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Just Stop Oil
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orange
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The Independent
Student Newspaper since 1947

VARSITY

Divinity Don slammed for 'racist' remarks

- Professor accused of 'dehumanising' Arabs and Palestinians
- Academic in faculty: 'unthinkable' that don can teach without discrimination

Eric Williams and Daniel Hilton

Comments by a Divinity professor have been called "racist" and "dehumanising" towards Arabs and Palestinians, with student societies demanding the university "take action" on the matter.

Dr James Orr, an academic at the Faculty of Divinity, responded to a video of pro-Palestinian demonstrations in London, which showed Muslim protestors praying, by stating: "Import the Arab World, become the Arab World".

His comments were slammed as "obviously racist" by Cambridge's Middle Eastern North African Society (MenaSoc) and Palestine Solidarity Society (PalSoc), who said: "How are Arabs and Palestinians meant to feel safe when such hatred is being incited?"

A member of the Divinity Faculty spoke to *Varsity* on the condition of anonymity, stating "this clearly falls well short of the standards expected of an academic at a public university."

"But it falls especially short of an academic in a Religious Studies department, with members of varying ethnicities and religious affiliations," they continued.

"It is unthinkable that Orr can continue to enjoy the confidence of students and colleagues to teach, examine and collaborate without discrimination," the anonymous academic added.

Orr made the comments after Saturday's unprecedented attack launched by Hamas, a Palestinian organisation of Islamist militants, which saw the killing of at least 1200 people in Israel.

Tweeting on Monday evening, his

comments came as Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant announced a "complete siege" of Gaza, cutting off food, fuel, electricity and water.

Cahir O'Kane, a professor of genetics at the university, tweeted in response, stating Orr could have "responded to the shocking Hamas atrocities in any number of reasonable ways" but instead chose "a derogatory and racist comment that targets Arabs".

MenaSoc and PalSoc described Orr's comments as an example of "the dehumanisation of Palestinians in order to facilitate acceptance of the mass atrocity that has begun against Gazans".

Since the Hamas attacks, Israeli airstrikes have killed more than 1100 Palestinians, in a response that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said has "only just begun".

Hamas is designated a terrorist group by Israel, the United States, the EU and the UK, as well as other powers, although this is sometimes only the case for its military wing.

"This [dehumanisation] process occurs before any mass atrocity," MenaSoc and PalSoc continued, demanding the university "not indulge in such narratives" and "take action to create a safer environment for Arab and Palestinian students."

Orr has been influential in national politics in recent months, playing a leading role at the controversial 'National Conservatism Conference' in May, which gathered influential figures from the right-wing of the Conservative party.

The National Conservatism movement describes its purpose as "reconsolidating the rich tradition of national



▲ Dr James Orr spoke at the National Conservatism Conference in May
Photo: EDMUND BURKE FOUNDATION

conservative thought as an intellectually serious alternative to the excesses of purist libertarianism, and in stark opposition to political theories grounded in race."

Orr has been at the centre of student backlash in the past, with criticism being levelled at him for his alleged links to Republican billionaire Peter Thiel and his controversial invitation of Jordan Peterson to Cambridge.

The University of Cambridge and James Orr were contacted for comment.

Admissions investigation
Breakdown between grammar and comprehensive school offers

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JSoc: We condemn SU Sabb

Daniel Hilton and Eric Williams

Cambridge SU's welfare officer has triggered significant student backlash after liking online content supportive of Hamas attacks in Israel, and could be facing a vote of no confidence.

The SU's Welfare & Community officer, a sabbatical position that is elected and holds a salary, liked a tweet by Rivkah Brown, an editor at Novara Media, that suggested Saturday's attacks by Hamas should be "a day of celebration."

Cambridge's Jewish Society (JSoc) condemned the Sabb's actions, stating they were "deeply shocked to see an SU welfare sabbatical officer endorsing the celebration of Hamas' brutal and incomprehensible slaughter of Israeli men, women and children."

Speaking to *Varsity*, JSoc said that the Sabb has privately "committed to apologising to Jewish students."

But an SU insider, speaking anonymously to *Varsity*, said that "unless a very strong apology is forthcoming soon, there will almost definitely be moves to put forward a vote of no confidence."

The national Union of Jewish Students (UJS) also called the incident a "disgrace" in a comment to the *Telegraph*.

The tweet liked by the Sabb stated: "Today should be a day of celebration for supporters of democracy and human rights worldwide". It continued, saying: "The struggle for freedom is rarely bloodless and we shouldn't apologise for it".

The now-deleted tweet was released after Saturday's unprecedented attack launched by Hamas, a Palestinian organisation of Islamist militants, which saw fighters break out of Gaza and kill over 1200 people in Israel.

"We condemn this abhorrent rhetoric, and the impact it has upon Jewish students in the strongest possible terms", JSoc said of the tweet.

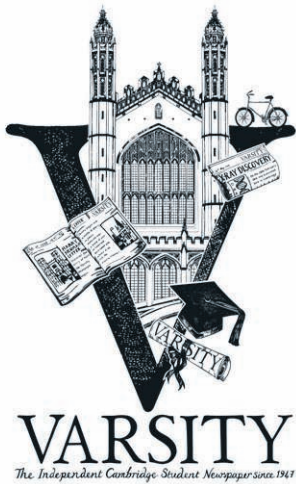
Hamas is designated a terrorist group by Israel, the United States, the EU and the UK, as well as other powers, although this is sometimes only the case for its military wing.

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant

Continued on page 3 ►

Week 3

"Cambridge is full of scientists, printing presses, theatre groups and all I need is the guts to write about them...perhaps I'll try out for Varsity next term"- Sylvia Plath (1956)



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Editorial

Moving from the dramatic highs and lows of Freshers' Week into the Cambridge routine, student life has now begun to slowly settle down. As we dedicate less time to drunkenly stumbling over cobblestones, we finally have a chance to find our feet again.

Although life at Cambridge may be falling back into more familiar patterns - weekly essays, Sunday Lola's, bleary-eyed 9ams - the world around us is a different matter. Whilst issues from across the globe manifest themselves in Cambridge, we are reminded that

we cannot ignore the issues that exist beyond this bubble and how our community interacts with them (p.1).

Meanwhile, as Just Stop Oil sprays King's walls orange (p.3) and a Varsity investigation uncovers vast inequalities between the amount St John's and Lucy Cavendish spend on their students (p. 5), this edition shines light on the underlying problems that continue to pervade this institution.

Looking inward, though you might perhaps feel burdened by the pressure of securing an internship (p. 9), a grad scheme, a master's programme - or perhaps simply the pressure of turning in your next essay - keep in mind

everything you've already achieved to get to this point.

If you've just come to the end of your first week in Cambridge, remember that although you might feel like a small fish in a big pond at first, your experience so far will not define your time here (p. 20). If, like us, you're a finalist, don't let the threat of an even bigger ocean daunt you.

Throw yourself into Cambridge life, discover new opportunities, and explore the world beyond your college - a feat that

would, as Hugh Jones argue on p.12, be made much easier if the SU finally built a bar...



Week in Pictures



Rosebank oil protest (30/09) [Hannah Mawardi]



Just Stop Oil protest (12/10) [Felix Armstrong]



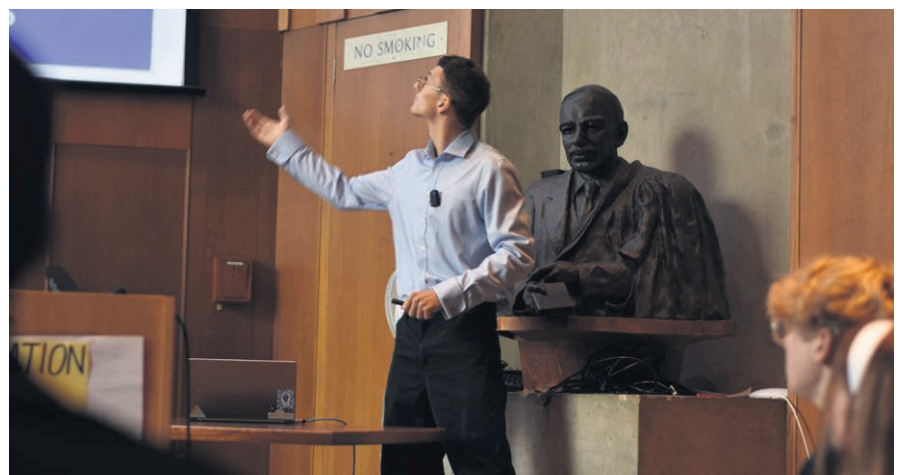
Netball blues BUCS (11/10) [Hannah Mawardi]



New Heong Gallery exhibition: We Could Be Heroes... [Tomos Davies]



Spitting Image Margaret Thatcher puppet at the UL [Hannah Mawardi]



Climate crisis mock trial organised by Clive Stafford Smith (09/10) [Eric Williams]

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Just Stop Oil paint King's orange

Felix Armstrong

A Just Stop Oil (JSO) activist staged a demonstration at King's College yesterday, in coordination with similar actions at Leeds and Manchester universities.

A protester sprayed the facade of the college with the movement's signature orange paint, before remaining sat in front of the College for at least an hour, while police attended to the scene. Police initially handcuffed the demonstrator, but then removed the restraints before bundling the protester into a van.

Just Stop Oil demands that the Government issues no new oil, gas, or coal licences, and their divisive tactics have caught headlines in recent years.

"We are alive at a pivotal point in history and what we do now will determine the future of humanity," read a leaflet being handed out by members of JSO on King's Parade.

One student watching the demonstration said: "JSO represents the interests of many students here at Cambridge, and this has caused no disruption to our day."

"We're in the eleventh hour, we're facing absolute human extinction, and I'm glad that this has happened today," they said.

Workmen who were also at the scene expressed their frustration at the group's tactics. One said that, though they have sympathy for the cause, JSO's strategy moves public sentiment against climate action: "That just pisses people off more, it's childish that they just like the pictures and stuff. They like the publicity for that, but it's not giving them the right press."

Another student said: "I don't think vandalism is the right option. [...] This thing's been around since before oil was invented, why are you throwing paint on this?"

Shortly following the demonstration, the College emailed students, saying: "I know that this will cause some upset and distress amongst the community. If you are worried, concerned, or impacted in any way by this event please do reach out to sources of support around the College such as your Tutor, the Welfare Tutor, Chaplain, or the Porters."

Welfare sabb's job at risk over Hamas attack reaction

Continued from front page

has since ordered a "complete siege" of Gaza in retaliation, cutting off food, fuel, electricity and water supplies. Israeli airstrikes have killed more than 1100 Palestinians, in a response that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said has "only just begun".

Einav Grushka, an Israeli student

at the university who co-organised an open letter condemning the University's "vague" response to Hamas attacks, told *Varsity* that it is "disturbing and unfathomable" that the Sabb "publicly support[ed] posts" calling for a celebration of the violence.

She continued, stating that while Israeli students "grieve our friends and loved ones [...] those that ought to be

supporting us in the university spread hatred and overtly support the massacre."

"We're already facing terror back home. Never in a million years would I expect this level of extremism to feed from within Cambridge", Grushka said.

The welfare officer involved and the SU have been contacted for comment.



▲ FELIX ARMSTRONG

Plagiarising concerns prompt law exam change

Jasmine Heddle-Bacon

The Law Faculty has reduced exams by two hours for all years over concerns of academic misconduct.

A letter sent to all Law undergraduates at the end of September outlined the Faculty's plan to continue online, open book exams but to cut down timing from five hours to three hours. The measure includes finalists, who have only ever taken five-hour online exams, implemented following the pandemic.

The letter seen by *Varsity* cited concerns of academic misconduct and poor academic practice as motivations for the decision. This year's change is also explained as a return to the equivalent exam format pre-COVID.

Some finalists have criticised the move, with one telling *Varsity* "this changes the standard of essay we are expected to write. We have not had any practice with this type of essay and we now have to learn from scratch."

Another student, who receives extra time and has seen their time reduced

from 7 hours to 3 hours and 45 minutes, expressed concerns about the change. They stated, "it disproportionately affects students with extra time."

The Faculty wrote that candidates spent too long cutting and pasting pre-prepared answers rather than answering the set question. "This fails to test the skills the exams are designed to test," the letter reads.

The letter's concerns also include plagiarism and collusion such as the use of AI, described as 'under[ining] the integrity of the law degree'. An exclusive study by *Varsity* in April found that 47.3% of Cambridge students have used ChatGPT to help with their degree. However, only 7.3% of participants admitted they planned to use ChatGPT during their exams.

Students are concerned that the change will only incentivise poor academic practice. An anonymous source told *Varsity*: "I didn't use any pre-prepared material in the five hour exams [last Easter] but reducing the time limit only incentivises doing so."

The letter is co-authored by Stelios Tofaris, Director of Examinations, as well as Mark Elliot, the Chair of the Faculty, and the Examinations and Academic Secretaries. In it, they describe their decision as "the best way to address these concerns at the present time".

The changes do not involve a return to in-person, invigilated, handwritten exams. "These do not reflect the way in which the vast majority of students work throughout the year," the Faculty explained.

Finalists' degree results will now comprise two modes of assessment, with second and third year both weighted at 50%.

Alongside the exam change, the Faculty is organising compulsory sessions on Good Academic Practice for all years, including talks on the use of artificial intelligence platforms.

As a final modification, word limits for exam scripts will now be indicative rather than previous absolute limits.

The Law Faculty was contacted for comment.

University watch



Beth Doherty

More than one in four UK universities operating food banks for students

In response to the cost of living crisis, more than one in four universities in the UK are operating food banks for students. The findings by the Higher Education Policy Institute have been described as "a damning indictment" by the National Union of Students.

Just Stop Oil stage protests at Oxford, Bristol and Exeter

Students spray painted buildings across the country this week, including Oxford's Radcliffe Camera library. The group was protesting against new oil and gas, such as approval for the Rosebank oil field which campaigners estimate will emit the same amount as the 28 lowest emitting countries in the world. Activists at the protests were arrested on the scene.

Coventry students face deportation following IT glitch

Three students at Coventry face the possibility of deportation following alleged IT glitches which prevented them from uploading their exams. As such, they have not received final grades. International students must obtain a degree before they can apply for a graduate visa, and any resit dates will be after their visas have expired. The University claims it cannot find evidence of any technical issues.

Oxford students responsible for city's status as medieval "murder capital"

Cambridge historians have identified Oxford as the medieval murder capital with a per capita homicide rate 4-5 times higher than late medieval London or York. Researchers identified a "deadly mix of conditions" which led to much higher rates of violence, mainly from the students.

Edinburgh student paper on the brink

A fundraising campaign to save Edinburgh University's historic newspaper, *The Student*, has surpassed its initial goals as the paper struggles for survival. As reported by *The Scotsman*, the 137-year old paper initially posted a £750 fundraising goal last week, with its total raised now standing at £4,671, with a £2000 target.

News

Staff union to strike, triggering 'substantial disruption' for students

Felix Armstrong

Hundreds of the University's non-academic staff will strike in October and November, calling for an improved pay deal.

The Cambridge branch of the Unite union, which represents over 450 staff, will strike later this month. Unite membership comprises staff of departments such as the University Library, estate management, and the Fitzwilliam Museum.

The strike action will "likely result in building closures and repairs not taking place," the union told *Varsity*.

The union's strike ballot found that 75% of voting members were in favour of industrial action, which will take place on the 24th and 26th of October, and the 1st and 7th of November.

The University's current pay offer stands at between five and six percent, which the union argues constitutes a real terms pay cut. RPI, one of two gauges of inflation, currently sits at nine per cent, rendering the University pay offer a three per cent cut, argues Unite.

Unite held a demonstration outside Senate House last month, which was attended by the Cambridge branch of the University and Colleges Union (UCU). A

spokesperson for Unite Cambridge told *Varsity* that the branch "is generally not a militant branch. It is unusual for our members to ask for us to organise an industrial action over low pay."

"We are in this position because, after years of below inflation pay awards, our members are struggling to pay bills and feed their families. Cambridge is easily as expensive as London to live in," they said.

"We are asking the University to recognise this, and to use every means at its disposal to increase pay on both a national, but especially local level. London universities use a London weighting payment to improve staff pay, perhaps Cambridge University could do the same," they concluded.

Ian Maidlow, Unite regional coordinating officer, said: "Our workers are being forced to take this action in response to the continued real terms pay cuts by one of the richest education establishments in the country."

"I'd urge the University to come back to the negotiating table with a better offer worthy of our members' hard work," Maidlow said.

The University of Cambridge has been contacted for comment.



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St John's spends nearly 1,700% more on student grants than Lucy Cavendish

Beth Doherty

St John's College spends over £1,700 more on financial support yearly per student than Lucy Cavendish, *Varsity* Freedom of Information requests can reveal.

St John's was able to spend 17 times more than Lucy Cavendish in the 2022-23 academic year, awarding £1,836,582 total, or £1,832 per student. This compares to Lucy Cavendish's total award of £86,152, or just £108 per student. This marks a 1,696% difference between the colleges. These figures only include college-provided grants, bursaries and other financial support.

Lucy Cavendish is the first, and only, Cambridge college to admit at least 90% of its UK students from state schools. At St John's, the equivalent figure is 67%.

Joe Garvey, a Lucy Cavendish student who has been heavily involved in research and advocacy, told *Varsity* that the difference can likely be attributed to discrepancies in the College's funding and endowments. "Spending is low because there's no money, that's the truth of it," he said.

Fatima Yusuf, a student at Lucy Cavendish, adds: "The hardship funding

available at the college illustrates a systemic failure from the University as Lucy Cavendish just does not have enough money to provide for its students."

Caredig ap Tomos, Cambridge SU Access and Education Officer, commented: "The variation is largely a function of the wealth of the college and its alumni. As an unfortunate product of the current system, working class students at Lucy Cavendish are ultimately disadvantaged compared to their peers because of the college they chose or got assigned."

Students have been repeatedly told that the Colleges Fund, which exists to help colleges like Lucy Cavendish grow their endowments, cannot be used for operational expenditure such as financial support. This limits the college's ability to increase funding for financial support.

Lucy Cavendish and St John's exist at two ends of the collegiate financial spectrum. In 2022, St John's recorded a £3 million surplus, while Lucy Cavendish faces a debt of £16 million. This debt is largely due to a series of loans to finance new student accommodation following the college's rapid expansion and admission of male and undergraduate students.

Lucy Cavendish students are quick to highlight the positives of the College, and described to *Varsity* its welcoming environment for students from a state-school background and tight-knit community.

However, Garvey also draws attention to the impact this disparity in funding has on students. "It's fundamentally a completely different student experience," he explained, "I have no idea what being a John's student would be like. The difference in funding means that a lot of us work during term time."

Yusuf highlights the impossible situation many working class students find themselves in: "Last year I asked for the hardship fund and not only was the process incredibly taxing but my main problem of affording rent was yet to be dealt with. If we're not allowed to work here, how are we meant to survive at Cambridge?"

The discrepancy is also accompanied by delays, preventing students from accessing educational opportunities. An anonymous student told *Varsity* they were unable to complete an extracurricular course, as they were unable to take the financial risk of not getting reimbursed by the College. "This process

is inherently exclusionary and creates barriers to access that do not align with the college's ambition for widening participation," they said.

The difference in provision is particularly stark given St John's' status as Lucy Cavendish's largest landlord. While St John's charges students some of the lowest rent in Cambridge, Garvey explains that, at Lucy Cavendish, "almost everyone struggles to pay rent and you don't get the same level of support for sport, travel or hardship as you would at a richer college."

Yusuf told *Varsity* that these problems are structural: "The problem with the collegiate system is that the University essentially steps out and leaves it to individual colleges. The University needs to push for colleges with larger endowments to donate to smaller colleges."

Caredig ap Tomos is clear that responsibility going forward must rest with the University: "Colleges should not be the focus of proposals to improve financial support, as the largest potential for distributing pooled resources lies with the central University."

The University, and Lucy Cavendish and St John's Colleges were contacted for comment.



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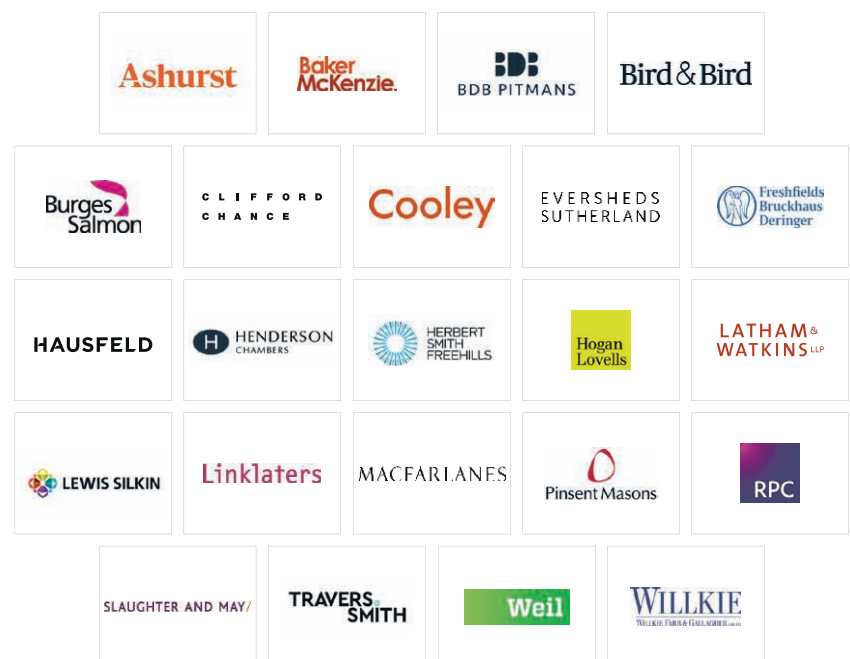
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News

Around town



Amelia Platt

Tributes paid to much-loved Cambridge market florist

Adam Stevens has died at the age of 65, the *Cambridge Independent* reported. Known to the community as ‘The Flower Man’, Mr Stevens worked on the Stevens of Boston flower stall for almost fifty years. He has been remembered by his colleagues as a “larger than life character” whose “great laugh” will be sorely missed. Glenys Self, who runs a jewellery stall at the market, said: “He was a huge character. His flowers brightened up the place and he had a fantastic smile as well as a wonderful positivity about him. And he loved to laugh. He’s left a big hole behind now on the market.”

