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No.905
Friday 28th October 2022
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The Independent
Student Newspaper since 1947

VARSITY

REVEALED: Controversial gender critical feminist to speak at the Union

Michael Hennessey
Deputy News Editor

The Cambridge Union is set to host controversial academic Dr Kathleen Stock on the 17th November for a debate on the proposal “This House believes in the right to offend”.

Stock’s views on transgender rights have prompted criticism, including her argument that “many trans women are still males with male genitalia, many are sexually attracted to females, and they should not be in places where females undress or sleep in a completely unrestricted way.”

Stock opposes gender self-identification, but has denied opposing trans rights, saying that she thinks “discussing female rights is compatible with defending trans rights”.

Stock published a book that questioned the idea that gender identity is more “socially significant” than biological sex.

However, Stock denies that she opposes trans rights, saying that she will: “gladly and vocally assert the rights of trans people to live their lives free from fear, violence, harassment or any discrimination.”

Stock, who was professor of philoso-



▲ Stock resigned from the University of Sussex amid a row over trans rights (REBEL WISDOM / CC BY-SA 3.0)

phy at the University of Sussex until last year, faced criticism for arguing against proposed changes to the Gender Recognition Act in 2018. In 2019, Stock signed the “Declaration on Women’s Sex-Based Rights” from the Women’s Human Rights Campaign, which called for the “elimination” of the “practice of discrimination against women which comprises the inclusion of men who claim to have a female ‘gender identity’ in the category of women”.

In May 2021, Stock was appointed as trustee of the LGB Alliance, which has been described as a ‘transphobic’ organisation.

In October 2021, students at the University of Sussex began a campaign for

her to be fired over her “bastardised version of radical feminism that excludes and endangers trans people”.

Stock, who was told by the police to use bodyguards on campus, said that “arguments should be met by arguments and evidence by evidence, not intimidation or aggression”. She was supported by the new Minister for Women and Equalities Kemi Badenoch, former prime minister Liz Truss and the vice chancellor at the University of Sussex, who saw the protests as a threat against academic freedom.

The protests in Sussex received national coverage, and Stock resigned at the end of October 2021. After resigning, Stock said it was surreal to see her name “plastered over every wall” on protest posters and that her treatment by colleagues had become “exhausting”.

Controversy erupted in Cambridge this term when gender critical journalist Helen Joyce spoke at an event at Gonville and Caius College. The event prompted outrage among students as Joyce was branded “hateful” and “ignorant”. The event went ahead this week against a backdrop of protests.

On the decision to invite Stock, The Cambridge Union said it is “strongly

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TUESDAY

19 °C

SATURDAY

13 °C

WEDNESDAY

18 °C

SUNDAY

13 °C

THURSDAY

17 °C

MONDAY

12 °C

FRIDAY

King's grad accommodation chaos

Louis Mian
Deputy News Editor

Numerous problems have been experienced by students living in newly constructed King's College graduate accommodation, including being left with no running water, hot water often being unavailable, poor internet connection, and power sockets working only intermittently.

The problems have occurred at Stephen Taylor Court, a site consisting of three postgraduate accommodation buildings on Barton Road, housing over 70 students. The construction of the court has just been completed by the college.

In a letter seen by *Varsity*, sent on 20 October, 17 students living in one of the buildings, The Adkins Building, expressed their frustration at the problems to the college and asked for discounted rent in light of them.

The students wrote that there have been "multiple issues" with their building, which "have made living in this accommodation difficult".

"These issues included unfinished construction, unfinished common room and library, inexistence of fly screens on windows, malfunctioning power sockets in the kitchen, late shipment of furniture, uninstalled sink and water taps,

door locks not working, issues with hot and cold water, issues with the lighting system, issues with the entrance doors, malfunctioning fire alarm, malfunctioning refrigerators, issues with cell service and internet connection, etc."

The students went on to explain "the pinnacle" of the problems was when "some or all of us had absolutely no access to water, meaning that none of the water taps in our rooms, in the kitchen, in the shared bathroom" and in the shower had running water.

Given these issues, the students requested "a decrease in our rent rate", stating: "it is the responsibility of the college to ensure the accommodation it allocates to its postgraduate students can satisfy the essential needs and requirements of a student accommodation, way before these rooms are allocated".

King's Domus Bursar, Philip Isaac, emailed students living in The Adkins Building, on 13 October, following problems with the water supply to apologise.

He wrote: "There are a number of related problems that are causing this loss of water supply, and they are being investigated and dealt with as I type."

"I am also looking into a rent rebate in recognition of these difficulties and will share this with you once I am satisfied we are on an even keel."

In a further email, he told students: "a number of you are reporting discomfort

through your rooms being too warm and there not being sufficient ventilation via the uppermost part of the window being opened." Isaac wrote that it will be possible for windows to be opened further later next month.

He went on to explain that in "compensation for the issues suffered at the start of occupation, I am awaiting a few more days before proposing a rent rebate, in order to satisfy myself that we are over the worst in the building".

Speaking to *Varsity*, Isaac stated that "the buildings are of a complex nature" and explained he is "confident" the college "are satisfactorily working through issues discovered after occupancy".

The buildings at Stephen Taylor Court have been built to the Passivhaus standard, meaning they use very little energy.

In order to achieve this, the buildings have been fitted with triple glazed windows, high performance insulation, and a "windtightness layer" external to the insulation.

This is not the first time King's has experienced problems with its graduate accommodation.

In 2019, graduate students at the college were given accommodation at prices markedly higher than they had requested, were given accommodation the construction of which had not actually been completed, and experienced "non-functional" WiFi.

Harry Potter formal cancelled at Girton

Daniel Starkey

A Harry Potter-themed formal at Girton College has been cancelled after concerns were raised over the event's inclusivity, due to its association with the book series' author, J.K. Rowling.

Rowling has been the subject of significant controversy in recent years, due to her outspoken views on trans rights, which many consider to be transphobic.

The theme for the College's formal, on October 27, was changed to "spooktober".

Initial concerns were raised over the Harry Potter formal on the anonymous submissions page Girthfessions, with one user calling the planned event "inherently transphobic".

After such concerns emerged, the College's JCR committee emailed students apologising for any upset caused by the association with Rowling, stating its commitment to creating a safe space for the LGBT+ community, and assuring students that the author would not be profiting in any way from the event.

In the email the JCR did not, however, suggest that the formal's theme would

change. They stated: "Simply changing the name of the formal would feel as if we are ignoring the distress that has been felt by students surrounding this."

"We would like to emphasise our focus on the Harry Potter community outside of the business that J.K. Rowling profits from. We encourage an aware interaction with the positive aspects of the community which have distanced themselves from Rowling."

While one member of the LGBT+ community suggested, on Girthfessions, that Rowling's views should not prevent people from enjoying the Harry Potter franchise, backlash persisted.

One student wrote that "anyone involved with the offensive, transphobic Harry Potter formal should resign from the JCR immediately" while another argued that it's "shocking that the Harry Potter formal was allowed to happen in the first place".

The JCR emailed students again, announcing that after "continued conversations with representatives of the affected communities and senior College staff" they had made the decision to change the formal theme.

The JCR explained that they hoped the change in theme would "make everyone feel comfortable and safe enough to attend this very special night".

The JCR committee detailed that they "endeavour to create a safe and inclusive space for everybody at Girton" and therefore "do not wish to hold any event that causes offence to any member of our community".

"When it came to our attention that some members of our community were distressed by the proposed 'Harry Potter' theme for our formal, we reached out to those affected and asked for their input."

"Following these consultations, and supportive discussions with senior members of College staff, we decided to steer our formal theme away from 'Harry Potter' and towards a theme which fosters a safe and inclusive environment which everyone can enjoy," the JCR committee continued.

The president of the formal's planning committee also issued a statement, refuting the personal implications of deeming the event "inherently transphobic", and explicitly stated that he is not transphobic.

Continued from Page 1 ▼

committed to our founding principle... of promoting Free Speech. The Union's role is to create a safe space in which to discuss difficult topics and provide members with the opportunity to cross examine them. We hope our debate on the motion 'This House Believes in the Right to Offend' in which Kathleen Stock will be one of the participants will do just that."

Lara Brown: Why I invited Kathleen Stock to the Union

It is important to me that the Cambridge Union exists to debate the issues of the day. Recent events — including Helen Joyce's recent talk — have shown the importance of that. I took the decision to invite Kathleen Stock to speak in our week seven debate, 'This House Believes in the Right to Offend,' because I feel that

she offers a unique perspective on the questions being raised around the exact parameters of freedom of speech. Having resigned from Sussex University over allegations that her views were offensive and harmful, her experiences are unquestionably a necessary part of that discussion. I know that this decision will disappoint some of our members; I would encourage them to attend the debate and take the opportunity to challenge Kathleen's views.

Who let the swans out?

Rescuers were called to the aid of ‘John the Swan’ after he became lodged in a pipe at St John’s College, reports **Michael Hennessey**

There are few worse places for a swan to get stuck than in St John’s College, but that worst case scenario came true for John the Swan, as he found himself lodged in a drainpipe at the Old Library this week.

Fellows at John’s are said to be the only people outside of the Royal Family who are legally allowed to eat swan. However, John the Swan, who was named after the College by his rescuers, escaped this grisly fate when he was rescued by firefighters.

The juvenile swan was spotted by students working in the library, who reported the situation to porters and subsequently the fire brigade and RSPCA.

One firefighter supported the operation from the grounds of the Master’s Lodge, while three firefighters crawled through the loft space at the top of Second Court to reach the roof of the Old Library.

The swan was placed in a “swan bag” and lowered to the ground on a pulley

system. The swan was checked by the RSPCA before being released back into the River Cam unharmed.

Swans appear to be particularly active in Cambridge recently, with Camfess reporting a sighting of a swan that “showed up to pres” at Murray Edwards College earlier this week. It is unclear whether the Medwards intruder was in fact the famous John the Swan.

Head porter Steve Poppitt said: “The trapped cygnet was given time to see if it would be able to free itself but when it became clear that it was not able to get out, we contacted the RSPCA and an animal rescue officer arrived on scene on Friday afternoon with the fire service.”

Firefighter Sam Cornwell said: “Animals are unpredictable which means that rescuing them can be challenging but this one went very smoothly. It is easier to get a swan back in the river where it belongs than getting a cow out of the river where it doesn’t belong.”

Naomi Sadoff, an animal rescue officer

from Cambridgeshire and Norfolk RSPCA, said: “He looked in excellent health considering his adventure and his wings looked fine. Cygnets tend to stay with their parents for around six months and then they are supposed to literally fly the nest. It seems to be the season for swan rescues as I’ve been to help with several recently, but none of them have got themselves into such a tight spot as this one.”

Previously, Cambridge has suffered from the terrifying rule of a swan called “Mr Asbo”, who was known for attacking rowers. “Mr Asbo”, whose other nicknames included “Stalin”, was reportedly relocated due to fears that he could cause a fatality.



▲ Mr Asbo’s reign of terror on the Cam ended when he was relocated (VAR-SITY)

University Council delays key fossil fuel vote

Michael Hennessey
Deputy News Editor

The University Council has passed a motion to delay a vote on a proposal to stop accepting funding from coal, oil and gas companies.

In July, the Grace was proposed by 84 members of the Regent House. The Grace system allows academics to vote on matters involving the governance of the University if it receives the support of 50 members of the Regent House, if it is not blocked by the University Council.

The Council have declared that they “share the desire implicit in the Grace to address the climate emergency as a matter of urgency” and have argued that the University has “demonstrated its commitment to global decarbonisation through the establishment of the Cambridge Zero initiative”.

The Council stated that they were aware that there would be support within the University for the aims of the Grace, but argued that some academics may be concerned about the potential for fossil fuel funding cuts to impact research “that could enable the transition to a carbon-neutral future”.

The vote has been delayed by the Council as they seek to “explore, and give proper consideration to, the full implications of these changes”.

Instead, the Council has commissioned a study to analyse the impact of the proposals, focusing on the energy transition, academic freedom and the ability of the University to fill gaps in funding.

The Council has asked to receive the strategy as early as possible in Lent Term 2023, and want to make sure that members of the University “are given a full opportunity to contribute to the

discussion on the way forward”.

The Council has highlighted that they do not want to “raise expectations about the ability of the Grace’s proposals to be implemented as presented”.

The original Grace said that the University should not accept research funding from a company if it is constructing new fossil fuel infrastructure, exploring new fossil fuel reserves or are members of trade associations involved in “political lobbying against science-based climate legislation”.

Cambridge would have become the first leading university to vote on fossil fuel funding had the vote taken place.

The main points of the study commissioned by the Council are to investigate if the Grace can be implemented in a way that supports academic freedom, is “consistent with the University’s charitable purposes in relation to research and teaching”, and makes sure

that the University remains financially sustainable.

The proposal was not backed by the Student Union undergraduate president, Zaynab Ahmed, and Professor Jason Scott-Warren, but received the support of the majority of the council.

Cambridge collaborates with companies including BP, Shell and Schlumberger through institutes, professorships and other research funding.

Sam Carling, a student representative on the Council who backed the Council’s delay, said: “Nobody is denying the severity of the climate crisis we’re facing. The issue we have is that funding from companies which this Grace would see cut off is being used to drive research critical to fighting the climate crisis, and that isn’t easily replaceable — science is seriously underfunded.”

Carling, who also sits as a Labour councillor in Cambridge, continued:

“The Council was right to commission a report into exactly how this Grace would impact on the research we do — people need to be fully informed when trying to make decisions about whether the relative impact of greenwashing that we allow by taking this funding outweighs the material benefits brought by the research it enables, and it would have been utterly reckless to have put the Grace before Regent House without that information.”

Sam Gee, organiser with Cambridge Climate Justice and Fossil Free Research, said that the group are “deeply disappointed that Cambridge University Council has chosen a delay tactic, instead of trusting its own academics”.

He continued: “As momentum builds for fossil-free research, the University of Cambridge risks laggard status if it does not act swiftly.”

News

Students protest Joyce talk

As the gender critical feminist gave a controversial talk on the trans debate at Gonville & Caius College, **Meg Byrom** and **Hugh Jones** spoke to those demonstrating — and those queuing to get in

The people waiting outside Gonville & Caius College on Tuesday evening, hoping for the chance to watch Partha Dasgupta speak to Helen Joyce, a controversial gender critical feminist, couldn't believe that the crowd of students massed outside Great St Mary's Church was there to protest that very same talk.

That protest, organised by the Students' Union's LGBT+ Campaign, amongst other local and student groups, began outside Great St Mary's church at 630PM. With Joyce already waiting within the wall of Caius, two crowds emerged, one clad in flags and masks, chanting in support of trans people and another queuing to enter the College to listen to Joyce's talk. *Varsity* spoke to both.

We made our way to King's Parade early, watching as crowds began to gather in the shadow of the University Church. While at first turnout looked low, in typical Cambridge fashion the crowd grew rapidly as it hit half past and around a hundred people arrived just on time. Wearing bright colours and bristling with pride flags, the protestors were given face masks by the SU, to protect against covid and from identification, as several national photographers lurked on the protest's edge, cameras at hand.

As the event began, the crowd joined in chants condemning Joyce, and gender critical feminists as a whole. As the night went on the drums got louder and the dancing began, turning a protest into a party as demonstrators tried to drown Joyce's talk out.

Caleb, a student, told *Varsity* that Joyce's views concerned them, saying: said that although Joyce claimed to

be a feminist, she was "excluding a whole section of women in the world, a whole section of people, just because she doesn't understand".

Another student put things more bluntly, saying: "fuck TERFs, we can't act like this is normal or okay for a University like Cambridge to be acting like this ... TERFs need to know they can't come to places like this without protests."

"It's a complete betrayal of trust by the College"

Not all protesters were students, however. One local said: "my husband is trans and events like this, people like Helen Joyce, make his life more unsafe, that's why I'm here."

Throughout our conversations with the attendees however, SU officials were keen for us to read their official statement, rather than talk to demonstrators, physically interjecting in our interviews at some points.

Despite the SU suggesting that they would be available for comment at the end of the evening, sabbatical officers refused to speak to us. At several points during the evening they walked away from attempts to get their opinions on the event. Neve, the SU's undergraduate access sabbatical officer, told us that the protest had been organised by the "politically autonomous" LGBT campaign, so they wouldn't comment on the demonstration.

When asked to comment about the talk instead, Neve said that sabbats were emotionally drained after the protest, offering instead to speak to us in the morning.

As the event came to a close, chants of "debrief at Sid bar" could be heard — though it is unclear who attended.



▲ TOBIA NAVA/ALEX PARNHAM-COPE

We did succeed in speaking to one SU rep, Oli, who helped organise the protest. They said: "we organised this protest today to give the queer and trans community at the University the chance to come together in solidarity"

When asked if they wanted the event to be cancelled, they said that they wanted it to be moved from Caius, as the College is home to queer and trans students.

"Whilst we'd have hoped the talk wouldn't have gone ahead at all, it would be better if it wasn't in their home", she added.

Oli also told us: "It's our freedom of speech to be out here in protest."

In this they agreed with the people queuing to get into Joyce's talk. Many,

like *Varsity*, were unable to get in due to Caius' last-minute decision to ticket the event over "fire safety" concerns. Nonetheless, they waited outside in the hope that seats would be left unfilled, allowing them to see the discussion.

Those waiting formed a diffuse group, ranging from Conservative student politicians to attendees of Cambridge's more conservative churches. There were also, however, a number of more liberal people keen to hear Joyce's talk.

One man simply told me that he had grown up under communism, and as such was sceptical towards narrow definitions of what can and cannot be said.

Another prospective attendee said that they were a PhD student whose research was on a similar topic to the areas set to be covered by the talk. She made it clear that she believed in trans rights, but also said that she firmly believed in open debate and free speech. This extended to the demonstrators, with her telling me: "I love a protest."

One man, chatting with her in the queue simply told me that he was along for the ride.

Ultimately, the one thing that brought the group of people milling around the bottom of Trinity Street was a belief in free speech, or at least that debate can be fun to watch, but for the protestors the event was no laughing matter.

Caius won't fly pride flags this year after student vote fails

Bella Shorrocks
Deputy News Editor

Gonville & Caius College will not fly the progress pride or transgender flags in 2023. In an email sent to undergraduates, it was announced that no nominated flag had received the required amount of student votes to be flown.

In a relatively recent initiative, adopted by the college in Easter 2022, Caius undergrads can vote for nominated student flag days. The flags nominated required 307 votes to pass the threshold — a third of all 919 eligible voters.

