

FREE
Take a
copy

**When
Maddie
met OSHU**

Our Agony Aunt goes on a date
with the TikToker **Page 28**

**Hanging out with
the nightclimbers**

Erik Olsson speaks with the secretive group
Page 19

**‘I’m gonna get
blacklisted for
this’**

Clubbing icon
Page 21



No.907
Friday 25th November 2022
varsity.co.uk

The Independent
Student Newspaper since 1947

Varsity



SLAP ON THE WRIST

Clare drinking society escaped punishment for setting fresher on fire

Jacob Freedland & Michael Hennessey

Students at Clare College's drinking society escaped punishment for setting a fresher on fire during an initiation, and were instead "encouraged to make a donation to charity", *Varsity* understands.

During a routine initiation of first-years taking place in Easter 2022, one student was accidentally set on fire after he was tasked with the challenge of putting out a lit toilet roll tucked into his shorts by running into the wind.

But after being allegedly covered in flammable liquid, he caught fire and had to be hospitalised. A Clare student told *Varsity* he was "basically immobilised" from the burns on his inner thighs.

However, according to a well-informed source, the members did not receive formal punishment from the College, and were instead encouraged to give money to charity.

The source told *Varsity* that the members, bar the fresher who had been burnt, agreed to give £50 each to a charity for burn victims.

Clare College did not respond to requests for comment.

The news spread quickly around Clare. One student said that most of their peers were not surprised by the incident, which was seen as inevitable based on the previous activities of the society. They told *Varsity* that most students were unclear as to why anyone would want to be involved in the drinking soc as an accident like this was bound to happen.

Controversies surrounding drinking societies are not new.

Earlier this term, the master of Downing College criticised the College's drinking society over "explicit" invitations to several female stu-

dents. Alan Bookbinder said that the group target "women they deem attractive, inducing them to drink in excess, and treating them in a misogynist and predatory way."

In 2018, the Facebook page "Grudgebridge" posted hundreds of accounts of inappropriate behaviour perpetrated by drinking society members which included sexual misconduct, bullying and classism.

There were allegations that male members of drinking societies had confiscated the keys and phones of "attractive fresher girls" and that another male member of a society said female students would be "going home in wheelchairs" after an event.

The Student Union president at the time said that Grudgebridge had caused a "seismic shift" in attitudes towards drinking societies at the University.

She said: "It's like the annoyance that has been bubbling up for years has erupted."

Following the controversy, a third of drinking societies committed to creating a code of conduct, including Clare's.

The Clare Rugby and Boating Society (CRABS) was one of the first drinking societies set-up in Cambridge. It was established in 1930 by Paul Mellon, an American undergraduate who came to Cambridge from Yale University.

After graduating Mellon became a successful banker, focusing his philanthropic activity on higher education. Mellon was a major benefactor to the Forbes-Mellon library at Clare which opened in 1986. In 1999, Mellon left \$8 million to the Fitzwilliam Museum which was used to redevelop the museum's courtyard.

King's food sends student to A&E

Bella Shorrock
Deputy News Editor

You don't usually expect to get dinner at college and spend the night in Addenbrooke's. But that's exactly what happened to a third-year student at King's College, who was rushed to hospital earlier this month in an "absolutely terrifying" experience.

That student told *Varsity* that having grabbed a plate of hake and chips from King's servery, they were surprised by the number of bones it contained. They said that the meal had not been advertised as containing bones, and that the number of bones it contained was "very extreme".

They tried to pick through the bones, but evidently missed one, and started choking. Unable to talk, they rushed outside. Fortunately, other students contacted the porters, and a taxi was quickly called to take them to Addenbrooke's.

They then waited in A&E for over three hours before seeing a surgeon. The specialist told them that the bone was wedged in their throat and had pierced the outer layer of their left tonsil.

Luckily, the student was able to get it out. Nonetheless, they told *Varsity* it was a "very stressful" and "very scary" experience.

The student criticised the King's role in the incident. "When I was initially choking and throwing up it was absolutely terrifying", they said. "I do think the College is partially responsible."

While it is not unreasonable to expect bones in fish, the student said the meal should have been explicitly labelled.

Nonetheless, they said that the College handled the situation "quite well" and that the porter who helped them was "calm and very efficient".

This is not the only time that King's butchery has sent students to hospital. At the end of last term, a first-year student was also rushed to Addenbrooke's, this time in an ambulance, due to fish poisoning.

When reached for comment, King's told *Varsity*: "The College takes its responsibilities around food labelling very seriously and fulfills all legal requirements when serving meals."

"Any student with questions or concerns about food from the College servery is encouraged to talk to the catering supervisor on duty."

News

Varsity podcast with Greg Taylor

Your weekly digest of all things Cambridge. Featuring special guests and quality chat.

Finally: Monday mornings.



IN THE PAPER

NEWS



Union election heats up

Labour, Liberal and Tories go head to head for Easter Term's Union presidency (PAGE 6-7)

CULTURE



The best Bridgemas decorations

Isabel Dempsey reviews your wackiest creations (PAGE 26)

SPORT



Pirton batter Churchill in rugby Cuppers

The men's rugby squads fight to get to the second round (PAGE 30)

Comment

Student spaces are under threat from colleges

Leader, page 17

Save your pity for catering staff, we don't want it

Connor O'Neill, page 13

IN BRIEF

Students win!

Sidney Sussex backs down on unpopular proposal to put CCTV in student bars (PAGE 4)

Papal Bull?

Pope could lead fight back on climate church with meat-free Fridays, research suggests (PAGE 10)

Congestion charge backlash

A proposal for a "sustainable travel zone" has been met with criticisms by local residents (PAGE 11)

Website: varsity.co.uk • Twitter: @VarsityUK
Facebook: [varsityuk](https://www.facebook.com/varsityuk) • Instagram: [varsitycambridge](https://www.instagram.com/varsitycambridge)

WEATHER

11°C
Partly cloudy

FRIDAY 25/11

8°C
Light cloud

TUESDAY 29/11

12°C
Light cloud

SATURDAY 26/11

7°C
Light cloud

WEDNESDAY 30/11

11°C
Heavy rain

SUNDAY 27/11

8°C
Light cloud

THURSDAY 1/12

10°C
Sunny intervals

MONDAY 28/11

7°C
Light cloud

FRIDAY 2/12

13 colleges pay staff below real living wage, SU research suggests

Daniel Starkey

13 colleges paid some staff a wage below last year's Real Living Wage (RLW), a report by published by the Students' Union claims.

The 2022 Taylor's Table states that the lowest possible wage at all these colleges was lower than the £9.90 per hour 2021 RLW.

The RLW, calculated annually by the Living Wage Foundation, is distinct from the £9.50 minimum wage (£9.18 for under-23s), as it takes into account the cost of household goods and services. For 2022, it was calculated as £10.90 for places outside of London (where the RLW is £11.95, given its higher cost of living).

The SU's report notes that given Cambridge's high cost-of-living, calls have been made for the London rate to be extended to Cambridge as well.

Queens' was the only college, as of November 2022, that paid all staff above this year's RLW.

According to the Taylor's Table, those colleges which pay below £9.90/hour are: Pembroke, St Edmund's, Churchill, Robinson, St Catharine's, Homerton, Wolfson, Lucy Cavendish, Fitzwilliam, Emmanuel, Magdalene, Peterhouse and Clare Hall.

Emmanuel came bottom of the table, with its lowest pay grade being £6.83 per hour.

Speaking to *Varsity*, however, the Bursar of Emmanuel College, Mike Gross, claimed the SU's findings are misleading.

Gross detailed: "When I responded to the original Freedom of Information request I explained that this low hourly

rate applies to Emmanuel students who volunteer to work in our student-run bar.

"The bar is only open to College members, only operated during Term, aims to break even, and is valued for being student-run and having low prices. I am very happy to be led by the Emmanuel student community as to whether these arrangements remain right for us."

Gross noted that if this group were to be excluded, "the lowest wage currently paid by the College is £10.11".

In addition to this, Andrew Cates, Bursar of Pembroke College, claimed that the SU "messed up their spreadsheet and used data for Pembroke from a previous year."

Cates claimed that the College "have long paid all our staff the Real Living Wage and were one of the first Colleges to adopt it".

He went on to note that the College "did actually notice" the error in the Taylor's Table, "but I don't think we bothered to correct it": "We care deeply about our staff but not so much about SU tables."

Mysteriously, however, when responding to a Freedom of Information request on 24 August this year, the Pembroke College registrar, Dr Becky Coombs, claimed: "the exact lowest hourly wage paid by the college to casual workers ... over the age of 18" was £9.50, below both the 2021 and 2022 RLWs.

Meanwhile, the Director of External Relations and Development at Homerton, a college whose lowest hourly wage is recorded in the Taylor's Table as £9.18, told *Varsity* that they pay "all permanent and fixed-term staff the Real Living Wage" and that all "employees includ-

ing casual staff get free meals on duty, and for catering casual staff the meal is taken during paid work-time."

The College also noted that it had, at the end of October, paid staff a one-off amount of £1,000 to help support them during the cost-of-living crisis.

Similarly, Fitzwilliam College explained that they have "paid staff members a £1,000 cost-of-living payment".

The College also announced that they "will increase permanent staff members minimum hourly rate to £10.90 in April 2023", and that they are "seeking to be accredited by the Real Living Wage Foundation by the end of 2023".

The SU's Welfare and Community Officer, Daisy Thomas, told *Varsity* that the Living Wage Campaign believes "that all workers should be paid the Real Living Wage, including those on casual contracts or students" and stressed: "There has been no inaccurate reporting of the data, which has all always been publicly available."

Thomas stated that the information in the Taylor's Table was calculated from Freedom of Information requests sent in August 2022 and outlined that if "any college, including Pembroke, has since altered their payment rates then they are encouraged to get in contact".

"We would be thrilled to hear if Pembroke has changed their payment since August and now pays the Real Living Wage."

The Cambridge Living Wage Campaign, which drew up the Taylor's Table, is a campaign group made up of local students, local residents, City Council representatives, and the SU's Welfare and Community Officer.

University pledges to return Zimbabwe warrior skulls 'taken as trophies'

Bella Shorrock

Deputy News Editor

Cambridge University and the National History Museum say they will repatriate human remains taken from Zimbabwe during the colonial era.

Zimbabwean officials want to recover the remains of the leaders of an uprising against British rule in the 1890s — including Mbuya Nehanda, who has since become a national heroine. She was executed in the capital Harare and Zimbabwean officials believe her skull was taken to the UK as a trophy.

The majority of the remains are in the National History museum, but remains linked to Zimbabwe have also been found at the University's Duckworth Laboratory.

In a statement, the University said it had "welcomed a delegation from Zimbabwe to view and discuss the repatriation of the remains of one individual from Zimbabwe".

It said it was "committed to working with the Zimbabwean Government to facilitate any request for the return of these remains".

The Duckworth Laboratory said it had a "small number of human remains from Zimbabwe" but had not identified these, in a statement sent to the BBC.

Cambridge University and the National History Museum have more than 43,000 human remains between them, and some of the largest archives in the world, with Duckworth having 18,000.

The call comes after the National History Museum returned over 100 Maori and Moriori remains earlier this year. The repatriation, carried out alongside other institutions, saw the biggest effort thus far to return remains to the native populations of New Zealand.

Cambridge has been criticised by a variety of nations for retaining objects taken during British rule. Last year Jesus College became the first institution globally to return a Benin Bronze to Nigeria.

Strikes kick off in Cambridge

Bella Shorrock

Over 70,000 staff at 150 universities across the UK began three days of strike action yesterday as part of an ongoing dispute. The University and College Union (UCU) have called the strike the biggest in the history of higher education. Strike dates are planned for the 24th, 25th and 30th this month.

The strikes come after UCU members voted 'yes' to industrial action last month. The results are the first ever successful nationally aggregated ballots in the education sector since 2016.

In the pay and working conditions dispute, UCU's demands include a meaningful pay rise to deal with the cost-of-living crisis as well as action to end the use of insecure contracts and tackle high workloads. UCU state that, on average, university staff do two days additional work unpaid per week, whilst a third of academic staff are on some form of temporary contract.

An architectural icon?

Robinson College, not known as one of the most beautiful buildings in Cambridge, has received Grade II listed status, reports Isabel Dempsey

When considering the most prestigious buildings in Cambridge, most people's minds might wander to the likes of King's College chapel or the grandeur of Trinity's Great Court, but it isn't often that you hear Robinson College find its way onto that list. The University of Cambridge's youngest college is often (both lovingly and derisively) described by students as looking like a carpark.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, however, seem to have a different view, having recently gifted Robinson College Grade II* listed status on the advice of Historic England. Only encompassing 5.8% of all listed buildings, Grade II* sites are categorised as "important buildings of more than special interest".

Matthew Cooper, Historic England senior listing advisor described the building as a "stunning city landmark" but most students were quick to disagree. One crude comment published on the Robinson confessions Facebook page, Love from the Bricks, jokingly suggests that illicit favours must have been performed to secure Robinson's listed status.

On hearing the news, many students began to bemoan the issues of mould and poor draining that continue to plague the College, forgetting that even Cambridge's most prestigious buildings have to contend with constant repairs. In response, Robinson's JCR president, Kaz Rawdanowicz, argued: "Considering

Robinson doesn't quite get the rep that it deserves around Cambridge, the fact that it's listed as a Grade II* building is a great leap forward."

Designed by architects Isi Metzstein and Andy MacMillan for Gillespie, Kidd & Coia, the listing report praised the design of the chapel and library for bringing the building closest towards an "all-encompassing artwork".

Richard Heaton, Robinson's warden, responded to the listing by saying that it "recognises our place in a changing aesthetic of Cambridge college architecture, and in the remarkable post-war generation of university buildings."

To the doubters of Robinson's architectural worth, he says, "I would invite you to come and sit in our extraordinary chapel and marvel at its open, angular spaces and radiant window," concluding that "our building may divide opinion, but in doing so we succeed in challenging the traditional view of what it means to be a Cambridge college."

While most buildings in good condition built pre-1850 are almost guaranteed listed status of some kind, anything built post-1945 has to be more carefully considered to ensure its significance stands the test of time.

One Robinson architecture student said: "I think that it's really cool that a modern building is graded — it makes Robinson all the more special." Other Grade II* listed buildings in Cambridge range include the likes of Cloister Court

in Sidney Sussex College and Barnwell Priory, a 13th Century Augustan monastery.

The old churches, gateways and college courts that populate the Grade II* category initially seem like much more obvious choices for this status. However, Robinson isn't the first example of brutalism to climb its way up the ranks. Murray Edward's somewhat dystopian-looking fountain also has a place on the list, alongside St Johns' Cripps Building, a 1960s concrete structure which sits in stark contrast to the rest of the College's 16th Century splendour.

Although miles away from Cambridge's Grade I buildings in grandeur, in achieving Grade II* status Robinson has beaten out lower Grade II buildings, such as the iconic Mathematical Bridge, the University Library, and St Edmund's College. This latter structure, built in 1896, is one of many other red-brick colleges in Cambridge, but none of them are so universally known for this feature as Robinson.

The College's commitment to the bricks is certainly as special as its Grade II* status suggests, the distinctive feature helping to place it above older buildings such as St Edmund's, despite its young age. Following this listing, many are intrigued to see which Cambridge buildings will gain listed status next. Who knows, since Robinson made the cut, maybe the Grand Arcade's car park will be next.



▲ Robinson (above) isn't as iconic a spot as King's College (left) (WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/FICKR)

Architecture that tries should be celebrated, not condemned

Comment Thomas Brian

I've always thought that water features are one of the best ways to improve something. Gardens need their ponds or bird baths, houses need their plumbing, country houses their lakes. Robinson does well in this category. Bin Brook, one of the lesser-known Cambridge waterways, trundles into Robinson through a great archway under its main wing. The brook then passes through the main site, before exiting out the back under the Needham Research Institute. It's a nice touch.

And not the only one. Robinson's gardens are lush and pretty, and have comely wooden walkways snaking around bushes and ponds. It's a pleasant way to travel around a college. Hidden within those gardens, one can be surprised by the buildings encountered: Last time I was there, I was in what seemed a well-made house, more suited to suburbia

than a college. But it fitted into the gardens nicely, and seemed a most commodious place to live.

Of course, you want to hear about that long main wing, stretching around the corner where Herschel and Grange Roads intersect. Externally, I will concede, not the prettiest. But far from the ugliest, especially as the modern colleges go. The red-brick walls blend well with the trees, and the notes of glass provide nice accents. Inside, it provides a pleasingly narrow thoroughfare, giving the feel of a dense, self-contained settlement, appropriate for the communal nature of college life. Within this wing, a community is encouraged. Yes, if I had planned a college, it would look different. But Robinson provides an interesting concept, well-executed. Architecture that tries, that focuses on buildings that are liveable, pleasant to the eye, and interesting should be celebrated.

Poorer adolescents may have worse mental health, new study finds

Izzy Matear
Science reporter

Perceived financial inequality increases the likelihood of poor mental health in young people, as well as the likelihood of bullying others or being bullied, according to a new study.

Research conducted by psychologists at Cambridge University found children who believe they come from poorer backgrounds than their friends may be likelier to suffer from lower self-esteem than those who feel financially equal. The team also found that kids who consider themselves poorer or richer than others

in their social sphere were likelier to bully others.

The link between economic disadvantage and worse mental health is long-established, but this new study shows that just feeling poorer compared to your friends may have a negative impact, regardless of actual family income.

"You don't have to be rich or poor to feel richer or poorer than your friends, and we can see this affects the mental health of young adolescents," said the lead author Blanca Piera Pi-Sunyer, a Cambridge Gates Scholar in the University's Department of Psychology.

The study analysed perceived finan-

cial differences within friendship groups among 12,995 UK children at age 11. The youngsters were asked to rate whether they thought of themselves as richer, poorer or the same as their friends, or whether they didn't know. Self-esteem and issues relating to bullying were also measured, alongside data on the weekly family disposable income.

Most children considered themselves financially equal to their friends, but 4% and 8% thought themselves poorer or richer, respectively. 16% didn't know.

Those who considered themselves less wealthy than their friends scored 6-8% lower for self-esteem and 11%

lower in terms of well-being than those perceiving no difference.

The 11-year-olds who believed themselves to be poorer were also 17% more likely to report being bullied than those who felt economically equal to their friends. This decreased at age 14, but those who felt poorer than their peers were still 8% more likely to be bullied.

The perception of being either richer or poorer than their friends was also related to a 3-5% higher likelihood of bullying others. "It may be that feeling different in any way at a time when belonging is important increases the risk of interpersonal difficulties such as bul-

lying," commented Pi-Sunyer.

Making judgements about ourselves in comparison to others is central to the development of our sense of self. "Our research suggests that wealth comparisons with those around us might contribute to a sense of social and personal self-worth when we are young," added Pi-Sunyer. Feeling you are not financially equal in comparison to your peers "might be problematic for our sense of belonging."

To remove the perception of economic inequality, however, we must first tackle objective financial inequality, a problem not likely to be solved any time soon.

News

Victory! Sidney backs down on unpopular proposal to put CCTV in student bar

Cat Coggan

Sidney Sussex College have backtracked on proposals to introduce security cameras to the college bar in a U-turn that will be seen as a victory among students. After weeks of disputes between the domestic bursar and members of the student community over control of the bar, the College has backed down, admitting to *Varsity*: “we didn’t get it right first time.”

Sidney’s student-run bar, one of the last of its kind in the University, has been caught up in disagreements around security and autonomy with college administration. In recent weeks and months the bar has faced issues due to increased demand, particularly from members of other colleges.

In emails seen by *Varsity*, the domestic bursar called for CCTV to be introduced in the bar, allegedly going against previous verbal commitments made to members of the student body and bar management. They said that the measure would need to be paid for by the bar rather than the College. According to an open letter circulated among students, the College said it would cost £2500, nearly 15% of the bar’s annual budget.

In the same email, the domestic bursar, Kathryn Smart, referred to the bar staff as “young” and “inexperienced” with “very little knowledge”, wording that some within the student community said was patronising.

Asked about Smart’s remarks, Laurie Wilcockson, the student manager of the bar, said: “Inexperienced bar staff



▲ Sidney students are very defensive of the bar’s autonomy from College

all receive informal training, followed by training on-shift from their experienced worker. Experienced workers are formally trained in licensing law and alcohol retail, with a qualification from the British Institute of Barkeeping. This, combined with usually a full year’s prior experience of working at the bar means my workers are especially well-trained.”

