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No.906 
Friday 11th November 2022
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The Independent
Student Newspaper since 1947

VARSLITY

Caius head blocked promotion of Helen Joyce talk

Hugh Jones
Senior News Editor

The master and senior tutor of Gonville & Caius College blocked Arif Ahmed, a Caius fellow and philosophy professor from using the College intranet to publicise an interview with controversial gender-critical feminist Helen Joyce, a leaked email shows.

The message was sent from Ahmed to colleagues who he believed might support the Joyce event, encouraging them to pass on the details of the talk to any of their students who might be interested.

In it, he explains that he is making that request because the master and senior tutor barred him from putting the details on the Venn (the College intranet system) because "further publicity will only inflame already heightened tensions in College".

Ahmed also said: "They have told me that they do not support the event. (It will go ahead anyway.)"

In the email he adds that: "A number of colleagues have told me privately that they support the event but are afraid to say so."

Additionally, he said: "A number of students, all women, have told me that they are afraid to be seen coming to this event, which they support, for fear of harassment from which they do not trust

the College or University authorities to protect them."

Ahmed concludes by noting that "in the circumstances I'd completely understand if you felt unable to" publicise the event.

The news comes after the master and senior tutor used a College mailing list to publicise their own "personal opinions" about the event, saying publicly that they would not be attending. They also called Joyce's views "offensive, insulting, and hateful to members of our community."

The revelation is the latest twist in the row taking place at Caius.

Last week, *The Telegraph* reported that alumni and donors were threatening to pull funding from the College over the leadership's decision to boycott the Helen Joyce event.

Last year, fellows voted to stop flying the pride flag because it served as a "political symbol" in contrast to the College flags which, supposedly, unites everyone. Students won't be allowed to fly flags this year after a College vote.

Arif Ahmed, is at the centre of this term's row. His hosting of Helen Joyce was his latest attempt at provocation after he hosted Jordan Peterson in Michaelmas term last year.

Full report pages 10-11 ►



Back to the future!

Is today's style just nostalgia for old school looks? (Page 26)

SU BME campaign divided over anti-racism statement

Hugh Jones
Senior News Editor

The Students' Union's BME campaign is split over a statement which links racism at Cambridge to the demography of the University's intake, *Varsity* understands.

The draft statement, seen by *Varsity*, aims to raise awareness of racism in organisations like the SU. It was produced by Kefeshe Bernard, the SU's BME sab-batical officer, according to a senior BME campaign source.

The division can be seen in that the draft leaked to *Varsity* contains a number of critical comments by Chang Liu, the chair of the SU BME campaign. In one instance, commenting on a proposed definition of race as referring to "skin colour and other physical features", Liu questioned whether this would "neglect" racism to Jewish people or the Traveller community.

One section, leaked to *Varsity* as a potential flashpoint, also reads: "Cambridge SU acknowledges that University of Cambridge [sic] would be considered a 'Predominantly White Institution, PWI', with 67.7% of offers being made to white students in the 2021 admissions cycle."

"Therefore, racism exists in Cambridge University."

That 67.7% figure refers to Home students, not international applicants. The United Kingdom as a whole is 84.8% white, according to 2019 estimates from the Office for National Statistics.

The statement also commits the SU to "deplatforming and refusing support to people and groups accused of direct and identifiable acts of personal racism."

The statement is currently a draft, and has not yet been endorsed by the BME campaign.

The BME campaign was set to debate the statement on Thursday night, but *Varsity* understands that they were not intending to bring it to a vote.

News

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Donors and alumni are up in arms over the College leadership's condemnation of the Helen Joyce event (PAGE 10-11)

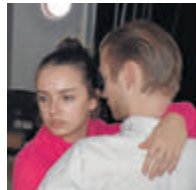
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WEATHER

16°C
Partly cloudy

FRIDAY 11/11

12°C
Light rain

TUESDAY 15/11

16°C
Sunny

SATURDAY 12/11

12°C
Light rain

WEDNESDAY 16/11

16°C
Partly cloudy

SUNDAY 13/11

11°C
Light rain

THURSDAY 17/11

14°C
Partly cloudy

MONDAY 14/11

10°C
Showers

FRIDAY 18/11

Petition calls for fellow to be sacked

Sono Echaniz-Furuta

A petition has been launched protesting the appointment of Nathan Cofnas as a Leverhulme early career fellow, calling for his termination at the University and his defunding by the Leverhulme Trust.

Cofnas, a Columbia University, Cambridge and Oxford alumnus, took up the position in Cambridge's Philosophy faculty this September.

Cofnas has been the subject of much press attention over a 2019 article in which he claimed there are "gaps" in IQ between different racial groups. This appointment has drawn fresh scrutiny.

The article sparked academic backlash on its publication, with a group of scholars rejecting his claims as "pseudoscience" in a published response. Cofnas recently told *MailOnline* that he stands by these views, and that the University

knew about them when he was awarded the fellowship. He argues for the value of pursuing this controversial research, despite the "cultural changes" it might trigger. Cofnas said: "The paper represents my views then and now."

Students have expressed disappointment and anger at the University over appointment to the three-year fellowship. The petition has been created in response, and highlights the 2019 article as well as a string of recent controversial tweets.

The petition also points to the Leverhulme Trust page, which declares that the Trust is committed to funding research on the legacy of colonialism, racism and other forms of injustices. The petition states that it is "incredibly concerning that an institution which is committed to such a cause would offer 36 months of funding to a proponent of scientific racism."

The petition labels his appointment as "problematic" and "intellectually disingenuous and morally reprehensible", and calls for Cofnas' funding from the Leverhulme Trust, as well as his affiliation with the University, to be terminated.

It also calls for the University and the Faculty of Philosophy to make a commitment that it will no longer support academics who try to justify scientific racism or discrimination of any kind. It also demanded a commitment from the Faculty and the Leverhulme Trust to fund scholarships in the fields of critical race theory, gender studies and non-western philosophy.

"We are sure there are countless other researchers besides Nathan Cofnas that are more deserving of Leverhulme Trust funding, and who are actually contributing meaningful knowledge production that betters our world", the petition ends.

History staff email leaked to students

Michael Hennessey
Deputy News Editor

An email meant for staff, sent on behalf of the chair of the history faculty, was accidentally sent to students on Monday (07/11), and encouraged colleges to make more offers to students from "widening participation" backgrounds.

The email was a regular "Chair's bulletin" for history faculty staff sent on behalf of Professor Mary Laven.

In the email, ahead of the forthcoming admissions round, colleges are asked to consider making an extra offer this year, in light of a "failure to meet our target number of undergraduates" last year.

Colleges are particularly requested to "make more, not fewer, offers to candidates from widening participation backgrounds."

History applications have consistently fallen over the last three admissions cycles. Applications have fallen from 632 in 2020 to 604 and 580 in 2021 and 2022. Offers made have also fallen year on year, from 231 in 2020 to 196 and 192 in 2021 and 2022.

The email also references the "general cheer" around the new trips launched in the history faculty this year, thanking staff for what had been an "insanely busy time".

The email also notes that some staff had not yet been paid for "examining

that they did last year", and Laven promises that this has been "taken up at the highest level".

The email hinted at "some major works from summer 2024" on the history faculty building that was described as "iconic and not very user friendly".

The faculty website says that the building is "nowhere near big enough for any of us", because the planned second block on the Sidgwick site was never built.

News of anniversary commemorations was also released in the email, as the faculty aims to hold an exhibition of past Cambridge historians to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the history trips in 2024.

Varsity Ski Trip goes cold

Ellie Austin

The annual Oxford and Cambridge University Varsity Ski Trip failed to sell out for days after opening ticket sales on October 20th. Despite tickets opening for sale at 8am on October 20th, the Varsity Trip Facebook page continued to advertise available tickets two days later on October 22nd at 12pm.

Additionally, multiple students have begun selling discounted Varsity Trip tickets on Ticketbridge and Oxtickets, the Facebook marketplace pages for Cambridge and Oxford students, and under the comments of the Varsity Trip Facebook page. One student claimed they weren't looking to make profit: "[I just] want to get rid of it".

Last year Varsity Trip experienced its fastest sell out time ever, reportedly selling out within 38 minutes of opening sales. However, reports of spiking at a club night, concerns of safety, and complaints around organisation of the trip were well known last year and perhaps have left a mark on the legacy of the trip this following year.

The slump in sales this year also coincided with a raise in the base price from

£399 in 2021 to £499 in 2022, as well as the removal of the optional Three Valleys Pass from the booking options this year. Varsity Trip reasoned this price increase was due to "the price of coach travel to the Alps [having] nearly doubled in the past year", while the removal of the Three Valleys Pass was reportedly due to an issue with the "opening dates of neighbouring resorts".

In response, Varsity Ski Trip said several factors have led to the trip not selling out compared to previous years including inflation and the cost of living. They argue that trends seen by the trip are representative of larger issues in the tourism industry. Moreover, the team said demand last year saw a spike due to the trip being cancelled in 2020 and this year's numbers are back at pre-pandemic levels.

On concerns for safety, the team commented that last year concerns were taken very seriously and have this year moved the venue in light of this. Amongst other changes, the team said issues last year were "extenuating circumstances" related to the pandemic and they are hoping that this year will be free of Covid related issues.

'Pooh sticks' society reemerges

Louis Mian
Deputy News Editor

"Where tf did this club go?????" thundered one concerned user of the anonymous confessions page 2 Cam 2 Fess last Wednesday. The student's anguish was prompted by hearing about the Cambridge University Pooh Sticks Club, the Facebook page for which has shown no activity for over two years.

A Wikipedia article on Pooh sticks claims that membership of the Cambridge University Pooh Sticks Club "is open to all students of the University of Cambridge", that the club "mainly consists of 'Feasts' organised at a variety of colleges once a term". In response to the distressed Camfesser, the Club wrote: "we been sleepin', but this just woke us up".

A former committee member said: "There was love, laughs and libations. We chinwagged with chums until March 2020. Unfortunately even Owl couldn't see Covid coming. Now the positions remain vacant waiting for another resurgence of eager Pooh-sticker-ites."

Mission impossible?

The Girton mistress' helicopter mysteriously landed on the playing fields half way through a college football match, reports **Bella Shorrock**

Students rarely catch a glimpse of their college master. Locked away in their grand offices, you only see them at matriculation, graduation or the occasional formal. But Girton students were in for a shock when they discovered they had to end their football match early to make space for the mistress' helicopter to land on the field.

Dr Elisabeth Kendall, who took up the job on 1 October, has a habit of jetting off by helicopter - allegedly landing on College grounds twice last month.

College staff were alerted to the planned landing by the head porter, who warned that it may clash with a friendly football match being held on the college grounds. The helicopter landed earlier than expected, and the players were forced to leave the field.

When the head porter was asked for information about further landings, so football games could be scheduled,

staff were informed that no more were planned.

While the reasons for using the helicopter are unknown, it has sparked criticism among the College community, with students pointing out the environmental impacts of private air travel.

One second-year Girtonian criticised the decision, telling *Varsity*: "the climate crisis is a big issue among students and things like helicopters are contributing to climate breakdown". Another student ironically suggested that it was the "best" response to the climate crisis and cost of living crisis the country is currently facing.

One student suggested to *Varsity* that the helicopter had been lent to the mistress by a donor for the purpose of going to a gala, but *Varsity* has found no evidence to support this.

Varsity contacted Girton College for comment.

► **The Girton mistress' helicopter lands on the football field**



► **The Girton mistress, Dr Elisabeth Kendall**
(GIRTON COLLEGE)

The Girton's Mistress should take the U-Bus instead of a helicopter

Comment Sam Hudson

Girton may be far away, but it isn't quite the remote reaches of Alpine Alaska or South African Savannah. In fact, thanks to the campaigning efforts of students and particularly Girton JCR, the U-Bus is set to finally

expand out to Girton, connecting the outer reaches of Cambridge with the city centre. Therefore, it's rather puzzling that Girton's new Mistress, Dr Elisabeth Kendall, seems to rely on helicopter transfers for her urgent business.

Not once, but twice this term, Girton's playing fields have become an impromptu helipad for the new jet setting mistress. One time her antics disrupted a football match between Girton and Caius, forcing the game to be abandoned at half time. Travelling by helicopter may be more

elegant and comfortable than the bus, but it is a fundamentally narcissistic way to travel. The noise, the space, the spectacle. It is all an indictment of the new mistress' ego, especially when it so directly disrupts college life in the case of the football game.

At a time when platitudes about the importance of action on climate change are two-a-penny, the least we can expect of those in positions of power is to not engage in such indulgent excesses. Demanding students make small sacrifices for the environment like foregoing disposable cups rings hollow when those in charge will gladly eclipse the annual carbon footprint of an average Cambridge student in a single trip purely for the sake of personal convenience.

It is also disturbing that this has happened at a time when many families, including those of students at Girton, are cutting back to accommodate soaring costs of living. After all, the average sub-hour outing in a helicopter is likely to be a similar price to the very energy bills which families are struggling to even pay.

Next time she needs to get somewhere, Kendall would be well advised to take the U-Bus like everyone else instead of the James Bond wannabe option. Currently the entire U-Bus fleet is being upgraded and more tickets are set to only cost a £1 flat fee. Perhaps if Kendall can find an electric helicopter which can be operated at the expense of small change she may be justified to keep up with her habit. But currently, that dream is about as far-fetched as Girton is itself.

Caius students to get 'free speech' training

Daniel Starkey

Professor of philosophy at the University of Cambridge, Arif Ahmed, will be running "free speech training" classes, aimed at encouraging undergraduates to tolerate views they disagree with.

The optional classes will be run at Ahmed's College, Gonville and Caius, this month, *The Telegraph* has reported.

Material covered in the classes, formed of two parts, will include totalitarianism, universalism, the works of John Locke and John Milton, alongside discussion about toleration and broader questions of freedom of speech today.

Ahmed stated that "it is an essential part of the university education that you understand the need for tolerance of a wide range of views, even ones that you find shocking or offensive".

Last month, Ahmed invited writer Helen Joyce, a gender critical feminist known for her controversial views on trans issues, to speak at Caius, prompting backlash from the student body, both within the College and the wider University, as well as criticism from the

College's master and senior tutor, Pippa Rogerson and Andrew Spencer.

Rogerson and Spencer, in an email to students on 19 October, spoke out against Ahmed's decision to invite Joyce, arguing that while they are striving "to make Caius an inclusive, diverse and welcoming home for our students, staff and Fellows", "events such as this do not contribute to this aim".

Speaking to *Varsity* following Rogerson and Spencer's email, Ahmed defended his decision: "These are matters of great public interest on which it is very important that there is free and open debate."

According to *The Telegraph*, Ahmed has also recently suggested that incoming university students should sign a "waiver" to accept they will be exposed to material that they may find "disturbing or shocking", stating that "the way to engage with [shocking and offensive views] at university is not to shut them down... but to engage with them and to have discussions".

Earlier this year, Ahmed, in an interview with *Varsity*, argued that freedom

of speech should be taught alongside consent, stating that, at university, "You can expect to be offended, and being offended or shocked shouldn't automatically be grounds for complaint."



▲ **Arif Ahmed is leading the provocative campaign to host speakers many students find offensive**

The philosophy professor has also used a number of columns in *The Telegraph* to defend free speech.

His most recent, on 26 October, asserted that the "fear to speak freely stalks Cambridge", alleging that he "had

to smuggle frightened students into a discussion on transgender issues".

Ahmed wrote that the event with Joyce "was a great success" and that while some students were "screaming, chanting and banging at the door... we ignored them".

He explained that the "best thing" about the talk was that Joyce "welcomed, and responded to, quite hostile questioning" and that he "was delighted that some people turned up who plainly disagreed with her book, *Trans*, often quite forcefully".

"To those students who say that the event should never have taken place, I say: watch the video (when released) and see for yourself. To the senior staff who have said the same, I say: contentious debate on things that matter is literally the whole point of a university education."

Ahmed questioned: "If you can't do it here, where, and when, can you do it? And if you can't do it here, why do we even exist?"

Caius in free speech crisis. Full report, pages 10-11 ►

News

Cambridge goes to COP27

Bella Shorrock speaks to the Cambridge students who are missing Week Five stress to attend climate conference

This week, the 27th Conference of Parties (COP27) gets underway in the Egyptian coastal city of Sharm El Sheikh. The summit, the largest annual gathering on climate action, will be attended by Heads of State, ministers, academics, CEOs and climate activists from across the world - including a delegation from Cambridge.

Badges to attend the conference are limited and highly sought after - but several Cambridge students have acquired them and are headed to Egypt to observe the climate discussions. *Varsity* spoke to some of those who are taking time out of term to attend the

conference.

One of them is May Zhao, a second-year student studying Land Economy at Fitzwilliam College. She was at COP26 in Glasgow last year, and is now attending COP27 as a delegate for the China Youth Climate Action Network (CYCAN), an organisation whose aim is to empower China's youth to take action. Since arriving in Egypt last week, she told *Varsity* she has attended some fringe events and met with Chinese delegates from other universities - but the real work started when the Conference officially kicked off on Sunday (6/11). Her role, as a student, is to represent the younger generation.

"Youth engagement is a very critical issue for COPs", May told *Varsity*. She hopes that "having the younger generation there can motivate politicians and official delegates from different countries to *actually* take action". She says that the presence of young people at COP is crucial, because scholars, activists and Heads of State are often touched by the scale of youth ambition on climate change.

Cambridge doesn't take a break for COP - attending the climate summit has meant that she's missing out on the notorious 'week five blues'. But, she says, her supervisors have all

been supportive. Studying Land Economy, there's a direct relation to the issues being discussed at COP, and she sees her week in Egypt as an opportunity to enrich her degree knowledge. "I think my professors are jealous", she told *Varsity*. May's missing several supervisions and essay deadlines to attend the conference "but when I told my professor he just said he wished he could come with me", she laughs.

Another Cambridge representative is Hannah Harrison, who graduated from Fitzwilliam College last year, and now works in climate education in Cambridge. Having worked remotely with non-profit organisation ClimaTalk during last year's COP, this year she's attending COP27 as a communications delegate for the Future Leaders Network.

Her advice for anyone going: "Don't fall into the trap of just talking to the people from the country that you're from". She wants to use this opportunity to meet people from all over the world and work together in sharing their progress on youth climate objectives. She's also wary of posting things about the conference on social media. COP can, she says, be an "exclusionary space", in which you see "the same faces over and over again". She wants to "highlight the experience of those who aren't often given the spotlight" - especially those from the Global South.