On the rum

A 36-year-old who stole thousands of pounds of booze has been jailed and banned from several Cambridge shops. The *Cambridge Independent* revealed how Ralph Allgood was spotted on CCTV breaking into the Mainsbury’s warehouse. He was found to have stolen tipples worth a total of £3,500. Algood was sentenced at Cambridge Magistrates’ Court to a year in the (tequila) slammer. Mr Allgood was also given a five-year ban from Co-op on Mill Road, Tesco on East Road and Petty Curry, John Lewis and Sainsbury’s in Eddington.

Claw-ful News

Chinese mitten crabs have been spotted on roads and in ponds in Cambridgeshire. A video on the BBC News website shows a pair of Chinese mitten crabs crawling out of a waterway. The footage was captured by Richard Bailey at the King’s Dyke in Whittlesey, with other sightings at Nene Park in Peterborough. The Nene Park Trust said: “They [the crabs] don’t pose any threat to people or dogs but may give a nip if anything gets too close, so we would advise visitors to keep their distance.”

Council to increase fines for fly-tipping

Cambridge City Council has approved plans to increase penalties for environmental crimes such as fly-tipping and littering, reports BBC Cambridgeshire. Littering fines will increase by £75, with fly-tipping penalties to be hiked by up to £500.

Selective schooling skews admissions

Aoife O’Driscoll

A *Varsity* investigation has revealed the influence of selective establishments in state-educated admissions statistics.

When representing admissions, home students are broadly categorised into maintained sector (state) and private schools. This often leads to the University and individual colleges presenting admission statistics in the form of the broad ‘state school’ background, such as that 72.5% of students from the 2022 cycle come from the maintained sector. These figures do not address the distinction between selective and non-selective schools within the state sector.

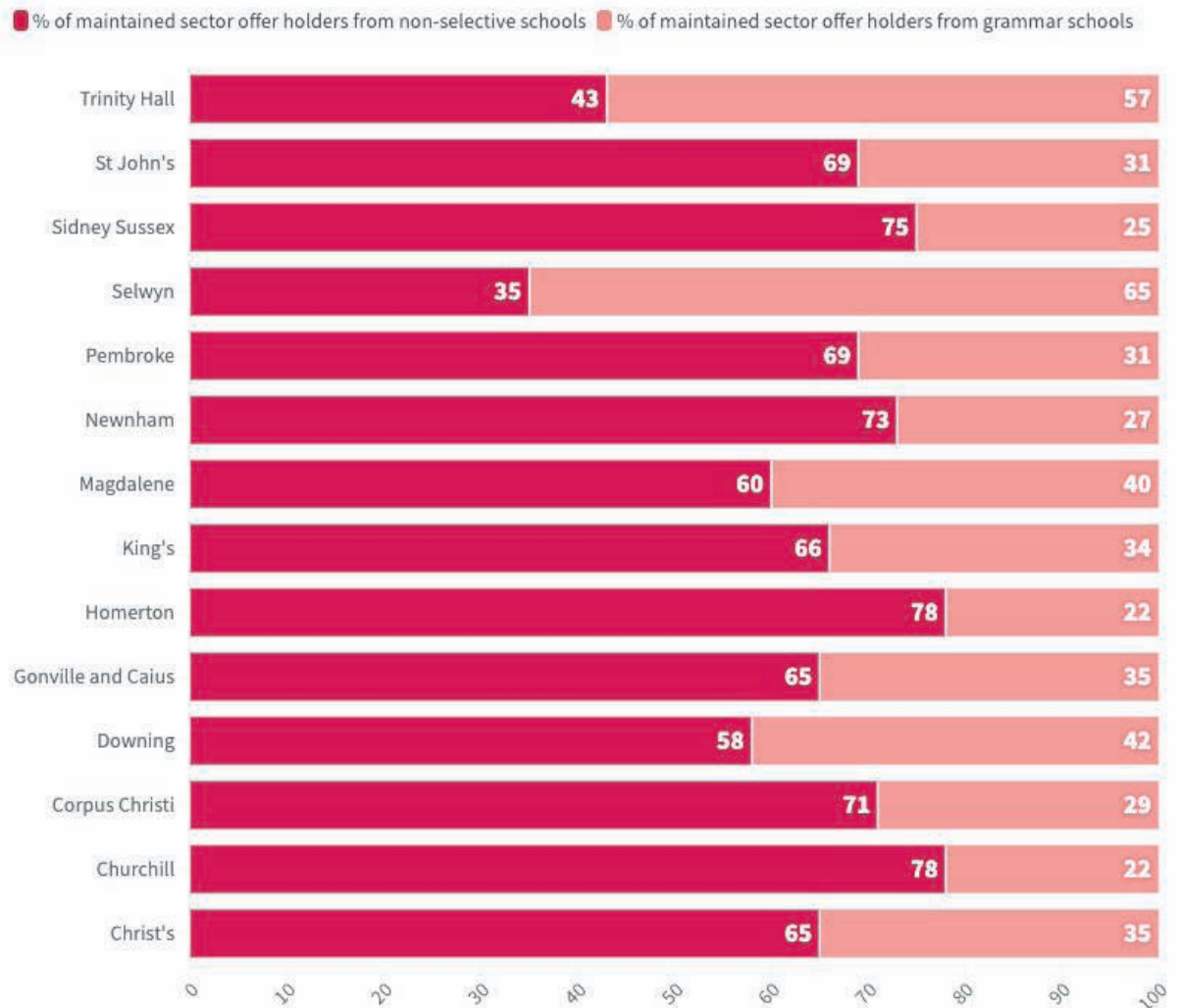
A freedom of information request to undergraduate colleges has provided further insight into the backgrounds of maintained sector applicants and offer holders from the 2023 admissions cycle. All percentages relate to the overall grouping of all maintained sector schools, excluding independent and non-UK admissions.

Of the 14 colleges from which information was obtained, Homerton and Churchill had the highest proportion of non-selective school applicants in the 2023 cycle, making up 81% of their state school applications. Conversely, 65% of state school applicants to Trinity Hall had a non-selective school background, the lowest proportion of the colleges listed here.

In the 2023 cycle, the vast majority of colleges which responded saw an increase in the proportion of state school students from a grammar school background within the pool of offer holders from the pool of applicants, and a decrease in the proportion of non-selective school students. Only one college included here, Sidney Sussex, revealed that their proportion of non-selective offer holders increased from applicants — by one percentage point.

In all instances, there was a higher proportion of non-selective school applicants from the maintained sector than grammar school applicants. In the majority of cases, the difference between proportion of applicants and offer holders from the two categories was ten percentage points or less. However, Magdalene, Downing, Trinity Hall and Selwyn all saw larger decreases between non-selective applicants to offer holders.

Selwyn reported the greatest disparity between non-selective maintained sector applicants to offer holders. Although 72% of maintained sector ap-



plicants to the College came from a non-selective background, they made up only 35% of maintained sector offer holders. This entailed an increase of 132% in representation of grammar school students in maintained sector applicants to offer holders.

In a similar investigation carried out by *Varsity* in 2020, it was found that Gonville & Caius and St John’s had the lowest proportion of applicants: 40% from a non-selective background. Gonville & Caius was also reported as having the second lowest proportion of acceptances with no private or grammar background, 31%. In 2023, however, 69% of incoming Caius home students are from the state sector, placing the total proportion of incoming Caius students with a non-selective school background at approximately 45%.

Dr. Chris Scott, Caius’ Tutor for Admissions and Outreach, told *Varsity* that “Caius changed its admissions policy in 2020 to prioritise academic potential. Since then we have also tripled our out-

reach capacity.”

For the 14 colleges listed, the overall median percentage of maintained sector applicants from non-selective schools is 73%, while the median percentage of offer holders from the same background is 67.5%. The median percentage of maintained sector applicants from grammar schools is 26%, and the median of maintained sector offer holders from grammar schools is 31%, an increase of 19%.

Varsity’s findings also include the success rate of applicants who moved from private education at GCSE level to state education during the post-16 period. According to reports from earlier this year, students who make this switch are a third more likely to be successful in their application.

At both Corpus Christi and Newnham, the proportion of state-educated students who had moved from private education at GCSE was higher in the pool of offer-holders than among intial applicants. At Corpus Christi, this was an

increase of 19%, and at Newnham, this was an increase of 97%. At Gonville & Caius, however, there was a decrease of 21% from applicants to offer holders. In all three cases, the proportions of applicants who fit this description were minimal, suggesting that it would not be possible to discern any trends relating to the success of their applications.

Chris Scott told *Varsity*: “A small proportion of students across the UK make a switch from the independent to the state sector for sixth form, and vice-versa, and there is a vast range of potential reasons for this [...]. Moving from an independent school to a state school does not increase an applicant’s chance of success.”

On the educational divide, he added: “Our aim in admissions is to consider each applicant we receive as an individual, in their context, and to make a judgement about their potential; it is not to discriminate or to strive towards quotas.”

Lights out on Wolfson matriculation

Felix Armstrong

Freshers at Wolfson College were left without a matriculation and carted off-site for their dinner last week, following unplanned power outages at the College.

The cancelled matriculation was a part of wider disruption caused by power outages that went beyond those anticipated by the College during a planned kitchen refurbishment.

Students were left without wi-fi during the outages, with the dining hall forced to close on Monday (02/10), and the college bar shuttered on Thursday (05/10).

Wolfson students were informed of

planned power outages on the Monday and Friday last week, according to emails seen by *Varsity*, but the first planned outage was lengthened after a generator failure. This was followed by a wholly unplanned outage on Thursday.

The College’s Bursar emailed students at 1 pm on Monday to inform them of “a problem with today’s power outage,” before cancelling matriculation at 4pm the same day, just hours before the event was due to start.

Due to the complete closure of the hall, students were assigned the use of a number of other colleges’ halls, including Darwin and Selwyn. “Cafeteria supper for tonight is also cancelled. But you

will not go hungry!” wrote the Bursar.

One fresher told *Varsity*: “We were banished to Newnham for our dinner [...] They only informed us of the postponement two hours before the matriculation.”

Another fresher said: “We were all disappointed that matriculation was cancelled — and it is a bit odd that they would plan a power outage on the same date as an event as important as matriculation.”

One international student said that they lost 400 words of their thesis due to the lack of wi-fi during the outage: “It was very aggravating, given how much I pay for college fees,” they said.

“The College has to stop gaslighting us on how the facilities are all okay,” they continued.

A Wolfson spokesperson said: “We were very disappointed to be forced to cancel the matriculation event for students on Monday, but we communicated this to students as soon as it became clear that the unexpectedly prolonged outage would make the event impossible to host safely.”

“We have of course rescheduled the matriculation event and dinner, which is free for students to attend. We are very grateful to students and members for their patience during the work,” they concluded.

Wild swimming: Cam it be done?

Matthew Taylor

Students wishing to swim in the Cam may soon be able to do so with more confidence in their safety.

Cambridge City Council has voted to support the application of a local voluntary group, the Cam Valley Forum, to designate a 270m stretch of river at Sheep's Green, on Coe Fen, as a bathing spot.

A bathing water designation application for the area will be made to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) this month. A successful outcome would see the Environment Agency testing the water at Sheep's Green each week throughout the bathing

season.

If the water quality was found to be "poor" in the first year, as the voluntary group expects, the agencies identified as major polluters would have legally have to ensure it is cleaned.

Students told *Varsity* of past dangerous swimming experiences, including one who recalled their friend being hospitalised after swimming in the Cam.

Another, who became ill just days after taking a dip said he "thought [he] was going to pass out on the toilet."

The same student said it was not uncommon for the training programmes of the University's boat clubs to be interrupted by sewage leaks. "Nobody

rows sometimes," he said. A submission to Rowbridge, a Facebook confessions page for rowers, describes what is colloquially known as "the poo zone" after a sewage leak.

More formal reports of the Cam's contamination include Robinson's college nurse warning students last summer not to enter the river due to the possibility of catching Weil's disease, contracted from the urine of infected rats.

The popular student swimming spot of Grantchester Meadows is ineligible for designation under DEFRA guidance. However, the Cam Valley Forum hopes the designation of Sheep's Green "will benefit the whole river."



▲ LOUIS ASHWORTH

Gonville & Snaius! Legionella traces found in Caius pipes

Felix Armstrong

Traces of pneumonia-causing bacteria were found in Gonville & Caius accommodation last week, with the College instructing students not to use hot water.

Legionella bacteria was found as a result of routine testing on the water supplies at Caius' Harvey Court accommodation on Friday of last week. Students at the first-year accommodation site were instructed not to use hot water for the rest of the day.

Legionella is often found in stagnant water systems, and can cause Legionnaire disease, a severe form of pneumonia, and Pontiac fever, a flu-like illness.

Jamie, a first-year English student who lives in Harvey Court, told *Varsity*: "I got a note slid under my door as well as an email from the Head Porter saying that there has been a test done on the water and legionella had been found in the hot water supply for Harvey Court."

"I was kind of worried at first, because they didn't give us much information about how long it had possibly been there, or if it was particularly dangerous," they said.

Another student felt that the College's communications on the matter could have been more informative. "I would recommend that adding a short description of what legionella actually is as well as recognising symptoms of having legionella would [have] calm[ed] people down," they said.

Students were alerted that the water had been treated later on Friday evening, with the Head Porter emphasising that "the level of legionella we identified was very low, and the risk of harm was minimal."

A Gonville & Caius College spokesperson said: "Routine testing found a minute trace of legionella bacteria in hot water systems at our Harvey Court accommodation on Friday 6 October. Best practice Health and Safety Executive procedures were followed to eliminate any risk to residents."

"Hot water was unavailable from 4pm until 8pm and cold water supplies were unaffected. We thank students for their cooperation and staff for their vigilance in testing and prompt actions in responding."

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News

Homerton students demand sports access

Students at Homerton College have launched a campaign to gain consistent access to their sports facilities. The College has restricted access to their Long Road pitches and sports facilities to one day a week. The Homerton Union of Students' Sports Officer has penned an open letter demanding that the College explains why the facilities are being restricted, and makes public the sums gained from external bookings of the site. "For a college that purports to be focused on welfare and mental health, this is unacceptable," the Officer said.

Madgalene-opposed hotel development faces setback

The Varsity Hotel and Spa's appeal to overturn the refusal of its first roof canopy plans has been dismissed. According to *Cambridgeshire Live*, the planning inspector justified the decision by explaining the canopy would be a "jarring" addition to the city skyline, which would fail to preserve the setting of the nearby listed buildings at Magdalene College. The College had previously objected directly to the plans, with a representative saying the report did not detail the impact on the "most sensitive viewpoints."

Union debates race re-run

Following Nick Davis' presidential victory in Sunday's Union elections, the Debates Officer race is being re-run after invalid votes were cast. The election, for the Lent 2024 role, saw Joshua Lim beat Sammy McDonald by just one vote. The Union told members this week that three invalid ballots were made, so the Debates race must be re-called as the result falls within this margin. The re-run will take place today, determining who will join the committee alongside Davis (President), Alessio D'Angelo (Speakers), Szymon Sawicki (Soc Ents), and Anoushka Kale (Equalities).

Bus stop change causes fury

Planned roadworks lasting eighteen weeks are causing anger among Cambridge University professors. Work is scheduled on the junction of Barton Road and Grantchester Road from October to March 2024. Drivers will have to follow a diversion of around four miles, and a bus stop off Barton Road is expected to be moved. Peter Landshoff, a former academic, told *Cambridgeshire Live* this change was "callous." He explained: "One has to make the best of getting old, but it is galling when people unnecessarily and thoughtlessly make things more difficult."

Foundation year students begin degrees

The first students to have completed the Cambridge Foundation Year started their undergraduate studies last week. 39 foundation year students completed the course, of the 47 who enrolled. 31 of these are going on to continue their studies at Cambridge. This was the first year of the foundation course, with another 48 students joining this year. The Cambridge Foundation Year was founded to help disadvantaged but talented students gain access to Cambridge. It offers them a one year pre-degree course in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences which is fully funded for students through scholarships. After completing this, students can then continue onto a Cambridge degree in a number of subjects.

The first cohort of foundation year students founded the Cambridge Foundation Year Society, which will help to support the new students enrolling on the pre-degree course and the students now starting their first year at Cambridge.

Cambridge alumni set to become tech mentors

Cambridge University has launched a mentorship scheme to boost the number of new technologies produced by its students and staff. *The Times* has reported on the scheme, named 'Founders at The University of Cambridge', which is led by Gerard Grech, the former chief executive of Tech Nation. Around 100 former alumni have already signed up as mentors. The first cohort of start-ups will begin in January. Dr Diarmuid O'Brien, chief executive of Cambridge Enterprise and responsible for the commercialisation of the university's intellectual property, said that while Cambridge had long supported spinouts it had lacked the means to support a large number of companies. "We have the most amazing alum globally in this space, who have been really successful as founders, creating businesses and raising capital," he added. O'Brien also said that over time the programme would extend beyond Cambridge.

Former academic 'feared speaking out' at Cambridge

Professor Arif Ahmed has claimed that he "feared speaking his mind" as a Cambridge academic. Prof Ahmed told *the Telegraph* that he was afraid to discuss or question some topics in lectures and tutorials while at Cambridge, out of fear of receiving complaints. Prof Ahmed was appointed Director for Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom of the Office for Students in June 2023. He insisted that there are "persistent and widespread concerns that many in higher education are being silenced, either by the action of the university or by its inactivity." Prof Ahmed is also set to oversee a new complaints scheme for students, staff and visiting speakers who could be eligible for compensation if they suffer from a breach of a university's free speech obligations. The complaints process is currently under consultation and is due to come in next August.



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The cult of the Cambridge intern

Speaking to some of Cambridge's flock of interns, **Bella Shorrock** and **Alex Levy** delve into an often opaque culture

Internships. Love them or hate them, they're a central part of the Cambridge experience. Upon entering second year, you'll likely be surrounded by students laser-focused on securing their dream placement. By third year, half of your peers seem to have future jobs promised at City firms they spent eight weeks at over summer.

But how valuable is the internship experience? Is it really needed in order to secure a job after uni? And what about other, less esteemed, forms of work - work that students might *have* to do over vacation just to fund their studies? We spoke to students who've undertaken internships in various fields, to try and find more about the impetus behind seeking an internship, and how valuable the experience really is.

“The ultimate prize is a return invite for the following summer

The yearly flurry of slick new LinkedIn profile pictures is testament to the flocks of student interns who descend on the City each summer, cutting their corporate teeth behind the plate glass exteriors of the world's largest firms. From investment banking to commercial law, accounting, insurance and consulting, getting a proverbial foot in the door somewhere in the Square Mile can be a lucrative inroad to an equally lucrative career. It can be hard to see past the

relative glitz of these industries - internship opportunities in other fields are often harder to seek out and have smaller intakes.

Most people were happy to tell us about their internships; others were more cautious. One third-year student refused to speak to us out of fear of losing their internship if they spoke openly. That alone illustrates how important these experiences are to students - and how closely guarded they are.

One student we spoke to studied Natural Sciences and set out on the well-trodden path into investment banking. “I literally didn't have any reasons,” she responded when I inquired as to her motivations. “My mate was doing it and my mum said, why not? I also wanted the money... and I knew I was going to quit.” After a competitive application process, she yielded 3 offers from around 20 applications - an enviable success rate, especially considering one was in the UK investment banking team at American giant Citibank. Beyond the paycheque for the week, the ultimate prize is a return invite for the following summer, known in the biz as “conversion”.

These summer-long internships are the next waypoint on the road to bonuses, expense accounts, and business cards, giving students a real insight into life on the job. Long hours are combined with a taste of London socialising on a banker's salary: “Thirsty Thursday” is an institution, with groups of interns and analysts spilling into pubs and bars with credit cards primed and ready to go. Not that you can fully relax over cocktails and pints - there is an under-

standably competitive culture among those vying for graduate positions, with the student referring to a culture of “face time”: to be in with the best chance, “you had to be the first one in the office and the last to leave. And you also had to be funny, so that they would like you.” This last stipulation becomes trickier when we consider the culture, which she described as dominated by male interns from Economics-heavy universities like Warwick. As in many settings, boundaries could blur: “It would be late at night, like 11pm, and everyone would be a bit delirious and crack jokes. It was a weird environment.”

The importance of this out-of-office socialising was clear with many of the students we talked to. Jude Browning-Scurville, who interned at consulting heavyweight Deloitte, emphasised the importance of “networking”. “A lot of it is about personality,” he told us. In that sense, it's a highly exclusive environment. While internship applications do often have access schemes - for example, for BME students - Jude told us that there were fewer access opportunities for those from disadvantaged socioeconomic and class backgrounds. The biggest thing is “who you know” - “if you don't have the connections, you don't have experience”. And it's that experience that matters in a place like Deloitte. It was only because Jude's mum works in the City, he told me, that he even knew “how to speak”. “I wouldn't have been able to network if that had been my first time in a corporate environment”. Once you're in the network, you're in. In terms of inclusivity, it therefore seems that the application process is “incomplete”.

In that sense, proximity to central cities is crucial. Just like the bankers' ‘Thirsty Thursdays’, Jude tells me

that companies like Deloitte hold weekly networking drinks and socials in the heart of cities like London - but if you live outside the city centre, like him, then attending them is difficult and expensive. This is just another example of barriers to access that make such positions more exclusive.