At the time of the disagreement, members of the JCR said they believed that some individuals in Sidney’s administration were attempting to undermine the student body by subverting channels of communication.

On 13 November, an open letter was published by representatives of the student body, citing “deep concern with the College’s lack of integrity and transparency regarding Sidney Sussex College Bar.”

The letter refers to the College’s actions

as stemming from an “institutionalised lack of respect for student views” and has so far amassed 329 student signatures, the vast majority of which are from undergraduates within the College.

The installation of the wiring for CCTV cameras within the bar was scheduled for 14 November, but at the time of writing, it has yet to go ahead. Since then, the College has further backtracked from its initial plan of action, citing in its statement to *Varsity* that it was committed to finding a “constructive” way forward for Sidney bar to remain a “welcoming space” that is “run by students”. Signalling that, at least for the moment, the autonomy of the bar will remain in the hands of the student body.

Student space are under threat from colleges, leader, page 18 ►

Emma formals to be cancelled unless ancient candlestick gets returned

Ella McCartney

A candlestick stolen during a formal hall at Emmanuel College last week has provoked a firm response from the College. In an email sent to students, the College said it would cancel all formals until the candlestick was returned. A series of rumours across anonymous confessions page Dowfess, speculating that a Downing student was the culprit.

Attendees of the formal last Monday told *Varsity* that the catering staff demanded the candlestick be returned swiftly after the formal had ended. In an email sent out the following day, Emma students were told that they must return the candlestick, “either anonymously to the Catering Department or to the Porters Lodge”. They were warned that if they did not return the candlestick by the end of Wednesday, Formal Hall would be cancelled for the remainder of the week. The email stated that college staff “cannot tolerate” this behaviour.

While the candlestick was anonymously returned by the deadline, rumours circulated that the candlestick — which in reality cost around £50 — was worth up to £15,000, and students took it upon themselves to uncover the thief. A student who was at the formal told *Varsity*: “There’s a consensus that it couldn’t have been an Emma student because we’ve all been told stories about candlesticks being stolen in the past and know never to do it.”

On anonymous Downing confessions page Dowfess, several students had speculated that the culprit was a

Downing student, before quickly redirecting blame with one post reading: “King’s students stole Downing candle sticks from formal pass it on.”

Stealing from hall is common throughout the University and is seen as a harmless rite of passage by many. One student who recently stole a plate from Emma hall told us that they were motivated by their desire to own something with their college’s crest. They also described a culture of stealing at the University: “It’s become a tradition at Cambridge that people’s college parents introduce them to.”

Similarly, a student from Murray Edwards justified hall theft as a means to get even with their college. They told *Varsity*: “I think it’s a Cambridge tradition. Colleges are so wealthy that it’s a way to try and make the nine grand worth it.”

College staff are well aware of students’ desire to steal and have adapted the way they conduct formals to combat this. Very expensive tableware tends to be reserved for high table and catering staff are sent in to observe students’ behaviour during formals.



▲ The table laid for an Emmanuel College formal

Corpus postpones referendum after SU ‘interference’

Daniel Starkey

Corpus Christi College has delayed its referendum on whether to remain disaffiliated from the Students’ Union, after an email sent by SU sabbatical officers shortly before the vote was set to happen was deemed an inappropriate intervention by JCR officials.

The email was sent to Corpus students last Friday (18/11) by Zaynab Ahmed and Neve Atkinson, the SU’s undergraduate president and access officer respectively, the day before the referendum was due to take place.

An email sent to students by the JCR president and vice-president shortly afterwards announced the postponement. They said that the SU’s email constituted: “an unprecedented and unacceptable interference in the internal democratic processes of Corpus JCR”.

“We are very disappointed that we have had to take these steps”, they

added.

The SU’s email implored students to vote to re-engage with the organisation. It detailed what it considered to be the SU’s positive work, and stated that continuing to boycott Student Council meetings — the main consequence of voting to disengage — would mean that the views of Corpus students would be unrepresented in the SU.

They wrote: “Whether you agree or disagree with the SU’s work, the Sabbatical Officers will continue with it without your JCR being represented on these issues.”

However, the email subsequently circulated by the JCR noted that an established JCR rule means that only the returning officer (Corpus’s JCR President) is permitted to send mass emails related to elections/referenda. The SU had not sought permission to send any such communication, and the JCR email said that it would have been denied in

any case.

Representatives of the ‘boycott’ side, the email added, have been invited to send one email to all Corpus JCR members, “in order to restore fairness between the two sides”. The JCR presidential election, scheduled for the same day, went ahead unaffected.

While boycotting means that the College’s JCR officers choose not to SU meetings, Corpus students remain at liberty to engage with the SU and its activities on an individual level.

Corpus has boycotted the Cambridge SU since the organisation’s establishment in 2020. The College had also been disaffiliated from the SU’s predecessor organisation, the Cambridge University Students’ Union, since 2010, with College members voting annually on whether to continue this practice.

The College held its annual debate on the question of engagement on the 9th November. The ‘engage’ side was repre-

sented by SU undergraduate president Zaynab Ahmed, while second year undergraduates Jacob Hougie and Malachi Gee spoke in favour of boycotting the SU.

The ‘boycott’ speakers argued that the SU’s ability to provide support is lacking, that it is unrepresentative, given its low electoral turnout, and that more work is done by JCRs to address students’ “real concerns”.

Hougie told this paper: “The SU’s actions during this referendum campaign are without precedent from any of the campaigns since Corpus began its boycott more than a decade ago.

“In breaking the rules of the campaign and sending the email quite so soon before the referendum, the SU showed a disregard for the clearly established policies.

“The SU should reflect on how this was allowed to happen, meanwhile Corpus can thank the swift response of the returning officer for protecting the

integrity of the referendum.”

Ahmed, on the other hand, argued that engagement would lead to Corpus students’ views being better represented. She also claimed that the SU does valuable work on behalf of students.

Ahmed and Atkinson told *Varsity* that they were unaware of the Corpus JCR rule prohibiting group emails by anyone other than the JCR president during elections.

They added that they had now found the rule, and that although it only applies to Corpus members running for office, “in the spirit of democracy and out of respect to the JCR Officers, we would not have sent out this email had the rule been communicated to us”.

They also rejected the claim that the email was “unacceptable”, saying: “We had no intentions to intervene in the democratic processes of the JCR.”

The referendum will now take place this Saturday (26/11).

Exclusive Student SIM-only deals

Get ready for freshers week
with over 50% discount



National Plus Student

15GB

~~£10~~
£3
/30 Days

Unlimited UK Minutes and Texts

100 International Minutes*

National Plan Extra Student

20GB

~~£12~~
£3.50
/30 Days

Unlimited UK Minutes and Texts

100 International Minutes*

UK Plan Super Extra Student

30GB

~~£15~~
£4.50
/30 Days

Unlimited UK Minutes and Texts

100 International Minutes*

UK Plan Mega Plus Student

100GB

~~£20~~
£6
/30 Days

Unlimited UK Minutes and Texts

100 International Minutes*



LycaMobile.co.uk/studentoffers

*For full product terms and list of included countries, see website.

Lyca

Mobile

The Lyca Mobile logo, consisting of the word 'Lyca' in a large, white, sans-serif font, with the word 'Mobile' in a smaller, grey, sans-serif font below it. To the right of the text is a graphic of two overlapping hearts, one blue and one green.

News

Knives out: Labour, Liberals and Tories

Fergal Jeffreys

You'd be confused for mistaking this term's Union election for the intraparty squabbles of Westminster in 2022. The grey Labour technocrat, a Tory party split between its past and future and an outsider Lib Dem hoping to recapture his party's former glory. Sound familiar?

The four candidates stack up, at least superficially, along party lines. Sam Carling, a self-described "serial multitasker" and this term's debates officer, has previously been chair of the Labour club (CULC) and serves as Labour councillor for West Chesterton. Past and present Union equalities officers James Appiah III and Ellie Breeze have both served on the Tory club (CUCA) committee, as chairman and committee member respectively. Joshan Palmer, Union treasurer in Michaelmas last year, is the chair of the Liberal association (CULA).

Yet, as any Union insider would tell you, party standards are largely left in the Union cloakroom. Candidates don't represent their society and sometimes pick up endorsements from rival clubs. Breeze and Appiah for instance have collected support from CULC committee members.

Since the electorate is so small - only

In their own words Union candidates running for president

Sam Carling
Ex-CULC chair



I want to see our society use it's potential to have a positive impact on our members and, through our outreach work, beyond. That's my vision - and I have a plan to achieve it, as well as the skills to carry out that plan. I'm an experienced leader, having been Christ's JCR President, leading CULC and being a councillor in Cambridge, and I will bring this external experience into the Union to help us open up, adapt, and become the centre of Cambridge for students.

Joshan Palmer
CULA chair



There is a lot happening in the world right now that really matters - so why does the Union continue to re-heat stale culture war debates with the usual suspect speakers? I will work with my team to deliver debates and speakers on topics of real substance in the arts, science & tech, religion, foreign policy, and philosophy. I promise you one term free of twitter hacks, pseudoscientists, election deniers, and Peter Hitchens. I promise a termcard that's worth voting for.

Ellie Breeze
Former CUCA speakers officer



As a high-profile woman in the Union pushing to improve the organisation, I don't shy away from a challenge, and I've proven that I am committed to making lasting, positive change. This term I've organised countless Equalities events, including a panel in collaboration with the reproductive rights society and Challenging the Establishment panel - which have started important conversations and platformed a wider range of voices than the Union usually hears.

James Appiah III
CUCA chair



I have seen first-hand how the Union serves standing committee rather than the members. As president, I will ensure you get your money's worth. I will install a training programme for underrepresented groups and make networking opportunities open to all. I will also bring a more entertaining culture to the Union by hosting a boxing match and comedy nights. Membership is expensive. As president I will make it worth every penny.

Become a mental health social worker
Do something that matters

- £ Get paid to train as a mental health social worker
- Join a Times Top 100 Graduate Employer
- Graduate Earn a master's degree
- Make a difference to people's lives from day one

Jade, Think Ahead social worker trainee

DID SOMEONE SAY FALAFEL?

Allow us to introduce ourselves. We are Taste of Cambridge, the vegan and vegetarian falafel wraps stall that just keeps on giving.

We have been on Market Street since 2009 and are proud to be one of Cambridge's oldest vegan and vegetarian eateries.

Our 4 different wraps take you on a journey of complex flavours, from roasted carrots and spicy hummus to refreshing salads and juicy halloumi, all complete with freshly cooked falafel, of course.

Our produce is sourced as locally as possible and we take pride in all of our packaging and processes being environmentally friendly.

Enjoy a real taste of Cambridge with one of our famous wraps from Wednesday to Sunday. And don't forget - students can enjoy 10% off our whole menu all year round!

clash in hotly contested Union election



▲ Joshan Palmer has asked: ‘Why does the Union continue to re-heat stale culture war debates with the usual suspect speakers?’, an apparent reference to this term’s guests, Mick Mulvaney and Kathleen Stock (FLORENCE TAWNS)

205 voted in Easter - the Union instead functions more like a party primary. Most of those eligible to vote are also involved, in some capacity, in the Union. Those running for election need to get the support from the various subcommittees across the term before election season rolls around.

Where political societies do matter is with their member lists. CULC, CUCA and CULA members tend to also be members of the Union. If those who carry both cards can be identified, their names can go on a spreadsheet and they can be persuaded to vote come the end of term. Groups from CUCA and CULA have long dominated Union elections, while CULC is a relative newcomer. This election is unusual in seeing the membership lists of each society go head-to-head.

The small electorate also means candidates’ policies are not insignificant. Breeze for instance has proposed integrating the equalities committees, while Appiah has suggested bringing in more entertainment to the chamber, like comedy shows and boxing matches.

More broadly there are three dividing lines in this election:

First of all: insiders versus outsiders. Some voters will want the Union to be run by those currently inside the tent

and having had experience in top roles, like Sam Carling and Ellie Breeze. Others will want outsiders who might shake it up — Appiah and Palmer, say, who haven’t held roles this term.

Then there’s where you stand on what’s referred to by Union hacks as the “clique”: a tightknit friendship group which includes Breeze and this term’s debates officer, Max Ghose, who is tipped to run for president next term, for the coveted Michaelmas spot. While friendship groups working together inside the Union is hardly novel, some members are hoping to halt their rise by blocking Breeze this term.

Finally, there’s the ongoing debate about how the Union should engage with the national “culture war.” This term’s committee has chosen to wade in, most notably with last week’s debate on offence that saw guest speaker Kathleen Stock criticised by students both in and outside the chamber. That debate has been a high water mark of controversy, but some in the Union want to go further: long seen as the holy grail for some in the Union is a debate on gender self-identification. While three of the candidates shy away from any reference to this term’s controversy, Palmer has pointedly asked in his Facebook event why the Union “continues to re-heat

stale culture war debates with the usual suspect speakers.”

The ranked voting system used by the Union means the winner will likely not be obvious in the first round. While Appiah and Breeze are expected to pick up strong support on the first count, Carling, seen as a steady pair of hands, will likely be a lot of voters’ second choice. Palmer, whose announcement that he was running came as a surprise to his rivals, is seen as the wildcard.

The election is getting heated. Appiah has received electoral complaints from his rivals for a number of supposed offences, including supposedly buying followers on Instagram. Hustings take place on Thursday night, an hour after *Varsity* goes to press. The last time an election was contested, hustings were tense, with audience members making impromptu speeches against then candidate Lara Brown.

The unspoken dynamic of this election, as with any election for Union president, is that most of the candidates have their eyes rested on an even better seat than the one in the Union chamber: the green leather benches of parliament. In this sense, the race is a rehearsal for politics in twenty years time, should any of them make it that far. Let the games begin.



The Business School
for the World®



PhD in Management

Study in Europe and Asia
with five years scholarship.

INSEAD, one of the world’s leading and largest business schools, is looking for 16-18 promising candidates like you to join the PhD in Management 2023 in the following areas: Accounting, Decision Sciences, Entrepreneurship, Finance, Marketing, Organisational Behaviour, Strategy, and Technology and Operations Management.

With the INSEAD PhD, you have the unique opportunity to study in two locations, France and Singapore, go for an exchange with Wharton in the US, benefit from the partnership with Sorbonne Université, and receive five years scholarship*.




Keen to learn more? Talk to us
insead.ad/contact-phd-2023





Apply now for the 2023 intake
insead.ad/why-insead-phd | insead.ad/phd/admissions

*visit insead.ad/phd-financing for the latest information.



AI has never been binary

Augmentation is the law of tomorrow

Artificial Intelligence is here to enhance people’s capabilities, not replace them. Those who integrate will gain the advantage. Are you ready for a blended future?

Want to be part of the law of tomorrow?
Find out more at mishcon.com/graduates

Business | Disputes | Innovation | Private
Real Estate | Consultancy Services

Mishcon de Reya Group
It’s business. But it’s personal.

News

'Hedghog ball' held at Kings

Cambridge's first ever "hedghog ball" was held at King's College on Saturday 19 November. Organised by the Shepreth Wildlife Conservation Charity (SWCC), Springwatch presenter and naturalist Chris Packham spoke at the event. He told guests: "The hedghog has come to embrace many things in our twenty-first-century lives, most notably change. Sadly, the most notable change is the calamitous decline

in its numbers." Packham detailed that while coming across "a snuffling hog" was a "commonplace encounter" in his youth, now "it's a treat", and lamented that we have not been able to return hedehogs "to the happier lives they had just a few years ago". Alongside Packham's talk, the event also included a four-course dinner, a performance by the College choir, and a charity auction.

XR protest Schlumberger

On Monday morning, Extinction Rebellion (XR) activists held a vigil outside Senate House in protest against Schlumberger, an oil services company, and its relationship with the University. Activists poured fake oil over a papier-mâché earth, simultaneous to XR holding protests at Schlumberger's London HQ. An XR Cambridge spokesperson told *Cambridgeshire Live*: "Schlumberger are claiming the impos-

sible — that an industry dependent on the burning of fossil fuels can be decarbonised", suggesting that they "are taking us for fools" and stressing: "all the world's scientists are saying that we need to end fossil fuels now to avert climate catastrophe". Climate activists had, in October, smashed the window of the Schlumberger research centre.



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS
BOOKSHOP

20% OFF*

ALL BOOKS FOR HOLDERS OF
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY AND CAMCARDS

SIMPLY PRESENT YOUR CARD IN STORE

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



Illustration by Richard Briggs



1 Trinity Street, Cambridge CB2 1SZ

☎ 01223 333333 ✉ bookshop@cambridge.org

*Offer can't be combined with other promotions

University watch

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

Oxford Union president forced out after vote

Ahmad Nawaz's presidency of the Oxford Union ended last week after a no confidence vote. 251 members voted to remove the president against 164 members voting in support. The result of the vote was announced after the evening debate, held on the motion: "This House believes woke culture has gone too far". The vote was forced when the access committee rejected Nawaz's explanation for missing previous meetings. During the debate, members shouted over each other and one member shouted: "stop the steal". The president-elect for the upcoming term has taken over as acting president for the remainder of this term.

Durham SU criticed over 'ASMR' foodbank video

Durham Student Union have released an apology after facing criticism for an "ASMR" video in which an SU staff member packed food parcel donations. The video showed an SU employee packing a food bank parcel with text that said "ASMR: packing student food bank parcels", and was criticised for "trivialising the actual issue of student poverty". One student said: "why are you making it cute that students are starving due to the university's greed". Durham SU opened the foodbank during the cost-of-living crisis as a "practical measure to ensure no student is left hungry".

Leeds lecture theatre occupation ends despite making no gains

Leeds University students who occupied a lecture theatre for almost two weeks have ended their protest, despite neither securing a meeting with the University nor a promise to cut ties with fossil fuel companies. Student Rebellion occupied the lecture theatre for twelve days and refused to leave until the University "updates its policy on responsible investment to include a ban on investments in oil, gas, coal and mining companies". However, the occupation has ended without securing meetings with the University, which the activists said was "indicative of our institution's disregard of the student voice". The group said that they had "achieved a lot in the past two weeks" including "strengthened bonds with allies new and old".

‘Hostels need to be a springboard’

Ben Mulley looks at how Cambridge is tackling the homelessness crisis

Ben Mulley

After a warm autumn, winter is finally setting in. When we go outside, we bring umbrellas, gloves, scarves. At their worst the outdoors are nothing other than utterly miserable. The cold weather sharpens our empathy for the homeless at this time of year. Seeing a fellow human being begging for change makes me feel heartbroken and guilty.

People end up homeless for a variety of reasons, from relationship breakdown to drug and alcohol addiction, or simply struggling to cope with the cost of living — though the council claims that they are yet to see an influx of claims made to the housing service due to the cost-of-living crisis.

Cambridge City council works hard to prevent homelessness. James McWilliams, the council’s housing manager, emphasises the preventative work of the council: “The people who are rough sleeping and the people that are in the hostels represent actually only a very, very small amount of, perhaps one in ten of, the people that approach the Cambridge City Council as homeless or threatened with homelessness.”

For those that are homeless, relief includes hostel accommodation, soup kitchens, student organisations, the council, and individual volunteers.

In Cambridge, aid is generally free of charge to those who need it. There are no homeless hostels in the city which charge for the night.

Barry Griffiths is a personable man with an infectious drive to help the homeless. He slept rough before getting support from Jimmy’s, one of Cambridge’s emergency hostels.

He moved through the Jimmy’s system and eventually became employed by them as a community outreach officer. He knows better than most that the care hostels like Jimmy’s provides to its 20 guests and their handful of pet dogs is vital.

But he also says: “hostels need to be a springboard” for longer term solutions. Staying in hostels for up to two years is not the most efficient way to reintegrate into society. A room in a hostel is not the same as a home.

To this end, the council recently spent

A room in a hostel is not the same as a home

£3.2 million to buy 14 one-bed flats for the exclusive use of rough sleepers, bringing their total count of similar accommodation for rough sleepers to 50.

So why are there still so many people sleeping rough in Cambridge? I’m told that homelessness is not exclusively about housing.