Rachael Parker Allen, a PhD student at Darwin College, is also headed to Sharm El Sheikh for the second week of climate negotiations. She's going as a delegate for the European Youth Forum, and got a badge through her work with Generation Climate Europe, the largest youth climate NGO in Europe.

How does it feel to leave the 'Cambridge bubble' for something so momentous? "Very exciting", she tells *Varsity* - "I know I'm going to learn so much".

Rachael also highlighted the significance of the summit happening in Egypt. "The African continent is



► Students discuss youth issues at the conference LAURA LOCK



obviously a place which is experiencing a lot of the loss and damage we're already seeing from climate change - I'm excited to see if that's going to shift anything in the negotiations".

Other student delegates from the University include Laura Lock, a second-year undergraduate and the President of Cambridge Climate Society, and Anna Gardener, an MPhil who is also attending as a delegate for the Future Leaders Network.

► The president of Barbados with the climate society president LAURA LOCK



Climate centre pushes for controversial research

Eric Williams

A Cambridge based research centre is heading to COP27 supporting a controversial "plan b" for climate change. At COP27, the Centre for Climate Repair at Cambridge (CCRC) will be looking to open "urgent conversations" about controversial research projects such as greenhouse gas removal and arctic re-freezing.

A UN climate report said that the social, environmental and ecological impact of these projects would be uncertain, but they could be used if climate change targets are missed.

Dr Shaun Fitzgerald, who will be representing the CCRC in Sharm El-Sheikh, said that a "Plan B" is needed in the glob-

al fight against climate change, in case the 1.5° warming threshold is missed.

Dr Fitzgerald told *Varsity* that "we're getting ever nearer the precipice" of the 1.5 degree temperature threshold above pre-industrial levels, agreed at the 2015 Paris Cownference.

According to UN reports on emissions reductions since COP26, the planet is still on track for 2.4°C - 2.8°C of warming.

"There needs to be urgent conversations about what we're going to do if society fails to make transformational change quickly enough", Fitzgerald told *Varsity*.

At COP27, Dr Fitzgerald and the CCRC will be calling for more research funding for controversial geoengineering approaches. Fitzgerald cites "marine

cloud brightening" and "stratospheric aerosol injection". Stratospheric aerosol injection mimics the "global dimming" effects of volcanic eruptions by introducing aerosols into the stratosphere, while "marine cloud brightening" would make clouds brighter to reflect more sunlight back into space.

"All the discussion is on plan A. There is no plan B, and at the moment, there can't be a plan B, because we just don't know enough", Dr Fitzgerald told *Varsity*.

Doubts over effectiveness and concerns over potential side-effects have caused hesitancy on emergency measures in the past.

However, commitments to research in solar geoengineering have been gathering speed recently, with the White House

announcing a five-year research plan into 'sunlight reflection', that could temporarily limit the effects of global warming.

In Egypt, Dr Fitzgerald will discuss the option of ocean-based carbon dioxide removal. The CCRC is especially interested in research into the use of giant kelp as a method of carbon capture.

The CCRC, which is headquartered in Downing College, was founded by the UK's former Chief Scientific Advisor Sir David King. It was formed as part of the University's Carbon Neutral Futures Initiative and was described as a means of "engaging with forward-thinking energy companies" by the University Council at the time.

Cam's constituency set to change

Louis Mian

Proposals for revised constituency boundaries in Cambridgeshire, and across the country, were released by the Boundary Commission for England on 8 November. This is to make parliamentary constituencies more similarly sized. Under the proposals all constituencies will have between 69,724 and 77,062 voters. Alongside some changes to the pre-existing constituencies, a new constituency, St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire, is planned to be introduced. In the consultation on the proposal, most were supportive of creating the new constituency, although concerns have been raised about wards, like Girton, being taken out of South Cambridgeshire.

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News

History Tripos revamped for first time in decades

The 'Eurocentric' History course hasn't been changed in decades. But what do freshers think of the revamped Tripos? **Michael Hennessey** asks

History students often joke that their course is so traditional that if you asked what papers someone who studied it in the 1970s did, you would know what they meant.

But since the start of Michaelmas term, History freshers have been studying a new look course that has undergone extensive reform for the first time in decades. Reaction to the changes among students has been mixed, with some criticising the faculty's organisation of the changes, whilst others are enjoying the new structure of the course.

Instead of taking five of twenty-four papers across first and second year,

freshers will instead take 'Outline' papers. These papers generally cover a longer time period, with the "Modern Britain and Ireland, 1750 to the present" paper replacing four separate papers that tackled political and socio-economic history separately on the old Tripos.

British and European history is no longer compulsory. New papers include one that focuses on "The Global South from 1750 to the present" and one on "the Twentieth Century World" as the faculty aims to "refresh teaching".

The new Tripos has a significantly reformed structure to previous years, where first and second year students wrote one essay for one supervision each week. In the new system, students have two supervisions per week, split between the two "Outline" papers that they choose.

Supervisions do not take place in week three and week six. Students will take twelve supervisions for each "Outline" paper split across Michaelmas and Lent. As a result, students will now write six essays per term, instead of eight as in previous years, which will be accompanied by six non-essay tasks.

Each week, students have one essay supervision and one non-essay supervision. This has been criticised by some students, with one student saying: "the two supervisions are in constant conflict with each other" and another student complaining that the new Tripos is "hard to balance" which means that "it almost always ends in the non-essay supervision work being left to the last minute or being sacrificed to try and get the essay done".

Another student summed up the complaints, arguing that they would "rather just have the one essay to focus on each week and do that really well".

Students have also raised concerns about competing deadlines in the new Tripos, that "supervisors often seem unaware of", as one student told *Varsity* that they "know people who every week have the essay due on the same day as their non-essay supervision".

Despite the criticism, many students welcomed the changes and said that they find the papers themselves interesting despite the organisational difficulties.

One student said that they particularly "like the informality of the non-essay supervision. Knowing you're

not going in with the risk of a dressing down for a bad essay has meant I've found these much more enjoyable".

Although some students have praised the new content of the course, questions remain about its organisation and how much information is available to students. One student said that they have "been told multiple times that we are the guinea pigs for this new system" and that "lots of supervisors seem themselves to doubt how well this new system has been planned and thought through".

Freshers also said that they were not aware of the detail of the new system during application season, saying that "there was not much information available... beyond the fact that a new Tripos was coming in 2022".

Another student said that second-year historians they had spoken to "seem very happy to have just missed the introduction of the new course".

Professor Andrew Arsan, Director of Undergraduate Studies, said that the new Tripos was "designed to provide a broad, inclusive curriculum and clear progression through the degree" to "aid the transition from school to university" in first year.

Professor Arsan said that the new

tripos is beneficial as it allows for a broader geographical range, including South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean as well as Britain or Europe which "helps students to gain a more global sense of the past and a more holistic understanding of a particular area or period". He stressed that "students can still study anything from ancient Greece and Rome to twenty-first-century America".

Professor Arsan said that the reaction to the new Tripos has been "overwhelmingly positive" and that "both students and lecturers are equally excited". He also said that the new course aims to reduce workload for students from 38-42 hours to 35-37 hours per week, by reducing reading lists and expected essay length.

Professor Arsan also stressed that "the tripos is still very new, so we're keeping all of this under careful review... including consulting closely with students". Professor Arsan encouraged students to speak to their DoSes and supervisors with any concerns as the faculty "welcomes and encourages student feedback as part of our ongoing commitment to providing an exciting, intellectually enriching course for all".



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Applications close midday on Tuesday 22nd November 2022. Interviews for shortlisted candidates will be conducted on the morning of Monday 28th November 2022.

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▲ Senate House was lit up Wednesday night for Cambridge's Sound and Light Festival, with displays of artwork created by more than 200 pupils across four local schools (CAMBRIDGE MUSIC FESTIVAL)

Dementia visible years before diagnosis, new research finds

Izzy Matear
Science Reporter

Dementia-related diseases such as Alzheimer's are usually only detected when it is already too late to alter their outcome. Yet a team of Cambridge scientists have shown it may be possible to detect signs of brain impairment years before diagnosis.

This research suggests that early interventions could reduce the risk of developing such a condition. Also, patients could be identified for clinical trials for new treatments to alter the course of neurodegeneration.

The team analysed UK Biobank data including problem solving, memory and reaction times, as well as weight loss or gain and the number of falls. This allowed them to investigate signs of brain function changes in the years prior to the diagnosis.

Before the research, there was little evidence of brain impairment before the onset of diagnosable symptoms. However, the research found that those

who later developed Alzheimer's disease scored more poorly than healthy adults.

Every single condition studied had patients reporting poorer overall health years before their diagnosis. The first author Nol Swaddiwudhipong said: "This is a step towards us being able to screen people who are at greatest risk."

But should anyone with decreased reaction times or memory be concerned? Dr Timothy Rittman added: "People should not be unduly worried if, for example, they are not good at recalling numbers. Even some healthy individuals will naturally score better or worse than their peers." But he also stressed "we would encourage anyone who has any concerns or notices that their memory or recall is getting worse to speak to their GP."

This research opens up new possibilities for future cures and prevention for neurological conditions, but also stresses a key point. We must remain vigilant when checking friends and family for signs of health deterioration, as it could point towards underlying conditions.



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News

'Vanity Project' axed

A piece of artwork, "Selvedge", which was planned to be installed at Mill Pond, has been axed, the city council announced on 7 November. The artwork would have seen a bank of the River Cam covered in gold-coloured metal. A petition, written by the campaign group Friends of the Cam, criticised the proposal, saying that "no money is wasted on this vanity project".

May Ball season is a-go!

The Cambridge May Ball season has launched! Queens' College May Ball tickets went on sale last Tuesday (8/11) to members of the College. Tickets were in such high demand some fourth years were reportedly unable to get a place. May Ball tickets are normally sold in Lent term but Queens' have historically jumped the gun this Michaelmas after forgoing the May Ball last year.

Cambridge Christmas lights switch-on returns

This month sees the return of the Christmas light switch-on event in Market Square. On Sunday November 20 the "Big Switch On" will start the Christmas season with local clubs, choirs and performers. This is the first since 2019 after the pandemic forced the last two switch-on festivals online.

Remembrance Sunday in Cambridge

Cambridge will pay its respects on Remembrance Sunday this weekend with parades, church services and wreath-laying events scheduled for those who have fallen. In Cambridge there will be a service at Great St Mary's Church from 10:50am on Sunday led by the Master of Emmanuel College.



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University watch

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

Durham students protest over housing conditions

Students at Durham University have protested the "abhorrent" conditions they have faced when finding housing, including overnight queues at letting agents. Students were forced to queue for hours to secure a home for next year, and have demanded an end to over-subscription, and more housing. Organisers of the protest said that the University had failed to address the cost of living crisis, describing it as a "ludicrous charade" with some rents increasing by 150%. One student said that the University was letting in too many students but that: "the bigger issue is with the landlords" who "know they have this captive audience".

Complaints over Oxford's lead pipes

Students at St Anne's College, Oxford have complained over unsafe conditions in an accommodation block. Students discovered lead pipes in the kitchens of the accommodation. The use of lead in houses has been banned since the 1970s. The College acknowledged that "there may be some concerns over the safe use of water", but said that there was not enough lead for it to be considered harmful. Students at the College will also be affected by upcoming renovation which will force some students off-site, and "a large number of students" will need to organise their own accommodation.

Climate activists occupy lecture theatres in Leeds and Exeter

Climate activists at Leeds and Exeter universities have occupied lecture theatres, protesting links to fossil fuel companies. The Leeds activists have occupied a theatre since Monday (07/11), demanding a ban on investments in fossil fuels and the refusal of all funding from these companies. The activists at Exeter have occupied a theatre in solidarity with the Leeds students, making similar demands. The group is also calling for all students to be taught a module on the climate crisis. Exeter University said they are "talking to the protestors about their actions and coming to a resolution that minimises disruption for others".

Achoo! The science of freshers' flu

Thomas Morris explores what viruses cause it, who's most at risk and how to avoid it

We have all been there early in the term: cough, headache, and general grogginess. Now some may rightly attribute this to the debauchery of the prior night, but there is another, more pervasive cause, the infamous freshers' flu. But what really is it that drives us to deplete the Sainsbury's pharmaceutical aisle?

Freshers' flu is the blanket term given to practically any illness contracted during the start of Michaelmas. These are typically upper respiratory tract infections, meaning they irritate the process of breathing, causing the coughs that echo through lecture halls.

Something to note is that the name freshers' flu is itself misleading. Flu is an abbreviation for the disease caused by influenza viruses, meaning they often cause similar symptoms: fever, runny nose, sore throat, muscle pain, headache, coughing and fatigue. However, as we are aware, there is a great disparity in what freshers' flu does to people. Some are bedridden and feverish for days, while others get away with a light cough and sore throat, which implies that a variety of different diseases are at play.

Influenza may well be one of the culprits. Other contenders include respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and metapneumovirus. All of these have national peaks during autumn and

winter, coinciding with Michaelmas. These are often more serious, so if you can't drag yourself to your suppo, you might be suffering from one of these.

If you are suffering from more mild symptoms, you may be infected by one of a range of other viruses, including rhinoviruses (such as the common cold), adenoviruses, and the microscopic elephant in the room, coronaviruses. It must be noted that these are groups of infections and not specific types of viruses. However, their symptoms are generally similar and without a test, it is very difficult to tell them apart. Their mildness means that they are not tested for in routine surveillance (with the obvious exception of COVID-19), and tests are not readily available, allowing them to run unidentified through the academic population.

One could be forgiven for assuming that freshers' flu is most prevalent during Freshers' Week. However, this is unlikely due to the exponential nature of disease spread (think back to those case number graphs in the early COVID pandemic). Cases of general unwellness tend to peak at two to four weeks after the start of term, just in time for Week Five blues.

However, there may be some redemption for use of the term 'freshers', given it is used in reference to those



▲ A fresher goes through the highs and lows of freshers' week (VARSAITY)

who are most likely to be infected. The spread of disease requires contact with people, and increased contact in more intimate environments increases the risk of transmission. Freshers are likely to attend more social gatherings than their elders, and these tend to be open-invite based, often bringing diverse groups of people into contact. In contrast, older years may mostly socialise within defined groups of people. This means that diseases can circulate to and from freshers through their much broader networks than typically exist for second and third years.

In regards to what facilitates the spike in illness during the start of the academic year, the most likely cause is the convergence of swathes of people from across the globe, allowing for people to contribute their home's diseases into Cambridge's microbial mixing pot. Poor diet, stress, a lack of sleep and heavy alcohol consumption (when compared to the prior summer holiday lifestyle) increase susceptibility to disease. This, combined with the colder weather that encourages indoor congregation (perfect for spreading respiratory illnesses) means that infection rates are high.

Although unpleasant, freshers' flu is generally benign. However, it must not be confused with meningitis, a far more serious condition that can cause a rapid deterioration in health and subsequent death. Meningitis is an infection that causes the linings of the brain and spinal cord to swell, and it has symptoms similar to freshers' flu: a runny nose, headaches and high temperature. Unlike freshers' flu, it can also involve light sensitivity and a stiff neck. If meningitis is suspected, immediately call the emergency services.



Missing: urgent appeal to return Sidney Sussex chair

Meg Byrom

In an email seen by *Varsity*, Sidney Sussex College has made an urgent appeal for the repatriation of a garden chair from the Master's terrace. The Dean of Discipline, Dr Bernhard Fulda, theorised the theft had been conducted by a "raiding party" of non-Sidney students.

The Dean had made this assumption due to his "high regard of Sidney students' intelligence (and their risk management skills)".

The hypothesis is inspired by an apparent "time-honoured tradition, [carrying] this off as a kind of trophy," with the Dean suggesting that members of Christ's may be the guilty party. Despite these accusations, Sidney held firm their

commitment to "innocence until proven guilty."

In the plea for the return of the chair, the email has asked for "all members of our community to rally round, and to restore College honour by giving the Dean hints as to where this chair might be located."

They followed by asking students to "try to remember whether you saw anyone carrying a wooden chair around one of these nights...even for Cambridge standards that would be a little on the odd side. Just hit the reply button now, and leave it to me. No names shall be named."

The Dean said he will "need to recalibrate my assumptions" about the intelligence of those who do not act to

return the chair despite knowing their whereabouts.

Amongst fears for the fate of the missing chair, the dean also shared less important concerns about noise at the college.

Missing chairs are just one recent example of a potentially eight-hundred-year-old tradition, in which rival colleges, groups and societies are renowned for stealing items of importance. Last year, the trend involved a competition to steal and return the King's College sign in one night, culminating with a final image of the sign on a boat sailing across the English Channel. Last term, a hoax email surrounding the famous Jesus College horse was sent to all undergraduates, with many believing it had been stolen.

Democracy wins in Selwyn as new JCR president finally elected

Eric Williams

Students at Selwyn College have finally elected a new president in their JCR election, after a hard fought-for campaign. In earlier stages, students had supported reopening nominations (RON) ahead of electing any of the nominated candidates. RON had gained 59.9% of the vote, with both Hollis and Cooper receiving less than a quarter of the student vote each. RON is an option in elections run by the Students' Union, which allows students to vote for the election to be run again, potentially with a broader field of candidates.

After long deliberations, Elina Smith ultimately came out on top, with 99 votes to Matthew Doyle's 77 after five

stages.

Selwyn students suggested that the earlier success for RON was in part the result of information circulated on social media, particularly "Selfessions" – the anonymous Selwyn Facebook confessions page.

Sam Hutton, a second year who supported Sam Hollis' nomination for the presidency, said: "last year, JCR election political posts were banned...but the new admin for this year did no such thing."

Quickly, jokes spread about how neither candidate was ideal and that we should simply vote RON instead."

Hutton said he "can only imagine it was freshers having a laugh. or a true desire to cause chaos."

News

‘There is place for a bit of backbone

Why is Caius always causing controversy? Hugh Jones asks

Fellows at Gonville & Caius College are deeply divided over recent culture war rows at the College, according to a source close to the fellowship who told *Varsity*: “there is real momentum to get rid of the master and senior tutor.”

In a leaked email revealed by *Varsity* this week, Arif Ahmed, the Caius fellow who invited the gender-critical journalist Helen Joyce to speak at the College earlier this term, quoted the College’s master and senior tutor, Pippa Rogerson and Andrew Spencer, referring to “heightened tensions” in the College.

That view was shared by the source close to the fellows, who described how the group of progressive fellows are “like a faction”, wherein they “only sit with themselves” and “can’t even look” at their ideological opponents.

Even Ahmed, a mild-mannered man who chooses his words carefully, seemed to tacitly criticise the College’s leadership when he spoke to *Varsity* this week.

