minsung Son** uses the series *The Chair* as a lens to consider recent events at the Union, and its success in tackling other important topics

Bill Dobson (Jay Duplass) teaches modernist literature at Pembroke University, a prestigious American institution. In his forties, he's by far the most popular professor in the English department, struggling with low enrolments and has-been academics. In an otherwise pleasant morning, while lecturing impromptu about fascism in literature, Bill chooses to do an ironic Nazi salute and a "Heil Hitler!" Footage of the scene are instantly shared, and his apology and resignation demanded. Amid growing student outrage, pressure from the college administration, and her personal relationship with Bill, Ji-yoon Kim (Sandra Oh), the first woman and Asian-American to chair the department, is tasked with handling the situation.

The 2021 Netflix series *The Chair* is brave to explore a sensitive realm: the tension between free

ate? Should we treat differently those who use offensive language to side with offensive ideologies and those using it as a satire, an example, or a mistake? Does the popular strategy of cancelling ultimately harm the democratic discourse or successfully deplatform undemocratic behaviour?

For anyone questioning, *The Chair* is a great watch. Not because it solves the dilemma with a clear-cut answer, but precisely because it doesn't try to. What co-creators Amanda Peet and Annie Julia Wyman excels in is the art of maintaining a balance between confronting perspectives. The show doesn't portray Bill as a fascist inciting Neo-Nazism (which he isn't), or ignore that the words and gesture he used can cause offense and distress to many, even when used satirically.

While recognising the value of free speech, it doesn't fail to acknowledge that Bill's inci-

speech and of-
fensive
speech. Greatly pertinent to today's world is that uneasy conflict, and the controversy at Pembroke isn't bound to a literature class at a fictional American college. Countless things in the real world summon the free speech dilemma—a divisive tweet, a remark from a comedy show; or, say, an aesthetics debate hosted by the debating society of a leading British university.

Indeed, it's less than a month ago that the Cambridge Union sparked a major controversy, in which art historian Andrew Graham-Dixon satirically impersonated Hitler and used racial slurs while arguing that there is such a thing as bad artistic taste (like Hitler's). How uncannily similar to what Bill did at Pembroke? Also controversial was the Union's subsequent, eventually reversed decision to create a speaker blacklist and put Graham-Dixon on it.

This sequence of events—involving also public apologies, calls for resignation, and a John Cleese boycott of a Union event in protest against the blacklist—left us with difficult questions. When, if at all, should free speech be restricted? How should we respond when someone uses words we deem inappropri-

dent ex-
ists
with-
in an
equally
important
context that
is a worrying
rise in anti-Semitic
incidents around
the world. It's admittedly regrettable that on one or two occasions, the show depicts students (wrongly) accusing Bill of being a Nazi, initially misrepresenting their more legitimate concerns and detracting from this careful balancing act. But, if the first step towards an informed opinion is to understand and acknowledge different views and experiences, then *The Chair* has done a generally good job of setting the stage for it.

What's impressive is that in dealing with a delicate topic in such a balanced way, the show maintains just the right amount of gravitas. It's not too heavy to the point where it loses its attraction as a dramedy—the day-to-day operations of the failing English department (like an old-school professor's pathetic attempt to track down the student who gave her lecture a mean review) provides enough comic relief here and there. Nor is it too lighthearted to belittle the serious nature of Bill's Hitler scandal and its aftermath. *The Chair* is one of the few shows that I was enticed enough to finish in one sitting, and that's probably because it knows well when

to be serious and when to be witty (although, I concede, it does consist of only six half-hour episodes).

Another pillar of the show apart from the free speech debate is Ji-yoon's everyday struggles, both inside and outside the professional domain. A woman, a Korean-American, and a single mother, she's a strong character at the intersection of two cultures and several disadvantaged groups. At work, she has to deal with white male professors who, albeit never explicitly racist, don't invite her to dinners like they do to Bill (also white and male). At home, she needs to connect with both her Korean immigrant father and her adopted daughter of Mexican descent. These problems don't go away just because Ji-yoon has 'overcome' them and became the Chair, the highest level in her professional ladder. *The Chair* offers a strikingly down-to-earth account of living and working in between cultures, illuminating

the minute difficulties of doing so that are so mundane, so easily overlooked. I was also surprised to see all the little cultural details and a quite realistic depiction of the Korean immigrant community—something I've been seeing exclusively in Korean directors' works like *Minari* (2020).