In fact, James says that some of the streetlife community aren’t homeless. The streetlife community is a group of people who chose to spend their time, and often their nights, on Cambridge’s streets.

Many of those on the street do have access to shelter. These people choose to have a street existence, although that choice is not exactly free. “It’s a choice which is made under a very constrained set of psychological and social circum-

In-depth Embrace, the student-run homelessness charity

I sat down with Tabitha von Kaufmann, the president of Embrace, a student-run homelessness charity, to chat about the society’s ambition for ending homelessness in Cambridge (Priya Bharadia writes).

“It’s easy to think that you can’t do anything for this city as a student,” Kaufmann says, “since most of us are only here for a couple years. But Cambridge won’t really do anything until students show they care about it.”

Embrace’s last donation drive in July was immensely successful, providing local food banks with 662kg in donations. Their latest donation drive is for winter gloves, with collection boxes available in each college until the 24th of November.

Organising the donation drives has been Kaufmann’s most rewarding and “encouraging” experience with Embrace. “We’re on our fifth one now,” Kaufmann smiles. “So far, we’ve done donation drives for period products, food tins, toothbrushes, and toothpaste. In a place like Cambridge, with so many students, it doesn’t take many donations to make a difference. We have a lot of power to change things.”

“It’s such a good sign for us as a future generation,” she says, “especially as we graduate and start work. Some people here are

going on to be the next politicians – which is scary!” she laughs. “But it’s encouraging to see that there is a real sense of care out there.”

With rising energy bills this winter pushing nearly 1.7 million UK households to breaking point, the work of Embrace feels more essential than ever to its members.

Embrace is feeling this sense of urgency: “We’ve realised how important our donation drives are – there’s really a need out there for basic things people can’t afford, so we’re doing our best to keep that going. We plan to do a food donation drive at the end of every term.”

Embrace is also challenging the University to provide structural solutions to poverty. In 2020, they asked colleges to give up some of their spare land around Cambridgeshire for modular homes.

“Ultimately, Cambridge University is one of the most powerful and wealthy institutions in the world,” Kaufmann says firmly. “There’s absolutely no reason why, in a city dominated by the University, there should be anyone on the streets. There’s no excuse for it.”

Cambridge was reported to be the most unequal city in the UK in 2020. The annual cost of a home in Cambridge was revealed to be £400,000, 13 times higher than the average salary of £34,400.

stances”, says James, “it’s something that a lot of people find difficult to accept.

“Because most people, walking home on a wet night in November and seeing somebody in a doorway, we think if you had somewhere better to be, you wouldn’t be in a doorway.”

Continued street existence is maintained by mental health problems, addiction issues, and, heartbreakingly, friendship. Why sit in your small and bare council-allocated modular home by yourself every evening when you could go out and be with your friends?

James pointed out that a few, between eight and ten, of the streetlife community remained on the streets throughout the pandemic, when there was an unconditional offer of 3 hot meals a day, a private room and an en-suite bathroom each, not to mention the threat of a potentially deadly virus outside.

Barry is a passionate advocate of what he calls “the hello campaign” – that instead of ignoring homeless people, we should acknowledge them and their humanity.

James was wary of blind compassion, however, aware that well-intentioned acts can sometimes do more harm than good. He is a campaigner for “real change, not loose change”, and fears that individuals who ask for money for accommodation are fuelling addiction issues, given Cambridge’s hostels are free.

In 2016 he co-founded the charity Street-Aid, who look to make lasting differences to the lives of the streetlife community. “We might pay for somebody’s first suit for a job or a bike for them to get to work”, he says.

Of course, the University is itself a charity, with a focus on education. The institution, which often sees the needy literally on the doorstep of its magnificent buildings, has the means to generate genuine social change.

James said: “[the University] might want to look at what it pays some of its ancillary staff and make sure that people are paid a wage that would allow them to be able to live in Cambridge”.

He also advocated for social housing projects on University-owned land, which could financially benefit the University, and apprenticeship or educational schemes for those reintegrating into society.

The idea that education could help the University solve such a pressing problem for the city it calls home seems rather appropriate.

Many have criticised the vast wealth inequality that exists between the University and the surrounding town. In 2018, it was revealed that the bottom 20% of the city take home just 2% of the income generated.

In late 2019 it was also reported that a homeless woman gave birth to twins outside of Trinity College. Trinity is Cambridge’s richest college.

In light of this a Labour Councillor at the time commented that organisations and businesses that benefitted from being in Cambridge had a “moral responsibility” for inequality in the city.

Whilst both the causes and solutions to homelessness are complex, speaking with the organisations that are trying to tackle the crisis- more must be done to understand both.

News

Protest calls for Cambridge to reject oil money

Eric Williams

Students and academics protested outside Cambridge's Department for Earth Sciences this Monday, calling on the University to ban fossil fuel industry funding for climate research.

The protests were part of a coordinated campaign at the UK's top three university recipients of fossil-fuel funding, in light of COP27.

Alongside protests at Cambridge, Oxford and Imperial College London, the international coalition of Fossil Free Research coordinated action at universities across the United States and Canada.

Last year, an investigation by *openDemocracy* found the University of Cambridge to have accepted £14 million from oil giants from 2017–21, ranking it

alongside Imperial College London and Oxford University as the largest recipients of oil company funding.

A letter released by the Fossil Free Research campaign has now been signed by over 750 leading academics, scientists and policy-makers, calling for universities to end fossil fuel ties, arguing partnerships create a fundamental conflict of interest, risking the integrity of vital research and academic freedom.

The students and academics argued oil companies should not be partners in researching the green transition, citing research into how fossil fuel companies have greenwashed records on environmental destruction and lobbying against climate legislation.

The rally at Cambridge was co-hosted by Cambridge Climate Justice and Cambridge SU's Ethical Affairs campaign.

Amelia Jabry, postgraduate president of Cambridge Students' Union, said: "Cambridge University is still in bed with fossil fuel giants like Shell, BP and Schlumberger. They accept regular donations from these companies. They fund PhDs with these donations [...] This shouldn't be a choice for a PhD student to make, it should be the prerogative for the University to source and supply ethical and environmentally friendly funding to its students".

Sam Gee, organiser with Cambridge Climate Justice and Fossil Free Research, said that "research ties between universities and fossil fuel companies help to bolster these companies' false claims that they are committed to science- and people-led climate action."

A student attending the protest, Ruari McColl, said: "For universities like mine,

which announced its divestment from fossil fuels in 2020, this is a logical and necessary next step. Without it, these universities are complicit in climate breakdown and the devastation of vulnerable communities."

The criticisms come amid renewed global focus on the influence of fossil fuel companies at COP27. Data released last week by Corporate Accountability, Global Witness and Corporate Europe Observatory showed that fossil fuel lobbyist presence at UN climate negotiations has increased over 25% from COP26 in Glasgow, with the number of oil and gas industry representatives in Sharm el-Sheikh second only in size to the United Arab Emirates delegation.

Last month, Cambridge's University Council passed a motion to delay a vote by academics on a proposal to stop ac-

cepting funding from coal, oil and gas companies. The proposal was submitted in July through the Grace system, which allows academics to vote on matters involving university governance if supported by 50 members of the Regent House. Eighty-four members of the Regent House offered their support, though the University Council still has the power to block the proposals.

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

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

Looking for an intellectually challenging and rewarding career option?

KICK START YOUR
CAREER AS A PATENT
ATTORNEY WITH US

What Does It Involve?

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

You will leave the lab environment yet remain at the cutting edge of science and technology, applying your knowledge and skill in a commercial context. You will help to protect intellectual property assets and grow businesses.

Sound Interesting?

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

Deadline for our Autumn 2023 intake:
10 January 2023

www.jakemp.com/careers

J A KEMP
PATENT ATTORNEYS • TRADE MARK ATTORNEYS

Papal bull? Pope could lead fightback on climate change, new research claims

Orla Holt
Science Reporter

A new Cambridge University-led study has revealed that a papal reinstatement of meat-free Fridays across the Roman Catholic Church could prevent millions of tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually.

The Christian practice of meat-free Fridays dates back to at least the 9th century, where Pope Nicholas I instated the practice in memory of Christ's death. Following a 26-year hiatus, the Catholic bishops of England and Wales issued a statement in 2011 re-establishing meat-free Fridays across their congregations. By comparing emissions generated from the average daily diets of meat and non-meat eaters, a recent research study has quantified the climate impact of the declaration: around one quarter of British Catholics changed their dietary habits in response, and it is estimated that over 55,000 tonnes of carbon a year were saved.

Such a dramatic effect — equivalent to 82,000 fewer return trips from London to New York — has resulted in calls for Pope Francis to re-implement this obligation on a global scale.

The lead author, Professor Shaun Larcom from the University of Cambridge's

Department of Land Economy commented: "The Catholic Church is very well placed to help mitigate climate change, with more than one billion followers around the world. Meat agriculture is one of the major drivers of greenhouse gas emissions. If the Pope was to reinstate the obligation for meatless Fridays to all Catholics globally, it could be a major source of low-cost emissions reductions."

But Catholics needn't worry about getting their protein fix on a Friday, with fish, crabs and even frogs still being permitted. In fact, the McDonald's Filet-o-Fish sandwich was invented as a meat-free alternative for Cincinnati-based Catholics observing the practice in 1962.

Furthermore, there is the potential for other religions to adopt similar approaches in supporting the universal fight against climate change. This has been recognised by the co-author Dr Luca Panzone, who remarked: "While our study looked at a change in practice among Catholics, many religions have dietary proscriptions that are likely to have large natural resource impacts. Other religious leaders could also drive changes in behaviour to further encourage sustainability and mitigate climate change."



▲ A student tucks into a chicken quesadilla after a Friday trip to Vinyl

Cambridge congestion charge proposal sparks backlash

Kareena Rippingale

A proposal to impose a “sustainable travel zone”, launched by the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP), a coalition of local councils, has faced a wave of criticism from Cambridge residents, who say the scheme will benefit students but disadvantage locals.

Between 07:00 and 19:00 on weekdays, those who enter the zone will have to pay a toll of £5. The proposal will be implemented by 2027/28. The zone will stretch about three miles out from the city centre.

The planned travel zone is part of a series of proposed reforms to expand bus networks. Other proposals include a flat £1 bus fare in the city, and a £2 fare for longer journeys. Students in the city already pay the £1 fare on the U-bus, but access to this discount would be widened out to local residents on the proposed scheme.

Peter Blake, GCP transport director, says the congestion charge aims to reduce congestion and air quality issues within Cambridge. The GCP predicts the proposals will reduce traffic by 50% in Cambridge. Public health data found that 48 deaths in Cambridge could be attributed to air pollution in 2020.



However, the travel zone proposal has sparked backlash from residents. A “Cambridgeshire Residents Group” has been set up to oppose the congestion charge, which has nearly 3,000 members. A petition opposing the congestion charge has received over 21,000 signatures.

Opponents to the scheme include residents who fear that the congestion charge will “impact households and businesses who are already struggling in the current financial crisis.” Those who regularly drive into Cambridge for work may have to pay up to £1,300 a

year. Indeed, nearly 70% of Cambridge University’s workforce live outside the city and therefore need to travel daily to work.

However, the GCP claims that the congestion charge will fund improved travel infrastructure, including better walking and cycling routes and lower bus fares to make bus services more accessible.

In a comment to *The Guardian*, Neil McArthur, vice-chair of the Cambridgeshire Residents Group, argued that the proposal favours university students and dons and disadvantages local residents as “the student population and the Cambridge dons won’t suffer ... They probably live and work within the city, they can walk or cycle wherever they want to go.”

McArthur also voiced concern that the University sat on the executive board of the proposals, as a non-voting statutory partner of the GCP, as he suggested that “the gown” was “driving the town”.

A protest march against the proposals will take place in Parker’s Piece on the 27th November. In the meantime, the GCP has launched a survey on the new transport proposals, which can be found on their website.



Light it up! Christmas lights adorn Green Street. Photo by Qing Lu

Tutor for global academic innovation?



Cambridge Global Connect
剑桥智联教育科技

www.camgc-edu.com

SEO/LONDON

SPONSORS FOR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

HAVE YOU SECURED YOUR NEXT INTERNSHIP?

OPPORTUNITIES: access to internships & work experience with 130+ world class employers

SUPPORT: free training, mentoring & employment support

LIFELONG NETWORK: professional connections through our Alumni programme

GIVING BACK: volunteer & pave the way for future generations to follow

JOIN US



campus@seo-london.org
www.seo-london.org



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Fully funded PhD studentships for 2023 entry

- Studentships cover full tuition fees plus an annual stipend.
- Apply for a PhD by 13 January 2023 (or 16 December 2022 for Economics or Geography and Environment) to be considered.

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



Comment



No more white Christmases?

Cartoon by Hannah Castle

Save your pity for catering staff, we don't need it

No matter how much students try to sympathise with college staff, we can manage for ourselves

Connor O'Neill



After seven years in a college catering department, I have come to terms with many of the peculiarities so treasured by the 'gown' half of the population. I know what 'Bumps' is. I am no longer filled with civilian indignation when I walk into work the morning after the King's Affair. Hell, I even learnt your ridiculous names for terms (even if I do refuse to call it Michaelmas). But if there's one thing that still perplexes me to this day, it's the sheer frivolousness of student arguments.

I've seen it all: articles written decrying the loss of that death trap that is the King's Bunker (there is one fire escape for a capacity of 200 and it constantly smells of gasoline). I've seen full scale parliamentary hustings over whether or not we should take down the Soviet flag in the bar – and some people defending it. I know there are no perfect countries but... come on. Usually you just raise your eyebrow and keep

setting up the three course dinner for these faithful comrades. When the argument is about the realities of my own job however, I feel I have a responsibility to wade in.

The impetus for this article comes from two previous articles in this paper. The first one written by a student who – in what I'm sure was an honest attempt to open a dialogue with the wider university community – worked a formal hall shift at Corpus. The second was the rebuttal from a student with a regular job at a college catering department which was a cathartic read – if a little terse.

Both articles were brilliantly written and made some salient points but there is still a piece missing – the non-student perspective. What is a formal like for someone who has worked their fair share of them (just over 100 by my estimate) but never attended one yet?

The first article is a good portrait of the night of the formal, but that is in actuality part of the problem. It starts when the formal starts, far too late to truly illustrate the headache of prepping. Yes, Ents committees try their best but they have to compete with strained budgets, academic pressure, and an organisational ability that would make the Fyre Festival guys tut. I spent my Wednesday night

chasing a gospel choir around the college because they simply had not been told where they needed to be nor when they needed to be there.

After a hundred different last minute changes the doors open, and then the fun really begins. People coming

Events committees try their best but have to compete with strained budgets, academic pressure, and an organisational ability that would make the Fyre Festival guys tut

in without tickets or worse, bringing in bottles of wine bought off campus. We confiscate these bottles and try to explain that if they were caught the college would lose their licence. There's only so many times the same people can tell you they didn't know before you conclude that they simply don't think the rules – the law even –

apply to them.

They laugh at the wait staff who ask them to sit down so they can serve, argue with the bar staff, and start Instagram pages belittling the food of chefs who sometimes work 50-hour weeks to keep them fed. We serve them until after midnight and then come in the next morning to clean up their mess.

And the most ridiculous thing is that we love formals. They're by far the most fun shifts to work. We joke about the students who can't hold their drink. We love the dressing up and the naff entertainment. And while 'students' is a byword for an impending inconvenience we'd be hard pressed to name one we actually dislike. Jonathan Swift wrote "principally I hate and detest that race called man; although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas and so forth" and that's how most staff feel about students. Besides, you'll never be half as annoying as that bane on the catering department: the external client.

The writer of the first article said that if they worked full time in a dining hall "I wouldn't hate students, but I would certainly envy them". I can't agree and in fact I think it's a patronising comment, like they didn't really listen to anything the

people they worked with had to say. It felt like the academic equivalent of white saviourism.

This may surprise you, but, I don't envy you. I don't envy your posh dinners (not least because we eat the same meals of you anyway). I don't worry about cooking for myself because that is something about which only a student could worry and frankly you're not really served "in a manner analogous to a wedding" (your DJs are better and your wine far worse than any wedding I've ever served).

So please don't feel sorry for me or expect me to be envious. I work a well paid, secure job and I have a great employer in King's College. Truth be told, I feel fortunate. I have all the perks of being a member of King's College without having to cope with the stress of exams, or of making sure my outfit is quirky enough to make it onto the Humans of Cambridge Instagram.

So you "bookish engineers and humanities soft boys", feel free to take a seat in the dining hall. We're perfectly happy to stay "outside of the spotlight".

Connor has worked in college catering for seven years. He currently works at King's College.

Comment

It's ok not to have a plan for the future

We're meant to know what our career holds, but really it's the twists and turns that make life precious



Sarah Adegbite

So, any plans for next year? What do you want to do? The question bursts from inquiring lips like an unwelcome intruder. It rises up on playing fields and market streets, in lecture halls and drinks receptions. I know its presence like a pebble in my shoe, but still it rears its ugly head. In the apt words of Tracy Beaker, I want to tell it to 'bog off'. But when you inform people that you're in your last year of university (rookie error, I know), there is truly nowhere to escape. On some days, I have no problem voicing uncertainty, letting that bubble of future doubt float in the air and land in my inquisitor's lap, with a silent 'pop'. On other days, I absolutely dread it. This is not so much when someone else asks me the question as when I make an enquiry of myself. Where do you see yourself in 5 years' time, Sarah? What contribution do you want to make as an active member of society?

At school, I would tell people I

wanted to be a journalist. A solid, respectable career with room for a modicum of creative expression (what was I thinking?). But I realise now that this was a impulse response to satisfy grown ups' questions, and a path that I don't think I had fully thought through. That revelation left me scrambling for answers. What would I become? An academic? A Bible translation consultant? A poet? Hearing about my friends and their job interviews and recruitment days, their grad schemes and master's applications, I feel split down the middle and glued back together. I'm truly, desperately happy for them. I want to see them succeed. These are the people whose weddings I'll attend, whose birthday drinks I will flip around my calendar for, whose children I hope will one day call me 'auntie'. But when they seem one step closer to that future than I am, fear clenches an angry fist.

Perhaps the reason I get apprehensive is my realisation that this is the first time I will have to make a decision for myself, about what I am actually going to do. Up until now, in a way, our lives have been laid out. We complete primary school to get to secondary school. We complete GCSEs to complete A-levels and A-levels to get into university. We have a choice about what subject to do, or what institu-

tion to apply for, but the next stage is pretty much there for you, ready and waiting. This, it seems to me, is the first time where I can truly choose to do whatever I want.

Or can I? A conversation I had with a friend the other day turned quickly

A society where the default question to primary school children is 'what do you want to be when you grow up?' is a society obsessed with progression. But there is beauty in uncertainty.

to the topic of predestination and free will, as they often do. Do we actually have free will? Or are we just wired to act in our 'best interests', implying that whatever we do is predetermined by biological natural instinct? Other issues emerge when you add God into the picture. Does a God who knows everything mean I can actually choose freely, or do I have to act in a certain

way to accord with the future God knows?

And what does this all have to do with my post-uni gap year, parliamentary internship, or law conversion course? Absolutely everything, if you'll let it. Our concern for our free will feeds into the very nature of our discussions on what lies beyond, because humans are funny creatures. We plan our lives as if we are in control of them, and we speak about the future as if it actually existed to us. Many minds more learned than myself have claimed there is no such thing as the future. Just tiny successive present moments all frothing up to one big narrative of our own lives.

This isn't to say that we should stop all plans, cease all job applications, and live in the present moment. I'm not that radical. A society where the default question to primary school children is 'what do you want to be when you grow up?' is a society obsessed with progression. But there is beauty in uncertainty. How is what you're doing today helping the you of tomorrow? Tomorrow's you is just another you in a different 'today'. What if we asked 'what are you doing now?', 'where do you see yourself, in the present?' or 'what does this current moment hold for you?' just as much as the alternative? Perhaps a bold

reorientation of priorities. Or perhaps, knowing that career paths are fickle, to ask 'what do you want to be?' would illicit different answers. Not about corporate prospects or qualifications, but actual human characteristics. Generous with my time, sacrificially loving, faithful and self-controlled: this is who I want to be when I grow up.