The work itself seems to vary. While some told us that their experience was

“I wouldn't have been able to network if that had been my first time in a corporate environment

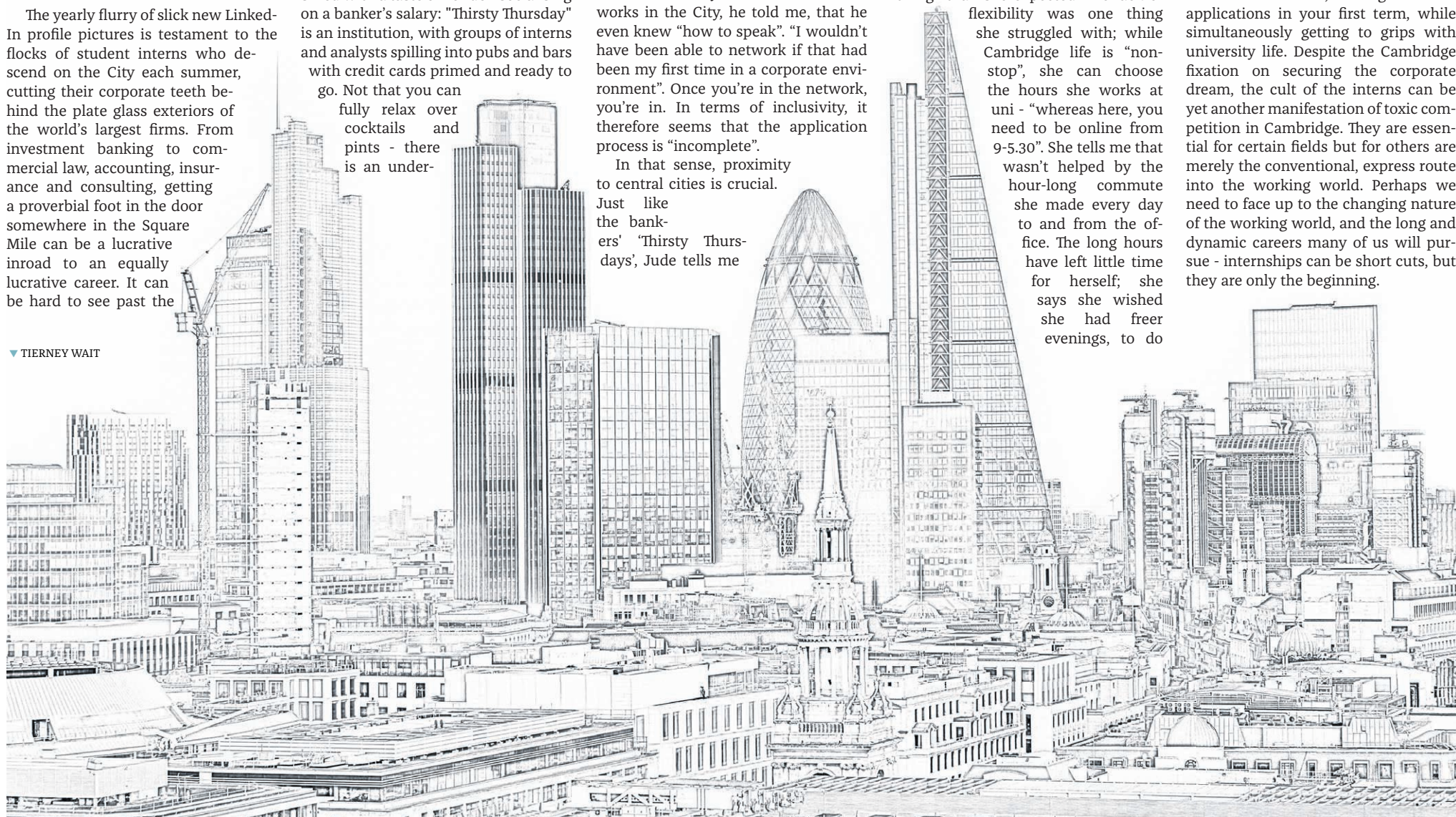
relaxed, more about socialising and getting to know how the company worked, others found it arduous. Miriam, a third-year Engineer, told us that she found her internship at Cowi, a Danish bridge consultancy company, far more “tiring” than she expected. The lack of flexibility was one thing she struggled with; while Cambridge life is “non-stop”, she can choose the hours she works at uni - “whereas here, you need to be online from 9-5.30”. She tells me that wasn't helped by the hour-long commute she made every day to and from the office. The long hours have left little time for herself; she says she wished she had freer evenings, to do

things like cook or go to the gym. “I have less time and I'm more tired than I thought I was going to be.”

As we talked to different students, a picture emerged of a tantalising golden ticket: if you secured a Spring Week in first year, you would receive a healthy leg-up on the ladder to a graduate position. As the internship process comes to a close, students start thinking about what follows - the prospect of a job offer. Our Citi intern quit her internship (coming to be known as “the girl who quit Citi”) after three weeks in favour of graduate medicine, a less glamorous vocation which nonetheless won out. By contrast, every other member of her team received a job offer. Jude has the promise of a graduate job in Deloitte. But not everyone uses their internship as a ticket to corporate life; Miriam was offered a job too, but decided to pass it up in the hope of something more flexible and hands-on.

To succeed in the world of internships, awareness of the system is crucial. If you fail to prepare early, the brief window of opportunity slams shut. Without the socio-cultural capital or departmental guidance that opens the door, you can find yourself outside of the circuit of employability. Awareness of the system often comes from family or social connections, and is necessary even before grappling with cover letters and interviews, writing scores of applications in your first term, while simultaneously getting to grips with university life. Despite the Cambridge fixation on securing the corporate dream, the cult of the interns can be yet another manifestation of toxic competition in Cambridge. They are essential for certain fields but for others are merely the conventional, express route into the working world. Perhaps we need to face up to the changing nature of the working world, and the long and dynamic careers many of us will pursue - internships can be short cuts, but they are only the beginning.

▼ TIERNEY WAIT



Features

'A quiet night and a perfect end': Compline at Cambridge

In the dusky confines of Cambridge's chapels, the ritual of 'Night Prayer' is evolving, writes **Joshua Gleave**

In a candlelit chapel, a priest breaks the silence: "the Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end." The congregation reply: "amen." It is around 9.30pm. The service – Compline – has begun.

These opening words have a long history. You can find them on the Church of England's website or in *The Garden of the Soul* (a Catholic prayer book from the 1700s). But the practice of Compline, which "completes" the day in prayer, stretches back even further: in the sixth century, it was the nightly custom of Benedictine monks, the last of seven rites they would perform each day. And, since student life was originally modelled on monastic life, Compline has long inhabited Cambridge college chapels too.

The role of Compline in Cambridge life, however, has changed. In 1516, a

college statute demanded that all members of St John's College attend Compline every Sunday, every feast day, as well as the night before those days; if you were absent, or late, you were fined. Compline seemingly became non-compulsory, but remained regular and popular into the late 19th century. Attendance at Selwyn's daily Compline service was, by one account, "warmly and successfully invited." Nowadays, though, Compline is a special occasion; my chapel at Corpus Christi only holds the service once a term (if that).

I spoke to Rev'd Arabella Milbank

Robinson, Chaplain at Selwyn, about these changes: her answer is to often say or sing the Compline rites privately before bed (or in bed!), keeping Compline's nightly rhythm between services (which happen twice a term). Perhaps because of its rarity, Compline remains a very popular service at Selwyn, drawing people of "all faiths and no faith," undergrads, postgrads and fellows.

Compline's unique beauty shines most, for me, in its music. This is music of perhaps the earliest style used by the church: plainchant – unaccompanied vocal music, sung to a single melodic line. For those of us who sing, plainchant takes some getting used to. It is written out in a now-defunct system called "neumatic notation," which gives little instruction in terms of rhythm. Compline singers must therefore feel the music freely, alert

to one another and to the chapel's reverberations. Molly Papps, who was choral scholar at Jesus last year, told me about the "calming" effect of this unified choral style. "Plainchant makes me realise how lucky we are to sing in beautiful historic spaces, as during Compline you have to listen to the building as a group to know when to start and stop." Even if you don't attend a Compline service, you can listen to a beautiful 1992 recording of one by Clare College Choir on Spotify.

In Anglican churches, congregational

hymns are the dominant musical form; it is rare to hear choral plainchant, arguably for good reason. Many feel it is important for worship to build community – this dimension is somewhat lost when so much of the service is enacted only by the choir. On the other hand, Arabella pointed out to me, this alleviates some pressure from non-Christian attendants, who needn't decide so much whether to verbally or musically participate. The increased role of the choir also opens up space for the priest themselves to meditate and pray during the service, she told me. Worship is not just a collective experience, too – it can be an intensely personal one: a priest once told me that we

each go to church to "meet our maker." Compline's archaic, sublime music suits that encounter well. Selwyn are even considering holding an entire Compline service in Latin, furthering the atmosphere of dramatic, medieval otherness.

In his *Regula Sancti Benedicti*, a set of rules for monastic life written around the year 530, St Benedict insisted that "after coming out from Compline no one shall be permitted to speak," on pain of "severe punishment." If you don't mind compromising on the full monastic experience, though, I recommend Compline at Jesus: after the service, everyone gathers in the Dean of Chapel's rooms for hot chocolate or port, restoring the social aspect some might miss in the

Compline is another answer to those different emotions that the night time brings

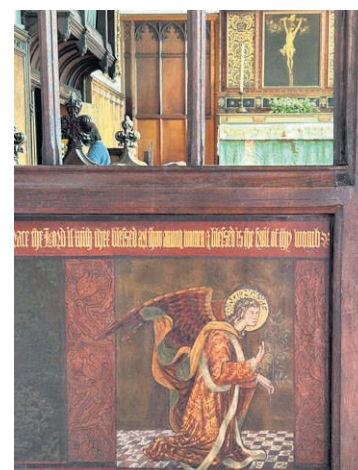
service itself. In contrast to the austere traditionalism of the service, the atmosphere here is relaxed, and the shelves hold books about John Coltrane. Pembroke

similarly runs 'Compline, Cocktails & Candlelight,' with G&Ts on offer in the antechapel once the service is over.

The night is particularly important to the student experience. Late, when worries and other negative feelings can accrue, students may go out to the club or the bar for some respite. Compline, Arabella suggested, is another "answer to those different emotions that the night time brings." An answer, I hope, that some readers will find worth listening to.

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Churches & chapels



The smallest chapel in Oxbridge

A college founded to train canon lawyers, Trinity Hall's diminutive chapel was built in 1366 with permission from Pope Urban V. 'Intimate' and with a spectacular ceiling, this central gem is well worth a visit; even-song is each Thursday and Sunday.

St. Botolph's Church

Tucked between Pembroke and Corpus Christi College, St. Botolph's whitewashed walls are adorned with intriguing plaques from its 700-year history. The 15th c. rood screen was richly painted by Godfrey Gray. This tranquil oasis in the heart of Cambridge is ideal for reflection, and also hosts concerts and book sales.

Churchill Chapel

Churchill's chapel has always been independent, owing to conflict among fellows during its founding. In keeping with the college's marmite-modern architecture, the chapel is brutalist in style, constructed of wood and timber. Alongside Churchill's duck pond and wealth of sculptures, the chapel is certainly worth a visit when in that part of town.

Little and Large

Great St. Mary's has pride of place on King's Parade and is the university church (undergraduates must technically live within 3 miles). Little St Mary's was once Peterhouse's chapel and its ornamentation bears traces of the Puritan 'Smasher Dowsing'.

The Holy Sepulchre

A striking building known as 'The Round Church' on Bridge Street dates from 1130 and is based on the rotunda of the original in Jerusalem.

The oldest building in Cambridge

Enmeshed in college buildings in the heart of town, the beautiful St. Bene't's boasts an Anglo-Saxon belltower which is the oldest building in Cambridge, dating from 1000-1050.

Alex Levy





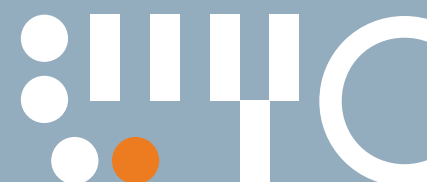
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Comment

University rankings are a meaningless measure

With Cambridge ranking 2nd, 5th, and 34th in university rankings, **Lucia Quadrini** questions what the point is

When you were applying to university, chances are you looked at a league table. With so many universities and course offerings out there, it's only natural; how else would you decipher what's 'good'? Sure, there's Oxbridge and the Russell Group, and some other reputable universities ordained by word-of-mouth. But in lieu of the internet's trusty legion of league tables, how else are you, a bright-eyed yet busy 17-year-old, supposed to sort the haves from the have-nots from the have-beens?

“League tables don't even try to pretend that they're objective”

To be quite honest, I'm not fully sure, but they seem to have managed just fine up until twenty years ago.

In 2003, Shanghai Jiao Tong University in China compiled the first international university rankings system of what it considered to be the 500 best universities in the world, known as the Academic Ranking of World Universities or simply the Shanghai Ranking.

The following year, Times Higher Education (THE) took notice and followed suit, announcing its top 200. In due course, so did many others: the Leiden ranking, Webometrics, the U-Multirank. As a result, in the two decades since, journalists, chancellors and students have all spent hundreds of hours dissecting, deliberating and debating these results, despite the vast majority not knowing or even questioning how they were formulated.

University ranking has become a business, and a very profitable one at that, with both universities and students alike taking notice. However, with more and more rankings competing to co-exist within the higher education market, there's dwindling incentive for these metrics to be objective, so long as they generate digital clicks and stimulate university investment. In fact, it's more profitable for them to be different, to use diverging methodologies and create confusion, because it enables that otherwise conflictual co-existence.

For example, the THE's rankings and QS World University Rankings were

originally in partnership with one another, until they split in 2009 and QS was replaced by Thomas Reuters until 2014. The league table powers-that-be agreed upon rankings until suddenly they didn't, or more likely until the market was big enough and profitable enough for them not to.

League tables don't even try to pretend that they're objective or steadfast, because they know that consumers no longer expect it from them. So, as a result, they're all different. For example, the Sorbonne University ranks in the top 250 according to Webometrics, yet the top 100 according to THE, and even the top 50 according to Shanghai. Or Dartmouth College, one of the US's prestigious Ivy League colleges, is relinquished to the top 400 by Shanghai and top 250 by QS, yet manages to make the top 150 in THE.

When it comes to Cambridge, QS World Rankings have proclaimed us as 2nd, while the Leiden ranking went with 34th. It's 12th according to Webometrics and joint 5th over at THE. So of course Cambridge will splash QS all over its social media, while the Leiden ranking – an equally rigorous statistical endeavour – will be brushed under the carpet.

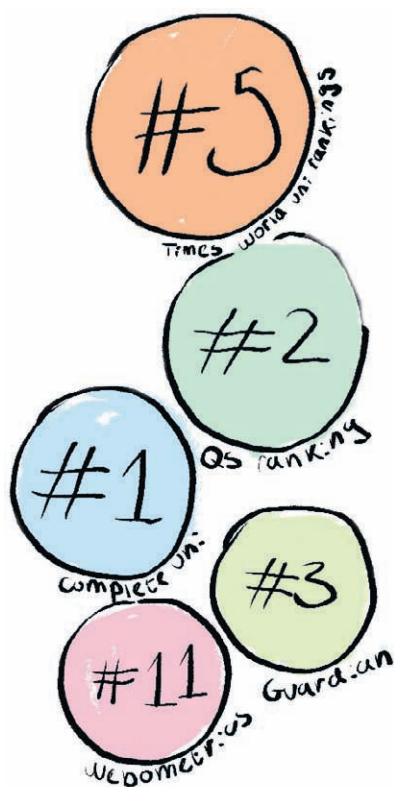
Every ranking system claims to have the best methodology, yet every ranking system remains subject to criticism. For example, the Shanghai Ranking gets flack for its favouritism of English-language research journals, leaving non-English-speaking universities at a disadvantage. However, both QS and THE incorporate a reputational survey into their ranking method, which perhaps turns the whole scheme into a popularity contest. Similarly, the U-Multirank, produced by the European Commission, was initially accused of being a means to favour European institutions – although a lot of this criticism was driven by the THE, who aren't exactly neutral on the matter.

Meanwhile, *The Times* are using last year's National Student Survey results in their Good Universities Guide 2024, which seems like something that should be better advertised than it is – perhaps with the guide itself, rather than in a separate article. After all, last year's cohort of students represent an entirely different life cycle of industrial action and Covid-19 restrictions from what incoming freshers can expect.

However, even less advertised is the fact that when it comes to Oxford and Cambridge, *The Sunday Times* is using NSS scores from all the way back in 2016. Even when the data has been adjusted by averages, this surely seems

dubious. Pre-Covid, pre-strikes, pre-cost-of-living-crisis. Completely out-dated when it comes to university today and how students feel about it. This is on account of the ongoing, years-long boycott of the National Student Survey by Oxford and Cambridge students, which itself tells a whole story about how graduates feel towards the datafication of their university experience. After all, to what extent can you quantify a whole three years of learning and living, conveniently reduced to a quick-glance table?

But what they really hope their methodology is best at is telling the market, the profit drivers, what it wants to hear. So when LSE wasn't included in QS's top 40, they changed their whole methodology to ensure that it was, abandoning their previously favourable treatment of strong STEM provision



▲EMILY LAWSON TODD

It seems that methodology improvement has become a convenient euphemism for people-pleasing. What Cambridge really comes second at is convincing the world, or at least QS, that it's its best university. Maybe we should take our reputation, or at least the flashy numbers attached to it, with a pinch of salt.

The SU should b

Facing a crisis of student disinterest, H

Did you make any academic new year's resolutions? Any pledges to yourself/your DoS to quit filthy habits? Well, Fergus Kirman did. Last March, upon his election as our Students' Union's new undergraduate president, in a poll which saw turnout drop to a record low 10.8%, he told *Varsity*: "We are in a pit and we've got to get out of it. Change is coming."

It was a commendable pledge; now it's time for him to keep it – and if he wants to avoid it going the way of my commitment to get to lectures on time, he had better have something radical in mind.

To understand the problem, let's take one example. Last year, the SU voted to ask university cafes to go vegan. This prompted, in the words of one representative, "significant feedback from our community; the majority of which was in opposition". I can only assume that this is code for enraged Sidge-dwellers declaring that "The SU can take my ARC panini when they pry it from my cold dead hands."

This is most students' experience of the SU: they don't listen to it. When they do listen, they don't like what they hear – and even when they get (angrily) invested they lose interest once it becomes apparent that the SU can't actually implement whatever crackpot scheme it's come

up with. Instead it boldly demands that the University implement it, at which point I assume the vice-chancellor's minions earnestly accept the proposal, nod gravely, and file it in a drawer labelled "SU wheezes, 2022/23".

Well, here's my own plan for fixing the SU, which I am fittingly powerless to impose and am confident will never go anywhere: President Kirman, the SU needs a bar.

I had this realisation in Glasgow last month. A friend was giving me a tour, and the first thing she wanted me to see was the Glasgow University Union. I don't think anyone has ever included the SU lounge on their tour of Cambridge. But then our SU doesn't have darts, pool tables, or cheap beer. It isn't packed with students killing time between lectures. In fact it is, in the words of the only person I know who has actually been inside, "the deadliest place on Earth".

The main weakness of Cambridge's collegiate system is that students can feel siloed. Unless you sign up for uni-wide societies (like *Varsity* – freshers take note), it can be hard to meet people outside your college. There is an acute need for a communal space open to all students and not owned by Greene King. If our SU met this need by setting up a bar, then not only would it be fulfilling its founding function of giving students what they want – it would also become relevant to our lives.

If students directly benefited from the SU's actions, spent time in its

Head to head:

Emily Lawson-Todd

It's hard to make a case for the new Harry Potter shop at the side of the marketplace. Not least because I can't stand Harry Potter, and if you, a grown adult in the year of 2023, still do, then all I have to say to you is: grow up and move on. Additionally, why the hell is there a Harry Potter shop here in the first place? Cambridge has absolutely no ties to the franchise other than stupid gowns and the fact that if you look at both in retrospect, you discover some pretty dodgy stuff. But within all of this, I can't help but warm to the shop. Not because I want a Gryffindor scarf like some massive neek, but because it represents a weird, nostalgic, view of Cambridge. It's the view of this silly little city where I live, eat, sleep, and throw up after one too many drinks in Sid bar (as is my God-given right) that often forms the first starry-eyed view you get of the city as a fresher. It, along with all the other naff tourist shops that clog up the city centre, reminds me that actually I do live in a pretty magical place. I used to hate the preconception of Cambridge that people have prior to coming here of the gowns and the glamour, because my first

term spent hungover and flu-riddled trying to figure out what Chaucer was on about felt anything but. And truthfully, this idealised view of Cambridge does often do more harm than good in many ways for widening participation and encouraging people from schools that don't look like Hogwarts to apply. But sometimes, amidst all the chaos of term, it can be nice to reflect and think about why people love Cambridge so much. Yes, there's an element of elitism to this love. But at the end of the day, I can't deny that Cambridge is a really pretty city – and a far cry from the grey planes of my native Sheffield. Two years into living in the heart of Cambridge and I am no better than the tourists that clog the Harry Potter shops. I shamelessly photograph King's chapel every time I walk past it to my lectures, I take the long route to Sidge so I can gaze at the mathematical bridge, and sometimes I even gaze at the Corpus clock with almost-affection (let's not get too carried away though, it's still really ugly). As cringe as it is (and believe me – it is), the new shop brings me back to that same starry-eyed admiration I get for the city I've come to call home, even in my most essay-crisis-eque of times. You're still a wrongun if you go in there though.

Want to share your thoughts?
Have an opinion you want to voice?
Join our Varsity Facebook Writers group to get involved



Build a bar

ugh Jones suggests a simple solution

building, and could corner sabbatical officers mid-pint for a chat about their campaigns, they might just be inclined to care about what the SU does, and maybe even vote in its elections. This is the model for other SUs nationwide. The Leeds University Union website advertises two bars, a bubble tea stall, and a Co-op franchise – all run by their version of our SU, in addition to its campaigning activities. UCL's Students' Union runs four bars and four cafes, as well as representing students. The same picture emerges at Warwick and Bristol and Sheffield – almost everywhere except Cambridge, in fact.

The SU cannot represent students from the periphery of student life

The SU cannot represent students from the periphery of student life. If it wants our engagement, it should follow the example of other student unions and place itself at the heart of the Cambridge experience – by opening a bar.