The philosophy professor never mentioned the master and senior tutor by name, and was scrupulous about avoiding saying anything inappropriate. He did tell us, however, “If senior people are cavalier about calling a view ‘hateful’ when it isn’t, that can have a seriously chilling effect.”

After the master and senior tutor called Helen Joyce’s views “hateful” last week, given how carefully Ahmed chooses his words, that didn’t sound like a coincidence.

Despite his caution, however, Ahmed is clearly not happy with the state of free speech at Cambridge. He described “an atmosphere of fear at Cambridge”, and added: “I do believe there is a place for a bit of backbone to be shown at British universities”. That is why he has been running free speech classes at Caius, aiming to teach students how to respond to views they find “controversial, shocking, [and] offensive”.

Going forward, however, students aren’t Ahmed’s main targets. “I don’t myself see the students as the problem as much as the academics”, he said.

Rogerson and Spencer might well agree.

It is more than just fellows who are angry, however. The opprobrium extends to alumni and donors, many of whom are unhappy with the master and senior tutor’s handling of the Joyce talk.

After Rogerson and Spencer wrote to students heavily criticising Joyce’s views, and saying that they would not be attending the event, a backlash ensued in the right-wing press.

Allison Pearson slammed the College in a column for *The Telegraph*. More worryingly for the College, that newspaper also reported that donors had said they were “embarrassed, appalled and absolutely disgusted” by the intervention.

Rogerson has tried to appease alumni in a message which spins the College’s response from a more pro-free speech perspective. The master said that she and the senior tutor had “expressed our personal opinions — as is our right.”

In a comment likely to anger students, Rogerson added: “We did not consider a cancellation ... Students are encouraged to engage in challenging discussions about difficult topics at university and at Caius.”

“The event took place on Tuesday 25 October with practical assistance from the College to ensure everyone’s security.”

The claim that the College had offered practical assistance to the talk conflicts with the claim that Caius didn’t host the event.

That the College did not consider cancelling the talk also implies that they could have done so. Students who regard the platforming of Joyce as a moral failure may well be critical of Caius for not acting on that ability.

This is the impossible dilemma for the master and senior tutor. They are caught between the anger of student activists and progressive academics, and the wrath of conservative fellows and alumni.

Despite the olive-branch message to alumni, today’s revelations about Rogerson and Spencer are likely to prompt yet more alumni anger.

Today *Varsity* revealed that Rogerson and Spencer blocked Ahmed from advertising the Joyce talk on the College intranet, despite using a College mailing list to publicise their “personal opinions” on the matter themselves.

The email also hinted at tensions between Ahmed and the master and senior tutor, with the former informing colleagues that, despite the latter’s objections, “[the talk] will go ahead anyway”.

What will happen next is unclear. What is clear is that the Caius culture wars are not going away any time soon.

A Caius spokesperson said: “Strongly opposed views are held and encouraged within academic institutions.”

“Prior to the event, some students and Fellows questioned the College’s commitment to diversity. These concerns led the master and senior tutor to reaffirm that Caius is a welcoming and supportive place. They were also very clear about the fundamental importance of the freedom of expression,” he added.



▲ Pippa Rogerson, Caius master (ROSIE BRADBURY)

Us Caians don't care about the culture wars

Comment Max Swillingham

The prevailing view among Caius students lies between uninterest and placation. Many were nonplussed by the Joyce event and gave it only a brief moment of thought — a friend said: “Caius are at it again,” half concerned, half tongue in cheek. And then the work continued. Perhaps it made for good conversation

over dinner on the nature and limits of freedom of speech. Beyond this, however, the reaction was quite anticlimactic considering the coverage the event received. Weighing far heavier on the minds of most undergraduates was the burden of work that had accumulated by the middle of term. The Joyce controversy provided some disruptive background noise, but no more than that.

While the Joyce event split the fellowship, undergraduates were less bothered. On the one hand, there are some who are very hurt by what Helen Joyce stands for. On the other, there are a great many who are relatively unburdened. They are more concerned with combating those intangible “Week Five blues”.

The irony is that although Caius is a culture war hotspot, most of its students are apolitical. This was laid bare in the vote on which flags the College should fly. There were five nominations for flag days, and to have any flag flown required 307 votes out of the 919 eligible voters (one-third). No flag was voted in: an average of 260 people voted for the flying of the flags. But this was not due to strong opposition — the average ‘no’ vote was 30.

In short, Caius’ political controversies matter less to students than one might think. At the end of the day, Cambridge students too busy to go to talks and protests aren’t likely to care about them.

to be shown at British universities'

Ex-CUSU officer slams Caius master



Louis Mian
Deputy News Editor

A former Students' Union Campaigns Officer, Dr Stephen Quilley, has written to fellows of Gonville & Caius College criticising the master and senior tutor's decision to boycott last month's talk with Helen Joyce.

Joyce is a gender-critical feminist who has attracted controversy for her views on trans issues. She was invited to speak at Caius by Arif Ahmed earlier this term, prompting a student backlash and a protest led by the Students' Union LGBT+ liberation campaign.

Quilley wrote: "the College desperately needs to issue an apology and a retraction" for the decision to condemn Joyce's views. He told fellows: "If you have tenure, now is the time to make it count."

Quilley, a Canadian academic writing in a personal capacity, said that he is not sure if Pippa Rogerson and Andrew Spencer, master and senior tutor of the College respectively, "can recover" from

the email they sent to the student body on 19 October.

In that email, Rogerson and Spencer stated: "We do not condone or endorse views that Helen Joyce has expressed on transgender people, which we consider offensive, insulting and hateful to members of our community who live and work here."

As a result, Quilley suggested, "Caius has suffered serious reputational damage", with alumni "withdrawing funding and sponsorship".

"The College and the University are looking increasingly exposed, and often foolish."

Quilley argued that the "genius of the Oxbridge college system is that it forces students and faculty to sit next to people from different disciplines, different countries, and holding diverging political opinions, in convivial and informal contexts, forcing potential antagonists to see each other first of all as individuals"

Reflecting on his time as an undergraduate at Cambridge in the late 1980s, he noted that he "was on the far left" and

partook in his "fair share of protests" and "instigated quite a few as Campaigns Officer for CUSU [Cambridge University Students' Union]".

"Some of them were legitimate, a small number successful - but quite a few (with hindsight) were silly, vexatious and not really very well thought out. Then, as now, it was part of the student experience."

"However, I was never in favour of the de-platform movement that was then beginning to colour campus politics. I loved argument and debate far too much."

Quilley wrote that while the Helen Joyce "scandal" seems to be a turning point, it is not the first such episode in Cambridge. He noted: "The banning of Jordan Peterson gave an indication of the way things were going."

Speaking to *Varsity*, Quilley said: "there is an atmosphere of great fear in all universities" and that those "who disagree with new orthodoxies (often with good reason) are pilloried and sometimes fired".

Quilley said he was not calling for fellows to oust Rogerson, speculating that she acted "out of fear" and adding that it is not his "place to say who should run a Cambridge college".

However, Quilley doubled down on his call for the College "to apologise to Helen Joyce and to retract" the email they sent to students on 19 October. He stressed that they ought to "re-affirm an inviolable commitment to the principles of liberal discourse".

"The College should also make it clear to students that being exposed to difficult and challenging ideas is what makes a Cambridge education so great," he added.

He suggested that what has happened at Caius is part of a broader process which is "undermining the foundation of civil society and democracy" and said: "It saddens me to see British universities diving into this rabbit hole."

"Pippa Rogerson's role should be umpiring and securing a continuing informed dialogue including the widest diversity of opinion," Quilley added.

▲ Andrew Spencer, Caius senior tutor
(NOAH FROUD)

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When it rains, it pours... Cartoon by Hannah Castle

The National Union of Students isn't working

The NUS has harboured antisemitism for too long, and the Cambridge SU's response has been woeful



Sam Hudson

The sacking of Shaima Dallali last Tuesday was a victory for students across the UK. Her antisemitism and tacit support for Islamic fundamentalism, in the form of endorsing an extremist cleric as her “moral compass”, put her entirely at odds with liberal student opinion. And while her removal is a step in the right direction, it does not solve the underlying issues which led to her election.

As a brief recap for those with a life, National Union of Students elections have been dominated by the hard left and anti-Israel movements under the umbrella of the aptly named “Red Square Movement”, since Labour Students was temporarily abolished by radicals (it has thankfully since revived itself under fantastic new leadership). With it, the organised centre-left opposition collapsed, fuelling a vicious cycle of apathy, lack of accountability, and institutional rot. Students see less and less point in partaking in the SU-organised election of NUS delegates because the organisation consistent-

ly fails to represent us. This lack of participation has only weakened the moderate factions' opposition to the Red Square Movement, allowing this hard left coalition and their follies to face little scrutiny.

That students generally lean left wing is a fact as sure as death and taxes. Very few are those whose primary goal is to wish death to Israel and fewer still are committed Trotskyites. But these are the characters have dominated recent NUS elections, placing the very union meant to be representing us students entirely out of step with student consensus.

Now, with the necessary sacking of Dallali, the ruling coalition has been fractured: the Federation of Student Islamic Societies, one of the most influential student societies within the NUS, is leading a disaffiliation campaign in retaliation for the sacking of the candidate they backed. Perhaps this may open up the political landscape for constructive change, but I am pessimistic.

You need only look at the list of recent presidents to see how badly and consistently students, particularly Jewish students, have been let down within the last decade. Malia Bouattia, who faced serious accusations of antisemitism, was elected in 2016 and provided a grim taste of what was to come. Sadly, she avoided facing the same fate as Dallali, not making the mistake of

alienating her allies with religious dogma as Dallali did.

Larissa Kennedy, elected in 2021, put together the most recent NUS conference which can only charitably be described as a trainwreck. As part of celebrations for the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the NUS, Lowkey, a rapper who has an extensive laundry list of anti-semitic remarks (including implying

Cambridge SU has remained silent on the continued decline of the NUS, continuing to send over £8,000 a year to the broken organisation

that University Jewish Societies were fronts for Israel), was invited as a “liberation” speaker. When the Union of Jewish Students pointed out the blatant inappropriateness of this to Kennedy, she suggested Jewish students should simply migrate to a different room when Lowkey

came on stage. I would have liked to see Kennedy, who has defended no-platforming, make the same demeaning response to an accusation of any other form of racism. And while Lowkey was eventually disinvited, it took widespread media pressure to compel Kennedy into her about-turn.

The Lowkey controversy, however, was just the tip of the iceberg when it came to the conference this year. Voting on policy motions, deemed “too confrontational”, was replaced with “consensus-based decision making”, a Kafkaesque system which would look more in place in the Soviet Union than anything approaching a democracy. Instead of debating and then voting on motions as is usual anywhere else, delegates would indicate their preference for particular policies. Based on the input of the delegates, a committee of NUS hacks would then simply decide on a “consensus decision”. Quite unsurprisingly this very rarely represented the will of the elected delegates, instead handing power to the dwellers of the NUS bog.

Combined with the election of Dallali, many delegates, even those on the Left, ended the conference with utter contempt for the charade. Reading SU, who is now having a referendum to disaffiliate with the NUS, published an open letter after the conference describing the NUS as “wholly inadequate, a total waste

of our money and a complete and utter failure”. I haven't seen another description which rings more true.

Unlike Reading, Cambridge SU has unfortunately remained silent on the continued decline and mismanagement of the NUS, continuing to unthinkingly send over £8,000 a year to the broken organisation. Perhaps they share the NUS's political interests but the likelihood is that they're simply ambivalent about the matter and too lazy to make a change. After all, when delegates are given luxury suites at the Pullman for their stay at the conference, the NUS gravy train becomes rather difficult to hop off from.

Frankly, I do not know if the NUS can be saved. Obviously, I will use my vote in the upcoming NUS delegate elections to support candidates who run on rooting out racism and mismanagement — as I hope everyone else will. But perhaps, as with most things, it was always doomed for destitution once students stopped paying attention. It has gone from a politically significant force to an anti-democratic hovel squatted in by some of the most reprehensible people in student politics. I hope it dies and dies swiftly so we may build something out of its ashes and finally see politics working for students again.

Sam studies Natural Sciences at Trinity Hall

Comment

Forget being real, we've lost the art of being still

If we can resist the endless desire to photograph experience, perhaps we can get more out of it

Sarah Adegbite



Busyness is the currency that Cambridge students trade on. Lectures, supervisions, committee meetings, formals. Focus groups, sports matches, launch events, pub trips. These are abstracted away into brightly coloured chunks on my calendar, and life becomes a series of neatly divided half-hour blocks. I transfer my time into a low interest savings account, and wonder why my investment fails to make a good return. This is the tender that props up our failing economy.

I have my answer to the inevitable “how’s this term going?” memorised. “Busy, but good.” “Intense, but I’m enjoying it.” “Lots going on, but I wouldn’t have it any other way.” And while these answers are true, I secretly hate that they play into that game of Cambridge busyness, and sometimes I question whether or not this is the best way to live.

The rapid blur of life makes us desperate to record every moment. I’m guilty of it. The BeReal notification arrives like a herald in the night.

My One-Second-Everyday app lies patiently in wait for another snippet of my day. On uneventful days we mourn the emptiness of our Instagram stories. What is this world if not an image capture experiment?

There have been a few times in the past couple of years where the landscape before me seems too good not to frame. Too beautiful not to have it saved in my phone to come back to again and again. Yet, it’s at



▲ **A millennial enjoying nature, the modern way** (GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO)

those most photo-worthy moments that something inside urges me not to. In those moments, I have wanted desperately to take a picture, to build an edifice in the shape of a high res photo, and know that that moment was captured. But always within me there is something begging me to resist. What was it?

Some Native American cultures become wary of the camera, seeing it as a tool that would whisk away your soul the moment you press the shutter. And there is some truth in this. You lose a piece of the moment, or force the creation of something artificial, one remove away from reality, if you take a picture to store somewhere else. The phone externalises memory and in so doing parcels away memorable emotion. Who needs the brain when the cloud does it all for you?

I’m reminded of the story of Jesus’ transfiguration in the gospels (indulge me a biblical comparison — I’m a theology student, okay?). Jesus and his closest mates — Peter, James, and John — ascend a mountain and are shown a blinding vision. Christ’s clothes turn white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them (Mark 9:3). He speaks with Moses and Elijah on that mountain, and the dumbstruck disciples stand in awe. Then Peter has to open his big gob: “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah” (Matthew 17:4).

At first sight, it doesn’t seem that Peter has done anything wrong. But God interrupts in a booming voice, and Peter’s timid offering drowns into the background. Why, though?

Some biblical commentators think he is too concerned with capturing the moment, too eager to speak at a time which should be revered in silence.

The phone externalises memory and in so doing parcels away memorable emotion. Who needs the brain when the cloud does it all for you?

And in his capturing attempt, he had cut in on the moment itself, jarring the divine display of Jesus’ goodness with his man-made creation.

And don’t we all do this? Stutter into speech what should be left unsaid. Or whip out a phone at a scene that could have just been left in my head. Maybe it’s just me? It seems like the desperation to remember does nothing but make me forget. However, there have been a few times when I’ve recognised that a tabernacle of a photo is not something I should build. That I must merely look on with wonder, and see what emerges.

And in those moments, I have decided to take a picture in my mind. The moon glowing bright against an

ocean of deep blue clouds, John’s peeking turrets clasp hands with that night sky. A red-beaked bird swooping from branches as I walk up to Sidgwick Site in the cold, dappled light. The mist rising from a whispering River Cam, as King’s looks on, unflinching. A melody of laughter erupting from the dinner table in the basement of my grotty student house. My roommate and I sitting in a gorgeous cup of silence, as she writes her essay, and I write this article. Every once in a while, I force myself to conjure up these images again. To remind myself that they happened to me, just me, and they exist just for me to see.

I was hesitant about writing this, in fact, about sharing these snapshots that have formed the camera roll of my mind during these past couple of years at university. I wanted to do them justice. As much as I love words, I know they won’t capture the colours that ring bright and true in my head, the nostalgia that rises to the top of my throat as I rifle through my files of memories. I think part of the thrill of deciding not to take a photo is knowing that there is a risk you could forget. But for the beauty of that fragility, for the rush of remembering something whose image only you have, that is a risk I’m willing to take.

Sarah studies Theology at St John’s

Notebook Thomas Brian

Cambridge is gorgeous in autumn

But a week or so ago, the cold weather first struck its tendrils in my humble cot. My voice, of which I am so fond, was struck down by some malaise, and left me severed from the joy and duty of the Lord’s praises. And so I sat, nursing my throat with honey and water, and heard the bells strike Hail Mary at six, and the college bells summon us to our founding purpose at half past.

Perhaps I am so far gone I know not it tolls for me? No, it’s just a sore throat. But all the same — what have I done to warrant this excommunication? Have I been too much out of key? Too rude to the Director of Music? Too harsh to my seminar fellows? Too lax in my work? The first or the last, but that is not the way of the First and Last.

I am recovered now, and I sang full pelt (my apologies) at Evensong. But meanwhile, I recorded some thoughts.

Capsule coffee

My colleagues have provided a fair bit of inspiration. A previous notebook spoke warmly of some coffee shops in Cambridge, and I too can weigh in. I have little taste in coffee — I take it fairly strong and black, and use it largely because few things are more disgusting at breakfast than water. But I have grown attached to it, for which I am sure there is a medical explanation,

The summer has now well and truly faded away, and left us in the chilled and wizened

and have formed a particular fondness for my little Nespresso machine that sits on its own little table in my room.

It is, in some ways, a ghastly modern thing.

There is no conceivable reason why my coffee machine should connect to Wi-Fi. Ordering capsules seems to require this convoluted app process which requires me to log into an account, which half the time tells me my password is wrong (it isn’t). The pods

are supposed to be recycled in a special bag, which I then have to cart off myself to some processing centre. You see, in the modern world, companies outsource the nuisance of environmental responsibility to you. After all, we’re clearly going to care more about the environment than Nestlé.

All the same, the coffee is strong and black, and comes in espresso, lungo and mug sizes. I may not connect the thing to the internet, but I have connected it to my heart.

Beware the nanny state

Another entertaining drinking experience, also courtesy of my colleagues, came recently at the delightful Champion of the Thames on King Street. I am, for my sins, an incorrigible cider drinker, and sat down with my editor for a pint, and a pork pie. With my flat cap by my side, and my editor in his polo neck, both of us with pint and pork pie, we must have looked like a proper young Labour duo, emulating our proletarian ancestors.