Still, eventually, there will come a point down the line where I will have to make some plans. Whether that be an internship, or volunteering, travelling, or just whiling away the days experimenting with what I love most - words - I'll know that those plans are exactly that. Plans. Nothing more and nothing less. James 4:14-15 tells us that we are "a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes." A sobering, but necessary thought. It reminds us that our plans should always be caveated, and instead of arrogant boasting our refrain should be: "If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that." For me, this is a vision of a future cloaked in mystery, veiled in a shroud of that mist of which we are composed. It is a future that shimmers on the horizon, but looks very different when it emerges at the sunrise, up close.

Sarah is a Theology student at St John's

Notebook Hannah Gillott

Under the weather, stuck in bed

I've been stuck in bed a lot this term. I caught what I'm certain are three separate colds (my dad disagrees), scrunched up my feet in a pair of shoes so my heels fell off (don't ask) and, now, can hear that faint ringing in my left ear which signals the arrival of that ear infection which has returned semi-regularly since I swam in the Hampstead ponds.

Like any good Cantabrigian, I hate being unproductive. So I crochet while I watch *Love is Blind* and run through a pack of tissues, my wrist twisting back and forth in a gentle rocking motion. The soft, easy swaying is comforting as I watch the minutes I have frittered away line up, each one connected to the one before, after, above, below, minute soldiers arm in arm, standing single file, red thread muscles taught.

And I write, because I haven't in months, and because my fingers are itching. And I think about time, and I carve nonsensical scribbles into an old notepad with the broken nib of an old pen I find on my floor.

Questions for my supervisor I'll forget to ask

From before my supo: "What is modernity?"

And later: "Do I really need to define modernity?"

I was recently reading about the Great Disruption. There is a theory that between 1792 and 1815, life changed so rapidly and so fully and at such a fundamental level that there was a

Sometimes, the feeling of everyone watching you is helpful. The Seeley fans out in a ripple of dismay and self loathing and sometimes - if you catch me in the right mood - I feel motivated

temporal rupture in the general consciousness. Before then, the past was seen as no different to the present. After, the space of experience and the horizons of expectation became so removed from each other that people could no longer conceptualise the past as alike the present at all, and the

future stretched out unknowingly. The past was *historic*, the future either utopian or dystopian. I was reminded of this when I watched a girl play smash or pass on TikTok with deep fakes of early US presidents adapted from their state portraits and modernised. I wonder if we've started connecting with the past again now that technology can jerk such intangible, deeply removed figures into the uncanny present. Also James Monroe? Lowkey smash.

I've always hated kindles

I'm a fair weather romantic. When the walk to Sidg is a twenty minute stroll through King's, the sun filtering through orange leaves to dapple the Cam in its comforting spotlight, I'll happily brave the journey for a paperback (as long as an arc cookie is waiting with my name on it). But when my mum's old umbrella is the only thing saving me from ruining the

hems of my jeans as I stagger past the consultants on King's Parade tempting me to sell my soul for a stale marshmallow? No. Then, I stay home. This has all worked well for me - the added benefits of working from bed involve Lemsip and snacks, not to mention the fact that the beauty of a hard copy will never outweigh copying and pasting from a pdf. But none of the secondary reading for Borges' *Ficciones* is available online. So I make the pilgrimage.

Working in the panopticon

Sometimes, the feeling of everyone watching you is helpful.

The Seeley fans out in a ripple of dismay and self loathing, and sometimes - if you catch me in the right mood - I feel motivated as I suddenly panic over whether to walk down the left- or right-hand stairs, looking over the library on the plat-

form entryway like a lesser known royal unsure whether or not to wave. Sometimes, though, I have the sudden realisation that my constant sniffing, which I'm drowning out with headphones, is still loud for everyone else. Then I have to leave.

Myopia

This cold - or flu, as I like to call it so I can justify skipping a supervision - is the worst of my life, I lament to my dad on the phone. He asks me if I just called him to complain. I decide whether to answer yes or no. Either one would be indignant. Yes - and so what? *You* decided to have me. I didn't ask to be born etc etc. No - I also need some advice on how to deal with an ear infection, *and* I wanted to see how you were. Whatever. My brain is submerged in a layer of fog and I have a +7 prescription so there's no way I'm making it out of this haze. I'll just drink a dose of cough syrup which borders on lethal and go to sleep.

I wonder why a just-below-average day can feel like the worst one of your life. I wonder why, on a *truly* earth shattering-ly, life altering-ly, horrific day, you worry instead how long you should wait before texting him back, how short you should cut your hair, how many stitches wide your new scarf needs to be.

Hannah is a History and Spanish student at Sidney



Students should stop sacrificing themselves for 'academic rigour'

The endless striving for top performance comes at the cost of students



Bella Cross

In Week Seven of Michaelmas, I sent myself home to have my first day completely off work during term since I started at university, planning to return after. For those who remember Michaelmas last year – after a year of lockdowns, freshers' flu hit everyone, including non-freshers hard. We spent the term hacking our lungs up in lectures, going on and coming off antibiotics, and consuming a concoction of caffeine and painkillers to push through.

I'm not someone who has ever been good at dedicating time to rest, and have subsequently had to learn to do it, but I got so ill I paid the £70 train fare home hoping for some sympathy and soup. Unfortunately, my body had other ideas and what I got was a week-long stay in (underfunded with overworked staff) Devon hospitals, and the beginning of a year of chronic illness. They couldn't find a diagnosis

at the time, but I had strep and scarlet fever. I'll spare you the photos I took in an attempt to make light of the situation, but Cambridge actually managed to bring me down with a Dickensian disease that I thought only sickly Victorian children got.

I won't blame the workload entirely. I had done the classic thing of taking on far too many extracurriculars, a bit too much fun and not enough sleep. But even if I hadn't done this much, the Cambridge term is far too demanding that we are never afforded the time to listen to our bodies and rest. Had, the first time I had a chest infection, or tonsillitis that term, I actually been able to take a full day's rest, I may not have had the frankly quite traumatic year I've just had. Cambridge allows for absolutely no bodily 'imperfection', we are expected to ignore its calls to rest, to enjoy life to the fullest, and instead train ourselves to be confined to a desk in a library from morning to evening.

The sense of superiority that students derive from this ability to undergo a robotic transformation of their bodies to churn out essay after essay for 8 weeks straight, is not

something to celebrate. Why do we hail as the ultimate achievement the capacity to deny ourselves balanced lives and push through illness? There is absolutely no shame in resting, it's no indication of inferior intelligence, and our grades shouldn't have to suffer as a result of recognising this.

But it is this fast pace of life, high intensity and pressure to really relax or have fun when we're not working to make it worth it, that means we're not really even resting when we're trying. The emotional swings of termly life require that even when we are seeking balance, we settle on something restless.

The ironic thing is that this ascetic grindset that has Cambridge as an institution and students in its grip, isn't even conducive to producing the best work or our best selves. How can we be creative, and push the boundaries of academia, and truly have time to critically engage and immerse ourselves in the literature if we are forced to churn out a 2000 word essay, and turn immediately to a new topic? I absolutely love my course, and I love how many exciting opportunities Cambridge has given me to learn from absolute legends within the field. But

it would be wonderful to be afforded the chance to really sit with these ideas.

We need, with it, greater opportunity for our own self-development and exploration, which is such an integral part of the experience of coming into adulthood whilst at University, and just as valuable as any strictly academic aspect of our degree. What does this intensity really prepare us for, other than to accept awful working conditions and bodily regulation for the rest of our lives?

The most mind boggling permutation of this very Cambridge self-denial is the broad acceptance of what is essentially a recognised week of depression in week five, when everyone else gets a reading week and designated time of rest. Every term, like clockwork, 'week 5 blues' hit as students withdraw from social life and are buried under their work. Yet despite this, the University is sending the message that they wish to see a 'reduced workload' instead.

All of the criticisms aimed at a reading week, including fears that supervisors will continue to set work, people won't use it to 'properly' rest (whatever that means) will not be solved by a 'reduced workload' – whilst the institution con-

tinues to place such intense pressure on students for 'high performance'. Academic surveillance and chastising students who get a 2.ii only heightens the immense pressures which Cambridge students place upon themselves. The admissions process ensures that those who are students here are already high-performing, motivated and engaged students. So the University ought to promote healthy work-life balances to help them thrive.

Cambridge is trapped in a self-regulating mindset of punishment, and we buy into it. We punish ourselves with more and more work, and we are punished if we fail to adhere to this self-regulation. It shouldn't take me getting an essentially eradicated disease, and the cycle of an incapacity to eat, move or swallow, antibiotics, and 'recovery' until my surgeries this summer to call for us all to have a chance to rest. The psychological toil, let alone physical toil, of this has been immense and it's not something I should have to implore people to have empathy for. Yet it seems that I do, because we are stuck in a self-perpetuating cycle of suffering in the name of academic rigour – and we must escape

Bella is an HSPS student at Selwyn



WHY CONSULT WHEN YOU CAN LEAD?

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

Omar, Assistant Brand Manager, Tampax



Alumnus of Emmanuel College

Zoe, Sales Manager, Febreze



Alumnus of Robinson College

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



Alumnus of Pembroke College



THE MAYS

The 31st edition of The Mays anthology, the best new student writing from The University of Cambridge & The University of Oxford, is recruiting a team. Culminating in a widely sold publication, The Mays has previously been guest edited by Stephen Fry, Zadie Smith and Kate Bush.

Applications are open for the following roles:
Deputy Editor • Oxford Liaison Officer • Art & Photography Editor • Poetry Editor • Prose Editor • Digital Artist

To apply please send your CV, 300 words detailing your vision for the role, and short answers to the following questions to mays-editor@varsity.co.uk

- 1.) Name a poem/book/artwork that moves you
- 2.) If you could have dinner with any creative person living or dead who would they be?
- 3.) If you were a font, which font would you be? (silly answers only)



Application deadline:
Midnight 2nd December 2022
Submissions will open at a later date in 2023.

www.themaysanthology.co.uk

The smoking area

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Tobia Nava

Students embraced their spooky-sides while performing *The Haunting of Hill House* at the Union Chamber last week



My prediction for the Union election

Mrs H. Ack gives you the down-low on this weekend's race

After digging through the Orator's bins, I've found some complete analysis about this term's Cambridge Union presidential candidates that we hope will elucidate our audience's choices as they choose to exercise their "fundamental democratic right" to vote in this election.

The president is a position reserved for Cambridge's *crème de la crème*, who, after various terms of sending thousands of friend requests to everyone at the University, are ready to cash in that "networking" for votes. Most candidates worry that they'll seem irritating by constantly drenching their colleagues with grovelling manifestos; thankfully the time-tested prefix of "I know these messages are getting annoying" absolves them entirely.

My favourite to take the election this term is an infamous character in Cambridge. After garnering an incredible eight sign-ups for CUCA at this Freshers' Fair, he is ready to take on the Cambridge Union a second time. Of course, the man we are talking about is none other than James Appiah III. Running behind the slogan "Happier with Appiah", James is off to a slow start with rhyming pedants. James acknowledges the huge economic barriers that membership to the Union holds and promises to keep them there. During a cost of living crisis, focusing on doing more stuff for the same price, rather than lowering the price, is an interesting tactic, although

if his "publicly requested" boxing match comes to fruition we may be willing to double our subscription rates.

Challenging James is a candidate you've probably heard about too many times, Sam Carling. Not content enough with his jobs as city councillor, University councillor, Christ's JCR president, Camfess Top Fan, CULC co-chair, Keir Starmer's bag carrier, and a previous writer for this publication, Sam Madri is looking for another job as Union president. Sam Beavertown promises to make the Cambridge Union the centre of Cambridge student life, but I once watched someone try to light a vape with a lighter after a Wednesday revs and it feels unlikely he'll live up to that.

Lastly, this term's equalities officer, former CUCA speakers officer, Ellie Breeze. Backed by a wonderful endorsement from Calvin Robinson's Twitter, Ellie promises to focus on equality and members' welfare. Though all of this is very important, I would rather see self-proclaimed future politicians hitting each other in Appiah's boxing match.

I can't wait to see the outcomes of this election, and the bold improvements that will definitely be implemented. Union presidential races are a lot like England at major tournaments, in spite of all possible previous evidence, you have to convince yourself that this time, things will actually be better.

NOT *the* NEWS

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

James Grimditch

Varsity Sex Survey flaws revealed

An in depth analysis has unearthed evidence that *Varsity's* sex survey data could be fundamentally flawed. After one mathmo answered that he'd had had over a dozen sexual partners the alarm was raised and *Varsity* hacks now suspect some kind of hilarious practical joke.

Anti-Southgate fever blooms in build up to World Cup

"Take the handbrake off Southgate!" screamed one furious fan. Tensions were running high in the fan zone after England scraped to a narrow 6-2 victory over top-ranked Asian side Iran. "Yeah, we've got the most talented generation in decades — let's get Eric Dier on the ball and watch that French midfield tremble!" screamed another. When pressed about specifics one fan answered: "He should start playing more attacking football, I mean our captain is Harry Kane, he didn't lift the pre-season Audi Cup by parking the bus you know?"

Students mourn Charlie Kirk's cancellation

Cambridge was in a sombre mood on Wednesday as news broke that Trump-activist Charlie Kirk had cancelled his appearance at the Union. After a humiliation at the midterms, Charlie Kirk has elected to stay in America, robbing this

cradle of knowledge and education of his views on man-made global warming being a hoax, or his outspoken views on the 2020 election being stolen.

Jack's sponsorship causes uproar

Jack's Gelato's sponsorship of King's College football team has sparked envy throughout Cambridge. When informed of the news, one disgusted Selwyn FC player threw his shirt to the ground and gesticulated at their sponsor: "They get all this free ice cream — what have Oxfam ever given us?"

David Beckham set to become ambassador for Marlboro

David Beckham, fresh off the back of his role in Qatar, announced this week his new role as brand ambassador for the cigarette titans. "The Western media only ever points out the deaths and misery associated with this brand," said a spokesperson for the former England star, "but David is excited to show the rich culture behind Marlboro to the world." With the fee rumoured to be around £10 million, Joe Lycett is currently threatening to chain-smoke 10,000 cigarettes unless Golden Balls backs down.

Trumpington

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



Trumpington has noticed humanities students looking brighter eyed than usual over the last few days. Their tote bags have been swinging a little more freely, a leisured spring has entered their steps as strut toward the Pret queue, subscriptions in hand.

Gone are the eye-bags, hangovers, and MMLers' trademark mid-lecture nicotine shakes. You see, dear reader, Christmas has come early for Cambridge's aesthetes. The UCU has come to tell us who is bad or good, and strikes have come to town.

No longer is hitting snooze through a 9am Foucault seminar in a post-Revs stupor a waste of £9000. Today, it is an act of solidarity with working people all over the world. Last week, missing a lecture was a thing of shame. Today, it is a badge of pride.

Even those who ignore the cries of "scab" and brave the Sidgwick pickets (looking at you lawyers and economists) are finding their days just that little bit easier.

Gone are the post-lecture ARC cafe queues snaking past the law faculty, pressing into the classics museum. No more are the shortages of vegetarian paninis after the midday rush.

Just spare a thought for those poor natscis and mathmos, trudging to the Downing site in their BP lab coats, holding on to the dream of that Lockheed Martin internship as they sheepishly pass their humanities-studying peers, shouting at them with clear, bright voices from the picket line.

And while, reader, you are in a sympathetic mood, I urge you to turn your mind to the CRABS, Clare College's drinking society. *Varsity* takes its role as a guardian of students' interests seriously. We also know that the cost-of-living crisis is squeezing students across the University.

This is why our front page this week highlights what is unquestionably the greatest injustice this term has seen.

The wicked, grasping authorities of Clare College have been using their bully pulpit to encourage the poor, sweet men of the CRABS to donate £50 each to charity for a mere moment of undergraduate indiscretion.

Who among us can honestly say that they have never set fire to a fresher in a moment of youthful high-spirits? Which of us, at least, can seriously say that they have never wanted to.

And yet the College seeks to punish something so trivial, so essentially harmless! What, after all, is a little ritualised masculine violence between friends?

Have the Clare authorities not considered the impact an inappropriately attired drinking soc will have on the College's reputation?

One can only hope that prescient alumni have endowed scholarships in anticipation of such an eventuality.

Leaders & letters



Student spaces are under threat from colleges. We must defend them.

In 1985, the Queens’ College JCR was the place to be. A fly-on-the-wall BBC documentary about the College reveals boisterous students lifting and reorganising the furniture, conducting raucous initiations for their respective drinking societies and generally mucking around. “What are you doing!” shouts one jeering student as his friend — a member of the Christian Union — downs three pints of beer. A packed JCR room looks on in amazement without a porter or staff member in sight.

A situation like this would be unthinkable in 2022. That same JCR, though untouched physically, is now firmly under the College’s thumb. The bar is run by professional staff and is locked at 11.30pm at the latest — during Covid it was shut entirely. You’ll get told off for resting your feet on the furniture let alone moving it around.

Autonomous student spaces like these are sacred. With exploitative leases, intrusive bedders and strict deadlines, they are the areas where students can unwind outside the watchful glare of their aptly named supervisors. But they are going extinct. Time and time again, nanny Cambridge has been caught flexing its institutional muscles, finding new and increasingly imaginative ways to police students.

Sidney Sussex’s latest venture is no exception. Today’s paper reveals that college pencil pushers wanted to install CCTV in the student run bar paid for by the bar’s own profits, but ditched the plans following student pressure. The College sheepishly admitted “they didn’t get it right the first time”.

But the problem stretches beyond Sidney: after the pandemic, colleges across the University have been trying to encroach on the few autonomous student spaces that exist. Student-run college bars are now a rarity: JCRs, once the centre of undergraduate life, now stand empty, a graveyard of gowns draped over unused chairs. And how can we forget King College’s plans to turn their iconic bunker into a soulless conference hall, even if they were put on hold due to a lack of funding.

There is also the desire among college authorities to surveil their students’ activities. Colleges arbitrarily lock card-access of particular entrances after a certain point in the night. Indeed, so far has the paranoia spread amongst the minds of our masters that, should the conscientious undergraduate find themselves in the company of a fellow student, they are officially required by many colleges to fill in an “Overnight Guest” form. If bureaucracy be the food of love: scribble on.

While Cambridge is far from the only university to employ a security service, rarely are they so present as the Oxbridge porter. Hiding behind the deceptively fuzzy brims of their bowler hats, we find another relic of the University’s past. Friendly though many porters can be, they have long since surpassed the bounds of a bobbie’s beat — venturing from their plodges in college-branded vans, they wait in anticipation of potential parties, while costumed students tiptoe past.

Sadly, it has ever been thus. Even the town’s infrastructure has been dictated by the University to restrict student independence. The train station is so far from the city centre because the University wanted to prevent students from leaving Cambridge during term-time to go to London: proposals to create a more central station were vetoed by the University through the 19th and 20th centuries.

And yet we signed up to it. If you’re lucky enough to bag a First at some colleges, you’ll have to verbally submit to college authority. At Gonville & Caius, during the Scholar’s Ceremony you stand up in the chapel to recite a promise to “live a simple life” and “obey the College authorities in all matters”.

But as the students at Sidney have shown us, it doesn’t always have to be this way. If enough pressure is applied, we can resist the hand of college authority to defend the spaces that make being a student wonderful.

For students, there’s no winning the culture war

The national press is using universities to stoke the culture war, and the Cambridge Union is complicit. Last Thursday, the Union debated the motion “This house believes in the right to offend”. Speaking in favour of this surely irrefutable motion were highly controversial gender-critical feminist Dr Kathleen Stock, and Cambridge Professor Arif Ahmed. There were no invited speakers arguing for the opposition.

While protesters exercised their right to free speech outside the chamber, members exercised theirs inside, and voted comfortably in favour of the right to offend: 247 votes to 72. The Times wrote up the debate, in an article endorsed as “excellent” by the Union president, Lara Brown. The title of the piece? “Cambridge University students ‘fear being offensive’”.

I’m no journalist, but I would suggest that a more accurate headline might be “Cambridge students vote overwhelmingly in favour of the right to offend”. But you won’t see that article in *The Times*, *The Daily Mail*, or even on *The BBC*. Why? Because it doesn’t fit the favoured national narrative — that students are entitled, woke, out-of-touch snowflakes.