Needless to say, this would be no panacea. The SU's problems run deeper than an inability to flog pints. As long as it is more interested in culture war-

fare and mawkish idealism than in improving students' lives, it will continue to be a playground for student Corbynites rather than an effective representative body.

Equally, as long as criticising the SU's unelected employees is forbidden, I fear it is doomed to continue spending almost £800,000 per year on staffing costs which do not bring any obvious benefit to students. It cannot be beyond the pale to suggest that an SU with fewer staff and more money to spend directly on students would be better for us. After all, it is meant to be *our* union.

Just touching on these points feels rather like applying a can-opener to a tin marked 'worms'. Having a real debate would be messy and controversial, and frankly I don't expect it to happen soon. But if one day we do decide to address the inadequacies of the body tasked with representing us, the discussion will surely be far more civilised if we can have it over a pint, in a newly-upgraded SU lounge.



▲EMILY LAWSON-TODD

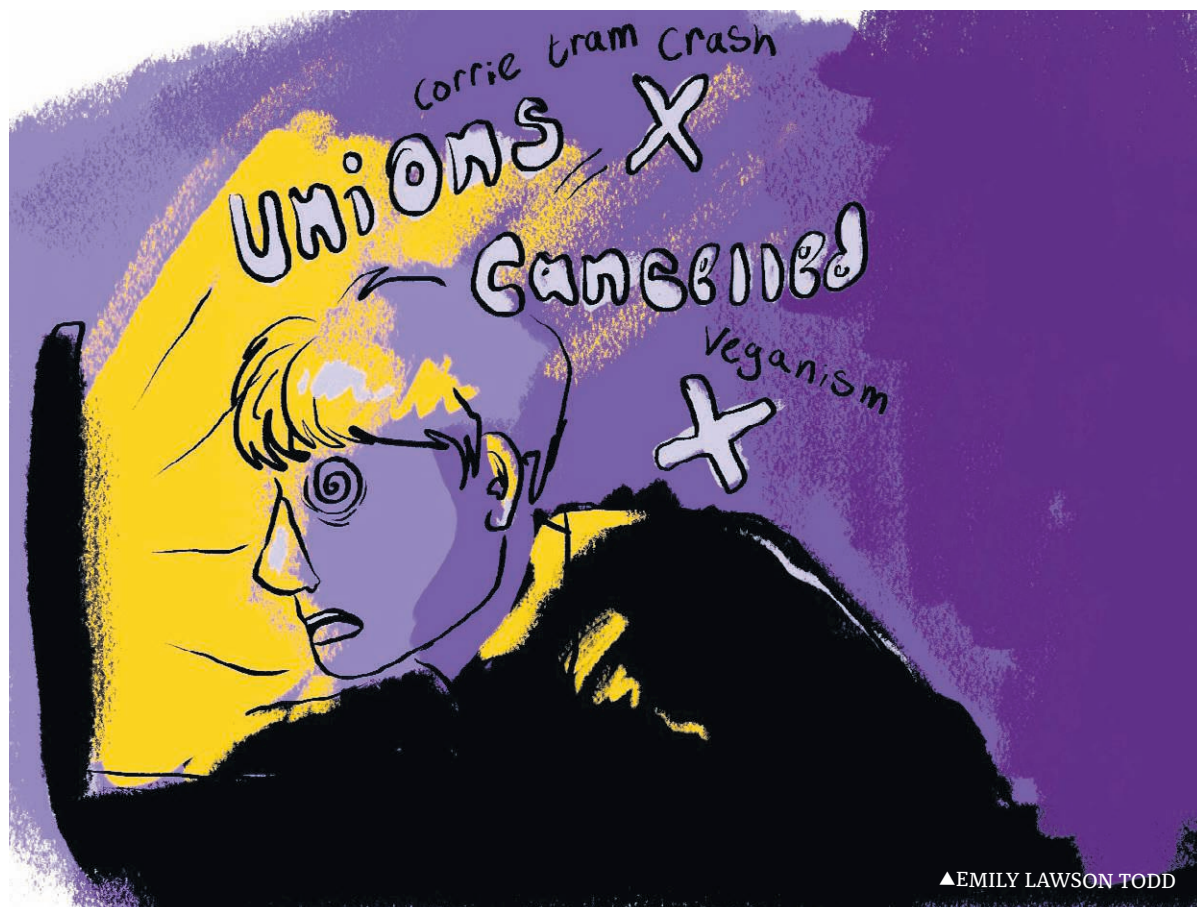
Harry Potter shop

Alice Mainwood

A first year spent living on West Road, right by Sidgwick felt like a massive win for the first few weeks of term. I was pretty pleased with myself as I rolled out of bed five minutes before my lectures started, especially in comparison to the poor souls who had trekked from Homerton and Girton for a 9am about Chaucer's longest and most painful reads. When the novelty of lectures wore off, however, and I found myself unfortunately rather snooty at 8:55am, my pre-lecture alarm was simply being ignored in favour of sleeping off last night's trip to MASH. It's not my finest moment (sorry they weren't my finest moments - I won't pretend it was a one-off). Living right next to Sidgwick left me feeling all the lazier, and all the more guilty for my lacklustre approach to my degree. Last year, I'm a reformed character nowadays. So, opting to ballot for a room right in the centre of town felt like the best idea ever in May. Gone would be the days of wallowing guiltily as my lecture took place just a two minute walk away. Any missed lecture opportunities could now be attributed to the

◀ISABEL DEMPSEY

lecture theatre simply being too far away, especially for a sleepy second year before 9am. Never again would I have to trek a whole ten minutes from West Road, doing battle with a King's' porter to be allowed through, dodging countless tourists' photos on the King's' backs bridge, and sneaking past their 'members only' signs to take the short-cut, just to get into town. I was better off being close to MASH and Pret than Sidgwick anyway, right? Oh, how mistaken I was. My dream of a lifestyle far away from Sidgwick has been bitterly ruined by the new addition to Market Square. The new Harry Potter shop has apparently cast something of a spell on the tourists in town, leaving them entirely unable to walk at a normal speed, or move out of the way of students power-walking through town, on an emergency trip to Mainsbury's. On top of how angry I get about slow walkers, I feel a similar level of fury towards the Harry Potter x Cambridge crossover. If only I had magic on my side. But no, all I have is a big old stack of unread books and hopes and prayers for tomorrow's supervision motivating me to power through a crowd of loitering tourists ogling the Corpus Clock.



Cambridge is London 2.0

From the lingo to work opportunities, Patrick Dolan argues everything at this university seems to favour those from the big smoke

Cambridge, nowadays considered an extension of north London, suffers from a hyperfixation with the capital. The realisation of the two cities' mutual obsession first dawned upon me during Freshers' Week. As a fellow student proudly stated that they were from the south-west, a swift response from a Londoner took me back "so, like Richmond area then?" The poor non-Londoner only went on to clarify that they lived near Gloucestershire.

As I orientated myself during first term, I quickly realised the interconnectedness of Londoners. Their city, although vast, seems paradoxically intimate where connections are as common as the frequent trains shuttling between stations – a fact I am frequently reminded of. The names of prestigious and famous private schools might not have been foreign to me, but I soon enough became acquainted with the names of affluent state and grammar schools in the London area, which, despite charging no fees, manage to produce numerous Oxbridge mutuals. It became evident that Cambridge, existing as a microcosm and extension of the capital, was fated to mirror the dynamics of London life; during the holidays, The British Library becomes Sidgwick and Embargoes is the new Rumboogie.

The fascination reached its peak when I, from Leicestershire, was asked why I didn't own an Oyster card. In fact, this encounter actually made me question my London knowledge; I believed the iconic card to be a relic from the past, with its more effective replacement of contactless cards and Apple Pay to tap in and out. And then there were of course the linguistic differences. I recall being told that if I was going to "have my accent," then I should at least consider pronouncing "the name of my capital city" correctly. If I am caught saying 'London' instead

of my usual 'Lun-dun,' please grant me permission; it has become a necessary evolutionary adaptation to survive and fit in during my time at Cambridge. Having said that, I shall never give into the southern pronunciations of 'bath' or 'grass'.

However, maybe it isn't just the Londoners to blame for microcosmic myopia. Back at home, I could not count how many times people have asked me about my uni life in the capital, mistakenly presuming Cambridge to be an area in London and imagining my daily commute passing Big Ben on the way to lectures. We can forgive the south for conflating the north, when the north and Midlands are guilty of the same trick.

It seems the East Anglian city finds itself grappling with an increasingly pervasive challenge that the rest of the country also faces: the relentless pull of London's centrality, an inevitability that envisages Cambridge metamorphosing into the new zone 10, accessible via the Elizabeth Line, in years to come. The statistics maintain a clear picture: 29.9% of offers extended by the University found their recipients in Greater London during the 2022 cycle. Cambridge, it seems, has no choice but to render its city welcoming to its southern counterparts, in an effort to make them feel more at home. Even the language represented the bridging of this gap: the act of arriving in Cambridge is curiously termed 'coming up,' despite many people physically having to travel down to Cambridge. Even asking a Londoner to walk more than fifteen minutes proves a struggle; that's just an evening family walk anywhere outside of the M25.

The deeply ingrained London-centric bias in Cambridge does not solely bestow these frivolous advantages, however. From the establishment of pre-fabricated networks and effortless job

opportunities to the seamless commute between the two major UK cities, the system inherently favours those residing in London. This bias perpetuates accentuated regional inequalities, placing non-Londoners at a significant disadvantage. Subtle yet impactful aspects such as the oversight of collegiate events not providing accommodation for student helpers with the assumption that you will board a train to King's Cross exemplifies this disparity.

Let's be clear however; this is not supposed to be a narrative of disdain for London or its inhabitants. In fact, I've been affectionately dubbed a 'token Londoner' by my friends. London, with its bustling energy and cosmopolitan nature, is difficult to hate as a tourist. But pardon my slight envy of seamless visits back home during term time and impromptu catch ups with friends scattered across the city during the holidays, while I'm relegated and imprisoned in the literal middle of the country during rail strikes.

So, perhaps what is needed is a greater appreciation for those who reside outside of the walls of the capital, coupled with a concession that we exist in a system that, albeit subtly, does favour Londoners. By embracing a mindset which values inclusivity, the institution can proactively work towards a dismantlement of these biases. Implementing policies that ensure fair access to opportunities and challenging assumptions can be the start of allowing every student the opportunity to feel comfortable and thrive at university, regardless of where they call home.

Yet, in the grand scheme of things, whether you're a native Londoner now or not, we may all eventually find ourselves entwined in the intricacies of the capital, revelling in the grandeur of the big city, as the Oxbridge pipeline fates us to be.

Interviews

'I try to speak for those who don't have a voice': Lord Simon Woolley, Principal of Homerton

Ella McCartney talks to Simon Woolley about transforming British politics, tackling racism, and improving social mobility through education



DAVID JOHNSON ▶

Lord Simon Woolley's political and social activism has been transformative for British society. As the founder and director of Operation Black Vote, Woolley is credited with creating monumental improvements in Black and minority ethnic representation in British politics that have indelibly changed our politics for the better. Becoming a member of the House of Lords in 2019, and the Principal of Homerton in 2021 - making him the first Black man to head an Oxbridge college - he tells me his new objective: to "inspire a generation to believe that they can do great things".

Fostered and later adopted by a white couple, Woolley grew up on a council estate in St Matthew's, Leicester in the 1960s. He was aware of socio-economic inequalities from a young age: "we aspired to have money [...] because we knew it would give us agency over our lives." He recounts how he learned resilience early on in life: "racism was alive and sometimes kicking [...] we had to fight our corner physically. I guess those years have made me aware today, in part, that I want to continue to fight for justice, equality, for dignity, for people who have less power."

Leaving school without A-Levels, Woolley pursued higher education through an access course, starting his undergraduate degree in English Literature and Spanish at the age of 27. In particular, Woolley cites his travels to Latin America during his university years in the early 1990s as "one of the greatest learning curves of my life [...] I'd seen people there prepared to die for their

cause [...] so I felt powerful and I had no excuse not to do this."

Woolley co-founded Operation Black Vote (OBV) in 1996 to lobby political parties to vie for the Black and minority ethnic vote, after realising that their participation in elections could change the outcome of marginal seats. OBV is non-partisan, a decision that Woolley stands by, especially when looking across the pond. "African Americans in the USA put all their eggs into the Democratic basket and look where they are now [...] We thought we want all the parties vying for the non-white vote, and if they all vie then they know they've got to have greater representation."

Operation Black Vote's impact has been monumental, helping increase the number of Black, Asian and minority ethnic MPs from 7 in 1996 to 66 in 2023, making the UK one of the most representative democracies in Western Europe. However, if Parliament were truly reflective of the 16% of our population from minority ethnic backgrounds, this number would actually be 104 MPs.

Woolley highlights the significance of having an Asian Prime Minister in the UK, "not that Rishi Sunak would afford any credibility to Operation Black Vote to his pathway to the top office, but let me tell you, without us he wouldn't be there." However, Woolley admits that he does sometimes feel "saddened" that "some of those politicians [...] are lording policies that their own parents would be prejudiced by if they had been in place at that time."

From 2018 to 2020, Woolley worked with Prime Minister Theresa May as the

advisory chair of the world's first Race Disparity Unit. Woolley describes the Unit as "groundbreaking": "it's the first government in a Western democracy that has a unit that looks at disparities and seeks to close them [...] if you've got the political will then you're closer."

Woolley has been a fierce critic of the 2021 government-commissioned Sewell Report that denied the existence of institutional racism, stating that it "is used too casually as an explanatory tool." Woolley tells me of his appeal: "The narrative was we're dying because we're inferior, we are poor because we're work shy. It was heart breaking to see a Black man front that."

"Racism was alive and sometimes kicking ... I want to continue to fight"

Turning to his experience and work as a member of the House of Lords and as principal of Homerton, I ask Lord Woolley how he deals with being part of an establishment that he has spent his life trying to challenge. He jokes: "I like a challenge, don't I?... I think that the short answer is: be true to yourself, respect the institutions, but it mustn't preclude you from wanting to change them within [...] I try and use my agen-

cy to speak for those who don't have a voice."

Despite openly admitting to feelings of imposter syndrome, Woolley is aware of his importance in these spaces: "I can bring a lived experience that adds to the Cambridge experience and that gives others who look like me and others who have come from a council estate that this place is for them too, not just to survive, but to thrive."

As the first Black man to head an Oxbridge college, Woolley admits that "I'm not weighed down by it, if I'm honest with you I feel blessed. However, I know it means I mustn't mess up [...] I still feel frustrated that not all my colleagues get the enormity of being Black in an institution like Cambridge University."

A key focus of Woolley's, as Principal of Homerton, is to improve social mobility through access to education. Cambridge's Foundation Year is something that he is particularly passionate about, having had a similar route into education earlier in his life. "It's fantastic!" he remarks. However, Woolley has even higher aspirations: "I think it shouldn't just be the Foundation Year. I would argue we need to do much more work upstream in primary schools and in schools."

When asked what he hopes his legacy at Homerton will be, he replies: "I often get asked that question and I don't think I'm driven by legacy. I'm driven by acting today, doing the best that I can, and empowering others in this space."

Alison Wright: Cambridge through the window of Fitzbillies

Fitzbillies founding date: 4 October 1920

Number of Chelsea buns made a year: 200,000

How was Fitzbillies started?

It was founded in 1920 by two men called Ernest and Arthur Mason - it still says "E and A Mason" in gold letters on the shop front. They came back from the First World War and used their "demob" money to start their business.

How did you become the owner?

I bought it out of receivership with my husband after it had gone bankrupt in 2011 and closed down. I was working in London at the time but saw on Twitter when Stephen Fry had tweeted that it had closed - that's when I knew. I had grown up in Cambridge and felt strongly about it.

What did you do before?

I studied PPE at Oxford and then was the marketing director of an insurance company.

How has the menu changed over time?

Chelsea buns were on the menu from the beginning and were sold for 1.5p! Before the second world war they were famous for the "Special Fitzbillies sponge cake", which was orange-flavoured and had clementine peel in it.

What's your favourite thing on the menu?

I like a scone, jam and clotted cream the most.

Do you notice a town-gown divide in your work?

I think cake is very democratic! We are for everyone - we're for the town and the gown, visitors UK-wide and international, the young and the old!

What are your hopes for your new cakeshop on Trumpington Street?

Our cafe has always been so busy, with its tables hidden away behind the shop front. When the barbers next door at No. 52 closed down, we had the opportunity to take that shop too. This gives a bigger and better cake shop and the ability to sell lots more ice cream in the summer as well, while the original bakery at No. 53 can be the main cafe.

Why do you think people love Fitzbillies so much?

Why do they love it? I will get a bit tearful when talking about this because it means everything to me! I think it comes from a simpler time, you know? We do simple pleasures, the classics, the things you love, just really well delivered. The food is essentially homemade, straight from what you do in your kitchen.

Isabella Dowden

'The line between masculinity and the apocalypse': Reuben Kaye comes to Cambridge

'It's a beautiful, fantastic, scary, sweaty mess' – no, not Rumboogie, it's Reuben Kaye's award-winning show, *The Butch is Back!* **Abby Reyes** investigates

Australian performer, singer and eyelash extraordinaire Reuben Kaye advertises himself as "what happens when you tell your children they can be anything."

Donning cabaret costume and God-knows-how-many-inch heels, Reuben exudes an unapologetic boldness in his shows, which are, in his words, "a joy to perform, a marathon to perform."

Maybe it's his experience from Channel 4's *Kids React to Drag*, but Reuben is patient with my naïve questions on exactly what drag is all about. "I've always thought that queer people are defined by others before we're allowed to define ourselves, so I never really worry about defining what I do, I just do it." For him, drag is "more than gender play... it's about the interplay of masculine and feminine in the male body."

While there is pain in what Reuben describes as the "maelstrom of that tug of war" between the "two poles" of gender expectations, there is also joy. "The best part about drag is that it's preaching a full body awareness, acceptance and love. It's world building."

One of Reuben's viral moments was

the clip from *Kids React to Drag*. Despite his self-professed terror at the prospect, the project was "beautiful and surprisingly touching". Among hilarious outtakes from the children, such as "your eyelashes are a bit too long" and "God, you must be well old", Reuben tells me that it did something important. "There's



Queer people are defined by others before we're allowed to define ourselves

a real sense that what we did in those five minutes made a difference and advanced the conversation, and that makes all the hate and death threats worth it."

He is no stranger to a backlash, the most prominent being the fallout of a "dirty joke about Jesus... When the religious right came for me, they didn't

hold me to account and ask about my views, they incited violence and sent death threats." Reuben is pro-freedom of expression, "but that doesn't mean there shouldn't be accountability... I'm trying to put this in a really eloquent way but I get pretty emotional about it."

It's hard not to get dragged into endless social media discussions on 'cancel culture' and 'woke' – and Reuben's view is that "you can say anything, you can say everything". On this issue, he aligns himself with the sentiments of comedian Stewart Lee: "I think woke culture is a really good thing [...] I think it's time comedians thought more about the words they use and why they use them, and the possible social damage that they do."

A more reflective form of comedy and performance is what Reuben brings to his new show, *The Butch is Back!* "Even though it's one of the filthiest shows I've done, it is, at its heart, still a family show." Surprising, given his

promise of multiple "dick jokes". Reuben depicts the show as an "instruction manual for kids and for parents on the social phenomenon that is coming out." Despite the debauchorous tones, there's an intensely personal backdrop.

"My dad had a bit of a stumble when I came out, and this just sort of explains how I mended that [...] In many ways the show has a pessimistic outlook, as a lot of comedy does, but there's a lot of hope in it". But overall, "the show is fast, funny, dirty, and a lovely line to draw between masculinity and the apocalypse. I hope that it addresses the

being a unifying force."

There's a long pause when I ask Reuben if he has a message for LGBTQIA+ students at Cambridge, and a furrowing of his brows as he looks around the sunny corner of Covent Garden he's called me from. "I'll tell you what my mum said to me when I was at school. School is something you have to survive until you get out into the real world and find your people. By the end of your career, nobody will give a shit about where you went to school, what will matter is the person you are and the people you have around you."

"In general, I would hope that Cambridge, as one of the most elite educational facilities, encourages students of any sexual identity or gender spectrum to follow their dreams, be themselves and feel safe and protected".

Reuben believes that drag is "tantalising", and that his shows provide something for everyone: "If you don't like the politics, you'll love the music, and if you don't love that, you'll love the dick jokes!"

You can see Reuben Kaye in *The Butch is Back!* at the Cambridge Junction, Thursday 19th October at 7pm and 9pm.



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JAX MOUSSA

THE MAYS



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

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Science

Give it a Gove? The pros and cons of Cambridge 2040

Marie-Madeleine Fuerbeth tracks the much-debated government project to make Cambridge into Europe's Silicon Valley

In July 2023, a government plan concerning the massive expansion of Cambridge housing caught the attention of citizens and both local and national media. Nicknamed 'Cambridge 2040', the project involves investments in planning and constructing 250,000 lodgings in an entirely new-built quarter by the year 2040. The plan aims to tackle the current housing shortage in the region, thereby enabling further growth of the high-tech sector around Cambridge.

Cambridge 2040 is part of the "long-term plan for housing" formulated by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in late July. The department follows the 'levelling up' strategy, a concept introduced by Boris Johnson's government in 2019 and currently led by Secretary of State Michael Gove. In a speech from 24 July 2023, Michael Gove outlined what Cambridge could look like in roughly 20 years. He stated that the department will create a vision for Cambridge that entails, in addition to more houses, the creation of a new green space ranking among the best parks globally and the significant expansion of laboratory space. While that may sound overly ambitious, some significant first steps towards Cambridge 2040 have already been taken. The Cambridge Delivery Group, chaired by Peter Freeman, head of England Homes, was created to serve as the central planning task force. £5m was allocated to the group.