But that drivell I have written is not why I mention this: While waiting for my editor, I spied a packet of cigarettes on the side. I am at peace, more or less, with “Smoking Kills”, “Smoking Orphans your Children”, “Cigarettes

murder Babies” etc. — these tend to be verifiable facts. But if you ask me, “Smoking

Kills: Stop Now” is a step too far. The government can force the tobaccoconists to tell me a medical fact, yes, but it seems a bit much for them to start dictating my personal behaviours.

I am not in favour of legalising marijuana or any other scheduled drugs, for reasons I will not delve into. But if we can just state arbitrary positions on the side of a product for sale, why not legalise it, with “Cannabis makes you boring” sprawled across the side. I’d lose the fight, and have to smell the stuff everywhere, but it’s a small mercy.

The daily commute

A lot of my week is spent trudging the same route through Silver Street, between the Sidge and home. As the summer has now well and truly faded away, and left us in the chilled and wizening

clutches of the dying year, do be careful on those pavements. Silver Street is a particular menace. There’s that puddle before the café, there’s the thin-

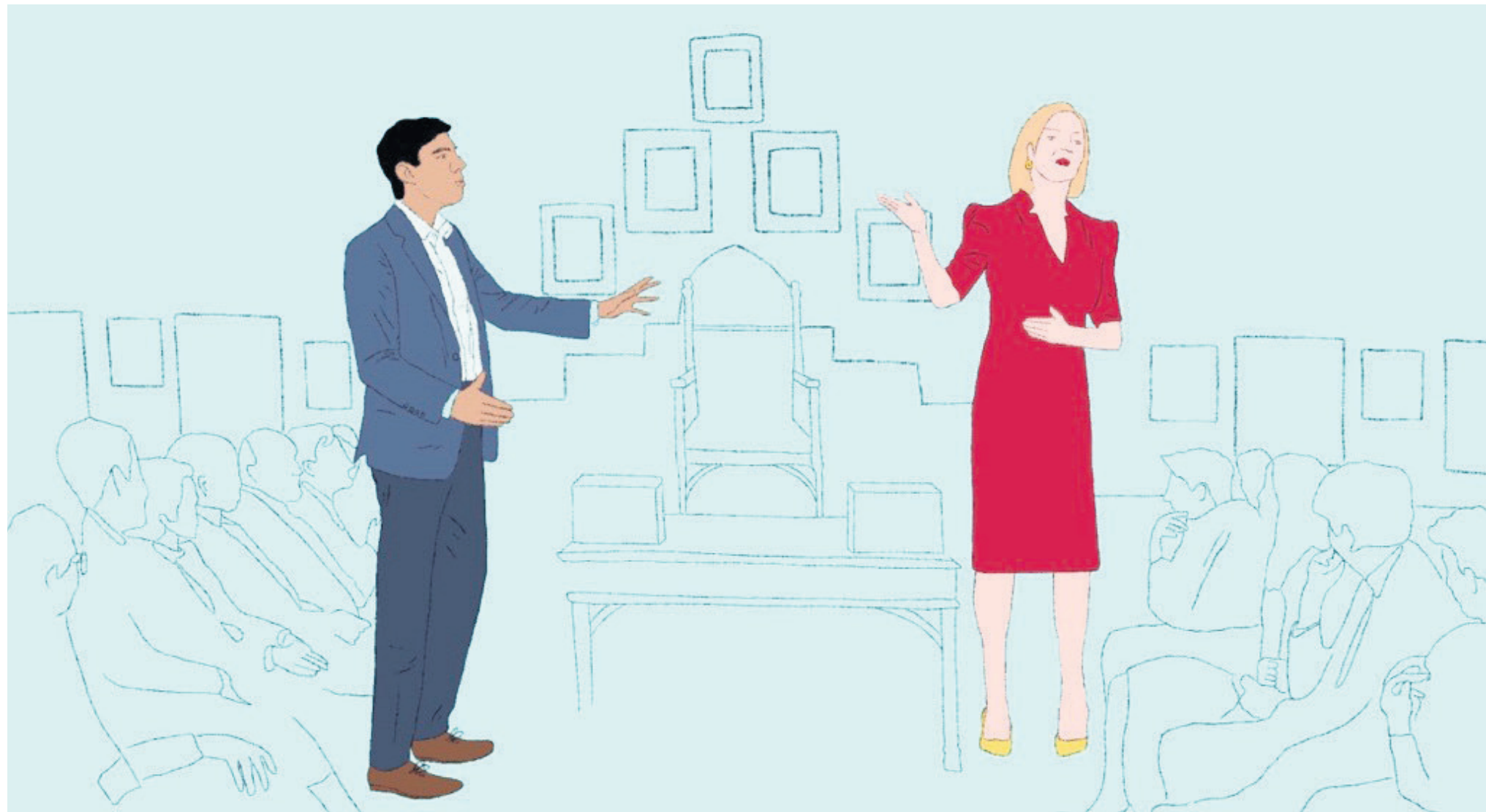
nest of pavements, now girded on one side by moist brick, and the other by a rainwater chasm; then there’s the gatherings of leaves as you turn down Trumpington Street, and

those sly little berries outside venerable St Mary’s. Not to mention those punting punters, still so bravely plying their trade. I suppose I’m too obviously disinterested — they never approach me.

But repetition is its own joy. We cruise through Cambridge from day to day, hopping over leaves and berries, and forbidding all with such and such a face. Slow down, Cambridge is gorgeous in Autumn.

Thomas Brian studies Classics at Peterhouse





Politicians act as if they're still at the Union — God help us all

If we want to understand the vanity and mediocrity of politicians, look at the places that claim to create them

Max Swillingham



Maurice Cowling always believed that the proper study of political behaviour requires one to see through issues of domestic and foreign policy, and to ask the question: 'Who rules?'. The answer, at Charles's the III's accession, seems to be that self-interest rules, manifested in the use of rhetoric for rehashed plans for growth which thinly veil the striving for positions of influence. Indeed, Truss and Kwarteng's 44-day immolation scene has flooded the banks of the Tory party with the redemption and serenity of Rishi Sunak. The *Götterdämmerung* scenario for the Conservative party seems to be passing; the Tory Rheinmadens have their ring back in the form of 'sensible' leadership.

But politics, although operatic, continues after final acts; and the closing of internal rifts is by no

means inevitable. To most internal and external observers, the UK seems — from post-Brexit, to upturning fiscal orthodoxies, to the Union — to be making high-political decision-making something of a crash course. Polycrisis has met high politics in the UK and has been exploding in its proponent's faces — how right was Dominic Cummings to nickname Truss "the human hand grenade", or Johnson an out-of-control "trolley", for that matter. So how on earth did our political class get in this mess, and are they equipped to deal with it? The answer, strangely enough, is all around us. We have to remember to think of politicians as students a bit more, because it helps comprehend their failures.

Understanding British politics for the last decade and a bit requires looking at the cast list. Those in power, David Cameron, Theresa May, Boris Johnson and Liz Truss were all of a generation that studied at Oxford in the 1980s, to say nothing of Michael Gove, Jeremy Hunt and David Frost (former Brexit Secretary, not the host of TW3, who was a Caian). It's not like this is unique — indeed, Oxford has a long history of educating weak

leaders. You often hear that modern British political life has an exceptionally weak lower calibre of politician. There is a grain of truth here, but the politicians of the past like Denis Healey, Michael Foot, Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan had just as many faults, and just as many scandals.

But nonetheless the present cast list is unique, for, if nothing else, its exceptional mediocrity. And they're

I have been a member of the Union long enough, known enough people in it, to know that it can't be any better

notable, also, because they act as if they're still in their Oxbridge political associations. Boris Johnson most certainly ruled as a Union president rather than a prime minister — dinners, debating, and dither. This may have been a good thing during peacetime, but not for a pandemic. Liz Truss, moreover, reflects that sort of society president that is not unique in

any such way other than by holding on, eventually falling into a position of power because there is no one left in the circle to be President, a sort of inert musical chairs in which none of the chairs are removed.

If I were clichéd enough I would say that 'this is why we need politicians forged with fire from the Cambridge Union', but I have been a member of the Union long enough, known enough people in it, to know that it can't be any better. They're just as scheming and unprincipled, even if they have less books written about them. The endless machinations to appoint year-long, unelected Vice-Presidency comes to mind, as does the opening of one's legs to every which political faction to win votes for a minor role. I like a handful of them, and rate a handful very highly, but it's a rarity; common adjectives tend to be 'boring' or 'reptilian'.

The mindset of a Union or political association is like a low-stakes card game player. You get to the table by making a name for yourself — perhaps by incoherent floor speeches or actually good speeches. Then you realise most players are tacitly colluding. Each player has in the fore of their

minds not just the present, but what the future holds if they choose to go on this slate. Back the right player and you've a royal flush; lay yourself bare on the wrong slate and your career in student politics is over and you write for Varsity. But regardless of talent, naked, unembarrassed ambition always wins over in student politics. It's a mindset that makes passable hacks and dreadful statesmen.

Not that I want to abolish the union — I have accepted it as a fact of life, part of the theatre of University life. But as a mere spectator, it terrifies me that some of its bigger names want to end up in politics, on either side of the aisle. God help us.

The endless striving for position and status that defines Oxbridge Debating Unions has made British politics a wasteland. And if the Cambridge Union now is anything to go by, I would be able to show you the future of politics in a handful of dust, dry and bourgeois, no more equipped to deal with the complexity of modern political problems than they are to organise a panel event.

Max Swillingham studies History at Gonville & Caius College

The smoking area

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Tobia Nava

Students celebrating Diwali at Main Court in St Catharine's College. Many College's held themed formals before and after Diwali.



Trumpington

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



It is always a sad day when a Cambridge tradition dies. For years Cambridge students from Churchill to Peterhouse have bonded over a shared sense of humour, laughing together at jokes based on two simple words: "Girton far".

Girton's mistress, however, has struck a blow against this heart-warming source of humour, leapfrogging town and gown alike by borrowing a donor's helicopter to go gallivanting beyond the Cambridge bubble (allegedly).

The pictures revealed elsewhere in this week's *Varsity* represent not only a blow for Girton College FC, who had to cut short a match to accommodate the mistress' aeronautic experimentation. Neither does it merely constitute a slap in the face for students who have been crying out for a U-bus for countless terms.

The real crime is that, by obliterating distance with modern technology, Girton's mistress has taken aim at a true Cambridge institution.

Luckily, Gonville & Caius College can always be relied upon to uphold Cambridge's traditions. The College has been kicking about since 1348, and rumour has it that even then the College was riven by bitter arguments, albeit about transubstantiation rather than the transgender debate, Caius was notorious for racking up an impressive number of martyrs.

Arif Ahmed will be pleased to know that nowadays, even at Caius, people aren't burned alive for saying the wrong thing (perhaps the SU has a 'no playing with matches' policy?) Still, if today's reporting in *Varsity* is anything to go by, the College's master and senior tutor might still be in hot water with alumni.

Perhaps the one thing that can finally unite the Caius fellowship is the riskw that donations dry up - and with them the College wine cellar? On a more serious note, this week saw a win for vibrant, competitive elections as a candidate promising to make things "great again" was defeated, when a people came together to overcome polarisation and political malaise.

Blue success in the US midterms did not extend to Selwyn College's fraught JCR president race, with CUCA librarian Owen 'Make Selwyn Great Again' Cooper and his Selwyn-nationalist agenda getting fewer votes than 'Re-Open Nominations' - twice. Instead, Elina Smith was elected, to the joy of the College communications team, who rapidly and not-at-all cynically sought to make as much capital as they could out of her Ukrainian heritage.

Trumpington offers sincere congratulations to Smith - but nonetheless worries about what this says about Selwynites. After voters rejected every candidate in an earlier round of voting, one has to ask: how could Selwyn students miss the opportunity to RON again? Clearly Week Five has robbed them of their sense of humour. Studying a Cambridge degree can be hard work, but when Cantabs start putting practicalities over being self-defeating in the name of good chat, something has gone direly wrong.

My son hates history - and that's ok

Dr Guy Sopal on coming to terms with his son's hatred of for his discipline

'Ten more minutes Dad!', he screams as the door slams behind him. It's 6pm and Sam is starting his manga anime episode of the day. This one is about Manga, thankfully not Magna Carta, I think he told me.

Ever since we diagnosed Sam with ADHD (the doctors didn't see it) he's preferred the adventures of Xioto to his school work and little sister. He comes back from a long day at Oakley Independant in Cherry Hinton, and after gorging on the carrot sticks and hummus Kerry, my partner (we had a humanist wedding), puts out for him he seems to want nothing more than to plonk down on the beanbag we bought from the Oxfam on Mill Road, open up his second-hand Chromebook and watch his series.

I try to entice him with the female-Native-American-leaders Top Trumps I made for him when he was six, but it doesn't seem to work anymore. Xioto's lifestyle is clearly cooler than Apache's battle with American gold-prospectors. Who knew?

I would say it's tough for me, being a 'historian' (whatever that means) myself, to see Sam take more interest in Netflix than the past. But hey, let kids be kids right? Right? Right.

Kerry says I invest too much in Sam. She's a believer in baby-led parenting, as am I, and thinks we should go with his flow. I feel I'm with her, and after he turned down my book launch at Waterstones for ComiCon I realised there was little scope for change. Besides, who really wants to study the stuffy-old past anyway? I don't and I get paid to do it!

NOT the NEWS

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

James Grimditch & Ronan Long

Irony Is Dead

The Satire team has had a crisis of faith after discovering that the Quantitative Environmental Sciences supervisions are now to be held at the BP Institute. For any freshers who get lost it's on Greenwashing Avenue, just past the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Conference Room and opposite the 'BP's net zero targets are a sham' laboratory. If you reach the 'fossil fuel companies covered up global warming for decades' offices you've gone too far.

Sidgwick Fashion Takes a Hit After Last Week's Downpour

Varsity's resident fashion expert commented; "we've seen a lot of irreparable damage done to ecological cotton tote bags and flares, not to mention the unprecedented suede shoes casualties. Dark times are coming." Indeed, a general slump in fashionableness is feared as more rain is predicted to arrive in Cambridge, and there have already been shocking reports of students showing up to Sidg in skinny jeans and a backpacks.

Varsity Satire Department on Hiatus for Harvest Season

"Their keen eye for low hanging fruit could be of great use to the nation's struggling orchards," editor announces.

Students 'Baffled' by Bizarre Phenomenon

Students were left dumbfounded on

Sunday as hundreds of townies partook in a 'fun run'. This, apparently local, tradition involves willingly running over a distance of 10,000 metres, for enjoyment (surely this can't be right- Editor). We spoke to one baffled land economy student who said, "I don't understand it, I can't even be bothered to walk to my one lecture a fortnight."

New Selwyn President 'RON' to Stand Down After Problematic Tweets Emerge

Last week saw an historic victory for underdog 'RON' in the race to be JCR President of Selwyn. However, since RON's landslide victory a record of a problematic past has surfaced, causing the new leader to resign in disgrace. "I truly believed in RON," said one tearful student, "all the other candidates are shit."

Union Dispute Causes Headache for Trinity

Trinity College was picketed recently due to its ownership of Trinity Terminal, the largest container facility at Felixstowe Port. Despite the port operator CK Hutchinson (registered in the Cayman Islands) raking in a whopping £79 million in profit last year they were only able to offer its workers a pay deal 3% below current inflation levels. The Master of Trinity College agreed to speak to Varsity, but spent the interview obscured by vast piles of cash sitting on his desk. "We are well aware that the college is in a very good place financially," he said, shovelling hordes of notes into a safe, "but just because we have around £1 billion in assets, doesn't

mean we can start changing the world for the better. We have absolutely nothing to do with businesses like CK Hutchinson, all we do is cash the checks." He pauses for breath, "Besides, if we only invested in morally sound assets what sort of example would that be for our students?"

Controversy Over Varsity Horoscopes

Several keen astrologists have complained that the newspaper isn't taking their horoscope section seriously enough after it emerged that last week's were written using a dartboard and banal platitudes. 'No one noticed until the photo came out' shrugged one writer.

Northern Soc Presidency Sparks Row

As the race for Northern Soc President heats up, the debate over where exactly 'the North' is proving controversial. Last year's President hailed from the Midlands city of Coventry, and current SU president (Kent) insisted this wasn't a problem. "As far am I'm concerned, anything North of Watford may as well be another world". However some members are unhappy with this ruling, we spoke to one student who hails from Liverpool, with strong feelings on the subject. "***** Coventry!!" She said; "and if they ***** then I'll shove it six feet up their *****".



The Selwyn JCR election shows that we do care about student politics. When it matters

Last week 60% of students at Selwyn voted to reopen nominations for their JCR presidential elections. With RON ousting the other candidates, Selwyn college has been rocked by political turbulence. Another election finally crowned the new JCR president days later. But with the college eagerly watching Selfsessions for more twists and turns in this undergraduate political drama, it's rare that JCR elections can instigate such interest.

Despite falling turnout rates, the extraordinarily high RON rate said something very different about undergrad politics than perhaps expected: the electorate were paying attention.

The option to RON candidate's is usually a sufficient protest vote, especially when options for candidates are limited or insufficient, but with Selwyn, the 106 RON votes show an engagement with student politics that the SU, student societies and other JCR's should be jealous of.

Too often JCR elections pique only the interest of LinkedIn goblins hungry for more committee positions on their consultant in the making CV's. The other typical candidates, well intentioned, but perhaps too idealistic do-gooders or baby student politicians, invoking some despotic populist call to overthrow the old regime.

Even with such a variety of candidates, JCR elections remain dull. Consistently low turnouts, positions going uncontested and little or no interaction at hustings define much of Cambridge's undergraduate democratic experience. The ability to snooze one's way to the top is too often a common occurrence.

But with the remarkable numbers in support of RON at the Selwyn elections- could this tide turn?

Students bemoan the lack of change in their colleges, at the university in general- but if the people with the role of representing us are bad, or even worse, fly under the radar in their mediocrity, then how do we expect anything to change?

Undergraduate elections should put forth the best candidates, but something is going wrong. Not just at JCR level, but with the SU too, these representative positions should be highly fought after with student's invested in the outcome but many would struggle to even name or identify their JCR treasurer or an SU Sabbatical Officer.

Whilst students on Selwyn's confessions page embrace the discussion over their recent election, it's a far cry from the cob-webbed voting link many will receive via email the next time JCR elections come around.

Students should embrace the RON vote and use it wisely - to force their candidates and student democracy to be better.