The author of *The Times*’ write-up is only one of many parasitic journalists, pundits, and politicians gorging themselves on Oxbridge clickbait. Cast your mind back to the most scandalous incident of 2021: when Magdalene College Oxford MCR took down a photo of the Queen that had been in their common room since 2013. From the wall-to-wall media coverage of the “incident”, you’d think Oxford had just declared itself a secessionist republic. It was discussed on countless radio stations; in print in *The Times*, *The BBC*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, and *The*

Sun; and commented on by the education secretary, the mayor of Greater Manchester, and a spokesperson for then-Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The removal of the photo was met with paroxysms of national outrage, and blanket condemnation of out-of-touch, disrespectful, woke Oxford students. How many students voted to take the print down? 10. The Union is no stranger to deliberately courting culture war controversy and trying to generate these sorts of viral moments, but this term has been worse than usual. Last week, debate speaker Calvin Robinson — obviously butthurt because Union members treated him with exactly as much seriousness as he deserves — took to tweeting attacks on individual students that racked up thousands of likes, and trawling Camfess for content to mock, like a well-adjusted adult. We were mercifully spared Toby Young (so in demand that he was nabbed by the Oxford Union for their original motion “This house believes woke culture has gone too far”), and Charlie Kirk, who needed a time out after the Republican’s loss in Arizona.

My objection is not primarily that these speakers are interminably boring (though they are), or that some have a tenuous grip on reality. It’s that the only purpose served by a termcard full of such speakers is to make a spectacle not of the speakers, but of the Cambridge Union’s members. We become the national punchline, no matter how we behave or vote in the chamber. Good-faith debates and reasoned objections will not save Cambridge students from the ire of right-wing populists and their followers, or from the British media’s infantilisation. The truth never gets in the way of a good story.

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

It was a given that a Union debate on a culture war topic, featuring Kathleen Stock, and being filmed for a Channel 4 documentary on gender issues, would be picked up by the national print media. In fact, it was almost certainly intended to be. The clickbait headline of *The Times*’ piece “Cambridge University students ‘fear being offensive’”, is clumsily paraphrased from Stock’s speech. The write-up contains multiple long quotes from Stock, and a quote from Ahmed. But the only student’s views represented are those that align with the intended narrative. There is no mention of the 247 students who decisively rejected the “snowflake” position, and embraced the right to offend. The only allusion to the debate outcome is that Stock “won”.

We must stop letting the Union bait students into becoming the story. The offence debate was a performance, but not for our benefit.

Laura Ryan, Downing College

Mathmos can be Swifties too!

Sir,

I much agree with Ella Shattock’s excellent re-review of Taylor Swift’s new album, *Midnights*. I do have a significant qualm though. The author calls out Fitz Mathmos on being completely unaware of the goings on in the Taylor Swift world. I myself am a Fitz Mathmo, who not only sent in a letter complaining about the initial review, but who also recalls (briefly) speaking to the author (in person) about *Midnights* only a few days after the initial review.

An amused and bemused Isaac Kaufmann, Fitzwilliam College

Correction

As a paper, we take accuracy seriously, but sometimes mistakes get made. In our last edition (11 November) we claimed that Chang Liu, Chair of the SU’s BME campaign was against the anti-racism statement that was in discussion. This was incorrect. Varsity editors

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. Last trip is November 24!

EDITORS Fergal Jeffreys & Jacob Freedland editor@varsity.co.uk
DEPUTY EDITOR Lewis Andrews deputyeditor@varsity.co.uk
MAGAZINE EDITORS Hannah Gillott & Sophie Macdonald magazine@varsity.co.uk
NEWS Hugh Jones & Meg Byrom (senior), Michael Hennessey, Bella Shorrocks & Louis Mian (deputy) news@varsity.co.uk
FEATURES Erik Olsson features@varsity.co.uk
COMMENT Jonathan Heywood & Jack Rennie opinion@varsity.co.uk
INTERVIEWS Eleanor Mann & Hannah Gillott interviews@varsity.co.uk
SCIENCE Louis Hodgson & Joseph Steane science@varsity.co.uk
SPORT Joshua Korber-Hoffman & James Hardy sport@varsity.co.uk
ARTS Isabel Dempsey arts@varsity.co.uk
FILM & TV Kez Kurtz filmandtv@varsity.co.uk

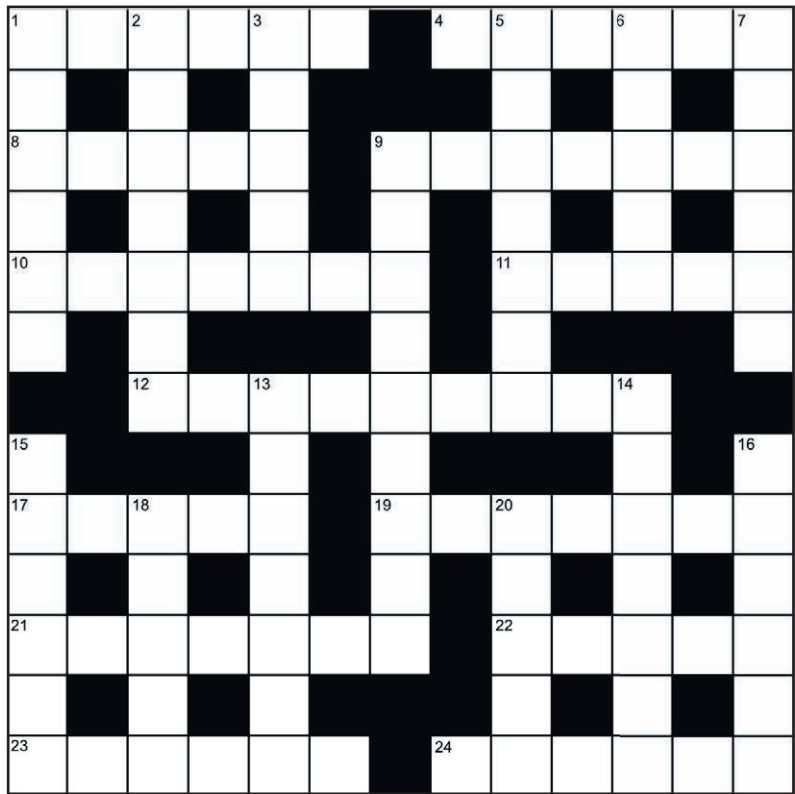
LIFESTYLE Juliette Kendal & Jasmine Hearn lifestyle@varsity.co.uk
MUSIC Daniel Hilton music@varsity.co.uk
THEATRE Toby Stinson theatre@varsity.co.uk
LETTERS Samuel Hudson letters@varsity.co.uk
PRODUCTION Jakob Alwall
CHIEF SUB-EDITOR Suchir Salhan subeditor@varsity.co.uk
ASSOCIATE EDITORS Lotte Brundle & Bethan Moss associate@varsity.co.uk
BUSINESS MANAGER Mark Curtis business@varsity.co.uk
VARSOC PRESIDENT Fergal Jeffreys president@varsity.co.uk
VARSlTY BOARD Dr Michael Franklin (Chairman), Prof Peter Robinson, Dr Tim Harris, Michael Derringer, Mark Curtis (Company Secretary), Alan Bookbinder, Elizabeth Howcroft, Fergal Jeffreys, Lotte Brundle & Nick Bartlett (Directors)

© VARSITY PUBLICATIONS LTD, 2022. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior permission of the publisher. Varsity, 16 Mill Lane, Cambridge CB2 1RX. Telephone 01223 337575.

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

The smoking area

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD by Evie Burr



- Across**
- 1. I need a design to be Epic! (6)
 - 4. Snoops around pub chain (6)
 - 8. Small deficit needs to be picked up (5)
 - 9. It's not odd to have gin cocktail at the end of the day (7)
 - 10. Decree about five hundred is with-drawn (7)
 - 11. Maybe unsee what is to follow (5)
 - 12. Pause lookout for timepiece (9)
 - 17. Bad to go after Selwyn College for a laugh (5)
 - 19. Pleased to have passed (7)
 - 21. We, sitting in broken punts, are covered in dust (7)
 - 22. Mindful of a conflict in hospital ward (5)
 - 23. Greta keeps having to do exam again (6)
 - 24. First couples of New Zealand to be caught up in south east? Its a blowout! (6)

- Down**
- 1. Nothing's going on in this theatre (6)
 - 2. Details of acne treatment hidden in rising sun (7)
 - 3. King sits in diner right away, drunk and tattooed (5)
 - 5. Stop before opening (7)
 - 6. Throws up, first off, and forgets (5)
 - 7. Sunk like a sad, sad egg (6)
 - 9. We don't go around men giving funding (9)
 - 13. A good time to travel down the mountain? (3-4)
 - 14. Captive has got chaotic energy (7)
 - 15. Distributer is mistakenly sure (6)
 - 16. Stick advertisement in this spot? (6)
 - 18. Where an actor might be in the beginning (5)
 - 20. A profit once more! (5)



SUDUKO by Sam Hudson

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

QUIZ by Sam Hudson

- 1. What is traditionally the first hymn sung as part of Carols from King's?
- 2. When was there last a White Christmas in Cambridge?
- 3. When did the Cam last freeze over?
- 4. How many years separate the death of St Nicholas and the founding of Cambridge?
- 5. Only the monarch and fellows of which college are allowed to eat swan for Christmas?
- 6. Which famous Cambridge scientist, among other things, was born on Christmas day, rejected the Holy Trinity, attended Trinity college, and was buried in Westminster Abbey?
- 7. Roughly how many people have bought mince pies this Christmas season in the UK so far?
- 8. Which band formed at Jesus had a Christmas number one in 2016?
- 9. Which Cambridge alumnus, whose name has provided inspiration to a recurring character in the Porter's Log, was the last Cambridge alumnus to captain England in a Boxing Day test match?
- 10. How many people watched the Queen's speech last year?

This week's answers:
1. Once in Royal David's City
2. 2010
3. 1963
4. 968
5. St John's
6. Isaac Newton
7. 5 - 5.5 million
8. Clean Bandit
9. Michael Atherton
10. 9.1 million

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

CHESS by Gwilym Price

The date for the 141st Varsity Chess Match has now been confirmed, which along with the British University Championships and College League will make for a busy Lent term. The Bridgemas blitz championships are also taking place on 28th November.



Price - Galer, Local League 2021.
Black to play and win.



Green - Price, BUCA 2021. White to play and win.

Solutions to puzzles from Issue No. 906:

- #7: 1...Qxh2+! 2. Kxh2 Nf2#
- #8: 10...Nxf2! 11. Kxf2 fxe4 12. Nxe4 Qh4+ 13. Ke3 (Critical; 13. Ng3 e4 wins the piece back with a winning position.) 13... Bh6+ 14. Kd3 Qxe4+!! 15. Kxe4 Bf5+ 16. Kd5 c6+ 17. Kxd6 and now a lot of moves win. The finish I chose was 17... Na6 18. Bxh6 Rfe8 19. Bg5 Re6+ 20. Kd7 Kf7! and mate is inevitable via ... Re7+ and Rd8#.

COMIC STRIP by Isa Hanak



Vulture

Are the Footlights
still funny?
Page 24

Best Xmas
decorations
page 26

'Don't kiss in Revs'
smoking area'
Q&A with clubbing's
most famous
face page 21



'It felt impossibly romantic'

Exclusive interview with the Nightclimbers



Erik Olsson

One very late evening at the turn of the millennium, Tom Whipple and 40 other Cambridge students found themselves on the roof of the Fitzwilliam museum.

Having held their boozy annual dinners on the same evening, both the University and Churchill's climbing societies had decided – independently of each other – to scale Cambridge's most famous museum.

"Night climbers often get away with it because people simply do not look up," says Whipple. But on this occasion, the police did

in fact *look up*. Perhaps to the great misfortune of one climber who was quite literally caught with his pants down, having just hooked his boxer shorts on one of the spires.

"We all got down, pretty much, because the police did not know where we were getting down, but I was the last one down with him because he had to pull up his trousers and then [the police] sort of chased us to Peterhouse".

The underwear trick was a trademark move of Whipple's, however, who in his third year decided that he'd start leaving his boxer shorts on spires. "I would point to them the next day saying it was me," he recalls.

Now a successful journalist at *The Times*, Whipple speaks nostalgically about his night climbing adventures while a mathematics undergraduate at Churchill.

"It felt impossibly romantic," he remembers. "But fundamentally it's students pissing about, being idiots".

His love affair with night climbing began at home though. To the dismay of his mother, Whipple's dad had lent him a copy of *The Night Climbers of Cambridge* before heading to university.

"It's a beautiful book if you haven't read it," he says, gently encouraging me to borrow a copy. "It's spectacularly well written".

Published under the pseudonym "Whipple-snaith" in 1937, the guide is still a must-read for any aspiring night climber, detailing in vivid prose how to scale Cambridge landmarks like Senate House and King's Chapel. It is often credited with inspiring the Cambridge tradition we now know as night climbing.

Another night climber, a second year undergraduate, is similarly inspired by Whipple-snaith's book: his eyes light up as he recounts reading the book for the first time.

Whipple went on to try his hand at some

Story continued on page 20 ►

‘Nobody knows what to say’: The Cambridge socials making grief less awkward

The British stiff upper lip has long been an obstacle in talking about our feelings. But speaking about grief doesn't have to be so awkward, learns **Jasmine Hearn**

University move-in day is a milestone for all Cambridge students. Some pose for photos by cloisters and staircase nameplates, shared on Facebook by proud parents. Others cling to siblings, not wanting the final goodbye hug to end. Stories are shared with new friends in those first weeks about your home, your family, and where you come from. Being away from your family for possibly the first time means connection to your roots feels more important than ever before.

But this isn't the case for all students, points out Milly Stubbs, host of the Cambridge branch of Let's Talk About Loss, an organisation which arranges meet-ups for bereaved 18–35-year-olds. Those initial weeks can pose a challenge for students who've lost someone close to them: "Everyone will assume you've got parents." It can be awkward to reveal to new people that you don't. Other students lose relatives during their time at Cambridge, and getting that phone call whilst in the library or your uni room brings a whole host of challenges.

There's still an awkwardness hovering over conversations around grief, particularly in the student demographic, where it's relatively

uncommon. I spoke to Stubbs to find out more about how grief fits into university life, and the support available through Let's Talk About Loss meetups.

What might life look like for students who have faced unexpected bereavement?

Stubbs was clear that this is different for everyone. Many keep emotions about bereavement private. It can be difficult to share heavy feelings with new people at university: "They might not want to make people feel bad," Stubbs said. The awkwardness around grief can go both ways, it seems. So how do we open up these conversations?

What might bereaved students need from friends whilst at university?

Stubbs stressed that no matter how awkward you might feel, if someone shares a bereavement with you, recent or not, "don't shut off the conversation". Being open is the most important thing. It's OK to say, "I don't know what to say", she told me. Sitting with the awkwardness and accompanying your friend in their sadness is a skill which will be appreciated.

Even if someone doesn't want to talk straight away, showing openness to listen and talk in the future is what counts. Stubbs said most people respond to death with sympathy alone, and are unsure what to say next. "It's rare, but more supportive, to say something like, 'I'd love you tell me about so-and-so... what were they like?' Nothing you can say will change what's happened, so it's important to acknowledge how painful it is, and simply to be with your friend through it".

Stubbs stressed that whilst practical duties for a bereaved person might dwindle with time, grief doesn't. And so, she said, check in regularly. "If you can, pick up on anniversaries; write the date in your phone calendar". Reach out on occasions which might be hard, like Mother's Day and Father's Day, "because it's just in your



face". Don't presume that your friend is struggling, because they might not be. Instead, start with an open question: "I know Christmas is coming up, I don't know how you feel about it, and I just wanted to check in".

It's not all about discussing grief, though. "Some people want a complete distraction", she said. Continuity can be a blessing, too: if there's an activity historically unique to your friendship, "keep going, or keep at least asking your friend if they want to keep going".

It's not uncommon for people to cope with trauma with jokes and dark humour. As an onlooker, this might make you feel awkward and unsure of what to say. How can someone navigate this?

"It's a difficult balance," Stubbs said, but the important thing is to stay humble, and to understand that there's no right thing to say. Again, it's no bad thing to feel awkward, and it's OK to laugh along. But Stubbs stressed that it's important not to reciprocate too hard, because it's insensitive. If you do say something you regret, it's better to address it – to acknowledge that something you said came out wrong, and you're sorry.

What do meetups involve?

▲ Let's Talk About Loss meetups

Despite the name, Let's Talk About Loss meetups aren't limited to discussing grief – and neither does Stubbs want it to be that way. "We're not trained counsellors, we're just peers that have similar experiences," she said. The group might gather at a pub or café, or do something more active like bowling. When the weather is nicer, meetups move outdoors, for a walk or picnic. "There's no pressure to open up – some people find it beneficial just to listen," Stubbs said.

Anyone is welcome at meetups. University life is often the chapter in which we're starting to lose grandparents and other elderly relatives. But Stubbs pointed out that "the bereavements that are too soon are so much harder to get your head around," so the group typically attracts people who have lost someone too young. The main thing is that it's useful to be able to ask if anyone else has gone through the same thing and share experiences – conversations about grief with people who've gone through the same thing are useful, but so, too, is sensitive support from friends.

Continued from page 19 ▼

climbing in his first term, practising first on Newnham College's Victorian drainpipes which, I'm reliably told, are very sturdy – perfect for any novice.

Gradually growing in confidence, Whipple graduated to more challenging climbs, deciding in his third year to scale one of the spires of King's college. "I did go up King's chapel but not in a way I'm particularly proud of," he says, acknowledging the assistance he received from some helpfully placed scaffolding.

"I left a toilet seat at the top and it stayed up there for a few months, which is good fun," he says.

How do colleges take down the items often left by night climbers? "There were definitely pants that

stayed up the entire time I was at Cambridge which probably got taken down by the process of weathering". One particularly memorable pair of hoisted black boxer shorts were white by the time Whipple left university.

More recently, however, night climbers will often do the climb again a few weeks later to retrieve the objects they left, according to one recent graduate.

The relationship between colleges and night climbers is nevertheless understandably fraught, though it seems colleges have grown increasingly strict over time.

While Whipple thinks "most colleges [...] generally seemed to be alright with it" in the early 2000s, one recent graduate paints a completely different picture, telling me that some colleges have been

known to expel those caught scaling its buildings.

There's also been a recent attempt by some who claim to be the night climbers to gatekeep the activity. "I'm not sure if the people who claim to be the night climbers are the true night climbers," warns Whipple. "People will have assumed the banner of the night climbers".

Indeed, we should be careful to think of night climbing as a secret society. Night climbing is often nothing more than just friends meeting informally to have a good time.

"We talk about [night climbing] as if it's a secret society," says Whipple. "Partly because it's Cambridge and it has this mystique [...] at a less storied university, there'd be a lot less indulgence of it".

There is a sense of heritage and continuum to

maintaining the night climbing tradition, but this is nothing more than a state of mind. There is certainly no official membership – as much as some may claim there to be.

Night climbing does not come without risks, however. Whipple details one particularly gruesome injury following a climb of Gonville & Caius college, which would involve an operation on his testicles.

"Although I have had children, so it was successful," he reassures me. "Fairly obviously [night climbing] is not sufficiently condemned by the University and is not sensible at all".

Would he recommend night climbing to a fresher? "The absolute last thing I'd want is people to read this, do it and get hurt. But if I meant that really sincerely I wouldn't be talking to you at all".

QUICKFIRE

Club BNOC Jamali Blair

Jamali Blair is a second-year Historian at King's. He's made a name for himself with his iconic Insta stories and updates

Who are the boys in your universe who feature regularly on your Instagram story?

"Boys in my universe"? That's... interesting wording, I feel very Love Island-y, very Bachelorette-y! Basically, I have two running jokes on my stories, "Corpus Josh" and "Emmanuel Matthew"! Corpus Josh came about because I asked him for notes and he didn't come through (YOU DID ALL MY PAPERS, DID THE EXTRA TRIPOS RANKING BOOST YOUR DICK SIZE?!?) and it became a running joke last year when I was having an existential crisis over my exams! It would be my luck

that he'd end up being a BNOC rugby player? Seriously though, Josh is the nicest guy, he's an absolute legend for taking all the coloniser/Young Tory jokes so well! I'm very aware that my jokes can probably come off badly if you don't know/get my humour (and I suspect half of Corpus think I'm the second coming of Myra Hindley/Ted Bundy, which isn't ideal) so I'll probably stop the jokes soon enough! The amount of times I get asked about Josh in the club is a definite cock-block! Matthew is also lovely, that joke came about because he ignored me when I first met him and absolutely hated me, and who can blame him? Even I'm aware I can probably come across as very dumb and obnoxious and cocky on first impression!