However, this government scheme had not been called for by local organisations or authorities. The mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough,

Nik Johnson, even published a statement in early July explaining that local bodies had not received sufficient information about the megaproject. In fact, the DLUHC had not taken into account the city council's urban development plans for the years 2022 to 2027. In the city council's proposal, preserving biodiversity, developing a response to climate change, and tackling inequality



Cambridge on a Saturday is already quite difficult to navigate due to the sheer number of students and flaneurs

through affordable housing are listed as main priorities. Building progress in four key areas, including the Cambridge Station area, the East Quadrant, North West Quadrant, and Southern Fringe, is trackable on the city council's website. Conspicuously, the current annual growth rate of housing stock at 1.5% pales in comparison to the government's projected increase for Cambridge's population from 150,000 to 400,000 by 2040.

Given the controversy, what are the reasons for pushing Cambridge's urban development to such an extent? Some believe that the 'Cambridge Cluster'

has the potential to contribute significantly to a revival of the British economy, which has been in decline for the past 50 years. The Cambridge Cluster is a network of Cambridge-based companies in the high technology sector, consisting of 26,218 businesses and yielding an annual turnover of £48bn in the 2021-2022 financial year, according to data from Cambridge Ahead, a business and academic member organisation. Cambridge has experienced significant growth since the establishment of the Science Park in the 1970s. Today, there is a shortage of available housing options for new professionals, resulting in a rise in real estate costs. Naturally, British politicians are committed to safeguarding the goal of having a cutting-edge technology centre, reminiscent of Silicon Valley, in the fens and claylands of the Cambridgeshire area.

Yet, many politicians and academics have publicly expressed concerns about the changes that would come with a new urban quarter in Cambridge. One cause for unease is the prospective densification of towns, which the DLUHC actually lists as one of its primary objectives. Cambridge on a Saturday is already quite difficult to navigate due to the sheer number of students and flaneurs. It is not uncommon to queue for 20 minutes to get your coffee. Although new shops and cafes are planned to be added to the new area, the historic city centre will likely remain the main attraction for incoming residents. Another problem is the limited water supply, for which the city and district are desperately trying to find a solution. The east of England is known to be the driest region in the UK with a constant threat of drought in the summer.

Cambridge Water, the local water supply company, initiated the construction of a new reservoir that could make up for the current shortage. To protect the wildlife and guarantee sustainable growth, this project would have to be conducted with the utmost precaution and would only be finished by the mid-to-late 2030s – if everything goes according to plan. Until then, as the South Cambridgeshire District Council discussed in June, restrictions on water consumption may need to be implemented. Undoubtedly, a prompt and reliable solution to water supply challenges will be indispensable for the construction of future homes on a large scale.

In an effort to appease local officials, the DLUHC decided to include the Environment Agency, the Water Services Regulation Authority (otherwise known as Ofwat), and a water scarcity working group in Peter Freeman's delivery group. An added sum of £3 million will help to enhance water efficiency in existing residences. Apart from that, a new governmental body called the Office for Place was put in charge of designing the new neighbourhood with the help of adjacent communities. With an appropriate look and feel, the modern Cambridge quarter will blend right in with the historic centre. That it could rival the picturesque buildings' popularity is unlikely, but it might disperse the flocks of tourists a bit.

In the end, it is paramount to recognise the current needs and problems of the city in the implementation of Cambridge 2040. The obstacles to a significant expansion of Cambridge are clear, which is why further information about the government scheme is eagerly anticipated.

Research round-up



Joyce Mau

AI-driven technique reveals new targets for drug discovery

A research team led by the University of Cambridge has developed a method to identify high-risk individuals for some diseases, including neurodegenerative conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, in collaboration with Insilico Medicine, an AI-driven drug discovery company. These diseases are associated with the protein phase separation phenomenon, where proteins spontaneously separate into two phases and disrupt key cellular functions linked to neurodegenerative diseases. The team replicated disease characteristics in cells by controlling the behaviour of these targets. It is hoped this method will be integrated into clinical intervention.

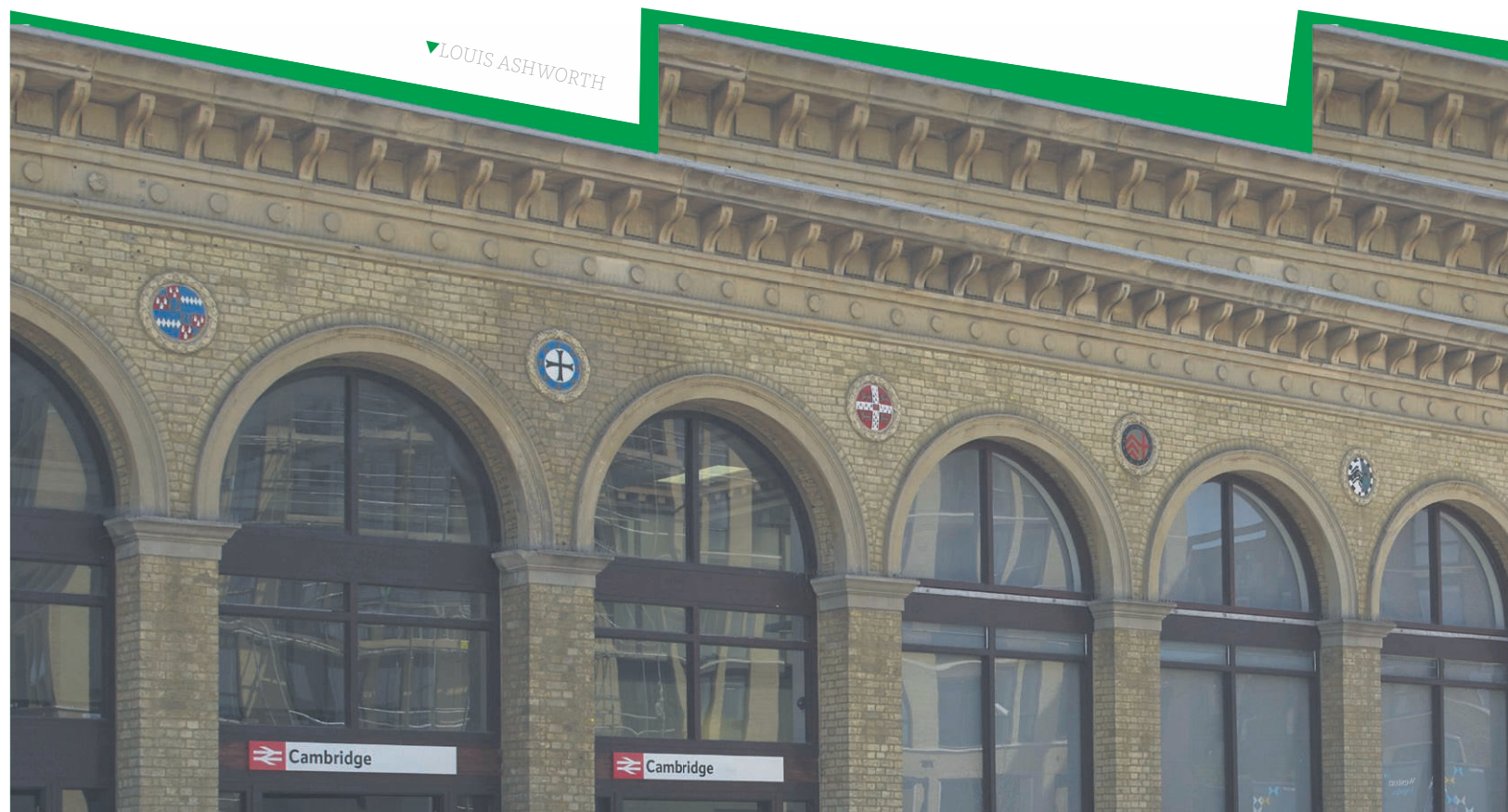
New vaccine technology could protect from future viruses

A new vaccine antigen technology, developed by the University of Cambridge in collaboration with other organisations, could protect against an even greater range of current and future coronaviruses, such as the Delta and Omicron variants of SARS-CoV-2. The current vaccines for seasonal flu and coronaviruses are based on virus strains or variants that arose at some point in the past, which make it difficult to prevent reinfections when viruses mutate. Instead of only targeting the spike proteins on the virus that change to evade our immune system, this technology targets the critical regions of the virus that it needs to complete its life cycle. The team used this approach to identify a unique antigen structure that gave broad-based immune responses against different coronaviruses and is compatible with all vaccine delivery systems.

Suppressing negative thoughts may be good for mental health

Suppressing thoughts about negative events not only makes one's worries less vivid, but also improves one's mental health, according to a new study. In the study, conducted by researchers at the Medical Research Council Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit, participants were involved in 'no-imagine trials', which encouraged them to stop thinking about negative events and block images/thoughts which concerned them. Following three months of training, participants reported that suppressed events were less vivid and fear-inducing. In addition, people with greater psychological symptoms at the outset of the study improved more after suppression training, but only if they properly suppressed their fears.

▼ LOUIS ASHWORTH





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The Smoking Area



▼ VARSITY ARCHIVES



VINTAGE VARSITY

By Paddy Davies
Jones and Joshua
Shortman

The state-of-the-art top-secret archives at *Varsity* HQ are open to very few. Frequently, (depending on the impulses of an intermittent card-access system), they are not even open to us. Within that small plywood cupboard are stored secrets and mysteries of the university’s past that would give the Pope’s Archivum Secretum a run for its money. As the keepers of this sacred, immaculately disorganised flame, it is up to us at the archive to provide today’s Cambridge with the lessons and wisdom of its history.

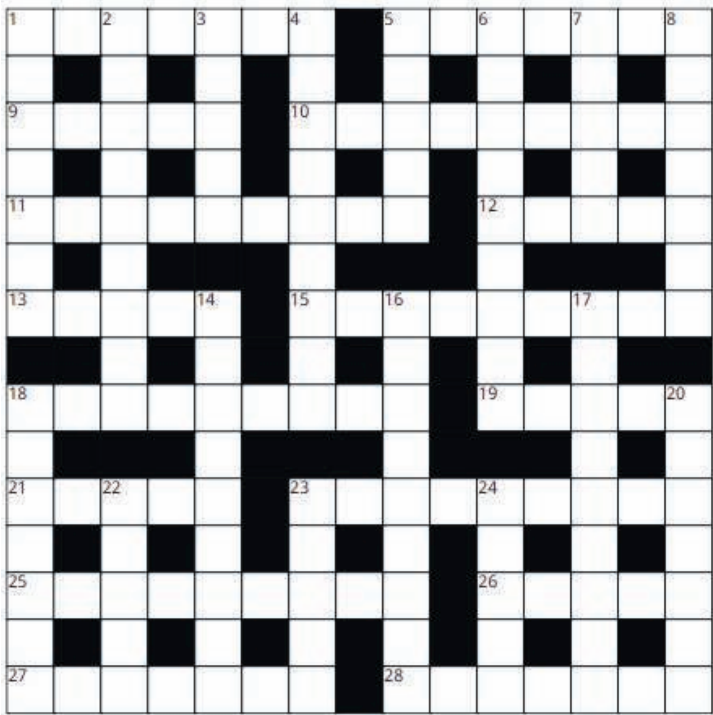
A peruse of its yellowed pages reveals some customs that could definitely do with a revival. The noble and historic sport of punt jousting, raised to a half blue in 1951 (according to an intrepid *Varsity* reporter by the name of Watt Aliar), might make a welcome interruption amongst the disembodied heads of floating tourists; brave, pole-armed undergraduates could stand and fall where the likes of ‘Ivor Longpole’, or (legend of the game) ‘Jane O’Shitbull’, once sent our Oxford rivals flying into the Cam. We may however be thankful that certain other customs have been consigned to the black-and-white pages of *Vintage Varsity*. There was once a time when students with the audacity to leave their attic rooms were required to do so within a gown: the emergence of the undergraduate body from under their academic robes in 1961 caused a scandal akin to that of mass public nudity, as they marched up King’s Parade, fending off reactionary counter-protestors demanding to “bring back the cap.”

One of the great pleasures of the archive is spotting the seeds of now-iconic institutions, being sown amongst students oblivious to their eventual pre-eminence. Who, after all, when reading in 1990 of a new “arts and entertainments centre” being opened past the train station (innocuously named ‘The Junction’, in an attempt to interface town with gown), could envisage the ear-ringing, ice-cold, 4AM pilgrimages that would soon lead out of its doors. Similarly, reading 1950’s *Varsity*, it is entirely possible to pass by the reputedly named ‘Gardenia cafe’, without recognising the warm glow of steamed up windows immediately familiar to any Cambridge student who’s stayed up past 1AM.

Moving forward half a century reveals how nearly this wasn’t the case: when in 2003, everyone’s favourite college (Gonville & Caius) announced plans to convert Gardies into further overpriced student accommodation. *Varsity* mounted a heroic counter-offensive to save the “legendary kebab emporium,” starting a petition against the closure signed by 800 students, and producing one of its all-time greatest cover pages, a photograph of a menacing black shoe stomping on a defenceless kabab. The headline in October, 2004? “We don’t like to boast, but we saved Gardies!” So next time your life is saved by a falafel burger, or a great wad of chips stuffed into a pita bread, remember which student paper made it possible. It wasn’t *The Tab*.

Games & puzzles by Tiro and Sophie Cole

Varsity Crossword



Quick

Across

- 1 Amidst (7)
- 5 Subatomic particle (7)
- 9 Photograph, perhaps (5)
- 10 Red (9)
- 11 Got set up on computer (9)
- 12 Female reproductive organs (5)
- 13 Kind of earrings (5)

- 15 London ship (5,4)
- 18 During relocation (2,7)
- 19 Girl’s name (5)
- 21 Cambridge College (5)
- 23 IT use these (9)
- 25 Area of water south of Ireland (6,3)
- 26 Something naughty (5)
- 27 Satiating (7)
- 28 Witchcraft, perhaps (7)

Down

- 1 Scottish, English or Welsh (7)
- 2 Movement (9)
- 3 A deep clean (5)
- 4 Common jewellery (9)
- 5 Called (5)
- 6 South American (9)
- 7 Cologne river (5)
- 8 Scrutinize devilishly (7)
- 14 Nicki Minaj song (9)
- 16 Oxford supos (9)
- 17 Free but not gratis (9)
- 18 Penetrates (7)
- 20 A tripods (7)
- 22 Slimey collision (5)
- 23 Unusually selective (5)
- 24 Liquid fundamental to life (5)

Cryptic

Across

- 1 Transformer confused dear Pat (7)
- 5 Border traditions (7)
- 9 Boat that goes up and down (5)
- 10 Prime minister’s cider (9)
- 11 Strange male bears ray of light (5,4)
- 12 Discover a Renaissance ring (5)
- 13 Noisy hedgehog? (5)
- 15 Competitive environment in Cambridge college (9)
- 18 Home secretary is a more courageous chap! (9)
- 19 Car inspection to get slogan (5)
- 21 Nasal accent makes a pinging sound (5)
- 23 Ex-PM in a religious building, unwell!

- (9)
- 25 Manic, so in confusion one can’t sleep (9)
- 26 Reclined and deceiving (5)
- 27 The occupants are a number of insects (7)
- 28 Doctor possessed those swimming with the fishes (7)

Down

- 1 Chalk: a listed building, hiding bases (7)
- 2 Deep pit in Iowa, or Old Ethiopia (9)
- 3 Evenly thank a Euro user (5)
- 4 Dutch port has river mammal on beaver’s home (9)
- 5 Conservative leader has major rift (5)
- 6 Spend time with others, endlessly, mega leftism! (9)
- 7 Bee so confused and overweight (5)
- 8 Upturn US soil and continue (7)
- 14 Call Ezra - gay odd men are church workers! (9)
- 16 Rude nonce confused and rejected! (9)
- 17 Strange institution lost street instinct (9)
- 18 Between a chocolate bar in a bet (7)
- 20 Dog bile churned up and bound (7)
- 22 Sounds like our child who sets fire to buildings (5)
- 23 College namesake hears set of musical notes (5)
- 24 Incel, lonely, hiding instrument (5)

Sudoku

Easy

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

Medium

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

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES ON INSTAGRAM
@VARSITYCAMBRIDGE

vulture.



Don't worry if you hated Freshers' - it only gets better from here

The first week in Cambridge is rarely as glamorous as we expect. **Isabel Dempsey** reassures that the best of your university experience comes much later

Day three of Freshers' Week. 7am. And I'm heaving over a toilet bowl. Not exactly out of the ordinary during Freshers' you might be thinking - *I did the exact same thing*. Except the difference here is that this isn't the unfortunate symptom of a night out. This is no consequence of tequila shots and Jägerbombs. Rather, the substance fuelling my sickness is my anxiety.

"I vommed this morning," I tell my parents over the phone through trembling tears, "I keep waking up every morning feeling sick."

"A few too many drinks on a night out," my dad quips. Bold of him to assume I drank a drop.

I often look back at my Freshers' Week with embarrassed regret. I never went clubbing, not once (very lame I know). I drank plenty, just in the safety of bops and bars - and going to a college famed for its bops, I didn't feel like I was missing much. But I certainly didn't go on some mad bender; the certified freshers story I find myself regaling goes quite differently to most. I almost went clubbing after a pub crawl but then was attacked by a flood of in-

voluntary tears and a second year had to walk me home. End of story, and (in the eyes of fresher-me) my reputation.

But that incident isn't something I should be embarrassed by. Not everybody's Freshers' Week is the same and there's not some specific standard of liver poisoning that you have to reach. What was most annoying about my anxiety is that my brain was at war with my body. I knew rationally that I had nothing to worry about. But my stomach refused to listen, awakening me each and every morning with the same nauseous alarm.

Spending my wild sixth-form years home in the middle of nowhere during lockdown, the pandemic had brought all my pre-uni clubbing dreams to a halt. Yeah, I'd gone to parties. Yes, I'd drunk. But for some reason I imagined clubbing as a whole different kettle of inebriated fish. It's easy for present-me to chastise myself for my 'wasted' (or not so wasted) week. But stepping into fresher-me's shoes (a more pristine version of my current pair), I have to remind myself of the specifics of the freshers' clubbing scene.

I did not know these people; I couldn't trust that they would look after me if the night went downhill. Placed in the same boat today, I would probably still be on edge. And as I soon discovered that large amounts of alcohol would sometimes leave me teetering on the verge of a panic attack, I should really be thanking fresher-me for not pushing that boat out too hard or too quickly. As the betting adverts say: when the fun stops, stop. It was something I had to ease myself into, grateful to have a friend from home whom I could attend a Taylor Swift night with: the stepping stone from which I slowly worked my way up to a more regular clubbing routine. Though I still live in fear of the Lola-coaster.

Unfortunately the cold light of day brought its own challenges. The morning puke had more to do with my imposter syndrome, fear of change, and impending sense of failure than my inability to dance to drum and bass until 3am.

Find your people through societies, they say. Ironically, the one society I did join was *The Tab*. Though entertaining to read, I quickly realised I wasn't interested in writing 'which Taylor Swift era is your Cambridge College?'-style pieces. I felt I'd messed up. *The Tab* soon became the metaphorical donkey butt on which I would pin all my first term anxieties, constantly harassed by the guilt of going off-grid and never writing a single

piece. Sorry, guys!

Coming to Cambridge, I was convinced I wasn't good enough to be here, let alone good enough to be involved in its societies. Why act, debate, or write in a university full of future famous thespians, politicians and authors? I was not of the standard to compete with these soon-to-be-prized alumni. Plus, how could I have time? I'm doing a Cambridge degree, so *surely* I must spend my every waking moment worrying about getting a First. I had yet to come to terms with the truth that it is what you do outside of your degree that matters the most in your uni experience. And God I kick myself everyday for not getting involved with *Varsity* sooner.

From an anxious fresher mess I've now discovered my people, my interests, and my (would it be pompous to say?) purpose. No, I promise that this isn't some advertisement for *Varsity* in disguise. What it is is the piece that I wish fresher-me had read. The promise that it will get better. The reassurance that simply surviving Freshers' Week is a feat in and of itself. And a plea for you to trust me when I tell you that you belong here and you will find your place with time. But also I hope that this piece will be the push to encourage a fresher like me to take some of those leaps now. Because I promise you, you'll only wish you'd done it sooner.

Ask Aunty Maddy: Tucci or not Tucci?

Plato. Socrates. Jaden Smith. This week Aunty Maddy joins their symposium and bestows knowledge upon Cambridge's most needy

My crush just broke up with their fiancé. How do I seize this chance and make the first move?

Who the hell is getting engaged at university? A crush on a supervisor, hell, a parasocial relationship with your favourite Pret barista would be understandable, but you, you're speedrunning that white picket fence! But I won't judge, and luckily, unlike you, my eyes aren't clouded by the fuzzy-wuzzy rose-tinted goggles of love (ick!). Let's forget about the power of seduction and focus on my powers of deduction - I'm going in with cold hard logic, baby.

First of all, you've got to remember that they initiated the break-up. To make matters worse, with each passing year climate change is pushing hot girl summer (gender non-specific) further and further into the autumn months, and with your beau-to-be in their power right now, any attempts at consolation and chill are largely going to go over their head, or worse, cement you firmly in the friend-zone. Still, with cuffing season fast approaching, you've got to move fast. Revenge from a spurned ex-fiancé aside, what you need to keep an eye out for are opportunities to routinely 'bump into' them, one-on-one, in places you already see each other - so it's natural, you know! How about outside the Little Hall lecture theatre

on Sidgwick Site? Easily confused with a nuclear fallout bunker from the Cold War and/or an unusually Brutalist public toilet, it's so hopelessly deserted that any encounter will be just the two of you, albeit against the backdrop of that sweet, sweet stale concrete. Just don't let things get too hot and heavy - it wouldn't surprise me if our cash-strapped humanities department built the whole thing from discounted RAAC. Apologies to the STEM students for a lack of recommendations, but let's not kid ourselves - none of you have the time (or all too often, the demand) for these dangerous liaisons.

Should I shave my head?