Have a response to the issues raised in this article? Send a 70-200 word letter to letters@varsity.co.uk and have your response published in print and on the website

The Union is taking the Mick

Sir,

Monday's (24/10) Union discussion with Mick Mulvaney, former Chief of Staff for the Trump White House, was an evening of chumming it with enablers of American authoritarianism. Mulvaney's interlocutor did not have it in him to even steer the conversation, only directing Mulvaney once... to an incisive discussion about the lessons of Harvard Business School. Disappointingly, on the attempted extortion of Ukraine for dirt on Hunter Biden, the vice-president of the Union resigned on even asking a question. Instead, he fumbled his words and invited Mulvaney to merely "talk us" through his side of a plot that ended with Trump's impeachment.

The sense from Mulvaney was of general victimisation. He is slighted by his alma mater, which refuses to invite him to speak. The media call Trump a racist after Charlottesville despite the good working relationship he maintains with a black cameraman. Mulvaney presented his own record as outstanding, such as when he refused to run negative advertisements during his first congressional campaign. In fact, the presence of dark money attack ads in that election was so notable that it made national headlines.

Mulvaney emphasised his disobedience to Trump, which was limited to comments made either in private or later disavowed. In 2016, Mulvaney said Trump would be disqualified from office in an ordinary universe, a claim he recalled before his appointment and unrecalled upon leaving. His most objectionable revision of the night involved the 2020 presidential race. Days after the election, Mulvaney railed against the "TV networks" deciding "who is president" and claimed they act as if the winner of most votes "doesn't matter". At his Union event, he instead presented his post-January 6th resignation as a rejection of Trump and

not opportunistically abandoning a sinking ship. We should hope that the aspiring Conservatives at the debate, then eager not to make Mulvaney uncomfortable, do not follow his path into such spinelessness.

Adam Kutnar, PhD student at Homerton College

Defining gender critical feminism

Sir,

Your editorial objecting to Helen Joyce being invited to speak at Caius reveals precisely why such a talk was needed, and also that the editorial writer either did not attend or did not listen. You have her beliefs completely wrong. To be "gender critical", which we agree she is, means to reject the projection of expected behaviour, abilities and preferences onto the biological reality of sex. In naming the reality, our sexed bodies, we seek to challenge and overturn the associated discrimination which is not inevitable. You entirely missed the point. Gender, as a social construct, is indeed attached to sex but must be anything but immutable, or there would still be no MA (Cantab) women or college masters like Pippa, Bridget, Elisabeth and Heather.

Fiona McAnena, MA (Cantab)

Taylor Travesty

Sir,

I read with intrigue and horror Sarah Abbas's review of Taylor Swift's new album, *Midnights*. While admittedly I wasn't impressed on my first listening, it took only a couple more listens to grow on me, with Mastermind rapidly becoming a favourite of mine (your ranking of it on your website is a travesty). I implore the author of your review to listen to *Midnights* a few more times before realising and admitting her error.

Isaac Kaufmann, Fitzwilliam College

Want to respond to an article? Send a letter: letters@varsity.co.uk

The NUS has gone nutty

Sir,

It appears that what we all know has been finally said out loud: the National Union of Students is an anti-semitic, loony-left, madhouse of an institution. I would call it Bennite, or Corbynite, or some such thing, but that would be an insult to the professionalism and character of the first, and to the latter's ability to dodge mentions of his anti-semitism.

But is this not what we expect of SUs? Yes, they provide perfectly competent services to students, and administer some things very well, that is true. But the moment your average Students' Union delves into politics, they do so with the empathy of Braverman, the foresight of Truss, and the judgment and subtlety of that chap who tried to rig a CUCA election.

Again, even Corbyn got through a few years running Labour without his antisemitism getting him the boot. The NUS president couldn't manage a year.

Disgusted of Peterhouse

Drop in applicants

Sir,

I skim-read your article (Cambridge applications fall for a second year in a row) and found myself musing on the subject. There are a number of possible explanations:

1. Year 12s have been rendered cowards by the COVID nanny state
2. We have become too scary and need to soften our image. Tho this end, I propose we charm the media by giving free bottles of Krug to all the graduands, and a cigarette and a cup of tea to our struggling members.
3. We've been caught in a general national drop in applications. Good, the queue for ARC is too long anyway.

Anonymous Classics student

Poem of the Week

It's social engineering!
His daddy he worked in consulting,
And finds the idea quite insulting,
That try as he might,
Admissions: No bite!
No doubt for his fee-paying schooling!
Thomas Brian, Peterhouse

Get involved!

We're always on the look out for new talent.

If you want to start writing for a section, email a section editor. Anyone is welcome.

Still unconvinced? Come along to our fortnightly social at the Anchor pub: 9pm on Thursday evenings. Fourth trip is November 24!

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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

Sudoku by Sam Hudson

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

CARTOON by Isabel Dempsey



Varsity Scopes 14th October - 28th October 2022 by Jasmine Hearn & Lily Kemp

Week Five horoscopes ...

Scorpio: Big birthday chapter for you, Scorpio! You're not a social butterfly, and we wonder how you'll spend it — a big part of you wants to retire to your bed-quarters and rot away watching Call the Midwife. Your friends need a mid-term break just as badly as you, though — be bold and get everyone together. You'll feel better for it, and we'll thank you for it when we see you at the pub.

Sagittarius: Unexpected expenses are heading your way this week, so be cautious of the Circuit Laundry app. You know how much it makes you want to throw your phone at the wall of that horrid laundry room, when you're charged twice for Perm Press Dry (what does that even mean?) — so mark our words — it can wait another week. Trust your humble Varsity astrologers, you will be swindled once again if you tempt fate.

Capricorn: Capricorn, It's time for a new look. You've become stuck in your very old and established ways and they're boring. Get a new look: ditch those jeans you've had since year 12 and



start a new phase of your life. You can't hold on to the past.

Aquarius: This week isn't likely to be a highlight of the term for you, Aquarius. But a Varsity blind date might just

change that! Meeting someone new, even if friendship is meant to be, could spice up your Week Six social schedule a little. Send over your details, and we might just be sending you off to an Honest Burger near you.

Pisces: Remember that friend you made in first year, the one you chatted about everything with and then suddenly, they fell off the map? Get back in touch. Weird smiles in Mainsbury's shouldn't cut it for your whole time in Cambridge. why not ask them to go for coffee? You won't regret it.

Aries: Darling, use your fire for something good. We all know that your degree is driving you up the wall so why not take on a new extra-curricular activity? I hear the fives team may be perfect for you. Mull it over; it's boring only committing to your degree, and heaven knows you've never been boring.

Taurus: You're our materialistic, slightly passive-aggressive icon, Taurus. We know you're growing weary of the mess in the kitchen, and don't your flat-mates know it! Get back down to earth. But if you're called to take a stand (and perhaps you should ...) against the two-month-old Tupperwares and the grotty sponges, remember to use kind words.

Gemini: You've been questioning your entire life this week, Gemini! You're drawn back into the past, to a time of Saturday mornings at home with your family, before pidges and plodges. There's no harm in this, but nostalgia is a two-faced friend. You have done remarkably well getting where you are — take a moment to appreciate your growth.

Cancer: We know you've been thinking about your one night stand at Newnham Village. We also know it's not just a one night stand ... Perhaps it's time

CHESS by Gwilym Price

Cambridge were victorious in this year's Freshers' Varsity march, winning by the tight scoreline of 14.5 - 13.5. This was the first match in a few years due to the pandemic and logistical issues, and let us hope that the match continues without issue in future years.



(1) MichaelisRV - Firethorn15, Online 2020



(2) Purdon - Price, Club Rapidplay League 2021

Solutions to puzzles from Issue No. 905:
#1: 1.Rxg7! Qd5 (1...Kxg7 2. Qf7+ Kh8 3. Qh7#; 1...hgx5 2. Qf7! and 3. Rh7#) 2. Qxd5 cxd5 3. Rxg6! (3. Rh7+ Kg8 4. Rxh6 also works) intending 3...hgx5? 4. hgx5#
#2: One of the prettiest tactics I've seen. 1...Ng3+ 2. Kg1 Qc8!! (threatening ...Nh3#) 3. hxxg3 Qxc5+ Kf1 Qxa3 +-

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

to make a move? Ask them out to Clare Cellars. It will give off those chill and uncommitted vibes you're pretending to have.

Leo: The weather has been awful Leo, and we know you thrive in the summer sun. However, it is the festive season and no one throws a party like you. Invite your friends, new and old, to a party this Saturday. Everyone needs cheering up and you're just the fellow to do it.

Virgo: Virgo, please stop getting changed in front of your window. It doesn't need to be an everyday naked neighbour moment from you. P.S. get some new pants; the elastic has snagged on those black ones.

Libra: Libra, there's no shame in asking for an essay extension. It's a new week and new beginning to work on your perfectionism. Your DoS will understand.

The Waste Land gets a makeover page 22

Back to 00s fashion page 26

The art-collecting master page 21




Vulture

The first generation of men at Lucy Cav



Sophie Macdonald, Erik Olsson

The tables were being set inside Lucy Cavendish's wood-panelled hall for the usual Friday formal. The lights were dimmed and the candles were lit. But for the first time in this mature women's college history, the gowned students queuing outside were not women. They weren't even invited: this was an exclusively male event. (Or that was the plan at least.)

Since Lucy Cav first opened its red brick doors to students in the sixties, the College had only ever admitted women over the age of 21. It wasn't uncommon as a student to share a gyp with a pensioner or have supervisions with a mum of three.

Ell, the incumbent JCR secretary, lived alongside women older than her parents in her first

year. "At first it was a bit strange," says Ell. "But we didn't really have the things in college that you would have at a 'normal' college."

This is not your conventional Cambridge college. Luke, the JCR president, even differentiates Lucy Cav from other women's colleges. "Lucy Cavendish is a different case to Newnham and Murray Edwards," he says incisively. "Because of the founding vision of the college. Making it mixed [was] the next step in this vision."

Lucy Cav is the most diverse college in Cambridge, with 90% of applicants from state schools and 60% filling wider participation criteria. Access is at the heart of the College's ethos.

In 2019, Lucy Cav took its next step for accessibility, and, following a consultation with over 2600 alumni, fellows and donors, the college appointed its first male fellows. Then, in 2021, Lucy

Cav historically welcomed its first mixed cohort.

"You'd be silly to expect the environment not to have changed," says Ell. "I had never seen a man in Lucy Cav apart from the porters or maintenance men."

But the consensus amongst the students is that the transition was surprisingly smooth. "The boys integrated into the college environment straight away," says Ell right off the bat. "Two weeks in [they] almost forgot there had been a change."

A second-year Lucy Cav undergrad agrees. For him, the most difficult part of the transition was in fact the generational divide between the younger, more outgoing undergrads and the older, more settled mature students.

"We're trying to make life more welcoming to undergraduates who are not mature by hav-

ing more bops, more fun stuff," he says bluntly.

Students at Lucy Cav were infamously deaned for their end-of-term bop in Lent last year, even though organisers had completed a "comprehensive" risk assessment.

Ell notes that in her first year Lucy Cav "didn't really have the things that you would have in a 'normal' college". "For example, we didn't have access to sports courts or a JCR until this year."

Speaking to the porters, however, Ell was pleased to find out that the "College did have successful bops where people lined up around college to try and get in — it wasn't just people sat around knitting." After COVID hindered this, it seems that students are keen to get the bop ball rolling once more.

For Ell, it is also important that the College's women-only history is not simply lost in the ►

Maverick Fraser

I worked at a college Halloween formal...



I am aware that this article's title will conjure two conflicting perceptions.

For those of the live laugh (vote) Labour lifestyle, you are doubtlessly quick to label my endeavours as self-fashioning saviourism, in a vein identical to that of Boris Johnson visiting a state-comp in Grimsby, or Rishi Sunak serving overpriced Chicken Katsu curry at Wagamama.

If you are a regular port-and-policy attendee, you are likely also disgusted. You fiercely believe that we, Cambridge students, are endowed with superior intellect which secures our right to be served a three-course meal with wine. We work hard. We must therefore play hard. Dinner conversation is so high-brow, even after being pennied — the most banterous of activities. (Note my world-weary sarcasm).

Allow me, dear reader, to explain my rationale for working in the Corpus kitchen for an evening.

I want to question the relationship between “intelligence” and social reverence. I am aware that this dynamic is rooted in historicity, yet it remains relatively unquestioned. Why should achieving good grades entitle us to sit in marvellous halls and be waited on by people who are far more similar to us than they are different?

Many of the Corpus kitchen staff are Italian. Although I brand myself a Cambridge Italianist, I almost feel awkward that I am waited on by people whose second-language skills are far superior to mine.

Some of the kitchen staff are sixth-formers, or students at Anglia Ruskin. Outside of term, Bristol students have also been known to work in college kitchens. Is it not bizarre that, despite us navigating similar stages of life, we spend our evenings being waited on by people who are, in essence, our peers? Oxbridge prohibits part-time

jobs; meanwhile, 62% of students at other universities have one.

I am not naive. I understand that one shift working in the college kitchen will not change this dynamic. But perhaps it will further our understanding of it. My shift begins....

I did some casual catering work between age 16 and 19, but have not done any for a couple of years. Arriving for my shift at six in the evening, my first activities are preparational. I wipe down tables, set out cutlery, and folded napkins neatly.

It is a Halloween formal, so my co-workers and I decide to put some makeup on. We then dress up the hall, adorning it with spooky decorations.

At 7.30pm the guests arrive in fancy dress, and take their seats. Catering staff ensure that each guest receives a card specifying their dining requirements. The operation is smooth, as Giancarlo (a senior waiter) constantly indicates the side of the hall from which we should enter and exit.

The evening service is quick yet composed. While students are leisurely tucking into their meals and sipping wine, the waiting team stride through the hall to serve 120 students, plus staff. In the kitchen, the chefs promptly and precisely plate each course. The chefs' eye for detail is evident in their presentation. Those conducting the service are similarly meticulous. The entire operation runs like clockwork thanks to Adam, Giancarlo, and Alberto, and is executed perfectly by the waiters.

At around nine, students leave the hall, leaving behind their empty wine bottles, their wet pennies, and miscellaneous mess. The waiting team spend the following hour cleaning such mess, ensuring that the hall is spotless and ready for Cambridge's (other) gastronomic jewel in the

crown: college brunch.

The catering team are not just good workers, but good people too. Many of the sixth form workers impressively balance their A-levels and university applications with work shifts. They are not, however, lethargic. Rather, they exude that youthful and vibrant *joie de vivre*.

They assure me that they are paid well. Two other senior staff members affirm this, stating that they moved from another high-profile Cambridge college to Corpus, and were pleased with the improved working conditions and better pay.

Ultimately, I thoroughly enjoyed my shift. The Corpus catering staff camaraderie is excellent, and relations between students and staff appeared particularly amiable.

If I were to work full-time in a Cambridge dining hall, I wouldn't hate Cambridge students, but I would certainly envy them. Who wouldn't be envious of being served posh dinner? Is it not enough that Cambridge students don't have to worry about external landlords, and cooking for themselves? Why are they being served in a manner analogous to a wedding, when in reality it's just an evening dinner party for some people who put pen to paper relatively well?

As a final year undergraduate, I have spent countless mealtimes in the college dining hall.

I have been surrounded by the portraits of former masters. I have heard the gong banged and the Latin recited. Yet, for this entire operation to materialise, there must be an extremely talented, professional, hardworking, and coordinated team — a team who often find themselves outside of the spotlight.

Perhaps it's time for some bookish engineers and humanities softboys to serve the people who have always served us.

Continued from page 19 ▼

past. They believe Lucy Cav's status as a safe space for female students can be maintained by a mixed student body, and that roles such as men's officer are crucial for ensuring this.

As a whole, it is acknowledged that welcoming male undergraduates into the College aligns with its ethos. With or without male students, Ell feels grateful for the inclusivity Lucy Cav's practices. “With the background I'm from and being scared to come to Cambridge, or any university, to be put into a really safe all-women space was a really nice thing to have, but (not to be like Hannah Montana) — I've really got the best of both worlds.”

This, of course, begs the question: with Lucy Cav turning mixed, is there still a place for single-sex colleges at Cambridge?

Dr Piers Bursill-Hall, who was one of the first four men to study at Girton in the seventies, states “men don't operate well in an all-male environment” but he “wouldn't be surprised if some all-women colleges survive long term”. He believes that “the thing that will always make a difference is admission” — “If women keep applying, they will survive.”

The transition Lucy Cav is undergoing is not a novel one. Bursill-Hall describes this experience vividly. “We were being admitted into a very feminist community — men were coming into an environment where women dominated — it was very matriarchal in the nicest sense of the world,” he recalls.

Bursill-Hall in fact fondly recalls being so well-fed at college that it must have had “financial implications” for the college. He says “men will eat anything, just because we're men” — something

he didn't think Girton were quite ready for.

Does he have any advice for the first-generation Lucy Cav men? “Lucky guys,” he quips. “They will probably get better food — they will find concern and care in their college. If they hit rock bottom there will be people there who will help.” He also claims that “women's colleges just had a habit of being more caring towards their students”.

Others are not so optimistic about the future of single-sex colleges.

Whilst Bursill-Hall may focus on the aspect of sex, in many ways Lucy Cav's decision is not about gender. “It was never about men,” says Joseph, the JCR vice-president. “It was just about providing educational opportunities to people who were historically denied access for reasons unrelated to being a man. And it just so happens that some of those people are men and that is why the admissions policy was changed.”

QUICKFIRE

Greta Saikovskaja
of Gardies fame



What do you do for work?

I'm a director at Gardenia Cambridge Limited - I'm also a chef.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to have my own restaurant in a countryside with unique dishes that don't exist anywhere else.

What brought you to Gardies?

I was working part-time jobs there when I was a student. I finished my business studies and afterwards I continued working there because I fell in love with the place.

Have you had any celebrity customers?

Back in the old days, we had Stephen Fry, Sacha Baron Cohen, Neil Kinnock, Joe Thomas, Jeffrey Archer, Claudia Winkleman and a lot more.

Favourite item on the Gardies menu?

Chicken souvlaki and Falafel.

Least favourite kind of drunk student?

Students are not drunk — they are young!

What are your favourite and least favourite parts of your job?

My favourite part is serving customers and cooking. My least favourite part is when we have to deal with racist people.

What would you like to be known for?

For my smile and my “philoxenia”.

How did Gardies make it through Covid?

It was a very difficult time and we are still suffering in order to catch up.

Favourite spot in Cambridge?

The Fitzwilliam Museum.

What is the craziest thing that has happened in the Gardies store?

One night, somebody ordered a burger and he was in the takeaway and his burger fell down. He started shouting: “Do not touch it, nobody touch it!” After 10 minutes the police came and they asked him: “What happened?” He said to them: “My burger fell on the floor!” The policeman was laughing and gave him an £80 penalty for wasting police time. Lots more has happened that we can't actually mention. What happens in Gardenia stays in Gardenia.