The Chair gives one a lot to think about, whether it's about the extent of free speech, about life as an second-generation immigrant in a cliquish setting, or just about the inner workings of elite academia. Changing paradigms of teaching and institutional problems in the ivory tower are among the themes also explored. Some will feel that all this is a bit too much, but I beg to differ. It's the show's ability to tell so many pertinent stories in a coherent, intriguing, and balanced way that makes it one of the best ones around.

◀ TWITTER/NETFLIX

Shop Varsity!

Our online store, offering a range of *Varsity* branded items is open now!

Pack of Pens: £2.39

Mugs: £4.99

Facemasks: £5.79

T-Shirts: £13.49

Sweatshirts: £17.99

Backpacks: £9.99

Tote Bags: £3.99

Postal print subscriptions are now available too
- get copies of *Varsity* delivered directly to your door worldwide!

All items subject to availability. Above prices exclude postage & packaging. All major credit and debit cards accepted

www.varsity.co.uk/shop

Music

Varsity Music's Albums of the Year 2021

The members of the **Varsity Music team** spotlight their favourite albums from this unforgettable year, from Wolf Alice to Arlo Parks

November may seem like somewhat of a premature time to be announcing our albums of the year shortlist, yet in the vein of short Cambridge term times, we're announcing our favourites a little ahead of time. This list of albums, compiled by our Varsity Music team, all seem to engage with vulnerability and honesty, offering different takes on a year that has been unpredictable and ever-changing. In their authentic depiction of relationships and the human condition, we hope some of these albums can offer you strength and comfort. With their multiple references throughout the shortlist, we also hope you appreciate Wolf Alice as much as the Varsity Music team clearly do...

Content note: Mentions of suicidal thoughts, self-harm, police brutality

“
Arlo Parks displays wisdom and maturity in her words, articulating the troubles of Generation Z in a way that very few could
”

Wolf Alice - *Blue Weekend* (Joe Bray, Staff Writer)

Wolf Alice have previously impressed, but never stunned me. “The Last Man on Earth” was a cinematic single, but I pressed play on the album with resigned hesitation. Yet, the Macbeth lyricism in “The Beach” intrigued me, muted guitars teasing a goosebump-invoking climax. Suddenly, I felt the album could be significant. As the tracklist progressed, I was increasingly stunned. Ellie Rowsell’s sensational singing and elegant lyricism seasoned cinematically sharp yet lo-fi instrumentals. Combined with diversity of genre, from the folksy “Safe From Heartbreak” to the teen-punk “Play The Greatest Hits”, it’s fascinating that all of these directions work. I would argue this album is perfect. “No Hard Feelings”, a perfectly short respite from anxiety and my most-streamed song of the year, exemplifies why. *Blue Weekend* has ‘bangers’ and ‘ballads’,

diversity and scope, but concision at 40 minutes. No second is unnecessary or wasted. **Honourable mentions:** James Blake - *Friends That Break Your Heart*, Nao - *And Then Life Was Beautiful*

Arlo Parks - *Collapsed in Sunbeams* (Josh Osman, Columnist)

Arlo Parks released her debut album *Collapsed in Sunbeams* at the beginning of 2021 in what was one of the most unpredictable, confusing times of the pandemic, let alone the last decade. In times like these, her reassuring, representative voice felt timelier and more necessary than ever. With her knack for poetic storytelling in simple words, the album’s themes of intimacy, pain and trust struck even harder, but the upbeat rhythms stop the album from being too pessimistic, even in its darkest moments. Setting such a high bar with such an outstanding debut at the age of just 20, Arlo Parks displays wisdom and maturity in her words, articulating the troubles of Generation Z in a way that very few could.