Sometimes the pressure of this job really gets to me. It's both reassuring and exhausting to know the students of Cambridge University have entrusted me with the fate of their lives. The weight of such hard-hitting, historic decisions as these bears down upon my weary shoulders. Forget the futures of the life-saving medics, or the overzealous HSPS students at the cutting edge of crucial new tax evasion schemes at the heart of Westminster - you only have to glance at the litany of crushbridges salivating over moppy-haired sidgbois to understand that one of the true accomplishments of this student populace is the upkeep of our luscious locks. Heavy is the head, they say, but in your case what appears to be heavier is that flowing crown of hair weighing you down. I guess your dear old Auntie

just hopes you're making this change for all the right reasons, and not simply because you absent-mindedly stumbled across the Instagram reel of an androgynous chain-smoking MML-er on their year abroad in Berlin. Despite your hopes, a recreation of their sculpted shaven look, along with a hell of a lot of latex, still won't compensate for the Uncle Frank's tramp stamp you got in Freshers' Week as the bouncer clocks you in the Berghain queue.

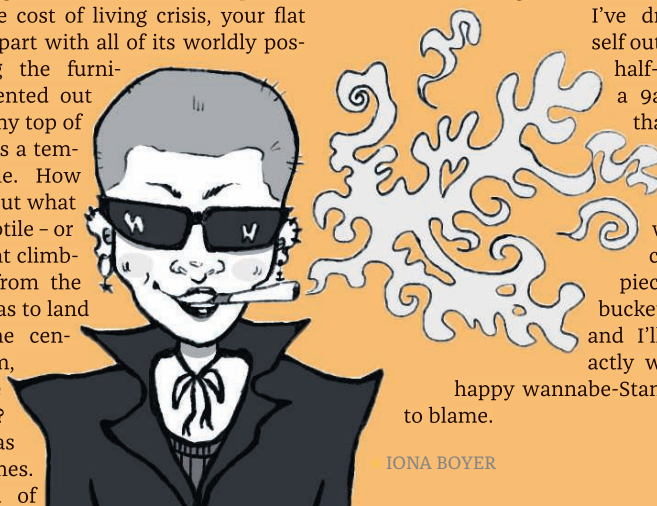
A shaved head is a lot like applying to Cambridge - a damned good idea at the time, but seemingly a lot more effort than you'd initially thought, and a questionable use of the so-called 'prime' years of the only life you're given on this miserable planet. Perhaps, amidst the cost of living crisis, your flat has been forced to part with all of its worldly possessions, including the furniture, and you've rented out the smooth and shiny top of your shaven head as a temporary coffee table. How very noble of you! But what if a large, shelled reptile - or an unseasoned night climber - were to fall from the sky and be so rude as to land smack bang in the centre of your cranium, splitting it open like a big juicy melon? And Aeschylus was one of the lucky ones. I imagine, instead of

a few half-decent tragedies (I assume; I'm still yet to read them), the only things the vast majority of us would die with under our belt are a couple of unfinished essays and a stash of ill-assorted McDonald's Monopoly stickers we were still desperately holding out on. In that vein, if you truly are strapped for cash, why not custom dye the stubble of your buzzcut and mortgage your head as an advertising billboard? Bar, perhaps, a particularly dire case of headlice, I seldom find anything engaging about the backs of the heads I stare over during lectures. You could be the force that changes all that. The next time

I've dragged myself out of bed, still half-asleep, for a 9am (scratch that, let's be realistic, 11am), I'll wonder why I'm craving a 20 piece chicken bucket from KFC, and I'll know exactly which razor-

happy wannabe-Stanley Tucci is to blame.

IONA BOYER



Flat Iron falls flat on its face ★★☆☆☆

Daniel Hilton takes a disappointing trip to Cambridge's new steakhouse

It seems as though every time I come back to Cambridge some new restaurant chain has popped up, and each time the same thing happens to me. I always mistake these brands for independent eateries and get embarrassed in front of my London friends. This time was particularly embarrassing, as I spoke to one of my privately educated pals (probably from somewhere called St Tiddle's School for Talented Toffs) raving about how excited I was to go to this steakhouse. But once I mentioned that this "steakhouse" was Flat Iron, he erupted into a chorus of "rah hahs", laughing at how uncivilised I was for not already knowing what Flat Iron was.

So, in an attempt to civilise myself, I embarked on a trip to see what it was all about. The atmosphere at Flat Iron was interesting; it's somewhere between a botanical garden and a cut-and-paste 'trendy' café. Though the dim lighting can strain your eyes, the ambience created isn't too bad (and indeed the lack of great light could mean it's the perfect place to go on your RAG Blind Date in February if you've had the misfortune of being paired with a Phys NatSci).

What is less great though is the view from the window, as the restaurant is opposite TK Maxx, Caffè Nero, and Taco Bell – fine in the daytime, but by night all the bins are out on the street and the offensive blue of Deliveroo plagues your eyes as Taco Bell orders are picked up.

I was then seated at my table and ordered a drink. I opted for their house Malbec (£8) which

was surprisingly fabulous and probably one of the best wines I've had at that price point. What was not fabulous though was how my wine was served. Call me old-fashioned, but if I'm paying eight pounds for a glass of wine the least I expect is for it to be served in the proper glass and not a tumbler. When I'm out drinking wine I want to exude a sense of classiness that I don't usually possess. Instead, I was made to feel like a nine-year-old recreating their first Holy Communion with a bottle of cooking wine from the top shelf.

“

I replied by saying: "oh it was absolutely perfect, thanks" while my stomach rumbled in protest

For the main meal, I opted for the signature Flat Iron steak (£13) with their bone marrow garlic mash (£4) and the peppercorn sauce (£1). While waiting for the meal I was offered complimentary popcorn and citrus water. The water was nothing

special – it's just water after all – but I did appreciate the free popcorn to gnaw on while I waited.

After a relatively short time the steak arrived. Despite having a Chinese chef's knife plastered all over their advertising (and laying one beside your fork), I was surprised to see that the steak came pre-cut and was really rather small. If the wine in the tumbler was already making me feel like a child then the pre-cut steak was not helping.

In all honesty, I'm not sure what I was expecting from a £13 steak, but the tiny morsel that lay in front of me was not it. To be fair, the steak was actually quite nice; it was very juicy and had a nice level of crispiness, but I guarantee that anyone could make a better one in their gyp. As for the mash, the portion size was small too, but it was more than made up for by the flavour – I can safely say that it was hands-down the best mash I have ever had. Each forkful was an eruption of flavour in my mouth – the smoothness of the mash was perfectly supplemented by the oiliness of the bone marrow and the garlic was the perfect topper.

Flat Iron mistakes itself for a tapas restaurant. There's no way that you can feel full after one steak, even with the sides. In fact, this approach was taken by the people next to me who all ordered a steak-and-a-half each and shared it. Finishing the meal, the waiter came and asked how the food was and, being British, I replied by saying, "oh, it was absolutely perfect, thanks," while my stomach rumbled in protest.

As he brought out the bill, he also brought two

little knife charms that could be cashed in for a free ice cream, a cute gesture. Maybe after a social collapse or nuclear apocalypse these charms will hold unimaginable value and be used to barter for fresh water and other trinkets. But for now I'd use it to get my ice cream, which was standard soft serve topped with chocolate dust. It was fine.

My trip to Flat Iron was a disappointment. I had gone in to see what the seemingly highly-rated restaurant was all about and came out hungry, confused, and slightly depressed, knowing that a sizable portion of my student loan was just spaffed up the wall. My advice: avoid this place like the plague. If you want a good steak then go to the Cambridge Chop House or to Millworks, though more expensive – the extra tenner you'll spend will be well worth it.



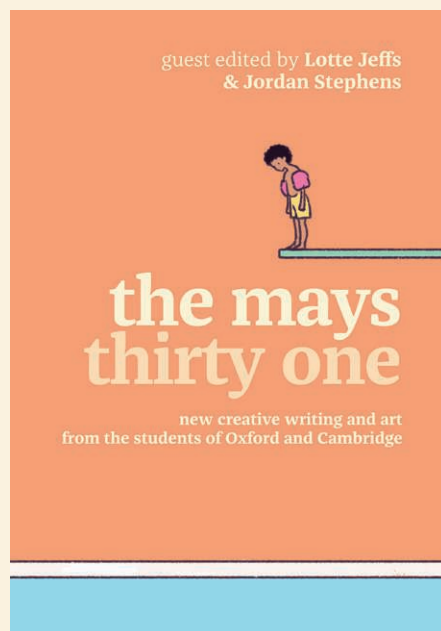
DANIEL HILTON

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Film & TV

Watersprite on 'bringing communities together'

Miranda Crawford chats to the Watersprite committee to find out how the festival is preserving its ethos 15 years on from its inception

▲OLIA GORONOVYCH

In 2009, a group of Cambridge University students set up a film festival called Watersprite. The aim was to highlight international film and put on a weekend of events to increase diversity, inclusion, and access within the film industry. 15 years on, Watersprite is the world's largest student short film festival, receiving submissions from all over the globe. The festival's influence has grown exponentially from where it first began; last year films were submitted from over 106 countries, with the number of submissions totalling 1762. But, after I sat down with three committee members to chat about Watersprite on its 15 year anniversary, it is clear that, despite its enormous growth, those initial endeavours from 2009 are still at the forefront of the festival's ethos.

Zeb Goriely, this year's festival director, explains how the events run by Watersprite are aimed at helping young people work towards careers in film by demystifying the industry. "A lot of people have a sense of the film industry as being pretentious or unwelcoming," Zeb tells me, "but anyone who comes to our events gets a very different experience." Watersprite is one of the few film festivals for which submissions are completely free, as well as attendance at the majority of its events. Unlike most film festivals, Watersprite is a registered charity, and supports its international attendees by paying for both their flights and accommodation in Cambridge. Access to the festival itself remains a priority for this year's committee, as part of their commitment to breaking down barriers into the industry. "You get to

do so much, being at Cambridge," Head of Events Flora O'Neill says, "but that's not

necessarily the people we are trying to target. It's a very privileged city, so we reach out to other places where they might not have access to the kind of stuff we have access to just by being in Cambridge."

A key aspect of the festival is its mentorship programme, open to anyone from a disadvantaged background who has submitted a film regardless of whether or not it has been selected. While the festival runs events and talks by keynote speakers, Zeb stresses that it aims to "offer more than just information, to offer opportunities for people to get a step up as they try and enter the film world." By pairing people up with mentors from a similar background, Watersprite actively provides young aspiring filmmakers with the support and guidance they need to make their way in the industry. "There's a point at which it's important to be inspired by talks, but when you want to move forward in your career having a mentor really helps."

The mentorship scheme is part of what seems to be a cornerstone of Watersprite's ethos: a supportive, compassionate community that is genuinely dedicated to increasing accessibility to the industry. Flora tells me about the festival's "film school marketplace" event, through which attendees can chat to people in the industry, build a community and network. It's clear to Flora that the industry professionals also find the festival rewarding: "industry professionals who come to Watersprite really like it - it's a really nice community. People genuinely want to help [...] they are quite invested in helping the next generation." One of Watersprite's current sponsors is now actively recruiting other sponsors, demonstrating the extent of the festival's impact on its benefactors as well as those it directly aims to support. "Watersprite is quite special in that

regard," says Flora. "Loads of people really care."

Alongside the multitude of events and opportunities hosted across the weekend, the festival remains a celebration of young filmmaking talent. This year is set to be the biggest awards ceremony yet, and Head of Awards Ruby Power is excited by the scope for experimentation that the short film format provides. Last year, Maja Kjellstad Aanonson won the Animation Award and the Neil Gaiman Film of the Year Award for her dark comedy stop motion animation 'Death at the Bus Stop'. "You never really see much of that," Ruby enthuses, "you would never see that in the cinema. The person who made it sat in a basement and made it completely alone. That can only really happen at this sort of event." Maja's innovative short film won her free entry into other film festivals, which she subsequently went on to win - an evident success story for the sorts of opportunities Watersprite provides for aspiring young filmmakers.

The Cambridge film scene is often seen as secondary to its thriving theatre counterpart, but from speaking to this year's committee members it is evident that a passion for film and increasing arts access in general is very much alive. "Watersprite is the best kept secret that we don't actually want to be a secret," says Flora. "By celebrating filmmaking we're bringing together all the people who love film," Zeb adds, acknowledging both the University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University students who are involved in the festival. "That divide seems to have lessened, and it's bringing the communities together."

Watersprite 2024 officially begins at its launch event on Monday 16th October with a screening of Raine Allen Miller's rom-com *Rye Lane* at the Arts Picturehouse, followed by a social. Sponsored by funding through the BFI, Watersprite will be putting on six screenings at the Picturehouse in the run up to the festival, so be sure to come along.

Head to head

Katie Burge and Josh Nathan go head-to-head on critics' opinions really are all that

Katie: Letting film critics tell you what to watch is stupid!

Film critics have been lauding their fancy ratings over us for years. Writing articles as though they are the self-appointed gatekeepers of cinematic excellence. But I'm here to tell you why you should take their opinions with a generous pinch of salt and a side of popcorn.

Picture this... it's a cold, damp November's day, you have already spent an hour defending your opinions at the stake in front of a scathing supervisor and questioning your ability to even form a cohesive thought, and now you simply want to unwind by watching a film.

Maybe you're feeling an arthouse flick that's been showing in Picturehouse and came recommended by that really cool barista, the sort of film that makes you want to start learning French. Or, as I often find, you simply want to watch Dwayne 'the Rock' Johnson starring in a raucous spy-thriller-comedy meets romance which you already know will probably be 'awful' in the eyes of a film critic, but fun is fun, and nothing else will hit the spot quite like it. Contrary to the snobbery of the film literati, it is actually possible to enjoy both without having to compare the two - it's called balance.

Rotten Tomatoes may know a thing or two about how to judge a film - it's purportedly "the most trusted measurement of quality for Movies & TV," according to its website - and yet the numbers often feel like they've been pulled out of thin air. Who are these mysterious reviewers? You know the saying, 'opinions are like belly buttons, everybody's got one?' Well, film critics seem to just enjoy flaunting their midribs more than most. While one critic gushes over a movie, calling it a masterpiece, another is shredding the same film to pieces with a few choice words.

The true test of a film is how engrossed it makes you feel, so watch what you enjoy, whether it's a cult classic, an epic blockbuster, or a B-movie that's so bad it's good - no one understands your taste better than you do.



▲HOLLY SHAN YU



film critics

head to head on whether film is important

Josh: Letting film critics tell you what to watch is smart!

We all have our pet peeves. Bad movies are mine. Within my circle of friends, I've become known as the bloke who won't watch a film unless Peter Bradshaw gives it at least a four star rating. But I promise there's more to my habits than just snobbery.

Wasting time is never a good feeling. Is there anything worse than a trip to the supermarket only to find that it's closed? Or spending hours on a supervision task only to realise that you've answered the wrong question? So when I finally get a moment to properly unwind, it's important that I really make it count. Why would I watch a movie knowing it might be a waste of time, when there is an endless sea of reviewers out there who can ward me off watching garbage? We've all got our own taste and for you, a 'good movie' could mean anything: who am I to judge if Cyberpunk or Lovecraftian Horror happens to be your thing? But every genre has its highs and lows, and a film critic's job is making sure that you're never scraping the bottom of the barrel. After all, there's nothing like a good five star rating to reassure you that you won't, once again, bite into a rotten tomato.

A quick glance at the numbers isn't all a review is good for; people tend to forget that film writers are literate too. Film reviewers normally give a vague sense of the plot and themes (good critics don't write spoilers); going in with a rough sense of the storyline won't guarantee a positive experience, but it'll almost certainly tip the balance in its favour. And when you come out the other side having enjoyed the whole affair but not quite seeing eye-to-eye with a reviewer's comments, isn't it nice to have someone to disagree with?

Ultimately, there's no denying that you'll never know if you like something until you've tried it -

but when you can keep the odds of getting it wrong to a minimum, why would you ever refuse?



◀ HEIDI ATKINS

10 questions for the Cambridge University Film Association

Sam Allen and **Heidi Atkins** chat with CUFA's co-presidents to discuss their must-watch films, upcoming projects, and what makes CUFA different

1) What's a movie everyone should see before they die?

Katie: *Frances Ha*.

Josh: *Fanny and Alexander*.

2) What's your least favourite movie?

Katie: I watched *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* and it was just too much time travel, and Pythagoras randomly appears and it just didn't make sense.

Josh: I'm going to annoy you a lot here but I'm going to say *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. Controversial, I know, sorry.

3) What's your favourite upcoming project?

Katie and Josh in unison: Take in 8...

Katie: It's where we shoot analogue film on Super 8 cameras and it's great because there's no editing, no retakes and it gets done during term time. The cartridge is four minutes and so you don't think about it for terms and terms on end - you've just got to make the film.

Josh: It's all being done in the first eight weeks of Michaelmas term. Anyone can get involved.

Katie: People think films are such an ordeal to make but actually you can make such short films so quickly.

4) Why should people join CUFA?

Katie: Great screenings, great speakers, great filmmaking.

Josh: It's the works. Anything film-related that you're interested in is here.

5) How is CUFA evolving from last year?

Josh: CUFA had a lot of difficulty in lockdown which is completely understandable and we also struggled with financial difficulties, but we've managed to resolve them all this year which means we've got more money, more time, and better people. We have so many ways to elevate this to the next level and get filmmaking properly on the Cambridge stage.

Katie: The last presidents were really lovely in doing the handover earlier than normal so they really helped us over Easter term to get to grips with it. Over summer we've been consolidating the whole plan.

6) What's your favourite speaker coming this term?

Josh: Adiescar Chase. She's a composer and she worked on *Heartstopper*.

Katie: Catherine Goldschmidt. She's the cinematographer of *House of the Dragon* and *Doctor Who*. I feel like cinematography is so interesting and a lot of people get it confused with directing so it'll be great to talk to her.

7) Varsity called the film scene in Cambridge a 'black hole', do you agree and what are you doing to fix it?

Katie: Yeah, I agree it has definitely been a black hole. At the freshers fair loads of people were saying they didn't even know we were here. Cambridge is definitely dominated by theatre but that's just because there's not the same infrastructure or opportunities advertised. In Cambridge theatre you

see about a billion plays advertised so we're really just trying to make it easier to find opportunities for actors, producers, etc.

Josh: The interest is definitely there.

Katie: There's so much crossover between different societies and we've been trying to do a lot with theatre like the ADC. There are so many people in theatre who are interested in trying film out. Black hole no longer.

8) The film scene is difficult to break into, especially learning skills like editing, what does CUFA do to try to help?

Josh: We've got plenty of workshops coming up! We're testing the water this term with one on screenwriting for aspiring writers, and one on self-taping, focused on actors who want to break into the film scene. We've also got a lot of speakers

“We have so many ways to elevate this to the next level and get filmmaking properly on the Cambridge stage

coming in to give their own industry expertise. We don't just want people to learn on the job, we also want these filmmaking initiatives to provide a more didactic approach!

Katie: In the same way that Cambridge theatre has elevated and promoted getting involved with the technical side

of things, we really want to show that there are so many roles beyond directing and acting - things like editing, cinematography and sound design.

9) What differentiates CUFA's film club from the other film clubs in Cambridge?

Katie: The great thing is that we don't have a particular specialism, so we've got a really varied roster. We're also trying to do a lot of collaborations - one with Pink Week and one with Blue Screen Film Society. We want input from people too, so we're going to run a weekly poll and

▼ LAUREN HERD



see exactly what people are interested in!

Josh: Our Film Club Officer is just amazing. His roster this term has been so impressive, I can't wait to see what he's got in store for the rest of the year. He's got great taste - the first film we're showing is *Badlands*!

10) Most student actors in Cambridge head to the theatre to perform, why do you think this is and what are you doing to bring more actors into film?

Josh: They just have a simple and easy to use infrastructure. Their pitching is easy, Camdram is easy to use so it's easy to get auditions and roles very quickly. Film doesn't have the same infrastructure, which is why we're in the process of working on something new. We've got a pitching scheme that we're going to release in Lent term which is going to work in a similar way to the ADC pitching scheme and hopefully will draw people into the film scene in the same way, so that they feel it's easier and more approachable.

Katie: Also I think with student theatre people just have a better sense of what that is. It can be amateur. With films people go to the cinema and see these big blockbusters and obviously that's not what you make as a student. People probably made films when they were younger in iMovie or whatever and it's the same, it's just a step up, and it's not a daunting thing. People can make films.

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Buying less and buying better

In a world of constantly changing trends, **Anna Metzger** talks circular fashion with Jane Horwood

Jane Horwood, founder of the pre-loved clothing boutique TrashChic, doesn't really go for the mainstream. With her bright pink glasses and graphic denim jacket, this web-designer-turned-fashionista has built a business from her eye for unusual and eccentric pieces. "I like bright colours," she tells me, "clothes that have an interesting story." Perhaps this is why TrashChic sells things you wouldn't find on the highstreet. In

“
There's something refreshing about the locality of this boutique

contrast to what she dismisses as the "samey" seasonal lines that big brands produce, the sequins, polka dots and animal prints of Jane's collection give off a sense of timeless eccentricity. People buy her clothes, Jane thinks, "when they want something fun, something different." They're the kind of clothes that you notice – whether you like them or not.

TrashChic is a microbusiness without regular employees or a storefront. The shop's day-to-day operations consist of sourcing, sorting through and selling pieces, either online or at a steady stream of markets and car boot sales. In a world where most of our clothes are part of supply chains that cross continents, there's something refreshing about the locality of this boutique, which according to Jane is yet to venture beyond Ipswich. Within the creativity and artful eclecticism of the TrashChic, there lies a genuine attempt to try and enact change in the fashion industry. Jane articulates her concerns about the dark underside of modern consumption, reminding me that "when you buy a £5 dress at Zara or H&M, someone is paying for that. It might not be you or me, but someone down the line is." Her passion

for secondhand fashion is inspired by the belief that clothing is not for immediate, short-term gratification, but something that can be reused, recycled, and reinvented throughout its lifetime.

