

## Cambridge gathers on King's Parade to stand with Ukraine

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# VARSITY

# Students back reading week

## 'Yes' campaign wins referendum

Lorna Kimmins and Esmé Kenney  
Deputy News Editors

The "Yes" campaign has won the SU referendum on the introduction of a reading week in Michaelmas and Lent Terms.

The results, revealed at 7pm last night (03/03) showed that 64% of voters supported the introduction of a reading week.

Voters were able to respond "Yes" "No" or "Abstain" in response to the question: "Do you support the introduction of a full freshers' week in Michaelmas Term and week-long Mid-Term Break/Reading Week in Michaelmas and Lent Terms?" While not binding on the University, the referendum result means

that the SU will continue to lobby for the change to be implemented.

The introduction of a reading week, or mid-term break, has been high on the SU's agenda for a while, with the University setting up a working group on the issue last year.

After a University consultation on the issue showed that there was "a lack of certainty" among colleges, faculties and departments on whether such a break would have a "positive impact on student wellbeing", the SU Student Council voted to hold the referendum in February, in the hope of showing University decision makers "the strength of student support for the proposal".

Story continued on page 4 ►

## Zaynab Ahmed wins SU election

Tommy Castellani  
News Correspondent

Current Undergraduate Access and Education Officer Zaynab Ahmed has been elected Cambridge SU's Undergraduate President. She beat her opponent Zak Coleman by 140 votes in the final round. Coleman is the incumbent Undergraduate President, meaning both candidates were re-running for a position as sabbatical officers.

Voting took place over four days and coincided with elections of the other sabbatical officers, the position of University Councillor and the reading week referendum. Turnout was 12%, even lower than

last year's figure of 18%.

Amelia Jabry, who is also a current sabbatical officer, won her election for the position of Postgraduate President.

Ahmed and Jabry's success marks an unusual achievement given they are the first candidates to successfully re-run for sabbatical roles in at least seven years.

Ahmed's key pledges include pressuring the University to re-evaluate undergraduate workloads, connect decolonisation campaigns to SU funding, and pressure colleges into implementing proper training for pastoral tutors dealing with student welfare.

Story continued on page 4 ►



TOBIA NAVA



## News

## EDITORIAL

## The beginning of the end

The days are getting longer, daffodils are beginning to push their heads out of the ground, and Lent Term is nearly over. For us as finalists, this represents the end of the very last full term of our degrees. Exams and graduate life are looming large.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves – there's joy left to be found in Lent term yet. For the first time since 2020, Lent bumps are midway through, with hundreds of rowers enduring the wind and rain of the Cam. You can read Sport's summary of the races so far on page 32.

If you prefer watching the rain from your room to battling it on the river, there's plenty of exciting articles in this week's Varsity print to keep you company: our Senior Features Editor explores her Bangladeshi heritage on page 11; decide for yourself whether the now fallen Solidarity College is revolutionary or ridiculous on page 13; find out more about birds, our modern-day dinosaurs, on page 15; and on page 17, you'll find an interview – albeit a brief one – with

Hollywood legend Robert De Niro.

If you're exhausted at this point in term, you're probably not alone in that. In the recent Reading Week referendum, 2,763 students voted in favour of the introduction of a Mid-term break/Reading Week, which News cover in more depth on page 5. If you'd like to know why we're all so tired, you can read about the science of burnout on page 15.

As this edition is finalised, the results of the Cambridge SU elections saw several victories resting on margins of less than 100 votes. We'd like to offer our warmest congratulations to Zaynab Ahmed, the new undergraduate president, Amelia Jabry, the new postgraduate president, and their team of sabbatical officers.

Finally, you'll notice a difference in our masthead this week. We know it's a small gesture, but we'd like to express our support for anyone affected by the war in Ukraine.

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## Police officers not sent to scene of ‘ongoing’ homophobic attack

The Wolfson students were instead told to file a report online

**Aoife Petrie**  
Deputy News Editor

**Bethan Moss**  
Editor-in-Chief

*Content note: this article contains discussion of homophobia and violence.*

Police did not come when called to the scene of a suspected homophobic attack against four Wolfson students.

The assault, which resulted in one student being hospitalised, occurred in Market Square in the early hours of Wednesday morning (23/2) after the students had attended Glitterbomb, Cambridge's only weekly LGBTQ+ club night.

After two of the students escaped and were able to call the police, they were told to “file a report online”. A spokesperson for the Cambridgeshire Constabulary said that they believed those assaulted were “already safe”, although the victims told *Varsity* that the attack was still “ongoing” at the time.

The police spokesperson confirmed

to *Varsity* that they are “investigating assaults ... which are alleged to have taken place between 1am and 3.15am on 23 February in Market Street and Market Passage, Cambridge” including “exploring CCTV opportunities.”

They continued: “The assaults had ended by the time they were reported, and the victims were no longer in danger...the suspects had left the scene”.

One of the victims sustained a broken nose, partially deviated septum, bruised eyes, and a concussion. She was repeatedly hit in the face and then kicked after she had already collapsed.

After the assault, the victims also tried to get help to call a taxi home from St. Catharine's College porters' lodge. The students say they were in “obvious distress”, outside the college, visibly injured and with one student having lost their glasses. St Catherine's told *Varsity* that a porter was unavailable to help the students because he was on a comfort break.

After getting home to Wolfson, students submitted a police report online

and were told that they will be provided with rape alarms.

The victims believe the attack was “targeted”. One student, when asked about whether he would return to Glitterbomb the following week, said that it wasn't his responsibility to feel like a martyr: “I didn't get socked in the face for a cause, I got socked in the face because I was just standing there, being gay.”

He continued: “I'm coming out of shock now. I felt a lot of anxiety yesterday and I still feel that a bit. I think when I go back to the market square it's going to hit me more.”

Cambridge SU LGBT+ Campaign released a statement on the assault on Instagram, signposting resources for those who have been “affected in any way by the incident and would like someone to talk to”. The campaign wrote that they were “shocked and saddened to hear of the incident” and extended their “support and solidarity to the victims”.

*Ella Hawes contributed reporting.*

## May Ball workers quit over pay alternative

**Eleanor Mann**  
News Correspondent

Workers for the Trinity May Ball left a group chat after they were told that they would only be given the right to buy next year's tickets instead of being paid minimum wage as initially promised.

The May Ball committee agreed a deal where student set-up workers, responsible for setting up the ball before it takes place, would work two, four hour shifts in return for the right to buy next year's Trinity May Ball ticket at full price.

However, workers left the WhatsApp group when the committee backtracked, saying that they would only receive the right to buy a ticket and not minimum wage.

One member of the committee joked to the group chat: “For the slave labour

you will receive the option to buy a ticket to the ball, and queue jump.” They also asked members to leave if they were no longer happy to work under these conditions.

One anonymous student told *Varsity* that they decided not to work because of the conditions of pay, saying: “I think it's appalling that a college with such a huge endowment and a May Ball with such a huge budget can get away with not paying their workers.”

They added: “A few people on the chat mentioned how it seemed like slave labour and, while that might be a bit dramatic, I just don't understand how it's legal to make people work eight hours only to get the right to buy a £200 ticket.”

When asked for comment, the committee claimed that the set-up workers were volunteers, not workers, and therefore not under any “contractual

obligation”.

In a statement, they said: “Trinity May Ball traditionally offers students the opportunity to volunteer to help with setting up the Ball. In light of their hard work, we offer a right to buy a ticket to the Ball and a queue jump in return.

“We would like to emphasise that these students kindly volunteer their time. They are not workers and are not under any contractual obligation to the Trinity May Ball committee.”

Though many of those applying were under the impression that they would be paid for helping to set up the ball.

The news follows the committee's u-turn nearly a month ago, to pay their general workers the living wage instead of the minimum wage. Prior to this, the Trinity May Ball committee had been the only one planning to pay its workers the minimum wage.

## Student tries to cycle into supervisors

The Justice for College Supervisors campaign marched on Old Schools this week

**Jack Evans**  
News Correspondent

A student tried to cycle into protestors, shouting “Go back to work!” as campaigners marched for more secure contracts.

The Justice for College Supervisors campaign led a march on the Old Schools on 28 Feb as the culmination of their postcard campaign. They tried to deliver 600 postcards signed by current and future supervisors to the administration offices but were refused at the door.

The campaign, also known as #J4CS, is calling for paid mandatory training, secure contracts for supervisors, and a pay rise.

The march was followed by a rally

on King's Parade which took place at the same time as broader UCU strikes in Cambridge for the ‘Four Fights’ from 28 Feb to 02 March.

The #JC4S campaign says that it is targeting the casualisation of higher education workers. In 2019 there were around 5000 supervisors with nearly 90% not on payroll.

The rally took place as the UCU released its report on a survey of University Teaching Officers (UTOs), who have secure contracts. Of the 138 respondents, 81% held College fellowships.

The UCU claims that the report shows that casualisation affects securely employed staff as well. 35% of respondents felt that they could not refuse requests to take on extra supervisions, despite 46% wanting to deliver fewer. Over half

were not happy with their level of pay. 51% said that they worked over 50 hours each week.

28% of supervisions were carried out by securely employed staff in 2017/18.

The President of UCU Cambridge, Michael Abberton, said “the supervision system is not working for anyone in its current set up” as it exploited casual workers and “overburdens permanent staff”.

A University spokesperson said that the system gave supervisors “flexibility to choose which and how many colleges they work with and their hours” and that average pay is “well above the living wage”. They also said that as “colleges are separate legal and financial employers, they cannot be covered by a single agreement” for supervisor pay.



# Student opens barber shop at Newnham

Customers come in for mullets, afros and funky hair colours, and leave feeling happy and empowered



Newnham College are currently unaware of the business (Yaz O'Mahoney)

**Juliette Kendal**  
News Correspondent

Haircuts are universal. But this barber is one of a kind. Yaz O'Mahoney – aka the 'Newnham Barber' – offers trans and queer-friendly haircuts to Cambridge students.

Yaz explained that barbers are often unwelcoming spaces to trans and queer people: "If you're assigned female at birth and you want a men's haircut, they'll feminise it for you or say you can't go

to the barber." As such, Yaz wanted to create a "safe and validating" environment, offering haircuts for queer and trans people.

They told *Varsity* that they make sure that no one is disappointed with their haircut. "I work with them every step of the way [...] I always do it in front of a mirror. I start long and then I take more off if they want their hair shorter."

Yaz has really enjoyed the response they've received from clients. "It's odd but it's nice [...] it's validating when people come to you for haircuts because you

know that they're good. For some people you can see it's the first time they've ever had a haircut that they felt like they truly wanted."

Stevie, a client of the Newnham Barber, told *Varsity*: "Having only come out as non-binary while at university I'd never had a gender-affirming haircut before so it was obviously really important to find the right person to do it. I knew Yaz through other friends at Newnham and they'd always inspired me with how unapologetically themselves they are so I knew they were the right person for the job. They were so understanding of my anxious feelings, talked me through the whole process and barely complained about the undogly amount of hair I left in their bathroom! Since the haircut I've felt so confident and I love the androgyny of it, I feel so much more me."

Yaz has always cut their own hair, and when lockdown hit, they decided to cut their hair short, and also started to cut their brother's and dad's hair. When they came to university, Yaz brought their equipment with them, and started cutting their friends' hair at college.

Now, Yaz has an Instagram account with nearly 200 followers that promotes their hair-cutting to students from all colleges. They told *Varsity* that they find the attention they've been getting to be "funny": "I've never been a particularly popular person [...] I think I'm quite charismatic, but I went to a school where I was one of the only people of colour; I was one of the only queer people; I was definitely the only trans person."

The Barber charges £10 for haircuts and £5 to cut black/afro hair. Yaz explained: "it feels inappropriate for me

## QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

### Favourite hairstyle to cut?

A fade on curly hair - it blends so nicely

### Hardest haircut to do?

Very straight fine hair: you run the risk of giving a bowl cut!

### Favourite haircut you've had?

My first mullet!

### Best spot at Newnham?

The tree in the centre of the gardens. If you climb right to the top there's a little branch you can sit on to read.

as a non-black person to charge large amounts of money to cut black hair."

As far as Yaz knows, Newnham is unaware of their business. However they explained that "it's not an official thing, I just enjoy cutting hair. It doesn't take up too much of my time. It's not a real job; I don't get paid an hourly wage, it's just like selling clothes on depop."

The reaction from Cambridge's queer community has been "really cool": "people talk and hear about you on the grapevine - I went out the other night and I was recognised nine times!"

Yaz also mentioned that they want to use their profile as the 'Newnham Barber' to promote life at the college: "Newnham has a reputation for being really 'TERF'-y but that's not the case [...] the student body is very trans-friendly: there's a study going on right now of gender non-conforming students at Newnham."

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# Cambridge pubs brace themselves as prices rise

▼ HANS WOLFF

**Esmé Kenney**  
Deputy News Editor

Cambridge pubs are hiking up prices as they bear the brunt of rising costs due to the pandemic and Brexit.

Speaking to *Varsity*, co-owner of the Maypole, Vincent Castiglione, said that so far, price increases have not been a major problem.

"The price increase is just something we have to cope with but it's not a major thing. We've had to put the prices up on certain things, but we've got a pretty loyal following so we're quite lucky."

He added that the price of the food menu had to be increased slightly, and that the price of beer had been increased by around 10p.

A UK hospitality survey representing 8,200 venues showed that nearly half of owners (47%) reported that they would have to increase prices by over 10% this year. The chief executive of UK hospitality, Kate Nicholls, said these circumstances are "weighing very heavily

on these businesses, which have had nothing but a torrid time," and added that many businesses will have to pass on these costs to their customers in order to stay afloat.

A manager of another independent pub said being shut took a "massive toll on the business. "We don't want to smack customers in the face with a massive price increase, but obviously prices have gone up, so it's hard to balance that."

Throughout the pandemic, pubs only had to pay 5% VAT, but this will return to 20% this year.

The Wetherspoons chairman Tim Martin has been particularly against the proposed increase in VAT, and in September his pubs reduced their prices by 7.5% for a day to protest this.

The next few months present even more challenges for the hospitality industry: the withdrawal of Covid support, rise of the living wage, and the uncertainty over the war in Ukraine said they'd have to "wait and see".





## News

# Victory for 'Yes', but turnout only 16%

Continued from front page ►

If implemented, the proposals would see the introduction of five days free of scheduled teaching in Week 5 of both Michaelmas and Easter terms. The Yes campaign say they will achieve this “by starting term three days earlier and ending it two later”, using the extra out-of-term days students usually have as part of their residency periods.

The Yes campaign cite improved student wellbeing, more time for extracurricular activities, and higher levels of “academic enrichment” as the main benefits they hope a reading week will bring.

“By Week 5, we are all feeling burned out and in need of a break. A Reading Week would allow us to rest and recover from the intensity of Cambridge term and give us time to catch up if we’ve fallen behind.” The campaign said.

It went on to argue that students would be able to socialise and take part in extracurriculars “without any guilt or pressure to be working.”

It also said that the reading week would allow time for students to absorb what they had learned during the first half of term, and pursue their own academic interests outside of the work set by faculties.

Reacting to their victory in a statement to *Varsity*, the Yes campaign said: “We’re really excited to have the support of the student body on this proposal.”

The No case, which was uploaded to

the SU website on Wednesday, put forward a number of arguments against the reading week.

Its core arguments were that the reading week would not be a “break”, that students would miss out on time to relax at the beginning and end of term, that it would make life more difficult for international students, and that the vacations were sufficient for reading around the subject.

It also argued that the SU could not guarantee that extra work, optional readings or supervisions would not be set throughout that week, nor could it guarantee that students would not have to pay more rent.

As part of the Yes campaign, campaigners have addressed what they view as “myths” about the reading week.

They say that residency periods will remain the same length, resulting in no extra rent being paid, and that the rest of the term structure would remain the same, meaning Saturday lectures would be unaffected.

In response to the claim that Faculties would give students more work, they argued that the University has committed to not scheduling teaching or setting new work during the reading week. They also promised to set up a system by which students can report if faculties continue to set work during this period.

## Analysis: What happened to the referendum’s ‘No’ campaign?

The referendum result comes after a campaign period where the official No campaign took little public action to make their case, Lorna Kimmins reports.

There were no representatives from the No campaign at Monday evening’s hustings to debate the issue, and a text supporting their case was only uploaded to the SU website on Wednesday (02/03), just one day before polls closed.

Both sides were allocated a campaign budget of £100, the same amount given to SU election candidates.

Although he was listed as the official leader of the No campaign, first-year student Stelios Sycallides told *Varsity* that he had never intended to take up the role: while he expressed an interest in being a part of the campaign, he told referendum organisers that he did not feel he could commit to leading it due to his degree workload.

In an email seen by *Varsity*, Sycallides was told by referendum organisers that he had nevertheless been named the official leader of the campaign by the SU’s democracy committee, as he was the only person to volunteer to be involved. They acknowledged that Sycallides had said he could not take on the role, stressing that this just meant he would be “the point of contact for the No campaign for the SU”, that he would have the authority to “approve spending from the budget we will give the No campaign”, and that he was free to recruit other campaign members to work with.

Despite a lackluster official campaign against the reading week, students have taken to social media to voice support for this side of the debate, with students using Camfess to outline the potential negative consequences of the change. Concerns were raised about subjects in which supervisions are normally held outside of Full Term, the possibility of paying extra rent, and the possible negative effect of fewer residence days outside of term time on international students.

The discussion on the anonymous confessions platform eventually pushed Olivia Taylor, a finalist studying PBS at Clare to write up the arguments against the reading week: she told *Varsity* that despite not feeling “particularly strong either way”, she decided to get involved with the campaign “for the sake of balance”.

In response to concerns about the contrast between the two campaigns, the Democracy Committee released a statement on Thursday (03/03), saying that they received “more applications to lead the Yes campaign than the No campaign” and that they took “extra steps to try to recruit No campaigners.”

They added: “That’s not to say that the way we have engaged students in the referendum is perfect [...] However, we are confident that the referendum has been conducted fairly and we have faith in its results as an expression of student opinion on this important issue.”



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## Key figures

**53%**  
Voted for Ahmed

**12%**  
2022 election turnout

**18%**  
2021 election turnout

**64%** 'Yes'  
**34%** 'No'

**16%**  
Referendum turnout

# Ahmed takes victory

Continued from front page ►

During her current term in office, Ahmed has campaigned to have all lectures recorded and made available to students online. Her manifesto outlines her aim to build on this by bringing in closed caption recording in lectures.

The position was significantly less hotly contested this election when compared with previous years, with four candidates running last year and as many as five fighting it out in 2019.

Reacting to her win, Ahmed told *Varsity*: "I'm absolutely delighted to be elected as your new Undergraduate President. I'm so grateful to students for giving me the opportunity to build on my existing work."

"I will continue to push for an accessible, decolonised and fair Cambridge which takes its students seriously. My first sabbatical year has given me a head start on lobbying the University, and this continuity will be hugely beneficial for both the SU and students."

She continued: "Moving forward, my first priority is to make the SU easier for students to interact and engage with, so that our campaigns are driven by the student voice."

On her re-election to the position of Postgraduate President, Amelia Jabry said: "Thank you to everyone who voted. I am extremely pleased to again be in a position to deliver actionable change to

improve the postgraduate experience at this university."

Ahmed confounded *Varsity*'s election poll, in which 19.9% said they would vote for her, while 30.5% said that they would vote for Coleman.

Reflecting on the result, Coleman told *Varsity*: "I'm really pleased to see such a strong team elected to lead the SU for another year. I've worked with Zaynab for the last year and in that time, as well as during this campaign, she has proven herself time and time again to be an incredible campaigner for students, as well as an all-round wonderful person."

"The SU will be in safe hands with her as the new undergraduate president and I'm excited to see what she achieves in the role! I also want to thank everyone who voted for me and helped in my campaign. I'm very grateful for the support and excited to keep pushing ahead on my main projects for the remainder of my term."

Other contested elections saw Eseosa Akojie elected as Women's Officer and Neve Atkinson win the role of the undergraduate Access, Education and Participation Officer. Sam Carling saw off stiff competition to be elected University Councillor, in the most hotly contested competition of this year's elections.

Uncontested elections saw Kefeshe Bernard chosen as BME Officer, Elia Chitwa elected as Disabled Students' Officer and Daisy Thomas stepping into the role of Welfare and Community Officer.

# Fitzwilliam Museum Society

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# News



## ‘You must return’: Year Abroad students scramble to get out of Russia

Following the Kremlin’s invasion of Ukraine, Year Abroad students are rushing – and struggling – to get out of Russia

**Stephanie Stacey**  
Associate Editor

As the Kremlin wages war in Ukraine, Year Abroad students in Russia have found themselves facing difficult decisions and putting together frantic travel plans. Airspace closures have complicated many students’ planned exit routes, resulting in lengthy bus journeys and complicated third-country diversions.

After President Vladimir Putin ordered an invasion of Ukraine by the Russian army concentrated along the border last Thursday, February 24, Cambridge’s Modern and Medieval Languages and Linguistics (MMLL) Faculty encouraged students to leave Russia and offered financial support to those booking expensive emergency transport routes out of the country. Some students initially expressed a desire to stick it out, at least as long as the guidance remained advisory, but all have since, according to the MMLL Faculty, begun making urgent plans to depart.

On Monday February 28, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

officially advised against all travel to Russia and urged British citizens within the country to leave. Following this shift, the MMLL Faculty similarly intensified its messaging, writing directly to those students who had initially sought to stay behind in Russia: “Now is not the time to hesitate: you must return immediately.”

“Everything has been changing incredibly fast,” one Cambridge student in Russia told *Varsity*. “On Thursday, I saw everything that was happening on the news, and I felt awful about the situation in Ukraine, but I didn’t necessarily think it would affect me.”

Another student, who has been studying in St Petersburg since September, told *Varsity* that her plans to leave Russia were littered with false-starts. At first, she and her friends booked last-minute flights out of Russia, but these were cancelled due to airspace closures. Instead, after assessing various different options, they planned to travel to nearby Helsinki, Finland, before flying back to the UK. Although they initially considered bus travel, the students ultimately decided to book a taxi, concerned that buses would

be overcrowded and wouldn’t tolerate their vast quantities of luggage, accumulated over 7 months of life in Russia.

Their taxi was scheduled for 5AM on Monday morning. At 1AM, it was unexpectedly cancelled, so the students reverted to their initial plan to take the bus which, fortunately, permitted their heavy suitcases. At the Finnish Border, they had to briefly get off the bus and travel on foot to go through Customs, dragging their suitcases through the snow. The Russian border officials there, the student tells me, “were especially confrontational”, but eventually permitted them to pass through, following five separate Visa checks.

After they reached Helsinki, the students’ journey home was relatively smooth, if emotionally draining. “We were all just running on adrenaline, but we finally burst into tears when the plane landed in the UK.” At that point, they had barely slept in three days, having had to rapidly pack up all of their possessions, make urgent exit plans, and bid their loved ones in Russia goodbye.

With airspaces closed, road travel is

one of the few remaining options for those seeking to leave Russia. Natalie, who has been living in a small village to the southwest of Moscow, plans to travel by bus to Tallinn, Estonia. The journey, at more than 1,000 km, will take almost an entire day. Speaking to *Varsity* earlier in the week, Natalie said: “These updates are coming in rapidly and it has been challenging trying to make a final decision, but after a long day of weighing options and speaking to various people, it looks like I will be leaving.”

“While no one here feels that it is, or will become unsafe in the village, some people who have spoken to me from back home are worried about travel from Russia and how ordinary Russians will fare in the wake of sanctions and economic isolation. A family member expressed a strong desire for me to return, and it is likely that within days I will say goodbye to the people who welcomed me into their community. I’m thankful for their hospitality and will miss them dearly.”

While most students have headed back to the UK, at least temporarily, William – a student in St Petersburg –

plans to travel to Turkey. Falling outside of the European Union, Turkey is still accepting direct flights from Russia. Once there, William hopes to seek alternative language-learning opportunities in either Azerbaijan or Kyrgyzstan, which both have large Russian-speaking communities.

William has spent the last few days rapidly reassessing the situation and putting together contingency plans. Asked about the impact on his mental health, he said: “It’s one of those situations that’s so weird that you can’t get into any anxious state. I’m in action mode and I don’t have time to process or digest.”

The Co-Chair of the Faculty, Prof Geoffrey Kantaris, told *Varsity* that they’ve been in constant contact with students. Providing them with the details of financial support to enable all students to return home early or seek a placement elsewhere.

As of February 28th, they’ve urged students to return home as they can no longer guarantee their personal safety if they remain in Russia.

## Galloway denies Uighur genocide to students, but video got ‘corrupted’

**Jacob Freedland**  
Senior News Editor

*Content note: mention of torture and religious persecution*

George Galloway, a former Labour MP, told students at King’s Politics Society that there are no Uighur concentration camps in China despite widespread evidence pointing to the contrary.

Speaking to the society two weeks ago (16/2), Galloway said that students were falling for the same “lies” about China that Britain had over Iraq.

While King’s Politics usually film and upload recordings of events to their YouTube channel, Galloway’s interview is yet to be posted with the society saying footage had “frustratingly” been “corrupted”.

In the interview, Galloway claimed that the Uighur muslim population is actually growing faster than other Chinese groups, adding that there are more mosques in Xinjiang than anywhere else in Asia except Saudi Arabia.

When a student rebutted Galloway by claiming that 1.25 million Uighurs are held in prison camps, Galloway said that those imprisoned were Islamic terrorists. He went on to say that he favours shooting terrorists over imprisonment, a point he made in an Oxford Union debate previously.

When the student who asked the original question confronted Galloway with evidence from Amnesty International which disputed Galloway’s claims, witnesses said he “kept shouting at him”, dismissing the numbers as propaganda.

According to attendees, the atmosphere “completely changed” after this. One said she was “personally upset” and regretted not walking out. She said it was like being told off as a child; where you know someone with authority is wrong but feel too scared to say anything.

Galloway went on to claim that Israel was an apartheid state, citing evidence collected by an Amnesty International. A second year Jewish student, Sam

Grankin, asked why Amnesty was a valid source in the case of Israel but not with China.

Galloway allegedly dismissed the question, telling Grankin that he was “a champion of Israel” and therefore shouldn’t comment.

Grankin told *Varsity* that he had concerns about Galloway coming before the event, which the King’s Politics chair, Mizanur Rahman, defended against by saying Galloway could be challenged by the floor during the event. Rahman says he pushed Galloway on his Uighur and pro-Russian position.

Galloway has been public about his views about Uighurs.

Speaking to Russian state affiliated TV in October 2020, Galloway said that there are no concentration

camps in China, the standard of living for Muslims in Xinjiang was “rocketing” and that while ethnic Han Chinese families can have two children, Uighurs are allowed to have three.

He claimed the only people being imprisoned are “Al-Qaeda/ISIS fanatics”, who, unlike in the US where they are “killed by drone”, are put in reeducation camps in China to “win them away from extremist fanaticism”.

Galloway’s claims have been widely challenged by detainees’ testimonies.

Contrary to Galloway’s claims about terrorist imprisonment, Amnesty International found in 2021 Uighur Muslims being subject to torture, mass internment and religious repression. They reported Muslims being detained for “entirely lawful conduct”, like having a religious-themed picture or communicating with someone abroad. One woman was detained for



GARY KNIGHT

having WhatsApp on her phone.

Detainees said they were interrogated in “tiger chairs” – steel chairs to keep the body in painful positions and subject to beatings and sleep deprivation. During the early stages of internment, they would be forced to kneel in their cell in silence for hours and told to disavow Islam and study Communist propaganda.

Rahman told *Varsity*: “We completely condemn the remarks made by George Galloway regarding the clear ill treatment of Uyghurs in China. Personally, as a Muslim myself, I am in complete solidarity with my fellow Muslims who are suffering around the world. It is incredibly important high-profile figures are challenged and called out when they hold views which are, without question, factually incorrect and hurtful.

“We will dedicate a slot on our next term to host a Uyghur Muslim to articulate exactly what is happening in China. We are incredibly sorry for anyone who felt uncomfortable hearing George Galloway’s misplaced views and we hope to do better.”





Caius students fly pride flags to protest the College's decision to stop flying them last month (3/2)

# Camfess: A blessing or burden for student mental health?

Lily Isaacs  
Investigations Correspondent

Content Note: Brief mention of depression, loneliness and suicidal thoughts

It's 2am and Jess is sitting in her room, on her phone, feeling utterly alone. So she turns to Camfess: "I don't think people realise how much loneliness hurts...I don't know how to make it go away or how to fix it. Idk why I'm even writing this, it just hurts so much".

The advent of anonymous Facebook pages have changed the shape of loneliness at Cambridge. Scrolling through the page, you'll see posts from students about suicidal ideation, depression, and loneliness appear weekly, with students giving support in the replies. Jess told me: "Camfess helped me, I didn't have anyone else to talk to."

The page's administrators, also students, acknowledge the importance of these comment sections, one saying they "try to post as many mental health posts as possible" because they end up being "useful resources." Student Minds Cambridge has a role titled 'Camfess Responder' dedicated to ensuring that all posts go regarding mental health get



I have a theory that everyone with a Camfess top fan badge like me deals with loneliness everyday. Am I right?

answered.

But there are costs to this peer-to-peer support system. One admin said that you can't know the full story from a single Facebook post, "so we advise people to generally not rely completely on advice from Camfess comments."

Administrating the page also takes a burden on those tasked with running it.

"[During covid] the negative submissions started to outweigh the positive ones. Camfess admins had to take a break for the sake of our own mental health."

When anonymous posts are the only resource for students struggling, it's a sign that their university might be failing them.

The Camfess community is quicker, and less intimidating to access than the University's counselling service, which often takes weeks to offer students an appointment, and only operates between the hours of 9:00-17:00.

Porters and tutors are offered by colleges as "out-of-hours" support. Ben Dalitz, SU Welfare and Community officer, said "there isn't good enough structural support", so students then turn to Camfess.

The only out-of-hours support offered by colleges are porters, who are often ex-police, or ex-military, whilst playing a vital role in student safety, don't have a background in mental health.

Ben argues "loneliness" shouldn't be a normalised part of studying at Cambridge. Camfess "provides a community of a kind, but it shouldn't replace real life-support."

A University spokesperson told Varsity: "Academic pressure at Cambridge can be a challenge for every student. Having the courage to discuss your issues openly with friends and family can be a helpful strategy for managing emotions. "Students can access a range of support from their Colleges and the University."



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Alumnus of Pembroke College



## Could you be the next Editor of Varsity?

Applications to be Varsity's Editor for Easter Term are now open. Please check out our website for further information on how to apply.

You will lead a team producing online content throughout the term after our 22nd April 2022 print edition up until the late summer handover to the Michaelmas 2022 team and be responsible for producing our Varsity Review & Yearbook - a circa 60 page A4 glossy magazine, which will be published on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

No previous experience at Varsity is required for the role. All students who are passionate about journalism, have clear creative direction for the magazine, coupled with a high level of expertise with Adobe InDesign and an eye for layout and design are encouraged to apply.

Direct questions to the Varsoc President at [president@varsity.co.uk](mailto:president@varsity.co.uk), or the Editors at [editor@varsity.co.uk](mailto:editor@varsity.co.uk).

The deadline for applications is midday, Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022. Interviews will take place on the morning of Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022.



# News

## Cambridge computer phenomenon birthday

The Raspberry Pi computer is celebrating ten years of its existence this month. University of Cambridge graduate and then Director of Studies at St John's College, Eben Upton, formed the Raspberry Pi Foundation alongside Cambridge Professor Alan Mycroft and several others. The charity now works with schools across the world to improve computing education.

To celebrate this success, an exhibition is taking place at Bletchley Park.

## Not all self-driving tractors were born equal

Weather-sensitive machinery and self-driving tractors are vulnerable to cyber-attacks and accidental failures. New analysis points to the risks involved in relying on agricultural AI to feed growing global populations.

Cambridge's Dr Asaf Tzachor, first author of the *Nature Machine Intelligence* paper, warned that AI farming systems will "ignore, and potentially sustain, the exploitation of disadvantaged communities".



▲ CAMBRIDGE INDEPENDENT - KEITH HEPPELL

## New Dinky Door appears in Cambridge

A new tiny door has appeared outside Cambridge University Press Bookshop on the corner of Trinity Street and Market Place. The sign hanging on the door says "Mage's Pages" and the shop's supplies are grown in the garden. The door opens to reveal a stove and rows or shelves full of mysterious potions. A statement from Dinky Doors says "We are seeking the help of a book mage who can grow a book to help our Supreme Leaders find their way back."

## Hughes who? College to rename MCR

In order to better represent the college's undergraduate community, which now makes up over a quarter of its student body, Hughes Hall MCR want a new name. Calling the Common Room concept "extremely outdated and old-fashioned", they are considering a move to "Hughes Student Union" or "Hughes SU" in the style of Kings, Sidney Sussex, Jesus, and Trinity, all of whom also opt for an overarching 'Student Union' moniker for their student representatives.



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## Cambridge post office fends off armed robber

Chesterton High Street Post Office was the target of an attempted armed robbery on Thursday 24/02. A man reportedly demanded money and threatened staff at the Cambridge post office with a gun at 3pm. He was unable to get through the building's security screen and left with nothing. Detective Sergeant Ashley Ryan is investigating and said, "this was a frightening incident for those working in the shop." He has asked to hear from anybody who was in the area at the time or has any footage of the robbery. No arrests have been made.

## History faculty hold seminar on Seeley ties

**Jack Evans**  
News Correspondent

The History faculty held a seminar last Friday (25/02) to discuss the question 'Who was John Robert Seeley?'

The seminar was chaired by the Regius Professor of History, Chris Clark, and included speakers from the History and POLIS departments.

It came in response to calls to rename the History Faculty Library from the 'Rename Seeley Library' campaign and included contributions from two representatives, Kezhé Temir and Nupreet Kalra.

Clark said that the History Faculty would "have to face [a] decision on this at some point", and that the talk would ensure that future deliberations would be "grounded in knowledge". He stressed that the faculty was still in the "process of discovery".

Faculty speeches focused on the life and work of Seeley, rather than whether the name of the library should be changed. Topics included his justifications of empire, his involvement in the founding and development of Girton College, and the impact of his writing on decolonization movements.

Seeley was the Regius Professor of Modern History from 1869 until his death in 1895. One speaker, Jon Parry, highlighted his role in the introduction of an independent History tripos, saying that he contributed to the "professionalisation" of historical study.

The representatives from the 'Rename' campaign said that it was a "political choice" not to change the name, describing the library as a "commemoration of violence and trauma".



# Features

## Me, nana, and my terrible Bangla

Senior Features Editor **Nabiha Ahmed** explores how she has navigated language barriers in her Bangladeshi family

**N**ot many people thrive in the sound of silence. In my nana's lifetime, however, he mastered silence as a love language. I'd stay with my grandfather as a toddler whilst my mum was at work and he'd mix equal parts of Ribena and water for me; I'd smugly watch CBeebies whilst silently drinking my cavity-inducing concoction from a baby bottle. In later years, nana became my silent chaperone on my pilgrimage to primary school. And upon arriving, he'd silently watch me from the gates before the sound of the bell marked the end of his covert surveillance. Once old enough to walk back from school alone, I'd often be welcomed with nana's sugary cakes — my mouth too stuffed to engage in any conversation. But when that baby bottle wouldn't work, he'd substitute it with sweet words and tell his "fences" — my Bengali grandad's attempt at the English word "princess" — that mum was coming back soon. When morning busses were slow, he'd angrily shout nonsensical phrases that morphed English and Bengali, complaining that the driver was going to make his beloved "fences" late. Approaching school, he once said that "shokhol fuwayn shaytayn" — loosely translated from Bengali as 'all men are the devil'. Nana (seemingly the pioneer of the "men are trash" movement) probably should've cared about my rotting teeth more than the possibility of eleven-year-old me befriending boys. But what mattered was simply that he *cared*.

During his funeral, there were soundless tears, wordless hugs, and quiet prayers. A hungry silence only satiated by the mosque's call to prayer, signalling the impending funeral prayers. A stubborn silence that only agreed to be fed by hands raised to remember him through God's words. And whilst all of this somehow felt very specific to the man who loved silence, it also reminded me of a painful truth. There was a scarcity of meaningful words exchanged between us in his native language before he died. I began to wonder if not being able to bond over that shared taste of Bengali with nana meant that I didn't get to know him well enough in his lifetime. I'd never asked him about his journey to London from Bangladesh, nor about his life before grandchildren. Was the language barrier also a barrier to knowing

*Those arms of the English language have gripped me too tightly*

who he truly was? Whilst I could understand almost everything nana said in his mother tongue, the Bengali language has never felt at home on mine. Being asked 'Are you good?' in Bangla by him could trigger thoughts of a thousand replies, but my beginner Bengali skills would reduce them to a short reply of "ji-oy", meaning "yes". Whenever Nana spoke in Bengali, I'd coyly reply with "ji-na"-s and "ji-oy"-s — safe phrases that didn't make me feel like the unwanted guest at Bangla's dinner table. And because of this, the taste of Bengali always felt like one I could precisely describe but one which I've never truly tasted myself. And there is a sense of self-imposed embarrass-

ment that I have never truly made room in my mouth for the language of my motherland.

The Bengali language for me, though once half-alive, died with him in many ways. When I occasionally tried the language for size on my tongue when speaking to my nanu (my grandmother), there seemed to be no muscle memory of it. Part of me wanted to blame my family members for discouraging me, who'd greet my failed attempts to speak Bangla with teasing. But I also felt shame. Shame because my elderly grandparents left the cradling arms of Bengali to develop a relationship with their English-speaking granddaughter. Shame because Little-Nabiha would snicker in the bosom of English as a first language when she'd hear nana say 'fences' or shout nonsense at bus drivers — not unlike how people tease me when I speak Bengali. Those arms of the English language have gripped me too tightly, making it harder to reach out to the people in my family who have never felt their embrace. And I am only beginning to unclasp the hold that the fingers of English have held on my tongue for so long. Not unlike the way nana balanced utilising and temporarily discarding the comfort of silence, I balance between embracing and challenging comfort when it comes to language. When nanu calls, I force myself to speak Bengali; even those awkward silences that indicate my inability to find the right Bangla words are appreciated by her. I beg my father to speak in Bengali when I can see him trying to verbalise his anger through English, a language that will never fully understand the extent of his emotion.

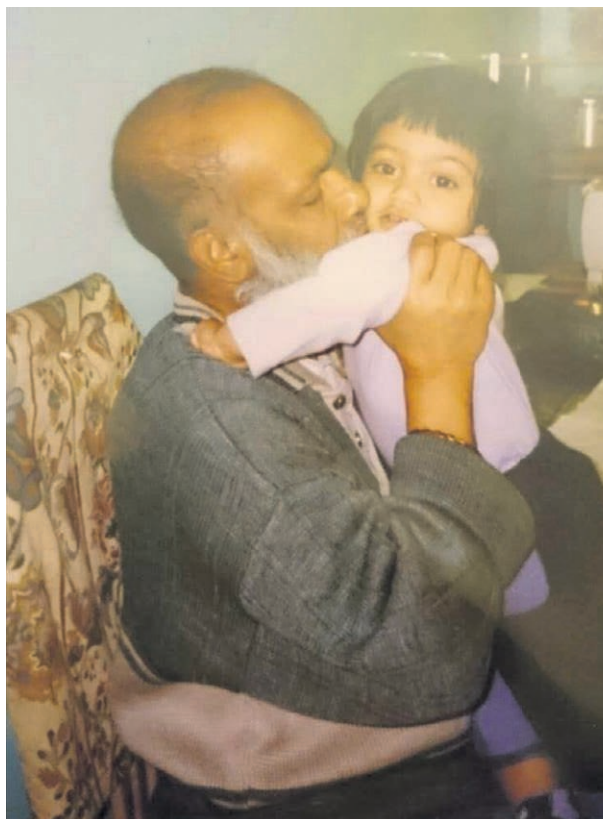
In doing so, I see his facial expressions transition from that confused space between speech and thought into ones resembling relief, pairing them with Bengali gestures and intonations that I will never replicate but have come to understand. I jokingly greet my mum with "what

*A hungry silence only satiated by the mosque's call to prayer*

you saying?" simply because I want to, and because she has learnt what they indicate even if she doesn't know what they precisely mean. By no means have I found a defini-

tive solution to language barriers for intergenerational, Bengali-British families. But what I have found solace, in balancing between retreating into the warm embrace of my native language and knowing when it would be good to try the embrace of another.

Twenty Pakistani mangoes lay on the kitchen table, bought by my mum after I'd nonchalantly mentioned I liked them once. The offering of leftover Papa John's "fixer" by my nanu leaves me smiling. That feeling of my brother silently pulling me into a long hug — after God knows how many years — straight after burying my grandfather is a feeling I still cling to four years on. The words "shokhol fuwayn shaytayn" ring in my ears as a grown woman. Through small pleasures, Nana's love is kept alive. He was my first love and my first loss. And my love for him has made me realise that I cannot afford to lose Bangla.



▲ AUTHOR'S OWN

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## Features

# Let stars come forth, without one quiet thought

Deputy Features Editor **Alex Levy** discusses loneliness in Cambridge and his relationship to societal narratives of romance, encouraging a more nuanced attitude to human connection

There is a notebook in my bedside table, given to me on my 19th birthday. It is blank except for 3 pages of gratitude – abortive attempts at perspective. They were scrawled reticently in moments where I wasn't feeling terribly unhappy, but lying in bed, contemplating the approaching, solitary minutes where I would have to confront those unvarnished and decidedly nocturnal thoughts which assail us all from time to time. A pre-emptive strikebound in green, with an elastic fastener.

Gratitude is one way I tried to quiet my mind and restore a sense of contentment which I hadn't felt for a while but is now slowly returning. Contentment: a tricky, diaphanous feeling that once you notice is missing feels as though it never existed in the first place. Much like that intangible, fairy-tale image I had of Cambridge, now beyond reach even in the pink light of the most spellbinding January evenings. In black biro and on neat lines I list the immense privileges life has afforded me:

1. Brilliant and supportive friends
2. Studying in a beautiful place
3. Mine and my family's health
4. Financial and material stability.

With each pen stroke, I was trying to drum into my head the simple and fundamentally self-indulgent fact that it could be worse. I tried, unsuccessfully, to remedy the superficiality of my anxieties with these rational statements – because frankly I was sometimes em-

barrassed by my own concern, no matter how profoundly it worried me at times: 'I feel alone.'

After about a year of university, feeling something was off, I told one of my brilliant friends about this loneliness. Paradoxical, no? But when I really thought about it, I had felt like this before, despite always having been surrounded by love. I came out as gay when I was 18 and that moment of supposed self-realisation didn't seem to have for me the same effect it had on others. So began the unrelenting

“  
So began my unrelenting comparison of my experience to the false comfort of what 'should' be  
”

comparison of my experience to the false comfort of what 'should' be – still, I brushed my discomfort off as I headed to university, excited after years of silence to be open with new people. Although the ability to ease into your identity is a fantastic and privileged experience, still someone, or something, felt missing. I was meeting incred-



▲ HEIDRUN RATHGEB

ible new friends and having a great time, but had had most of the flurry of traditional young adult experiences before university – romance seemed the last stubborn bastion of youth. And while I didn't notice and wasn't enormously bothered at first, the butterflies, sparks and whatever else is supposed to fly simply didn't. At first, I was sure it was the pandemic, but quite suddenly, one day, the questioning began.

I consider myself a very social person, and am sustained by connection with others. Society fashions romance as the logical counterpart to the satisfying platonic and family relationships which mean that, in spite of my worries, my life has always felt full. I flirt, date, sleep with people and have made some brilliant connections in my ongoing (mis)adventures with romance. But the nagging possibility at my core that maybe this wasn't for me has been one of the most disconcerting and disorientating experiences of my life (evidence of my enormous luck so far – see notebook of gratitude).

And the thing about romantic love is its inestimable cultural clout, a collective obsession stretching back thousands of years which has inspired or featured in most of humanity's greatest productions. Even the medieval texts I find myself studying seem alienating, their amorous themes fixing me with a pointed stare from across the centuries. But me? I once felt a strange affinity with the tragic characters of Wedekind's 'Spring Awakening' – confused and exhausted Moritz, leaving his desk to sit at the window and longing to join the spirits he imagines moving among the rustling

leaves of the trees.

My pretentious ramblings and the veritable fashion runway that is the Sidgwick Site betray the fact that humanities students are so often creatures of aesthetic. It is a ridiculous thought, but I can find little glamorous or aesthetic about the way I feel. There's a certain cachet to feeling young and lost, but in my (now infrequent) low moments, it feels more like an emptiness, a lack.

“  
I catch myself and wonder why I am trying to reduce lovely, human experiences to arbitrary and hugely subjective categories  
”

No dusty volume to be found in the MML library has put into lucid prose the specific unease I feel when I think about my future. Sage authors and teenagers alike have a universal understanding of heartbreak, and at the end of the day, a cigarette by the Cam while thinking about an unrequited love is just infinitely more attractive than my own panicked twilight confusion – for which there seems no eloquent salve, only confidence in the truth that whatever way I am wired, that is, and has to be, me.

Feelings such as mine can of course come under a number of entirely valid and well-documented orientations, and the disappointing lack of acknowledgement of ace awareness

week by my JCR is a testament to the long path to societal acceptance which lies ahead for the community of people who identify on the broad spectrums of romantic and sexual attraction. These queer identities must be recognised if we want to mitigate the shame and confusion that so many feel, and the profound marginalisation experienced both within and outside of the LGBTQ+ community. Equally, I know a good number of people who feel alienated by our societal narratives of young love, and a more nuanced attitude towards romance and sex has the potential to ease the pressure and disillusionment which so many feel.

At 20, I don't know my feelings well enough to find a new label that fits or is helpful, with so many people yet to meet and experiences I am yet to have. The whirlwind of self-critical thoughts has quietened, and the maxim I've found most useful is to take relationships in my life simply for what they are – connections between people. I catch myself and wonder why I am trying to reduce lovely, human experiences to arbitrary and hugely subjective categories. I avoid expectation and the normative ideals instilled in us from a young age that romantic relationships are necessarily superior to platonic ones, and to live in the present rather than ruminating on distant and hypothetical futures; in this space, I am happy, more open. Humans really are the most complex of beings and relationships of any kind are the most wonderfully subjective things we do – for this, I am grateful.



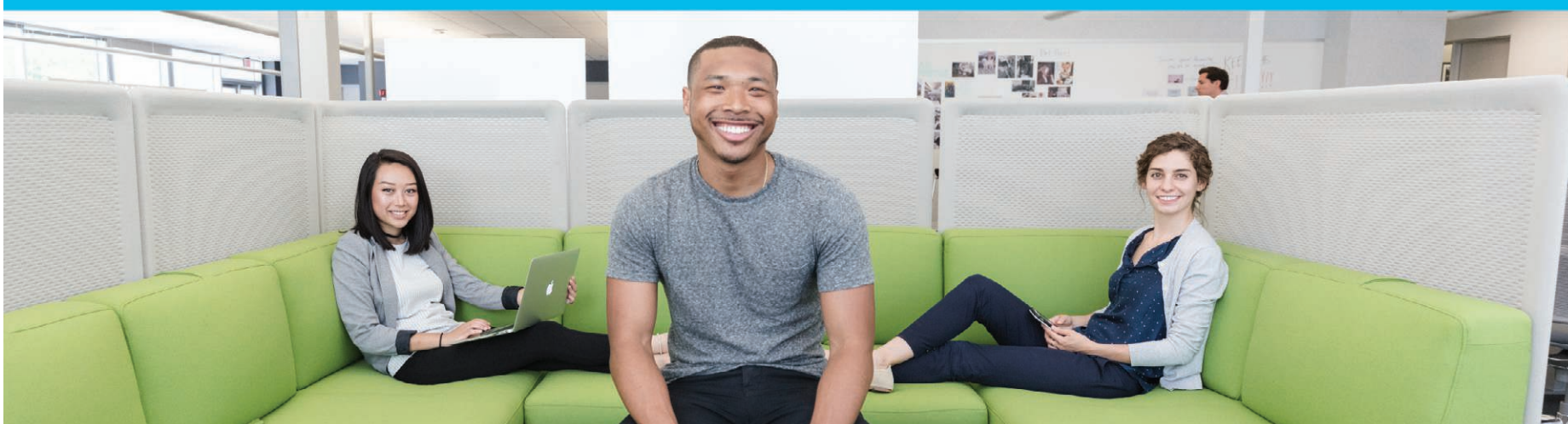
▲ KATIE KASPERSON





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# Opinion

## Britain's defence of Ukraine must start in 'Londongrad'

**Sarah Manney** argues that if the UK is serious about facing Russian aggression abroad, it must start by tackling its dirty money at home

▼ FRANS RUITER, ADRIEN WODEY & EMAAN ULLAH



A mansion at Kensington Palace Gardens. A gated community in Surrey. Georgian townhouses in London's 'Red Square.' As missiles fell on Kyiv's pastel spires in the early hours of February 24th, these towers of Russian wealth cast a grey shadow over London. Anti-corruption Action Centre (AntAC), a Ukrainian NGO, is urging the United Kingdom to "block Putin's wallets," in reference to the assets of former ministers and well-placed businesspeople which earn the city its moniker 'Londongrad.' Being rich and Russian is not a crime, but close links between money and politics in kleptocracies like Russia demand scrutiny into the sources of exorbitant wealth. As a foreboding 2018 Foreign Affairs Committee report states, the UK's toleration of ill-gotten funds "undermines the strength and unity of the global diplomatic response to Russian state actions."

A new Battle of Britain – in the banks rather than on the beaches – is taking shape. In the past week, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced sanctions and asset freezes targeting hundreds of banks, businesses, and individuals. The toughest of these cut major Russian banks off from the SWIFT financial system. The Home Office also ended the notorious "golden visa" program which has expedited residency for 2,500 Russian millionaires.

Even if further sanctions materialize, Ukrainians believe they will be insufficient to change the Krem-

lin's calculus. Beyond other forms of hard support and immediate help for refugees, a complete leveling-up of the fight against kleptocracy is needed, akin to the overhaul of the US intelligence apparatus to fight terrorism after 9/11. This means eliminating corporate secrecy, stamping out money laundering, and exposing domestic enablers – all with vastly more resources from

*“A new Battle of Britain – in the banks rather than on the beaches – is taking shape”*

the UK Government.

The easiest place to start is with the 176 luxury properties worth over £4.4b belonging to individuals believed to be connected to the Kremlin. Most are so well known that since 2016, journalists have led "kleptocracy tours" past these empty residences. Yet this is only the tip of a palatial iceberg. The NGOs Transparency International and Global Witness estimate that there are more than 85,000 UK properties owned by anonymous foreign corporations, known as shell

companies. No longer the problem solely of tropical tax havens, opaque corporate structures like the UK's Scottish Limited Partnerships have helped to move at least £15b in suspected proceeds of corruption out of Russia, prompting Nicola Sturgeon to renew calls for their dissolution.

The introduction of a transparent registry of company owners at the UK's Companies House in 2016 can be applauded, but gaps like a lack of verification and exceptions for British overseas territories leave the door open to abuse by the very actors we most need to detect. Similarly, unexplained wealth orders (UWOs), meant to help law enforcement more quickly confiscate corruption-linked assets, have only been used in four cases since 2018. A step-change in skills, talent, and resources is needed. For instance, the UK's Financial Intelligence Unit, responsible for reviewing banks' suspicious activity reports on money laundering risks, has roughly 100 investigators for over 700,000 annual filings. The Economic Crime Bill brought forward on Monday night is a promising step towards creating a register of property owners and strengthening UWO tools, among other reforms. It must be resourced with equal ambition.

Behind these technicalities are professional enablers who, through varying degrees of wilful negligence, open a back door to the West for Kremlin allies. High-profile exposés like the Panama, Paradise, and Pandora papers have brought some scrutiny to company registration agents

who lend their services to the shell companies mentioned above. Yet a network of other professions must also be held to account. Lawyers have used attorney-client privilege to shield dubious transactions from government scrutiny. PR firms and defamation lawyers have brought spurious libel cases against journalists investigating corruption – especially in the UK where laws are most permissive. For example, late

*“[Professional enablers] open a back door to the West for Kremlin allies”*

Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia had 47 libel lawsuits open against her at the time of her assassination in 2017, many of them brought by British law firms in British courts. New legislation could clarify anti-money laundering expectations for lawyers and help courts dismiss cases intended merely to waste time and resources.

Students can help universities and think tanks reduce the risk of 'reputation laundering' by accepting funds potentially gained through corruption. The University of Oxford

has been criticised over a £75m donation from Leonard Blavatnik, of the eponymous Blavatnik School of Government, whose fortune has been described by experts as being "obtained by and with the consent of the Kremlin, at the expense of the state budget and the Russian people." Not to escape blame, the University of Cambridge was named a half-dozen times in a 2021 National Endowment for Democracy report for accepting donations from politically exposed figures such as a Ukrainian oligarch with ties to Russia who is now under international sanctions. Greater scrutiny, such as consultation with country experts, can ensure that universities enable free societies – not their assailants.

To be clear, these measures are no substitute for an immediate response to the "hideous and barbaric" conquest of Europe's largest nation, numbering 44 million people. But the rubles siphoned out of Russia and recycled in the UK are an IV drip sustaining the Kremlin elite, even as ordinary Russians are bled dry by economic sanctions. Experts believe it was indeed the need to distract from the widening contrast between a prosperous, democratic Ukraine and an increasingly pallid Russia that drove Putin to war. If so, countering illicit wealth here in the UK can expose who is truly to blame for Russia's woes. The UK must fight the Kremlin on its own turf – which may be closer to home than many of us would care to admit.



# Solidarity College: revolutionary or ridiculous?

Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle and Freddie Poser showdown over the recent occupation of a lecture block at Sidgwick Site

The main argument against the occupation seems to be that it will not ‘get anything done’. Rather ironically, a movement protesting the power imbalance between the University and its workers is thus criticised on the grounds that it lacks power or effectiveness. However, if “getting something done” was easy, there would be no need for an occupation. If there was an easy fix to the downward spiral of wages, the cutting of pensions, or the lack of secure contracts, there would be no protests. If negotiation channels between the University and its workers were functional, or between departments and movements like Rename the Seeley library or Decolonise the Curriculum, there would be no protests either.

There is a protest precisely because it is hard to “get something done”. And “getting something done” about the working conditions of supervisors, PhD students, and university staff, is a moral imperative. The occupation itself is a space of continuous discussion, deliberation, and debate. It breaks with the Cambridge habit of separating spaces of learning and spaces of living. As opposed to most Cambridge socials, entry is free, and there is a zero-tolerance policy towards any form of prejudice. And unlike JCRs, political societies, and other debating spaces, it is non-hierarchical and open to all. This is a

refreshing break from a University whose fascination with hierarchy and seniority is written into its traditions, from its ‘high tables’ to lawns only some can walk on to its student rooms balloted according to tripos results.

The occupation is a welcoming place for all, a place where people can express themselves freely and engage with each other, all the while imagining an alternative way of living, and thinking, to the one upheld in the mainstream of society.

It is easier to be against the occupation than for it. It is more comfortable to mock it as utopian or revive the spectre of “communism” in attacks reminiscent of the American Red Scare than it is to engage with its ethos of communality, equality, and liberation. The occupation and the time and effort students have put into creating this haven of communality, debate, and free speech, far from university

benches where politics is debated in the abstract and from a comfortable distance, demonstrates that what is most comfortable, in this case, is not what is right.

▼ SOLIDARITY COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE



People may well know I don’t have a huge amount of time for this year’s round of strikes. I do – however – absolutely believe that every staff member has the right to strike and should do so if they feel it’s warranted. So-called ‘Solidarity College’ however, the ragtag group of students currently playing revolutionary in the Economics faculty, do not deserve our respect nor attention. They need to grow up and learn that petulantly disrupting their peers’ learning will not win them – or their lecturers – any battles.

Like most, I had a good laugh at the OG Solidarity College – 2020’s occupation of Old Schools (the University’s central office building). Sure, it was a bit weird, and some of the rooms smelt a bit, but who were they hurting blocking access to the council chamber or the big fellows coffee shop? But today is not 2020: the world, SolCol, and the student body have all moved on. This occupation isn’t stopping the University Administration Service from getting

to their desks – it’s blocking access to one of the busiest lecture blocks across the University.

The student body has experienced over two years of disrupted learning, from both strikes and COVID. That a small group of students have unilaterally decided to inflict further chaos on lecture timetables smacks of pretentious privilege, not principled praxis. Economics and English lectures – finally back in person – were moved to zoom whilst Mathmo Marxists and Engling Engels play revolutionary in the temporarily-renamed ‘Angela Davis Building’.

This will do nothing to help lecturers and supervisors make progress on the important fights they are striking over. Complex issues of USS regulation will not be solved by a group of 19-year-olds who regret missing 1968. Structural finance issues in the UK higher education sector will still be there once Faculty Freidrich vacate. The scheduled learning of their peers, however, will be lost.

These words will, of course, fall on deaf ears. These students aren’t interested in the difficult work of solving difficult problems. They want to sloganeer their way through University, winning social cachet for co-opting the struggles of others under the guise of solidarity. We shouldn’t ‘support the occupation’ but instead, demand better than cheap demagoguery.

# Abstaining from morality: India and the war in Ukraine

Akshata Kapoor unpacks the domestic and geopolitical importance of India's response to the war in Ukraine

On 25th February, India abstained on a UN Security Council resolution condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine. On the 27th, India abstained from a vote to convene an emergency session of the UN General Assembly. It was joined both times by China and the UAE.

When I heard this news, all I could feel was a heavy sense of shame. The same sense of shame that struck, again and again, over these past few years whenever the government of India exploited its power and undermined democracy. Only now, it was on the global stage, in a situation where right and wrong couldn’t be clearer.

The support for an Indian abstention comes from armchair activists and foreign policy experts alike. The most common justifications involve preserving India’s diplomatic interests. Russia and India have had a decades-long relationship built on weapons, energy, and Russia’s UNSC veto power safeguarding India’s border interests. Putin visited Delhi in December 2021, and the two countries aim to significantly increase bilateral investment and trade. More vengeful commentators believe that move is the correct one based on Ukraine’s past lack of support for Indian foreign policy interests. Many are disillusioned by the West’s hypocritical rhetoric, which has opposed India securing its borders in the past. While the

double standard of the West when it comes to invasions and wars is undeniable, India will only be able to wield accusations of hypocrisy to dig its own grave. Resistance to American hegemony cannot take shape on the grave of unalienable principles of international relations.

On a call with Putin that took place on the 24th, Prime Minister Modi urged an “immediate cessation of violence.” Many who support India’s diplomatic strategy but dislike the war seem to be convinced that India is internally pushing for peace. However, calling for peace without condemning violence absolves Russia of guilt: it allows Putin to continue peddling the narrative that Russia is fighting a ‘fascist’ government in Ukraine by objecting to general violence rather than pointing out Russia’s wilful warmongering and aggression. One of the major Indian publications that reported on this call wrote: “Putin briefed Modi on the recent developments in Ukraine as the Indian PM became the first global leader to speak to the Russian President following the launch of Russian special military operations in Ukraine.” The article proceeds to give, uncontextualised, the Russian reasons behind the invasion. The adoption of the Russian language of “special military operation” by an independent Indian news source betrays the dangers of India’s ineffectual and weak stance, allowing Russian propaganda to sustain In-

dia’s diplomacy.

Condemning India’s weak response, Shashi Tharoor, a former diplomat who is currently a Member of Parliament, wrote: “India did not even object to Russia’s ‘recognition’ of the ‘independence’ of the two separatist Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk.” This observation illustrates why India’s complicity is so poignant. India itself has begun resorting to, on a smaller scale, the propaganda and undemocratic, aggressive politics championed by Russia in the build-up to the invasion of Ukraine. It was, after all, the current Modi government that unilaterally undermined Kashmiri democracy and the Indian constitution in stripping Kashmir of self-rule. As much as India needs Russia’s support to avert Chinese or Pakistani aggression, India is perhaps also happy to encourage impunity for

border violence that is fuelled by undemocratic hate-mongering and propaganda.

While Indian diplomats have encouraged peace talks, they have made no stronger statements calling out the invasion. This is ironic considering that the main focus of India’s response to the crisis has been to evacuate the thousands of Indian students stuck in Ukraine. TS Tirumurti, India’s permanent representative to the UN, in an attempt to clarify India’s stance, said: “We welcome today’s announcement by both sides to hold talks at the Belarus border [...] We continue to be deeply concerned about the safety and security of the Indian nationals including a large number of Indian students who are still

stranded in Ukraine.”

While India has had a long history of remaining neutral during times of international conflict, India’s response this time seems more than a neutral call to peace. It is India refusing to acknowledge an invasion; voting in the same manner as China and UAE, two authoritarian countries; pursuing self-interest rather than global peace; protecting its own interests rather than leveraging its power with Russia to bring an end to the crisis. Even in

2014, our initial response to the annexation of Crimea was to affirm Indian support for preserving territorial integrity, a minimum but necessary statement that denounces invasion. While India has abstained on many crucial resolutions in the past, there has usually been some form of explicit condemnation and shock at the use of violence. Not this time. While India’s abstention from voting on the Russian invasion may be unsurprising, with this move, the country’s historic moral doctrine of espousing peace and respecting sovereignty is being irrevocably compromised.





## Opinion

# The government has privatised the pandemic

Maia Livne argues that making Covid restrictions a question of personal responsibility has created an ethical nightmare

No more Covid? Boris Johnson probably never felt more like a stout, dishevelled Santa than when he gave the nation a long-awaited gift this Monday: the 'end' of the pandemic. Yet no gift comes without a price, and while the end of Covid isolation may seem, especially for young people, a dream come true, we might just be standing on the threshold of a new social nightmare - the ethical minefield of post-Covid. For, unfortunately - as a recent second stripe on your LFT might have reminded you - Covid has not disappeared. It has changed, yes, and maybe the government's decisions are even scientifically justifiable - that is, like everything with Covid, up for debate. The difference is that previously, that debate was not let completely loose in the hands of the public. For good and for bad, people had guidelines to follow, and could blame the government for the restrictions or lack thereof. Now, we are all left alone to deal with one of our generation's most hated topics - solidarity.

Today's world might just be the most polarised time ever for solidarity and empathy, especially for young people. This is the age of the lonely masses: social media connects people and closes them up in their rooms; phones fly us overseas, only to bash us against an echo-chamber's walls. Our economic system breeds vicious self-promotion that seeps into every element of our lives - from meditation apps telling us to put ourselves first, to the adoration of the girlboss and the con-artist. This is the cultural heyday of the lone wolf, yet its consequences

are universal. Our economy is ruining our planet for the sake of a fraction of the population. The counter-reaction, climate activism, lacking

“  
Now we are all responsible for our own Covid response system  
”

political power, turns personal. And so people go vegan, reduce their waste to zero, and give up planes, straws, and cars, hoping to change, by private actions, the fate of the whole world. In an age of never-ending selfish greed and appetite, the counter-response seems to have been found for many in self-deprivation.

What climate has done to our consumerist gluttony, Covid seems to have done to social interaction. But while consumerism is inherently harmful, in-person relationships are essential for humanity. Covid has destroyed taste buds and social lives alike, ruined people's mental health, increased domestic violence, and furthered the world's ongoing sex drought. Yet more than that - unlike the climate crisis - it created an impossible moral equation. The unfortunate thing with bad things happening is that they are - what do you call it? - bad. People who kept social distancing to perfection suf-

fered mentally, people who broke social distancing truly risked and even damaged other people's health. People suffered economic and social losses from the restrictions, and people died and were ill when restrictions failed to protect them. It is easy to brush it off and say people died *with* and not *from* Covid, until it is someone close to you who could have lived *without* it. It is easy to say people should not prioritise a coffee over other people's health - but it is harder when all of those omitted social interactions amount to two years of gaping loneliness.

In this new anxiety-raising and morally-challenging environment, we all saw selfishness from loved ones that we would have rather not been exposed to. At least at first, Covid demanded sacrifice. That seemed as impossible as giving up fast fashion, food, and cars must have seemed previous eras. After previous ones for risking our lives and destroying our planet, now we have to completely restrict our lifestyle in order to protect those same elders. And though the consequences of selfishness were less apocalyptic, they were far more personal and immediate. Of course, the best socially-distanced interaction was to hate together on the selfishness and hypocrisy

of celebrities and politicians who broke restrictions. It was harder to see people we love and respect lie to their parents about partying, refuse to put a mask on, or not get vaccinated. In a time where benevolence became for many exhausting, Covid did not only unveil selfishness, it created it.

As for the current situation, the fact that we all wish to live alongside Covid does not mean, necessarily, that Covid wants us to live. Of course, Omicron, especially alongside vaccines, does not carry the health threat that Covid did previously. Even if we were to name it influenza - "Covid" still echoes for many with the inconsolable deaths of loved ones and the collective trauma of the past two years. This may be the start of

a good process, but it will surely be morally messy; this messiness will probably be brought home to students at the end of term, when our minds will have to switch from a Covid-less world to a world where our choices are the only protection for our elderly family members.

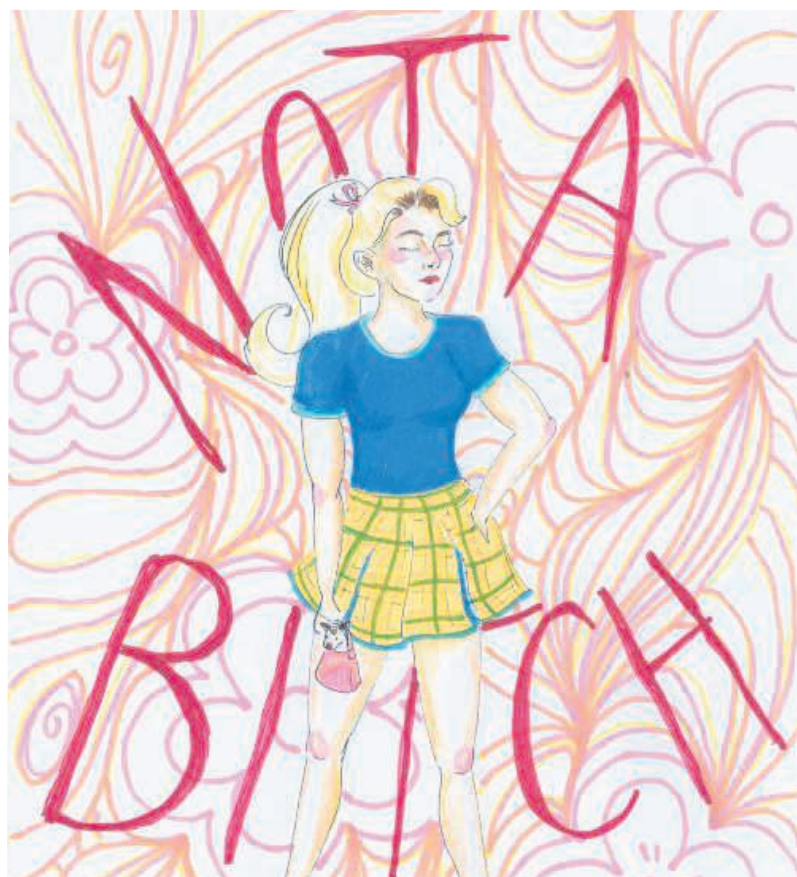
Yes, it might truly be the time to call it a day on Covid measures - but it is a mistake to think Covid has been cancelled; it has just been privatised. Now we are all responsible for constructing our own Covid response system, and it will probably be hard, frustrating, and almost impossible to do it in coordination with our families and friends. Now, people will more than ever have to decide how they treat Covid, and what boundaries they set between themselves and others. Responsibility, and some people's fear for their health, will demand a social price. Social solidarity will come with a price tag as free testing will soon no longer be supplied. The medical consequences will unfold in the following weeks, but what is certain is that guilt, shame, and selfishness will find their way even more into our everyday interactions.

NUMBER 10



## Don't call me a bitch

Whilst feminism has reclaimed the word, Bella Cross rejects being called a 'bitch' and the archetype it idealises



It is a shared experience among marginalised genders to grow up experiencing 'casual' gendered prejudice. Words like 'bossy', 'cow', 'feminazi', 'slut', and 'bitch' are thrown around from a strikingly young age. Particularly, the word bitch has emerged as a normalised term despite being bathed in misogyny. With the rise of mainstream 'Girlboss' or 'CEO' feminism in the later 20th century, there have been attempts to reclaim the word as empowering. With the promotion of women up the job ladder viewed as the pinnacle of this brand of feminism, there is little critical analysis as to how this has simply widened who has access to the position as an oppressor. The reclamation of this toxic image of empowerment, the 'bitch', has fed into the popularisation of the girlboss narrative. It is worth examining.

Of course, it is important to recognise the historical implications of the word bitch as gendered and racialised particularly in the workplace, where competitiveness, drive and strong-mindedness have typically led to rewards for men whilst marginalised genders were demonised for similar behaviours.

There is a clear double standard that still exists today and reveals how effective capitalism and patriarchy are in supporting one another. But it's time we push past merely highlighting this hypocrisy as feminists and reevaluating what liberation requires. By attempting, as feminists, to adopt these ideals of power, selfishness, and competitiveness, we only reinforce this dichotomy of femininity as passivity and masculinity as action. We must stop examining gender in overly simplistic ways which not only hold men to reductive and low standards but simultaneously reinforce the gender binary.

The figure of the 'bitch' upholds an unhealthy capitalist ideal that promotes the selfish individual above community-driven values. Neoliberalism has successfully co-opted our self-perception so that it is ingrained into our culture and self-value system that our worth is tied to our 'success' - particularly in financial accumulation but also in power or academic prestige. Prioritising our own success at all times becomes a poisoned chalice. Sensitivity, kindness, and compassion are not signs of weakness, but are

in fact, strengths and should be celebrated and not refused as so many self-proclaimed feminists continue to.

The reclaiming of the bitch character has, therefore, often reinforced this binary which creates space for explaining away poor behaviour as just 'something men do'. But also, it alienates men who do not live up to these unhealthy standards or do not care to. Compassion is a value that is held across the gender spectrum and can be something that is nurtured within us. This doesn't negate our ability to lead, it enhances it as we can be motivated and passionate leaders without needing to idealise selfishness in the process.

The 'bitch' as a figure simultaneously continues to be used to describe women that we dislike often with little reasoning, but particularly when they are perceived as rude or catty. Furthermore, 'bitch' appears to be a popular insult when marginalised genders of all sexualities (but particularly queer people) reject the sexual advances of men, whether that be a simple ignoring of a compliment or rejection...

Continued at [varsity.co.uk/opinion/23218](https://www.varsity.co.uk/opinion/23218)



# Science

## Birds: our modern day dinosaurs

Birds may represent an evolutionary echo of dinosaurs, but what can we learn from them? **Lucie Gourmet** explores their potential

**B**irds are the only living descendants of the long-lost dinosaurs, extinct 65 million years ago. This link was first established by the discovery of the fossil *Archaeopteryx* in 1861, and since then, dinosaur species have been divided into two groups depending on the orientation of their pubis. Paradoxically, though Ornithischia is the group which can be referred to as “bird-hipped” dinosaurs (further divided into Thyreophora, Ornithomimidae and Marginocephalia) its counterpart Saurischia, meaning “lizard-hipped” dinosaurs, is the group from which birds come from. The reversed pubis of birds is only due to the independent evolution of similar features to achieve the same function (a process called convergent evolution). Saurischia is subdivided into Sauropodomorpha and Theropoda, the latter being known for dinosaurs such as *Tyrannosaurus rex* or *Velociraptor*.

### What makes birds special?

The anatomy of birds is remarkable, enabling most of them to fly. Their skeleton is different to those of other animals, being composed of lightweight bones due to the existence of hollow spaces in their bones. These hollow bones serve another function as well, forming part of an effective respiratory system: air sacs present in bones are connected to the lungs. When we (humans) breathe, some air always remains in our lungs and so our lungs do not fully collapse in each breath. Birds, on the other hand, have a one-way system that moves the air into the lungs using only one direction. Inhalation in birds involves air entering the posterior air sacs and the lungs while the air from the previous breath moves out to the anterior sacs. Subsequently, exhalation is the movement of air from the posterior sacs and the lungs to the anterior sacs while the air in the anterior sacs goes out through the trachea. This means that unlike mammals, birds can take in oxygen even during exhalation.

Bird skeletons are also rigid due to the fusing of adjacent bones, meaning that they can support their weight while flying. For example, their collarbones have merged into

one structure called the furcula, more commonly known as the wishbone. Birds also have large, flattened bones such as the keel, which allows them to support their strong musculature. Interestingly, the reproductive organs of birds only enlarge during mating season, contributing to being lightweight.

Birds have enlarged brains and are perhaps more intelligent than one might believe, in particular corvids of the crow family) and parrots. Crows can recognise faces, enabling them to hold grudges and communicate with other crows. They also hold funerals for their dead, which is a surprising sign of social intelligence. Ravens can be paranoid and have been observed to hide food more frequently when their peers are around. If a raven steals another one's food, he will be excluded from the group, and other ravens show a refusal to cooperate with him. This can be considered as a form of social ostracism. Various birds are known to be able to use tools, such as woodpecker finches to hunt prey and crows to probe for food into small spaces. The most unexpected example is the fact that the humble pigeon has been shown to count, subtract and sort numbers ordinarily! Whilst every pigeon may not be a mathematical genius, this certainly suggests that birds may be a lot smarter than we think.

### What we know about bird evolution: an interview with Cambridge expert Dr Field

The origin of birds is a fascinating story: they survived the end-Cretaceous mass extinction, which led to a radiation event. Multiple bird species have appeared over time, resulting in more than 10,000 bird species we have today, which makes them one of the most diverse groups of vertebrates. I interviewed Dr Daniel Field, a group leader in evolutionary paleobiology at Cambridge, who is investigating the origins of avian biodiversity. He recently discovered the fossil of the oldest modern bird called *Asteriornis maastrichtensis*, also known as Wonderchicken.

This fossil was found in Belgium close to the

border of Maastricht in the Netherlands and comes from the age of dinosaurs, at the end of the Cretaceous period. The skull of the Wonderchicken is well preserved, allowing Dr Field's lab to gather information about what birds looked like at the time of dinosaurs. A model of *Asteriornis* will soon be present in the museum of Zoology at Cambridge (see picture below).

### Why is it so hard to understand birds?

Dr Field explained that it is extremely difficult to infer the phylogenetic relationships between all the different bird species; because multiple species arose in a very short amount of time, it is challenging to reconstruct the time-frame. Moreover, to define lineages between modern birds and dinosaurs we would need

fossils. Fossils are often incomplete and lack the specific information we need to distinguish species. On the other hand, when working on modern birds, we can sequence their genome, but this approach has its own issues. The genome of birds contains a different proportion of DNA bases compared to ours which makes it difficult to assemble avian genomes.

Nevertheless, understanding bird genomes may be useful beyond evolutionary history. Birds could help us in our battle to cure cancer: they have lower cancer rates than expected. Peto's paradox states that large animals have lower cancer rates than predicted because in response to the exten-

sive cell proliferation needed to generate their large size, they tend to have regulatory features that can be protective against cancer. For example, blue whales and elephants have multiple copies of the tumour suppressor gene TP53. Alternatively, another theory is that large animals have “hypercancer”: cancer may be able to “behave” differently by using resources without contributing to tumour development, thereby leading to tumour death.

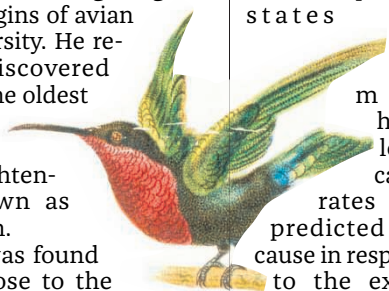
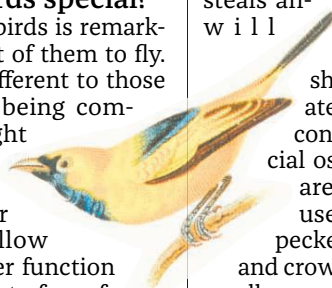
However, birds are an exception: they have low cancer rates despite their relatively small size. This could be because they inherited the cancer defences of their much larger ancestors, the dino-

sosaurs. With Dr Marc Tollis, Dr E. Yagmur Erten and Dr Daniel Chavez, my research work aims to investigate the presence of cancer genes in birds to better understand their cancer evolution. Shedding light on this topic could be relevant to human cancers.

We are fascinated by birds because of their history, diversity and specific characteristics. They are incredibly intelligent and beautiful at the same time, which makes them an interesting model organism to study. Birds are modern day dinosaurs full of secrets and mysteries which could potentially help us make sense of cancer evolution. We gain many benefits from studying them.



(birds of the crow family)



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## Science

# Probability puzzles and problems

**Nick Scott** picks apart some of the world's most well-known probability problems, inviting readers to have a crack before breaking down the answers

Probability is an area of maths that almost everyone would have studied at school, but still contains many interesting puzzles and results that can surprise even those who have studied the subject at a high level. In this article, I've set out some of my favourites, none of which require any advanced mathematics to solve, and have then explained the solutions. I hope you find them as enjoyable as I do!

## A variant of the Monty Hall problem

I'm assuming many of you have heard of the Monty Hall problem involving a game show with goats behind two doors and a car behind the third, and there are many discussions and explanations of it online (such as this one). Here, I'd like to talk about a slightly different version of the problem.

Imagine you're taking a multiple choice exam where there are three possible answers to the first question: A, B, or C. You have no idea what the correct solution is, and decide to guess A. An invigilator then walks into the room and announces that B is not the correct solution to the question. Should you switch your answer to C?

## The lost boarding pass problem

100 people take turns boarding an aeroplane that has 100 seats. They have each been assigned one of the seats (and no two people have been given the same seat). However, the first person to board has lost their boarding pass and chooses a seat to sit in at random. The rest of the passengers then enter the plane one at a time. If their assigned seat is empty, they sit in it; otherwise, they choose an empty seat at random to sit in.

What is the probability that the 100th person sits in their assigned seat?

## Simpson's paradox

A university realises that it has been accepting a lower proportion of green-eyed applicants than applicants with other eye colours. Since each department of the university runs admissions independently, the university de-

cides to look at each department individually, to see if the disparity is caused by one department in particular. But in fact, it turns out that every department admits a higher proportion of green-eyed applicants than applicants with other eye colours!

Is this possible, and if so, how?

## The coin tossing game

Alice and Becky play a game where they toss coins and compete to see who can get the most heads. Alice gets to toss 100 coins and Becky gets to toss 101 (different) coins, but if they get the same number of heads, Alice wins the game.

What is the probability that Alice wins?

## Intransitive dice

Suppose you have three dice, which we can call A, B, and C. Each of these is a fair six-sided die with positive whole numbers on each face (a die can have two the same number on more than one face). On average, die A tends to beat die B (i.e. if you roll both of the dice, the chance that the value displayed on A is higher than the value displayed on B is greater than 50%) and die B tends to beat die C, but die C tends to beat die A!

Is this possible? If it is, can you find an example?

## Turning over cards

Your friend has a standard deck of 52 cards (so there are 26 red cards and 26 black cards), shuffled in a random order. They will turn them over one at a time. At any point, you can stop them; then, they will turn over the next card, and you win if that card is red and lose if that card is black.

If you stop them before they turn over any cards, you have a 50% chance of winning. Is it possible to do better than that?

**Answers to the puzzles can be found online**

◀ KLIM MUSALIMOV

# The science of burnout

As we near the end of term, **Sophie Head** explores the psychology behind burnout and why some people are more prone to it than others

The midpoint of term has passed, and the feeling that term is everlasting has descended upon many, the slippery slope of evaporating self-care only getting worse. Recognising and understanding the science of burnout is crucial to nip it in the bud and avoid forming a habit of giving it your all in the first half of term and then hibernating in the second half – as many before me have said, it is a marathon, not a sprint. While stars burnout eventually via nuclear fusion, it should not be a guaranteed experience for Cambridge students.

The term “burnout syndrome” was coined in the 1970s by American psychologist Herbert Freudenberger. First used to describe the inescapable chronic fatigue experienced by doctors and nurses, it has now been officially recognised by the World Health Organisation in 2019 as a syndrome. Described as “chronic workplace stress that has been not successfully managed”, this alludes

This is purely speculation and does not diminish the need for interventions at college, subject, and university levels, as the blame cannot be passed from the institution to the individual. The knowledge that this uni-

◀ JACQUELINE DAY



tasks throughout the day. To wake up, shower, and eat breakfast may require only one spoon for most people. Yet, when you are burnt-out, chronically ill, or disabled, it may take you three spoons to finish the same action. Equally, burnout and disabilities often come with disrupted sleep patterns, so spoons cannot be replenished in the same way for all. Pagnin & colleagues investigated emotional exhaustion, daytime sleepiness, cynicism, and academic efficacy, finding a bidirectional relationship between sleep and burnout symptoms. Put simply, burnout damages sleep patterns, and sleep patterns can breed more intense burnout.

Research into burnout may highlight the steps educators can make to reduce the frequency and intensity of burnout and linked mental health issues. For example, stress management and sleep education should be delivered by college staff, not by JCR welfare who do not feel equipped or are too pressured to give this guidance to peers. As burnout is linked to wider mental health, it would be sensible for college tutors and other pastoral staff to take a mental health first aid course, which has been shown to increase knowledge regarding mental health, decrease negative attitudes, and increase supportive behaviour. At a minimum, an investigation into the efficacy of the increasingly political implementation of a reading week at Cambridge may also allow students to pace their work and not burn out once week five hits. Equally, tutors should support students to move deadlines or scrap some entirely to complete the term in a somewhat liveable state.

**Burnout may come across as inherent to the experience of a Cambridge student**

While enjoyable, and recommended if you feel like it, the typical “self-care tips” that plague most burnout articles will not solve the issue. A face mask feels nice, but it does not cure underlying mental issues and so understanding the science may help tackle it at an institutional level. Saying “no” when we are overloaded with commitments may also be a vital tool, but last I checked, saying no to every supervision or lecture might not be for the best either.

“Typical ‘self-care tips’ that plague most articles won’t solve the issue”

to physical and emotional exhaustion and resultingly not being able to keep up with work demands.

Flashback to my first supervision – my supervisor told us that I must be neurotic, as all Cambridge students are. According to the American Psychological Association, a neurotic personality type is characterised by a chronic level of emotional instability and proneness to psychological distress. Once the initial panic faded, I realised there might be some truth to his bizarre statement. While there's no evidence to back this and would be a questionable study if it ever did occur, his words did make me question if students here are destined to burn out. This “inevitability” of burnout – if you were to be so pessimistic – may not just be because of the chaotic essay/problem sheet factory but instead the type of people that are drawn to study at Cambridge. In some studies, burnout has been more strongly linked to neuroticism than work-contextualised factors. Applicants and eventual students could be more vulnerable to burnout and mental health issues as a subcategory of a neurotic personality type and may often be engaged in attempting perfection beyond the realms of attainability.

iversity may attract people more at risk of burnout and maladaptive perfectionism only increases the need for university-wide interventions. Burnout may come across as inherent to the experience of a Cambridge student, but this only makes the issue trivial and harder to deal with.

There are three components to burnout – exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy. Perhaps surprisingly, the most dangerous element may not be exhaustion, but instead the failure and naivety to acknowledge the burnout and prevent it from worsening or becoming habitual. The build-up of academic deadlines, long class schedules, and the pressure of being a “well-rounded student” who engages in every extracurricular there is lends only to it being a question of not if, but when.

Spoon theory, developed by Christine Miserandino in 2003, was a gamechanger for how I viewed myself as more prone to burnout. My journey with anxiety, depression, and ADHD had led me not to forgive my “laziness” and inability to do simple, necessary things such as cook, tidy, and shower. My ADHD means sometimes I may bite off way more than I can chew, as I struggle to say no or set boundaries due to rejection-sensitive dysphoria, where one may be more prone to people pleasing and more sensitive to rejection. Spoon theory uses the metaphor of spoons to visualise exhaustion and energy supplies: spoons demonstrate finite energy resources and that, when chronically ill or burnt-out, the amount of energy needed to complete supposedly easy, everyday tasks may be more than expected. For instance, everybody has ten spoons or “units” of energy to complete



# Interviews

## Robert De Niro on the importance of acting spontaneously

‘When you come to do it in the moment, that’s what it’s all about’: **Fergal Jeffreys** and **Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle** receive acting tips from the Hollywood legend, who also spoke out against the Ukraine invasion

Sunday, at Midday, the queue in front of the Union stretched out beyond the corner of the street,

wrapping around the now-closed Patisserie Valérie, and continuing well into Jesus Lane. People were chattering excitedly ahead of Robert De Niro’s visit to the Union.

An overrun lunch and the elaborate security surrounding the actor’s talk meant Varsity only had a five minute chat with him, followed by the chance to observe his calm demeanour and joking tone from the gallery of the chamber.

On his early interest in acting, De Niro starts, then starts again, before mumbling a sentence about how as a kid he used to enjoy going to the movies.

Changing tack, Fergal asks a more specific question: in an interview for Heat, Michael Mann described how Al Pacino prepared two weeks in advance for the coffee shop face off while De Niro performed it unrehearsed. Do these two approaches in one scene enhance its quality?

“I’ve never talked to Michael Mann about it - it’s my favourite scene in the movie. We went through it once before, with Michael trying to work out what the background of the shot might be. You don’t want to waste yourself during a scene. We didn’t start shooting until midnight and by that time we were already tired, I was concerned about having enough energy.

“Whatever preparation Al did before, when you come to do it in the moment, that’s what it’s all about. Some directors like to rehearse, tape out the area where the scene takes place, I like to just sit down, make adjustments, work it out with the director the morning before you shoot

“  
[Aspiring actors] should go to every audition... but ‘I haven’t done [one] in a while’

demning the aggression. “We have to do something to stop the aggression,” he says.

“You see what’s happening in Ukraine now, you have to stand up and say ‘you can’t do that, it’s wrong’.

“It’s that simple. It’s not even about democracy, it’s about right and wrong - the truth.”

He states that future generations will judge us on our reaction to the crisis, on the level of solidarity we choose to display.

When asked what advice he would give aspiring actors, he says to go to every audition possible, so people from the industry start remembering the actor’s name, even if they don’t end up selecting them.

“  
We have to do something to stop the aggression [in Ukraine]

“  
“I haven’t done an audition in a while, though,” he adds, at which point the audience starts laughing and clapping.

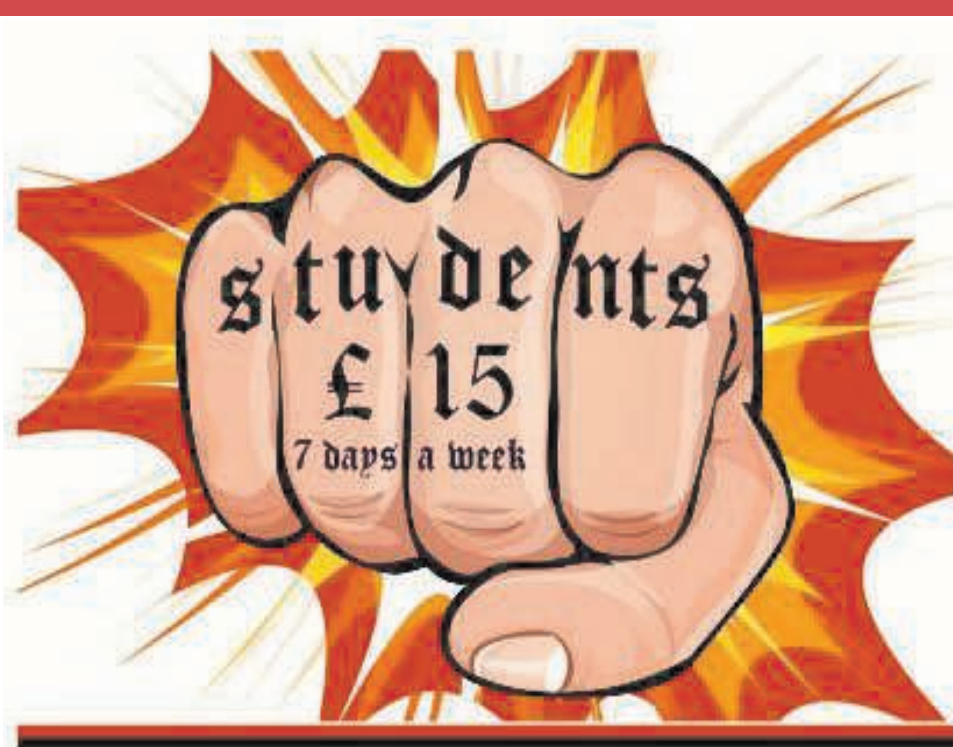
it, that’s kind of what most actors that I know are used to, everything else that interacts.”

On that note, De Niro was whisked into the chamber. While addressing members, his tone was optimistic, and reflexive.

When asked what’s the best piece of advice he’s ever received, he pauses. “Something about paying attention to the truth, to facts. Being honest,” he says.

This feeds into his previous mentions of the “madness” of Trump’s America, and of the moral imperative to “say something, or do something”, in the face of such shocking politics. “If you’re not part of the solution, you’re part of the problem,” he repeats twice.

He touches on Ukraine, strongly con-



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## Interviews

# How different is the West from China? Ai Weiwei in Cambridge

The artist tells **Marion Willingham** about his Kettle's Yard exhibition, *Liberty of Doubt*

**A**i Weiwei is one of the best known and most prolific artists of our time. Addressing a crowded Cambridge Union on Thursday 17th February, he discussed his 81 day detention in China, his controversial decision to drop a Han Dynasty urn, and his newest film project *Coronation*, filmed in Wuhan by dozens of remotely directed volunteers. He then sat down with *Varsity* to discuss his latest exhibition, *Liberty of Doubt*. "That title is pretty vague," Ai says, "but it is really related to history, how we make judgements and how we evaluate. For me, any meaningful thoughts come from doubt. I think doubt is crucial."

"Politically also," he says, "when a society starts to believe that one idea is right and that the others are bullshit, I think that is very dangerous, and can go to extremes. We have a potential danger when people think: 'This is obviously right.' I will always have

doubts about it."

Ai is known not only as a political sceptic but as a dissident, for his continual criticism of the Chinese government. There is a sense in

“Any meaningful thoughts come from doubt. We have a potential danger when people think: ‘This is obviously right’”

*Liberty of Doubt*, however, that his political statements are no longer reserved for China. Takeaway boxes and toilet rolls carved in marble are exhibited in display cases from the British Museum, whilst porcelain plates depict the global refugee crisis.

"China is an authoritarian state, which is easy to associate with strong censorship, clear doctrines, and not allowing individual opinions to be presented. But, the West still does this in a different way: through education, mainstream media, entertainment. They also discourage individualism through financial means; you cannot achieve financial success if

you don't talk with the same language, the same tone, the same set of judgements. So in very different ways, they achieve the same result, in terms of limiting human imaginations and creativity."

Despite his ardent defence of freedom of speech, Ai is keen to emphasise the subjectivity of any supposed "truth". The first room of his exhibition is filled with historic Chinese objects, bought at auction in Cambridge – some of which are authentic whilst others have been identified as counterfeits.

He states that the notion of authenticity is much more important in Western culture than in China, where copying is seen as an important and legitimate cultural process.

"When we talk about truth we talk about our inner judgement, on aesthetic and moral levels, that is truth. Truth is not fact. It's relative, based on our own vision and our own language."

When asked about the precarity of truth in the social media age, Ai does not seem worried, historically an active social media user himself. "We can see social media as an environment – it's just like a mountain or

“Truth is not fact. It's relative, based on our own vision and our own language”

river, raining or snowing. Of course, life as a journey passes through environments where everybody has a very different perception or different understanding of life."

Alongside the objects on display at Kettle's Yard – both artistic and historic – various documentary films are being screened, including the 2017 feature *Human Flow*. Ai's films, books, and political projects such as the collection of thousands of names of school children killed in the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, require a process which is more investigative than artistic.

"My studio," Ai says, "is more about researching, archiving, studying what we have done and how we did it. In my studio you cannot see a single artwork of mine, which is different from any other artist's which is full of their works. I hate looking at my works."

As for what could emerge from his studio in future, Ai plays his cards close to his chest. "I have no plan," he says. "I don't have to do art. It happens that I am still doing art, but I don't have plans." In the meantime, *Liberty of Doubt* is on display at Kettle's Yard until 19 June.

◀ **Ai Weiwei** TOBIA NAVA



▲ The exhibition includes an almost exact replica of a Ming dynasty dragon vase, with the subtle addition of a sixth claw AI WEIWEI STUDIO

## Ai Weiwei and Andrew Nairne at Kettle's Yard

**Akshata Kapoor** writes on the discussion between the artist and Director of Kettle's Yard on the latest exhibition

**B**efore the press viewing of Kettle's Yard's new exhibition, Ai Weiwei sat down to discuss 'The Liberty of Doubt' exhibition. Looking bemusedly at the eager gathering of journalists, he answered questions with jokes and wry comments. Light-hearted yet profound thoughts lent insight into the hilarious, defiant, creative genius behind the works we were about to see.

Andrew: The title of this exhibit is 'The Liberty of Doubt', could you tell us a bit more about it?

Wei: There was a Guardian review of this exhibition and the main message they sent was that *we really doubt this artist is a real artist*, which is very interesting. This time we have given a new definition of ourselves. Our art, culture, and politics has been dramatically changed. Changing. I think the title is fitting too... I don't want to explain more in detail, but it's a really nice title.

Andrew: Does it mean more to you than other artists because of your experiences in China? You are hyper-aware of notions of freedom, whether it is freedom to interpret and understand history and culture, or freedom in some political and social matters...

W: Talking about being from China: my friend in New York, when I showed him my work, he likes it. He also said I don't know any gallery who would show a Chinese artists work. He's honest, it's 1980s. By the 2000s many galleries – major galleries – showed Chinese artists' works. So, times change. Before, they call me a dissident, now [much of the] media is asking is *he really an artist or an activist wanting to make some kind of big splash?*

That's why I wrote my book '1000 years of Joy and Sorrow', which ex-

plains why I get involved with political struggles. Because I was born into political struggle, I didn't jump into it. My works, if you look carefully, focus on the traditional meaning of art and craft and shape... in all kind of media and forms. And that's part of my interest. I don't care about becoming an artist, but I really care to become a good craftsman, because that means your hands can find true knowledge.

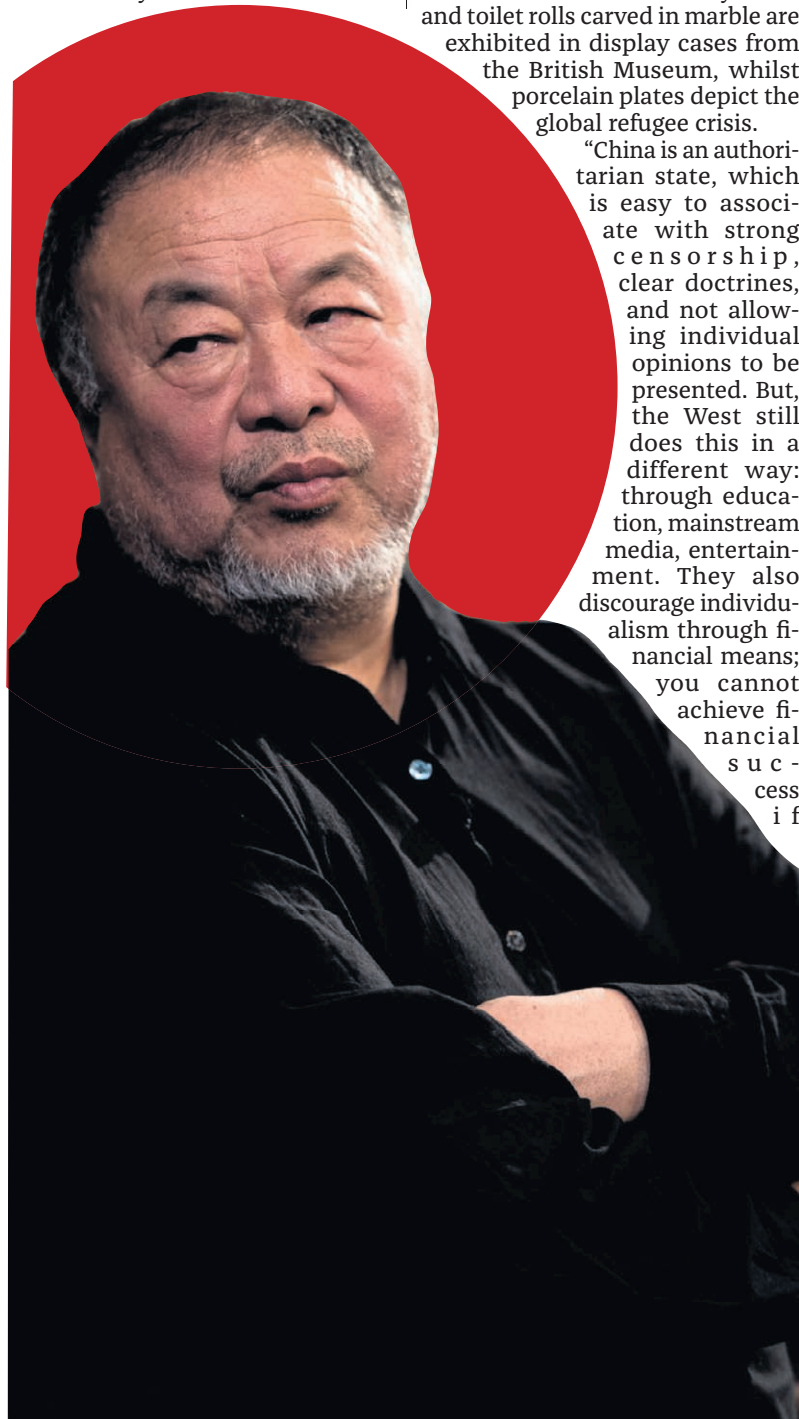
I was thinking about one specific work- the handcuffs made out of jade. What do you feel happens to the idea of handcuffs when they are made in jade?

W: I'm an artist, really like using my imagination. Most things I make because I think that would be a good idea. Jade has the longest history in human fascination about objects. 1.4 billion people have the longest tradition dealing with jade from 6,000 years ago that's a tradition that's never stopped, not interfered by war or different kinds of religion. This is an ordinary piece of stone, they.

Weiwei spoke a bit more about his sense of belonging to Kettle's Yard, the use of porcelain in the exhibition, and the exhibit's connection to his father. He ended the discussion with some thoughts about beauty and creation inspired by his father.

W: All my understanding about art has come from [my father]. If he sees something beautiful, he becomes so happy. Only art or poetry makes us feel the area that the authoritarian can never touch.

Imagination must be some kind of desire. It is something that we don't have or [are] always thinking *that would be a good idea if that could exist.*





# Vulture



OLIVIA LISLE (@livcollage)



# Lifestyle

## Emily affords a weekend in Paris

Columnist *Emily Sullivan* provides her tips and tricks for spending a weekend away in Paris



**P**aris is stunning at any time of year. In summer, you get crowds of tourists bustling through the Jardin du Luxembourg and picnicking beneath the Eiffel Tower. Autumn might be the perfect time for you to embrace your artistic side and see some of the most famous works of historical art in the Louvre, including the Mona Lisa and Venus de Milo. If a weekend of escapism and picturesque views in one of the most beautiful cities in the world is all you can concentrate on, look no further. It is doable for students on a budget and worth it for the rich culture Paris has to offer.

### Where to stay

Yes, a balcony with a view of the Eiffel Tower naturally sounds ideal. But realistically, not much time is spent in the hotel room when you're in a place with so much to explore. Hotels which are outside of the centre will be much cheaper and still be of good quality. Check for hotels without a TV or an included breakfast to make your stay less expensive. The metro in Paris is also the easiest and fastest way to get around, so this is convenient to use when you are outside the centre.

### What to see

#### The Louvre:

If you want to explore the art of Paris, the Louvre must be seen first. On Wednesdays and Fridays, the museum is open until 9.45pm and its entrance fee is reduced. Why not romanticise seeing the Winged Victory of Samothrace in a vast museum when it's dark outside and the museum is quiet? In terms of navigating it, there are big exhibits which you won't want to miss. These include the Mona Lisa (small but mighty), Liberty Leading the People and the Wedding at Cana.

### Views:

In terms of the notorious Eiffel Tower, it shows a stunning skyline when you go up it, but the view is just Paris from very high up. You can go to the top of the Arc de Triomphe for around half the price and this way, you'll get a view with the Eiffel in it. The tower lights up for the first five minutes of every hour after dusk until 1am, which adds to the stunning backdrop of Paris' night sky.

### Gardens:

Naturally, the gardens of Paris are also free to look around. The Jardin du Luxembourg is filled with sculptures and statues, with the palace and gardens commissioned by Marie de Medici. The palace itself has an Italian style as she wanted to reflect her childhood in Florence.

### What to eat

There are also some tricks to eating well in Paris. You might notice that restaurants will add a service charge to your bill. Large tips are not necessary, a tip of one or two euros is normal. Instead of dining in restaurants though, the bakeries mean you can get a picnic lunch full of baguettes and pastries. The cafés in Paris are likewise chic and sophisticated. Why not spend a couple of hours sipping on hot chocolate in a café on the Champs-Élysées and watching the world rush by?

So, if you're planning a short city break during the Easter holidays or this summer, Paris will always be 100% worth the money you do spend; and with these tips and tricks hopefully you can bring down the expenses of what could be an amazing weekend. A weekend isn't enough to do everything, but it is enough time to be completely swept away by the French charm and to fall in love with Paris.

DANIELLE JUMP ▲

## Give up the ghosting

Please, for the love of God, text that person you've been ghosting — **Ceci Browning** on ghosting

**Y**ou are allowed to change your mind about people. Deciding that someone actually isn't for you is okay. However, that person has a right to know this. When they send you a message, asking if you're free, reply and tell them you're not interested. Tell them that they haven't done anything. I am on good terms with all of my exes. Except one. We were seeing each other, for a while, and then he disappeared. No calls, no messages, nothing. This is the only ex who won't stop in the street to say hello if we walk past one another. Cambridge isn't a big city, so this happens quite often, and every time I see him shoot past on his bike, a sick-green feeling sloshes around in my stomach.

Last week, I sent this ex a message. I am clear that I am not looking for anything further with him, that all I am asking for is one conversation to wipe the slate clean. Then I wait. And I wait. I find myself unable to do anything but concentrate on the passing of time. Books remain unread. Essay remains unwritten. As the hours go by, slowly and painfully, my confidence begins to diminish. My phone lies silent on my desk, face down. A headache comes on, like a knife being pushed into the space between my eyes. No is a sad but acceptable answer. Silence is not.

“When we ghost people what we are really doing is evading responsibility”

He's busy, I think. He probably hasn't seen it. He's just busy. That's all it is.

This is never true. It might be for a few minutes, maybe an afternoon, but who do you know who doesn't look at their phone for more than twenty-four hours? Nobody. We all have our phones in our hand all the time. I know this because at the same time I am waiting for this cowardly ex to reply, I am ignoring the message of another guy. I know I shouldn't, that I really ought to reply. I know that it will take two minutes and then he won't feel this same horror at being totally ignored. But I still don't say anything.

'Honesty is the best policy', they say. Is it? Do we really want to know when people don't want us? Do we really want the truth when the truth is that they're actually not that bothered, even though they swiped right, even though they sent that Instagram follow request, even though they laid next to you in bed and told you their secrets. Do we want that?

It's too easy to forget that the person you're not replying to isn't just a name on a screen. The person in that tiny little circular contact photo is a real person, one with thoughts and feelings and an imagination, who is prob-

ably waiting to hear back from you. When we ghost people what we are really doing is evading responsibility. We are taking the easy exit, instead of facing up to the consequences of our actions and telling the truth about how we feel.

My ex did not reply because he was scared of what I might say to him, of me asking questions that he did not want to answer. I did not reply to the guy in my Instagram inbox because I did not want to close that avenue completely, even though I knew that I didn't want to go out with him. And you know what?

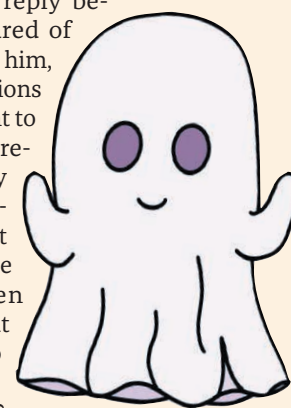
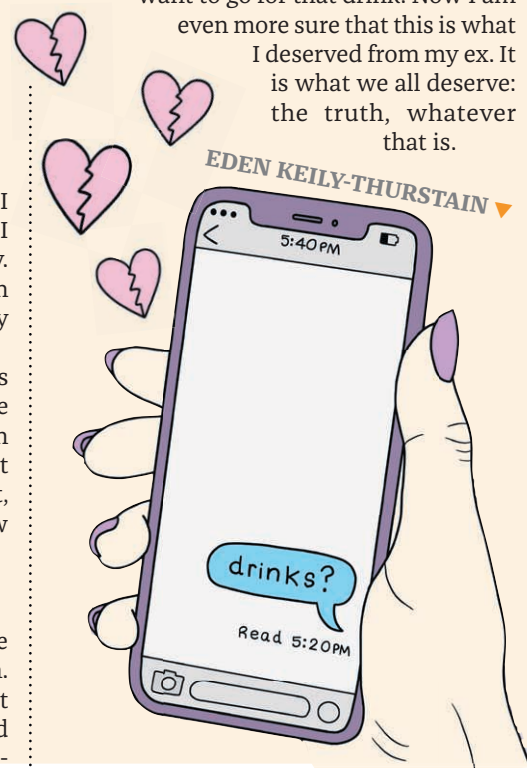
The guy in my inbox is probably not replying to someone too, for some similar reason. There is probably a person out there staring at their phone screen and waiting impatiently for his name to appear.

Tell them that they haven't done anything wrong and apologise that you've wasted their time. If they have done something wrong, if they've offended you with something they said or something they did, tell them this too. In the grand scheme of things, this is the better option. It'll hurt them for a minute, but then things will be better and they'll wonder why they ever wanted you to reply to their message to begin with.

That my ex did not reply has not changed the course of my life. I have carried on doing all the exciting things I would otherwise be doing. But now, having told the guy in my inbox the truth — I'm really sorry but I'm not interested in taking things any further — I have broken the cycle. I have the moral high ground. I bit the bullet and told the person I had been ghosting that I actually didn't want to go for that drink. Now I am

even more sure that this is what I deserved from my ex. It is what we all deserve: the truth, whatever that is.

EDEN KEILY-THURSTAIN ▼





# The love that dare not speak its name

An anonymous student reflects on their struggles with coming out as bisexual in their traditional home town



“I just can’t imagine it, you know? I can’t imagine anyone nowadays who wouldn’t accept their kids as gay. My parents would love it. No, seriously, I think they’re hoping I’ll come out any day now.”

I smile like I agree, as though it seems to me too, to be a remote possibility. And, here, in Cambridge, it is. But Cambridge is not the only reality.

I like to joke that I was brought up in the 1950s. I say joke; it’s not an inaccurate description. My home-town village is idyllic. Around three hours cross-country from Cambridge is another flat, slightly rainy, green place. It’s a place where people go on holiday. It is peppered with small family-owned pubs; fireplaces and cheesy chips; welly-booted darned-jumpered flat-capped farmers; labradors; chocolate-box houses; fields. Miles and miles of fields. You can walk for hours and not run into a single person. My village has a church, a playground and a garage. I work in the pub in pheasant-hunting season. I know the regulars by name.

That pub is the same one where, at 14, I told my mum I was bisexual. It is the same pub where she told me to break up with my then-girlfriend, my first love; where she told

me that it was unnatural; that ‘bisexual’ was another way of saying *gay*; that this was not the future that she had imagined for me. That she felt she had lost her daughter.

A month ago - roughly eight years on — I went home. On the way back from the station, I told my dad that I’d met this wonderful girl. That she was gorgeous, that she was kind, that she was funny. That she liked me too. I told him that I was excited, and anxious, and felt

“We risk forgetting those of us that have to travel back to the 1950s every few months”

like I was falling head over heels. In the dark of the car, watching the road ahead, he told me that he didn’t think my eyes sparkled in the same way as when I talked about men. At that moment I was fourteen again, sitting on the floor of the kitchen, biting back tears

as I told my girlfriend on the phone that she couldn’t meet my family; I was nineteen and my family was telling me they didn’t like the girl I was living with, but couldn’t give me a reason why. I am twenty two and sitting in the car, eight years after coming out, feeling like I am back at the starting line.

My parents are wonderful people. They are two of the kindest people I know. Homophobia - if that’s what it is - is a complicated, sometimes subtle, thing. My parents would never consciously try and hurt me or any other queer person. My dad, a few years ago, bought me a badge emblazoned with ‘still bisexual’; when I phoned he asked me about the girl I was seeing. My mum has read up on bisexuality — apparently there’s a website, somewhere — and realised I may, in fact, still end up with a bloke. I think that helped. So, they try. Things are better than they once were. Much better.

Even so, my dad is convinced that I am straight. My mum does not want to hear the poems I write about women. I cannot bring a girl home. I cannot bring a girl home because I know they would never like her as much as someone they could call my boyfriend.

But here, in Cambridge, I can hold a girl’s hand in the street, kiss her when I meet her, and introduce her to my friends. I can shave a slit into my eyebrow, and put rainbow laces in my shoes, and wear earrings that say ‘queer’.

I can use pronouns that feel right. I can wear a suit or a ballgown and no one would bat an eyelid. No one questions my identity. I am who I say I am. And that is a wonderful thing. A wonderful, wonderful thing.

But if we take queer spaces for granted, if

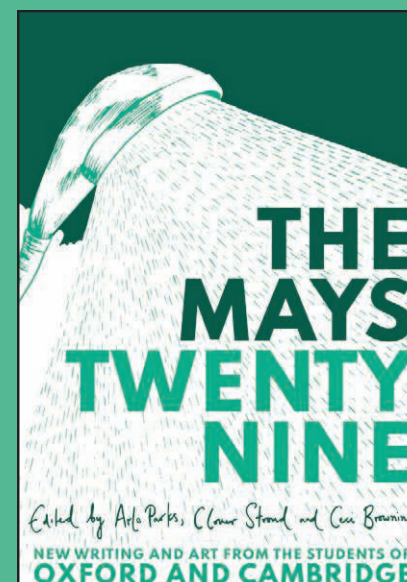
“My parents are two of the kindest people I know. Homophobia - if that’s what it is - is a complicated thing”

we assume that this acceptance exists everywhere, we risk complacency. We risk forgetting those of us that have to travel back to the 1950s every few months. And in the long term, if we are complacent, we risk those spaces disappearing, one by one.

I am sat across from a boy with an earring, a girl with dyed hair. We do not stand out. No one looks at us twice. Later I will go and see a girl for a drink. And I will bring her flowers, hold her hand, kiss her goodnight. And I will never stop being grateful that I can.

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# Arts

## 'An exquisite way of expressing grief': the Chagall stained glass of All Saints' Tudeley

Staff writer **Rosa Phelps** interviews Josephine Willoughby about the stained glass windows created by French artist and groundbreaking modernist Marc Chagall

**M**arc Chagall: ground-breaking modernist. All Saints' Tudeley, a tiny church with a predominantly elderly congregation in a rural Kentish hamlet. What on earth could they have in common? All Saints' is the only place of worship in the world to have a full set of stained-glass windows painted and designed by Chagall. It's a beautiful place, made all the more exquisite by the poignantly tragic tale of how the windows came to be. I sit down with Josephine Willoughby, a member of the congregation and trustee of the Chagall Windows Preservation Trust to learn more.

Originally there was to be just a single window in memoriam of Sarah D'Avigdor Goldsmid. She had resided at Somerhill House, a Jacobean manor up the road from the church. However, in 1963, tragedy struck the family: 'Aged 21, Sarah went on a boating trip with two friends and only one of them came home.'

“It's a beautiful place, made all the more exquisite by the poignantly tragic tale of how the windows came to be”

Her grieving family searched for a fitting way to commemorate their loved one.

“Sarah was madly keen on modern art. She was the first person ever to buy a painting by David Hockney, right at the beginning of his career.” Sarah particularly adored Chagall's work, above all his stained-glass creations. Her mother decided, “The way I want to honour my daughter is to have a window made for the East window of this church.” As Josephine says, clearly moved, “That's quite an exquisite way of expressing grief, not allowing it to just be an ending, but to become a very big beginning.”

The gift of the window didn't come easily. As Josephine points out, “Chagall was at the height of his fame. Why on earth would he accept this commission?” Fortunately, the D'Avigdor Goldsmids and Chagall had a mutual friend, through whom they contacted the artist. Chagall initially refused the commission, but Sarah's mother, Lady Rosemary, persisted. “She kept writing, and eventually, very excitingly, he said yes.”

The finished window is “the narrative story of the life and death of Sarah. It depicts her in the sea surrounded by fish, her grieving family and home, and Sarah joyously mounted on a red horse before ascending to heaven.” Sarah

has “lost her life but she's at peace. I believe that Chagall's message is that God's love transcends all and we share the hope of resurrection.” At the top of the window, “you've got Christ with his arms outstretched on the cross. He's loving and welcoming.” Then, “over the top, there's what I believe is the Holy Spirit, a big bird's wing.”

I ask what prompted the expansion of the project, moving beyond the first window to include all of them. Josephine vividly recounts the turning point, Chagall's first visit ever to the church in 1967. “On entering the church, Chagall would have seen the north windows, a mixture of clear glass and a medley of Victorian stained glass. Although Chagall had famously been commissioned by the Rockefeller

to design a church's windows in New York state, in the case of the Tudeley church, he would gift the windows for

free. This dramatic moment marked the beginning of an ambitious project; Chagall's desire to entirely fill a place of worship with his glass was finally fulfilled in 1985 the year of his death.”

Chagall actively participated in the physical process of the window's creation, and this is immediately evident as a visitor. As Josephine explains, “the beauty of these is, you can see the bubbles, you can see the scratches, you can see the thumbprints, especially because they are at eye-level.” In addition, “Chagall made scratches onto the glass which he called pecking, tracing lines all over it like rock paintings or runes.” This affects the refraction of light in the church; “they're always ablaze with colour, but they change with the light, so one day will be totally different to the next.”

All Saints' is “a place of healing and a place of great spirituality”



▲ JANE RAINBOW

great spirituality” to Josephine. Something a visitor once told her encapsulates this: “she considered All Saints’ to be the Thin place, which in Celtic Christianity is the fine line that divides heaven and earth. It’s where that line is thinnest which is just the most appropriate and beautiful way of putting it.” Chagall himself believed that his stained glass occupied a liminal space between the spiritual realm and the physical world, Josephine tells me. In 1962, he said, “For me a stained-glass window is a transparent partition between my heart and the heart of the world.”

“A stained-glass window is a transparent partition between my heart and the heart of the world”

The church has an extraordinary effect on visitors, she says. “It's difficult to explain. All Saints' is a place where people might just come to see and marvel at the windows, but they don't necessarily expect the church to leave such a lasting impact. You don't have to have faith to visit but for everyone it will be a spiritual experience.” “that's quite an exquisite way of expressing grief, not allowing it to just be an ending, but to become a very big beginning.” According to her, the family has found much solace in knowing that ‘out of their tragedy has been born this extraordinary gift.’



# The paradox of the female muse

In the second installment of her column, **Eleanor Antoniou** explores attempts by contemporary artists to reclaim the figure of the female muse

▼ DANIELLE JUMP

**F**emale creators have long had a complicated relationship with the figure of the muse. In ancient Greek mythology, the nine Muses were goddesses who inspired the creation of the arts, literature, music, and sciences. This seems to suggest that they are meant to be active subjects, creators rather than crafted objects. And yet, when we think of a muse today, we most often picture a passive, reclining female model; she is powerless, perhaps nude, and posing silently in front of a man. Traditionally, a muse is always a woman, and the creator who uses her for his art is a man.

“  
Modern female artists are fighting back to reclaim her and to restore her creative power  
”

There is, then, a paradox at the heart of the concept of the muse. The notion of the ancient muses seems to enable female creativity: the muses are goddesses, who, in turn, inspire others to create art. However, as male writers and artists begin to shape their own creations, they also shape the muse herself. She becomes another part of their creation as they begin to appropriate her, so that our modern understanding of the muse is a passive and objectified woman. She is still an inspiration to the male creator, but inspires as a powerless object, as an emblem of idealised female beauty, rather than an active creator in her own right.

Even Sappho, the most famous female poet from antiquity, has been named as the tenth muse. In the passive understanding of the muse, this limits Sappho to an object for male writers to exploit. She becomes an object of poetry, rather than a poet. Indeed, it is Ovid's version of Sappho that influences how so many people think of her today: the love-sick girl who threw herself off a rock to her doom, because of her overwhelming love for

Phaeon. In her own poetry, Sappho presents women as subjects, and yet she herself has become a story and an object through history's interpretation of her: the patriarchal myth surrounding her life all too often overlooks Sappho's own subjective creativity.

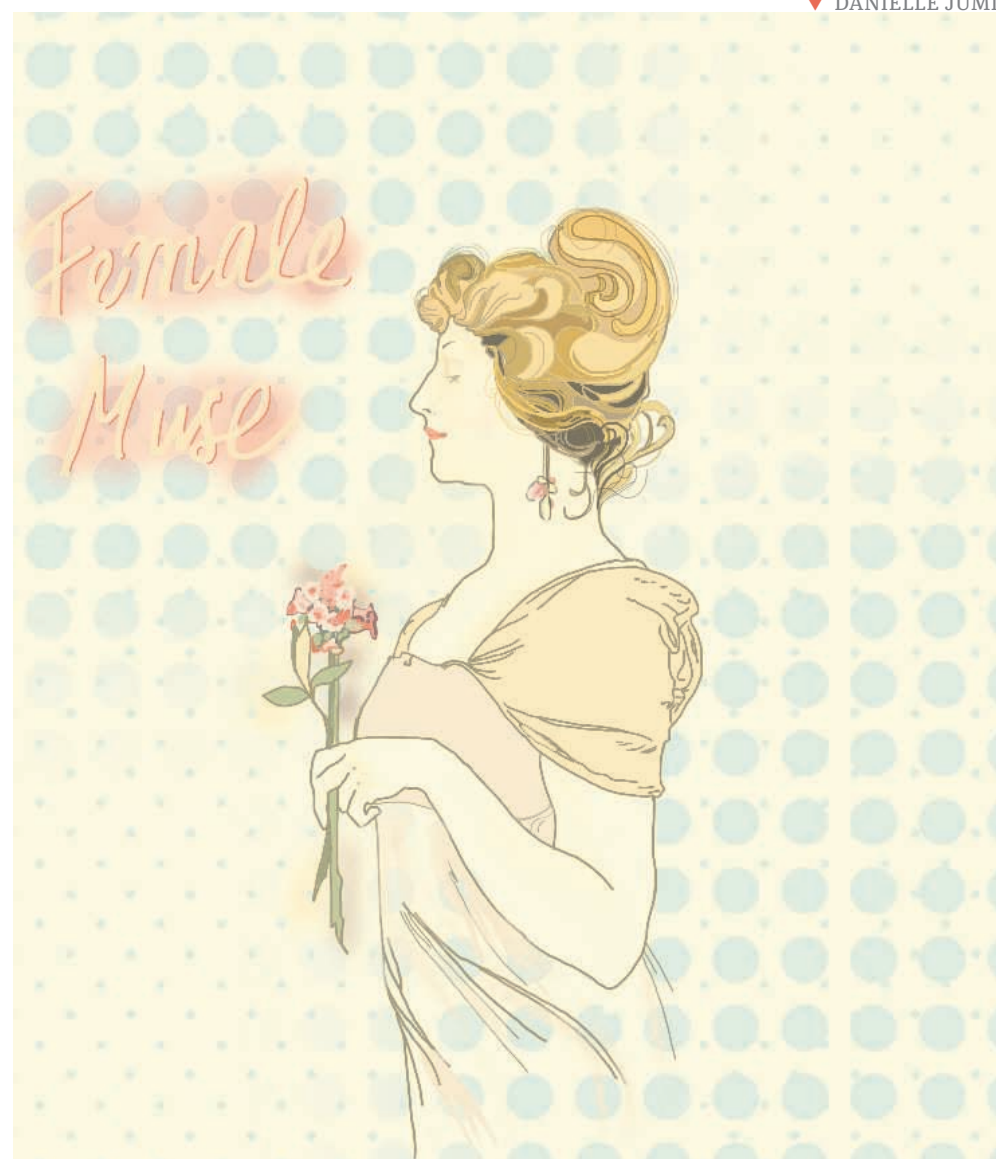
Whilst male-dominated art history has moulded the muse into a powerless figure, modern female artists are fighting back to reclaim her and to restore her creative power: they are repositioning themselves as subjects and calling attention to the paradox of the subject/object dichotomy that has defined the muse throughout history.

In her self-portraits, Frida Kahlo creates herself as her own muse. She famously said, “I am my own muse. I am the subject I know best. The subject I want to know better.” Kahlo ascribes to herself a unique power, reclaiming her image and drawing creative inspiration from within herself.

Yayoi Kusama does something similar by casting herself in her artwork as both subject and object. She becomes both the inspiration for the art but also the viewed image, inviting viewers to look at her body, sometimes nude, but always retaining her own power as creator of the image itself. Kusama's Infinity Mirror Rooms further play upon the subject/object dichotomy, as those who walk through cannot photograph the art without themselves in the frame. We are irresistibly drawn to look at ourselves within the infi-

“  
The male gaze is cancelled out here as women take the nude for themselves  
”

nately sparkling reflections, unable to separate ourselves as viewer of the art from the object that we are viewing. We become almost a part of the installation, adopting the position of a traditional muse, but always retaining our power to move freely and gaze at the piece as we desire.



Today, it is perhaps the female nude above all which calls to mind images of the passive female muse posing for the male artist. But the beautiful watercolour paintings created by Blanca Schofield Legorburo on her Instagram page, *Eve Taking a Nude*, reclaim the female body and celebrate it. The male gaze is cancelled out here as women take the nude for themselves. The paintings are posted alongside the voices of each model, whose own words accompany each portrait, in stark contrast to the silenced women who have modelled for male artists throughout history.

Finally, last term, the New Hall Art Collection at Murray Edwards pushed against the boundaries and paradoxes surrounding the

modern muse through their exhibition, *The Centre of the Frame*, which displayed Maud Sulter's series of the nine Greek muses recast as Black women, calling out the Westernised beauty standards with which the muse has been burdened. Crucially, Sulter's women all retain a sense of agency, and Sulter herself appears as one of the muses, Calliope. She places herself inside the frame, appearing as an equal alongside her other models, each accompanied by Sulter's own poetry: she is both the artist and the muse here. In this way, the muse's original creative power is finally restored through the works of women artists, and the objectified and patriarchal muse figure vanishes through the art of reclamation.

## Hockney exhibiton to open at the Fitzwilliam Christopher Dorrell

The Fitzwilliam museum and Heong Gallery at Downing are hosting an exhibition of David Hockney's work from March 15th to August 29th. *Hockney's Eye: The Art and Technology of Depiction*, is the first exhibition to “give serious scholarly scrutiny to Hockney's ideas as well as his art.”

Featuring some works of Hockney that have never been exhibited publicly, such as his self portrait painted in November last year, the exhibition investigates “Hockney's lifelong exploration of how the surface of a picture can convey what we actually see,

radically questioning traditional ways of depicting space and optical perspective.” It will juxtapose Hockney's work with classics in the museum's collection, including Vincent Van Gogh, Claude Monet, John Constable and Nicholas Poussin. Through these juxtapositions the exhibition hopes to explore some of the ideas Hockney explored in the 2001 book *Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the Lost Techniques of the Old Masters*.

The exhibition, co-curated by Martin Gayford, Martin Kemp and Jane Munro, was brought to Cambridge upon the suggestion

of Martin Kemp, alumnus of Downing College. Portraits of both Kemp and Gayford are in the show. “As *Hockney's Eye* shows, a museum's collection may be permanent, but it is never static.”

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# Fashion

## Love fashion, hate myself

Columnist **Amy Reid** reflects on the curse of using clothing as a crutch and the dangers of keeping clothing too close to your heart

I can't remember the exact moment I started hating the way I looked. I'd grown up as an awkward-looking primary school girl with a questionable haircut, but it never crossed my mind that appearance was an issue until a few years into secondary school. From then, like most girls my age, crippling insecurity weighed me down with conviction and intention.

As a child, I sourced my confidence from other places, such as being an advanced reader for my age and being called 'a pleasure to teach' at my Year 6 parents' evening. Shockingly, as I



style can often be a strange melange of self-esteem boosters and artistic inspiration. It's hard to unpick our relationship with fashion as a whole because it exists in so many forms; it's a means of expression both at the level of haute couture and, equally, for the ordinary person getting ready to run a quick morning errand. Fashion is deeply intertwined with the human image and beauty like no other art form. We don't get to opt-out of our own image.

For most people, relationships with clothing go beyond function. There's

no denying that clothing is emotional, whether it's a bag with sentimental value or an outfit that makes us feel body-confident. However, we can

mood is maintained by a broad association between looking good and feeling good. Dressing smartly and looking 'put together' is a trait we expect from successful people, and dressing in line with a sub-culture seems to be a principal entry requirement. An unkempt appearance is associated with depression, laziness, a lack of care for oneself, and certain styles of dress with certain groups of people or interests – this all leads us to feel that clothing has to be an extension of your personality, 24/7. At that point, fashion is no longer a means of self-expression but a way to keep others satisfied. The notion that your clothing should always say something about you or represent you is absurd, and will likely never be truly fulfilled – a person cannot be distilled into a few items of clothing and some quirky accessories.

How creative you can be with your style is directly limited by your confidence, or what you believe you can 'pull off'. This often results in some extremely boring looks and a proclivity to just follow trends. To be fixated on clothing being



▲ INSTAGRAM / D.3B4 at Sidge.

I love fashion because it's an art form so personal and connected to the human form – but that's also why it pains me. Clothes can make me feel amazing, but they can also ruin my day. And to be honest, I'm tired of letting the

photos posted the morning after the night before ruin my memory of the time I enjoyed when I was living it rather than examining myself under a microscope.

*“If I couldn't feel pretty, then by God I was going to have my fashion efforts recognised”*

got older, this wholesome praise stopped having the same impact and, after accepting the ugly truth, I leant on clothes to give me pride in my appearance. If I couldn't feel pretty, then

by God I was going to have my fashion efforts recognised.

Now, at the age of 20, I fashion and feel comfortable in my skin like I never have before. I can't pretend I don't feel happy in clothes that make me look my best eyes of others. I do love fashion claim, or am I just a victim obsessed with pleasing people? Potentially. Sadly, I of my love of dress stems from a fundamental need

find ourselves

trapped and unsatisfied as a result of tying personal style too tightly

to our personal identity. Fashion's ability to control our

*“Clothing is woven so carefully in with my self-esteem that I pass by fashion concepts I know I love because I just can't risk feeling ugly”*



▲ INSTAGRAM / LAME.COBAIN

'flattering' is to be led down a restrictive and decidedly un-creative, boring path. To be honest, I'm definitely, and

regrettably, in that headspace right now – after a few months of low self-esteem I can't bear to see myself in anything which makes my body look any way other than its 'best'. Clothing is woven so carefully in with my self-esteem that I pass by fashion concepts I know I love because I just can't risk feeling ugly. Clothing is my comfort blanket. And I haven't even touched on my habit of single-handedly funding the entire staff of Vinted's holiday pay in one teary-eyed sitting after a bad day



▲ INSTAGRAM / PALOMIA



# Details, drama and dopamine: Fall 2022

Fashion Editor **Kasia Truscott** examines the influence of dopamine dressing on the Fall 2022 ready-to-wear runway

**F**lorals for spring? Groundbreaking. Neon pinks and electric blues for autumn? Actually, that might just be so. With the promise of longer days and blue skies so nearly upon us, there's some-

as the colour of the year for 2022, a shade of periwinkle blue with a "spritely, joyous attitude and dynamic presence that encourages creativity and imaginative expression." It's an optimistic outlook that has clearly been em-

tinsel make it the perfect collection for capturing the energy and essence of the modern young woman: 'it' girl by day and wild child by night. The silhouettes are short, sweet and classy, paying homage to the brand's haute couture roots with a fun, flirty twist. From gingham checks in apple green and hot pink, to blooming ball skirts in a deep romantic red, this might just be my favourite Oscar de la Renta collection to date. After all, what better way to beat the oncoming winter blues than a yellow feathered coat and a zingy teal two-piece?

When people think of LaQuan Smith for Fall 2022 ready-to-wear, they usually think of Julia Fox opening the show in that futuristic femme fatale number. And while I really can't blame them for drooling over the gown's sexy cut-out details, I'm also keen for people to start talking about Smith's splashes of electric blue, candy red

named as "the new New York bitch." It's dauntless, it's cool, it's intriguing - and it brings plenty of drama along with the dopamine.

Dopamine dressing isn't just confined to block colours and playful textures, however. As Kenzo has proved this season, you can have as much fun with prints as you can with colour. A striking new take on florals is woven into the beautiful calligraphic strokes on a variety of men's suits, jackets and trench coats. Elsewhere, a vintage-inspired poppy print takes centre stage in the form of waistcoats, skirts and midi dresses, fully embracing the playful, nostalgic essence of the collection. Personal kudos has to go to the daisy print of one denim two-piece; the

*“What better way to beat the oncoming winter blues than a yellow feathered coat and a zingy teal two-piece”*



▲ INSTAGRAM @OSCARDELARENTA

thing of an optimistic air about an oncoming March that feels significantly more 'normal' than the last. And if the outlook of the 2022 runway is certainly anything to go by, it's that dopamine dressing - with its loud patterns and colourful palettes - is giving us all the more reason to think and feel positive. Gone are the days where bright block colours are reserved for summer wardrobes; the latest drops from high fashion retailers for Fall 2022 ready-to-wear are proving that this season, it's out with the basics, and in with the drama.

Nicknamed the 'happy hormone', dopamine is the neurotransmitter that spikes when we experience something pleasurable. It's fitting, then, that dopamine dressing is the art of mood-boosting fashion, wearing clothes and colours that give us a happiness kick; think statement prints, bright block colours, and over-the-top details. The phenomena has long been the subject of psychological research, pouring insight into the ways in which our moods are driven by what we wear. If you associate the colour yellow with feelings of happiness, for instance, research suggests you are more likely to embrace and reignite that feeling when you wear yellow clothes. So, what's the specific hype around it for Fall 2022?

Pantone, the global authority on colour, kick-started the year by naming 'Very Peri'

braced by designer collections for the past few seasons, including the zingy orange accessories of Valentino Spring/Summer 2021 and Versace's pink Bratz doll heels. Retailers this year are jumping aboard the dopamine bandwagon with their latest drops of Fall 2022 ready-to-wear, featuring real statement pieces like the metallic ruffled bubble skirts from Paco

Rabanne and, a personal favourite, a psychedelic yellow

*“Neon pinks and electric blues for autumn? Actually, that just might be so”*

chequered coat from Conner Ives.

Dopamine dressing is truly setting the rules for the upcoming autumn, proving that 2022 might just be the year of feel-good fashion.

A real standout name this season is Oscar de la Renta. Vibrant hues of pinks, blues, greens and yellows atop the striking textures of leather and



▲ INSTAGRAM / @OSCARDELARENTA



▲ INSTAGRAM / @CAROLINAHERRERA

light wash and baby-blue colour palette adds the perfect touch of a casual, fresh buoyancy to its loose-fitting silhouette.

If there's ever a need for more evidence that clothing really does impact the way we feel, then maybe amid the excitement of Fall 2022 ready-to-wear do we find all the answers we need. With designers like LaQuan Smith taking real risks this season, splashes of unique colours and adventurous prints are enough to give anyone a real rush of dopamine as we dream of better days to come in the year ahead. It's true that neon might not be the new black just yet, but maybe it's time we all start giving ourselves little splashes of optimism by making our wardrobes just that little bit brighter.



# Film & TV

## A talking penis is the least of its worries

*Pam and Tommy* is entertaining but exploitative, says **Lotte Brundle**

I was hesitant about watching Disney+'s new show *Pam and Tommy*, which they're selling with the oh-so-catchy tag-line 'based on a true scandal'.

If you set aside the fact that streaming services will now exploit literally anything for money, it's surprising to see the dramatisation of Pamela Anderson and Tommy Lee's leaked sex tape lined up alongside Disney children's classics such as *Beauty and The Beast* and *Frozen*. But I guess the '+' in Disney+ must stand for 'plus sex-tape', because this children's film company has just gotten X-rated.

In the end, my morals were vastly overruled by the multiple teaser-trailers that bombarded my Facebook and Instagram. I'm sure you've seen them? They feature an eye-bogglingly busty bleach-blonde (prosthetics) Lily James as Pamela, and a nipple-pierced, tattooed leopard-print thong clad Sebastian Stan (again - a very interesting use of prosthetics here). Quite frankly, who wouldn't want to watch the series after seeing that? After, too, seeing multiple articles on actress Lily James's unbelievable 'Pamification', I couldn't help my curiosity. I am only human and so, naturally intrigued, I caved, sat down, and watched.

*Pam and Tommy* is a great watch. For anyone who doesn't already know, it tells the story of Pamela Anderson and Tommy Lee's

leaked sex-tape in the 90's. The show also stars Seth Rogan and is engaging, amusing and moving. However, just like the original sex tape, it is a show that puts the viewers pleasure first, at the expense of Pamela Anderson's privacy.

Lily James, the actress that plays Pamela, has been very vocal about the respect and admiration she has for ex-*Baywatch* actress Anderson. Ironic, considering Pamela Anderson, when approached by Disney, made it

“  
It's phallic, it's  
graphic, it's huge,  
and it's ridiculous  
”

clear that she did not want to be involved in the show at all. This sex tape shook the world when it was leaked without Lee and Anderson's consent in 1995. It seems downright malicious, then, for Disney+ to profit off the pain and trauma these real people - Anderson especially - suffered as a result of having their private sex tape publicly leaked. What

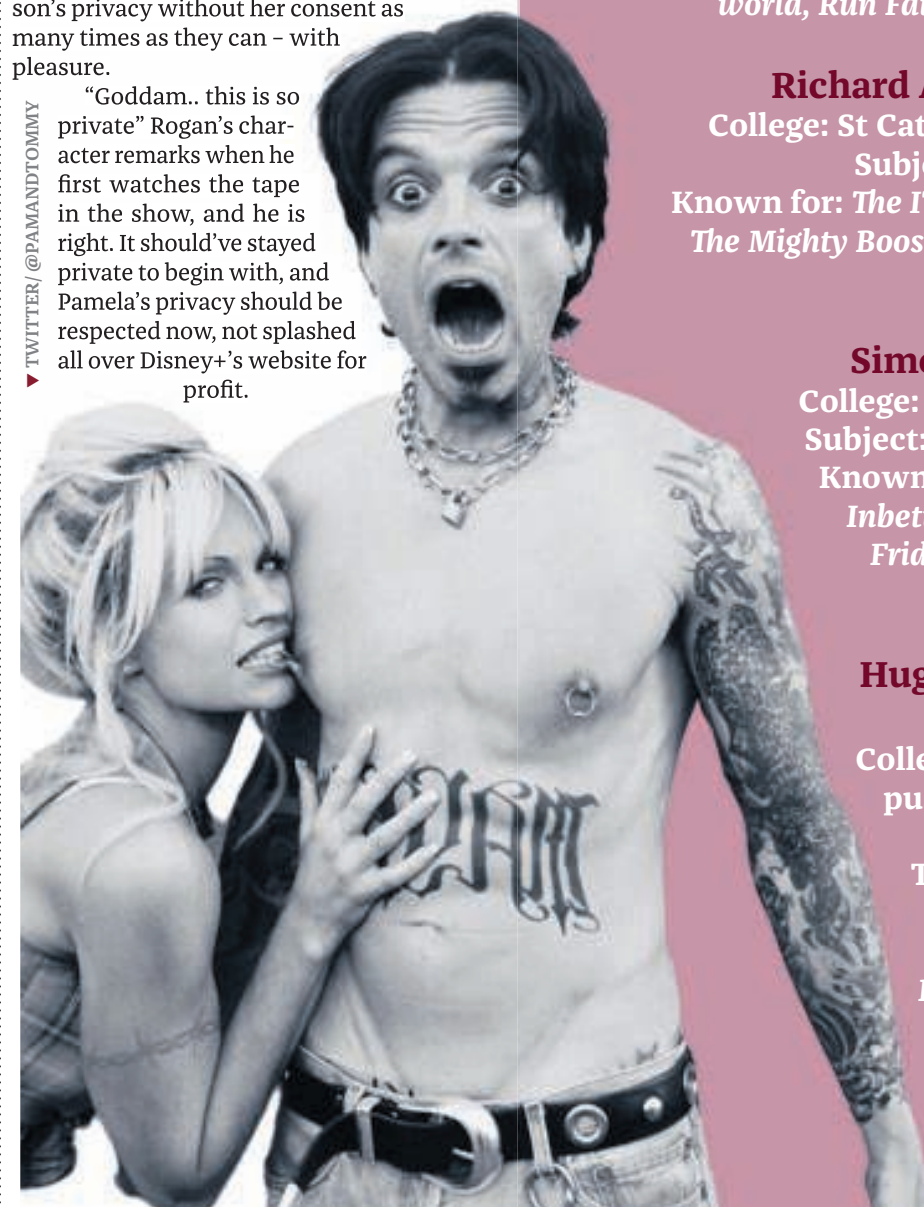
this dramatisation invites the viewer to do more than anything, is look up and watch the original tape - and thus exploit these non-consenting individuals all over again.

In an interview with Thrillist, James was prompted by the following statement: "Pamela has been very upfront about not watching the show and not wanting to engage [...] because it was such a traumatic time for her". But James emphatically replied that she "wish[es that Pamela] had been involved" but that she also "felt really confident" she "was surrounded by people who were focused on telling the story honestly [...] with total empathy". This, I think, is where James's - and the *Pam and Tommy* production team's feminism - seems to fall short.

The show itself features a popularly discussed moment with a talking prosthetic penis. It's phallic, it's graphic, it's huge, and it's ridiculous. This itself seems to make a complete joke of Pamela and Tommy's trauma at the hands of this sex-tape.

In one of the earlier episodes, Lily James as Pamela says to Stan's Tommy Lee: "I feel violated, don't you?" This blatant awareness proves that the team behind *Pam and Tommy* aren't blind to the fact that they are re-surfacing something that heavily traumatised and violated the real Pamela Anderson all over again. It shows instead that they simply don't care: As long as Disney+ keeps playing them that top dollar, they'll exploit Pamela Anderson's privacy without her consent as many times as they can - with pleasure.

“Goddam.. this is so private” Rogan's character remarks when he first watches the tape in the show, and he is right. It should've stayed private to begin with, and Pamela's privacy should be respected now, not splashed all over Disney+'s website for profit.



## From 'Bridge to

Everyone knows that Steph  
how many of the acting alum

**Rachel Weisz**

College: Trinity Hall

Subject: English

Known for: *The Favourite*, *The Mummy*, *About a Boy*

**Naomie Harris**

College: Pembroke

Subject: Social and Political Sciences

Known for: *James Bond*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*

**Sacha Baron Cohen**

College: Christ's

Subject: History

Known for: *Borat*, *Bruno*, *Ali G*

**Thandiwe Newton**

College: Downing

Subject: Social Anthropology

Known for: *Line of Duty*, *Westworld*, *Run Fatboy Run*

**Richard Ayoade**

College: St Catharine's

Subject: Law

Known for: *The IT Crowd*, *The Mighty Boosh*, *Travel Man*

**Simon Bird**

College: Queen's

Subject: English

Known for: *The Inbetweeners*, *Friday Night Dinner*

**Hugh Bonneville**

College: Corpus Christi

Subject: Theology

Known

for:

*Downton*

*Abbey*,

*Paddington*

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## the big screen

en Fry is an ex-student, but  
ni on our list can you guess?

**Sandi Toksvig**

College: Girton

Subject: Archaeology and Anthropology

Known for: *QI*, *The Great British Bake Off*

**Emma Corrin**

College: St John's

Subject: English, Drama and the Arts

Known for: *The Crown*

**David Attenborough**

College: Clare

Subject: Natural Sciences

Known for: *Blue Planet*, *Planet Earth*

**Claudia Winkleman**

College: Murray-Edwards (formerly New Hall)

Subject: Art History

Known for: *Strictly Come Dancing*

**Phil Wang**

College: King's

Subject: Engineering

Known for: *Taskmaster*, *Daphne Sounds Expensive*

**Lily Cole**

College: King's

Subject: Social and political sciences

Known for: *St Trinian's*

**Ian McKellen**

College: St. Catharine's

Subject: English

Known for: *Lord of the Rings*, *X-Men*

**Miriam Margolyes**

College: Newnham

Subject: English

Known for: *Harry Potter*, *Romeo + Juliet*, *Yentl*, *Call The Midwife*

Catrin Osborne

# Fashion in film

*Film and TV* take you along the red carpet of cinematic costume design

Since the dawn of Hollywood, fashion and film have been intricately intertwined. Outrageous outfits and creative costumes will add symbolism and visual splendour to any piece of cinema. In turn, the big screen's best clothing has influenced shoppers across the globe. From Afrofuturistic tribal designs to Shakespearean characters decked in designer clothing, these films are a feast for the eyes.

“Creative costumes will add symbolism and visual splendour to any piece of cinema”

## Back to the Future (1985)

**Katie Kasperson**

Not many movies cover two distinct decades' worth of fashion; *Back to the Future* is a rare find in this regard. When Marty McFly time-travels from 1985 to 1955, he's wearing Nike trainers, a red puffer vest, and a pair of Levi 501s, all beneath a yellow hazmat suit. Immediately he sticks out, mistaken for a space invader during his first '50s encounter. When Marty's mother, Lorraine, meets him, she keeps calling him Calvin because Calvin Klein is “written all over [his] underwear”.

The film's climax occurs during the Enchantment Under the Sea school dance, where Marty's parents famously have their first kiss. Lorraine sports a strapless pastel pink dress with a '50s-style swing skirt, and George, Marty's father, wears an all-white suit with a black bow tie. Meanwhile, Marty dons a grey blazer and a burgundy tie but accidentally exposes himself as an outsider while playing 'Johnny B. Goode'. While *Back to the Future* is not about fashion per se, costuming plays an essential and often-overlooked role in the film's successful depiction of culture clash.

## West Side Story (2021)

**Nadia Sorabji Stewart**

There is one word that can describe Paul Tazewell's designs in Spielberg's remake of the 1961 classic: bursting. The characters burst out of their costumes and the costumes burst off the screen. One might imagine that the best dressed would be the character who presents the most obvious sex appeal, Anita, in her lemon dress lined with blood-red frills. This outfit is present in the film's most exuberant and carefree number, America, where Tazewell has snuck in an homage to the past, with an ensemble

dancer dressed in the famous lilac frock Anita wore in 1961. Respectful of history, he is not shackled by it. He confidently reverses the colour scheme that represented the warring gangs in 1961, yellow and purple. Now, the latter wear rusty copper waistcoats and it is the former who stroll the streets in a darker palette. Their muscles almost burst out of torn, oil-stained vests. One has the impression that youthful energy might explode at any moment from those fabric confines.

## Belle de Jour (2018)

**Sophia Till**

For Luis Buñuel's 1967 film, *Belle de Jour*, the costuming works to help tell the story of a young, married bourgeois woman, who spends her days as a high-class sex worker while her husband is at work. Catherine Deneuve, who plays Séverine Serizy, is dressed head to toe in Yves Saint Laurent, the couturier responsible for her entire wardrobe. Vogue has described this film as YSL's “most outstanding contribution to cinema”.

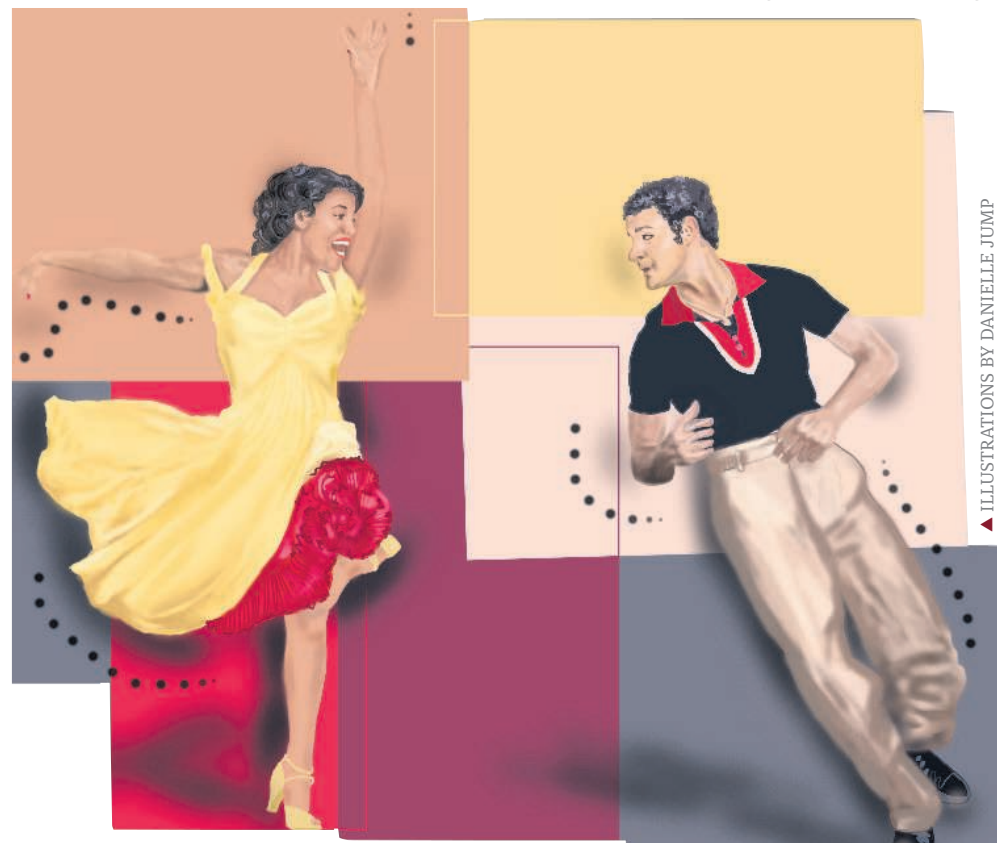
Adapted from the 1928 novel by Joseph Kessel, the costumes capture the duality of the character, who is all at once prudish, erotic, seductive and alluring. The vinyl, black trench coat has now become a cult classic, making its way into mainstream fashion; we still see it on the catwalk today. Even the shoes that Deneuve wore for the film, which were part of YSL's 1965 Spring-Summer collection, were eventually named after the film. Deneuve herself says, “the character's style really owes a lot to the image that Saint Laurent created”. Though, perhaps it is not

only Séverine that should be thanking the Paris designer, but fashion as we know it.

## Black Panther (2018)

**Catrin Osborne**

Ruth E. Carter's costumes perfectly encompass Black Panther's pressing theme of Afrofuturism. Throughout the film's creation, Carter diligently studied and incorporated traditional pieces from across the continent. No scene embodies this as much as when Wakanda's tribes line the cliffs of Warrior Falls; each character is adorned with purposefully chosen African clothing such as Basotho blankets and a Maasai headdress. To promote the MCU's brand of superheroes, Carter balanced traditionalism with cutting-edge fashion design, such as 3D printing and interweaving the fictional metal of vibranium into myriad costumes. A River Tribe elder (Isaach de Bankolé) wears a modern suit by Ghanaian-British designer Ozwald Boateng paired with an African lip plate. By balancing African tradition with current Black couture, Carter's costumes are essential to promoting the film's message.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY DANIELLE JUMP



# Music

## 'In the Fire': Dave and the power of live music

**Ryan Keys** takes a look back at Dave's performances over the years, commending his stage presence

**M**y first encounter with Dave's music was entirely by accident. I had left YouTube on in the background to shuffle music, when I was suddenly struck by a voice I had never heard before delivering moving, vulnerable lyrics about the dangerous life of an up-and-coming rapper to a sparse but powerful piano accompaniment. The song was 'Panic Attack', from Dave's first ever EP, 'Six Paths'. He was performing it live to a studio audience for the 2017 Future Festival, and they were just as in awe as I was. Not only was he rapping every line with an emotional intensity that made you feel every word, he was doing so while playing his own instrumental on an upright piano.

At the tracks close, the accompaniment drops out and Dave delivers an a capella verse

“  
For a moment you  
forget that there was a  
crowd there at all  
”

that blurs the line between rap and spoken word poetry – and the crowd doesn't make a sound. In fact,

watching it, for a moment you forget that there was a crowd there at all, until Dave finishes the song with a sigh of satisfied exhaustion and they erupt in to thunderous applause.

This was like nothing I'd ever seen before in the UK rap genre, or, indeed, in hip-hop at all. I came away from the video with the giddy excitement of discovering something entirely new –

and I couldn't wait to see more.

Luckily, I wouldn't have to wait long.

In the years following this performance, Dave sky-rocketed into the UK rap hall-of-fame. His second EP, 'Game Over', dropped later that year, successfully capitalised on the momentum built by popular singles like the 'Wanna Know Remix' featuring Drake and 'Samantha' with J Hus. Two years later, Dave released his stunning debut album 'Psychodrama', which won the BRIT award for Album of the Year and solidified his status – aged just 21 – as one of the greats.

Over this time, Dave produced a number of memorable live performances. He delivered impressive studio sets for 'Later... with Jools Holland', BBC Radio 1's Live Lounge and NPR's Tiny Desk Concert, and performed for thousands at Reading and Leeds Festival and Glastonbury. It wasn't until 2020, however, that I experienced the same feeling watching Dave perform live as I did in 2017.

At the 2020 BRIT Awards show, before collecting his award for Album of the Year, Dave astonished the nation with a performance of his song 'Black'. It begins with Dave alone on stage, sitting at a strikingly minimalist black-and-white piano, on top of which are impressive projected 3D visuals to accompany his lyrics. After delivering his first verse with characteristic prowess, Dave is joined by another pianist who sits opposite him on what we now realise is a double-sided piano. As the two pianos come together in glorious harmony and Dave continues to rap one of his

“  
An emotional resonance that can only come from live music  
”

most lyrically-powerful songs, we realise we are bearing witness to true greatness.

And then, as we think the song has reached its end, Dave stands up from his piano stool and performs a never-before-heard extra verse. Condemning institutional racism and paying tribute to the heroic Jack Merritt, this verse gives the song's powerful message an

Listen to the best of Dave's discography here:



emotional resonance which can only come from live music. Currently sitting at nine million views on YouTube, this performance sits alongside previous BRIT appearances by Skepta and Stormzy as one of the defining moments of the UK rap genre.

This show-stealing act set a precedent for live performance which seemed almost impossible to match, even by Dave himself. But on the 8th February he did just that. For the 2022 BRIT Awards, Dave, along with UK rap royalty Fredo, Meekz, Ghetts and Giggs, gave a historic performance of the song 'In the Fire' from his sophomore album 'We're All Alone in This Together' – which tops everything that came before it.

From the very start, we know we're in for something special, as Konyikeh delivers a

“  
After a pandemic that forced live music to a halt, Dave is at the very forefront of its resurgence – and, personally, I can't think of a better man for the job  
”

beautifully soulful rendition of the gospel song that the track samples, while Dave accompanies her with a wonderfully subtle fingerstyle guitar part. Then, the track begins, and there's an uproar from the crowd as Fredo appears to perform his verse. Each of the featured artists delivers their verses impeccably – without a backing-track in sight – and the whole thing is accompanied by the enchanting harmonies of a full gospel choir. The performance goes from strength to strength, with each artist truly living up to the occasion, until we get to Dave's closing verse which is, of course, delivered masterfully. And then, as if all this weren't enough, Dave grabs an electric guitar and plays a dazzling solo, all the while flames are shooting out of its neck. As the solo ends, and Dave stands on a stage lit up with fire, alongside four of the best rappers in the UK scene, you can't help thinking: "He's done it again".

Once more, Dave has surpassed himself, and shown us everything that live music could and should be. After a pandemic that forced live music to a halt, Dave is at the very forefront of its resurgence – and, personally, I can't think of a better man for the job.

### The Varsity Guide to Careers 2021/2022

## Varsity

Guide to Careers 2021-22



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# Theatre

## What's on

Why not celebrate the end of Lent term with a night of student theatre?

**Unsoiled**, Corpus, 19:00, 1st – 5th March

**Footlights Spring Revue 2022: When Life Gives You Lemons**, ADC, 19:45, 1st – 5th March

**The York Crucifixion**, Corpus, 21:30, 1st – 5th March

**Footlights Smokers**, ADC, 23:00, 1st and 8th March

**MODERATION**, ADC Larkum Studio, 20:00, 2nd – 5th March

**Ed: The Musical**, Cripps Auditorium, Magdalene College, 21:00, 3rd – 5th March

**1972: The Future of Sex**, Girton College Old Hall, 21:00, 3rd and 5th March

**The Witness for the Prosecution**, Selwyn Chapel, 19:00, 4th – 5th March

**The God Committee**, Howard Theatre, Downing College, 19:30, 4th – 5th March

**Sleeping Beauty**, West Road Concert Hall, 19:30, 4th – 5th March

**Drifting**, West Road Concert Hall, 19:15, 6th March

**Medea the Musical**, Town and Gown, 19:30, 7th – 10th March

**CUMTS: Old and New Bar Night**, ADC Bar, 20:00, 7th March

**Peer Gynt**, Corpus, 19:00, 8th – 12th March

**BME Shakespeare: Much Ado About Nothing**, ADC, 19:45, 8th – 12th March

**Crave**, Corpus, 21:30, 8th – 12th March

**Second Generation: Ice Cream Tubs and Tupperware**, ADC, 23:00, 9th – 12th March

**The History Boys**, Girton College Old Hall, 19:30, 10th – 11th March

**A Type of Christ**, Jesus College, 14:00, 12th March

**Speakeasy**, ADC Bar, 20:00, 13th March

**CUOS Shorts 2022**, Trinity College Chapel, 20:00, 14th – 15th March

**The Captive**, Corpus, 19:00, 15th – 19th March

**Not Even the Dogs**, Corpus, 21:30, 15th – 19th March

**The Student Union**, Cripps Auditorium, Magdalene College, 19:00, 16th – 19th March

**Singin' in the Rain**, ADC, 19:45 16th – 26th March, 14:30 19th, 24th and 26th March

**CU Show Choir: O M Glee!**, ADC, 23:00, 16th March

**Keeping Up with the Kimprov**, ADC, 23:00, 17th – 19th March

## A modest defence of pretentious theatre

Not everyone can be Samuel Beckett. Theatre Editor **Georgina Hayward** argues there is a fine line between pretentious theatre and valuable theatre

Oh no. You've just stumbled into the wrong room at the theatre and now instead of watching the latest big-budget adaptation of *Macbeth*, you're watching a small, student-written piece about a dying cat and it's all a metaphor for late-stage capitalism. And it's from the cat's perspective.

Let's imagine, for a moment, that this is a realistic scenario (as in, let's pretend that Cat Capitalism would make it to the same venue as a well-funded *Macbeth*). What might your main gripe with the production be?

▼ LOUIS ASHWORTH

Maybe it's poorly written. Maybe the script is slow-paced, the dia-

logue stilted, the characterisation of the cat poorly thought-out. The monologues are a bit long-winded, and trite assertions

are made about The State of Things Today. Wake Up World. This is an Urgent Piece of Theatre.

Maybe it just isn't your thing. You really don't enjoy extended monologues in which the lead (playing the cat)

rub his back against the legs of the front row. You didn't like the attempts at audience interaction or the avant-garde dance to triangle music. It's not your cup of tea. I understand.

But if your complaint is that it is *pretentious*, if that's the reason, of all reasons,

that you choose to write it off, then you and I will be having Words.

Something is pretentious if it makes an effort to be bigger, clever, or more important than it actually is. Problem: this describes all art, and probably all people. Does the universe care about *King Lear*? No. *King Lear* knows that. Are you superior, important,

in the grand scheme of things? I mean, maybe not. You probably think you are, though.

But let's not get too expansive. We're talking theatre. Plays can be produced at a relatively low cost, with a handful of friends and a semi-willing audience, so the theatrical world has always been the perfect petri dish for the kind of art that is ambitious, experimental, and a bit crap.

In the world of student theatre, the word 'pretentious' crops up in conversation again and again. 'I promise – it's not pretentious!' says a young actor, of his one-man spoken-word poem, soundtracked by jazz.

Maybe the word 'pretentious', in this context, refers to art that has not enough good qualities to balance its superior attitude. I would argue, though, that even art that is 'objectively' bad is essential in a world with a thriving artistic community. Pretentious plays can be the baby teeth that sprout before better things grow in. Plenty of young writers produce pieces that don't quite live up to their high ambitions.

Besides, bad art in general will always be of interest to future generations. Occasionally an English literature lecturer will say something along the lines of "Now, this poem is very bad, but it's interesting because..."

Bad student plays about climate change will be fascinating in a hundred years down the line, provided that we're all still here.

And even if pretentious plays aren't stepping-stones to greater success for student dramatists, or historical sources for the future – even if the writer of the cat play burns the script and runs away to be a hedge fund manager, I would still applaud when the curtain falls. The play has what so many more successful endeavours lack: heady, life-affirming ambition. It attempts to do something great and fails. There is something very noble about that.

“Bad student plays about climate change will be fascinating a hundred years down the line”

“Pretentious plays can be the baby teeth that sprout before better things grow in”



## Editors' picks

Theatre editors **Georgina Hayward**, **Bethan Holloway-Strong** and **Lewis Andrews** recommend some of their favourite shows

### Georgina

Based on the graphic memoir by the iconic Alison Bechdel (of the Bechdel test), *Fun Home* is a warm and charming musical about family and fathers. It was also the first Broadway musical with a lesbian protagonist. *Angels In America* is a sweeping epic set during the AIDs crisis. Tony Kushner's poetic script is blackly comic, beautiful, sexy and devastating – sometimes all at once.

### Bethan

Although I've sadly never seen it live, I love the soundtrack of *Bare: A Pop Opera*. This cult classic musical by Damon Intransigence and Jon Hartmere follows a group of high school students coming of age in their Catholic boarding school.

Dealing with religious trauma, homophobia, and Shakespeare, this is a hard-hitting and beautifully written musical.

### Lewis

Playwright Robert Holman recently passed away, and his play *Making Noise Quietly* had a profound impact on me as a youngster. He explores a poignantly beautiful friendship, and what it is like to learn about yourself in times of ostracisation and hardship.





# Sport

## Ex-Premier League Chairman speaks on the modern game

**Tom Bullivant** talks to Richard Scudamore about fans, the ESL, and club ownership in English football

I meet Richard Scudamore three and a half years after leaving his job as Premier League CEO. He isn't quite retired yet, but his occasional consulting gigs are a far cry from his job at the pinnacle of English football. During his time at the Premier League from 1999-2018, he oversaw the league's biggest period of growth, holding the reins as the league went from strength to strength to become the world's most popular league, and the one with the biggest domestic TV deal.

I begin by asking him about events that happened after he stepped down, however. Ten months ago, the 'big six', a notion Richard tells me he disagrees with, tried to break away to join the European Super League. In the aftermath of the project's failure, Scudamore told pundit Gary Neville that the clubs should face strict consequences for their actions. Did they face sufficient repercussions? He thinks so: "They have offered up undertakings, and they've offered up some form of penalty and compensation and a financial settlement.

"Most importantly, I think, are their commitments, and they've made meaningful commitments to be more collegiate citizens of the Premier League going forward and that's already manifesting itself. They've signed up to all sorts of new rules about the future. I think that's actually meaningful, it's positive."

His answer strikes me as by-the-book, unsurprisingly, given he was responsible for regulation and legal affairs at the echelons of English football for almost twenty years. Even more by-the-book is his response when I ask whether the Saudi Arabian Public Investment Fund's recent takeover of Newcastle should have gone through despite ethical concerns surrounding the Saudi state's links to the fund. "Leaving aside one's personal view, you have to start with the Premier League as a UK based organisation," Scudamore explains, "The UK Government currently actively encourages investment by the Saudi sovereign wealth funds into the UK. I'm not too sure that the Premier League should take any sort of stance that is not, in some ways, consistent with UK law and governance.

"In my interpretation of those rules, it was within the rules for them to allow that takeover to take place. And so on that basis, on those two somewhat more objective bases, I don't think there was anything particularly wrong with it."

He won't budge when pushed on his personal view either: "Because of having been in the job for so long, I still feel like I'm invested with that responsibility to play it rather straight. And to play in the safest place is to keep it in accordance with the rules." I reframe the question, asking whether the Premier League has a responsibility to safeguard ethical concerns when owners approach the league. He tells me the only responsibility the league has is to assess whether buyers have the appropriate funds to fulfil prom-

ises they make to clubs. As for ethics: "I don't think there should be a subjective test about whether 'we like the cut of your jib' or any of those other more subjective analyses."

Criticisms of the modern game often focus on the perceived widening gap between the top and the bottom of football. Google Scudamore himself, for example,

*"I don't think there should be a subjective test about whether 'we like the cut of your jib' or any of those other more subjective analyses"*

and you'll likely find a slew of articles and angry tweets about his £5m 'golden handshake' retirement package, received from top-flight clubs around the time Bury FC were going under. Does he think the gap is widening? "Yes, but I think [the games at the top and the bottom] are very different. I've been to Championship and League One games all my life and, believe me, it's all better. There are more crowds than there used to be, including at Bristol City (Scudamore's team).

"What has undoubtedly happened is the game has stretched, but these are different games." Is this a good or bad thing? "Depending which way you look at it, you can argue there's an inevitability about it. The bigger brands have gotten bigger, but the smaller brands have also got bigger, but just nothing like by the same stretch."

Recently, there has been a noticeable spotlight on the position of the average fan in English football, often perceived to be left behind by the TV-centric brand the Premier League has become. Scudamore is relentlessly profit-focused, almost a prerequisite for someone with his old job, and is one of the most staunchly capitalist people I've come across. So, I ask him about his stance on the matter, bringing up Friday and Monday night games with no trains back home and ticket prices which can reach £80-90 at the top end. Does he think fans are treated well? "I can sit here and fully understand the quoting of an individual ticket price. When you take a step back, average ticket prices across the league across every single seat are about £32. I also know that public transport is not ideal in terms of some of the kick-off times. So there are frustrations, and I don't underestimate those, which is why there aren't many games on Friday.

"You can't be too extreme in these things. Why is any game moved from Saturday at 3 o'clock? To give it the best

possible TV audience because that's an economic driver. All the time I was in post, this money was being reinvested. It's being invested primarily in playing talent and managing talent, and we've attracted the best in the world. And that's what creates the show. That's what creates the interest and it's a trade off for the virtuous circle that is the Premier League. Its success is based on putting on the best possible show."

In lieu of the gap between the top and the bottom of the game widening, and fans complaining about their treatment, the word 'greed' is often thrown around when describing the game's upper crust. I highlight this, asking if he thinks there's an element of 'greed' in the game. "I try not to react to the word greed, but it's quite on the offensive end. Lots of people in the world want to maximise the value of things. Most homeowners in the UK like the idea that the value of their home has increased. I don't call that greed. Now let's put that in a football context. The Premier League has built a product and it's incumbent upon the Premier League to sell it for as much as it can.

"When that money comes in, around

80% gets redistributed to the clubs in membership. That money goes, in the main, to attracting the best possible playing talent to keep the whole thing attractive to keep it competitive. The clubs still meet their responsibilities; they give away £500m to the leagues below, charitable donations to good causes, and youth development and community schemes all the way down to the National League. There's a massive amount given away. I don't feel any need to justify the time when I was in position spent maximising [our] own income."

Looking forward, Scudamore thinks the Premier League is the most competitive it's ever been, and doesn't see that changing anytime soon. Reflecting on his legacy, steering the league to such a strong competi-

tive position, as well as a financial one, does Scudamore think he's popular? Does he even care? "Only amongst

my children, my wife, and my dogs. You can't do jobs like this and think about it as a popularity contest. All I know is from the day I got the job, I gave it my best in good faith. Whether I left it in a better place than when I started, that's for others to judge, not me."

Does he think he left it in a better place then? "I was happy with my time," he

says, "I left at the point when I wanted to leave on my own terms, but it's not a popularity contest. There's an element of being like a politician about the job as well. It's impossible to be universally popular. It's not what you set out to do."

After the interview is wrapped up, Richard surprises me by remarking that, for someone who loved the job as much as he did and did it for so long, he hasn't once missed it. He's now content with his current life of the odd phone call with his successors and shouting things he wouldn't dream of shouting in everyday life from the stands at Bristol City's Ashton Gate.



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# Netball Blues storm to BUCS title after Nottingham win

**Rachel Mercer**  
Sport Correspondent

**Liam Kline**  
Senior Sport Editor

Cambridge University Ladies Netball Club (CULNC) Blues were crowned champions of the BUCS Midlands Tier 2A division last Wednesday (02/03) after beating Nottingham Women's 2 by a score of 53-45.

The run-in was Cambridge's penultimate fixture of an impeccable season, winning all nine league games and securing the title one match early.

The Blues had clashed with Nottingham 2 twice before Wednesday's game, both times coming away victorious. A dominating 53-32 league win last month was closely followed by a numbingly close 62-60 victory in the Midlands Conference Cup, which Cambridge crashed out of last week (23/02) after losing 57-43 to Nottingham Trent 2.

Cambridge got off to a flyer as they

were determined to return to winning ways after their cup and Varsity defeats, taking a 7-0 lead and keeping Nottingham completely off the scoreboard for the first five minutes of the game.

Thanks to some exceptional shooting performances by Clodagh Bottomley and Zoë Starbuck, along with a formidable through court defensive effort from the entire team, the Blues stormed to a 22-7 lead after the first 15 minutes.

The second quarter saw Nottingham make several changes and the game became a much closer affair. Once again, Cambridge, spurred on by fierce defensive displays from Fenna Agnew, Clare Pearson and India Foster, scored several superb goals in quick succession at the beginning of the period. However, Nottingham steadily played themselves into it and the home team eventually won the quarter by three goals, whittling the Cambridge lead down to 12 at half time.

Cambridge switched things up in the third quarter. Captain Millie Quayle took to Centre, replacing Tabbie Brough

whose strength and speed had been the engine for Cambridge's attacking plays in the first half.

Rosie Schofield also took to the court at Wing-Defence for her first minutes since fracturing her foot near the beginning of Lent term, and Rachel Mercer subbed into Wing-Attack with her ankle firmly strapped up after sustaining a worm-related ankle injury earlier in the week. Thea Krumins, a defensive stalwart all season for the Blues, took the Goal-Defence bib.

By this point in proceedings, Nottingham had really upped their game and, after a hard-fought quarter, the gap remained at 12 heading into the final 15 minutes. The team knew they had everything to gain, and everything to lose.

Nerves showed a little throughout the quarter, with the gap slimming to seven with seven minutes to go. With a Blues blazer in sight, however, the team showed great mental strength and determination, and saw out the game to ultimately take a 53-45 victory.

Krumins secured a well-deserved MVP award, sufficiently justifying her decision to prioritise netball over rowing.

Cambridge will play their final game of the BUCS season and academic year on Wednesday 16th March against Birmingham 4.

### Teams

**Nottingham 2:** Unconfirmed  
**Cambridge Blues:** Fenna Agnew (GK), Clare Pearson (GD), Indie Foster (WD), Tabbie Brough (C, vice-captain), Millie Quayle (WA, captain), Zoë Starbuck (GA), Clodagh Bottomley (GS)  
Finishers: Rachel Mercer, Rosie Schofield, Thea Krumins



# Lent Bumps recap

1 Lady Margaret	17 Lady Margaret II	1 Downing	17 Downing
2 Pembroke	16 Churchill	2 Jesus	16 Homerton
3 Caius	15 Lady Margaret II	3 Newnham	15 Gorton
4 First and Third	14 Selwyn	4 Emmanuel	14 Sidney Sussex
5 Downing	13 Gorton	5 Lady Margaret	13 King's
6 Robinson	12 Selwyn	6 Pembroke	12 Peterhouse
7 Trinity Hall	11 Caius II	7 Churchill	11 Selwyn
8 Jesus	10 Hughes Hall	8 Clare	10 Lucy Cavendish
9 King's	9 Sidney Sussex	9 Caius	9 Emmanuel II
10 Magdalene	8 Darwin	10 First and Third	8 Jesus II
11 St. Catharine's	7 Wolfson	11 Trinity Hall	7 Corpus Christi
12 Clare	6 First and Third II	12 Fitzwilliam	6 Magdalene
13 Christ's	5 Homerton	13 Peterhouse	5 Newnham II
14 Peterhouse	4 St. Edmund's	14 Christ's	4 Hughes Hall
15 Queens'	3 Pembroke II	15 Queens'	3 Fitzwilliam
16 Fitzwilliam	2 Jesus II	16 Murray Edwards	2 Queens'
17 Emmanuel	1 Emmanuel II	17 Darwin	1 Darwin
			17 St. Catharine's

1 Churchill	17 Clare II	1 Gorton	17 Queens' II
2 Lady Margaret II	16 Magdalene II	2 Homerton	16 Pembroke II
3 Gorton	15 Downing II	3 Sidney Sussex	15 Clare II
4 Selwyn	14 Robinson II	4 King's	14 Caius II
5 Corpus Christi	13 St. Catharine's II	5 Selwyn	13 St. Edmund's
6 Hughes Hall	12 Christ's II	6 Peterhouse	12 Christ's II
7 Caius II	11 Robinson II	7 Lucy Cavendish	11 Emmanuel III
8 Sidney Sussex	10 Trinity Hall II	8 Emmanuel II	10 St. Catharine's II
9 Wolfson	9 Fitzwilliam II	9 Jesus II	9 Trinity Hall II
10 Darwin	8 Clare Hall	10 Robinson	8 Newnham III
11 First and Third II	7 Lady Margaret III	11 Corpus Christi	7 Sidney Sussex II
12 St. Edmund's	6 Churchill II	12 Magdalene	6 Clare Hall
13 Homerton	5 Fitzwilliam III	13 Newnham II	5 Queens' III
14 Pembroke II	4 Peterhouse II	14 Hughes Hall	4 Magdalene II
15 Jesus II	3 First and Third III	15 Downing II	3 Trinity Hall III
16 Queens' II	2 Hughes Hall II	16 Wolfson	2 Lady Margaret II
17 Emmanuel II	1 Lucy Cavendish	17 Queens' II	1 Queens' II

▲ Day Two: The men's top three divisions (left) and the women's top three (right)

**Liam Kline**  
Senior Sport Editor

After a two-year hiatus, Lent Bumps is finally back on the River Cam, once again producing the all-time highs and lows that makes college rowing the bitter-sweet beast it has always been.

Day One witnessed a bundle of surprises in the women's second division (W2). Sidney Sussex, thought to be a particularly strong crew this year, failed to bump, with Homerton catching a very splashy Girton before they had the chance to catch Homerton themselves.

In the M3 division, there was less contention at the top, with Clare II, Magda-

lene II, and Downing II all rowing over.

M2 saw six bumps in total. Churchill fell to Lady Margaret II, Caius II overtook Hughes Hall, and Darwin bumped Wolfson. Emmanuel II, St Edmund's II, and Girton were all caught by Queens' II, Homerton, and Selwyn respectively.

Day Two saw the M1 and W1 divisions in action for the first time, with the latter producing a tense three-way matchup between Darwin, St. Catharine's, and newcomers Homerton.

Gonville & Caius Boat Club enjoyed a particularly successful day on the water overall, with their M1, M3, W1, and W2 boats all bumping, and W3 and W4 rowing over.