Honourable mentions: Wolf Alice - *Blue Weekend*, St. Vincent - *Daddy’s Home*

Miranda Lambert, Jack Ingram & Jon Randall - *The Marfa Tapes* (Sianna King, Columnist)

No song in 2021 has made me sob my eyes out quite like “Ghost” from *The Marfa Tapes* - and no, I might not be Miranda Lambert, and nor had I gone through a high-profile celebrity divorce the last time I

checked, but the heart-wrenching lyrics across this rootsy lo-fi record make me feel her every emotion right down to the core. It consists of fifteen songs that these three singer-songwriters have written together over the past five years and was recorded spontaneously in the depths of the pandemic in the desert by the Texas-Mexico border, and it’s about as raw as you can get - the wind blows, cows moo, and the border patrol flies overhead in the background. No 100 words can do it justice, so you’ll have to take my word for it and give it a spin: *The Marfa Tapes* is something special.

Honourable mentions: PJ Harding & Noah Cyrus - *People Don’t Change*, Brandi Carlile - *In These Silent Days*

Madison Beer - *Life Support* (Matthew Cavallini, Music Editor)

“How do I word this? Was about to write you this letter, but it was just curses in cursive” opens “Emotional Bruises”, one of many laments that make up Madison Beer’s life-affirming *Life Support*. It’s a lyric that quite sublimely sums up the pain that went into making this album. The debut record from Madison Beer was ground-breaking in its exploration of mental health themes: “Effortlessly” touches upon self-harm and exhaustion in the wake of her BPD diagnosis; “Stay Numb and Carry On” alludes to unhealthy coping mechanisms; “Default” and “Homesick” address suicidal thoughts and feelings of not belonging. Her honesty makes for an incredibly comforting listen to anyone who has fought these battles too. She also artfully moves between the emotionally moving and physically moving, with the inclusion of “Baby” (perhaps the sexiest song ever made, no exaggeration).

Life Support not only highlights that Madison is one of the most technically skilled vocalists today (see “Selfish”, a song that would be a career highlight for any artist) but showcases that there isn’t a feeling she can’t invoke.

Honourable mentions: GFOTY - *FEMME-DORM*, C. Tangana - *El Madrileño*

Shungudzo - *I’m not a mother, but I have children* (Maddy Fisher, Music Editor)

2020 felt like a never-ending onslaught of crisis, protest, and breaking points, and there was perhaps worry that, in 2021, the public would fall back into a state of bliss ambivalence. Shungudzo, in her exploration of police brutality, fetishisation, activist burnout, and wealth inequality, tells her listeners - there is no right time to stop talking about this. Despite this being Shungudzo’s debut album, she is already established in the music industry, writing for Little Mix and Jessie Ware. This mastery over her craft is stunningly evident throughout the album, as she excels in her rock, soul, pop and spiritual offerings. She is resentful and exhausted by the violence endemic to American society, yet the overall message is paradoxically comforting: even if nothing changes before we die, it is our future children that we are fighting for. Besides, it is resistance alone that makes us free. Listen to this album now and revel in all its beauty. Then play it through the megaphone at your next rally.

Honourable mentions: Self Esteem - *Prioritise Pleasure*, Wolf Alice - *Blue Weekend*

VARSLITY MUSIC’S ALBUMS OF THE YEAR 2021 PLAYLIST

Listen to the highlights from these albums hand-picked by our team on the Varsity Spotify (musicvarsity) or by scanning the code below on the Spotify app



PHOTOGRAPHY: LAUREN ENGEL, ATYPIKAL CREATIVE, JIM & IDLE COOK OF COOKHOUSE MEDIA, MARK NESBITT, ALEX KURUNIS; GRAPHICS: MATTHEW CAVALLINI





Be You, With Us

#WeAreCisco



Software Engineer | Associate Consulting Engineer
Associate Solutions Engineer | Desktop Engineer | Test Engineer

cisco.com/careers

Violet Emission Impossible: Part II

Violet correspondent *Florence Brockman* brings us the second part of her investigation into the G20's fight against the climate crisis



▲Number 10/Flickr

Last week, as the green G20 gang descended on Gas-glow, the world watched on. It certainly rolled out the red carpet for climate royalty (although you decide for yourself what Salt Bae was doing there) but the Emission Impossible bombed at the box office. Even the Prime Minister didn't have the stamina to complete the two-week cinematic extravaganza. After going out all guns blazing in that game of fishing battleships with Macron last week, diplomacy seemed dull in comparison. A quick nap could be excused, couldn't it? Boris floated off into his own green capitalist utopia, impenetrable to the glare of David Attenborough sitting beside him. It seemed his fellow leaders were stifling yawns too. After consuming a quick carbon-neutral croissant, looking serious, and suggesting some zero-carbon claims, our saviours disappeared, leaving only the lingering smell of petroleum on the runway.

The plot in disarray, a mass resignation of the stellar cast, Emission Impossible flailed helplessly. Cue the civil servants. Hired as extras, they now found themselves as stars of the show, negotiating a way to save the world. Knowing

Tory donors? In an attempt to recharge the Earth's batteries, the negotiators had run dry. Tightly wound at the start of the conference, their mechanisms had begun to fail. The drone of 'deeee-forrest-aaaaay-cion' and 'meeeeee-thayyynne' hummed around, giving everyone tin-

“

Much to Jacob Rees Mogg's delight, Westminster had returned to the days of the Great

Stink

”

nitus, until someone had the sense to rewind them. No Drama Sharma was even stuck on an IV of Irn Bru for good measure.

Just as 450 organisations pledged to invest in clean technology, it was the Houses of Parliament that could do with some cleaning up. The Thames Barrier just about manages to keep London dry from the rising sea levels, but is powerless against the torrent of Tory sleaze flooding Westminster. After refusing to cut sewage discharges last month, the MPs were truly wallowing in their own mess now the stench of unlawful lobbying and rewriting democracy filled the chambers. Much to Jacob Rees Mogg's delight, Westminster had returned to the days of the Great Stink. Finally! Mogg donned his top hat, hopped on his penny-farthing, and pedalled off to Parliament, with a briefcase full of

Somerset Capital cash, deaf to the cries of democracy. It's 1853, who needs it anyway?

Even the stench became too much for the disgraced Owen Patterson: Parliament remained a shit that could not be shifted. No amount of hand sanitizer from Ian Duncan Smith's cushy second job with a Byotrol could clean up this mess. Floating around the Commons in a rubber ring, Johnson needed an almighty big plunger to unblock this scandal. It was just the case of coming up with a big enough distraction. Trapping a caver in the Brecon Beacons (everyone's a sucker for a good rescue story)? Breaking the Northern Ireland Protocol? There surely must be something to act as a distraction.

But wait — COP26! The blockbuster's conclusion was finally on the horizon. What better way to speed things up than a few words from the Prime Minister? 'Solve it!! Solve it! Keep 1.5°C alive' cried Johnson, as he floated on the sea of sludge. With three minutes until the credits rolled on COP26, the negotiators snapped into action, giving the Duracell bunny a run for his money. And, after a post-credit intervention from India and China, Alok Sharma, who looked

“

'Solve it! Solve it! Keep 1.5°C alive' cried Johnson, as he floated on the sea of sludge

”

like he had more Irn Bru bubbles than red blood cells in his bloodstream, staggered onto the podium. Rumour has it he even emitted a soft orange glow, not unlike the light pollution over London. It was under this glow that the Glasgow Climate Pact was born.

So it was over. After months in development hell, a painstaking plotline, and too many characters to keep track of, the end credits finally descended on COP26. Leaving the cinema and seeing daylight for the first time in two weeks, Alok Sharma wept. Of relief, of disappointment, or perhaps just conjunctivitis; we can't be sure.

What is certain however is the next instalment, COP27, is already in production.



▼Number 10/Flickr

Haircuts

Clipper Cut	from £15
Dry Cut	from £18
Wet Cut & Dry	from £20
Restyle	from £21
Flat Top	from £20
Long Hair	from £21
Skin Fade	from £22

Signature Cuts

Your style from £27

Classic Cuts

Your style from £27

Beard

Trim	from £7
Shape	from £10
Wet Shave	from £25

Boys under 12

Monday to Thursday	
Dry Cut	from £14
Wet Cut & Dry	from £16

Uni Student

Only excepted with a valid uni and N.U.S. card	
Monday to Thursday	from £14
Friday	from £20

Senior Citizens

Excludes Friday & Saturday	from £13
----------------------------	----------

Price List



Lui's
Barbershop
EST. 2001

01223 566663

www.luisbarbershop.co.uk

facebook: @luisbarbershop1

Sport

Qatar World Cup: why it must be boycotted

With the controversial sporting event now less than a year away, [Tom Bullivant](#) expresses his opposition to the tournament and calls for teams to steer clear of any involvement



Tom Bullivant
Staff Writer

The 2022 World Cup in Qatar is football's greatest scandal, and there are certainly a few to choose from. The tournament, built on a web of corruption, human rights abuse, and death, is the ultimate showpiece of football - a game that claims to be all-inclusive. For no player or team to boycott it would be a slap in the face to the family of every migrant worker that has died to build the stadiums that matches will be played in. A year away from the tournament, these issues are notably absent from the public eye, or even worse overlooked. They shouldn't be.