In recent years, secondhand clothing sellers have enjoyed unprecedented prominence in the UK market. Often cheaper, more original, and environmentally conscious, businesses like TrashChic have a lot to offer the consumer. Nevertheless, Jane emphasises that running a small business in an industry dominated by brands worth hundreds of millions isn't straightforward. The regular slog of meeting customers at small, local events is not always profitable and can make it difficult to, as Jane says, "find your people." Small businesses can't cut costs the way that international conglomerates can and developing a social media presence in a saturated market can feel near impossible. There's an ethical question that business owners like



◀ JANE HORWOOD
BY ALINA NATALI

Jane who are interested in reducing consumption must confront. How does one encourage a 'buy less, buy better' ethos, when business re-

wards those who sell the most? "I don't want people not to buy things," Jane remarks, "because that's what I'm doing, I'm selling clothes."

TrashChic will be featured at the Grand Arcade's upcoming circular pop-up event running on the 28th and 29th of October. This event is part of a week of 'Let's go circular' events run by the shopping centre to encourage and showcase more sustainable modes of consumption. According to the event's marketing organiser, the purpose of the concept is to "connect and share knowledge" about how to cut pollution and waste out of production. Jane says that this sort of event marks a rare opportunity for businesses like TrashChic to reach a more mainstream consumer audience. Regular costs for a retail unit in a shopping centre are untenable for most independent businesses, with rent usually surpassing £2,000 a week.

The exploitative and unsustainable practices of the fashion industry have increasingly come to light in recent years.

Large scale change can seem slow,

and the challenges insurmountable. My conversation with Jane left an impression of the creative fervour and commitment that allows businesses like hers to breathe new life into old items. The fashion industry undoubtedly has a lot to answer for, but maybe there is a lot to be learnt from small businesses that think big.

The unexpected sustainability of the Cambridge stash horder

Ruby Cline defends head-to-toe stash in the name of the environment

The most unfashionable Cambridge student arguably has the most sustainable wardrobe: a single sweatshirt or fleece embroidered with some society or even just the word "CAMBRIDGE," which they wear on repeat paired with the same pair of jeans. In winter, the college puffer is pulled from the bottom of their otherwise empty wardrobe. This outfit has been the object of derision for a long time, strongly associated with the faint smell of BO and highlighters. However, in the interests of sustainability I think Cambridge-core should be given a chance to shine.

Declaring that you own one single sweatshirt deprioritises image and prioritises ideas. It offers a simple message to the world: *I'm thinking. I'm studying. I'm working hard.* As long as this is the message that a wearer wants to give, they are able to keep to the same uniform. This is far cry from the highly unsustainable and constantly changing outfits of those who want to give off the message, *I am fashionable.*

The hoodie-wearer is also multi-seasonal, needing the adjustment of only a few layers of stash as the cold comes and goes. Those who fall victim to the college puffer often defend themselves citing its warmth, and they are not wrong. I chronically end up freezing in pub gardens and lecture halls because a coat would have ruined the look. The Cambridge-corer doesn't have to worry about this. At every layer they are branded with their message. They therefore certainly end up needing fewer options for their layers than I do.

I find my style changing drastically at university compared to home. The Cambridge-corer, as anyone who has played "spot the Blues in the British Library" game will be able to tell you, doesn't switch out their stash for anything – even their home city. The brag, after all, is the same: *I go to Cambridge, don't you know. I'm studying. I'm working hard.* They are not subject to the style adjustments that can happen at home compared to university, which I'd argue is probably a very good thing.

Ultimately I will not be buying a stash sweatshirt anytime soon. But I do think we should look to unexpected places to learn how to dress a bit more sustainably, and perhaps the Cambridge-corers are a model of green dressing which we should treat with a bit more respect. Sorry – not green. Distinctly, and obviously, Blue.



▲ ALICE MAINWOOD

Circular fashion: coming up in Cambridge

Weekly Sewcialise drop in sessions

Mondays 10:00-12:00

Gibbons House Bermuda Road

Both new and experienced sewers are welcome at Sew Positive's drop in sessions where you can learn to mend, make or alter your clothes.

Cambridge Repair Cafe for International Repair Day

21st October 13:00-16:00

St Andrews Hall

Learn how to give your old clothes new life with the Community Repair Network.

Pre-Loved pop up shop

28th and 29th October 10:00-18:00

Grand Arcade

Shop from some of Cambridge's best vintage and pre-loved boutiques.

Lucy Cavendish Clothes and Book Swap

14th and 15th October 10:30-16:00

Nautilus room, Lucy Cavendish college

As part of #LucyGiving Fest, add to your wardrobe and bookshelf while also getting rid of things you don't need anymore!

The Good Fashion Show

26th October 19:00-20:30

Grand Arcade

Come along to the Grand Arcade's fashion show hosted by Give your Best, a charity that provides clothes to refugee women and children.

Vintage Kilo Sale

12th November 10:30-16:00

St. Pauls Church Cambridge

Featuring sustainable, vintage and retro brands for £20 a kilo.

So, Cambridge theatre has a race problem. What now?

Supriya Finch hopes for an end to racial prejudice in Cambridge's theatre scene

Any student of colour involved in the Cambridge theatre scene can tell you of the racial issues that persist within it. So what next?

I've interviewed students about their experiences, and all had plenty of suggestions for ways things could go better. Comfortingly, they also had lots of praise for initiatives that already exist.

One such initiative, Bread (called such because 'poetry like bread is for everyone') exists to push new narratives in Cambridge theatre and film, and has an important role in supporting the projects of minority artists. It runs socials, provides funding and boosts publicity for works fighting for progress. "It's good to know that they're there, making space," says student actor Irisa Kwok, "being in Bread spaces makes me feel like I can breathe out. Everyone deserves to relax on the theatre scene." Actor Ebenezer Boakye echoed this, calling it a "fun, safe space." He suggested that members of the Bread committee should be permanently installed on the ADC pitching committee as a pro-diversity voice, more easily held accountable than ADC representatives.

Bread also offer guidance through the pitching process; anyone who's ever pitched could tell you why this is necessary. "Pitching is too opaque," Ebenezer tells me. He says it needs to be better advertised so that not only intensely involved 'theatre kids' know when it's happening. As he points out, if only the generally disproportionately white ADC regulars know when pitching season is upon us, and how to write a pitch that will stand out in the cutthroat selection process, we'll get stuck in a feedback loop of majority white, Western works of theatre.

That being said, interviewees

were keen to emphasise the lack of bad blood. "We don't need blame, we need dialogue," says Kwok. They feel that white production teams are frightened of making mistakes, that there isn't training available to combat these worries and ingrained biases lurking beneath their under-

ably good intentions. "I've met so many people who want to combat racism and open the space, and obviously some people feel differently, but a huge number of people in Cambridge theatre want change," says Rishi Sharma, the man of a thousand Camdram credits. The message is clear: we're here, we have ideas, and we want to talk. Yet the floor for these discussions is often limited to Facebook and Varsity, where two-sided conversation is difficult and the human element feels distant. Forums for constructive discussions could represent a great step towards addressing these concerns in a transparent, creative way - something many would love to see stimulated by Cambridge's dramatic societies.



We don't need blame, we need dialogue

Rishi suggests building stronger relationships with societies based around ethnic minorities, like African Caribbean Society, India Society and Chinese Society, to name just a few. "Perhaps they don't want it - it should be totally their choice but they should be given the option to be included in this outreach," says Rishi. As he points out, BME Shakespeare reached out to a few of these to publicise auditions and performances, with major success. "It could be so transformative for combating racism, for selecting shows, for getting people onstage and backstage and in seats that normally wouldn't be there," he says.

Of course, in a space like Cambridge, the problems begin well before casting begins. "The Cambridge theatre world is so tiny, so many steps you have to take to get in - you need to have the right A Levels and school experience, you need to have the spare time, which working people may struggle to find, you need Western cultural capital that you may not have access to," says Ebenezer. But the biggest problem of all occurs even before Michaelmas: "you can't just change Cambridge, you have to change everything, because even to get here there's so much to be done,"

Ebenezer points out. In this highly elite institution, privilege greases the gears significantly, and under-privilege can not only keep you out of the theatre scene but from the university in its entirety. Grim stuff.

Varsity's previous series of articles on race in theatre ended on a rallying cry, it seems only right to return to its author, Naomi Obeng, to continue this pattern. "Students can either be ahead of the industry or behind it," she says, "and they can choose where they fall. Creative people can imagine a better world." Her main advice from working in the professional theatre scene is to allow people of colour to create, control and define their own spaces: "if you go into a pre-existing system then you can spend the whole time try-

ing to catch up, or you can abandon tradition. Good spaces come from power, not powerlessness." The question of whether we need to found new spaces entirely outside of the ADC, which is so steeped in history and tradition that it's practically the definition of a "pre-existing system," remains up in the air. Currently, some students work within it, like those creating diverse pieces in the ADC and the Corpus Playroom, where others opt to create separate spaces that can interact with what already exists or ignore it however they please - like Bread.

People of colour should get to have fun in the theatre scene, just like everyone else. "That's the point, isn't it?" says Naomi. "The theatre is a place to play. You can feel like there's a lot at stake, but student theatre is a place to fail - as long as you learn and grow. It's worth a try, even if it doesn't go how you want it to."

With that, she cuts to the heart of the problem. Tensions around race relations are everywhere in theatre: thrumming through audition packs, pitch meetings, rehearsals, performances, reviews. People of colour in the theatre scene must be constantly aware of their position as the Other. Some choose to make incredible art out of this othering, confronting it face to face. But artists from ethnic minorities should get to choose whether or not to do that, rather than exhausting themselves constantly worrying about how race impacts every step they take. They should get to make art about their experiences of race that aren't about racial tensions; they should get to make art centring on people of colour that aren't about race, if they so please. They should get fair opportunities free of discrimination and tokenisation. And they should be able to have fun. Isn't that what student theatre is for? To let us play. To relax. People have been holding their breath for

far too long. Here's hoping for a collective sigh of relief soon.

▼ MOJOLA AKINYEMI

What's on this Michaelmas



▲ LOUIS ASHWORTH

Metamorphosis: 17-21 October

Adapted from Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, this production promises to take the "would you still love me if..." phenomena to a much more profound level! Transformed for the modern world, we cannot wait to take on this ambitious exploration of what it is to be truly human.

***I was in the house and I was waiting for the rain to come*: 31 October - 4 November**

An original translation of Lugarcé's 1995 play, this production narrates the reality of a family in mourning as they await the return of the prodigal son. Olivia Krauze and Aubin Ramon's rendition of this lyrical tale promises to showcase our theatre's versatile talent.

***Seven Sketchy Sins*: 1-3 November**

A perfect Halloween after-party, which promises: "if you're not laughing, you'll be screaming." An ADC late show to bolster your spirits before those Week Five blues creep in...

***Love Corporation*: 7-11 November**

This CUADC Playwriting Competition winner brings an ex-psychiatrist face to face with a revolution going on abroad - and one a bit too close to home. Toby Collins brings their pertinent dystopiastaging the fragility of our world to the intimate setting of the Corpus Playroom.

***Serious Money*: 14-18 November**

A necessary, mid-term warning for those of us panicking and planning to fall back on that future in finance. Set to rhyming couplets, *Serious Money* offers a darkly humorous snapshot of the corporate world beyond the Cambridge bubble.

***CUMTS Freshers' Musical*: 15-18 November**

Freshers this year are set to take on a rendition of the classic *Romeo and Juliet* narrative, transported to the tensions of 1990s Ireland. You cannot miss out on this annual showcase of the freshest Cambridge talent.

***The Hair Shop*: 21-25 November**

A coming-of-age narrative celebrating black femininity in a world of subjugation and broken morals. *The Hair Shop* becomes emblematic of a space where silenced experiences are lived out and given a voice. ***CUADC/Footlights Pantomime*: 22 November - 2 December**

Are the streets of London really paved with gold? Anticipate Dick Whittington's crash-landing into drab modern day reality in this year's panto. As per tradition, round of the year with some light-hearted, fresh-faced comedy.

***The Complete Works of Shakespeare (Abridged)*: 28 November - 2 December**

This ambitious production promises to perform the entirety of the Bard's collection in just 97 minutes! It sounds like a hilariously chaotic comedy that cannot be missed - especially for those English Freshers who'll be tackling Shakespeare later in the year.

Arts

In the artists' studio with Elaine Pamphilon and Christopher Marvell

Eva Weinstein and **Clementine Lussiana** sit down with Cambridge creatives to chat Kettle's Yard, nature, and documenting the everyday

Elaine and Christopher's house is nestled outside of Cambridge, and getting there involved riding a trundling bus down rapidly narrowing country lanes. Though in reality not far from town, the village they live in couldn't feel further from the medieval Cambridge skyline, burrowed in a wide expanse of fresh greenery. Their home – because it is much more home than house – is a converted pub, a light, airy, white-washed space that Elaine tells us is inspired by the soothing interiors of Kettle's Yard. Peaceful it is, and as we settle into a plump sofa having been laden with coffee, biscuits, a book about their upcoming exhibition, and fistfuls of postcards, the balmy tranquillity of the space washes over us. Sipping our coffee, we gaze around at the walls adorned with clashing works of art that somehow reside harmoniously side by side. The difference works, and we tell them so. “Kettle's Yard taught me that placements is an art form too,” Elaine replies knowingly.

The couple were friends of famous art collector Jim Ede, former director of the Tate Gallery and regularly visited his home at Kettle's Yard: “when you rang the bell, he'd open the door and you'd go in and you could smell breakfast in the air because he'd just had bacon and eggs. It wasn't a rarefied museum; it was a house.” Kettle's Yard influences are everywhere in their house, from the furnishings to the harmonious mish-mash of artwork sprinkled across each room: “I wouldn't think of having printed curtains! It's a kind of way of life,” Elaine says, referencing Laura Freeman's ‘Ways of Life: Jim Ede and the Kettle's Yard Artists’, balanced on the coffee table in front of us. Encouraged by Ede's stories of Ben Nicholson and Alfred Wallis, Elaine and Christopher moved to St Ives – the vibrant epicentre of British Modern Art – where they spent 25 years before returning to Fulbourn, Cambridge.

Elaine Pamphilon and Christopher Marvell are two Cambridge-based artists, respectively known for their painting and sculpture that conjure up the playful whimsy of the British day-to-day. Christopher's sculptures are born at the end of the garden in a spacious, airy studio. Shelves and tables are strewn with an eclectic array of casts and sculptures of figura-

tive animals, while Elaine's paintings decorate the walls. Though their art is completely different, both in form and style, their work sits alongside each other in joyful symbiosis, having balanced a living and working relationship that is now crucial to their creative processes: “both of us being artists has been amazingly helpful because we can be really critical of each other's work.” There is a playfulness in both of their art, present in the writing scrawled over the youthful colour and print of Elaine's paintings, and in the inquisitive look sported by Christopher's dog sculptures, or his birds, poised with wings outstretched, ready for take off. “We have the same eye for line, texture, style... it's very sym-

pathetic.” Christopher reveals that recent experimentations with colour and patterning on his bronze sculptures are inspired by Elaine's colour palette, as the hues of his patterning are tonally similar to Elaine's paintings. It's no wonder that they frequently exhibit their work together, with their first joint exhibition having taken place at our very own Newnham college in 1986.

Elaine's in-house studio is bathed in natural light: white walls lined with artists' accoutrements (neatly stacked), and large windows opening up onto the garden. Their art tumbles out from their studios into the garden, where sculptures are carefully placed among well-kept flower beds and vegetable patches, seemingly springing from the land itself.

The calm atmosphere of her workspace seeps onto Elaine's canvas – paintings of Cornish seascapes or Cambridge landscapes have a soothing quality as Elaine is drawn towards softer tones and colours. Ceramic mugs and figurines line the window-



▲ELAINE PAMPHILON AND CHRISTOPHER MARVELL

sill, miscellaneous objects sit atop the piano and fresh flowers from her garden or daily walks at the Fulbourn nature reserve are carefully placed in jugs and mugs. Intimate pieces of the everyday which often go unnoticed become Elaine's primary subject matter.

Sitting there, our admiration for their art is swiftly supplanted by an interest in the artists' lives. As Elaine speaks (peppered with contagious laughter and frequent inquiries as to whether we want more biscuits) we learn that there are many strings to her bow, or, in her case, harp, which she learnt to play at the Royal Academy alongside the likes of Elton John.

Despite her glowing talent for music, she has always loved painting, a passion that blossomed during her time as an au pair in Paris for the family of artist André Hambourg. The love for painting



Though their art is completely different, their work sits alongside each other in joyful symbiosis

took over, and she decided to switch from music to art whilst studying at Homerton; at the time a teacher training college. “Being at Homerton was such fun,” Elaine tells us, “it wasn't as serious as it is nowadays.” She left the year that the college officially joined the University. By then, she was playing the harp in college halls, at society events, and playing it well enough to make a living. Art remained a hobby, one that existed alongside a successful musical career. That is, until she met Christopher, soon-to-be partner in both art and life who encouraged Elaine to apply her creative prowess to painting. “He told me,” Elaine says, “you could make a living out of this.” It appears he was right, with the artists' long term success recently culminating in the form of an exhibition at the Portland gallery in London.

Placing our empty mugs back on the table before saying goodbye, we couldn't help but liken these paintings and sculptures to herbal tea for the soul – calm, soothing, and utterly refreshing. Their work reminds us that art can be found in the simplest of places – the figures of nature and the colours of everyday life.



▲ELAINE PAMPHILON AND CHRISTOPHER MARVELL

Autumn book club

In a start of term reading slump? Have a browse through our autumn picks and get back in touch with your inner bookworm

By Blossom Durr, Madelaine Clark, Eve Connor, Love-day Cookson & Esyllt Parry Lowther

Playing to the Gallery by Grayson Perry

Can an inverted urinal, a splodge of paint on an otherwise-empty canvas, or a formaldehyde preserved cow be considered works of art? Marrying witty humour with acute, intellectual debate, Grayson Perry's *Playing to the Gallery* delivers an impassioned polemic in defence of the contemporary art world, attempting to demystify the canon and allow readers the opportunity to explore what art is and what it can be. If you're wanting a stimulating guide that dissects the contemporary art scene and challenges the status quo with mischievous humour, look no further.

Collected Poems by Philip Larkin

Larkin is best read when the wind (and your temper) get a bit more biting in the colder months. His cynicism is detached, but elevated – repelling and magnetising us at once. As *Mother, Summer*, I aptly declares: “Too often summer days appear / Emblems of perfect happiness / I can't confront: I must await / A time less bold, less rich, less clear: / An autumn more appropriate.”

Autumn Journal by Louis MacNeice

Lines of *Autumn Journal*, written over four months in 1938, toll through time, unaltered. It is with the Michaelmas student's voice that MacNeice might write: “I am in the train [...] and summer is going South as I go north / Bound for the dead leaves falling, the burning bonfire, / The dying that brings forth / The harder life.”

Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte

My autumn book recommendation would be Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* – what Cambridge lacks in moorland, it more than makes up for in historical architecture and biting wind – the ideal atmosphere for the classic. Autumnal to its core, the novel is filled with love, loss, the supernatural, and some of the most iconic literary characters of last few centuries, making it the perfect read for dispelling the boredom of dreary afternoons.

Staying Alive by Neil Astley

If you are going to buy one anthology of contemporary poetry, let it be this one. You will come across a depth of feelings and themes and a range of new writers that will break your heart and build it back up at the same time. Whether you know you love poetry or think you don't, this book is for you. The title says it all.

A review of 'Real Families': The Fitzwilliam's latest exhibition

Esmé Cockain unpicks what makes up a 'real family' at The Fitzwilliam Museum's new exhibition

Art both reflects and influences the society we live in. It captures how people think, feel and live while simultaneously changing the way that we see the world and what we accept as the norm. And this is why the Fitzwilliam's latest exhibition is so relevant in its questioning of what makes a 'real family'.

'Real families: stories of change', showing at the Fitzwilliam museum until the 7th of January, delicately and beautifully explores the complexities of the modern family through the medium of visual art. Curated by Susan Golombok, a psychologist from Cambridge University's Centre for Family Research, this exhibition presents families past and present of all shapes and sizes, as well as the love and tension within them. Every visitor will find something that resonates with their own lived experience, while also being exposed to the unfamiliar. These fascinating artworks ultimately piece together to form a celebration of diversity and an uncompromising declaration that there isn't, and there never has been, any such thing as a 'normal' family.

That's not to say that things haven't changed. The exhibition begins by visualising the transformation of the family in the last 50 years. A 1978 newspaper clipping with the rather aggressive headline 'BAN THESE BABIES' describes the public outcry at the use of artificial insemination amongst lesbian couples, labelled as "unnatural and immoral." But the following room paints a new and different picture, one in which so-called alternative family styles are shown

unapologetically at ease: transgender fathers, single parents embracing their babies conceived via assisted reproduction, a lesbian couple nestled on a sofa watching TV with their kids.

The exhibition continues in this fashion, jumping between the old and the new to provoke interesting and unexpected comparisons. A painting named 'The Holy Family' dating back to 1660 is creatively placed in a section labelled 'step families'. Joseph is depicted affectionately kissing the hand of baby Jesus who is poised upon his mother's lap. We then see this renowned family in a new light; although Christ is the son of God, Joseph raises him as his own son in a strange prototype form of the step-family structure. Likewise, a stunning oil painting of the Annunciation by Nicolas Poussin hangs beside Elina Brotherus' self-portrait of the same name in a clever allusion. The former depicts Archangel Gabriel's visit to Mary, informing her that she was to carry the child of God; the latter explores the artist's unsuccessful IVF treatment, an experience which she compares to "waiting for an angel who never shows up."

It's difficult not to feel touched by the extremely personal, yet relatable stories that play out on the canvases. Nicolas Nixon's understated black and white photography of his own children encapsulates that love-hate sibling relationship that many would recognise. Their body language conveys a typical closeness and affection, mingled with a hint of aggression. Caleb Cole's 'Odd

One Out' series triggers an equally emotional reaction. By taking family photographs purchased in antique stores and estate sales, removing all of the other figures and isolating just one person, Cole's pieces communicate the uncomfortable feeling of not fitting in with the rest of your family. The central figure stands out against an expanse of white silhouettes, illustrating their isolation and the pressure to conform.