Favourite book?

James Haskell's What A Flanker, or Katie Price's Be-

ing Jordan! Maybe Diary of a Wimpy Kid because I don't think any character sums me up better than Greg Heffley — a big sloppy femma with a cursed and messy love life, desperately trying to be an alpha?

Actual favourite book?

Gone With The Wind or To Kill A Mockingbird? I'll also cheat and throw in A Streetcar Named Desire even though it's more of a play because it was my favourite part of A-Level English Lit? (You can tell I've not read much outside of my degree lately, shit!)

Introvert or extrovert?

Introvert! I've always struggled a lot with anxiety and depression/trust issues and I can definitely be quite guarded and shy around new people? I think I'm good at reading people and matching their en-

ergy, but I'd also say I struggle with putting myself out there and not feeling self-conscious, at least when I'm sober! I think that's why I enjoy clubbing so much, because I can lose a lot of my inhibitions and emotional hang-ups.

What's the worst joke you've ever heard?

My life! That sounds very teen angst, but I can't think of anything on the spot!

Top 3 songs on the pre playlist?

Oops I Did It Again, because you can't beat a good bit of Britney, can you? Livin' La Vida Loca, because you can't beat a

bit of Ricky Martin when you're trying to get in the mood to flirt and drop game, surely?! God, that sounds dead cringey! Hypnotise by Notorious B.I.G because you can't beat a bit of 90s rap?

Who's your Cambridge arch-nemesis?

Probably myself, I feel like I'm so blunt and sarky that my mouth either gets me into trouble or has people preconceiving me negatively before getting to know me?

Gardies or Van of Life?

I can't not say Van of Life. The guy who works there and I have been on a beautiful, year-long journey of him trying and failing to spell my name right, so I have to shout out my guy! Big up Greta too though!

Advice for freshers? Don't kiss in Revs smoking area! Don't beef the historian who has the same sporting interests as you and whose college is right next door to you? Basically... don't make my mistakes and you'll be fine!

Where do you sleep?

In a bed! Nowadays... mostly my own! I should probably put more effort into dating apps but I always feel dead cringey

using Tinder/Hinge?

Wildest night out?

How much can I say without getting blacklisted from future employers? Should I go full Theresa May "running through fields of wheat?" Wildest night out... maybe when me and a bunch of the CURUFC lads randomly started stripping in Wednesday Revs? Honourable mentions to a) when I went to Twickenham for Varsity Rugby, a group of Oxford people bought me £100 worth of drinks at Spoons and I ended up making the Chelsea Pensioners lift me, or b) having my best pull rate during that two week period where my hair looked like pubes as a result of *that* bad haircut?

Where will you be found on a Wednesday night?

Spoons, then Revs, aiming to pull a girl, if not I'm still pulling... an all-nighter to finish off an essay with a hangover and my mental health at an all time low!

Mash, Lolas, Revs or Vinyl?:

Revs > Mash > Lolas > Vinyl

What did you want to be when you grew up?

I used to want to be a meteorologist but then GCSE Science humbled me!



Order yours today!

The Varsity Tote Bag



Just £3.99 plus postage.

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

www.varsity.co.uk/shop

J. S. Wilson & Son Bookbinders Ltd

Cambridge Established 1830



Thesis Binding • Conservation

Leather Binding • Journal Binding

Tel (01223) 212420

www.jswilsonandson.co.uk

Features

Mince spy? Sam Hudson goes on a mission to find the best pie in Cambridge

There are many things I've sacrificed for *Varsity*. My dignity. My friends. My family. And now my waistline. Over the past week, I have tried every mince pie Cambridge has to offer. From Greggs to Pret, no stone has been left unturned in this most rigorous of tests.

Procuring the pies was an endeavour in and of itself. Through bucketing rain I trod around Cambridge on a mince pie spending spree. Thankfully for my (now rather wet) pockets, the *Varsity* budget can just about stretch to cover such an important journalistic cause.

Waitrose had the best overall pie. The pastry was above average and not too stodgy, as is the case with far too many store-bought mince pies. It also looked the part, containing a classically contoured dome rather than the tacky snowflake design most other supermarkets have now adopted. The star of the show was the filling, however. Doused with liberal amounts of cognac, the pies towed the fine line between sweetness, sharpness and tartness very well. It's not an experiment my body is remotely prepared to take but the *Varsity* panel concluded that you may well be able to get tipsy off a tray or two of these pies. With a price tag of £3.50 for six, they are (rather unsurprisingly) on the more expensive side of the test, but it's certainly a price worth paying. Just make sure you pick up the right ones. I almost picked up the gluten, egg and dairy-free pies. While it's remarkable that they can now make pieless pies, I'm sure they probably aren't as nice as their normal offering.

Costa had the best café pie. While expensive at £2.35 per pie, they're far larger than the ones you find in supermarkets. The pastry was some of the best on offer, having a shortbread-like buttery richness which impressed the judges. Unfortunately, it did not clinch the top spot as its filling was decidedly mediocre, lacking the punch of other, more alcoholic pies. Its look was also less traditional than Waitrose's offering, opting for that now quite clichéd snowflake design.

Of course the head-to-head we really wanted to test was Pret vs Greggs. Unfortunately both pies were quite disappointing. Greggs had the better pastry — some of the best on test in fact. Sadly, the positives ended there. The filling in the Greggs' pie resembled more a chutney than Christmas mince, being far too liquidy and having about as much real fruit as the average military ration pack.

Pret, on the other hand, despite having much better mince than Greggs' offering, had very crumbly and stodgy pastry, essentially disintegrating when it was taken out of its packaging. All-in-all, Greggs was the clear winner value-wise, with six pies for £1.99 clearly beating Pret's dismal offering of just one pie for the same price.



'Boris was the author of his own demise. I was the occasion'

Simon McDonald was a top civil servant who spoke out against the PM, sparking his demise. **Chris Patel** asks whether the new Christ's master feels reponsible

In the political avalanche faced by Boris Johnson's Conservatives in July, Christ's students, myself included, were squarely focused on one man. This man was Sir Simon McDonald, the former top civil servant who sent Boris Johnson's career fatally spiralling when he revealed a Downing Street cover-up of sexual misconduct allegations against MP Chris Pincher, and who had been due to take over as Master of Christ's since November. Even though the summer holidays dispersed the Christ's community, a palpable buzz was felt surrounding "the man who brought down Boris Johnson."

However, McDonald wants to get one thing straight. "I studied history at Cambridge as an undergraduate. And I learned to distinguish causes and occasions. I do not think I was the cause of Boris Johnson's fall. I think Boris Johnson was the author of his own demise. But I see that I was the occasion."

McDonald, who spent four decades as a diplomat, including a stint as the lead official in the foreign office from 2015 to 2020, also said that it was retirement that allowed him to expose the cover-up — "I tried hard before speaking out in public to get the system to do the right thing by private intervention, so I spoke in advance to senior figures in Number 10 and the Cabinet Office and the Foreign Office." But

that's as far as he would have been able to go had he still been a civil servant — "Part of the essence of being a civil servant is service in private." If not for McDonald now being a member of the House of Lords, Boris Johnson could still be our Prime Minister.

However, since the departure of Johnson, who McDonald called the worst PM that he ever worked with, another Prime Minister has come and gone. Now Rishi Sunak, described by McDonald as "methodical", "hardworking" and "a man guided by facts", is now at the helm. His assessment is that "we could have two relatively quieter years" under Sunak's tenure. Given the flurry of crises faced by Johnson and Liz Truss, perhaps this does not say much.

McDonald's career was in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and at a Cambridge Union address in February he made the prediction that Russia would not invade Ukraine. Eight days later, the "insane", as McDonald calls it, happened. "Seven months later, we can see it was insane from [Putin's] and Russia's point of view, because basically everything has gone wrong for Russia."

Despite Putin's actions, McDonald still has faith in Russia's ability to negotiate. "Certainly everything that Russia has tried to take since the 24th February needs to be returned to Ukraine." Yet he continues: "But that's all that needs to happen. There must not, in my view, be any invasion of Russia, any touching of Russian sovereignty [...] And then there needs to be a negotiation, because I can imagine circumstances where the political future of parts of the Donbas, of Crimea, is not with Ukraine." McDonald reckons that a UN-supervised process might be the only method of negotiation that works. I ask, with a degree of incredulity, whether he thinks Putin will ever be amenable to negotiation. McDonald replies, "Even a figure like Putin has to occasionally accept defeat, because when you've lost, you've lost."

As a career diplomat, McDonald exalts diplomacy not just as the solution to the Russia-



Acting and sleepless nights - King Charles' time at Cambridge

Sophie MacDonald takes a look through the *Varsity* archives, revealing the King's first impressions of Trinity

You're not seeing double. During his student days at Cambridge, King Charles III had a look-alike. Philip Heslop was commonly mistaken for the King, so much so that, in an interview for *Varsity* in 1968, he confesses to "trying to look regal" after people nudged each other and pointed at him during a concert. Despite trying, he "couldn't keep a straight face and after a while people realised". Mimicking the King's decorum was evidently the hardest part.

Faking the crown must be a common trait for Union presidents to adopt. Heslop was the president of the Cambridge Union and chairman of the Cambridge University Conservative Association. But, unlike Bradwell in 2021, he didn't have an article in *The Times* to show for it.

In his interview, Heslop also states that "the most dramatic incident" that occurred as a result of being mistaken for the King "was when some youths came up to me in the middle of the night. 'There's Charles,' they said. I thought they were going to attack me."

Heslop told *Varsity* that "people come up to him in cinemas and say 'I've seen you before'". The resemblance must have been uncanny: Heslop admits that he "does wear his hair the same way as the Prince." He also claimed to have a "better understanding of the Prince's problems now".

While King Charles read Anthropology, Archaeology and History at Trinity College, Philip Heslop read Law at Christ's College from 1967 to 1970. After graduation, Heslop became one of the youngest and most respected QCs of modern times.

He acted successfully for Alan Sugar in his dispute with Terry Venables regarding Tottenham Hotspur. He represented Ken Bates during the attempted takeover of Chelsea FC and Richard Branson against T-Mobile concerning the sale of G3 telephone licences. He was even branded as a kind of "M" (a codename for current or past heads of MI6 in the James Bond films), after directing covert operations from his office.

Heslop would, according to rumour, meet financial regulators informally over tea, in the Palm Court of the Waldorf Hotel, where a snazzy pianist would prevent their conversations from being overheard.

Heslop acted successfully for columnists, like Taki, that were being attacked by Mohammed al-Fayed for funding Neil Hamilton's libel case. Though Taki's volatile articles in *The Spectator*

Ukraine conflict, but as the future of British power. He believes that Britain has to "readjust [...] our hard power is simply not as capable as it used to be, but we are still powerful, and much of that power is soft power." Diplomacy, McDonald believes, will also be a huge asset in the struggle against climate change. Even if young people aren't developing new technologies to fight global warming, "planetary issues are going to be a huge part of the classic foreign policymaker's agenda in the next half-century."

McDonald is especially passionate about climate issues, having travelled around the world with the British Diplomatic Service and finding that absolutely nowhere on the planet was untouched by pollution. He describes his expedition to Saudi Arabia's Empty Quarter, one of the world's largest sandy deserts. Even after two days' trek into the heart of an area where no humans live, he was "amazed by the plastic waste - the empty carrier bags coming over the dunes in the middle of the most remote desert in the world." In 2021, when McDonald visited the Greenland ice sheet, he saw firsthand that "everywhere was melting...seeing it for myself made a very deep impression."

Having personally witnessed the impacts of pollution in more places than the vast majority of Britons ever can, I half-expected McDonald to think that the planet was doomed. However, I was mistaken. "There's no part of me that thinks that, because I'm here in Cambridge, the people now studying are the people that will have the ideas, that will invent the kit that will save us." This green ethos is at the heart of what McDonald wishes to do at Christ's. "Ground-source heat, air-source heat, photovoltaic energy are going to be the future. It's about improving insulation. It's about changing how we travel. It's about changing how we eat. A lot of agendas have to come together. And work is already underway. But I hope in my seven years in Christ's, we can push this a lot further."



▲ Photos from the *Varsity* archive of Charles and Heslop as undergraduates in the late 1960s

bothered the judge, Heslop convinced them to see his client as an 18th-century Grub Street journalist who should not be taken seriously.

Heslop's determination to enable disadvantaged students to study law led to him fundraising and contributing to Christ's College. Surrounded by politician Leon Brittan and dramatist Harold Pinter, Heslop led a pleasant life. Yet his phobia of doctors would prove fatal. After wearily contemplating what he believed was gout, Heslop was rushed to the hospital and died of septicaemia.

Meanwhile, King Charles's contributions to *Varsity* did not end at a look-alike. For *Varsity*'s 21st anniversary, the King spilled what his first impressions of Cambridge were. Despite "receiving so many admonitions about" writing for *Varsity* before arriving at Cambridge, the King decided: "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em!"

The King recounts being "wedged into a Mini, which is a form of travel not normally employed when there are people to meet upon disembarkation." Because of this, he explained, "first impressions took on a distorted aspect because all that could be seen in front of Trinity Great Gate were serried ranks of variously trousered legs, from which I had to distinguish those of the Master and the Senior Tutor".

Appealing for sympathy, King Charles said "if you have ever tried to get out of a Mini, you will know through what contortions you have to go". After having "performed these in front of quite a large number of people" he was taken through the gate and into Great Court.

He compared the "burly, bowler-hatted" porters dragging shut Trinity's wooden gates to "a scene from the French Revolution or some other" and recalled how "rewardingly

silent" Great Court was. That's despite "the everlasting splashing of the fountain and the sound of photographers's hob-nailed boots, or their equivalent, on the ringing cobbles, together with the click of shutter in lens", of course. Nowadays you need only beware the man asking you what song you're listening to.

The King was also no stranger to "night activities going on," or at least, the ones occurring "directly under his detached and innocently beautiful window." This was something he "had to accustom himself to, particularly the grinding note of an Urban District Council dust lorry's engine rising and falling in spasmodic bursts of agonised energy at seven o'clock in the morning, accompanied by the monotonous, jovial dustman's refrain of 'O come, All Ye Faithful' and the head-splitting clang of the dustbins."

"At night too," it was "hard to ignore the timeless notes of the National Anthem or 'Land of My Fathers', punctuated by the melodious disintegration of bottles and merry voices raised in conversation, reaching the barred confines of his room at some unearthly dark watches of the night."

If you thought the King never banged his head on the wall in frustration, think again. He compared "these happenings" to "beating your head against a wall, which, I may say, I do frequently when the conditions are satisfactory".

Overall, "these happenings" did in fact "contribute to his experience in Cambridge", and the King hoped that: "in some very small way," his brief exposé would "contribute to the celebration of the 21 years (shall I say of service?) given by *Varsity*."

Are the Footlights fading?



▲ Recognise the faces? Some former famous Footlights (CAMBRIDGE ARTS THEATRE)

Toby Stinson digs into the Footlights past and present to see how today's group fares in the shadow of past success

The Cambridge Footlights, the most renowned sketch troupe of them all, as the advert for their 2022 International Tour proclaims (quoting *the Independent*). Most renowned, though, for their alumni, not for up-and-coming stars. So much of our view of this Cambridge institution is stuck firmly in the past, but what does it actually mean to be a Footlight? Were the famous alumni really that funny? And does this history matter anyway?

"People always criticise Footlights because there's that history behind it", smokers officer Niamh Howat tells me. "They're like oh, Footlights are not as good as they used to be." This complaint is a common one, and most Cambridge students have probably heard it at one point. It is also a persistent one, which even the group's famous alumni had to overcome. Richard Ayoade and Mathew Holness, speaking in a 1997 documentary, echo Howat's words almost verbatim. Ayoade goes even further, saying "if you actually look back through the archives," at the old material of Fry and Laurie, or the Pythons, "most of it's terrible." So maybe we're being too harsh; maybe Footlights have always lived in their forebears' shadows.

Taking up Richard Ayoade's challenge, I delved into the *Varsity* archives, flicking through pages of old, slightly yellowed, newspaper pages for reviews of Footlights shows. I must say, the countless 4-star reviews don't exactly sound "terrible". "For the umpteenth year in succession, the Footlights Revue last night was a triumph," proclaims one review from 1980—the year Stephen Fry, Hugh Laurie, and Emma Thompson were

Footlights. There is no trace here of the Footlights not being what they used to be: the cast is "near perfect", their sketches "slickly presented", and the revue a "triumph". But perhaps this is to be expected from such esteemed names.

Maybe cynicism is a modern infection? Looking at Ayoade's own year, 1995, the language is more familiar. There are references to a "Messers Fry & Laurie" in one review, while another begins, "I remember the days" – it seems nostalgia has set in. But for all Mathew Holness' complaining, there is little sign of the Footlights being seen as bad. The reviewer praises a certain David Mitchell for his "natural double-act feel" with Holness, while the piece ends proclaiming, Footlights are not just as funny as they used to be; they're as funny as they are. Perhaps, today's troupe really aren't as good as they used to be...

Or perhaps, people were easier to please. Current Footlights president, Ayush Prasad, points to the group's double-sided history: "we do have a reputation that we're trying pretty desperately hard to shake of being pale, male, stale, and frail." The archives reflect this reputation. A 1980 review praises the show's 'funny voices', including an impression of "a cheeky Cockney, while the 'highlight' of another smoker was "Earl Spencer-Brown's impression of a penis." I'm not sure this material would get you a 5-star review today, although it might get some publicity on Camfess.

This is the same history people look back on with rose-tinted fondness, and this is precisely why the current iteration want to move away from it. "People have this idea of Footlights", Prasad tells me, "being as it was when it was Steven Fry and Monty Python: these guys who invite their friends to become a Footlight." Today the group's focus is on developing new talent and fostering access to comedy. The moniker of Footlight is granted as a "reward for people who have consistently contributed to comedy," and have shown "commitment to access". Prasad and Howat insist Footlights is not just about the Spring Revue or who gets to call themselves a Footlight, but rather it is about the smokers, where people can practice material; about the socials, where

writers bounce ideas around; about creating a space where anyone is welcome. Such openness, Howat says, "makes the comedy better at the end of the day, because if people have a diverse range of backgrounds and life experiences [...] you can make more jokes out of that."

Fostering such diversity requires a nuanced approach to Footlights' history. The committee is trying to reframe their image away from nepotism and dinner jackets. "A lot of freshers say you've got all these famous alumni; I don't think I'm good enough," Howat tells me. "And we say, no, you are! We want to help make you that famous alumni." However, this off-putting image is what facilitates their new inclusivity. "We are lucky," Prasad acknowledges, "to have a well-recognised brand name, so that we can pull

'You're not going to get famous alumni without them being a bit shit in first-year'

people in" with the promise of future stars. "We can get that recognition, we can get that funding, we can provide that platform using this history."

But, perhaps audiences also need a nuanced approach. Yes, the name convinces us we could be seeing the next Olivia Coleman, but these are just students honing their craft. Even John Cleese said his first Footlights show "wasn't terribly good". The archive reviews consistently agree—Earl Spencer-Brown's first smoker is dubbed "pathetically juvenile", even David Mitchell's performance had "lengthy pauses". Still, a reviewer notes, "there is a great deal of raw talent and good material out there," and perhaps this is how we should view the Footlights. It is certainly what Prasad wishes: "a place where, when people look back 10 or 20 years after they've graduated, they think I started there. This is where I did it for the first time. This is where I got the chance." But, I guess being viewed as funny wouldn't hurt either.

VIEW FROM THE STALLS

Forget theatre; I want Truth!

Greg Miller



Why is theatre a thing? It seems that as soon as there is a bare space, and someone walking across it, with another person sitting and watching, we have a play of some sort. From the earliest civilisations, there has always been some degree of dramaturgical impulse—and it really is awful! This desperate need to perform which humanity can't seem to rid itself of. Even the conversations we have are performances, carefully controlled exercises of narrative play: we consider when best to release information and when to withhold, when to make tasteless jokes and when to sit back and nod solemnly. This life is all one big pantomime and I for one am tired of it. I propose a new art form to replace theatre and all it represents. This art form will be called: Truth.