Cambridge University students or Anglia Ruskin students?

Everyone is welcome in Gardenia.

Any advice for incoming freshers?

Enjoy the first year, because the rest is going to be more difficult. And if you get depressed, which often happens, talk to somebody.

Meet the art collecting warden of Robinson College

Sir Richard Heaton and Isabel Dempsey discuss diversity and elitism in the art world

Most people might be surprised to hear about a student stepping foot inside their college master's house onceb — let alone four times. But Sir Richard Heaton, the Robinson College warden (the red-brick term for 'master') has made this possible by generously opening up his Warden's Lodge to a wide range of events this last year. From making poetry out of cut-out words on his patio to a cheese and wine evening in the dining room, the highlight of every event has been the tour of the impressive art collection that decorates his home.

Richard tells me that the first real artwork he "bought commercially" was when "there was a pop-up show called Affordable Scottish Art" while he was acting in the Edinburgh Fringe. He vividly recounts "lots of brightly coloured Glasgow paintings" from which he selected his first piece. However, it was only when he brought it home and his mother remarked "you're going to be an art collector" that this one-off purchase became a life-long habit. He claims that at the time he "didn't really think anything of it. But she was right. I've always wanted to

surround myself with pictures. And I've always enjoyed the process of choosing and buying and talking to artists."

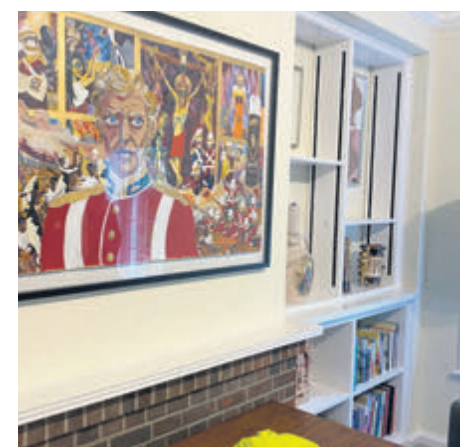
It's this process of discovery and interaction that draws Richard most towards the world of art. He explains that he's "not a collector in the Frieze-art sense of the word" — referring to the massive and highly-priced Frieze art fairs in London. Although he enjoys going to Frieze to "look around as a fascinated tourist," he prefers to find his pieces from individual artists. He explains that art collecting can be an "extraordinary world of high-net-worth individuals; and investments; and hedging; and all sorts of things which I'm just not terribly interested in. And I can't afford to be interested in," he quips. For him, "one of the agitators to the elitism charge is that if you buy contemporary work you're either doing high-end purchasing". Richard argues the other case is when "you're buying directly from artists." He claims that "if they're making a sale early in their career it's a pretty good thing. So I don't feel remotely exploitative or elitist in playing in that market. I've got no apologies for doing that."

But for some, the elitism goes beyond the expense. There's elitism in the experience of art, with many feeling self-conscious that they're expected to read and respond to pieces in a certain way. However, the warden insists that "people

don't need to be taught in order to respond to colours and shapes and emotion and mood." He explains that when he opens his collection up to guests, "I enjoy people enjoying the works in my collection. Everyone responds in some way. And I don't think there's a correct way of looking at a painting." He insists that art doesn't have to be snobby, joking about how he's organised the paintings in his office "pretty basically into shapes down this end and people down that end. There's nothing terribly sophisticated going on."

For him, "one of the lovely things about art is that it rewards any degree of engagement." Shifting his gaze to one of my favourite pieces in the room he explains that he enjoys "hearing artists talk about their art more than I enjoy speaking about art myself." He tells me how the artist behind this "underwater-y" piece was "brought up in Tehran" and is trying to reclaim her memory of what cinemas looked like in her city. So you can equally "respond to it as a blue painting" or, perhaps more deeply, "as an evocation of memory." Ultimately, he believes that "art — and the creation of artworks — stimulates people," going on to explain that he's a trustee of the Koestler Trust which "encourages the creation of art by people in prisons".

As we move from the office to the tour of the Lodge itself, there is a clear effort in curating a bold collection, not only of diverse pieces but



from diverse artists. From the urinal he plans to make the centrepiece of his "gallery room" to the stunning photograph 'You Too Can Touch the Moon' by Tejal Shah, there's something to catch the eye of everyone. He explains that "art being representational is a really interesting theme for me. A bit like surrounding yourself with friends." Richard tells me how "at one stage I looked at my collection and I realised it was 75% men or that I had lots of Indian art" but "I didn't have any British-Asian art." He encourages people to prompt themselves to "diversify" their outlook and expand their horizons. Not only has the warden of Robinson College enjoyed the process of diversifying but he thinks his "collection is more interesting" because "it's got more voices. It's like a choir."



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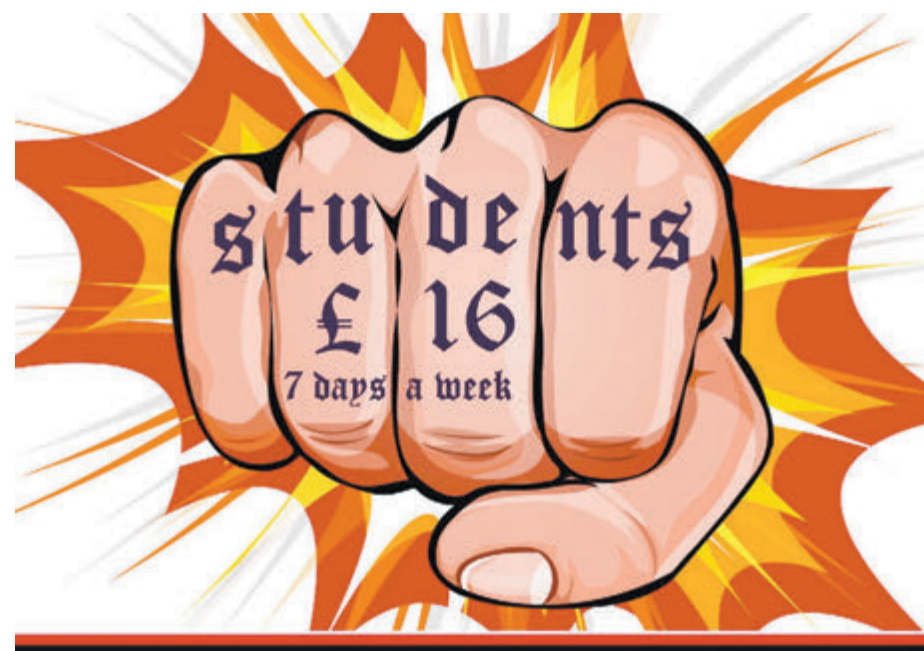
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Theatre

The Waste Land turns 100

Toby Stinson sits down with director, Pip Pearce, to discuss turning poetry into drama, and the state of modern theatre

One hundred years after the publication of T.S. Eliot's poem of the same name, *The Waste Land* is coming to the ADC. But this is not an adaptation, or a staging, of the famous poem—rather it is a 'continuation' of Eliot's work.

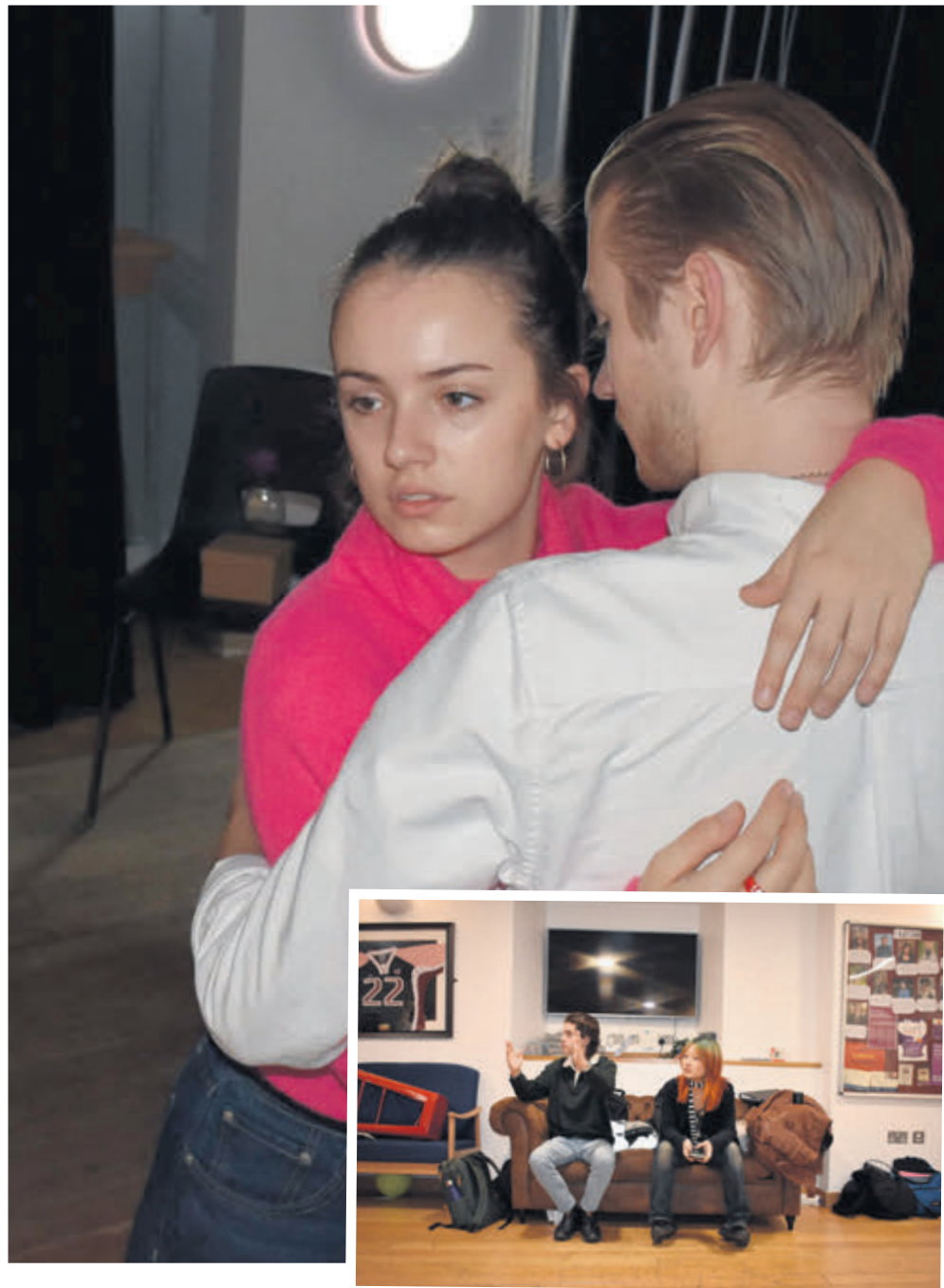
The show is a "response to what *The Waste Land* is trying to do", and aims to "do something similar in the theatre," says Pip Pearce, the show's director and co-writer.

"We wanted to replicate and use the similar themes Eliot was offering us, but do them in a slightly different way." While this may sound to some like the avoidance of a difficult text, or the result of legal issues (of which there were *many*), Pearce insists that there is actually more freedom without the weight of Eliot's text, and a century of textual interpretation bearing down upon the production. "I think trying to be restrictive in staging an adaptation which is really specific to the text would probably lack some of the free qualities of Eliot's writing anyway." This is the case of previous adaptations, which have perhaps revealed why Eliot's text remains mostly on the page. But the production will retain some of the original text, in the titles of the sections and in the occasional phrase. Mainly though, Eliot's text is present in the spirit of the production.

Being free from the constraints of reproduction or adaptation allows the production to focus instead on the reasons for *The Waste Land*'s cultural legacy, its style. Pearce points to the depth of Eliot's piece, with its layers of subtext and references—'intertextuality' is a word that keeps coming up—"there's more that comes out in multiple readings. You notice things you haven't before or make different connections." This, though, relies on multiple readings, and Pearce acknowledges that most people who open *The Waste Land* for the first time find themselves confused, if not entirely lost—as evidenced by the desperately repeated '?' scrawled in the margins of my own second-hand copy; cries for help from a previous owner who long since gave up on Eliot.

"I wanted to start on a simpler plain for the theatre," Pearce tells me. He believes that through staging: "I can make [ideas] a little bit more obvious or bring out those subtexts in a way that it may not read as obviously when it is just on the page."

But why stage this now? What relevance can this so-called *modernist* poem (now decidedly historical) have today—let alone to a theatrical world? The answer, Pip tells me, is in what Eliot can do for modern theatre. *The Waste Land* is, as many people will attest, a poem that was 'ahead of its time': revolutionary and experimental. But Pearce insists that theatre is still, even now,



catching up. "We are now moving into a post-dramatic realm: not just thinking about narrative and story, but seeing how else we want to communicate." *The Waste Land* offers theatre companies inspiration for how one might reinvent the theatre away from the narrative, embracing Eliot's multiple voices, poetic weaving, and ambiguous intertexts and subtexts.

Through Pearce's direction, this manifests as fragmentation and ambiguity: "One of my main motivations to try and put this on is to create a work in which the audience can provide their own meaning to the production." One scene, he tells me, is "set at a dinner party, but we're not quite sure why it's being hosted, and there's a 'main course' that keeps being referred to but we're not sure what that means—and it's not the food." In *The Waste Land*, then, is an attempt to create a theatre of experience, drawing on Eliot to blur the line between narrative and perception.

The production has been a voyage, having taken over three years to realize, battling through the pandemic and copyright laws. The scale of the production is also impressive, combining the work of fifteen different writers. Each was asked to respond independently to a given prompt.

▲ Rehearsals for *The Wasteland* Katya Stylianou

Their work was then 'spliced' together and interwoven to create, quite literally, and Eliot-like multiplicity of voices.

This is a production with 'splicing' at its heart, combining not only different writers, but different art forms. In producing theatre out of poetry, what, I ask, does this play say about the relationship between art forms? "Making a theatrical response enables more meanings to come across," Pearce tells me. "Because we're not just playing with linguistic meanings; we're playing with visual ones as well, and the interplay between them." The theatre can adopt aspects of other art forms and use them to its advantage. This, for Pearce, is all part of a move towards a more open and interpretative artistic world. "To do *The Waste Land* in theatre," he insists, "is just another step in the same direction as what Eliot is trying to do," another step towards intertextual artforms, another step towards a "post-dramatic" world.

This amateur production is presented by an arrangement with Faber and Faber on behalf of the Eliot Estate and is proudly supported by The Mighty Players.

VIEW FROM THE STALLS

Actors — shut up about your acting

Greg Miller



Sometimes, there are things worse than Hell. Now, I know Hell still has a great deal of cultural purchase. A lot of people still fear those eternal fires with as much vigour as preachers of old. Still, some things on this Earth can make you wish you were in the fire rather than the frying pan, and this — for me — is a conversation with *serious actors* about acting.

Before you rail at me, this is certainly not the case with all actors — it isn't even the case with many. But there are a select few who make me grind my teeth at least half an inch shorter, as I desperately remember my fundamental opposition to violence.

These are the actors who love to talk about nothing but acting: who witter on at length about the challenge of the craft, the discipline of the craft, the craftsmanship of the craft. These are actors who cannot fathom a person not liking theatre; who stare blankly at the individual who doesn't know Artaud or Beckett; and who gawp and splutter when someone merely wants to talk about the weather.

They are people who love words such as "challenge". To them, "challenge" is everything in the plays they pick, be it the physical and emotional demands of their performances, or the research they need to do to pull it off. Funnily enough, "challenging", "demanding", and "difficult" are also words which apply to having a conversation with these walking husks of egotism and insecurity.

One particularly horrific instance comes to mind. I was at a formal and was sat opposite a peculiarly awful strain of actor, who asked me what I thought my most "challenging" role had been — the most important role for my "development"? After giving my answer, this person then proceeded to talk about how "humbling" Cambridge theatre was, before having the gall to go on about how one play they were "attached to" was so very "important". This talk of humility in "important" work was fooling no one. As they wagged their tongue in this humble display of ego, their main grew cold and my heart even colder.

But I am not being fair; I am also being hypocritical. The reason I shudder so much at these "walking husks of egotism and insecurity", trembling in their desperation to do something "important" with their lives, is because there is so much of myself in them: because I too need the applause of an audience; and because I too want a sense of doing something in the world.

But these are too many questions. Satire should not be doubtful or reflective; it should attack first and ask questions later! So, when I attack this certain type of actor for their insufferable qualities, I shall forget that I might share some of them, or that I may be just as awful—and, for me, that is the most "challenging" performance of all.

Downton Abbey's conservatism would make Thatcher proud

David Levy reveals the Tory tropes in the much loved show

Rest in peace to Margaret Thatcher, you cheeky gal. You would've loved Binley Mega Chippy. It is with these words that Isaac H.P, friend of the anxiety-inducing "what are you listening to?" TikToker OshuClips, sent his love to the Conservative leader of the late 20th century. Though I'm sure Thatcher would've loved the Coventry chip shop that stole TikTok's hearts, there is another British institution that I'm sure she would've liked more: Downton Abbey.

Set in the aristocratic hills of Yorkshire, Downton Abbey tells the story of the Crawley family and its servants. Despite their polished public image, the Crawleys' six-season lifetime is characterised by scandal. A Turkish ambassador dies on top of Lady Mary whilst having sex out of wedlock? There are many closets in the Crawleys' mansion, and each houses a skeleton more debauched and un-Edwardian than the last.

There are some critics, however, who think that these skeletons are a distraction. Though

it might be fun to marvel at weekly white-tie banquets, Downton sanitises Britain's history. It takes the bloodied inequalities of the post-Edwardian period and markets them as something to be cherished rather than atoned for.

A quick dip into the Downton Abbey Wikipedia page tells the same story. Cora Crawley, the mother of the estate, is heralded as soft-spoken and family-oriented. Whilst Thomas Barrow — one of the only service people to rally against the privilege afforded to the Crawleys — is charmingly referred to as conniving and smarmy. In the viewer's mind, the beneficiaries of the landed estate are the doting mothers, and those criticising its inequality are the villains.

To most, this won't be much of a surprise. A show curated by a Conservative peer, with a name that makes Boris Alexander de Pfeffel Johnson blush, is bound to glamourise British history. The fact it places aristocracy on a pedestal isn't all that shocking when its writer, Julian Alexander Kitchener-Fellowes, Baron Fellowes of West Stafford, sits on that very pedestal.

This story, however, only paints half of Downton's conservative tale.

Enter Margaret Thatcher. Blazing to electoral success in 1979, and gaining a 144-seat majority in '83, her political career was built out of

fighting the expanding power of the welfare state. Alongside an unhealthy dose of Victorian values, Thatcher saw the 'nanny state' as a political virus rather than the antidote. Where Labour promised to repurpose state power for

A show curated by a Conservative peer, with a name that makes Boris Alexander de Pfeffel Johnson blush, is bound to glamourise

those in need, Thatcher denied the assumptions their policy rested on and turned to charity. In the words of a more spritely, better-looking, Gordon Brown: "[Thatcher] pulled [charity] from the lumber room of social history, dusted [it] off and, much to the embarrassment...of Britain's voluntary organisations...presented [it] as a vital component of thoroughly modern Thatcherism". This Thatcherite ethic, however, can be put into fewer words: there is no need

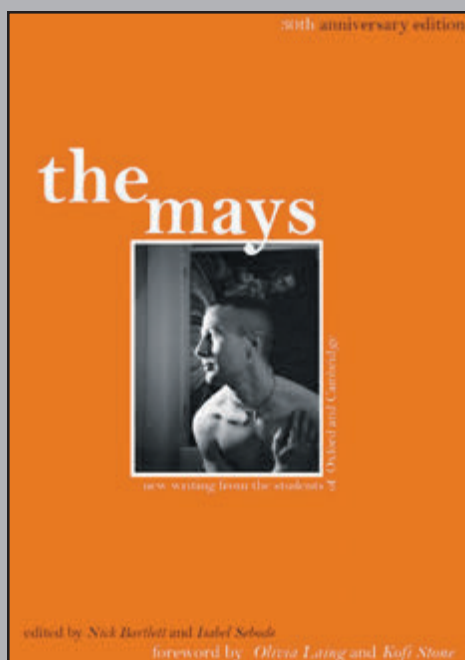
for a welfare state — good people, who want to do good things, will fill the gap.

This waspishly conservative message — one which even Liz Truss would laugh out of the Cabinet room — is at the centre of Downton. Let's take a look at Thomas Barrow, the villainous footman. Downton Abbey Twitter loved to loathe Barrow and what he represented — someone with a burning desire to rise above his designated rank. Thankfully for Conservative OAPs that love the show, Barrow eventually rids himself of this meritocratic delusion. Having routinely criticised the system for the better part of five seasons, he begins to realise his place in the servant class of the estate and is ultimately rewarded with a promotion to butler in the series' finale. The all-merciful Crawleys, despite his communist moans, extend their generous hand and reward him. You don't need to change the structural problems with the system, Downton suggests; if you come to terms with the way things are, you will be rewarded by good people who want to do good things.

So, don't let people convince you Downton Abbey is harmless, scandal-ridden fun. It is the host for a virus. Though their top hat and tails might not be Thatcherite blue, for every minute its characters appear on British TVs, they cast a dangerous shade of Thatcherism across the country.

the mays 30

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The new Arctic Monkeys album: A metamorphosis or a wet paper bag?

Georgie Atkinson and Michael Hennessey (Arctic Monkey super fans) go head to head on the band's new album

Following the release of the much anticipated album *The Car*, fans of the Arctic Monkeys have been split into two camps: those who accept the band's evolution to a different sound, and those who grieve the four lads from Sheffield and their high energy rock anthems. Our Michael Hennessey and Georgie Atkinson go head-to-head to argue whether this is a metamorphosis or a change too far.

The greatest band of their generation are built around transformation - Michael Hennessey

"Guess I'm talking to you now / Puncturing your bubble of relatability / With your horrible new sound," croons Alex Turner on the third track of the new Arctic Monkeys album *The Car*. Turner echoes recent criticism of the band's "horrible new sound" in his own songwriting. But the critics of the Arctic Monkeys' new direction miss the point - the greatest band of their generation are built around transformation.

Turner's band has been in the midst of transformation across all seven of their studio albums, but never more so than on *The Car* and their previous album, the controversial *Tranquillity Base Hotel and Casino*. Five years after releasing their most popular album *AM*, the band dropped *Tranquillity Base Hotel and Casino*, where guitars and drums were largely ditched for a piano and tales of a luxury resort on the moon.

The change was not welcomed by many, and the unexpectedly sedate album prompted much criticism. Fear circulated in the summer of 2018 that those iconic stalwarts of twenty-first century British culture had changed and would never be the same again.

That same fear is present in the reception that the band's new album, *The Car*, has received. The



rock of AM has not returned, as Turner leans into strings and an 80s David Bowie styling.

The lyrics themselves foreground a theme of surveillance throughout the album, perhaps a commentary on how a group of Sheffield teenagers feel growing up in the public eye. The album cover itself, a photo taken by drummer Matt Helders of a car on a rooftop taken from a distance, contribute to the espionage feel of the album, as do Turner's lyrics. On the dark, foreboding *Sculptures of Anything Goes*, he sings of "Village coffee mornings with not long since retired spies / Now that's my idea of a good time," before referring to "sweeping for bugs in some dusty apartment" on the album's titular track.

That is not the only continuity with older

albums. Despite claims from many that the band only produces slow, lounge music, some songs on *The Car* would not be out of place on *AM*. *Sculptures of Anything Goes* and single *Body Paint* utilise the talents of the whole band to create classic rock tunes that will not be out of place on setlists next summer alongside *R U Mine?* and *Brianstorm*.

Despite the negative reception from some quarters, many of the problems that fans of older Arctic Monkeys albums had with their changing style are resolved here on *The Car*. The ten songs on the album cannot be described as slow or one note, a criticism consistently levelled at their 2018 album. Although overly confusing and lengthy lyrics remain in some cases, especially when Turner sings on *Hello You* of a "Lego Napoleon movie / Written in noble gas-filled glass tubes / Underlined in sparks", the effect that this has on the album is far more limited than on *Tranquillity Base*.

By now, many critics and fans are dividing the Arctic Monkeys into two bands. The moshpit-friendly indie rockers of AM fame, finding new fans through a recent explosion on TikTok, and the experimental lounge music of later years. But the differences between these two diverging bands are not as significant as many would argue. Anthemic rock anthems remain, but are supplemented by strings and drawn out metaphors. Besides, the whole point of the Arctic Monkeys is to keep changing. After all, their 2006 debut album put it best: *Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not*.

As impactful as a wet paper bag - Georgie Atkinson

"I elongated my way home; I took the long way round." A lyric taken from the Arctic Monkeys' experimental album from 2009, *Humbug*, and a lyric that could be attributed to the painful experience of listening to the Arctic Monkeys' newest release, *The Car*. *Humbug* was an album that demonstrated that the Arctic Monkeys are (as aptly noted by my colleague) built around transformation. However, their newest release is perhaps the last evolution and transformation that the lads from High Green, Sheffield will make.

If you have been following the Arctic Monkeys' lyricism with a fine-tooth comb like I perhaps rather sadly have, it will not come as a surprise that this album appears to be a eulogy to their long illustrious career. We have been teased that this might be the case with lyrics such as: "bear with me lads, I've lost my train of thought," taken

▲ Georgie doesn't buy into the hype around the Arctic Monkeys new album (ISAAC TANN)



from their last album *Tranquillity Base Hotel and Casino*. This confused rhetoric is once again reiterated throughout *The Car*. Alex Turner succinctly notes: “And I cannot for the life of me remember how they go”, in reference to song lyrics, whilst serenading his audience on the track *Big Ideas*. Ironically it could also be noted that being forgettable is characteristic of the album itself. As a body of work, *The Car* rather than being a bastion of an evolution of sound, is just a muddle of memory, nostalgia, and lament, which does not resonate on any distinct level. There is a sense of apathy aimed towards the music industry imbued throughout the album. This apathy appears to have seeped out into the music itself, as the album lacks the characteristic wit that their work usually contains. Whilst I will happily accept that there was a success with the more melodic lounge album *Tranquillity Base Hotel and Casino*, it is notable that the rock elements of the album were the glue that held the album together. On *The Car*, the limited use of rock combined with watery eyed nostalgia makes the album about as impactful as a wet paper bag.

There has been a fascination with nostalgia that has haunted the six previous studio albums from the Arctic Monkeys. Perhaps this album was foreshadowed when Turner shrieked, “who wants to wake up in a city that never wakes up? Blinded by nostalgia,” on the band’s second album. It appears that the band have ironically become their own ‘favourite worst nightmare’. The once youthful rawness and wit of the band’s

The band have ironically become their own 'favourite worst nightmare'

music seems to have been transformed into apathy disguised as nostalgia.

After the release of a live album in 2020, to appease the band’s fans, I will boldly state that this album sounds more like a contractual obligation rather than a genesis of a new sound. It does appear that Alex Turner is throwing in the proverbial towel with the euphemistic lyric, “when it’s over you’re supposed to know,” on the track *Jet Skis on the Moat*. Whilst I accept that this album is disappointing for those who found the Arctic Monkeys through a 15 second clip of 505 on TikTok, it is also a painful listen to those who have stayed resolute to the band throughout all of their iterations.

Whilst my colleague fears that their fan base are lamenting the new release, perhaps the question to ask is whether the Arctic Monkeys are lamenting their own career with *The Car*? With the damning lyrics, “if that’s what it takes to say goodnight, then that’s what it takes,” on the final track on the album, it would be hard to disagree that the light is dwindling on the success of the band. It’s all but been confirmed that they’re headlining Glastonbury next year, and it is fair to say that this is a perfect farewell album to accompany them on what will potentially be a farewell tour.

Had an opinion on this article? Send a 70 to 200 word letter to letters@varsity.co.uk

We should Taylor regardless of *Midnights*

Ella Shattock



From sprinkler splashes to fireplace ashes, there are few acts of vandalism that I do not wish on this newspaper’s most recent Taylor Swift review. They say yesterday’s news is today’s fish and chip paper, but frankly that would do a disservice to battered haddock.

In case you’ve been living like a monster on the hill (Fitz mathmos, looking at you), Taylor Swift released her tenth original album on 21st October. With all due respect to my esteemed fellow writer, their opinion on *Midnights* completely missed the point, and here’s why.

Let’s start with the album being called “a messy combination of mismatched songs.” Anyone who perpetuates this blasphemy does not understand the concept behind *Midnights*. Every song relates a sleepless night from across Taylor’s career. Part of the magnificence of this album is how it jumps back and forth between genre and subject matter. Pivoting from dance-bop Bejewelled to the ethereal heartache of *Bigger than the whole sky*, each new sound slots into a thematic patchwork quilt of midnight thoughts.

Next up, an accusation of “a lack of touching lyricism”. Too many expected *Midnights* to be a third sister to folklore and evermore, but it has more tonal variation than this. There are sections, like “Salt streams out of my eyes and into my ears” which do feel epiphany-esque. But the less-picturesque Anti-Hero lyric: “Did you hear my covert narcissism I disguise as altruism / Like some kind of congressman?” is an equally badass piece of poetry. Taylor is at her best when her songwriting subverts our expectations.

There is also an allegation that *Midnights* is without a single bridge. Um. That is just factually incorrect. The bridge of “You’re on your own kid” is single-handedly getting me through Week Five (we made the friendship bracelets). What about *Sweet Nothing* and *Mastermind*? Sorry, I’m only cryptic and Machiavellian ‘cause I care.

My fellow writer concludes that “this album is missing the essential charm of her music.” For goodness’ sake. Maybe you’re missing the essential charm of her music? Get it off my desk.

There is a trap in trying to be too cool about liking Taylor Swift. Being a Swiftie is not about chic and “unbothered ambivalence”, it’s about jumping around your friend’s room like a kid on Christmas morning, and accosting strangers with a giddy intensity because you heard them say “death by a thousand cuts”. Might I remind the reader of Taylor’s advice earlier this year: “I’d like to say that I’m a big advocate for not hiding your enthusiasm for things.”

So I urge you all to enjoy *Midnights* without a caveat. Let’s all agree to stop justifying our love for Taylor Swift (“Haha omg I know, I’m so basic …”) to the John Mayer fan strumming his guitar, and mansplaining into his overpriced IPA. Okay? He bores himself to sleep.

Having bluntly disagreed with this newspaper’s previous reviewer, I have to thank them for making me revisit the closing lines of Taylor’s NYU speech: “As long as we are fortunate enough to be breathing, we will breathe in, breathe through, breathe deep, breathe out.” The opening verse of *Labyrinth* hidden in plain sight? Sorry, you called this album ‘underwhelming and unmemorable’? Baby love, I think this article has been a little too kind.

CLUBBING

14th November

JazzSoc x Slipped Disc (Revolution)

Two Cambridge staples collaborate to bring you a fine and eclectic blend of Techno and Jazz at everyone's favourite venue.

22nd November

Grandma Groove: Music Sounds Better with Drag! (Revolution)

Don your finest cardigan and boogie on down to Revs for an evening full of entertainment from Dragtime!

24th November

St John's College Jazz Band (Hidden Rooms)

Join St John's College 20 strong big band as they serenade you with original and modern jazz.

24th November

Cambridge Funk Jam (La Raza)

Cambridge's fortnightly Funk Jam returns, expect a night full of ghost notes and syncopated rhythms.

THEATRE

10th-12th November

The Fletcher Players' Bridgemas Play: Twelfth Night

Bridgemas meets Shakespeare. Expect fun, cross-dressing, and chaos.

11-14th November

the Haunting of Hill House (Union Debating Chamber)

A young woman sets out to prove the existence of the supernatural, changing her life forever. An acclaimed portrayal of fear.

15-19th November

Field of Folk (Corpus Playroom)

Enter the psychedelic dreams of an aspiring musician, as he searches for "the truth" in dreams and imagination.

15-19th November

Blue Stockings (ADC)

A look into the world of 19th century Girton students, battling against Cambridge misogyny.

17-19th November

All My Sons (Robinson College Auditorium)

The story of a family's post-war trauma and the complex relationships of grief and forgiveness.

8-12th November

Black is the Colour of My Soul (Fitzpatrick Hall)

Three characters are plagued by their pasts, as they try to escape a mental institution. Reflection on the awful history of asylums.

Music to pick you up

Daniel Hilton soothes your blues with his picks for Week Six



Ah, Week Six. Week Five’s older and far fiercer brother, jealous that his little brother has all the spotlight (much like Noel Gallagher) and makes sure to make it everybody else’s problem. In our experience one of the few things that can get us out of our Week Five (and Six) blues is listening to music, so here are our recommendations for songs to get you through the rest of term! Our other recommendations are on the QR code below!

Heaven knows I’m Miserable Now - The Smiths

Much like the lyrics in this song, almost everything makes me absolutely miserable. Especially when, like Morrissey echoes in the song, I see “two lovers entwined pass me by” – even more so when it’s on Silver Street with its skinny pavements. Although, a small amount of happiness is conveyed in the song when he sings how he was “happy in the haze of a drunken hour”. He must’ve been talking about Clare Cellars.

Gotta Get Up - Harry Nilsson

“Gotta get up, gotta get out/Gotta get home before the mornin’ comes / What if I’m late? Gotta big date / Gotta get home before the sun comes up.” Truly Harry Nilsson encapsulates how I feel stumbling back after a night out knowing full well I have a 9am lecture in the morning. Also, the art for the album sums up how I feel, parading around my room in a dressing gown and clinging on to my coffee for dear life. The album name too – Nilsson Schmilsson sounds like something I wrote in the essay I finished at 5am after seven Red Bulls.

Bridge Over Troubled Water - Simon & Garfunkel

Whether it be Silver Street bridge, Clare bridge, or Magdalene bridge, every time I cross them all I can think of is this track. The troubled water that Simon & Garfunkel were very clearly referencing in the song is absolutely the River Cam (I would say I think this when I cross King’s bridge, too, but the porters wouldn’t let me get cross it to get to Sidge).

My Rival - Steely Dan

The perfect song to play when you get to your supervision utterly dishevelled only to find your chronically organised supo partner (your rival, obviously) come into the room with a smile and the best essay ever written. What a dickhead.

◀ Scan me to listen to the playlist

Fashion

Fashion nays that should be yays

Nafisa Mahmood and Lily Kemp debunk the supposed 'no-gos' in fashion

There's an unspoken Burn Book, if you will, in the world of fashion. Countless looks crossed out in red permanent marker to save us from wardrobe disaster. Supposedly. We think it's time to debunk these myths.

Blue and black

Someone, somewhere, decided that blue and black together was a total fashion faux pas. We couldn't disagree more. If you find ease in all black outfits, consider investing in a navy, or a brighter cobalt piece to elevate your look, whilst still retaining all the comfort and security you'd like.

Gold and silver

Another forbidden colour combination we won't be getting our heads around. Gone are the days of puritanically assigning ourselves to just gold or silver: mixing metals is an effortless way to shine through your accessories.

Socks and heels

We object to any fashion rule that causes discomfort (which also means that it's totally acceptable to swap out heels for flats at any event that usually calls for the former). But if you're sure, socks are a chic way to add some padding to your heels. Slouchy and neutral are usually the way to go, but don't be afraid to opt for something bright and patterned. It adds personality, and we love that in any look.

Spots and Stripes

Honestly, we're in favour of this clashing of patterns as long as something matches. I find spots and stripes work well in small doses; try it with accessories. Maybe a striped scarf and spotty gloves. I rather enjoy seeing people testing different patterns in the same outfit. Another way to do this is by matching contrasting textures. Silky bandana and a wooly jumper. A silky 80s shirt and flares.