At times, the vastness and variety of the exhibition becomes overwhelming. There are gems to be found amongst an array of material that takes time to sift through. You don't get the chance to get bored: the artworks leap between mediums and styles, going from embroidered baby clothes, to a Barbara Hepworth sculpture, to a giant 3D installation.

Some of the pieces displayed are not conventionally



▲PAINTING BY ALICE NEEL (FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM)

pretty or aesthetically pleasing. Their value lies in the messages that they convey, the real stories that they tell, and the raw emotion that you cannot help but feel when you see them in front of you. While some artworks at first seem unremarkable, reading the accompanying caption will suddenly open up a whole new meaning; a narrative that brings the work to life.

'Real Families' presents a pioneering and unique collaboration. Carefully curated art communicates decades of academic research, which work together to challenge assumptions and highlight the diversity of the modern family. The result is a compelling and insightful study of human relationships which is definitely worth a visit.

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Music

Beyond Borders

Alex Brian chats to Jacob Benhayoun, the student fundraising for disaster relief using live music

Since matriculating into Trinity College three years ago, Jacob Benhayoun has thrown himself into the Cambridge music scene. After playing in several jazz bands in his first year, the History student went on to join Cambridge's favourite ten-piece, Hot Content. In total, Benhayoun admits, he must have played "at least 50 gigs" last year.

Thus, when an earthquake hit Turkey and Syria last February, leaving approximately 1.5 million people homeless and killing over 55,000, Benhayoun was determined to put this experience to good use. Alongside Turkish student Hale Salman, Benhayoun organised a gig at Revolution, featuring Hot Content, Quasar and DJ Talulah, all the proceeds of which went towards disaster relief.

Dubbed 'Beyond Borders,' the event – along with a sponsorship from Rumboogie – raised over £2000 for the charity Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC). Consequently, when another earthquake hit Morocco this September, Benhayoun was ready to spring into action. Their latest event, held on Monday 9 October, also aimed to raise money for Libya, which was devastated by floods only days after the earthquake in Morocco.

For just £5, attendees were treated

to a late-night concert from Hot Content, Quasar and the DJ Edmo. Like Talulah before him, Edmo was "really thoughtful" and incorporated music from the area into his setlist. Not only was the event an opportunity to experience each artist's first gig of Michaelmas, but the ticket cost was going towards a good cause. As Benhayoun insists: "there's no better way to spend your money than that."

The organisation of the event was facilitated by Benhayoun's presence in the Cambridge music scene. The musicians, he could just message, while Zak Bakkali from Clare Sound provided all the equipment. Meanwhile, it was Hale Salman who initiated the conversation with Revs, which Benhayoun praises for being "very agreeable."

The Moroccan crisis is especially pertinent to Benhayoun, who is a second-generation Moroccan with family affected by the earthquake: "it's tough in the wake of something like that to know what to do, especially if it hits close to home. Being proactive was the best way for me to process it, encourage people to donate and shed a bit of light on it."

While Benhayoun started organising the event almost immediately after news of

the Moroccan earthquake broke, he feels disappointed not to have seen "any sort of message of

solidarity from the University." Likewise, the fundraiser for the Turkey-Syria earthquake was partly inspired by a lack of fundraising opportunities and the meagre support provided by the University. Nevertheless, Benhayoun asserts that "sometimes, as students, we have to take things into our own hands ... We've always been more than capable of doing brilliant things together."

When I spoke to Benhayoun, he had not yet decided which charity would be receiving the revenue from Monday's event. DEC is not running an emergency appeal for Libya and Morocco. Therefore, Islamic Relief was at the top of his list. However, he assured me that "every penny of profit is going straight to charity."

As for future events, Benhayoun is keen to re-establish his arrangement with Rumboogie and make gigs like the one on Monday "more of a continuous thing." Besides being for a vital cause, Benhayoun believes these events are important because "apart from Grandma Groove, you don't get a great number of opportunities to see live music in a club setting for a reasonable amount of money."

When I asked for his favourite Cambridge bands (other than Hot Content, of course), he cited Temor for its "high-quality jazz" and "extremely talented musicians," and Quasar for its "fusion of jazz and hip-hop," deploring that "hip-hop is not appreciated in Cambridge as much as it should be."

Clearly, this is someone with a deep understanding of the Cambridge music scene, who will be able to invigorate its nightlife all while raising money for important causes.



▲ HOT CONTENT BY GEMMA PENSON

Varsity's autumn playlist

Sufjan Stevens – 'Futile Devices'

With gently plucked guitar and soft vocals, this song creates a cosy atmosphere perfect for when the leaves start to fall and the days begin to shorten.

Wolf Alice – 'Safe from Heartbreak (If You Never Fall in Love)'

Lush vocal harmonies – especially once frontwoman Ellie Rowsell is joined by drummer Joel Amey – not only encapsulate the season, but perfectly mirror Rowsell's resignation towards love.

White Stripes – 'We're Going to Be Friends'

This song epitomises the feeling of finding a friend and alleviating the anxiety of moving to a new place.

Laufey – 'Dreamer'

This jazz track feels both modern and nostalgic, much like using a computer in a 17th-century library.

Paul McCartney – 'Jenny Wren'

McCartney has the magical ability of writing melodies that are both unspeakably sad and utterly beautiful.

Fontaines D.C. – 'Dublin City Sky'

With a repeating melody and minimal instrumentation, the simplicity of this track gives it a comforting energy.

greent Perez – 'Cherry Wine'

As cosy as the title suggests, this track features acoustic instrumentation, syncopated rhythms and a warm guitar solo.



▲ SCAN ME TO LISTEN TO THE PLAYLIST

Cambridge musical history corner by David Quinn

When Nick Drake was a fresher

55 years ago, Nick Drake was finishing his first year at Cambridge. While most students were worrying about exams, Drake set his sights on a record deal with Island Records. He was trying to romanticise his Cambridge life, but Fitzwilliam

▼ ISLAND RECORDS (WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)



in the 60s was hardly an idyllic setting. Notoriously, the windows of its dorms rattled with passing traffic, leading students to plaster up their frames. Indeed, while the folk singer is often depicted as a recluse and a romantic, he was very much still a student. Tales of Drake chucking his friends into the Cam, for instance, gives a whole new meaning to his iconic song 'River Man.'

When John Lennon stepped into Lady Mitchell Hall

The year 1969 was predisposed to notoriety. However, it was before man landed on the moon that John Lennon stepped foot in Lady Mitchell Hall. Complimenting the (less than musical) yelps of his new partner and collaborator, Yoko Ono, Lennon delivered nearly half an hour of improvised feedback generated using an amplifier and guitar. The concert was Lennon's first public performance without the other Beatles. Determined to construct a new identity for himself, Lennon increasingly embraced the experimental.

▼ LOUIS ASHWORTH



For instance, saxophonist John Tchicai recalled how Lennon set an alarm clock to determine the end of the show before walking on stage. However, other alarm bells should have been ringing. The concert was ridiculed by critics, with *Rolling Stone* calling it "utter bullshit." Nevertheless, Lennon found a receptive audience among the Cambridge students who attended and was encouraged to persist with radicalism in both politics and music. That step into Lady Mitchell Hall may well have been a small one, but it was one giant leap for the musically inclined.



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Music

Busking in Cambridge: the good, the bad, and the ugly

Emily Lawson-Todd chats to third year NatSci Katya Bungay-Hill about her experiences busking in central Cambridge

Sitting down to talk with Katya, I realise that this isn't the first time I've seen her this weekend. Our first encounter was on the street corner by Franco Manca where she was playing a folk-inspired cover of Talking Heads' 'This Must Be the Place' to the bustling crowds flocking to the marketplace, a song she calls a "consistent crowd-pleaser." After all, when Katya isn't dashing off to lab practicals or frequenting Downing site as a third-year Natural Sciences student at Sidney Sussex, she's a regular busker.

The rules around busking in Cambridge are surprisingly lax, with buskers not requiring a licence to play in the city centre. Thanks to these rules (or lack thereof), Katya admits that, although she has been busking for "four years or so" in her hometown of Oxford, it is only in the past couple of years that she has started taking to the streets with her guitar "more regularly." "I try to go about once a week – it doesn't always happen!" she laughs.

When I ask how she manages to balance her musical career with her degree, she admits that it's fairly easy, saying that she just sees it "as another hobby" and that it's a "nice way to relax." On that second point, she laughs and cor-

rects herself: "actually, it's not always that relaxing! You have to prepare for it, you have to be actively thinking all the time." Comparing it to other, more traditional forms of music performance, she highlights that "you have to win people over in a way that you never have to do if you are playing a gig ... You have about 30 seconds to convince them that you're

“

It's so human – it's one of the most human types of performance I've ever done

worth being there or to try and make their day a bit better."

With both of us knowing how chaotic the city centre can get, I ask how receptive people are to street performances. Katya is keen to highlight both the positive and negative interactions she encounters while playing. But the strangest? "The weirdest moment was when I

was busking with one of my friends and it was all very lovely until this man who was probably very drunk came up to us and started screaming 'I LOVE YOU' into my ear!" she laughs. Katya adds, "I just kept playing because what else are you supposed to do?" However, the good far outweighs the bad (and the ugly): "plenty of people come up to you and tell you really sweet things ... It gives you a really nice belief in yourself when people do walk up to you and engage." For her, it's these interactions and the "grit" that busking requires that matter far more than the money, which she doesn't see as "the most important thing." "It's so human – it's one of the most human types of performance I've ever done," she says.

For Katya, "music was always there" – both at home and at school. "I credit a lot of my musical roots to my primary school because it was very big on singing. It showed me that [music]'s not just a chore, not just

something you have to do in assembly. They took the time to make it something that was really fun." As the Tories continue to slash funding for music and the arts across state schools, her statement that "the music you hear

when you're young is so formative for the sort of music you play and the sorts of musical intuitions you end up having" takes on a new dimension, as does her assertion that schools should be "teaching people that music is for everyone, that all types of music can be for everyone, that there's not a 'correct' type of music." Amid the chapel choirs and elite orchestras of Cambridge, I can't help but agree with her about the importance of emphasising other forms of music, but also opening these opportunities to more people.

Before I leave her to rehearse, I ask Katya if she has any advice for students trying to break into the Cambridge music scene. Her guidance is refreshingly frank. "It just requires you being active," she says. "Seek it out and know that people will only know that you exist if you put yourself out there." When I think about her covering Joni Mitchell next to the marketplace, it dawns on me that there is no one in Cambridge better qualified to talk about being "out there."

◀ JOHN CAVANA



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Reporters clash at Freshers' mini tournament

Will McLaughlin and **Ed Marsh** recap the Robinson, King's, Queens' and Selwyn tournament that took place on their shared pitches

King's 1 - 0 Selwyn

King's faced Selwyn in their opening match. This fixture last season provided a pivotal confidence booster for King's. They beat Selwyn 6 - 3 in Cuppers, a result that triggered a run of good results in the league and ultimately helped them stay up. Both defences were well organised, leaving just scraps for the respective frontlines to feed off. It came as no surprise then that the game would be decided by only one goal. That goal came just before half time after a well-worked King's press resulted in Rade Meech-Taci slotting the ball into an open net.

Fearing the loss, Selwyn resorted to the dark arts of

football. My personal favourite was one player complaining to the referee that one of the King's players had shouted "leave it" to his own player. He demanded a free kick. Maybe it's because I've never played football to a high enough standard, but this was a new one to me.

King's 0 - 1 Queens'

Division One faced Division Two as Queens' took on King's in both sides' second game of the mini-tournament. King's were without their scorer, Rade Meech-Taci, from the first, as he had to attend Blues Tennis Trials. Things took a turn for the worse when the King's College captain gave me the nod to start as striker. A position in which my only reference point was watching Lee Gregory and Michael Smith tear League One apart last season for Sheffield Wednesday.

▼ ED MARSH

Queens' opened the scoring with a Louis Charvill goal. It must be noted that Charvill was

in non-regulation kit, a fact that gifted King's a fantastic excuse for their poor defending.

Just like in the King's vs Selwyn match, one goal was enough to win it. King's failed to properly test the Queens' defence and the game petered out, along with my hopes of becoming KCFC's no 9.

King's 0 - 0 Robinson

Having had a tame two opening games, King's wanted fireworks against Robinson. Unfortunately, however, there was not even a sparkler's worth of excitement.

King's, having lost their striker after the opener, were now without their goalkeeper. After some intense tactical discussion, the King's captain deployed a now infamous system within the KCFC squad. Bearing in mind he had no strikers at his disposal, he chose to play a narrow 4-1-2-1-2 system, mirroring the tactics of every single Fifa 18 player.

The game may have ended 0 - 0, but when these two face each other with full squads later in the season, there is potential for a classic.

Robinson 3 - 0 Queens'

After Binson's relegation last season,

hopes were not high for their opening match against Queens'. But with new freshers taking to the pitch on both sides, things looked very different from the 4 - 3 Queens' victory last season. Makafui Avevor was undoubtedly the difference on the right wing. He made the top right corner of the net bulge after a masterful Sufyan Chowdhury through ball in the first half, before beating the keeper again at the beginning of the second half to make it 2 - 0. As the game drew to a close, I took inspiration from my footballing idol Bruno Fernandes, meaning that after I was fouled on the edge of the box I managed to milk it enough to secure a free kick. When Maka stepped up to take it the outcome was inevitable, and the keeper was soon rummaging around in his onion-bag. 3 - 0, hat-trick, on to the next.

Robinson 1 - 2 Selwyn

Rivalry is unavoidable between Robinson and Selwyn. Not only are they neighbours on Grange Road, but they were also neighbours at the bottom of Division One last year, both being relegated to Division Two for the new season. With a frantic display in the first half, Robinson showed why. Selwyn capitalised, and made it 1 - 0 going into half time. After the restart

however, Robinson were bright. The freshers combined well, and Felix Kind found the back of the net calmly after a Mylo Michaels pass.

Unfortunately, Robinson's passage of good football did not last long, and Selwyn scored again to end the match 2 - 1 in their favour.

Queens' 2 - 0 Selwyn

Due to our two correspondents playing in the Robinson vs King's game, we can't describe what happened in this one. But much to our dismay, in securing the victory, Queens' also secured the title of overall winners.

The event was great fun for all involved however. And with substitute players as refs and linesman, teams with half their players missing kit, and raised voices used in place of whistles, the new freshers were able to get a very good idea of what college football is like.

Unfortunately, the article can't end on this uplifting note because I have to set the record straight. Where was the mention of our stonewall penalty in minute one Ed? Camfess will know about this crime against journalism! Disgrace!



Cheap beers and cheap shots: Robinson's secret to pool dominance

Alex Davies questions why Robinson is so fluid on the felt, and finds an unlikely reason for its success

If Spartans were born with a sword in their hand then Robinson students came forth with a cue. Upon entering those red and hallowed halls, there is an expectation placed upon billiards excellence. This is certainly a dramatic opening, but there is evidence to back it up. The College has won three of the last five Division One titles and four of the final seven Cuppers before the competition was disbanded in 2019. Last season was a particular highlight, as across three teams Robinson remained unbeaten and ended the year as champions of both Division One and Three. But the question is, what is the reason for this domination?

To outsiders there is little that catches the eye about Robinson (except for the mass of red bricks), as Cambridge's newest college lacks the history and grandeur of many of its neighbours. But there is a sense of community embedded in the College's social structures that has allowed pool to thrive. The two key social hubs of the College, the bar and the JCR, both possess pool tables that are in constant use throughout an evening. Pool is always a popular social activity when available, and Robinson

fourth-year PhD student and Cambridge University snooker captain Alex Fisher says the College's set up is the reason for its success. He commented on a lack of tables in other colleges and stated that "given the facilities, it's no surprise that Robinson always has a couple of players in the university teams." Alex himself is one of these players. For Alex it was not only the competitive matches, but also the opportunity to practise with other high quality players every day that went a long way to developing him into the player he is today. He started playing snooker and pool at 16 before starting at Robinson just two years later, so there is no doubt that the College played a key role in his development.

Of course, there are other factors that contribute to the success of the teams, one being the hard work and organisation of current first team captain, Timothy Wong. When I asked him why he felt the College had always excelled he said: "we've always had good players," and evidence of past triumphs undoubtedly suggests this. But this is not by chance. Pool tables are found at the heart of Robinson's social culture, and the bar is cheap, which amounts to a lively and

pool-friendly atmosphere – an atmosphere that is often beneficial during home games, because as in any sport, a home crowd goes a long way. Without the popularity of the bar a lot less pool would be played in the College and as we all know by now, practice makes perfect.

As captain of the third team last season, I witnessed this first hand, as a group consisting entirely of freshers went from having very little experience of the sport to a team that was able to win promotion. No one encapsulated this transformation more so than Will McLaughlin. He started the season as the third team reserve and ended it by coolly potting the ball that secured another Division One title for the firsts. He put his improvement down to two things: the availability of £2.20 Bin Brew pints, and 'Stephen Hendry's Cue Tips' on YouTube.

The talent of uni players such as Timothy and Alex coupled with the enthusiasm of others to pick up a cue has transformed Robinson into the red brick fortress it appears from the outside. But the true hero is the social set-up inside the walls. The legacy of pool at Robinson looks in safe hands for a few years yet.

Captain's corner

Alex Berry chats to handball captain Sadie Kirk

Who is your sporting idol?

Jessica Ennis-Hill and also any handball player.

What is your best sporting moment?

When I was asked to train with the GB Handball Futures team.

Worst sporting moment?

Breaking my ankle during last year's handball Varsity match against Oxford.

Why handball?

It's such an amazing sport – it's fast and exciting. Games are usually really close and score lines tend to go very high with teams often scoring 20-40 goals each per match so there's always lots to watch and do! Plus it keeps you really fit and there's always something new to try out with the team like a new play or move.

Is it easy for beginners to pick up?

Handball is super easy for beginners to pick up! There are only a few simple rules to learn and the skills used are

common in a lot of other sports too.

Any pre-match rituals?

Playing some good music before and during the warm-up and generally keeping it relaxed before the game.

Why is the handball team the best?

The handball team is really close, everyone is super kind and trainings are always challenging but a really good laugh too. It's an amazing environment to train in because everyone is so encouraging. We also have great weekly socials to unwind after a busy Cambridge week!

Who should we look out for this year?

Flo, Sam and Gabi are definitely our players to watch this year!

What is the best bit about being captain?

Getting to be more involved in a sport and team that I love!

Worst bit about being captain?

Admin!

Varsity predictions?

A Cambridge win (of course)



▲ NORDIN CATIC

Sport

Catching up with the handball captain

pg 31



Why do Robinson dominate at pool?

pg 31





Buckle up, BUCS is back

▲ HANNAH MAWARDI

Alex Berry

After a long summer break, the highly anticipated return of the BUCS league is here. University teams up and down the country will be competing on Wednesday afternoons, so we're recapping the highlights from the most recent matches.

Netball

Cambridge	28
Nottingham 2s	44

The netball Blues kicked off the season against the Nottingham 2s at the University Sports Centre this Wednesday (11/10). The Blues were quick off the mark in the first quarter, rapidly generating a 3-1 lead against an energetic Nottingham opposition. Gameplay was immediately end-to-end, with plenty of turnovers made by both teams' defences before the attacking players fully settled

into the match. However, the Blues were quick to regain dominance and managed to build up a 6-3 lead. Battles between opposite players took place throughout the court, with centre Izzy Howse's swooping interception in the centre third being quickly matched by the same from the Nottingham centre.

After a few more turnovers, Nottingham quickly found their footing in the game and managed to get the edge back over Cambridge, before wing defence Millie Ireland-Carson's interception was quickly converted to a goal to level the scores. Due to their clinical shooting duo, Nottingham began to pull away which quickly widened the score to 15-10. However, the Blues continued to fight back, with goal attack Lucy Walker sinking some equally impressive shots.

As the second-half began, Cambridge were still trailing Nottingham, the score now 16-23. Defensive pressure from the opposition left the Blues struggling to take advantage of the whole width of the court, players quickly getting trapped in

channels and forcing some risky passes. The Blues responded in kind by upping the energy in defence, but failed to stop Nottingham from strengthening their lead. Some acrobatic interceptions from their seemingly never tiring centre court players left the score 23-33 ahead of the final quarter.

Goalkeeper Ruthie Adeleke was quick to make some turnovers on the backline as the final 15 minutes began, which led to some lovely long range shots by goal shooter Kat Heylen. Tiredness started to kick in for the Blues as the match drew to a close, with more interceptions made by Nottingham, and more mistimed passes plaguing the attacking efforts of the team.

The match ended with a final score of 28-44 in favour of the Nottingham 2s, but given how many new players have been added to the squad since last year's Varsity victory, it's unsurprising that they are yet to be a completely polished machine. There were still many moments of brilliance throughout the match, providing plenty of promise for the rest of the season.

Rugby Union

Cambridge	47
Swansea	12

The women's Blues were back in action at Grange Road on Wednesday's rainy afternoon, but were not deterred by the bad weather as they dominated their match against Swansea, with a final score of 47-12. Hetta Friend opened the scoring for the Blues with a second row try, cleanly converted by Polly Hipkiss to put them 7-0 up. This was soon followed up by tries from Emily Bell, Vianney Gomezgil Yaspik and a second for Friend, all converted again by Hipkiss to make the score 28-7, with Swansea scoring a try just as the rain began to fall.

Swansea were only able to get back onto the scoresheet once more for the rest of the match, no competition for the Blues as they continued to add to

their tally. Hipkiss added to her impressive play with an incredible run leading straight to a try, which she then converted yet again. Phoebe Smith closed off the scoring for the day with the final try, leaving the Blues ecstatic with their brilliant performance to open up another BUCS season.

There was joy for both the men's and women's Blues teams in badminton on Wednesday, with identical 6-2 wins for each. The men's team defeated Oxford on home soil, providing a positive omen for what is to come in Varsity later this year. The women's first team travelled away to play at Nottingham, but I'm pretty sure they'd say it was worth the journey.

Badminton

Cambridge	6
Oxford	2