The Caius LGBTQ+ officer called the decision "a great disappointment" for queer students and allies at the Col-

lege. They told *Varsity* that the decision to "introduce additional barriers to flying Pride Flags" reflected "a continued policy of disassociating from and excluding the queer community at Caius that is being relentlessly pursued by some fellows" at the College.

The flags rejected by students included the progress pride flag, which was nominated to fly at the beginning and end of pride month and LGBTQ+ history month, as well as the transgender flag, which was nominated to fly on the transgender day of remembrance.

Only 322 students took part in the vote, 35% of eligible voters. This meant that no flag received the required 307 votes. The progress pride flag received

287 votes for and 22 against, while the transgender flag received 179 votes for and 21 against.

Another Caius student expressed disappointment told *Varsity*: "After all the work the student body put into campaigning for the flags, it's incredibly disempowering that not a single one reached the threshold number of votes. The fact that some people actually voted against the flags is even more alarming."

This comes after recent controversies over flying the pride flag at Caius. In February 2022, senior academics voted to stop flying the LGBTQ+ flag after claiming it was a "political" statement. The move prompted backlash among students, with many outlining the harmful

impacts the decision would have on the College's LGBT community.

After condemnation from the student body and the SU, the decision was reversed in May this year and the flag was flown on the first day of June for the start of Pride Month.

A vote also took place on flying the flag of Cornwall, St Piran's Flag, on St Piran's Day. This also failed as 184 students voted for and 61 against, with 77 abstentions.

When the College Council at Caius initially blocked the flying of the pride flag, in February, the College said "Flags flown to express opinions about causes and issues, have the potential to divide us. All of us are Caians, so the College flag

speaks for all of us. No other flag does."

At the time, the Master, Pippa Rogerson, said that she was committed to "making College a place where everyone feels welcome, and where everyone can thrive".

At the time of the original controversy, the College outlined an amendment to its regulations that allow flags to be displayed in rooms. This has been highlighted again by the College in the email outlining the results of the student vote, reminding students that they have "freedom of expression in their own rooms and windows at all times."

As the crisis unfolded, students protested by unfurling pride and transgender flags at a college formal during Grace.

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News

High hall prices spark rows at Emma and Magdalene

Ella McCartney & Hugh Jones

Emmanuel College is facing criticism over increased hall prices, with some students calling for a boycott of the college buttery on Emfess, the College's confessions page.

The high prices have come as a shock to students, some of whom feel that the pricing is not transparent. One told *Varsity*: "It's difficult to know what separate things cost and what they'll add up to." They said that one meal had cost them more than £8, adding that as a result they had started buying smaller portions to save money. The student expressed concerns about the effect this was having on their health, saying: "It's sending me down a spiral of junk food as I'm no longer getting veg."

Some Emmanuel students have even started skipping meals to reduce their spending, with one telling *Varsity*: "even if I am hungry during lunch, I will wait till dinner to avoid paying twice."

Emma's hall prices are now comparable with eating out, with many students seeing this as better value for money. Emmanuel's three-course formal hall, costing £9.75, is now only slightly more expensive than normal buttery food and is of much better quality.

Much Emmanuel accommodation lacks full kitchen facilities. The most populated first year accommodation does not have ovens or even hobs, only microwaves. Residents told *Varsity* they believe that their lack of alternatives to hall food has made them a captive audience and that they feel as though "the College is trying to undermine us."

Students worried that higher prices would shut less affluent students out of hall—an important social space at Emma. One Emmanuelite told *Varsity* that the higher prices "have reduced the amount of opportunities I get to see people."

Following lobbying by Emmanuel's student body, a £3.20 lunch meal deal is now being trialled, and Emmanuel's Student Union has promised that this will become permanent if it is popular, and may even be extended to dinner.

Students have described this as "promising"—but have also expressed frustration that it is not being applied to dinner straight away, and questioned whether it would lead to a two-tier dining system. One student noted: "not everyone's timetable allows them to come back to college for lunch, so having a cheaper option available for dinner would be much better."

Emma is not the only college facing student anger over catering arrangements. Magdalene College has seen buttery prices increase by 31% since Easter Term, prompting widespread frustration among the student body.

Students had been told that prices would increase by approximately 6%, leading to anger when the true extent of the hike became clear. That frustration came to a head at a recent JCR open meeting, where the prospect of a boycott was raised if things did not improve.

Committee members discouraged such a move, calling it undiplomatic. Nonetheless, after the meeting a number of posts appeared on Magdfess, the College's confessions page, calling for a boycott, though some subsequent posts were also critical of that suggestion.

At the open meeting, Magdalene's JCR president told students that the College has said, while prices will remain at the new, higher levels, portion sizes will be increased. They also said that a 'budget' alternative should be introduced for students looking to save money—though this has yet to materialise.

As prices rise, what should be done to help students with the cost of living crisis?

£8 for a meal at Emma only adds to the pressure on students' finances amid the cost of living crisis. With inflation reaching 8.8% last month, up from 8.6% in August, it's doubtful Emma's £3.20 meal deal will be the silver bullet needed (Louis Mian writes).

In a survey conducted by the National Union of Students (NUS), results show around a third of the 3,500 students who responded had just £50 monthly to live on after bills and rent. 96% of those surveyed said they are having to reduce expenditure due to increased prices.

A comparable study by Unite Students found 66% of students and 73% of parents are "extremely worried" about the cost of living and that 50% of students reported that their mental health is being affected.

What can be done to help students? While the NUS, in a petition with over 12,000 signatures, has called on the government "to develop a tailored cost of living support package for students", the Cambridge Student Union

has made specific demands on the University.

Detailing that the cost of living "is one of the biggest issues affecting the student body this year", the SU requested the University "increase the Cambridge Bursary in line with inflation", "introduce a special hardship fund to address the cost of living crisis", that research bodies "increase PhD stipends by 10%", and that the colleges "commit to a three year rent freeze".

In a university-wide email on Tuesday, Prof. Kamal Munir, one of the University's Pro-Vice-Chancellors, announced Cambridge has "increased funding to the University's Student Hardship Fund by 50%" and: "Students can also take advantage of a pilot lasting until February next year to provide subsidised lunches at the West Hub on the West Cambridge campus."

It appears the University's solution for students struggling to pay for college food is a daily trip to West Cambridge. Ingenious!



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Departments criticised over dropping lecture recordings

Sono Echaniz-Furuta

Several University departments have announced that lectures will be given in-person this year. In many cases, recordings will only be available to those who have requested special permission from the Accessibility & Disability Resource Centre (ADRC).

This follows a statement from the General Board's Education Committee, saying that lectures should be given in-person except where a valid reason exists.

While their statement recognised the value of recordings for students with access disabilities, as well as during times of revision or illness, the Committee asserted that in-person lectures are "more engaging and effective" than recordings alone.

Faculties have adopted a general stance on in-person lectures in line with the Committee's expectation, leaving the final choice up to individual lecturers.

The HSPS Faculty announced that in-person lectures will be standard this year, as recorded lectures led to "declining attendance, undermining the status of in-person teaching and depriving

students of the pedagogical and social benefits of lecture hall teaching". Students with special needs have been directed to the Disability Resource Centre to "request permission for recording of lectures".

The MML Faculty has also made in-person lectures the norm, allowing disabled students to record lectures.

However, the students "need evidence to support this requirement". Students with disabilities must inform the ADRC of their situation and wait for the University to make an "appropriate adjustment to improve their learning experience".

Meanwhile, the History Faculty told students, on 5 October, that the "vast majority of the Faculty's teaching will take place in-person this year".

The Faculty stated: "In light of the interactive nature of much of our teaching and the social and pedagogical importance of lecture attendance, the Faculty is not expecting lecturers to record their teaching this year, though some may wish to continue to do so."

In their email to students on 5 October, the History Faculty did not mention any provision that would be put in place for students with disabilities.

The Faculty provided greater clarity in an email on 14 October, explaining that they have updated the lecture recording policy and are now recording lectures for students with documentation from the ADRC.

The Department of History and Philosophy of Science has decided to leave lecturers largely free to choose whether to make lecture recordings available.

One second year student told Varsity: "Not all people with disabilities are comfortable in identifying as disabled to the University, or are at different stages of their journey along that process. To then add the burden of requesting special provisions on them seems unfair".

SU Disabled Students' Officer, Elia Chitwa criticised the decision, saying it "shows a distinct lack of care and respect for disabled students".

They added that the decision will only increase the "overwhelming administrative burden disabled students face".

Students also raised the issue of scheduling conflicts with university commitments, and the case of unforeseen complications, with one student saying "you shouldn't have to be choosing between that and your education".

▲ Extinction Rebellion performed a play—Alice in Schlumberland — outside Gonville & Caius College this week, to protest Cambridge's ties to fossil fuel companies (PETER CORBETT)

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News

XR in Wonderland

XR activists blocked the entrance to the Schlumberger Research Centre in Cambridge on Monday, protesting Schlumberger's funding of PhD scholarships and fellowships at the University. XR says that funding research at the University "Schlumberger makes it's activities look more legitimate. The blockade included an Alice in Wonderland teapot "to highlight the absurdity of the situation."



▲ Olaudah Equiano (WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

Bridge named after anti-slavery campaigner

Cambridge's Riverside Bridge, which is opposite the Cambridge Museum of Technology, will be renamed to the "Equiano Bridge" this year. After a two year consultation, the bridge has been named to honour Olaudah Equiano, who escaped slavery and wrote an influential autobiography of his experiences. He moved to Cambridgeshire in his later life.

Letter asks for funding for international students

An open letter has called for the Cambridge Trust, which provides scholarships to help international students study at the university, to improve its funding for PhD students. The letter, signed by 150 students, demands that all PhD students receive four years of maintenance stipends at a value matching the UKRI monthly rate.



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University watch

Michael Hennessey brings you the top student stories from the other place(s)

Durham freshers' nightmare

Administrative and welfare issues marred Durham University's freshers' week this year, as confusion concerning the number of incoming students put pressure on college staff, caterers and freshers reps. Less than a fortnight before freshers' week, Hild Bede College decided to reopen their riverside accommodation, to welcome up-to 160 extra students.

Other colleges also reopened rooms which were set to be closed this year. There were extensive delays for incoming students receiving campus cards, and students were asked to move rooms mid-freshers' week to a different college. St Cuthbert's Society, a college, was also hit by reports of "racially, sexually, and politically offensive comments" being drawn on shirts during a white t-shirt party. This event was condemned by college leadership, and a University spokesperson told *Palatinate*, Durham's student newspaper, that "much positive feedback was received about the overall welcome experience from parents and students alike".

Oxford hit by cockroach infestation

Cockroaches have taken hold of off-site accommodation at Exeter College, Oxford, limiting kitchen access and prompting intervention from pest control. The cockroaches have been found in bathrooms and kitchens and has sparked a rent strike. 36 students have refused to pay rent, although Exeter College denies this.

On 30th September kitchen access was prohibited due to "maintenance concerns" until 17th October, but this was extended for a further two weeks to 29th October. Hall food will be free for affected students, but one student told *Cherwell* that "as a non-British person, I have to say, sorry, I do not want your college food, even if it's for free".

Oxford college JCR sets up food bank

Hertford College's JCR has opened a food bank to help its students through the cost of living crisis. The food bank will stock items including coffee, cereals and tea. JCR members are frustrated as Hertford is currently involved in "expensive building projects such as a new library and graduate centre" while students are struggling.

‘TikTok guy’ accused of harassment

Kareena Rippingale

A TikTok star has faced allegations of inappropriate behaviour from Cambridge students. Josh Robinson, also known as OSHU on TikTok, has been accused of asking women uncomfortably personal and private questions, alongside criticisms of his behaviour on social media.

OSHU has over 5.1 million followers on TikTok. He garnered his fame through asking passers-by, mostly Cambridge students, what song they are listening to. Known to students as ‘the TikTok guy’, OSHU is famous on platforms such as Camfess for stopping students with his microphone throughout Cambridge’s city centre. However, critics argue that rather than being harmless fun, his videos have turned inappropriately sexual.

Varsity spoke to three female students who were interviewed by OSHU.

One told us: “you think that you’re gonna be okay with it, when he asks ‘can I ask you a question’, and then it just spirals. And suddenly you feel like you’re in a club and a guy is talking to you and you’re like, oh my god why is this happening, like, I’m so not interested. Like it’s the exact same experience emotionally.”

OSHU inquired whether he could ask her a question about kissing. “I just thought it would be one question. I thought it would be something so chill, but suddenly it was just getting more and more intense and then he bristles over you, and is like ‘do you want to kiss me?’”

The student said the questions were “personal” and “private”. She was expecting it to be a little intimate but “not so intimate it’s about sex basically. He was like, how do you lead up to sex? That’s

not something I want to speak about with a stranger.”

After the questions, OSHU did not ask if he could put the video online. While the student did give her initial consent to the interview, she did not anticipate the questions that followed. She told *Varsity*: “do I feel like I was sexually harassed? No, but do I feel like I had a similar experience, like when your consent is not there? Yes.”

Comments on OSHU’s TikTok echo these concerns. In a video posted on the 16th October, he asks two women: “would you ever swallow my balls?” before holding up a packet of Maltesers. The video prompted a slew of critical comments, with one person writing: “Seriously not funny. Immature sexual harassment”. Other users said the clip was “not funny man”, and “not even funny just borderline sexual harassment.”

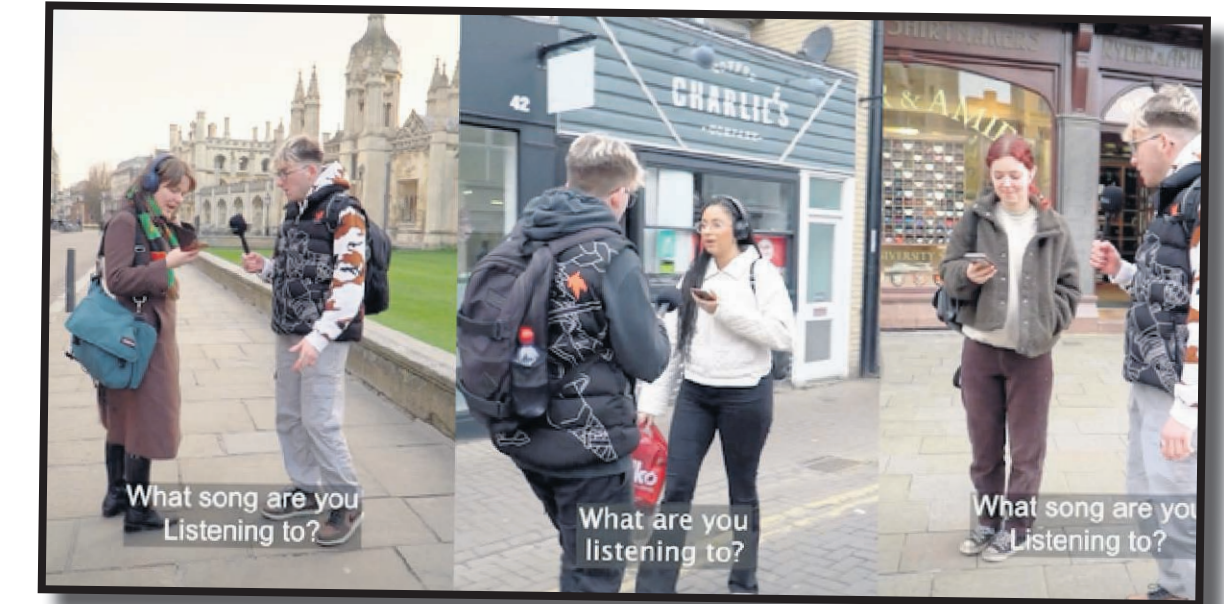
A similar video involves OSHU asking a woman: “would you swallow my sausage?” Users commented: “this is sexual harassment” and “Nahhhh too far”. One person wrote: “epic prank bro, I’m sure those women were super comfortable.”

Interviewees also highlighted that OSHU disproportionately speaks to women when his questions are sexual.

Two female friends who were interviewed by OSHU last week told *Varsity* about their experience.

They said that OSHU initially asked whether he could ask them a question, without specifying what that question would be. The students said he did not ask for permission to film. They also said they were told to separate and be filmed individually.

OSHU then showed the first student a picture and asked if she could iden-



tify the man in it. When she replied that she couldn’t, the TikTokker told her they were a porn star.

OSHU then asked the student if she watched porn. When she replied no, he asked her why, and then showed her another picture, this time of a female porn star, asking the student if thought the actress was attractive.

The student’s friend said: “I could see she was visibly uncomfortable, and it’s not just because I know her.”

They felt particularly uncomfortable after the encounter, as he informed them afterwards that the video wasn’t going on TikTok, but was for his side project in India. The students are unsure if he was joking, but despite not knowing what this ‘side project’ involves, one of the students hopes he was telling the truth. “I don’t know if I want the video of me being like, yeah I know what downward

dog is, or answering whether I watch porn, to be online”, she said.

They also noted that, despite the sexual nature of the questions, OSHU did not ask their age or confirm that they were not minors. Furthermore, he did not ask whether they were okay with the interview being published after it had been conducted. The students said: “once you’ve given your prior consent, you feel bad saying I don’t want you to post this. I don’t think there’s an option on how to say no. You just kind of walk away and then it’s done.”

OSHU does not have a legal obligation to ask for consent to film, or to post the videos to his 5 million followers, as they are filmed in a public place.

On the criticism, Josh Robinson commented, “I am very sorry to hear that these allegations have been raised against the content I put out. When-

ever I conduct these interviews, I like to think we do so to a high standard of professionalism, including but not limited to ensuring the people that partake are of a suitable age, and that there is no bias in who is asked or what is asked of them — with regards to gender or otherwise.

Regardless — I take all criticism seriously and will (as I have always done) strive to ensure that anything that could be deemed as misconduct is addressed. As a content creator, my only aim is to provide entertainment for my followers so the thought of causing discomfort to anyone participating stands firmly in opposition to my ethos.

If further claims are given, please reach me directly and we can discuss more about the issue.”

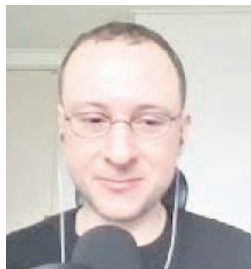
Controversial race researcher gets prestigious fellowship

Sono Echaniz-Furuta

An American academic who has expressed controversial views about racial differences in intelligence has been made an early career fellow in the University’s Philosophy Faculty.

In 2019 Nathan Cofnas became embroiled in controversy over an article he wrote, in which he argued that genetic differences in IQ could exist between racial and ethnic groups. In the article Cofnas also said that since “truth is intrinsically valuable”, it is scientists’ duty to uncover it even when controversial.

His appointment has faced criticism, with one philosophy student telling *Varsity*: “It’s crazy that someone who’s published such obviously questionable work has been given not only a platform but a Fellow position. It’s obviously disap-



◀ Nathan Cofnas did an masters in HPS (LIPTON MATTHEWS/YOUTUBE)

pointing but not surprising.”

In his piece, Cofnas argued that while “significant cultural changes” would be inevitable if the racial differences theory was widely accepted, the negative consequences it might trigger are not a valid reason to avoid further research.

He compared hypothetical racial differences in intelligence to gender-based differences, arguing “virtually everyone believes in physical and psychological

differences between men and women, and essentialize these differences”, but that didn’t stop “men in the West from supporting women’s rights, and didn’t prevent great progress towards the end”.

The article sparked academic backlash, with a group of scholars rejecting his claims as pseudoscience in a published response.

On 24 June 2020, the editor of the journal which published Cofnas’ piece resigned during the controversy, implying that the response article was the reason why.

Cofnas has stood by his arguments, claiming that those attacking his article have not read it. In an April 2020 interview with the *Daily Campus*, he stated that he didn’t “understand how certain ideas become taboo, and [he doesn’t] think anyone does”.

Academic slams Bolsonaro in run-up to Brazil election

Eric Williams

A Cambridge academic has spoken out against Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro.

An open letter signed by Tiago Cavalcanti, a Professor of Economics, alongside thirty seven other figures from Yale, Harvard, Princeton and LSE, outlined support for opposition candidate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a founding member of Brazil’s left-wing Workers’ Party (PT) and former president from 2003-2010, is facing off against incumbent Bolsonaro in the second round on October 30th.

Speaking to *Varsity*, Cavalcanti said a Lula victory on Sunday would mean a “brighter future” for the country, Cavalcanti said the main story of Lula’s time

in office was one of poverty reduction, increased access to education, and the extension of “hope for a rich future to all Brazilians” in a nation that had historically been “deeply unequal”.

However, Cavalcanti told *Varsity* that the stakes of Sunday’s election go “beyond the economy”. On top of the implications increased deforestation rates under Bolsonaro has for the climate crisis, Cavalcanti raised the mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the incumbent President’s challenges to the country’s democratic institutions.

“Bolsonaro comes from a military tradition”, said Cavalcanti, “he’s been a vocal supporter of Brazil’s past dictatorship and has increasingly been criticising the Supreme Court”. On Monday, Lula da Silva said he hoped that Bolsonaro would accept the results of the election.

News

Mental health chief: Counselling is

With six suicides this year, the University is in hot water.

Erik Olsson & Hugh Jones spoke to the mental health chiefs trying to tackle the crisis

The office of the recently appointed head of the University Counselling Service feels surprisingly corporate. Christopher Haylock's workspace is large and modern, but the space is bare. The room feels better suited to an executive fond of Scandinavian minimalism than to a softly spoken counsellor, with an interest in dialectical behavioural therapy.

That said, I did not need anyone to tell me that Haylock is a professional psychologist. Quietly authoritative, his manner is reassuring and his voice even more so. As we set up, I worry my recording device won't register all the talking points he's rehearsed with his communications advisor.

Haylock's PR man is keen for the interview to go well. Our meeting comes at a pivotal moment for the University: it has just launched its new "Reach Out" initiative. Devised in response to the University's mental health review, it aims to signpost the increased resources available to students.

The extra £4.7 million investment follows a period of self-reflection for Senate House. Six students have committed suicide this year, and statistics indicate that the number of students seeking help is on the rise. *Varsity* exclusively revealed last month that intermission applications have more than doubled since 2013.

Confronted with these figures, Haylock speaks of his plans to "develop" the counselling service from "afresh" and to build "a service that is more responsive to students". Haylock tells me that he wants to "learn from what had gone on in the past" and in turn: "to help the service transition from the point" where it was at. He does not discuss the service's past failings directly or in any depth, referring to them only in passing.

But there is an implicit recognition that the University's mental health services were inadequate. This becomes apparent as Haylock forensically lists his key objectives for the service. Among them: "to ensure students get seen in a timely and accessible manner." The bar is certainly low.

Maintaining support at the collegiate level is vital to Haylock's plan, as it entails the "withdrawal of the college-based counselling system". College counsellors will be pooled back into the central counselling service for university-wide use, with an aim of having one central and accessible counselling service by the end of this term.

The plan is ambitious. It remains to be seen if Haylock will meet his December deadline. Though he claims to have "widespread support" from senior tutors, some pushback seems inevitable. In a rare moment of candour, he admits: "I've only been here six months, so I'm still learning about the resources each college

has."

Still, this approach might work. Despite having one of the largest mental health budgets nationally, university money had not been allocated effectively in the past. A centralised system which eliminates inequalities of college-provided support might be more cost-effective. And, crucially, it would benefit all students, not just those at wealthier colleges.

It may also ease waiting times. Haylock says: "Every student who now refers to UCS should get an appointment within ten working days." More counsellors means UCS can provide support at the point of need, rather than at the point of accessibility.

But the "Reach Out" campaign, of which counselling is a core component, fails to acknowledge the issues at the heart of the crisis. Haylock tells me that he would "rather have a student preemptively reach out if they are in distress rather than get to the point of crisis".

Haylock is not fit to speak to the causes of the mental health crisis — he deals in its mitigation. But it seems the onus is on students to reach out, rather than the University to address what leads students to "crisis".

The new vice-chancellor deviated from the University line last week, telling *Varsity* that workload is the bigger issue. Haylock is never as direct, but agrees that counselling is not "the complete answer".

I was still intrigued by Haylock's comment on "pre-empting crisis". Deteriorations in mental health are rarely predictable, and most happen "out of hours". What mechanisms does the University have in place for students needing emergency help after 5pm?

"UCS is not a crisis team," Haylock says. "We still signpost people to the Samaritans."

The service is, however, trialling an out of hours support system for senior tutors so that they can contact a professional counsellor when crises arise at college. Outcome pending, Haylock is hoping to roll it out to all colleges on a permanent basis.

Haylock has an unenviable task, and as our time together comes to a close, I wish him luck for the term ahead. Almost in relief of the interview having ended, he jokes that he is continually "learning" about the "complexities of Cambridge". I laugh in agreement.

So too does the communications advisor. Speaking from the corner, he adds: "I think we all are."

And as he gestures for me to leave, I realise that was the most honest moment of the interview. An unguarded comment recognising how difficult Cambridge can be. A small but significant admission from two senior university figures. It's a shame they don't do it more often.



▲ Christopher Haylock (TOBIA NAVA)

The view from the ground

Speaking to *Varsity* this week, Ted Kehoe, welfare officer in Selwyn College's JCR, gave us his view on the mental health crisis (Michael Hennessey writes).

"The environment here can make students feel as if they need to focus entirely on work and not slow down to take time for themselves," he said. In particular, he noted that the short terms at Cambridge lead "students to try to put off getting help until the end of term, which only makes things worse".

Kehoe discussed the importance of the University Counselling Service as a "first point of call" for students

in distress, and this was especially important for those who cannot afford private counselling. Although he acknowledged the UCS had its flaws, he maintained: "They're taking steps to try to resolve the problems that they've encountered in recent years."

Turning to the role of colleges, he emphasises the importance of having tutors point out resources to students.

He observed: "students suffer when they are unable to find somewhere or someone to turn to for help," since this is something colleges could improve.

Although there are prob-

lems with Cambridge's system for addressing students' mental health problems, Kehoe was impressed with some of the recent changes made at Selwyn.

The new college nurse has placed more of an emphasis on mental health and wellbeing, adding she has "made an effort to work with student representatives". He praised the funding available from Selwyn to help students to access private therapy.

Despite Kehoe's optimism, the situation varies across colleges, and — for now — the centralised University system is struggling to cope with the pressure.

important, but not the only answer

Cambridge cares, but academic rigour is here to stay

Hugh Jones
Senior News Editor

Dragging myself to the student services office at the unholy—for an English student at least—hour of 9:30AM, I didn't particularly feel like Natalie Acton was concerned about my well-being.

As our interview got going however, that impression quickly faded. Acton, the University's head of student support, was friendly and energetic. Sitting down with her, alongside Andrew Aldridge, the University's head of internal communications, I got the impression that both care deeply about what Acton called a mental health "crisis".

I'm speaking to Acton and Aldridge about the University's Reach Out programme, a communications campaign aiming to ensure Cambridge

students know how much support is available to them, and how to access it. The urgency of this is clear from the way Acton and Aldridge spoke about the problem. As well as calling the situation a "crisis", they admitted that workload is part of the problem. Such an admission would have previously been unthinkable, but after the suicides, and the leak of a damning report into Cambridge's mental health provision over the summer, Acton was quick to say: "there are a range of things that the University is looking at to try to address workload."

Acton also emphasised how far she was willing to go to grip the problem. She said her team was in constant dialogue with students and: "we're constantly reviewing what's needed across the University." More substantially, she tried to convey that the University as a whole is taking the issue seriously, with a number of faculties and departments reviewing their cur-

ricula "through a well-being lens".

This would be quite the change. As I told Aldridge and Acton, no matter how much they encourage students to reach out, or improve support, some people will maintain that until Cambridge's often-gruelling workload and frenetic culture change, students are going to keep getting hurt.

It was here that—for the first time—I felt a hint of PR-speak creep into Acton's voice. After insisting: "we are listening", Acton told me: "I think the students who talk about work, what they don't say is 'Cambridge is too hard'. They say 'there aren't enough hours in the day to get through everything that I need to do.'"

Some students say that amounts to the same thing. Regardless, pressed on whether she would want Cambridge to be made easier, if that is what it would take to solve the crisis, she demurred.

"I definitely can't commit the Uni-

versity to that", she told me, adding: "the University won't want to reduce that academic standard."

This seems to be the tension Cambridge just can't confront. When asked if Cambridge's culture is part of the problem, Acton says she knows some students find the pressure too much.

As far as tackling that goes, she says: "This campaign is trying to ensure that students, whenever they feel the need of support, do reach out for help." Perhaps I am being too cynical. She does add: "the University is currently looking to try to address areas where workload just feels too much."

Acton and Aldridge clearly care. They are launching a raft of new measures to support students—now anyone who refers to the counselling service will be seen within ten days. They have also dropped the limit on the number of counselling sessions students can access, ensured that clinically trained staff are on call out-

of-hours to advise porters and tutors dealing with suicidal students, and are working to professionalise the tutorial system to make sure students are being looked after properly.

While the pair are happy to offer details on measures to help students in distress, they have less to say about how they will prevent distress in the first place. Despite acknowledging that workload and culture are a problem, they don't seem to have solutions. It seems that the University will stop short of loosening Cambridge's fabled academic rigour.

Aldridge and Acton are certainly sincere in their concern for students' wellbeing. They also seem keen to suggest that they will do whatever it takes to tackle the crisis. The problem is that if Cambridge's intense workload and pressure-cooker culture are ultimately unchangeable, the University's reforms might not be enough.

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Liz Truss' worst nightmare. Cartoon by Hannah Castle

I'll support the strikes, but never the UCU

Striking dons deserve leadership that represents them and has a plan to win



Sam Hudson

Another year, another set of strikes announced by the University and Colleges Union (UCU). For the past five years, Cambridge lecturers have walked out over cuts to their pensions. In the words of Yogi Berra: "It's like déjà vu all over again".

That lecturers are striking is not itself at all disagreeable. The right to industrial action is a key part of any civilised democracy and has worryingly come under increasing assault by the Tories. Lecturers are well justified in having their grievances too. Guaranteed retirement income has been cut by up to 35% and pay has only risen by a meagre 3%, lagging significantly behind the rate of inflation. So it is a crying shame that at this critical time university staff are represented by an organisation as supine and rotten as the UCU.

If there is anything which speaks volumes about the UCU, it is their own record of success. Or rather the total lack thereof. The last time the UCU even tasted something approaching a victory was back in 2018,

where they managed to negotiate the introduction of a "Joint Expert Panel" to help assess changes to their pension scheme. A truly effective measure which has resulted in... precisely no change to the scheme, with the people who actually manage the pension fund simply ignoring the recommendations of the panel and maintaining business as usual.

You don't need to be an economist (in fact it's probably better if you're not) to see that the UCU's demands, while certainly just, will not be accepted by universities. Due to systemic underfunding of tertiary education, many universities are already calling for increases to tuition fees just to keep things as they currently are, let alone pay staff more. The UCU might argue that, given its significant wealth, Cambridge can afford the proposed changes to both pensions and wages. And while this may be true, it obtusely neglects how both pensions and wage rises are actually negotiated. Pensions and wage rises are negotiated centrally by a coalition of universities of which Cambridge is only one. So even if Cambridge acquiesced to the demands of the strikers, nothing would change as other financially bereft universities would simply veto the terms.

Since 2018, the UCU has only intensified this exercise in futility, with strikes becoming more

frequent and less popular among the student body year on year. It appears the UCU have adopted the notably successful strategy of "we'll just keep trying it until it works" pioneered by World War One generals. Just as wave after wave of soldiers were sent fruitlessly charging



▲ A UCU activist preaches to the choir (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

into No Man's Land, the UCU strikes with the same fruitless demands again and again to no avail without even contemplating changing their own tactics.

And the parallels with General Melchett don't end there. The UCU's high command is dangerously out of touch with the very people they are meant to be representing. Just take the UCU's position on the University's free speech statement two years ago. Cambridge UCU

explicitly opposed an amendment to the University's statement calling for a change in wording, instead demanding "respect" rather than "tolerance" for speech. The amendment supporting "tolerance" swept to victory, claiming 87% of the vote, with only 13% backing the UCU's position. Abject embarrassment aside, this episode reveals why the UCU is such a decrepit institution. Despite having "democratically" voted at a UCU meeting on their opposition to the amendment, their position did not remotely line up with that of the academics they are meant to represent. Instead of being at least moderately democratically representative, as Unions should be, the UCU is run by a clique of bourgeois radicals who disastrously dictate the union's direction.

Despite overtures of solidarity with students, this camarilla is nakedly concerned in serving its own self-interest. Their smug disdain for us was clear when they kept backing online-only teaching throughout the pandemic, despite the clearly tragic impact it was having on student mental health. It was clear when they wholeheartedly endorsed an antisemitic conspiracy theory about this very newspaper, concocted by one of their chief commandants. And it is clear again and again when they repeat the barefaced myth that their impotent strikes are with student interest

in mind or that students somehow have an equal duty to join in with the futile display.

While the UCU circus and the clowns who run it may be moderately farcical to watch from afar, their harlequinade has real impacts, especially on the most vulnerable. Demanding that students not cross picket lines will disadvantage those who cannot afford to buy material they'd otherwise be able to access freely from libraries or university repositories. It will have the most impact on those who struggle to fund the very tuition they are being deprived of. And so what? A group of academics can have their moment in the sun? Because if the UCU continues their course as they have promised, their strikes will continue to achieve absolutely nothing.

So no, I won't be donning a pink hat and joining the picket line with the UCU schmucks next strike. I will be laughing in despair at the entire charade. I can only pray that the UCU will learn to use strikes appropriately to target the structural issues which blight higher education, rather than continuing to charge headfirst into barbed wire. It is so truly fascinating that the union supposedly representing the most highly educated group of people in this country, is quite probably the most strategically inept of all.

Sam is a Natural Sciences student at Trinity Hall

Comment

Am I wrong to be jealous of freshers?

As first-years enjoy clubs and events, I can't help but think about the freshers' week that my year never had

Sarah
Adegbite

Being on my college's JCR committee is my one personality trait. I ran for Secretary in my first year, and before I knew it, I was sucked into a world of elections, minute-taking, event-organising, and personalised stash. Almost two years later, and with the role of co-president, I couldn't imagine Cambridge without my JCR.

And although most of the job is emails, admin, and meetings, one of my favourite weeks of the year happens before term even begins—Freshers' Week. Despite being second and third years, we've attended Freshers' Hall and Matriculation Dinner, run consent and wellbeing workshops alongside brilliant facilitators, and hosted the annual 'dress-as-your-subject' Freshers' bop. We've supervised a societies fair and sports BBQ, a trip to bowling and the theatre, turning up to multiple club nights with 'St John's JCR Freshers' Week' plastered across our backs, with absolutely no shame.

But amidst this whirlwind of staircase parties and welcome speeches, there was something ugly growing in my stomach I couldn't ignore. I wanted to be happy for that new cohort, to gaze them with motherly kindness and greet their wide-eyed enthusiasm with affection. Of course I expected some pangs of nostalgia, but seeing them line up for matriculation in nervous bunches, with newly bought gowns making their debut, I felt a knot of jealousy tie itself tight in my chest.

Where was my matriculation photo? Where was my Freshers' Fair on Parker's Piece? Where was my socialising that wasn't in a group of six? It felt like I had been cheated. I was giving those born a couple of years after me everything I had wanted from a first year experience, and it just felt... unfair. Jealousy is a parasite. It latches on where it does not belong, and the more you feed yourself, the bigger it grows.

And as I reflected on that ugly stone in the pit of my stomach, the clearer it became that it was more than raw envy. At the start of summer, the thought of my final year at Cambridge settled an anxious cloud over my mind. I didn't want my time to end. Final year meant the impetus to 'make the most of every opportunity'—as we are told at Halfway Hall and from each alumnus who

stumbles into our path—was truly an urgent one. This would be my last Freshers' Week, my last Bridgemas, and my last 'first lecture'. I could always come back for further study, but is the postgraduate experience really comparable?

While the thought of that 'last' sounded like a death knell in my head, here I was, reliving that which should be first—Freshers' Week—in my final year as an undergrad. Nostalgia, resentment, and a wistful longing for what could have been, had intertwined themselves and wrapped a scratchy rope around my hands, restraining me from moving forward.

And yet, you have to resist indulging 'what ifs'. My other personality trait is studying Theology, and as a Christian, I knew the biblical precedents to what I was wrestling with. In the Book of Esther, a young Jewish woman who nobody knew became the wife of mighty King Xerxes. When a royal official plots to destroy the Jewish population, her uncle urges her to plead for the king on behalf of her people, even though it might cost her life. He asks: "And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14).

Sometimes the human instinct is to long for what we do not have, but such longing blinds us to the fact that perhaps we have come to our



▲ Freshers got to enjoy the delights of Lola Lo's (TOBIA NAVA)

positions for such a time as this. I'm not saying that the fate of a people depends upon how we use our time at Cambridge, but the principle holds. It's okay to mourn the Freshers' Week you never had, or the Matriculation Service you never got, but it's important to know when your mourning period is over.

Perhaps you were called to enter Cambridge in the COVID-19 pandemic 'for such a time as this', to meet the friends you can now call family, or join the society that would have fallen off your radar in the midst of a plethora of in-person workshops. Perhaps none of that would have happened if you hadn't accepted your offer in 2020.

This doesn't mean that these past couple of years haven't been hard: isolation that humans were never intended to experience was thrust on some of the most vulnerable in our society. It means that *despite these things*, there is no relief in wishing for another person's life, or another year group's Freshers' Week. There is, instead, a power in embracing the position you have, for such a time as this. Maybe I wouldn't be the person I am today. Perhaps I wouldn't have had the experience I did in this beautiful, messy place called Cambridge.

Sarah studies Theology at St John's College

Notebook Lotte Brundle

Oranges are the only fruit of my diss

My anxious fingers itch to deploy classic word count beeper-uppers: "furthermore", "moreover", "nevertheless". Long-form writing requirements look unachievable without gentle padding—mammoth tasks demanding concentration, commitment and critical thinking: a holy trinity in short supply as of late.

Supervision essays on Oedipus's serious mummy issues and desperate attempts to cobble together the muddled beginnings of my dissertation have taken their toll: I can barely string a sentence together, let alone a coherent thought. My diss looks at literature's juiciest novels (for research purposes) and asks whether oranges are a common symbol for homosexuality. Sure, English may sometimes seem like a joke, but it offers a fruitful lesson: big projects become more palatable when broken into bite-sized chunks. There's clarity to be found in taking things a slice at a time.

It's not all Greek to me anymore

Once every three years, a ritual occurs: Cambridge's keenest thespians put on the Greek Play. The double bill is performed entirely in ancient Greek, and as such I set out to attend purely for the sake of my studies, dreading two hours of subtitle squinting. But my fears were unfounded: Persians, its tragic half, was moving in its glamour and intensity, and the hilarity of Cyclops, an otherworldly and surprisingly phallic comedy, was not remotely lost in translation.

Quite the opposite: this alien language washed over us, even as technical issues meant we sat through the

We share some common ground in our separate lives

first ten minutes with no subtitles for guidance. We giggled as a distraught stage manager intervened, but were soon plunged back into the majesty of the spectacle, which stuck with me beyond my brief time in the stalls. I

felt connected to a time-honoured tradition, and left the theatre feeling lighter and happier. Ah, catharsis.

Three years together, apart

Living parallel lives can be dizzying. After my partner visited last week, I was reminded of how much of our relationship has been spent far from one another. As term ramped back into gear, I found myself overwhelmed by reading lists, opening nights, long afternoons at The Eagle, and strolls by the Cam. He, on the other hand, was occupied by job interviews, apartment viewings, bustling kitchens, and dog walks along the River Stour. We both live near rivers: we share some common ground, or water, in our separate lives.

I only hope that by when (if!) we reach our fourth anniversary, we'll finally get to share a double bed full-time.



Frankly, I refuse to divide my college-mandated single bed between the two of us. It's a fate no self-respecting human being should have to endure. I look forward to sharing my week, and the comfort of lying on a mattress side by side, with him when this year is through.

Working congregation

Bubbles fizzed as I poured prosecco at my college congregation. Cheerful graduates walked over to a reception table lined with uniformly neat rows of rosy macaroons, cherry-red tomatoes on cocktail sticks and miniature sandwiches. There's beauty to be found in symmetry. Their eyes glistened with excitement and fulfilment, expensive watches sparkling on many a wrist. My gaze was drawn away from glitzy displays of early-career success (or generous gifts) and towards their parents: near mirror images of their children, but older, greyer, prouder—two pieces of the same puzzle.

I think ahead to my graduation, only a year away now, and my own

fantasy begins to form. A hazy image draws itself in my mind: sunlight shines across the cricket field, my parents stand beside me. In lieu of a college waistcoat and tie, I'm wearing a white blouse and gown. Instead of serving drinks, I'll be saying goodbye to Cambridge for the final time.

Things that have pissed me off this week

The beauty of writing is that you can share your joy with the world. The beauty of *whinging* is that you can have a good old moan.

With that in mind, here are some things that have pissed me off this week, in no particular order: being sworn at by rude cyclists, the queue for the ARC cafe, spilling coffee on my white trousers, the itchiness of contact lenses, mornings, alarm clocks, Eduroam, watching my freshly bought avocado fall out of my bike basket only to be annihilated by the tyre of an overtaking car, a Sainsbury's soy milk shortage, Taylor Swift, not understanding politics, damp washing, having to buy a new bike lock (£40), the endless rain, the Doctor Who season finale, Twitter, Liz Truss.

Lotte studies English at Hughes Hall

Beware the daughters of Thatcher and hair bleach

Right-wing women are not a win for modern feminism

Maia Livne



Whenever I wish to speak evil of a member of my own sex, I like to say that I admire her feminist work, allowing young girls all around the world to see that women too can be boring and obnoxious. Meloni, Truss and Le Pen take my line to an extraordinary extreme, (I tend to have these cosmic effects, it is the unburnt witch in me as they say), proving that even women can be demagogues. The daughters of Thatcher and of the hair bleach products seem to be burning the world one Tory party at a time, transforming the Gaslight, Gatekeep, Girlboss joke into political reality.

In the past, I have tried to consider these leaders outside their gender. I would, and still do, condemn sexist commentary against Truss, and it is sexist to only see her via the lens of gender,

which is also why I would not support her only because she is a woman. She does not represent women issues and she is not a feminist figure for me. But conversation with friends has made me rethink whether gender might actually be relevant here. My friends seem to have been more disappointed in female right-wing leaders than in male ones, feeling almost personally betrayed.

Even in local spheres, when elected women in societies used their position to recruit a conservative team, or barely invite female speakers, it seemed to upset my friends more, and I found myself emotionally agreeing. What is it about women that makes their evil feel like a rawer betrayal? Perhaps because it really is.

What do we mean when we say we want more women in politics? In an age of image, we are quick to see representation as a vacant aesthetic trope in politics and forget its deeper significance. Representation can go both ways—for the person or for the people. Do we, women, want to have women in politics to show that even a woman can sink the market and get accused of crimes against humanity? Or do we want to have women because they have

a first-hand insight on the issues of half the population?

Women can understand the dangers of domestic and sexual violence, of period poverty, of being constant guests in the public male space, they understand that female patients are ignored by doctors, that jobs seen as feminine are underpaid, that women anywhere are underpaid and an endless list of other other issues. Their insight and not their oversight is what matters, their knowledge of women's experience—not their visual role of a woman in the team.

But the visual aspect is what benefits the mismatch of female leadership and conservative politics, as we are, more than ever, obsessed with seeing women. The visibility of women is economic fuel for public relations and advertising. This is definitely not to say that pretty women get their jobs because of their looks, but it is to say that the visibility of women helps augment the virality in today's media-based politics.

From Helen of Troy to Amber Heard, the world loves consuming beautiful women, and hating them. And however we view them (personally I am a big Helen of Troy fan) we cannot deny the importance of femininity to the public

gaze. It attracts adoration, as it also attracts haters, who usually manage to clumsily unveil their inner sexism in the way. That, of course, attracts new attention back to the right, as they can rightfully attack the sexism, and distract audiences from their own sexist approaches. Meloni managed to capitalise on the sexualisation of women in the public eye when holding two melons to her breasts as part of her campaign, which understandably women could see as a betrayal. The most powerful woman in the country paved her way to success by merchandising objectification — one of the most common tools to weaken and hurt women.

We like to see women, but we love to hear men. And by using sexist tropes to promote conservative thought, Meloni combines the chauvinistic, masculine voice of the radical right with the sight of a woman. In the modern world, women are still a product, only now, (businesswomen as they are), they can manage their marketing on their own. And once you have sold your soul to the devil, all the rest is a pretty easy deal.

Women should support women, not support themselves upon women. And that is a key difference capitalism has

managed to blur when atrophying the revolutionary power of feminism into another gadget. Women are poorer, underrepresented, disrespected, unprotected — their struggle is linked with so many others, their rights are interwoven within every household in every single country. Changing women's rights could change the structure of dominations upon which the world is built. Instead, we have created a layer of bossgirls, atop a class of exhausted women.

Amid a capitalism that now requires both parents to work full time jobs while women remain burdened with traditionally feminine duties, we do not merely need a leader who is a woman, we need them to be leaders who see and fight neo-patriarchal structures. Our way to view women should also change for that, as often even the most self-proclaimed liberal of us, will categorise every woman who does not look or talk the way we expect as annoying, dumb and irrelevant. If we learn to respect women as people, we will find new leaders, who fight not only for their own ambitions, but for the people they represent.

Maia studies English at Trinity College

THE MAYS



We are currently seeking to appoint a student Editor-in-Chief for The Mays.

Now in its 31st year, The Mays is a book of the best of new student poetry, short stories, creative photography and art from the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford.

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The smoking area

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Tobia Nava

The Galapagogos perform at the launch party for the Centre for Music Performance on 23 October.

More student bands will perform on 15 and 29 November.



Trumpington

Cambridge's diarist makes fun of this week's biggest stories



This week's edition of *Varsity* rounds off a rather rough week for Caius. After the SU kept Pippa and Andy awake long past their bedtimes on Tuesday night, protesting gadfly fellow Arif Ahmed's little chat with Helen Joyce, they might have thought that things couldn't get any worse.

Unfortunately, they were wrong. After not enough students could be bothered to vote on whether to fly the pride flag, they suddenly became very bothered indeed that their prized college puffers might incur dirty looks from students at more liberal Colleges, like Peterhouse, Trinity, or Magdalene.

It was a bad week for the College's communications officer to go on holiday - and not just because he was mysteriously unavailable to take *Varsity*'s calls when we suddenly found that we needed tickets to the Helen Joyce talk.

Varsity's sex survey gave Caius its final blow when the College failed to make it into the top three most sexually active colleges. Being head of the river doesn't translate into actual head, apparently.

Trumpington would also like to take a moment to congratulate our noble SU sabbatical officers for their hard work on that protest.

Varsity was, of course, at the protest (our reporters will go anywhere for you, dear reader), and we could see how hard the sabbs were working. Running away from our reporters for two whole hours must have really worn them out, and being at work after 4:30PM must have felt so strange, even if it is technically 'their job'.

What's more, it really does show superhuman dedication to representing students' voices that after the protest had finished at least one noble soul (not a sabb, it must be said) led a rallying cry to carry on the struggle.

Their words — "debrief at SidBar" — will always serve as a reminder that sometimes one needs to ignore the shouts of student journalists, and just go for a pint.

Speaking of dedication to duty, Trumpington was pleased to see the University Council bringing Cambridge's fabled rigour to their environmentalism.

Cambridge is of course renowned for its simple, efficient, and dynamic decision-making bodies, so it was a refreshing change to see the Council vote to delay making a decision this week.

Some might opine that climate change is in fact a 'crisis' and 'that rapid action is necessary', and so 'the University dithering over whether to cut ties with fossil fuel companies is a disgrace' — but Trumpington is glad to see that Senate House is sticking with its trademark brand of bureaucracy. After all, what would Extinction Rebellion do if people actually started listening to them?

The march of the Englings

Ronan Long examines the migration pattern of Cambridge's student wildlife

As winter approaches, and the frost sets in across the land, this curious species begins the annual journey to its ancestral homeland. One swaying flock, upright in the howling wind. Although they are safer together, not all will make it. Not all can.

Filtering in across the bridges, they blot out the very pavement, that blazing Arts and Humanities spirit drawing them into Sidgwick like driftwood to the typhoon's eye.

Their traditional garb protects from the harsh elements—thick woollen jumpers and oversized jackets ward off the freezing chill; deep greens and browns that blend in with the algae-sludge Cam. Doc Martens crunch the hoary grass and orange leaves. Their flanks are protected by the hanging tote-bag, emblazoned with their particular allegiance—Shakespeare & Company and New Yorker, those two great and noble warring factions, united on this march. An apothecary amongst the tribe stands tall, reaches into his own satchel, and begins to roll a cigarette. A prized craft among his people, he is under great pressure to distribute to his fellow travellers.

They converse, sharing stories of the night before—a menthol cigarillo shared beneath the stars on a stolen punt, a conceptual poetry reading featuring the slant rhyme "zine/ketamine/

Heseltine", a penny-board pink-slip drag race down Petty Cury. Between anecdotes, each traveller considers alluding to Chaucer, but thinks better of it.

An interloper joins the head of the phalanx, in a tight grey Regatta fleece—the congregation pauses. It is unsure that he will be allowed safe passage with them, for he resembles that most hated adversary, the STEM student. He turns to the side, displaying a golden hoop hanging from a bloodied ear. The relief is palpable in the air: he is giving normalwave, it is said. It is clever, it is ironic. The procession continues unfazed to the corner, where even more join.

A flock of Canada geese flies overhead, making their own migration. Our weary humanities students lift their heads in awe, sharing in the transcendent nature of community, of passage through life and the joy of belonging. An ASNaC's phone dings; the other ASNaC has said they can't make it to the lecture. Not wanting to be alone with her professor, she opts to head back to college. The first to leave the troupe. Allegiance wavers. The idea of a return to college, a nap, and checking moodle later on is floated by one Engling. It continues to float, prevailing over waves of noncommittal dissent. The herd thins. Who cares anyway, it's not even on their paper.

NOT the NEWS

What were the stories that didn't make the cut?

Humanities students 'furious' at lecture recording overhaul

A decision to stop recording humanities lectures has caused outrage across Cambridge. We spoke to one angry student who fumed: "I studied Geography at university so I could develop a nicotine addiction and shag horse girls in peace. The fact I am now being expected to work is counter to everything I'm paying nine grand a year for."

Churchill set to land lucrative film contract

Spielberg is coming to Cambridge with a brand new film about the brutality of life in Stalin's Soviet gulags. Filming is set to commence at Churchill College in 2023, with the location scout saying: "We really wanted to find some architecture that encapsulated the total and utter bleakness, joylessness and lack of hope that was ever present in the gulags. We did wonder if Churchill College was a bit too ugly at first, but we think we can fix it in post."

University to rethink multiple choice questions in wake of cheating scandal

After the chess world was rocked by one player using vibrating anal beads to cheat in high level games, fears have risen that the same process could be used to gain an edge in multiple choice exams. *Varsity* spoke to one computer scientist, sweating profusely and constantly adjusting his trousers, who opposed the University's plan to scrap multiple choice questions: "The mere idea," he said, biting his lip: "that

anyone would stoop to such lows just to gain an advantage is beyond reproach." The unnamed student let out an audible moan. "I sincerely hope the University reconsiders its policy immediately," he yelled, sprinting for the bathroom.

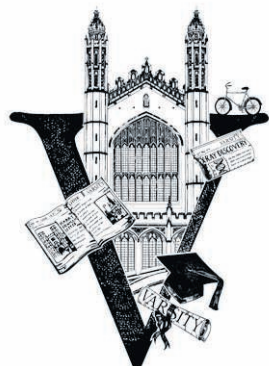
Politics lectures suspended

One leading academic explained the decision, saying: "We have no idea what the f*** is going on anymore."

Vice-Chancellor Anthony Feeling learns what decolonisation is after watching Avatar (2009)

After a recent interview with *Varsity*'s news editor, where he revealed that he didn't know what decolonisation is, Vice-Chancellor Anthony Feeling embarked on an educational adventure that was sure to teach him the intricacies of this important issue. Using the University's world-class educational resources, and Toope's leftover Netflix account in the office's Smart TV, Feeling reported he successfully gained a nuanced and holistic view of the importance of decolonisation through James Cameron's *Avatar*. His prolific communications officer informed us that he was "shocked by what the RDA did to the 'blue aliens' and vowed to implement a multi-step plan to decolonize the University". The first step of this plan is Feeling's attendance to Halloween Night at Revs, where he will dress as a "sexy blue alien" and "get in touch with students' experiences with the vestiges of colonialism".

Leaders & letters



Caius have the right to host Joyce, and students have the right to protest her

This Tuesday, students would have found it hard to miss the talk by Helen Joyce hosted at Gonville & Caius. They might have been overwhelmed by the huge volume of online activity, especially on Twitter, telling Cambridge students what we should or shouldn't think. Many would also have seen it advertised on faculty mailing lists, which represents an unacceptable overreach by the organisers of the event – Professor Arif Ahmed especially.

Professor Ahmed has a track record of courting controversy, having re-invited Jordan Peterson last year for a talk a year after the Divinity faculty rescinded a two-month visiting fellowship offer, when photos emerged of him posing next to a man wearing an islamophobic shirt. Ahmed declared the event a “victory”, again criticising the University's previous disinvitation. Whether you love or despise Peterson and what he stands for, the intense battle of free speech instigated the rescinded fellowship gave him publicity on a platter, and allowed him to be victimised despite his views.

The invitation of Helen Joyce is Ahmed's latest and most overt attempt to start a free speech war, and one that Ahmed no doubt will have relished. But we do not have to combat hate on Ahmed's terms: instead of no-platforming speakers, which lends undeserved credibility to a narrative of censorship and victimhood, students can and should exercise their right to protest. It is this outpouring of student expression that represents the best of Cambridge.

And lively protests were organised outside Caius by the Student Union, their chants echoing down King's Parade. The right to protest is as crucial a part of free speech as hosting talks, and those brave enough to rally in support of trans rights deserve to be heard. In a world hostile to both young people and marginalised communities, it is more important than ever that allies embolden them with shows of strength and solidarity. Protests can allow this to happen in a meaningful, public manner.

Those who criticise the protests are fundamentally unserious in their inconsistency, and do not speak for Cambridge students as a whole. Self-proclaimed free speech defenders are therefore sorely mistaken to see this protest as a threat to free speech. Instead, it is representative of a thriving, politically engaged, expressive student body confident enough to argue for their rights in the open, rather than fall into the trap of no-platforming.

Of course, there are students who agree with Joyce's view that gender is not a social construct and is immutably tied to sex. Those students obviously have the right to invite her and attend her talk. Others also have the right to protest, and loudly at that.

But perhaps valuable lessons were also learnt in the event itself. Joyce posted on Twitter after the event, expressing her gratitude for having had the chance, for the first time in years, to be confronted by people who disagree with her or despise her in such an intimate setting. In the same way, students who attended the talk left with an enriched understanding of the subject and their views of it, by virtue of thorough debate. As controversial as this talk was, the ability to debate and discuss freely is at the heart of wuch an enlivening place to study. This right must be defended, not diluted.

Caius master was wrong to boycott Joyce event

Sir,
In writing to her students as she has, Pippa Rogerson — the master of Gonville & Caius — has committed a gross abuse of position and recklessly risked inflaming the already volatile situation which surrounds her college and its members (both senior and junior) in relation to the planned event of 25 October. It is to be hoped that, reflecting on her behaviour, she withdraws her communication as soon as possible and issues a public apology for overstepping the mark.

Putting aside the content of Helen Joyce's views, which people are of course free to consider repugnant and which may — subject to the law — be passionately contested both within and without the University, it cannot be doubted that, once properly invited (as she was), Caius has had a duty to allow Joyce to speak without risk to her safety and without the imposition of improper impediments. What is more, the College's officers are subject to that same duty.

Encouragingly, at one stage its authorities seemed to recognise this, telling this paper that they supported “free speech and would encourage those within the college community and wider society to challenge views they find reprehensible through debate”. Unfortunately, this liberal-minded attitude has now been abandoned. In writing to her students in the terms she has, Rogerson has set not just her face but also the College's against those responsibilities. In her open letter — presumably sent using the sort of ‘to-all-students’ mailing list to which she only has access due to her position — the master claimed that events such as that planned “do not contribute” to her “aim” for how the College should function as “an inclusive, diverse and welcoming home” for both academics and students. Alas, perhaps she has a different defini-

tion of inclusive than I do, because this is an utterly exclusionary position to adopt. While freedom of speech is a “fundamental principle”, she added: “on some issues ... we cannot stay neutral.” This partiality then presents itself as a denunciation of the event as involving ideas which are “offensive, insulting, and hateful to members of our community”. In other words, the master's letter involves official condemnation of the event, in the strongest possible terms, when her obligation — along with that of her college — is to support the reasonable facilitation of it. Plainly, there is quite some cognitive dissonance going on here.

Crucially, it is no good for Rogerson to say, as she did in her own (attempted) defence, that she wrote her letter purely “in a personal capacity”. She must have used her normal email account — and, as I say, the College's own internal mailing lists — to send it. Further, it would be obvious to any fair-minded reader — as it would have been to the master herself — that her views on this issue only have weight because she is, in fact, in charge of the college concerned. In other words, despite her disclaimer, Rogerson's email constitutes a flagrant abuse of position, and an action antithetical to the mission of a liberal educational institution.

Beyond all this, the master's letter is to be further condemned. It is, in its use of hyperbole, inflammatory and it offers pseudo-official encouragement to any more radical students or campaigners to take matters into their own hands to disrupt the proceedings. Who wouldn't think that they were justified in silencing what has now been officially designated as “hate”? If any of the participants in the event or its organisers are harmed in the build up to or execution of it, she would — I think — be legally responsible. Likewise, although it clearly assumes the existence of an intellectual monoculture at Caius — something which would be surprising given the high public profile of views like Joyce's — the master's letter may well have an intimidatory effect on her students, especially her female students, who hold such views and wish to attend Joyce's talk. That would breach the trust which they as inquiring young minds place in their college

to let them explore and question the world around them as they themselves choose to. As a result, Rogerson's letter is neither that of a responsible leader nor that of a dedicated educator.

A Concerned Don, Oxford

Swiftly condemned

Sir,
I hear that the current editor of *Varsity*, Jacob Freedland, hasn't listened to Taylor Swift's latest album (*Midnights*). This is a travesty. I recommend in the strongest times that he remedies this as soon as possible.

Isaac Kaufmann, Fitzwilliam College

A merchandise mystery solved?

Sir,
You mention CUCA spent four hours trying to find their lost material somewhere in Peterhouse. Perhaps CUCA should consider not leaving their merchandise in the choir vestry, where it is just asking to be thrown away?

Disgusted of Peterhouse

Angry reader

Sir,
I am a sixth-year undergraduate, disappointed, incited and frankly foaming at the mouth about what appears to be the terminal decline of *Varsity* across the last year. What to be the jewel of the Cambridge zine scene is now as loud and full of shit as the singing bin. I want know why the editors have cut the following: poems of the week, impenetrable and thoughtful features on the issues faced by HSPS students.

I'd encourage this term's editors to listen to its frustrated readership by putting its ears to the ground and their corduroy class asses in the air
With regards,

Concerned reader, Pembroke College

Send us a letter:
letters@varsity.co.uk

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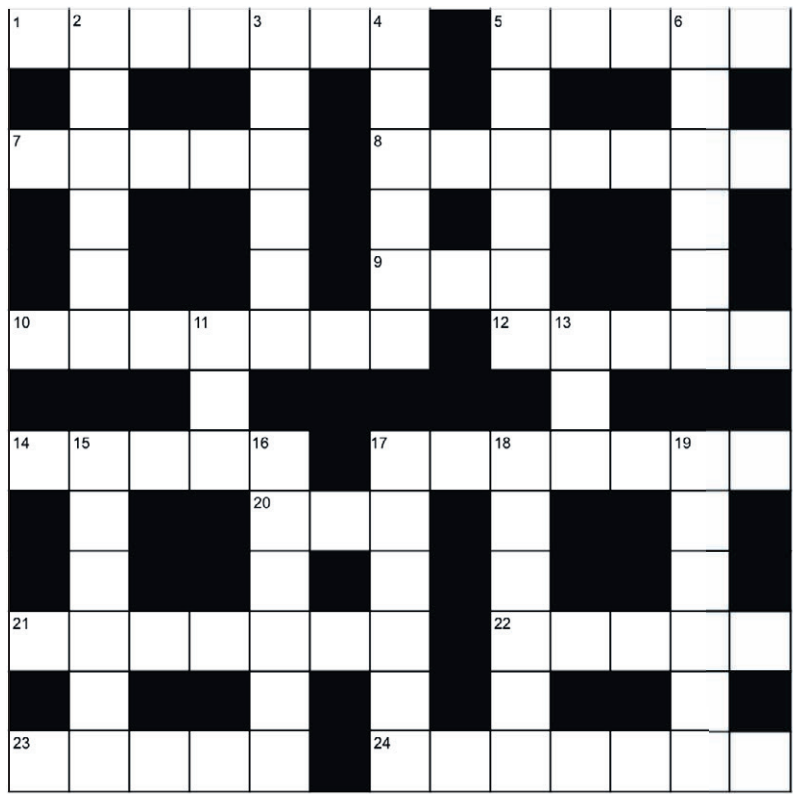
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Varsity is published by Varsity Publications Ltd. Varsity Publications also publishes *The Mays*. Printed at Iliffe Print Cambridge – Winship Road, Milton, Cambridge CB24 6PP on 42.5gsm newsprint. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. ISSN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

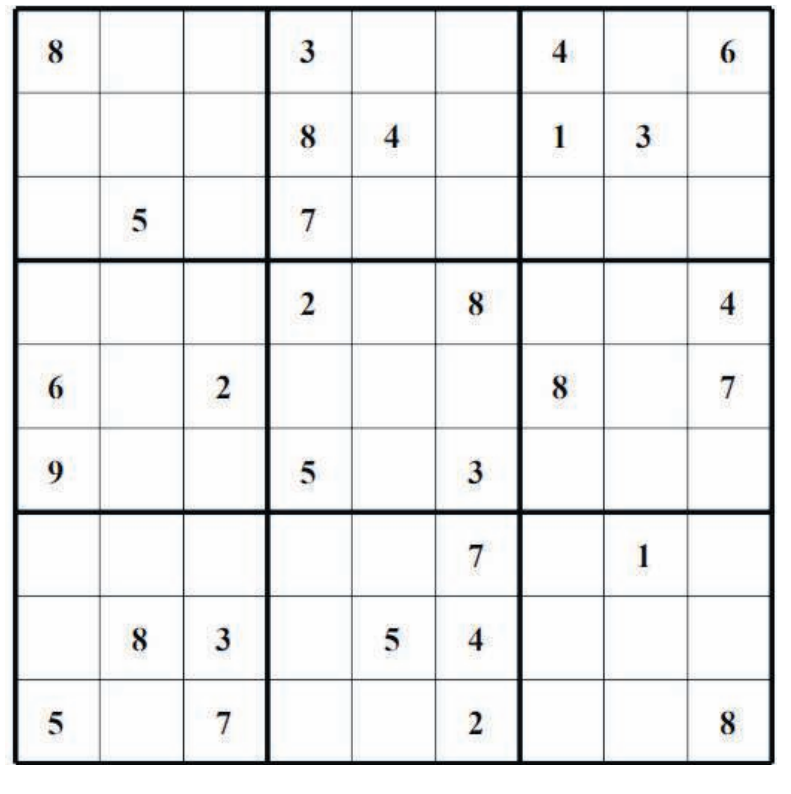
The smoking area

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD by Evie Burr



- Across**
1. Frosting makes organ ache after leaving operating room (7)
5. Abandon a fight (5)
7. Pale as that man at the start of November (5)
8. Rent taken back from equal associate (7)
9. jack was known to do it (3)
10. Space is opened to put contents of fort in available space (7)
12. Dr Lee can be someone you ought to respect (5)
14. A polite man's ambassador (5)
17. Saint takes pearl in exchange for stationary item (7)
20. Anger is tiresome internally (3)
21. Slim person who writes letters is about fifty (7)
22. Thief, for example, could start with a chess piece (5)
23. Mast fixed by pirate leaders to impress (5)
24. Constantly bothered but is in possession of sleigh (7)
- Down**
2. Arts degree written up and dispatched but isn't here (6)
3. Against contract being shortened (6)
4. Realm where Euler's number has prime variant (6)
5. Journey between two points makes a line (6)
6. Strongly opposed to a poem (6)
11. A straight sprint (3)
13. Friend heads up the circuit of a track (3)
15. Split in which Penny leaves after Georgia is manipulated (6)
16. Too busy to be secured (4,2)
17. Chaser in the wrong place for hunt (6)
18. Three quarters of ABBA with the heads of Cambridge Union Society? It adds up! (6)
19. Reveal former stance (6)

SUDOKU by Sam Hudson



QUIZ by Sam Hudson ANSWERS

Where in Cambridge might you find the ghost(s) of...?

1. Christopher Round, who allegedly drowned both his lover and his rival in a College pool
2. Lions who have moved from their usual location on a plinth
3. Oliver Cromwell haunting the location of his head
4. Ludwig Wittgenstein, haunting the location of his head
5. A depressed doctor who hung himself in the Master's Lodge in 1632
6. Kwasi Kwarteng's reputation
7. Christopher Hitchens haunting his old school
8. Syd Barret, who met Roger Waters at this pub before founding Pink Floyd
9. Dinosaurs

- This week's answers:
1. Christ's College
 2. Fitzwilliam Museum
 3. Sidney Sussex College
 4. Trinity College
 5. Churchill College
 6. Trinity College
 7. Ley's School
 8. The Anchor
 9. Pembroke College
 10. Sidgwick Museum

5	6	7	1	3	2	1	7	5	8
8	3	6	7	4	5	8	1	1	1
4	1	5	7	4	6	2	7	4	1
1	2	2	2	1	7	8	1	6	6
7	5	8	1	6	4	4	7	7	9
7	6	3	8	9	2	5	1	1	7
6	8	2	9	1	7	7	7	3	3
5	1	6	4	5	3	1	3	7	7
9	4	5	2	2	1	3	1	6	8
7	9	4	5	7	1	3	1	6	8

CHESS by Gwilym Price

Last week, the Fresher's Blitz was won by Coby Graff with a score of 6.5/7. The 4NCL, the UK's premier team tournament, also kicked off over the weekend, with Cambridge University 1 coming up against two of the stronger teams in Division 1: Cheddleton and Manx Liberty and unfortunately falling to two defeats.



(1) Price - Snape, 4NCL Div 2 2022-23, White to play and win.



(2) Analysis, 2021. Black to play and win (warning: hard)

Cambridge University Chess Club meet on Monday evenings at St John's College

VARSLITY SCOPES 14th October - 28th October 2022 by Jasmine Hearn & Lily Kemp

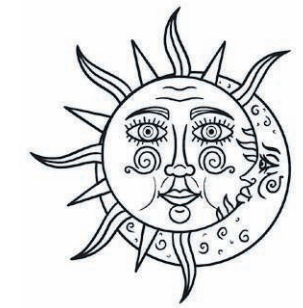
A new week, a new chapter: For some of you, this week brings prosperity; for others, peace. All signs look out for tricks and treats; it's a scary couple of weeks. Varsity predicts the trials and tribulations of Halloween season and mid-term mayhem.

Libra: You've not been feeling the love with the ol' degree this week, Libra. Can you even remember how to use iDiscover? To be honest, we don't blame you. But imagine what could happen if you reminded yourself why you chose your subject in the first place. Book that DoS meeting, talk it out, and get inspired.

Scorpio: Last week, we told you your energy needs protecting as of late. Drama has been brewing. But we're so pleased that — against all odds — you managed to swallow your pride and choose peace over violence. Stay on that wave! You're doing great, don't blow it now. This week could be a good one for some quiet mov-

ie nights with friends at home.

Sagittarius: You're a metropolitan baby at heart, Sagittarius — and these cobblestoned, cyclist-ridden streets just aren't



doing it for you. You're made for bigger, brighter places than the Sidgwick Site. Hop on the train to London for an evening to catch your breath and feel the buzz... you'll come back feeling inspired.

Capricorn: Creativity is brewing for you, Cap. You're canny, you've been watching the Cambridge arts scene for a while now, and your artistic insights have been simmering. Now's the time to strike — pitch a show to the ADC, launch a zine, or head to a CUTAZZ class.

Aquarius: You're spontaneous and adaptable, Aquarius — and you never say no to a party. Our matchmaking senses are tingling for you this week — and we're never wrong. If you catch wind of a silent disco, you'd better grab your headphones and get down to Sweet Home Alabama, no matter what you had planned for the night — we think a silent disco is no bad place to find love...

Pisces: Ring your mum, she misses you.

Aries: You've had to-do lists and timetables coming out of your ears this week,

Aries. Newsflash: your goals are unrealistic. Stop packing so much in. As we broach Week 5 burnout, chill out — and what better place to do it than at the University of Cambridge?

Taurus: You love basking in the little pleasures of life, don't you Taurus? It's a shame you're too burnt-out to change your bed sheets. Maybe this week, a bit of time in the sweet nature of Cambridgeshire would do you some good. Cycle down to the Botanical Gardens for some autumnal sun and a couple of hours away from it all.

Gemini: You put so much love out into the world, Gemini, and we're all for it — now it's time to let the love in. And you've got more people you can rely on than you think. Trust yourself, and look out for small, sweet signs of connection from your nearest and dearest, or reach out to an old friend. You'll feel better for it.

Cancer: Someone new has entered the scene for you recently, Cancer! Wear your heart on your sleeve this week. We know you want to play it cool, but your new beau wants to hear you speak your truth just as much as you want a text back. It's your move.

Leo: What's been going on, Leo?! You swore you were going to pull some big library nights, and yet we found you in the wee hours of the morning doing something questionable; we won't share what. Reality check, Leo. You can't carry on like this — pull yourself together this week and get some early nights.

Virgo: You've been quite the social butterfly recently, Virgo! But watch your back — not everyone's got your best interests at heart. New friends, unfortunately, aren't always the gems you think they are. Ask yourself, do they really make your soul feel good?

Vulture



Best rooms
of Cambridge
(page 26)

The Cambridge
Greek Play
(page 22)



‘The domestic
bursar walked
in on me’

Students divulge in the first sex
survey since 2008 (page 20-21)

‘My girlfriend and I had sex on

The wait is over. More than 50% of Cambridge students identify as something other than heterosexual, according to an online survey carried out by this newspaper.

Nearly 600 students, representing a cross section of Cambridge colleges and subjects, completed the self selecting questionnaire last carried out in 2008. The anonymous survey was open to students over the course of 26th-28th October. So, what are the headlines?

Straights a minority

Varsity can reveal that 49.7% of the respondents identified as heterosexual, whilst 11.9% and 29.7% identified as homosexual and bisexual respectively. One student, who seems to have taken a little too obsessively to their outings on the Cam, identified their sexuality as “rower”.

Whilst perhaps surprising, these statistics are corroborated by the remarkably similar findings of the recent sex survey carried out by *Cherwell*, the University of Oxford’s student newspaper.

Cherwell also found that 49% of its students were heterosexual, with nearly 33% identifying as bisexual.

Speaking on the striking similarities, the editor of *Cherwell*, Pieter Garciano, told *Varsity*: “It’s fascinating to see the resemblance in outcomes between Oxford and Cambridge. One wonders whether this is due to the similarities in student populations, or because *Varsity* and *Cherwell* draw similar types of readership”.

16% are virgins

Only 16% of the students surveyed by *Varsity* said they were virgins, a figure that remains unchanged from 2008. And of the students that have had sex, 71% lost their virginity before arriving to Cambridge.

According to the survey, the average Cambridge student has had seven sexual partners.

All stated averages were calculated by taking outliers into account. One aspiring top shagger claimed to have slept with 10,000 people.

Nearly half don’t do casual

The survey equally put to bed any rumours of promiscuity. 48.8% of the respondents claimed to never have had a one night stand, with nearly half of all students in a committed relationship. A further 10% are in “complicated” arrangements. Comparatively, only 16.5% of students are regularly having one night stands.

But this certainly doesn’t mean that students don’t like to get creative. Ten respondents claimed to have had sex on King’s parade, whilst 15 have done the deed in a punt. Another 20 have had sex in a college chapel. It seems students are finding more inventive ways to integrate staples of the Cambridge experience into their sex lives.

Minority on dating apps

Unsurprisingly it seems that dating apps have brought little joy to the 38% of students using



them. Only 15.7% of those in relationships met their significant others on a dating platform.

The survey also revealed the continued importance of the club scene. 41% of respondents claimed to have met one of their sexual partners at a Cambridge club. Whilst Lolas and MASH have facilitated many fateful encounters, the most popular club to meet potential sexual partners is Revolution. 155 respondents claimed to have met one of their partners there.

One in three don't have safe sex

Despite most students being sexually active, one in three Cantabs do not consistently practice safe sex. Precisely a third of respondents to the online survey said that they do not always ensure contraception is used during sexual intercourse.

The survey’s last section gave respondents the opportunity to impart their funniest sex anecdotes. From sex in the hot tub of “Watergate” fame and misapprehensions of gender to spontaneous threesomes and romps in exam halls, students are evidently challenging the stereotype of the boring Cambridge nerd. Vomiting and defecation were also a worryingly common theme to many anecdotes.

Locations at which students have had sex include: a bench outside the University Library, the toilets at MASH, on a desk, at castle mound, outside a church, on the scaffolding around King’s chapel and on the deck of a yacht.

One student claimed to have “shagged” a *Varsity* journo who “in the midst of post-nut clarity started writing an article”. That is the level of commitment that *Varsity* demands of its writers.

Whilst many were enthusiastic at the prospect at completing the questionnaire, one disgruntled student was not so keen, arguing that *Varsity*’s “morally corrupt” survey was complicit “in the media’s slow destruction of the Western world”.

Best sex anecdotes

1. I was given a blowjob during the master's speech
2. My girlfriend and I had sex on the scaffolding of King's Chapel
3. I woke up in the middle of the night to find the guy I went home with pissing in the wardrobe
4. My partner shat in my mouth during sex
5. We had a college family meal...and it just ended in an orgy
6. I had sex in my supervisor's office

The Rompkins Table '22

Average number of sexual partners by college

Colleges getting the most

1. St John's	(10.16)
2. Trinity Hall	(9.57)
3. Robinson	(9.42)
4. Homerton	(8.62)
5. Gonville & Caius	(8.44)

Colleges getting the least

1. Peterhouse	(2.5)
2. Emmanuel	(3.11)
3. Trinity	(3.22)
4. Newnham	(3.98)
5. Magdalene	(4.11)

Bringing sexy back?

Despite the moral panic, students don't seem to have an issue getting it on, writes **Ella Mann**



Fear not, boomers. Gen Z are far from a sexless generation. 1920s swing is back in full force according to the *explicit* results of *Varsity*’s sex survey.

It should be noted that the sexual escapades of Cambridge University’s best and brightest included below are the more tasteful recollections. The stressful environment of rigorous academia seems to be reflected in the filthy sex lives of its students, producing a (literal) hot bed of chunning, bumming and strumming.

Perhaps one student’s concerns that *Varsity*’s sex survey is assisting “the decline of Western civilisation”, are valid. From one student’s splinter complaints after a scaffolding encounter, to another waking up to find their one night stand “pissing in [their] wardrobe”, Cambridge students have shown a clear preference for the weird and wonderful.

Whilst Cantabs might be having more sex, it isn’t necessarily sexier. Some anecdotes were a tad too honest, with one anonymous submission confessing that “one time a girl touched my shoulder and I nuttet.” Cambridge students also appear very reluctant to give up their intellectual pursuits under any conditions. The pride with which one submission recounted interrupting foreplay to “complete my Duolingo streak” was a little concerning.

All in all, *Varsity*’s deeply scientific survey seems to have shown that Cantabs are not the University Challenge virgins many imagine. From plain Patrick Bateman-style narcissism to the earnest glee of one Trinmo at getting laid, Cambridge students continue to rival their competitors in both the exam hall and the bedroom.

the scaffolding on King's Chapel'

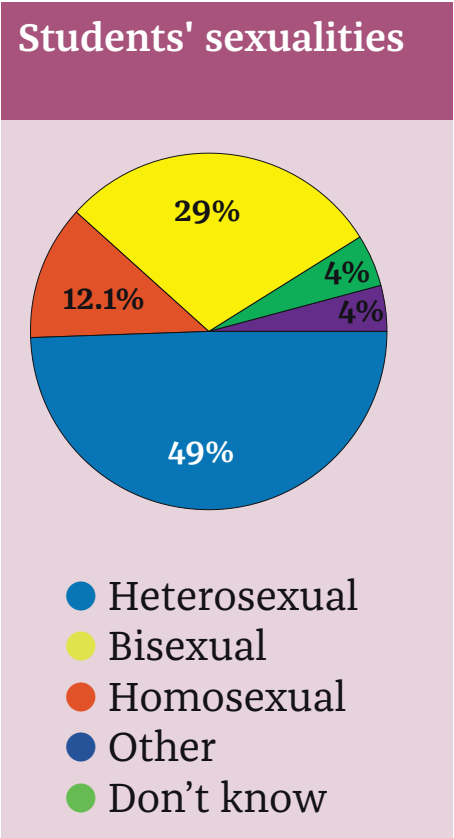
Average number of sexual partners by subject

Subjects getting the most

1. Philosophy	(16.86)
2. Veterinary Medicine	(14.6)
3. English	(10.93)
4. MMLL	(9.0)
5. History of Art	(8.66)

Subjects getting the least

1. PBS	(3.77)
2. Classics	(3.84)
3. NatSci	(4.65)
4. CompSci	(5.45)
5. History of Art	(5.72)



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Theatre

A dead language brought to life

Anjeli Chapman meets the students who are taking up language lessons for The Cambridge Greek Play

Alex Silverman pulls out a chair and sits down in front of his piano. “What are we singing about?” he asks the chorus clustered in front of him. “We’re singing about the possibility that the Cyclops is getting his eye taken out.”

The Cambridge Greek Play is a triennial tradition that began in 1882. It consists of two pieces of Greek theatre put on by a cast of Cambridge graduates and current students. This year, those pieces were Aeschylus’ *Persians* and Euripides’ *Cyclops*, a rarely performed satyr play.

The plays are performed entirely in Greek—subtitles are provided for the audience. But the actors must learn their lines in a dead language, with many of them having no classical background.

These aren’t roles for dilettantes. Previous Greek Play performers include Rupert Brooke and Tom Hiddleston. Since the nineteenth century, hundreds of actors have been where these students are now: painstakingly reviewing their Greek translations, sleep deprived, standing up straight to the costume assistant’s tape measure.

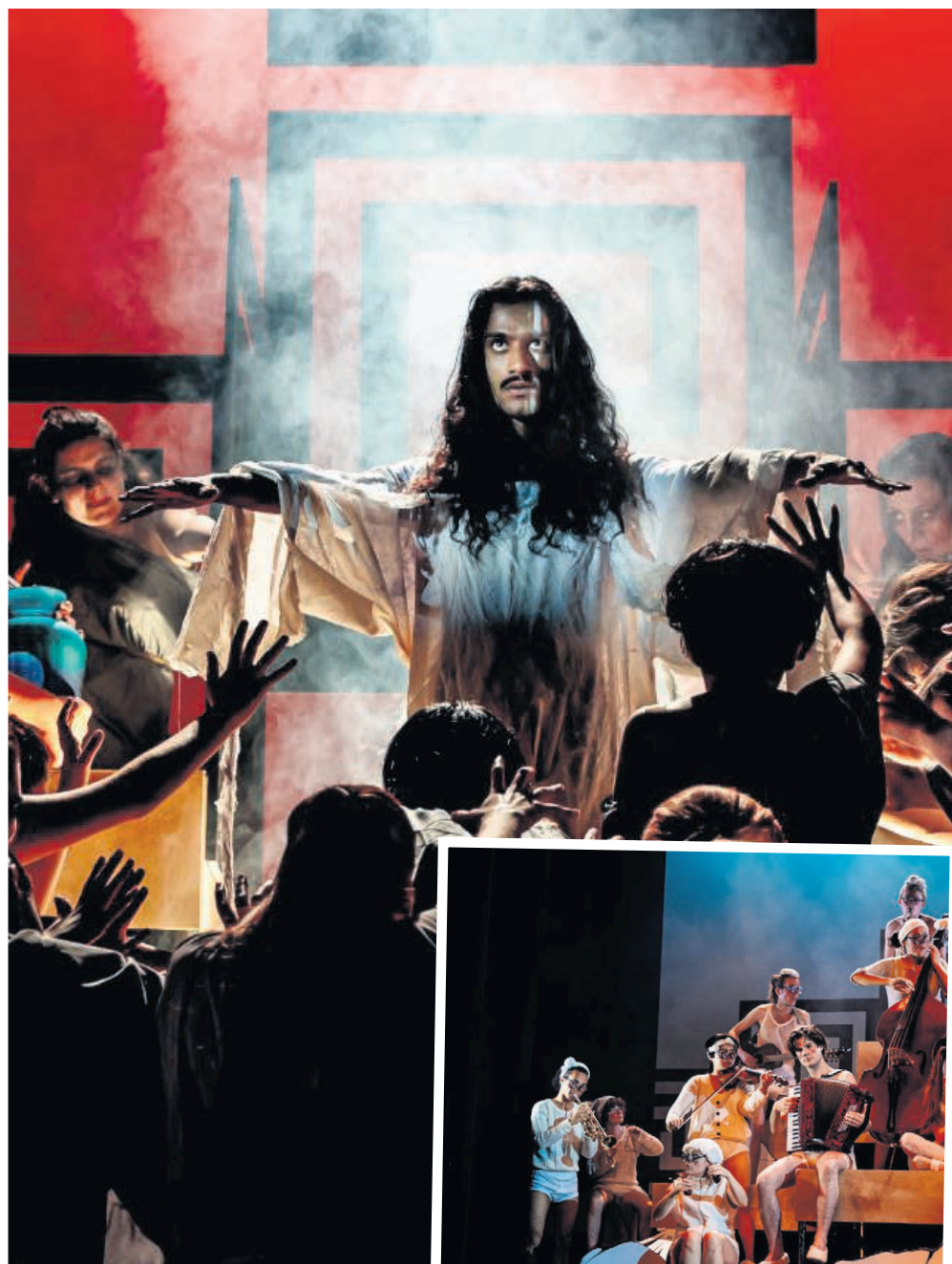
Now their ranks are joined by Maria Telnikoff, a former Downing Classics student who brings a terrifying, impenetrable wall of strength to her role as Atossa, the matriarch in *Persians*.

The director Daniel Goldman commented that Telnikoff has this role because “she wanted it the most. If this makes her sound artless, it shouldn’t. Even in rehearsals, she radiated a palpable force!”

Jude Ashcroft, who plays Polyphemus, the titular Cyclops, also said that an early audition involved “imitating a gorilla”. Ashcroft has a gentle, easy presence and a charming modesty. He brings a warmth to his role in *Cyclops*. Ashcroft is going into his second year, but was drawn to The Greek Play before he’d even applied to Cambridge. “It’s not an opportunity you get in many places. If I were lucky enough to get into Cambridge, then I’d have to do my best to be involved.”

There were plenty of hoops to jump through first. Saul Barrett, who plays Xerxes in *Persians*, claimed that one of his auditions involved reciting a “monologue from *Measure for Measure* as if it were a stand-up routine.”

“My biggest fear is doing the same thing over and over again,” he said. And so, each night of *Persians* is different: Barrett has played Xerxes as defiant, fearful, even a petulant child.



▲ Mithriran Ravindran starring as Darius the Great in *The Persians* (ZOE BIRKBECK)

▼ Saul Barrett plays Xerxes (ZOE BIRKBECK)

After their successful collaboration on the 2019 Greek Play, *Oedipus at Colonus*, Goldman and composer Alex Silverman chose *Persians* because it felt like a challenge; they chose *Cyclops* for balance and levity.

“It’s an extraordinary artefact,” Silverman says of *Persians*. “[It’s] A pageant. It’s ritualistic, elegiac, primitive.” It’s also painfully timely. *Persians* is an observation on the aftermath of mass death. The parallels are obvious. The contemporary relevance is so clear that Goldman decided against his initial vision, which was to render *Persians* as an overt performance of politicized grief. “The easy version,” he said, “Was all in suits.”

When it was first produced in ancient Greece, surviving accounts tell us that Aeschylus’ play was staged minimally. Goldman’s production is similarly pared down. *Cyclops* is a deliberate contrast. The story about a

Ashcroft's audition for Polyphemus, the cyclops, involved imitating a gorilla

cannibalistic giant features elaborate puppetry. It’s delightful and high energy.

The undeniable fact of this production is that these actors don’t just have potential. They aren’t precocious children and I’m not witnessing the end of something. When I watched the 2022 Cambridge Greek Play, I felt I was watching an act of accession; the advent of a meteoric rise. And this is only the beginning.

VIEW FROM THE STALLS

Acting is too easy. We are suffering from an epidemic of thespians

Greg Miller



There is deep problem in this country, and it is not what you think. No, it is not the economic damage of Brexit. No, it is not the whirligig in Number 10. The problem is acting.

Firstly, acting is easy. Sorry to be blunt, but it is true. Now, I’m not saying that it’s easy to be a brilliant actor. To do that requires a lot of instinct, skill, and years of experience doing it on stage where it matters. But to do it adequately, to the point where someone can say “they were good” is not so hard. Just have someone else refer to you by a name which is not yours – this is what they call the “character’s name” in the trade – and wear a hat. Or a scarf; whatever item of clothing you feel the “character” would wear, which can, in actual fact, be anything.

Also, you don’t even have to write the lines! They are given to you, free of charge, and all you need to do is “interpret them”. That is, to say them how you would say them if you said them. Too many people are realising how easy this gig is. And, understandably, they are cashing in on it, to the point that we are suffering from an epidemic of actors. They are filling up “school” after “school”, crowding around for a role in some play; for a bit part in some Netflix flick; or even a spot in a deodorant advert. The problem has grown so bad that jobless actors are now everywhere – although you may not know it. Out of every ten people you pass on the street, no matter where you are, at least seven will be muttering lines under their breath if you look close enough.

In fact, only the other day I was sitting on a park bench, just trying to enjoy the bench, when an actor emerged from a nearby bush. I don’t know how long they’d been in there, but their eyes were wild; their clothes ripped, and their body gangrenous. They pelted at me full tilt, squawking out what I could only imagine was the devil’s tongue itself! Naturally, I fled (as is my custom). I was later informed by a friend in the know that this devil’s tongue was the script for an upcoming Doc Martin audition. Go figure.

But actors are now needed for more things than ever. We’re past the quiet days of the York Corpus Christi plays now. Films, TV series, adverts, plays are all endlessly dividing and multiplying, each requiring fresh “characters” and fakery. When will it end? Only when we end, friends, and there’s nothing left to fake. Have a good day!

The artist behind new sculptures in Cambridge

Isabel Dempsey speaks to Gavin Turk about his new exhibition at Downing College

When rushing to and from Cambridge station, I wonder how many of you have ever noticed the statue that sits outside. If the piece doesn't spring to mind, then imagine a wrapped-up lump tied in string (which my friend so helpfully described as a big shoe) and it might just jog your memory. The sculpture, called *Ariadne Wrapped*, is meant to depict a reclining Ariadne – the woman from Greek mythology who helped Theseus escape the labyrinth. Personally, I'd always assumed the covered sculpture was damaged or waiting to be restored. But, in fact, this wrapping was part of the sculptor Gavin Turk's intention.

Turk explained that he decided Ariadne was his muse by researching how her name was attached to this “male representation” of an “archetypal reclining figure.” But that didn't answer my more probing question: why wrap her? He revealed that his inspiration first stemmed from a show he did in 1996 at the South London

Gallery. He decided to wrap all the works up for the opening night and then not actually open them until the day after as a “kind of performance art.”

Turk's latest exhibition *In Search of Ariadne* at the Heong Gallery in Downing College details his artistic journey in the creation of the statue. Much of this fascinating exhibition consists of wrapped waste. Products, such as old drainage pipes cast in bronze, are tied up in fabric so only a vague outline is visible – or so the placard says. The viewer will never know for certain what actually lies beneath the covers. When I asked if he found the process of covering up his work frustrating he responded with a simple no. He explained that “I really like the investment you might make interpreting a rough shape – in the way that you might look at a cloud and say it's an elephant.” Going further Turk said he liked “that there's a freedom and movement of ideas and perceptions in the world. When you slightly destabilise those perceptions, you're able to question paradigms and ideologies, and introduce people to a different way of looking.”

Yet, I found the concealed paintings to be the most frustrating – in the best possible way. I'm still longing to discover what's hidden beneath the material. Titles like ‘Portrait of the Sailor Gentleman Jim’ invite an image that

I'll never be able to see myself. Turk says “I think there is another side to making art which involves something of an illusion. If we take something from the real world and place it into an art context we make a picture of that thing.” He insists that it's “part of the human condition to want things to take up a certain order and to want things to be a certain kind of way. Disappointment is important as well and the fact that it's always questionable.”

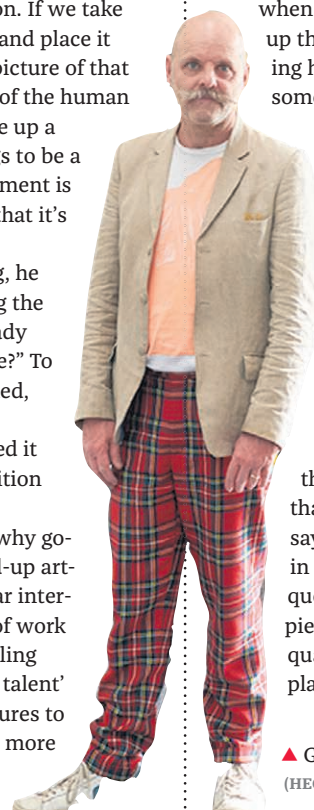
With this idea of questioning, he recounts an anecdote of visiting the sculpture at the station and a lady asked him “what's it going to be?” To her disappointment, he explained, “oh, this is it.” Looking back, he expresses regret at having ruined it because the future of the exhibition is “still full of potential.”

For many, I can understand why going to an exhibition of wrapped-up artwork doesn't hold any particular interest. Of course, not every piece of work in the exhibit is wrapped, revealing Turk's more traditional ‘artistic talent’ as well. From uncovered sculptures to eye-catching paintings, there is more to stimulate the eye than cloth and string. But with this more

abstract work, comes the inevitable ‘I could've done that myself’ mentality that many have when it comes to modern art. When I bring up this debate, Turk responded by claiming he's “a great fan of skill and craft. But sometimes when I'm skilling and crafting

my own artwork I don't necessarily see that as integral to the artwork.” These mentalities “are just tools the artist can use to force people into questioning their set of values.” He adds, “I'm also a great fan of the idea that everybody's an artist, but I think lots of people won't acknowledge that fact.”

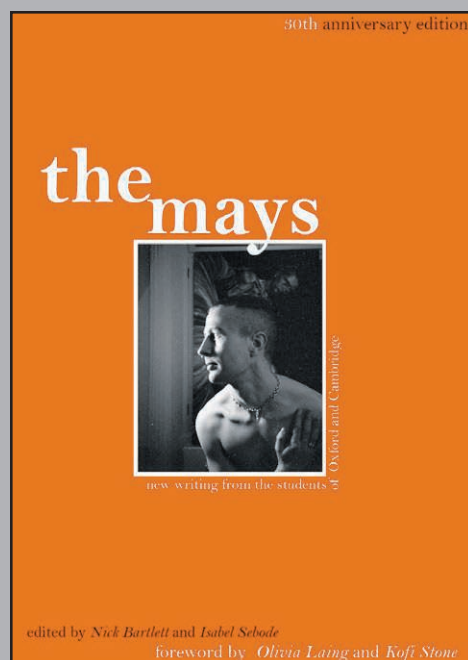
However much I enjoyed the questions the exhibition posed and seeing the thought process behind the mysterious statues, I understand that it may not be for everyone. Turk says that “contemporary art lives in this state of flux” that constantly questions “is this art?”. For Turk, for a piece to ask “is it art?” should be the qualifying definition of art in the first place.



▲ Gavin Turk
(HEONG GALLERY)

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Why are Cambridge students obsessed with Taylor Swift?

Sarah Abbas delves into the Swiftie-pysche capturing Cambridge students

You've stumbled into Lola's on yet another cursed Sunday night. The familiar chimes of Blank Space by Taylor Swift echo through the building. What's the deal? Why are Cambridge students unable to contain themselves when they hear their favourite American sweetheart sing an overplayed tune?

The reason must be deeper than the fact we are all basic and grew up listening to her. I conferred with the co-president of Cambridge University Taylor Swift appreciation society (CUTSAS), Basma Khan, to discuss why and how they have sold over 2000 tickets in their first year, while well established societies are yet to reach similar numbers. Basma puts it down to the fact that Swift's

There truly is a Taylor Swift song for everyone

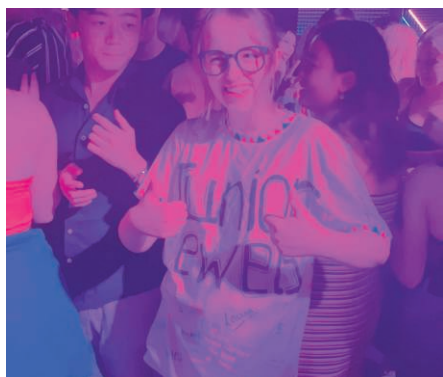
discography is so wide that there's room for people to have their own preferences. From the soft ballads of Folklore to the teenage angst of Speak Now, Swift has covered a variety of sounds in her ten albums. There truly is a Taylor Swift song for everyone. And since everyone knows at least three Taylor Swift songs, she's a common denominator in most people's music taste. Mix this with the fact the club nights are from 8-11pm, Basma recognises the importance of an early night with the academic rigour of this institution: "people love a friendly, safe environment to have a little bop together and belt out Taylor Swift songs and the fact it fits around people's schedules so well makes these nights so popular". Another reason for the contagious Taylor Swift bug circulating Cambridge is how perfectly her albums have coincided with Michaelmas. Basma explains how the listening parties (the next being for *Midnight*s at Hidden Rooms on the 4th of November) provide an environment where people can exchange opinions on the album and solace over heartbreak. "People get talking about it, and bring their boyfriend and friends who aren't Swifties, who then get to know Taylor's music".

The 21st of October saw the release of Taylor Swift's tenth studio album. For her first original release since *Evermore*, expectations were high. Were they met? It seems that with producer Jack Antonoff's new experimentation with sound, namely electric pop, combined with a lack of touching lyricism has made this album underwhelming and unmemorable.

Jack Antonoff clearly had been doing some experimenting with synths and elec-

tric pop. However, the lack of dimension and seemingly rushed production has left it sounding flat. Each song could be described as a diluted version of a previous Swift track. For example, "Maroon" is a mix of "Call It What You Want" and "King of My Heart" with cringe worthy lyrics such as 'And I chose you / The one I was dancing with in New York'. What happened to the quiet genius that used to soak all of her lyrics?

Swift's strength lies in her story-telling abilities. Each of her previous albums have had a strong theme. A theme directly relating to something in her personal or professional life. *Reputation* was about her legal struggles with Scooter Braun. *Lover* is dedicated to her long-term boyfriend Joe Alwyn. What is *Midnight*s about? It oscillates between love songs, revenge anthems and reminiscing tunes, leaving a messy combination of mis-



▲ Swiftie at CUTSAS event (Jess Graham)

matched songs.

Even when a song has a clear theme, her lyrics fall flat. The biggest disappointment on the album has to be "Snow on The Beach (feat. Lana Del Rey)". With both of them being iconic writers in the 21st century, their combined talents amount to little. While the song is beautiful and poetic, it's lacking in what's most distinctive for these artists: substance.

Besides her lyricism, Taylor Swift is known for her bridges like those in "All Too Well", "Dear John", "Cruel Summer". Every album has a number of genius bridges. But *Midnight*s doesn't have a single one. The result is that every song sounds like a Taylor Swift song, without sounding like a Taylor Swift song. As such, this album is missing the essential charm of her music.

But at the end of the day, it's still Taylor Swift. Charts will be topped, records will be broken and before we know it, all these songs will be stuck in our heads.



'90 minutes of glee': Caius open mic night

Caius open mic night sets a high standard while retaining inclusivity, writes **Jermaine Lawal-Adewale**

Calling back to early 20th century America, open mic nights were born from the prohibition of alcohol, forcing citizens to rely on underground bars for their enjoyment. With that in mind, you might be initially confused to find the underbar of a Cambridge college aiming to replicate such an environment. But if anything the parallels between the two are evident. The open mic night in the Gonville & Caius underbar provided students with a deserved escape from the pressures and demands of their academic work, treating them to 90 minutes of glee. On the night, nerves were high. And so too was the sweltering temperature of the room. In fact, the stellar turnout probably produced enough heat to justify the college's choice to refrain from turning on the heating for now. The night got off to a great start. Rhys Griffiths was the perfect emcee choice, someone with enough charisma to carry conversation and keep spirits high between the different acts getting their gear ready – be it tuning their guitars, or prepar-

ing the instrumental over which they would sing. Temperature aside, the setting of the underbar itself was ideal, carrying a great deal of intimacy that allowed for complete focus on the performer whatever the weather.

A richness of talent was on show, with gorgeous renditions of a Ukrainian folk song and a cover of Frank Sinatra solely backed by a guitar to start off the show. And this level of talent only continued as the night went on. Another highlight of the show was Tirza Sey's performance — a known and loved figure among the college. The crowd roared, and rightfully so, before and after a gorgeous solo performance that was backed solely by an instrumental. There was a whole lot more where that came from, with Josh Shortman performing an excellent original song about conservatism and idealised life in rural Dorset – the origin of which lies with a debate he witnessed at the Cambridge Union. The ability to mesh such a wide range of interests together outside of the demands of a Cambridge degree is what makes these acts so talented. It shows that spaces like this are so crucial to the city's live scene.

Jacob Carey, the founder of the Caius Open Mic Society, tells me he "founded the Caius Open Mic Society (COMS) because I wanted to facilitate and promote the incredible artistic talent of members of the college within a performative environment. The aim of COMS is to put on a regular event which members of the college could be proud of,



▲ Chris Dodd performing at the open mic night (OLLIE MERRIMAN/ ALI LORENZO)

and somewhere where members of other colleges would want to attend and perform.”

If this is about pride, then there was tons of it on show simply through the turnout. Caians turned out in numbers to support all the performers, as did a string of members of other colleges. The founders of COMS have high hopes for the society to become the premier place for live student music. And, if its debut night is anything to go by, then it should have no problem doing so.

Wannabe performers shouldn’t be put off by the high standard set by the show as Jacob reiterates that inclusivity remains at the forefront of the vision of COMS and that the shows are open to “anyone and everyone.”

I wanted to facilitate and promote the incredible artistic talent of members of the college

There is such a wide pool of musical niches and talents in Cambridge that unfortunately go under the radar. Yet, this biweekly event aims to showcase acts that would otherwise be overlooked. The showrunners hit home the welcoming nature and general ethos of openness in COMS. It underlines COMS does not cherry-pick acts based on what they bring to the table or what they think would be desirable to their audience.

The Cambridge scene is lucky to have events like these that allow for students to come into their own, and to anyone who wants to see the event, make your way to the Caius underbar at 8:30pm every other Friday.

‘United in disco, boogie and funk’: The cult of Grandma Groove

Georgie Atkinson sits down with the grandmas behind Cambridge's favourite club night Grandma Groove



If you follow the sound of knitting needles and a trail of sherbet lemons during term time, it may surprisingly lead you to Revs or Mash - there you will find the most wholesome club night in Cambridge. Established in 2017, Grandma Groove has cemented itself with a funk-based permanence in the nightlife culture of Cambridge.

The persona of Grandma herself is a little mysterious. However after some investigation (a quick google), I sat down with founder Oscar Bell-Ogilby and his ‘groovy partner in crime’, Jacob Powell, to discuss why a grandma has taken Cambridge by storm. Adorned in a Grandma Groove t-shirt, it was clear from the outset Oscar takes his mission of providing a club night ‘for the students, by the students’ with the utmost sincerity.

Is it unsurprising that this Cambridge club night was born out of a conversation on a Ski trip with the Officer Training Corps? Perhaps not. However, when pressed on the genesis of Grandma Groove, Oscar stressed that he was tired of Cambridge nightlife “being a bit sleazy and cheap”. Thus Grandma, ironically, was born.

Intrigued by the naming convention and musing on whether my grandmother would be considered particularly groovy, Oscar responded that there is a groovy grandma in all of us. “Everyone on a night out can act as groovy as they like and then in the morning feel like a bit of Grandma.”

Despite this being a little cringe worthy, the sentiment behind Oscar’s intention does seem pure as he provides value to those who buy tickets and to ultimately ensure that students have a good time. Oscar was keen to also stress the importance and centrality of the Cambridge based musical talent to the nights themselves. On founding the night, he understood that there was a gap in the market to support and nurture Cambridge based talent, especially DJs such as Swarbz and JaPow. JaPow aka Jacob, as well as being a core part of Grandma Groove and DJing across Cambridge, is a fourth-year Engineer at Jesus in his spare time. He perhaps al-

luded to his strength as an Engineer with his creation of the impressive club night rep network that he has knitted together across 75% of colleges. With this network entrenched across Cambridge, it is clear that Oscar and Jacob know how to leverage their so-called “groovers” as the nights themselves sell out within a matter of hours.

When approaching the awkward question around the cancellation of The Boat that Boogied, Oscar offered a strong defence of why the night had been cancelled: the Queen lying in state only mere metres away from the scheduled venue. Oscar noted that Grandma Groove has “never been about making money”, and that blasting disco and funk music such as “Staying Alive” by the Bee Gees to those in the queue may have caused some reputational risk.

The failed foray in bringing Grandma from Cambridge to London may suggest that Grandma Groove is better suited to a CB2 postcode. Jacob noted that whilst Cambridge is incredibly intense, the night is an escape from the workload and a night where you can come together as a community. A community “united in disco, boogie and funk.”

We’ve all procrastinated by flicking through Ticketbridge and seen listings that pop up both for the purchasing and selling of Grandma Groove tickets. Oscar appreciated the fact that there was a platform for people to resell tickets. However, he also noted the perilous tale of a ticket reseller who, due to making a £300 profit on reselling tickets, now has a lifetime ban from grooving with Grandma. The wholesome nature of the evening again was brought up when in response to ticket reselling, as it was also mentioned that people have offered to knit jumpers and bake cakes in lieu of payment of a ticket. This only reaffirms Oscar’s sentiment that there is a grandma within all of us.

The unity and warmth that this club night creates was aptly reiterated by Olly as Grandma Groove provides a ‘united family on the dance floor, it’s a cult and it’s a family.’ It is clear that the wholesome nature of Grandma Groove is here to stay.

EVENTS

Sarah Abbas

29th October
La Vida Lola's (Lola Lo)
It's time to celebrate Halloween. If you haven't been to Lola's yet, this is the time to check it out. Dress up in your best scary fits and get ready for a cursed night.

2nd November
Rum boogie (Revolution)
Missed Halloween Lola's? It's never too late to celebrate the best dressed holiday of the year. Rally up your friends and head to Revs to have a take two.

4th November
CUTSAS Mid-nights Listening Party (Hidden Rooms)
Loved the new Taylor Swift album and ready to sing along with the new tracks with your friends? Head to Hidden Rooms to rejoice with other Swifties.

4th November
Open Mic X Just Me and the Geese (Churchill College Bar)
Up-and-coming Cambridge talent will be performing followed up by The Geese closing with a set of original songs.

6th November
La Vida Lola's (Lola Lo)
It never gets old. Get yourself in the going-out mood and brave the three floors of Lola's once again. What could possibly go wrong?

9th November
Rum boogie (Revolution)
Surprise, surprise: another week of the same people in the same venue. Don't be boring and at least make the rounds.

THEATRE

Sarah Abbas

1-5th November
No Exit (Corpus Playroom)
Imagine finding out Hell is a room full of nothing but the people you are stuck there with. No Exit explores this very same situation.

1-5th November
Chess (ADC)
Queen's Gambit meets ABBA: Chess features a love story between an American and a Russian, which evolves among Cold War tensions.

1-5th November
The Melanin Monologues (Corpus Playroom)
A celebration and warning about the tensions surrounding black culture, this show tells personal stories about black women.

2-4th November
ADRIFT! (ADC)
Dan Ward's original satire confronts the definition of professionalism as a corporate agent, lawyer and hapless trainee board a ferry.

8-12th November
Solifuge (Corpus Playroom)
Covering the lived realities of being a veteran once your feet are back on homeland, Solifuge will explore those experiences. How do you move on from your past?

8-12th November
Dance Nation (ADC)
Follow the dancers of Liverpool Dance Works as they process growing up. From ambition, to sexuality, to power, Dance Nation will explore what it is to be a young dancer.

Welcome to my digs: Inside

Hand-painted frescoes. Three beds. Tourists taking photos through the windows. **Lewis Andrews** goes on a mission to find the best rooms in Cambridge

Ever wondered what it feels like to finish top of the ballot? Even worse, have you found out the best rooms were within your grasp, only for them to be well-protected secrets? *Varsity*'s own nosiness, or rather "investigative skill", has ensured that you can feel the envy all the more.

Before setting off I had hoped for

hidden fireplaces, trap doors and secret tunnels, all of which are still yet to see the light of day. However, what was found did not disappoint. We ruled out size as a criterion, as it was not considered a unique enough feature. Instead it was all about quirk, and the rooms that follow are dripping with it.

Gonville & Caius The Turret Room

A mighty journey up a set of stairs is followed by another steeper set. It isn't the highest room in Cambridge for nothing. But once atop the spiral staircase, the Caius "Turret Room" hits you with a stunning picture of King's Parade in its majestic entirety. A viewing platform is only a stone's throw away, where people pay for this very experience. I had seen this room from below many times, and the current inhabitant Juliette admits that people are frequently "looking up into the room and taking photos". It is "great for watching people all day — I even witnessed a proposal whilst sitting on the window edge." "Aside from moving," she adds, "you get used to the stairs." While I was there, a free runner flashes past the window and onto the adjacent Senate House roof. In this room, you are clearly best placed to spy all of Cambridge's happenings.



▼ The view from Juliette's room
 (ALEX PARNHAM-COPE)



Newnham The Princess Room

The mythic "Princess Room" is straight out of *Romeo and Juliet*. It took some time ascertaining whether this title actually referred to a real room or was a product of some English student's imagination. Not one, not two, but three (yes three!) balconies surround the circumference. Aneesa admits that it gives "royalty vibes" with an immense window framing the grounds below, which ensures that "family and friends want to come round to see it". To get there, one has to walk across the largest corridor in Cambridge, as if the aura of an English manor wasn't already strong enough. Aneesa notes her mornings are flooded with sunlight, and concludes by pointing to a mysterious button next to a bricked-up fireplace. Though nothing happens when pressed, there is a sense that there are further secrets to be uncovered.



▲ Aneesa's view when writing supo essays (ZAYNAB KHAN)



the best rooms of Cambridge

Queens' The Ballroom

It is hard to believe that this oak fantasy, with beams aplenty, is not a nearby cottage. There is a main living room with two separately attached bedrooms, enough already to earn a nomination to be on this list, but also a kitchen to seal its position here. Charlotte points out the lifestyle that the room can therefore accommodate: "If you're staying up, late night pasta is right there — you never have to leave the room." The bright pink sofa adds a splash of colour amid the ancient wood (with the space apparently being there "since the beginning of the College"). With such an abundance of legroom, it is no surprise that the spot has become a "central hub in Queens", be that for rowing meetings, pre-party preparations or the parties themselves. Such is the number of visitors, the wall is covered in signed Polaroids of those who have stopped by (à la Gardies).



Magdalene The Tapestry Room



Hearing of this room, it is easy to anticipate a costly rent and a butler at the door. However, this room is of the lower rent bands, smaller than the others on its floor and is hidden amid an unassuming building off-campus. Hand-painted Italian frescoes adorn all four walls, surrounding the inhabitant with tapestry-esque finery. Engineer Andrew says that he finds the room "surreal", and is "relieved to have the Perspex preventing damage, as it's easy to bump into". Old graffiti on parts of the Perspex, including a celebratory "living la vida loca", confirms that protection is needed. Despite being a Magdalene property, it is Tit Hall that it overlooks — proudly showing off what they are missing out on. "I didn't even ballot that high," he admits, "it's just most people don't know about it." We apologise if you were already in the know, and have now ruined your chance of securing it next term.

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Lifestyle

Esther Arthurson

Life drawing is surreal enough — let alone when your boyfriend's the model



As a child, my parents beamed and oohed over my nursery artwork, indulgently tacking it to the fridge without the faintest clue whether it was supposed to be a goldfish or a self-portrait. Over the years, my skill never increased and my enthusiasm decreased, a combination that allowed me to put my artistic pursuits to rest before I sliced off an ear and was driven to the south of France. This slumber lasted thirteen years until a rude and unanticipated awakening last Friday night.

The queue for ArcSoc life drawing is an endless snake of disorder and fashion statements, trailing beyond the Engineering department and wreaking pavement havoc for all who pass. Were you to join it, I guarantee you would spot at least one surprising acquaintance in line ahead of you, pencil eagerly poised to sketch a penis — perhaps the quiet girl on campus, your Amish best friend, or a stray lecturer, probably looking deeply uncomfortable and a little skittish as they try to blend in with the swathe of art history students swarming the vicinity. This queue is a blackhole for the mismatched and unexpected, lending the evening the surreal dimension of a Titanic reunion scene before it even begins.

Most weeks, the event is so oversubscribed that they have to turn people away. (Should we be impressed by the sheer scale of artistic talent in Cambridge or concerned by the number of perverts? Food for thought.) You know that well-worn proverb: too many artists spoil the naked person. This week, the queue was severed right in front of us — we weren't getting in. I have to confess, this news flooded me with competing emotions, relief being a key contender, guilt a close second, and confusion at how the massive



Architecture Department had such a pathetic capacity — the anti-Tardis. However, they didn't have long to fight it out — my friend chased after the queue-cutter and quietly explained what I'd been hoping to avoid confessing all night: "Her boyfriend's the model..."

Taking off your clothes for money is generally frowned upon by society (excluding the occasional hen party granny, but we'll sweep her under the rug with all other slightly shameful

British idiosyncrasies.) It is even more frowned upon when their strippage involves a live DJ and eagle-eyed onlookers sipping wine from the bottle with one hand and sketching carelessly with the other. There could probably be an argument made for why life drawing is one of the distinct phenomena that make us human, up there with self-consciousness, memory and the complexity of our relationships. But I'm not going to make it.

I started with a different model, an older man, which I couldn't help but think went in Jamie's favour. However, my heart stopped when I heard laughter from the room next door; I prayed that

the source of the laughter wasn't the size of his penis. (He assures me it wasn't, for those of you wondering.) Once they'd switched, I understood the hilarity; he was using my cushion of Jim from Friday Night Dinner to shield his crotch in one of his poses. Poor Jim was violated.

I'd be lying if I said I did much drawing. I was busy trying to cope with what might be one of the most surreal experiences of my little life thus far, and found myself transfixed, staring at his face (yes), desperately trying to steal some eye contact with him to either make him laugh or have to think desperately of his grandmother. When he first told me he was doing this, I was not the keenest bean on the block. But seeing him there, a physics student light-years from his comfort zone, I was begrudgingly proud of him, in a more than a physical way. I just think he was really brave. Hence, I spent most of the hour smiling at him. At the time it didn't feel creepy but pretty wholesome — albeit more so if he'd had clothes on.

Glancing at the interpretations of my boyfriend's body scrawled on other people's paper brought about pride in a more physical sense. It was another unique opportunity to see this person I know so well through the kaleidoscope lens of thirty odd strangers' eyes. At the end, the girl sitting behind me showed me her sketch, which included me looking at him. It's weird and oddly comforting, if slightly 1984, to think that there's always someone behind you, tracing you into their picture of the world, whether you know it or not. An affirmation that you exist, that you are seen, that someone will take the time to paint your portrait whether or not you believe you're worth the time and ink.

During the final 20-minute sketch, I realised I had to get something down on the paper. So I used the only medium I feel somewhat equipped to use: words. Inside his outline, I started to write down all the reasons why I love him. And I'm still not finished.

To end, I'd like to clarify that this is not an advert for Architecture society, nor is it an endorsement of public nudity. That being said, I'll be modelling next week. Hope to see you all there!

Blind date

This week Skylar, first-year BioNatSci, met Emmy, first-year Classicist

Skylar on Emmy

First impressions?

We'd actually met in freshers week, but regardless, they looked significantly cooler and more appropriately dressed for a date than I was.

What did you talk about?

Poetry, types of cells, doctors, and room decor.

Any awkward moments?

Both arriving 20 minutes late, one from trying to print overdue suppo work, one from walking in the entirely wrong direction. At least we were late together!

Best thing about the other person?

They have lots of really cool things to say about interesting niche topics. And, of course, a pretty amazing pair of doc martens.

Did you go on somewhere?

To Christ's Pieces, then back to hall.

What do you think the other person made of you?

Passable at conversation, not at time management.

Would you meet again?

Given we live 4 floors apart, I'd assume so.

Emmy on Skylar

What were you hoping for?

To meet someone new who I got along well with and maybe find some romance.

First impressions?

By the time of the date it was closer to tenth impression, but they seemed really cool and had awesome boots.

What did you talk about?

A whole variety of topics ranging from poetry to awful sci-fi opinions.

Any awkward moments?

We were both pretty late and I thought that wouldn't be a great first date impression, but we still managed to get there within a minute of each other. Maybe it was a better omen than first anticipated?...

Best thing about the other person?

They're really funny and easy to talk to about pretty much any topic. Also, they didn't laugh too hard when I spilt my coffee by gesturing wildly.

Did you go on somewhere?

We went to Christ's Pieces after grabbing coffee and sat and chatted for a while, then ran back to college together to grab dinner and avoid the oncoming rain clouds.

What do you think the other person made of you?

Really bad with directions and coordination but hopefully made up for it with stellar conversation and a cool jacket.

Would you meet again?

Seeing as we've run into each other in the hallway at least three times since the date, I think we'd have to actively avoid each other not to. But all jokes aside they're pretty cool.

Skylar and Emmy met at The Locker Cafe, King Street. You, too, could soon be running into your date in the hallways several times a day — are you up for a mystery meeting? Fill out the Varsity Blind Dates form...



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by your surroundings



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For details on membership or a tour of the Club house, please visit
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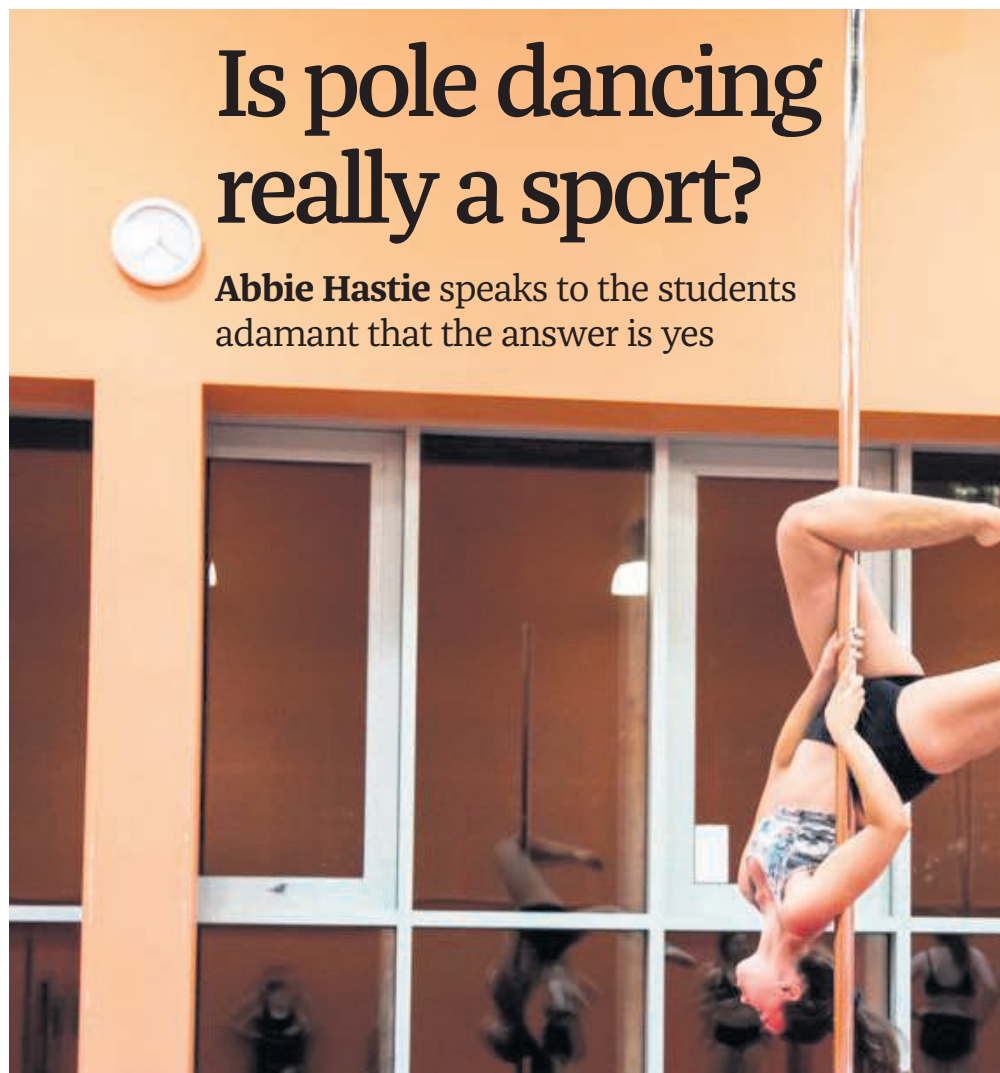


OXFORD AND
CAMBRIDGE
— CLUB —

Sport

Is pole dancing really a sport?

Abbie Hastie speaks to the students adamant that the answer is yes



▲ Pole dancing students mid-routine (QING LU)

Forget any ideas you may have about strip clubs and overtly sexual performances: I soon realised that pole dance is an intense physical challenge. It involves the pole dancer hoisting themselves up on a steel bar using only their core strength. On top of that, they perform acrobatic tricks at the same time.

Pole dance is essentially gymnastics around a fireman's pole, with the added danger of smashing your head on the ground. Oh, and that of burning your bare skin on the pole, as the multiple red marks and bruises slashed across thighs attest too. This is not a sport for the fainthearted.

It is, however, for the warm-hearted. Everyone I spoke to at Cambridge's Pole Sports society told me how friendly and supportive the club and its members are. It was evident immediately. As pole work began after the warm-up, people instantly began giving advice to teammates

unsure of their next move, helping them dismount safely and clapping them when they did well. The team's camaraderie was almost as strong as their cores.

Pole Dance has aesthetic benefits as well. "Everyone has abs here," I'm told by one member of the team. The club has three levels of difficulty: beginner, intermediate and advanced. Doing any level will make you stronger, but it is notoriously difficult for beginners. Even a simple spin around the pole was too much for my tight groin.

As I left the evening training session, one of the poles detached from the ceiling and fell on my head. It is testament to the warm atmosphere of Cambridge's pole dance society that even this did not put me off.

While I may not be on the path to becoming an elite pole dancer, I thoroughly enjoyed my night at a lovely, welcoming, and, most importantly, serious sports club.

Follow @cu_polesports on Instagram.

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Libby Bryant

Netball captain



Best sporting moment?

Beating Oxford this season - the first time in over five years!

Worst sporting moment?

Going from a significant lead to drawing our match at Varsity 2021.

Most embarrassing moment?

Setting the fire alarm off at a swimming gala. The pool started to drain and the whole crowd had to evacuate the building.

Best victory?

Going unbeaten in the league to be promoted to Division 1 last season.

Worst defeat?

We lost 3/4 matches in Varsity last season.

Why is your club the best?

We're all always up for a laugh but also want to train hard too!

Who has the best chat?

Definitely not Millie Quayle...

Who receives the most fines?

Millie Carson.

Ones to watch?

Izzy Howse and Jade Popoola.

Prediction for this year's Varsity match?

Clean sweep for the Light Blues of course!

How can we follow Cambridge Netball?

@cambridgeuninetball

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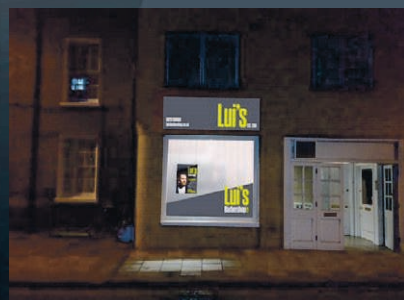
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Netball: Cam win tight game

Abbie Hastie

The Netball Blues beat Oxford in their second match of the season. It was a tight game in which momentum swung from one team to the other.

Cambridge began the match with a string of goals from Goal Shoot Clodagh Bottomley. The goals were backed up by good defending by Jade Popoola at Goal Defence, and excellent movement and agility by Centre Izzy Howse.

Oxford came back through a burst in the middle of the first quarter and at the start of the second, gaining a 3-point lead, the score at 15-18.

The streak was broken by the prolific

Bottomley, who inspired a Cambridge lead of 29-27 by half-time.

The third quarter again saw a Cambridge scoring spurt from substitutes Lucy Dodd and Lucy Walker, before an Oxford resurgence fueled by aggressive play from their goal shooter cut the Cambridge lead to 42-38 going into the last quarter.

Oxford dominated the middle of the fourth quarter, coming back to within a goal of Cambridge at 48-47. The Blues maintained discipline to secure a 56-50 victory over Oxford, avenging their 15-point defeat in last year's Varsity match. It was their first win against Oxford in over five years.



▲ Netball Blues beat Oxford (QING LU)

Basketball: Ox fade at end

Jonny Coffey

In a physical game, Cambridge paced themselves perfectly, saving their best basketball for the final five minutes.

Oxford's defence aimed to limit space in the paint throughout, even when it took fouls to do so. The Dark Blues' resolute defence demanded an aggressive Cambridge attack, and the Light Blues became more direct as the game progressed.

The teams were evenly matched until late in the fourth quarter, despite scoring bursts from Cambridge's sharp-shooter Charlotte Dawson and centre Liz Roe.

Cambridge entered the final five minutes with a one-point lead. Inspired individual performances galvanised the Light Blues for the remaining play. A high-arching Mie Monti floater kicked things off. A strong defensive possession later and Cambridge, now holding a three-point lead, were back up the court.

Then Onintze Zaballa, crowning a stellar performance, went on a scoring rampage, scoring eight points without reply. A dizzying drive was rewarded with two points, before a dagger-three, the pick of her points, shattered all hopes of an Oxford comeback.

HIDDEN RIVALRIES

Rowing: Corpus vs Robinson

Joshua Korber Hoffman
Sports Editor

Everyone knows John's-Trinity, but what about Corpus-Robinson?

May Bumps 2017 saw both boats collect spoons in Division 2. In 2018, it happened to Robinson again, and they found themselves one place behind Corpus for the 2019 edition, in 16th.

Robinson were the laughing stock of the river. However, they had the last laugh in 2019, after bumping Corpus and finishing one place ahead of their bitter rivals.

There was one more twist in the tale. In 2022, it was Corpus' turn to usurp Robinson after a spectacular last two races. This year, Corpus will be lining up in 14th, and Robinson in 15th.

This year, Robinson will be out for revenge...again.

Rugby league: Decisive win for Cam

Joe Wherry

Oxford's second team returned home empty-handed after a 26-16 defeat at St John's Playing Fields. The Light Blues never looked in trouble as three second half tries added some much-needed gloss to the visitor's tally.

Tries from Aidan Stonehouse, Nat Strange and Max Grant helped guide Cambridge to victory, whilst robust defending subdued any real Oxford threat.

Were it not for the questionable presence of a few familiar past Oxford blues

faces, on paper Cambridge might have been strong favourites. Stonehouse made the first of what would be several breaks through to dot down in the corner. Minutes later it was Tom Hardman barrelling over to double the host's lead to 8-0, both tries going unconverted.

Cambridge continued to win the territorial battle for the majority of the first half. Nat Strange ghosted under the posts for the third try of the match, this time with the extras added.

Defence then became the order of the day for Cambridge before amidst relent-

less Oxford pressure. Big hits from Grant and Owen Hanford helped to weather the storm, Oxford going into the break scoreless.

The second period was evenly contested, Oxford finally getting on the scoreboard before Grant collected a floated pass out wide to cross the line. Two more Oxford scores in quick succession then brought the score back to 20-12.

The comeback did not last long, Grant doubling his tally after a burrowing run Hanford, before a late Oxford consolation brought the score to 26-16.

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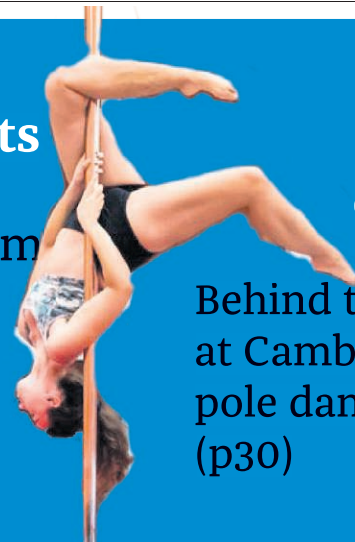
Sport

Oxbridge
match reports

Highlights from
the Oxbridge
games (p31)

Is it a
sport?

Behind the scenes
at Cambridge's
pole dance club
(p30)



We're better than Oxford*

*at basketball, netball, rugby league
and lacrosse

▲ Cambridge women compete a lineout with Oxford (DIK NG)

Joshua Korber Hoffman
Sports Editor

Cambridge played Oxford eight times in eight different sports over the last two weeks, winning four and losing four. Oxford might be higher in the university rankings, but when it comes to sport, there is nothing between them.

Cambridge won in the basketball, netball, rugby league and lacrosse, but lost in the football, rugby, tennis and badminton.

While the cynics might say that Oxford came out best in the three biggest sports - football, rugby and tennis - the cultured amongst us realise that the real test of a university's skill is in the more niche sports. Besides, no one will remember a narrow loss in the football when we win the Boat Races in the summer.

On Wednesday 19th, there were matches in rugby, basketball, netball and tennis. On Wednesday 26th, matches were played in rugby league, lacrosse, football and badminton.

With various Cambridge promotions in their regional leagues last season, this year holds far more Oxbridge matches than normal. It provides an exciting context for the all-important Varsity matches later in the year, usually the only time the universities meet in the annual sporting calendar.

Despite a Varsity win last year, Cambridge's women's tennis team fell to a 6-0 defeat to Oxford on Wednesday 19th. Cambridge's women's rugby team also lost, an impressive final half-hour by Oxford resulting in a 12-48 defeat.

Cambridge's women's basketball team were the first to beat Oxford in the eight

matches, winning 51-41 in a physical battle. The women's netball team followed up with a 56-50 win, avenging last year's Varsity defeat. It was their first win against Oxford in over five years.

This Wednesday, The Cambridge women's lacrosse team beat Oxford 14-13 in a tight game. The men's rugby league team also won, winning 26-16.

Despite being the better team for the majority of the game, Cambridge lost 0-1 away at Oxford in the men's football match.

Cambridge's women's badminton team also lost, in a 1-7 defeat away at Oxford.

The Oxbridge sporting rivalry goes back almost 200 years, to the first Boat Race in 1829. While Oxford won that event, it appears that Cambridge sport has since caught up. The rivalry lives on.



▲ Cambridge beat Oxford in the netball match (QING LU)