If there was a minute's silence at the World Cup for every migrant worker that has died working in Qatar since it was awarded the tournament in 2010, all 64 matches would be played without noise. *The Guardian* reported earlier this year that more than 6,500 workers had died, almost all on the building programme for 2022, and this figure is likely an underestimate. Labourers, forced to work long hours in incredible heat with little to no protective equipment, have paid the ultimate price. In 2016, an Amnesty International report found that migrant workers were living in squalid conditions, going months without pay, being denied exit visas and having their passports confiscated, and had been deceived about the type of work on offer before going to Qatar. According to the charity, this is forced labour under international law, or in other words modern-day slavery.

Individual stories are all the more harrowing. One Nepalese worker

was reportedly denied an exit visa in 2015 after the Nepal earthquake. He claimed he just wanted to go home to see if his family was alive. This death and suffering is not an accident, it is systematic abuse and murder. When the World Cup is played here, because sadly it is now a case of when and not if, the players and teams who go will have blood on their hands and will be indirectly responsible for this abuse. As The German ProFans Alliance have put it, the tournament will be "a lavish football festival on the graves of thousands of migrant workers".

To attend the tournament would also mean to overlook the country's long list of human rights violations. In Qatar, homosexuality is outlawed and in some cases punishable by death. Freedom of speech is hard to come by too; in recent years, journalists have been jailed for speaking out against the regime. Meanwhile, domestic violence is legal. Unfor-

“
We live in an age
of football activ-
ism unlike any
other yet [...] the
silence on Qatar is
deafening
”

tunately, the list goes on. Those competing at the World Cup will be validating the Qatari government and these policies. Attendance and endorsement are simply inseparable given the magnitude of the event

and the publicity the country will receive from it. Boycotting, however, sends the perfect message of refusal to tolerate such abuse. *Tifo Football* laid it out well: "homosexuality is not a choice, it's discrimination; domestic abuse is not a culture, it's a crime". To play this World Cup is to ultimately forgo basic morality and perpetuate backward attitudes.

Allegations that Qatar won the World Cup dishonestly began less than a year after its allocation by a FIFA committee led by disgraced former President Sepp Blatter. For instance, there have been claims that Qatar paid millions of dollars to various global officials in an effort for them to cast their vote in the nation's favour. Although there is no concrete evidence of corruption, clearly something seriously untoward had to happen for the oil-rich, non-footballing state to be awarded the World Cup. After all, every one of the 22-man committee that voted on both the 2018 and 2022 World Cup has been implicated in dodgy footballing dealings in some way. Football is supposed to be an all-inclusive game and yet we are presented with a tournament built on death in a discriminatory state won by exclusive means. It makes no sense.

Some argue that Qatar has improved significantly since 2010's announcement, and the tournament's spotlight has forced them to. This is partially true; in March 2021, Qatar enforced its first ever minimum wage, employers are now obliged to pay for workers' food and accommodation, and employees can change jobs without their employers' consent. But these are small steps and in no way do they compensate for the huge suffering faced by previous workers,

nor have the issues of corruption and human rights abuses been fully addressed. What's more, Finnish captain Tim Sparv, after his recent meeting with migrant workers, claimed that many new laws are not being effectively implemented.

“
Attendance and
endorsement are
simply insepara-
ble given the mag-
nitude of the event
”

Such flimsy policies from the Qatari government do not justify calling off a boycott.

Further measures have been taken outside Qatar to combat the situation, but still not enough. The Norwegian FA recently voted overwhelmingly against boycotting the tournament despite around 49% of the population being in favour of one. Elsewhere, Finnish international Riku Riski boycotted a training camp in Qatar back in 2019, prompting Sparv to increasingly raise awareness of the country's distressing situation, and Sweden altogether cancelled their annual training camp in September. Meanwhile, Danish fans called for a debate on a boycott in parliament, and the German and Norwegian national teams have both trained in t-shirts calling for respect of human rights. Outside of Scandinavia and Germany, however, the footballing world has been largely silent. Clearly, not enough is being done. The

▲ Md Shaifuzzaman Ayon/Wikimedia Commons

players that decide to participate in Qatar who choose not to speak out should feel ashamed. Football must not be played at all costs, and this is far beyond any reasonable limits.

A boycott from players or entire teams is needed, as it will effectively send the message that abuse and corruption will not be tolerated. If Qatar and FIFA are to improve, they must recognise the seriousness of suffering embodied in this World Cup. With no boycott, this is impossible. We live in an age of football activism unlike any other yet, as players like Marcus Rashford campaign against child poverty and teams around the world strive to champion Black Lives Matter, the silence on Qatar is deafening. How can the modern, socially-conscious generation of footballers justify playing in a World Cup that stands for suffering?

Perhaps this stance will change in the run up to the event, as media focus on the tournament intensifies. Already in recent weeks and months, as teams' places are confirmed, scrutiny has increased slightly: David Beckham came under fire for becoming an ambassador of the tournament just last month (25/10). But still, this is not enough. Maybe players at the competition will say what needs to be said, or make outspoken gestures in high-profile moments, as has been the case before in sporting history.

Football is meant to be fun, joyous, and inclusive, but next year's World Cup has been assembled on death, human rights violations, and corruption. The juxtaposition is both stark and worrying for the game. A boycott is the very least the footballing world can do to stand against such horror.

Sport



▲ Cambridge lost the tie in the second half due to poor discipline (Kane Smith Photography)

Steele-Bodger Match 2021: CURUFC 14-21 Steele-Bodger XV

Joseph Hill
Sports Correspondent

Liam Kline
Senior Sports Editor

On Wednesday afternoon (24/11), Cambridge University Rugby Union Football Club (CURUFC) was defeated by Steele-Bodger XV in the annual Steele-Bodger Match at Grange Road. The score finished 14-21.

The historic fixture was returning for the first time since 2019, where CURUFC won 34-19. Traditionally, the match was used as a send-off for students prior to facing Oxford University at Twickenham in the Varsity Match but, with the Battle of the Blues moved to Saturday 2nd April next year, the game now provides an exciting break in the Michaelmas term.

The Light Blues went into the match on the back of two wins and one defeat so far this season, besting both Pringle Farm Pillagers and Exeter Chiefs under-23s before falling to defeat against Durham University.

Speaking in the run-up to the event, CURUFC head coach James Shanahan reflected on his side's recent form: "We've had two good performances and Durham was a little bit disappointing. We've blooded a lot of new boys, there are quite a lot of youngsters coming through. I'm pretty happy".

Looking ahead to the spring, Shanahan explained: "Building toward April instead of December, it's been quite nice and refreshing. The pressure is off, so to

speak, and I think the boys have quite enjoyed that". He added: "Maybe the more time we have to build will give us a better chance in April".

Turning to the action in the much-anticipated affair, Cambridge started on the front foot, with full-back Alex King breaking from inside his own half after barely two minutes on the clock before being tackled at the 22.

A hectic opening saw Steele-Bodger XV winger Craig Dowsett intercept a pass in his side's own territory, looking certain to score before the rapid Tim Andrew produced a moment of defensive brilliance, chasing him down over sixty yards before bringing him down just short of the Cambridge try line.

As the Bodger's grew into the game, they began to play more fluid rugby, with the half-back partnership of former Blue Chris Bell and Matt Hodgson marshalling the game well. Their offloading in particular impressed, moving the ball quickly and forcing Cambridge to work hard in defence.

The visitors broke the deadlock in the eighth minute, as number 8 Will Hodgson piled over to leave the Light Blues 0-7 down early on.

Despite the setback, Cambridge's Archie Smeaton was as dangerous as ever, bursting through tackles on numerous occasions. Not to be outdone by his colleague in the forwards, Suwi Chibale remained the Light Blues' primary outlet in the backs, consistently causing the Bodger's centres problems.

Cambridge's number 10, Jamie Ben-

son, who made his Premiership debut for Harlequins earlier this month (13/11), impressed with his kicking and went on to score Cambridge's first try, showcasing electric feet to weave in between four defenders and dot down in the 34th minute. He added the extras himself to level the score.

However, parity would not last long, as Bodger's full-back Jon Searle scored at the other end after several minutes of pressure. A difficult kick from near the touchline was slotted with relative ease by Matt Hodgson to make it 7-14 at the half-time whistle.

The Bodger's picked up where they left off as they began the second half brightly, with Bell catching Cambridge unaware and darting down the sideline, but his speculative offload came to nothing.

After a fast-paced first half, the tempo in the early stages of the second dropped slightly. Cambridge's Andrew came close, only to be denied by a great tackle from opposite number Dowsett.

The hosts struggled to convert territory into points, spending the first fifteen minutes of the 40 deep into the Bodger's half to no avail. Meanwhile, the Bodger's commitment to free-flowing rugby and offloading in the tackle was their downfall on several occasions, with a promising field position being lost due to a loose offload.

The second half stalemate continued, both sides resolute in defence and often scrappy when attacking. Benson's quick feet offered up the best chance of the half after 65 minutes, slipping in Max

Loveridge whose pass to Andrew fell just behind the winger who only had one man to beat.

Cambridge finally scored in the 70th minute, with Andrew once again on the scoresheet after displaying blistering pace to carve open the Bodger's defence and score under the posts. Benson, faced with the simplest of kicks, made no mistake in levelling the scores at 14-14 with ten minutes left on the clock.

But once again, the Bodger's hit back almost immediately, with replacement Alex Brown producing a moment of magic to break through the Cambridge defensive line, Will Kelly converted to make it 14-21 to the away side.

After a sluggish half an hour, the Bodger's looked to jolt into action, almost adding to their tally minutes later if not for Chibale holding the ball up well on the try line. Inside-centre Sol Hyde made good ground each time he received the ball, while Bodger's forwards proved too powerful in the scrum for Cambridge to deal with.

As the final whistle chimed around a packed Grange Road, the game ended with the Bodger's still seven points to the good. Moments of battling brilliance from both sides punctuated a tense affair. The Bodger's edged it, however, which was a fair result given some of the rugby on display from the invitational side.

Varsity Player of the Match : Chris Bell (Steele-Bodger XV)

Teams

Cambridge Starting XV: 1 Danny Collins (Fitzwilliam)*, James Wright (Jesus), Matt Pettit (Clare)*, Charlie Friend (St John's), Zac Bischoff (St John's)*, Tom Walton (St John's, Captain)*, Stephen Leonard (Emmanuel)*, Archie Smeaton (Queens)*, David Holdroyd (Jesus), Jamie Benson (Downing), Tim Andrew (Jesus), Max Loveridge (Jesus)*, Suwi Chibale (Queens)*, Dougal Russell (St John's)*, Alex King (St Catharine's)

Cambridge Replacements: Luke Parry (Downing)*, Ben Jackson (Sidney Sussex)*, Paddy Harris (Hughes Hall), Matt West (St John's)*, Hugo Lloyd-Williams (St John's)*, Demi Obembe (Churchill)*, Charles Favell (Homerton)*, Sam Odu (Gonville & Caius), Angus McIntosh (Jesus)

*Denotes Blue

Steele-Bodger Starting XV: Matt Meek (Blackheath), Miles Huppatz (Shelford), Josh Scott (Heriots), Jack Lee (Worthing Raiders), Chris Wearmouth (Tynedale), Ollie Smart (Blackheath), Daniel Dass (Blackheath), Will Hodgson (North Walsham), Chris Bell (Blackheath), Matt Hodgson (North Walsham), Craig Dowsett (Saracens Amateurs), Sol Hyde (Durham University), Etienne Dussartre (RC Vincennes), Nick Foster (Blackheath), Jon Searle (Exeter University)

Steele-Bodger Replacements: Ben Halgh (Tynedale), Ciaran Moore (Clifton), Kay Minkiewicz (Old Albanians), Callum Anthony (North Walsham), Will Kelly (Toronto Arrows)