Now, I must admit, I'm in the early stages of my thinking on this subject. I have not yet written the manifesto, nor assembled a group of young creative peers willing to rally behind me in this endeavour—behind me, crucially. Nor have I quite worked out how to make an art form of Truth, which is opposed to the art form that is theatre. Nor, indeed, do I know what I'm talking about...But I shall take up the rest of this column as a sort of testing ground, if you (the reading rabble) will happily permit me. You will? Wonderful!

Firstly, the thing I dislike most about theatre is the stage. Be it an elegant, raised platform or a grim little 2×2-metre space among a mass of plastic chairs: it irks me. It reeks of illusion. I do not like to be tricked or cheated, and too often have I fallen for the old "gi'us yer wallet" trick. Once, I happily waited for four hours in a back alley, whistling away in full confidence of the speedy return of my monies. It was only as night-time approached and the chorus of alley cats started up that I knew I'd been tricked. So, we shall get rid of the concept of a stage, and the privilege of players and audience members. That's a start. Moving on.

Secondly, we shall remove the idea of people speaking before other people entirely. Because as soon as people address an audience, they start doing all sorts of crazy things, like using rhetoric or pretending to be decent people. That's going right out. We just can't be having it. So, we scrap the concept of performers and audience. But here we face a fundamental problem, which is that all the serious and proper arts require an audience of some sort. And yet if we have no performers, we have no audience. So, what do we do now?

My first instinct is to get rid of the people. But that can't be done. It's just not politically correct, for starters. And think of all the letters of condolence we'd have to write! No. I know what to do! We just get every person in the room to shout out what happened to them that day, all at the same time and over the top of each other. Is that not what Truth looks and sounds like? Yes, indeed: my new art form is all ready to go. We just need it to happen. And that's where the zeitgeist steps in! Any minute now....

Boathouse Bops!

Daniel Hilton treks down to the boathouse and finds out what music keeps Cambridge's rowers going



▲ Rowers listening to Adele (Daniel Hilton)

In my experience there are four cults in Cambridge – some devote their lives to the Chapel choir, some to the student politics, and some to journalism. However, by the far the biggest and most prominent (mostly because those involved never shut up about it) is rowing. With their mystical words like “erg” and “cox” and “crab”, a rowing muggle like me can find it difficult to relate to them, so I took it upon myself to slightly demystify the boat club by relating it to something I know relatively well – music.

To investigate whether the music played in boathouses were bops or flops, I ventured over to the College boat club for the first time to watch the 30 rate 20 erg where the rowers go on rowing machines and stroke 20 times within 30 minutes.

As the rowers began their 30 minutes of misery the first track that appeared was “BIL-LIE EILISH” by Armani White, perhaps an odd choice for a group of eight guys about to go absolutely crazy on an erg but if it works it works. Following this, the next few songs all followed the same theme of being the sort of high energy, bass heavy music that you might expect the world’s worst DJ to play at MASH, although there were a few tracks that stood out like “Danielle (smile on my face)” by Fred Again...Which when paired with the synchronised back-and-forth of the rowers, seemed to mesmerise me for a little while. Speaking to a rower after the erg, he echoed this as he said the repetitive nature of a lot of the music helped him zone out from the pain and instead focus on the music to keep his arms and legs going.

Chatting to Luca, Captain of Boats at Emmanuel Boat Club, who expertly devised the playlist, he said that the main reason he picked

the songs was the strong rhythm in all of them and he echoed how important focusing on the music was during the erg as he said “you want the music to flow over you”. Unexpectedly, Luca mentioned how he likes to choose pop songs from the 2010s that have easily recognisable lyrics, the justification for this being that the rowers will sing the song in their heads and focus on the music instead of their exhaustion. Further, he also said that remixes feature heavily on his playlist and that he likes to use them because they’re usually much higher energy than the original track but still retain the easily sing-along nature of the song. As a self-proclaimed “music addict”, Luca took great pride in his choices for the playlist and said that the music truly does play a huge part in these training sessions.

In the last five minutes, the rowers’ exhaustion reached its peak and so Luca’s secret weapon of Adele remixes was finally deployed and, as much as I was sceptical whether Adele could bring life back into the rowers, I must admit that it worked incredibly well. A fellow onlooker was the boat’s cox who took refuge from the rowing machines and instead looked at the stroke rate spreadsheets which he said seemed to increase depending on the hype of the music.

Speaking to the recovering rowers about their erg, they agreed they would have found it difficult to complete the erg without having the music to focus on, with one saying that he would have finished but substantially slower. At the end of this erg, I was reminded of how powerful music can be in Cambridge life – relaxing music can help us study, sad music can help us get over our Week Five Blues, and seemingly Adele is the secret weapon that turns the average boat club to being top of the river.



Fergal Jeffreys

Editor

Most streamed:

Count Me Out - Kendrick Lamar

Still Beating - Mac Demarco

Guilty Pleasures:

Astral Weeks - Van Morrison

Jacob Freedland

Editor

Most streamed:

Scarborough Fair - Simon and Garfunkel

Guilty Pleasures:

SPACE MAN - Sam Ryder

Meg Byrom & Hugh Jones

News Editors

Most streamed:

Happiness - The 1975

Greaze Mode - Skepta

Guilty Pleasures:

1989 - Aitch

Psalm 88 - The Choir of St John’s College

Isabel Dempsey

Arts Editor

Most streamed:

Cruel Summer - Taylor Swift

Anti-Hero - Taylor Swift

Guilty Pleasures:

The Red Means I Love You - Madds Buckley

Daniel Hilton & Georgie Atkinson

Music Editors

Most streamed:

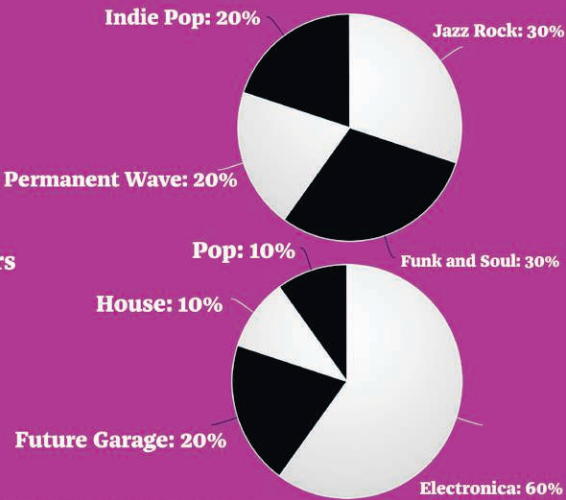
Maple Syrup - The Backstreet Lovers

Eyelar (shutters) - Fred Again..

Guilty Pleasures:

Edamame - bbno3

Keep Driving - Harry Styles



Analysis

Georgie Atkinson



The playlist compiled by the captain of Emma’s boathouse has happily challenged my perception of a rower’s music taste being ironically muted. I was surprised to see that Eminem’s Lose Yourself didn’t feature on the playlist. Having previously been informed by a rower, of how they would break out into a cold sweat at BOPs when they would hear the lyrics, “mom’s spaghetti”. As a firm believer that Fred Again.. is single-

handedly reviving electronic music, I more than appreciate how Danielle is featured. With lyrics such as, “sometimes I wanna feel the pain”, this track selection is overtly signalling the sadistic nature of erging. If electronic irony was a genre - this playlist would define it. Knowing how rowers commit their lives to the sport, it’s unsurprising they view erging as the most painful part of their love affair and require the soothing tones of Adele to ease their pain. Perhaps we need to start viewing rowers with sympathy if they need to be consoled by the lyrics “sometimes it lasts in love, but sometimes it hurts instead”.

Arts

Rocking around the Bridgemas tree

Isabel Dempsey reviews students' wackiest Xmas creations from Britney to Supreme

From the Fitzwilliam Museum to Kettle's Yard, I'm used to reviewing some of the most ingenious and inspiring art in Cambridge. But having exhausted all of Cambridge's galleries this term, I've decided to turn to students for inspiration instead. Home to some of the most gifted people in the world (or at least that's what all of their secondary school teachers claimed), I was excited to see what creative Bridgemas decorations these talented individuals could come up with. And the results didn't disappoint — these avant-garde designs certainly push the limits of what Christmas decorations can be.

Oh Christmas traffic cone, oh Christmas traffic cone

We've all been there. It's been a messy night: you've had a few pints, consumed a cursed concoction of liquor at pres, and topped it all off with a couple (or five) shots in Revs. Then suddenly the moment of creative genius hits. Wouldn't it just be so fun and quirky if we stole a traffic cone? How else can I prove I was ever a wild and rebellious uni student if I've never stolen a piece of roadside equipment? What might initially seem an uninspired (and let's face it) overdone idea, this group of students' innovative reimagining of the classic traffic cone design is truly something special. A splash of paint and a few ribbons later, they transformed it from a tired piece of student home décor to a Christmas tree that was gifted to their director of studies.

Hit me (Santa) baby one more time

With her new-found freedom, Britney Spears is back on the music scene and just as big as ever. But despite her fame and fortune she still found time for a quick trip to everybody's second favourite Cambridge queer night: Glitterbomb. Following a few too many Jägerbombs, the 'Toxic' star attempted to head back to the car park where her chauffeur was waiting only to find herself lost in Robinson College — an easy mistake to make even when sober. After a wild night amongst the bricks, she decided to leave a Christmas-inspired cut-out of her to watch over all of 'Binson's Bridgemas bopping. Or at least that's how these Robinson students remember the story of how Santa Spears ended up in their staircase.

Oh, say! Can you see by Rudolph's early light

One of the Founding Fathers of the United States, Benjamin Franklin is known for many things. Freeing America from Britain's rule; inventing bifocals; his love of Leicester; his status as the Queen of Christmas (sorry Mariah Carey). Okay, maybe you can't find those last two facts on his Wikipedia. Making a big step up from Mount Rushmore (largely due to the fact that he isn't actually on it!), these students from St Catharine's have made a proper commemoration



to this historical figure. Trapped in the eternal war between angel and star, this group decided to shun both of these traditional options on top of your Bridgemas tree, as they were just too generic for their liking. Instead, they've given the position of shining glory to no other than Ben Franklin — his classic "I love Leicester" badge gleaming on his chest, having infamously been such a big fan of England in his lifetime. This piece is certainly a ground-breaking twist on traditional Christmas décor.

Rocking around the Bridgemas Tree

Speaking to the curator of this inspired "monstrosity", she described it as "a drying rack, with tinsel and rubber gloves as decorations, complete with an unlit cigarette as the angel on top of the tree." When I began this long and treacherous search for Cambridge's most creative (okay cursed) Christmas décor, this is exactly the kind of hideously beautiful gem I was looking



▲ Clockwise from top left: a Britney Spears cut-out; Benjamin Franklin as the Christmas angel; Cursed Bridgemas tree; Supreme logo and Covid-19 mask on a Christmas tree (GEORGE COX, EMILIA WHITEHEAD, EMILY LAWSON-TODD, LEAH NELSON)

These avant-garde designs certainly push the limits of what Christmas decorations can be

for. It looks like it's been taken straight out of the Tate Modern. I've already abandoned my dissertation work for the week to begin drafting an essay about the symbolism of the unlit cigarette as a representation of the dying light of Christ amidst the toxic contemporary commodification of Christmas. This anti-capitalist statement holds up a middle finger to the royal establishment that introduced the Christmas tree to Britain, innovatively inspiring us to make Christmas joy out of the little we have during this cost-of-living crisis. Or at least that's what I'd tell my supervisor.

And a Covid mask in a pear tree

From the hazard tape to the horrendously hacked away star sponge, this tree's décor has left me feeling more uncomfortably confused than inspired by the Christmas spirit. Don't even get me started on the Supreme logo over the face mask. Is this a Varsity x Supreme sponsorship deal I don't know about? Is it a statement about the prioritisation of corporate wealth over public health during the Covid-19 pandemic? Or maybe it's just a final and desperate plea to Father Christmas in the fear that their Christmas letter didn't make it through the bricked-up accommodation fireplace.

What (not) to watch this Christmas

Four writers settle the score: *Love Actually* is out, but *The Holiday* is in

Oh deer, we won't be watching these again this year

Home Alone - David Levy

Very few films don't fit neatly into a box. Spielberg's *Jaws* is clearly for miswired teens who like scaring themselves for fun, while baggy-jean-wearing, art-gallery-enjoying twenty-somethings have obviously marked their territory over Wes Anderson's *Grand Budapest Hotel*. There is, however, one film which transcends these neat categories — *Home Alone*.

Its fans range from adoring seven-year-olds who hate their parents to said hated parents, 40-year-old bankers who watched it when it was first released. But I have a problem with this unanimous assent for a little American boy with gun skills. As everyone watches eight-year-old Kevin stave off two robbers, *Home Alone*'s fans seem to ignore one important question: why didn't he call the police?

Maybe the phone lines were dragged down by a thunderstorm? Maybe Kevin had a deep mistrust for the cops? But I think there's a more obvious answer... Kevin's a psychopath.

Though he knew of the robber's plans before they arrived, it's only after branding them with hot metal, punching nails into their feet, and maniacally spraying them with BB gun pellets, that he decides to finally call the police for help. Only when their defenceless and adorned with third-degree burns. *Home Alone* isn't the survival story you think it is: Kevin is the criminal.

Love Actually - Kezia Kurtz

Richard Curtis's British classic was released in 2003 and watched every winter since. The film is an anthology, showcasing nine parallel stories about love at Christmas time. It does have its charms, from Hugh Grant's endearing fumbling over his words to a young Thomas Brodie Sangster's confident professions of puppy love. So, what stops the movie from being an innocent and enjoyable watch?

The film repeatedly fetishizes dodgy workplace romances between sleazy male bosses and their young female colleagues. Case in point, the Prime Minister and his maid: a regressive representation of 'modern' love that belongs in *Downton Abbey*. Any nod to homosexuality is a joke - the film is so fiercely heterosexual that it offers a sympathetic portrayal of sleazy men who cheat on Emma Thompson! The token black protagonist is also cheated on. Actually, all cheating in the film

seems to evade proper interrogation, like every hint of a nuanced plot line.

To fit all nine stories into the two hours leaves each lacking in character development. The anthology form becomes perfect because most of the plots are simply not interesting enough to carry a movie alone. The film merely offers up a romanticised presentation of love and family to an anxious and lonely post-9/11 Britain. There's not much to love, actually.

Treat your-elf to these classics instead

The Nightmare Before Christmas - Ellie Kennedy

Hands down. Whilst some might question how a Halloween film could also be the best Christmas film ever, this Tim Burton hit really hits the mark. The film follows Jack Skellington, the King of Halloween Town, as he stumbles upon Christmas Town and attempts to bring its joy to his own community back home. Yes, the film's protagonist may be a skeletal figure who attempts to steal Christmas, but when you boil it down to its basics, it is a story of the glee of discovering Christmas. It's a Halloween v Christmas story — and Christmas wins.

If you're tired of scrolling through a plethora of Hallmark Christmas movies that reel you in with their reds and greens and monotonous happy endings, then watch Tim Burton's classic — you won't regret it.

The Holiday - Oliver Bevan

So bad that it's good. A classic in which two women decide to swap houses with one another after each going through messy breakups. It's like house swaps before Airbnb. Oh, and it's at Christmastime. Cameron Diaz plays a rich and successful Angeleno with a mansion and an inability to cry. Kate Winslet is Bridget Jones reincarnate; she does nothing but cry in her woolly jumpers and cute cottage in the Cotswolds.

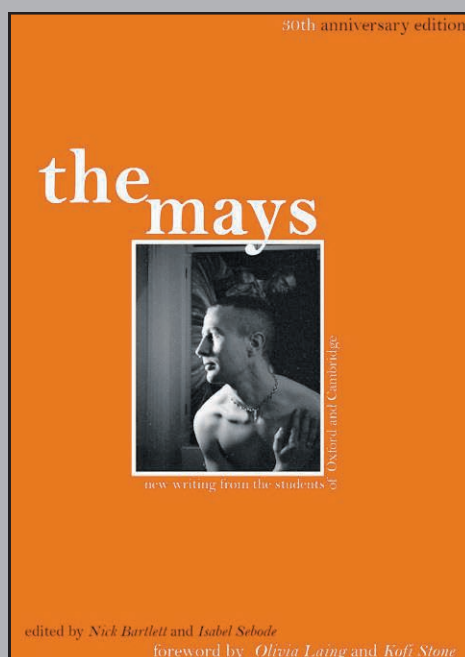
The film is slow-paced and relaxing. Not much really happens — which is just what I need after a hectic Michaelmas term. The sunny Californian set soothes my winter-induced, vitamin D deficient sadness, while the snow-clad English village makes it feel like Christmas. Hot cocoa is aplenty.

Winslet forms a budding relationship with a down-to-earth American, portrayed by Jack Black. Diaz falls in love with a British guy, complex with the cute accent and distinguished charm. And for a romantic comedy, *The Holiday* is surprisingly sincere. The love stories feel genuine - Kate Winslet and Jack Black actually have chemistry!

For all we know, they might be nothing more than holiday flings to help these heartbroken women heal, but isn't this what Christmas is all about? Taking a break from life? And some thousands of miles from home, it's refreshing to watch a Christmas film that resists the conventional idea that it's a time to spend with family.

the mays 30

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



Available in all good bookshops
and to order online here:
<https://shop.varsity.co.uk/shop/>

C&G

Coach Services



37 years experience of University groups.

Vehicle sizes up to 70 seater single deckers, up to 77 seater double deckers and 16 seat minibuses.

Local Cambridge based coach company.

www.candgcoaches.co.uk

Email: info@candcoaches.co.uk

Lifestyle

Blind date Auntie Maddy meets OshuClips

Can a snapback/surfer shirt/microphone-wielding boy and a Sidgwick site bandana/skinny scarf/Doc Martens girl fall in love...?

Picture this: it's 5.21pm on a Sunday and I'm bolting like a maniac across the bridge on the King's backs, my sweat thankfully but a few drops amongst the torrential rain that soaks, along with the feeling of impending doom, slowly down my back. I'm beginning to wonder whether agreeing to go on a blind date is really the most productive thing I could be doing on the Lord's day of rest.