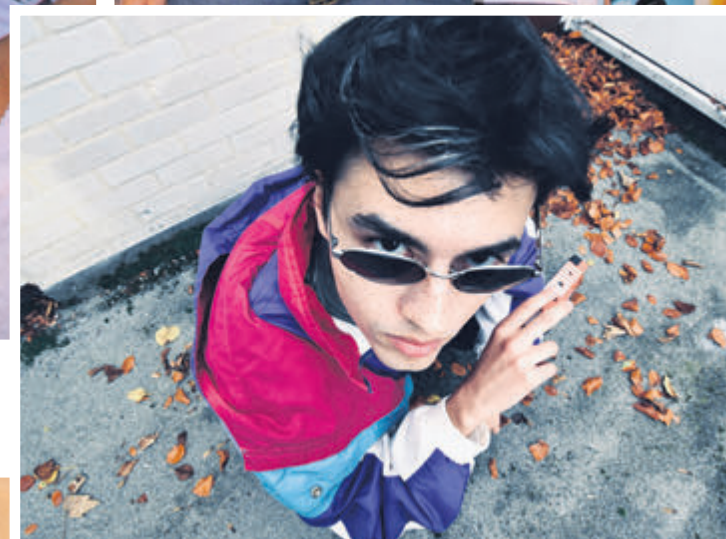
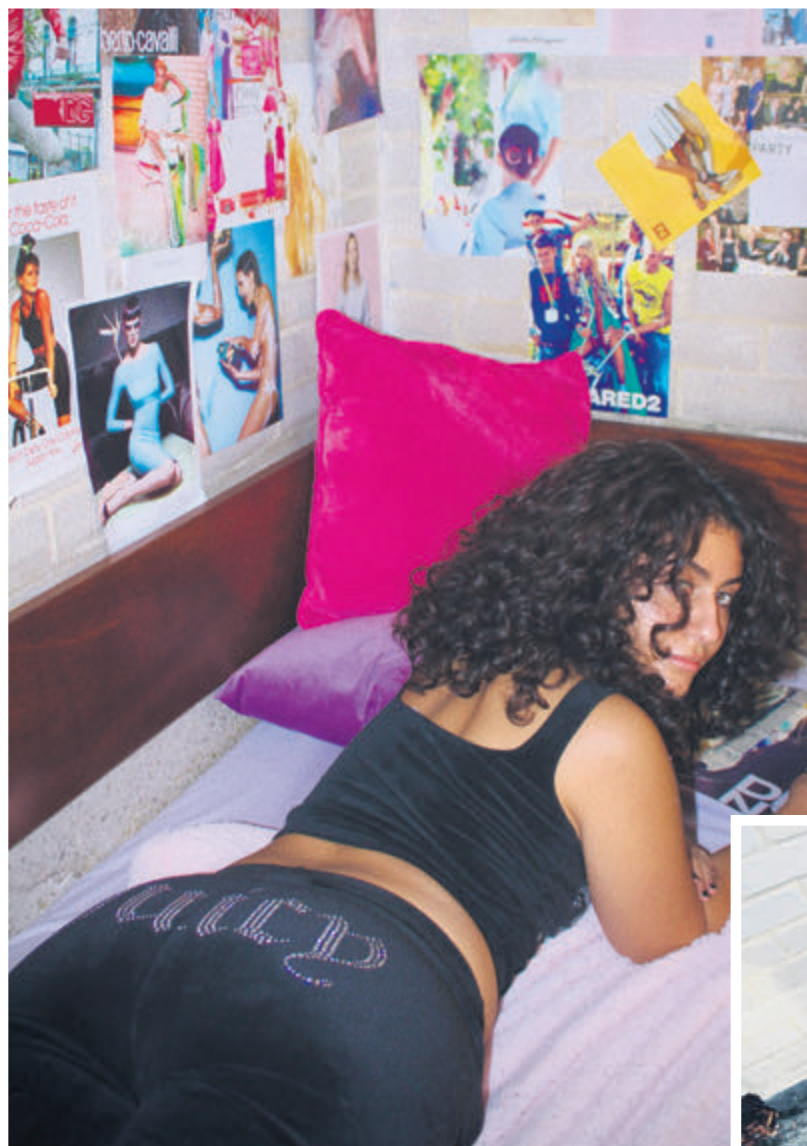
Double denim

The most outrageous; the most unpopular. Frankly, we find it only works if you're committing to a vintage 80s look; think baggy jacket and maybe some cuffed jeans (delicious). However, It's giving Mum-core if you match double denim with skinny jeans. But then again, who made me the fashion police?

Leather Trousers

A definitive nay for both of us is leather trousers. Whilst having its practical benefits of that 'wipe clean' texture, it's inescapable from Sandy's final look in Grease. In short, save it for Halloween; I may be able to cope with it once a year. Ps...take everything we've said with a pinch of salt. Wear what you like; we love originality.

Is today's fashion just nostalgia



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Lifestyle

Nick Davies

Mario Kart has robbed me of my money, deprived me of my dignity and almost wrecked my marriage



To those unfortunate souls who do not go to Homerton, some background is needed. The jewel in the crown of the Homerton college buttery is a battered 2005 edition of a Nintendo Wii. The stress of an all nighter at the library or the allure of a Sunday Lola's evaporates in the face of a head-to-head Grand Prix. Mario Kart is the premier public service of Homerton: open to all, free at the point of use, and with relatively short waiting times.

Mario Kart may have started off as an idyllic stress reliever, the ultimate antidote to all those core readings about 4th century Greek philosophy my degree foists on me. But instead, it has slowly become the bane of my existence. It's robbed me of my money, deprived me of my dignity, and almost wrecked my marriage. The person responsible for this – my college wife, Sophia Liversidge. My greatest Mario Karting rival, and this is the story of woe that follows from it.

We need to go back to the late noughties. I was always very good at Mario Kart. My dad and sister faltered as I weaved my way across Wario's Gold Mine, thundered through Mushroom Gorge, and hammered down Rainbow Road – the most iconic and lofty of Mario Kart courses – to win. I was a smug and precocious prick of a kid. And I prided myself on unrelenting victory on those tracks. I thought that part of me had gone. My Wii collected dust for many years at home and Mario Kart remained untouched. But the Homerton Mario Kart rekin-



dled that part of me – a part which I realised was only dormant, not dead. I'd established myself as a fairly dominant player in the college Mario Karting scene, chasing the sweet rush of seeing my character (Luigi) adorn the 1st place spot.

That's where Sophia Liversidge comes into the picture. We first played. And she won. An error, I thought. Then again. She won. And again. And again. How could this happen? She

knew the tricks of the trade: the shortcuts in every course, blocking every shell and making every turn. I was beaten down in defeat, jeered at, bullied off the road by the red shells she targeted at me. This was like the first act of any good Quentin Tarantino flick. The main character, beaten down and humiliated, plotted to take their revenge.

I couldn't allow this to continue. So I raised the stakes. I thought forcing myself into a high

stakes bet would bring out that residual fire needed to push me. It came to a head one drunken evening at the Homerton buttery – with a bet. The terms: if she won, I offered to pay for two bottles of pink gin, with two bottles of tequila being brought for me if I won. But I was no gambler in a casino. This was skill and I was ready. It all came down to Rainbow Road – of course it did. My premier course.. I performed flawlessly. But alas, victory was still hers. Deflated and burdened with onerous debt, humiliated in front of my peers, it was time to face acceptance.

I wasn't the man I thought I was after all. The sound of the Coconut Mall theme song, ringing in my ears like some cruel joke. However, amid my despair and rage there is an important lesson and a silver lining I've drawn on.

Cambridge is a place where people prize high ambition. People sweat for starred firsts and those internships at JP Morgan. All I want is to beat Sophia Liversidge at Mario Kart. And in that, there is something quite liberating in my Cambridge experience. At 21 years of age, I care more about victory at Mario Kart now than I did when I was seven. But I'm not ashamed because there's an important principal at stake: my inalienable right to care about the stupid and insignificant. I think when we stop caring about the stupid and insignificant – and only care about 'the things we should care about' – we lose a little something of ourselves for we begin to take ourselves too seriously. We begin to wear the Cambridge gown and lose our ability to laugh at ourselves so-to-speak. Openly competing and caring about whether you win at a course called 'DK's Snowboard Cross' is a great way to remind yourself that yep, I'm a bit of a weird, immature prat. Self-recognition is vitally needed at this university. So I revel in my immaturity and know that no matter how many pink bottles of gin it costs me, the day will come when I beat Sophia Liversidge at Mario Kart.

Ask Auntie Maddy

This week, Auntie Maddy tries to fathom some Freudian familial issues, and unpacks a committee role conundrum



I'm a fresher who's shagged both of my college parents, and now neither of them are speaking to me or each other. Help!

Okay, legend. Didn't realise you were the one driving up the stats in the Varsity top shagger survey (because it's evidently grossly above average... right? Right!?). And yet, to pardon my phrasing, just look at what it's come to. Freud would have a fucking field day with this one. You didn't specify whether or not this abomination occurred on two separate occasions, or whether you were offered a special kind of 2-for-1 freshers combo. But I'm going to assume that unless the sex was disastrous (no offence) then this incestuous hotbed was born from a series of separate bad decisions, which – if nobody has actually done this already – have

come back to bite you in the arse. To be fair, it's more on them – who knew that this year's Michaelmas shark week would in fact be smack bang in the middle of term? Still, all this doesn't exactly help you out of these infested waters. I'd advise family therapy. But what with the NHS already being one foot in the grave, I hardly think your sexual deviance will boot this crumbling college dynasty up to the top of the waiting list anytime soon. You may just have to leave these two divorcees in the dust and sew your wild oats elsewhere. Ever heard of hinge? I'm sure you'll be able to meet the esoteric sidgwick-dwelling manipulator of your dreams quicker than you could have ever destroyed your parents' marriage. You'll probably be equally miserable, but at least your poor, poor college sibling might be able to catch a break.

Should I put my JCR role on my LinkedIn page?

I'm somewhat hesitant to truthfully answer this question. On the one hand, I sheepishly admit that I myself am the owner of a LinkedIn profile (please, for the love of God, add me on there – my awkward network-phobic arse needs a job after graduation and there seems to be no opening for 'pretentious humanities wanker' or 'semi mean-spirited agony aunt' anywhere that would pay me enough to afford solid food). But

I find I like to play it cool and watch my fellow students' incessant posting from the sidelines – think of me as just a lowly passenger on others' solitary drudge into the rat race. However, on the other hand, what exactly is having your fleeting JCR role smack bang on the front of your LinkedIn going to achieve? Are the omnipotent corporate overlords, poaching the unwitting souls of Cambridge's undergraduate body and selling them for scraps of fossil fuel profits, really going to bestow upon you the kind of gold-plated internship that half the university seems to be salivating over for something that was done, heaven forbid, not for profit nor publicity, but for the community? Props to you for putting in the effort, there's no way in hell this sleepyhead could ever be bothered to dig deep and find the (presumed) motivation hidden deep inside of her to be a catalyst for something other than a moratorium on stealing cakes from welfare tea. I, for one, respect your commitment – I'm just not sure how much JP Morgan or HSBC will. Saying that, when I do inevitably launch my bid for college overlord, I expect you'll all be rushing to the polls to ensure I'm Catz's first ever president for life.

Got a question for Auntie Maddy? Email her at lifestyle@varsity.co.uk

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Sport

Football: Fitz and Homerton win before Cuppers grudge match

Jonny Coffey

After matchday three, title-races and relegation-battles are beginning to take shape across the college football leagues.

Men's & Non-Binary Division One

Jesus were unable to retain their spot as league leaders, suffering a shock 2-1 defeat against Pembroke.

While Jesus faltered, Fitzwilliam and Homerton maintained their perfect league records ahead of next weekend's Cuppers grudge match. Six goal contributions from Kosi Nwuba powered the Grifins to an 8-1 victory over Robinson, whilst Fitz defeated Johns 4-2 to claim the league's top spot.

Elsewhere, Churchill climbed the table with a 3-1 victory over Caius. And postponement prevented

Selwyn from further staking their claim as Cambridge's leakiest defence.

Men's & Non-Binary Division Two

Both Trinity and Sidney Sussex headed into their weekend clash with two wins from two. With pole-position at stake, Trinity dominated the tie and claimed a 7-3 victory.

Corpus Christi (the Selwyn of Division Two) endured a 10-0 thrashing against Darwin. With 32 conceded after three games, Corpus are serious contenders for the worst defence to ever grace Cambridge soil.

Women's & Non-Binary Division Two

Queens' Greens suffered a 15-0 thrashing at the hands of Wolfson/Darwin/St Edmund's, despite being cheered on by their new canine mascot Jeremy.

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Dan Twine

Fencing captain



Sporting idol? Oh Sang-uk. He has unbelievable power and flexibility.

Best moment? Winning 14-5 against the bronze medallist of the national championships.

Most embarrassing moment? Forgetting to

bring not only my fencing shoes, but any footwear whatsoever (except sliders) to a training session.

Best victory? The 2020 men's firsts' Varsity competition, when Alex Schlindwein brought back the foil to win the match by one hit.

Who has the best chat? Tang. He comes out with the best bangers when you least expect it.

Who receives the most fines? Artem. Wine gives him the ability to vault fences or get an entire club banned from a college's dining hall.

Why is your sport the best? Everything comes down to the centimetre or hundredth of a second.

How can we follow Cambridge fencing? @c_u_f_c on Instagram.

6,500 workers dead.
Seven-year sentences for
homosexuality.

This World Cup should not be happening.

Comment Harry Aktins

It was never meant to be like this. A winter World Cup in Qatar. This wasn't a decision based on the merits of Qatar's bid – but on greed and corruption.

The supposed guardians of our game were willing to turn a blind eye to Qatar's shocking human rights record in order to line their pockets. Sepp Blatter, FIFA President at the time, and Michel Platini, his Vice-

President, were both banned from all footballing activities for eight years in 2015 on corruption charges. A further eight members who voted in the decision were indicted in May 2015 by the U.S. Department of Justice for corruption relating to the bid. Two members, Issa Hayatou and Jacques Anouma, were accused of receiving \$1.5 million in exchange for their votes.

Since 2010, over 6,500 migrant workers are estimated to have died in Qatar. Alongside reports of confiscated passports and delayed wage payments, LGBTQ+ fans wanting to travel to the World Cup have concerns over their safety. In Qatar, same-sex sexual activity

is punishable by a seven-year prison sentence. This month the Qatar World Cup ambassador, Khalid Salman, stated that homosexuality is "damage in the mind". Last week, Sepp Blatter said that awarding Qatar the World Cup was a mistake. But it is far too late to be absolving himself of responsibility.

FIFA isn't fit for purpose. It claims to be "taking concrete measures to promote diversity and anti-discrimination in football." Hollow words have rarely been spoken. They have managed to turn a footballing celebration into a modern day tragedy. They have blood on their hands.

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World Cup 2022 Preview

Ben Conway gives his verdict on the World Cup predictions of two of Cambridge's most trusted football brains, the women's Blues captain, and the combined wisdom of the men's Blues team

Winner

Varsity sport co-editor James Hardy (JH): **Argentina**
Varsity sport co-editor Joshua Korber Hoffman (JKH): **England**
Men's blues (Blues): **Brazil**
Women's Blues captain Frances Steele (FS): **France**
Ben Conway's verdict: The bookies' favourite, by some margin, is the men's Blues shout: Brazil. I'm having an internal struggle between the patriot in me that wants to say England, and my brain – which would bank on Brazil.

Golden ball

JH: **Lionel Messi**
JKH: **Lautaro Martínez**
Blues: **Lionel Messi**
FS: **Kylian Mbappé**
Verdict: This one is always hard to predict. There's always someone who wows and then fails to live up to those standards ever again (think James Rodríguez). So I appreciate JKH's prediction. But I'll say Gareth Bale, who will be trying to conjure a spectacular last dance – given that he'll probably retire as soon as the tournament is over.

How will England do?

JH: **Last 16**
JKH: **Winners**
Blues: **Quarter-finals**
FS: **Quarter-finals**
Verdict: Falcons captain Joseph Helm was very specific with this one, forecasting an extra-time loss to France in the quarters, accompanied by national devastation. I don't think the nation could deal with two consecutive lost finals, so it's win or bust this year. For me, we lift the trophy. Otherwise, I'm going with quarter-finals too.

Dark horse

JH: **Senegal**
JKH: **Ecuador**
Blues: **South Korea**
FS: **Belgium**
Verdict: I love the Ecuador shout here. To qualify for the tournament they beat Colombia and Chile. They even recently had an appeal lodged against them for fielding an ineligible player, which has since been overturned. You'd imagine they'll be fired up for it. Their group features Qatar as the pot A team, so it's extremely open. Aside from them, I wouldn't put it past Denmark to have another impressive run, or Japan to upset Spain or Germany.

Golden glove

JH: **Thibaut Courtois**
JKH: **Yann Sommer**
Blues: **Alisson**
FS: **Alisson**
Verdict: Blues centre-mid Matt Harris was reportedly extremely confident with his prediction. But I think it overlooks a tricky group (Serbia, Switzerland, Cameroon). I like Argentina's chances of two-plus clean sheets in their Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Poland group. So it's Emi Martínez for me.

Where to watch

1. College bars: Most college bars will be showing the England games.
2. The Isaac Newton: Loads of TVs and exceptional curly fries.
3. The Alma: A projector screen and a friendly atmosphere.
4. Baron of Beef: A cosy way to watch the footy.
5. Varsity ski trip: Skiers will be able to watch the round of 16 and the quarter-finals in France.

Golden boot

JH: **Lionel Messi**
JKH: **Harry Kane**
Blues: **Harry Kane**
FS: **Kylian Mbappé**
Verdict: Surely he couldn't win it two World Cups in a row?! But our experts have some substantive faith in Harry Kane, which I'll echo. He scores all types of goals; takes our penalties; and has ample opportunity to stats-pad in the group against Iran, Wales, and USA. Vinícius Jr.'s sparkling form over the last year makes him a prime contender as well.



Sport

World Cup Preview
Varsity gives its predictions (p31)

College football round-up
Fitz and Hom rivalry heats up (p30)



Joy for John's...

...while Jesus weeps

PHOTO: QING LU

Maggie wins University IVs

Rupert Gardiner

Rowers from St. John's College dominated University Fours with a boat in every final, narrowly beating Jesus to a university medal in both the men's and women's events.

The Lady Margaret Boat Club of St John's College (or "Maggie", for short) advanced a crew to the final of every race in all four divisions (M1, M2, W1 and W2) but were unable to replicate the achievements of 2016 and win every category outright. Caius won both second divisions.

The annual University Fours competition is one of only three events at which a university medal is up for grabs, and is the only one rowed in "fours" (four row-

ers and a cox). While not as idiosyncratic as the infamously chaotic Bumps, the multi-day knockout event nevertheless puts its own spin on the regatta format, with boats starting 120m apart, racing to different start and finish posts simultaneously.

On Friday evening, both first division finals saw Maggie face Jesus down the two kilometre course into the setting sun. Both races went down to the wire, with all crews providing prodigious displays of rowing skill that would have made either club worthy winners. However, it was the scarlet blades of Lady Margaret that triumphed in both races. The women's crew won the competition in 8 minutes and 10 seconds, with a margin of just one second, and the Lady Margaret men

reached the finishing posts in a mere 7 minutes and 5 seconds, only two seconds before Jesus.

Elsewhere, Jesus W1 set the fastest time for the women's competition this year in their quarter-final race against Magdalene. In both the men's and women's second divisions, the Caius second boats won in close races, denying Maggie a clean sweep of wins.

Despite the victories, Maggie's rowers cannot rest on their laurels. The December Fairbairn Cup, run by Jesus, is a race where the hosts tend to dominate. If the infamous oracle of the Cam Rowbridge is anything to go by: Maggie "needs to watch their back".



▲ John's and Caius men's IVs racing down the Cam (QING LU)