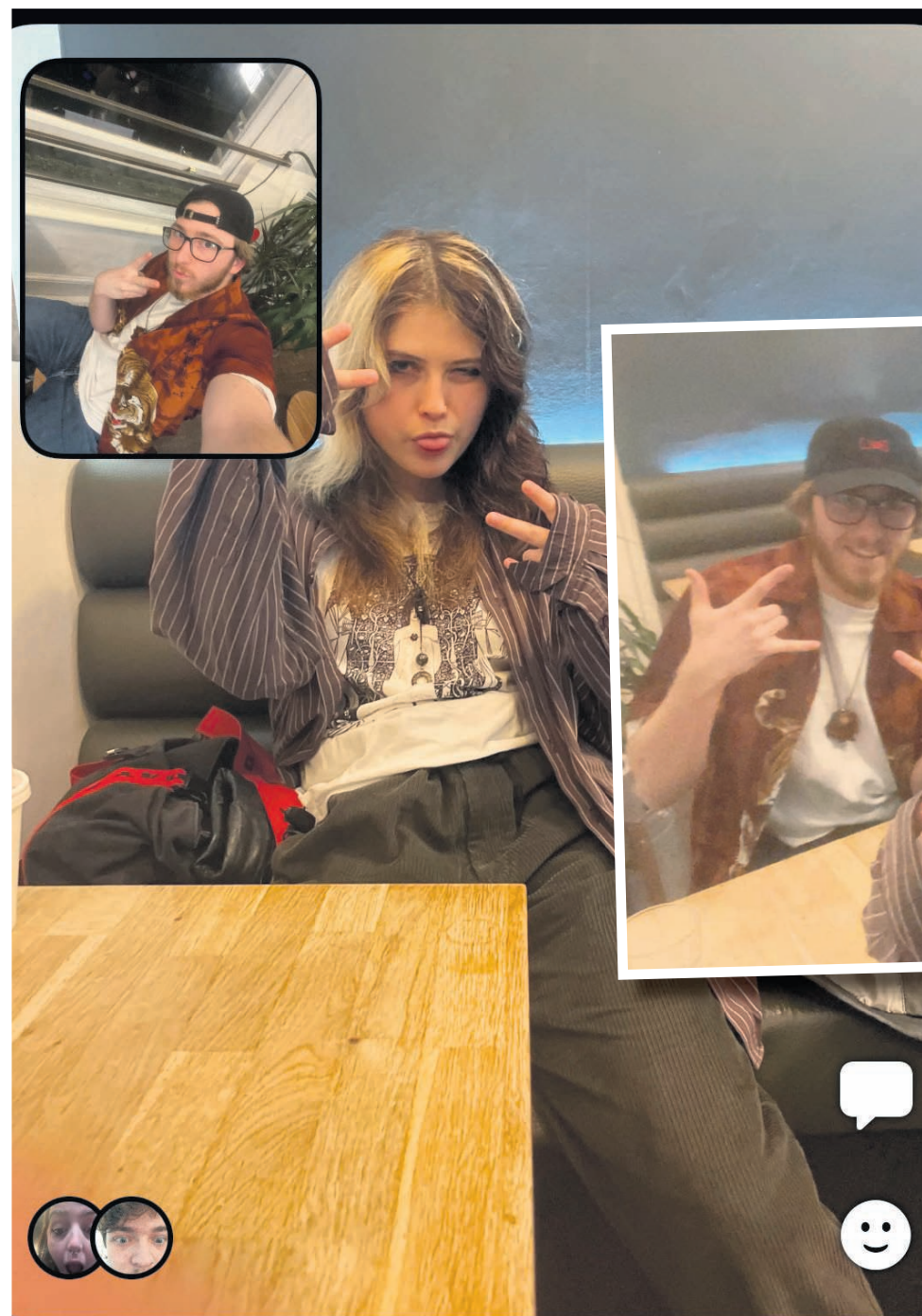
But this isn't just any blind date: it's with one of the most prolific — and, depending on just how many times you've been accosted on King's Parade, controversial — A-list Tiktok-ers in Cambridge. This is a *Varsity* blind date with OshuClips, the kind of hard-hitting student journalism you've been waiting for. I arrive on the scene and feel a pang of guilt as I am accosted by the sight of Oshu in his signature backwards cap, gently marinating in the rain that runs off the roof of Benets, the place our two lonely hearts have agreed to meet.

But I needn't fear — judging by his dedication to the grindset, Oshu is for all weathers, and having generously paid for my mulled wine and a tap water for himself (his body is a temple, mine more an old shed rotting at the back of the garden), he is happy to lead me upstairs to the sky lounge (a.k.a. the Benets upstairs window seat). I wonder if this is how it feels to be a celebrity girlfriend, or at the very least some sort of mid-tier premier league WAG. But before I can be taken too aback by the passion that threatens to engulf us, the conversation begins to flow.

Strangely, our first topic of conversation is not which songs we have been listening to. Rather, Oshu, derived from Joshua, reveals to me after much persuasion a Santa Claus costume. It's stashed in the same work bag that has presumably been gracing the veritable catwalk that is the streets of Cambridge. I make a mental note to stay tuned for the upcoming Christmas special.

The clock strikes six and the Benets staff kindly tell us that it's time for us to go, so we head towards Parker's Piece. Up until now I had assumed that the grand external appearance of the University Arms Hotel was housing some sort of austere, official government building. Never did I think I'd be inside its hallowed halls, nor had I ever envisioned myself sipping coffee across from OshuClips in the Parker's Tavern cocktail lounge that lies within. One bathroom break deep and I soon realise that this is a place far above my breeding. Oshu knows the staff here — it appears he knows just about everyone — and sitting opposite me, we begin to delve deeper into each others' lives, bonding over shared stories and the candlelight. But I soon remember that I am on company time, and get to work getting to know the man behind the Tiktok.

I ask him what the goal is when he films his videos erring on more sensitive topics, such as preferred pronouns, body image and body count. He says that he regrets when the conversation turns sour and battles ensue in the comments. I muse if sometimes controversy may be good for his algorithm, and believe he



already knows this.

Then, something disconcerting begins to happen. OshuClips begins to delve deeper into the 'fun' facts of my life. I fear that he may switch back into content mode and a flash of fear creeps through me at the prospect of being probed on my own preferred pronouns, body image and body count. It's not quite that. He asks me if I've ever been in a long-term relationship — or heaven forbid, situationship. I fire the question back at him. We both skirt around the answer. He asks if I ever want to get married. I answer no — although, come back in five years when he and his barefooted friend are Tiktok multi-millionaires, and I might just change my tune. He asks what the one piece of advice I'd give a stranger is. I rattle off some bullshit about self-reliance because I'm obviously such a #lonewolf #sigma. I ask him what his is, and he replies: "talk to everyone". I guess it's been working out okay for him.

Then, here comes the big one. Oshu asks the one question you must never, ever confront an English student with. He asks me what I want to do once I finish university. A silence ensues. I resist the instinctive urge to surrender the image of myself as terminally unemployed and living off tinned food in my parents' basement for the rest of my miserable existence, and mutter something about journalism or the media (because those pay oh-so well). I realise I have been calling him 'Oshu' and not Josh for the entire blind date, and hastily apologise.

The hours fly by as the date begins drawing to a close. At home I have another hot and steamy fling ready and waiting for me — my second year dissertation — and Oshu needs to rest his legs before he once again begins the city circuit in the morning. Having taken our obligatory selfie (love you editors, xoxo) on my blurry, greased-up front camera earlier in the night, we finish our drinks and say our sweet goodbyes. Although

parting is such sweet sorrow, there's no confirmation of a second date. Can a snapback/surfer shirt/microphone-wielding boy and a Sidgwick site bandana/skinny scarf/Doc Martens girl fall in love? Who knows, but one thing's for sure — the next time I'm running post-breakdown on the streets of central Cambridge, I'll think of the brief time we spent together, and dodge the cameras knowing where they came from.

Quickfire questions with OshuClips

Where are you from?

I've lived in Cambridge all my life.

Cats or Dogs?

I don't like cats, but I'm working on myself to change that...

What did you do before TikTok?

I worked at Tesco, where I won an award for my duties to customer service — although I can turn the charm on and off at will...

Drink of choice?

I don't really drink, but if pushed, my drink of choice is Malibu and Coke.

Favourite establishment in Cambridge?

Wilfreds, the sweet shop on King's Parade; I'm good friends with the manager.

Why doesn't your King's Parade accomplice wear shoes?

That's a story that has to come from him.



Be You, With Us

#WeAreCisco



Software Engineer
cisco.com/ensoft

Follow @WeAreCisco



Sport

Jesus thrash Queens' to begin Cuppers defence

Jonny Coffey

Jesus began their defence of the Women and Non-Binary football Cuppers in style, storming to a 9-0 victory over Queens'. The Reds were dominant, showcasing incisive passing and ruthless finishing. Beattie Green and Anna Herr dazzled in midfield, while striker Gabriela Bisinoto was clinical, netting four times. It was scrappy in the opening stages, with long-balls going back-and-forth. Queens' started strongly, spurred on by winger Izzy Lowe's energy. As the game calmed, Jesus took control. Green broke through on goal, forcing an outstanding save from Queens' keeper Shannon Grimes. Minutes later, Jesus were back up the pitch, with

Beattie orchestrating again. A delicate through-ball found Leah Gomes, whose cut-back was finished off by Bisinoto. Energised, the Reds continued to threaten. Grimes made several excellent saves, but she couldn't prevent Leah Gomes, Anna Kerr, and Kaya Hardie all slotting home from close-range, making it 4-0 at the break. Queens' made a spirited start to the second half, but Jesus broke through again with Hardie, whose powerful shot found the bottom-left corner. Bisinoto then netted three times in ten minutes to make it 8-0, before Beattie finished superbly to score a well-deserved goal. Jesus are now clear favourites to regain Cuppers.

Corpus lose to Clare despite noble effort

Joshua Korber Hoffman
Sports Editor

Having conceded 37 goals in five games, Corpus Christi put in a performance against Clare dubbed a "revolution" by co-captains Seb Baynes and Ben Mulley. Facing consecutive relegations, Corpus remain bottom of Division Two. However, they were unrecognisable in their fourth league game of the season against favourites Clare, due to a superb

showing by Maverick Fraser, Shane Murphy, and goalkeeper Amrit Hingorani. Clare's James Adeosun was the game's best player, and special mention ought to go to Essam Rama in goal, making five or six spectacular diving saves. But it was Corpus who shone brightest. Aadi Prabhe was almost mistaken for Busquets, playing both calmly and fairly. A disappointing day for Clare, and one to savour for Corpus. The match ended Corpus 0-4 Clare.



Photo of the week

▲ Pirton fight through Churchill during their Cuppers victory (DIK NG)

Queens' edge into rugby Cuppers second round

Abbie Hastie

Queens' edged past Peterhouse-Emma-Selwyn-Tit Hall (PEST) in the first round of rugby Cuppers last Saturday, winning 14-12. It might have been different, but for a last-minute penalty miss by PEST's Jasper Bates. A man of the match performance by James Onley-Gregson (a try and two conversions) were enough to take Queens' to the second round, despite two PEST tries by Nathaniel Bean and Ben Crowther. On a miserable afternoon at Trinity Hall's Wychfield pitches, momentum swung between the green shirts of Queens' (shorn of their usual team-

mates from Jesus) and the PEST super team represented by four colleges. PEST started the game the better team and put the Queens' defence under sustained pressure, leading to one attacking scrum after another. Eventually, PEST got the first try 17 minutes in, scored by Nathaniel Bean and converted by Bates. Queens' were energised after conceding, their early pressure scuppered by a knock-on after a successful scrum. They eventually scored a try, covering the length of the pitch around the half-hour mark. It was converted by Gregson who, minutes later, turned scorer by surging from deep. He converted his own try, completing the Queens' comeback by half-time with the score at 14-7. The second half started quietly, with the first real attacking pressure of the half coming after 55 minutes, when PEST's Ben Crowther scored following a successful maul just yards from the try line. Bates missed the conversion from just ten yards. PEST's bad luck continued in the dying minutes of the game, as they lost the ball at a lineout. They soon turned the ball over in their desperate quest for a try, and their final chance came with a penalty minutes from the end. Jasper Bates was again over the ball for PEST, and his kick initially prompted cheers from the PEST support. Sadly for PEST, they were deceived by the angle, and Bates' kick went narrowly wide, handing Queens' a place in the next round.

Haircuts

Clipper Cut	from £16
Dry Cut	from £19
Wet Cut & Dry	from £21
Flat Top	from £21
Restyle	from £23
Long Hair	from £23
Skin Fade	from £22

Beard

Trim	from £7
Shape	from £10
Wet Shave	from £18

Boys under 12

Monday to Thursday	
Dry Cut	from £15
Wet Cut & Dry	from £17

Uni Student Discount

Only accepted with a valid uni or NUS card

Monday to Thursday	from £16
Friday	from £18
Skin Fade Monday to Thursday	from £20

Senior Citizens 67+

Monday to Thursday	from £14
--------------------	----------

Price List

Lui's

Barbershop

EST. 2001

01223 566663

www.luishbarbershop.co.uk

facebook: @luishbarbershop1

Instagram: luishbarbershop2001

ADVERTISE WITH US

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

Email: business@varsity.co.uk

Telephone: 01223 337575

www.varsity.co.uk



Fighting for a place: Modern pentathlete Anniko Firman's journey to Cambridge

▲ Anniko Firman had never rode before coming to Cambridge (LAURA DEARN)

Joshua Korber Hoffman discusses how Anniko Firman fundraised to pay for her university tuition

Anniko Firman's fencing match in Bath occurs the day before Liz Truss resigns. The political turmoil is tangible enough to pierce the purified Cambridge air. Editors around the country are holding the front pages. But on the crisp Wednesday morning when I meet Anniko outside the Varsity office before she drives south, it doesn't come up.

Sport has a way of distancing itself from politics. Like a fencing match, politics dances before sport, occasionally thrusting the foil in its direction. Sport usually jumps away in time, keeping a comfortable space in between. Politics is on the front page, and sport is on the back. Occasionally, sport can't escape, and it gets nicked by news' foil. Newcastle United being bought by Saudi Arabia. A world cup in Qatar. Sport creeps towards the front of the paper.

These moments are rare. The fencer is quick on her feet. We enjoy sport because it is a distraction, because we feel real emotions without real consequences. Politics breaks the illusion. Like a phone ringing in the theatre.

Sometimes you can't ignore it. Brexit has taken a toll on the international sporting community in the UK. Before 2016, a European student studying at a British university would pay home fees of £9,000 a year for an undergraduate degree. Now, they must pay interna-

tional fees of a minimum of £24,507 and a maximum of £63,990. EU applications are down 40% since the price hike.

Anniko Firman was one of those applicants. She is from The Hague, in the Netherlands. When her parents' restaurant had to close during the coronavirus pandemic, they were left without a source of income. Firman had an offer to study Classics at Cambridge, but not enough money to pay for it.

When we meet Firman, she is in the second year of a Classics degree. She is a senior member of the Cambridge modern pentathlon team. She smiles a lot. She made it to Cambridge, partly due to an aunt in the US, and partly due to a GoFundMe page that went viral in the Netherlands. It raised enough to cover her tuition fees for a year and a half. "Help Anniko make her Cambridge dream come true," it reads. Brexit nearly meant it didn't.

Every few months, Firman posts an update on the page. She tells me that donors like hearing about how she is doing. One thing keeps coming up in her recent updates: modern pentathlon.

Modern pentathlon is an Olympic sport comprising five events: fencing, swimming, equestrian show jumping (horse-riding), pistol shooting, and cross country running. Firman tells me these are meant to be the five skills one needs for battle, the purpose of the sport having been to train cavalry riders.

It was one of the original sports in the first modern Olympics.

At the Tokyo Games

in 2022, a German coach was seen punching her horse. After the Games, the international modern pentathlon committee voted to remove horse-riding in an effort to prevent the whole sport being ditched from the Olympic schedule. An obstacle course event, or cycling, have been cited as possible replacements. I've never heard of an army going into battle on a bicycle.

On her latest GoFundMe update, Firman tells her donors: "I'm excited to grab every opportunity Cambridge has to offer and can't wait to get settled back into the student life." Previously a competitive swimmer until a broken foot stopped her at 14, she dived headfirst into modern pentathlon in her first year. She has gone from strength to strength.

Firman is a strong swimmer. Her dad was a competitive swimmer in Indonesia before he moved to The Hague, and was instrumental in her development as an athlete. But she had never fenced, shot or rode horses until coming to Cambridge. The riding was especially tough. Firman invested a lot of time learning to ride, and by the end of her first year she made it into the first team for Varsity. She trains eight times a week. Combined with her participation in the fencing club, that climbs to twelve times. She says she turns up to supervisions carrying her fencing gear, and her

her that it might be because she's carrying a bag of swords.

Talking to her, it is clear how grateful she is to those donors who helped her get to Cambridge.

She never expected it to blow up the way it did. Firman got a call one night from a Dutch journalist who wanted to cover the story, and the next morning the article was published. Soon, she had exceeded her already ambitious fundraising target.

One can't help thinking, though, that Firman shouldn't have had to raise the money in the first place. Her parents came to the Netherlands from Indonesia, and now she is in the UK. She competes against athletes of all nationalities. Sport has an international spirit — a spirit that Brexit undermined, nearly preventing Firman from making it to Cambridge. Her story highlights how much there is to cherish in sport, and what we are losing sight of in our politics.

Firman is a Classicist. She will know the words of Diogenes the Cynic: "I am a citizen of the world." Firman raised money thanks to 700 donors from across the globe, and she is now an athlete in the modern pentathlon, a sport played in 120 countries. The sporting community at Cambridge is an international one, too, and it is better for it. Politics is making this harder to sustain.

After the interview, she tells me there's a space in the car if I want to join them in Bath.

Unfortunately, I can't. I have a seminar, where most of the time is taken up by discussion of the next step for the Conservatives. I watch a football highlights video afterwards. The commentator makes a passing comment on the significance of the players taking the knee before kick-off, still in his football commentary voice. The video cuts straight back to the action. The fencer is quick on her feet.



supervisors are always friendly and interested, rather than critical of her taking so much time away from her work. I don't tell

◀ Anniko shoots (HENNY DILLON)

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Karl Paul Parmakson and Jinheum Park Table tennis captains



Best sporting moment? Beating the Oxford men's captain at Varsity.

Most embarrassing moment? 1-9 and 2-8 defeats at last season's Varsity.

Best victory? No Varsity defeat for 18 years in a row for the men's first team (2004-2021).

Worst defeat? 0-17 defeat in BUCS against University of East Anglia last week, winning just one set in total.

Worst thing about being a captain? Being the club's eternal car driver for BUCS.

Why is your sport the best? Equipment is easy to carry, and it's easy to find people who like table tennis anywhere.

Why is your sports club the best? Table tennis on Friday night!

Who has the best chat in the team? Karl.

One to watch? Mitsuki Zhu and Rocky Yu.

HIDDEN RIVALRIES

TENNIS: CHURCHILL VS DOWNING

Joshua Korber Hoffman

Mixed tennis is always an intense college sport, but this year has proved even more heated than expected.

In the second division, only one point separates Churchill Is at the top and Downing IIs in second place. Downing were humiliated in their 5-1 defeat to Churchill on the first day of the season (15/10), but resurrected their chances after a close win over Clare and decisive victories over Jesus and Magdalene.

However, Downing were stopped in their tracks by Emma last week (12/11), while the Churchill train continued to hurtle towards league victory, still unbeaten.

At least Downing students can sleep well at night knowing that their first team is top of Division One, while Churchill Is still languish in the second tier.

Next season's match between Downing and Churchill will not be for the faint-hearted.

Sport

Modern pentathlete
Anniko Firman's journey to Cambridge
Page 31



Womens' football
Jesus thrash Queens' Page 30

CAPTAIN'S CORNER
Table tennis champion
Page 31

Running away with it



Cross country victories for Robinson and Downing

▲ Poppy Craig-McFeely and Paul McKinley won their races (MAGOG TRUST)

Maia Hardman & Joshua Korber Hoffman

The annual Cuppers event of the Hare and Hounds (Cambridge University's cross country running club) took place at Gog Magog Down on Saturday.

Robinson's Poppy Craig-McFeely won the women's race in style, while Downing's Paul McKinley took the win in the men's race following a close contest against Trinity Hall's Ewan Spencer.

The Hare and Hounds Cuppers event is used to select the line-up for the Varsity match soon after. The II-IVs race is tomorrow and the Blues is on 3 December.

The women raced a 6km course,

dominated by Craig-McFeely. Lucy Cavendish's Helene Greenwood took second place, ahead of Anna Kelly of St John's and Milly Dickinson of Gonville and Caius.

The men raced a 10km course, won near the end by McKinley. Behind second-placed Spencer was Jesus' Luke McCarron and Angus Harrington of St John's.

An honourable mention also goes to Phoebe Barker for finishing 16th in the men's race.

The Hare and Hounds will be pleased at the strength of the line-up as they prepare for the Varsity matches in the next few weeks.

Pirton and Robinson win in rugby Cuppers first round

James Hardy

Cambridge students were treated to the first round of rugby Cuppers this Saturday, including nail-biting wins for Pirton (Pembroke and Girton) and Robinson.

Last year's competition was won by St John's after a 45-5 win over Fitz-Sidney in the final.

In this year's first game, Pirton won 19-14 over Churchill. All three Pirton tries were scored by Oyare Aneju, who was undeterred by a controversial yel-

low card for his captain.

Despite fighting valiantly, Clare-Corpus-King's (CCK), top of Division Two, lost 24-5 to Trinity-Christ's. According to CCK's Instagram admin, Teddy Pearson's try, the only for CCK, was the best of the match. Five metres out, Teddy "used his immense power to crash over the line".

Meanwhile, Peterhouse-Emma-Selwyn-Tit Hall (PEST) lost 14-12 to Queens' (report on page 30).

First division Robinson won a dramatic kicking competition against

second division Caius after the game finished 7-7 after normal time. Caius return to fighting for promotion against CCK and PEST.

St Catharine's, second in Division One and one of the favourites for Cuppers, faced no such difficulty in their match against Downing, destroying them 38-7. Downing now face a league campaign in which they are fighting for survival in the top tier.

Jesus v All Grey's (a team made up of mature and graduate students) was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch.