

FREE
Take a
copy

**Spooky, sexy, or
supervisor?**
pg. 24

**Council
recommends
PVC for
sustainability**
pg. 4

No.916
Friday 27th October 2023
varsity.co.uk

The Independent
Student Newspaper since 1947

VARSITY

We can't take more marking boycotts, says new VC

Taneesha Datta and Isabel Dempsey

After half a decade as provost of Princeton University, leading Cambridge as the new Vice-Chancellor is in many ways familiar territory for Deborah Prentice. Sitting across from us in her spacious office at the Old Schools, which was first built in the fifteenth century, it's clear that Prentice is having to confront a new set of traditions. Still, she presents a subtly powerful presence, calm and composed, boldened by the bright print of her floral blazer. The imposing wooden-panelling of the room is offset by a pop of modern art, bringing a new energy into the space.

Coming into Cambridge from across the pond, Prentice feels grateful for the opportunity to start from scratch: "I think it does bring a fresh perspective, I think it brings humility," she says. She moved to Cambridge partly out of a desire to learn something new - a fitting sentiment for someone overseeing one of the world's most prestigious academic institutions. "There are things that Cambridge I think solves beautifully that American universities don't solve as well," she observes, while also suggesting that in some areas Cambridge should "take a look at" what American universities do. Although she later jokes about the lack of cooperation between the colleges, offering us a rare glimpse at her personality ("who says the colleges never cooperate? They cooperated on my inductions!"), she says that she's never seen any American university "come close to what Cambridge can do" with the college system. She admires the way it marries the two halves of university life as a research institution and as a place to nurture students.

On the other hand, Prentice tells us she has been involved in conversations about potentially broadening the Cambridge curriculum in a way that more closely resembles the US liberal arts system, especially when it comes to an educational focus on sustainability. Cambridge Zero, for example, was started in 2019 as an initiative to maximise Cambridge's contribution to creat-

ing a sustainable zero-carbon world. As part of Cambridge Zero, Prentice tells us there is a desire "to have environmental sustainability be a part of everybody's education." However, she is keen to emphasise that these aren't her own views: "I don't have a personal view about this," she clarifies, explaining that this is something she's heard others discuss.

In this dichotomy between what she has "heard" and what she personally desires to do, throughout the interview we find ourselves navigating the boundaries of Prentice's position. As we ask whether she plans to fully divest from fossil fuels, we discover she doesn't see the design of specific policies as the focal point of her job: "ultimately, it's the University that will decide. The governance here is such that particular policies will get hashed out by the Council and the Regent House." Instead of fixating on the "narrow" issue of University funding, Prentice hopes to help lead the University forward in the space of climate change more broadly. This is a project that, she says, everybody is on board with. "Everybody," she repeats, with a decisive nod and pointed stare.

As we move from from the climate crisis onto the cost of living crisis, Prentice chooses her words carefully. She is anxious, she tells us, that students may not be aware of the plethora of bursary schemes and hardship funds available. "The University doesn't have the resources to carry everybody," she notes, while still insisting that "there's always a solution for anybody who's really struggling."

Students' education has been severely disrupted over the past few years, and the University is currently in the midst of a pay review for staff. Prentice insists the University is going to require deep change to achieve higher pay: "it's going to require a lot of change at the University, actually, because it's not as if there are pots of money lying around - it's about changing the way the organisation works and driving efficiencies in order to provide the ability to pay our people more." The University is currently gathering data

Continued on page 3 ►

'Universities aren't about telling people what to think'

New VC on Israel-Gaza response



▲ Dr Deborah Prentice
Photo: Tomos Alwyn Davies

Thanks for investing in gilets, says Selwyn

Arwen Godingen

Selwyn students have been thanked by the College for "investing" in "bedsocks, gilets, vests and blankets" as heating is cut, apparently to reduce the College's carbon footprint.

Students have expressed frustrations following heat and maintenance issues in the College.

Students have claimed that their central heating was not turned on until the 18th of October, despite the College promising to activate the heating from the 1st of that month.

Selwyn has told students that changes to its heating policy have been made to cut College expenditure, which could then alleviate costs for students. Many students have labelled the move hypocritical, as college rent has increased again this academic year.

The College has the third-highest 30-week rent in the University, at a median cost of £5,900. College rent increased by 7% for the 2022-2023 academic year and again by 10% at the start of this year.

Selwyn students complained online about the lack of heating at the College, following the cold spell earlier this week.

One student wrote: "Can we sign an open letter to get the heating on - it's fucking freezing."

The college Bursar had told students that "from 1 Oct - 15 Nov heating is on in residences from 7-9am and 7-9pm." Following the 15th of November, the heating will be turned on all day until the Spring.

However, students living in Selwyn College's Old Court have reported that their heating did not turn on until the 18th of October.

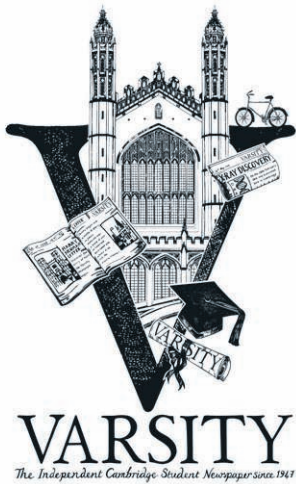
The Selwyn Bursar stated in the email to students that "older buildings have inbuilt circulation challenges, not always predictable. For example, it seems from the pattern of tickets received this week that the Old Court's pipes have taken in air" and "will need 'bleeding' to let the air out."

The Selwyn Bursar also wrote to students that the College is "grateful to

Continued on page 3 ►

Week 4

"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)



EDITORS Taneesha Datta & Isabel Dempsey editor@varsity.co.uk
DEPUTY EDITORS Daniel Hilton & Chris Patel deputyeditor@varsity.co.uk
VULTURE EDITORS Leo Kang Beevers & Alice Mainwood magazine@varsity.co.uk

NEWS Felix Armstrong & Eric Williams (Senior), Tommy Castellani, Beth Doherty, Romilly Norfolk & Amelia Platt (Deputy) news@varsity.co.uk
INVESTIGATIONS Aoife O'Driscoll investigations@varsity.co.uk

FEATURES Bella Shorrock, Alex Levy & Patrick Dolan features@varsity.co.uk
COMMENT Emily Lawson-Todd, Jude Crawley & Anoushka Kale opinion@varsity.co.uk

INTERVIEWS Ella McCartney & Abby Reyes interviews@varsity.co.uk

SCIENCE Elsie Jang & Patrick Humphreys science@varsity.co.uk

SPORT Alex Berry, Will McLaughlin & Fabian Pountney sport@varsity.co.uk

LIFESTYLE Iona Boyer & Miranda Evans lifestyle@varsity.co.uk

ARTS Clementine Lussiana & Eva Weinstein arts@varsity.co.uk

FASHION Ruby Cline & Anna Metzger fashion@varsity.co.uk

FILM & TV Isaac Jackson & Heidi Atkins filmandtv@varsity.co.uk

MUSIC Alex Brian & Tianyu Liu music@varsity.co.uk

THEATRE Grace Cobb, Amelie Bromnick & Molly Scales theatre@varsity.co.uk

HEAD OF MEDIA Tomos Davies
CHIEF SUB-EDITOR Sianna King subeditor@varsity.co.uk

ASSOCIATE EDITORS Famke Veenstra-Ashmore, Hannah Gillott, Erik Olsson & Nick Bartlett associate@varsity.co.uk

BUSINESS MANAGER Mark Curtis business@varsity.co.uk

VARSOC PRESIDENT Michael Hennessey president@varsity.co.uk
Varsity Board Dr Michael Franklin (Chairman), Dr Tim Harris, Michael Derringer, Mark Curtis (Company Secretary), Elizabeth Howcroft, Michael Hennessey, Famke Veenstra-Ashmore & Nick Bartlett (Directors)

© VARSITY PUBLICATIONS LTD, 2023. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior permission of the publisher.
 Varsity, 16 Mill Lane, Cambridge CB2 1RX. Telephone 01223 337575.
 Varsity is published by Varsity Publications Ltd.
 Varsity Publications also publishes *The Mays*.
 Printed at Iliffe Print Cambridge - Winship Road, Milton, Cambridge CB24 6PP on 42.5gsm newsprint.
 Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. ISSN 1758-4442

Editorial

With the wealth of strikes and protests that Cambridge has seen in the past year, it seems that groups from across the University are close to breaking point. Our new Vice-Chancellor Deborah Prentice (p.1) is having to contend with an array of difficult conversations. From divestment to staff pay, it seems that we're on the verge of change - almost there, but not quite.

As we move into the second half of term and await decisive answers, we cannot treat the contentious issues around us as separate to student life and welfare - it is inevitable that the

one will impact the other. There is no sweeping solution to these questions, but this edition of *Varsity* explores change and action throughout Cambridge. As Joshua Shortman notes (p. 10), activism in the name of worthwhile causes has always been an integral part of student life at Cambridge. Maddy Browne argues that we require tangible action from the University (p. 12), while Tom Moran suggests that JCRs can be a force for driving positive change across colleges (p.13). Across the rest of the paper, Naima Clarvis explores the troubled return of the East West Rail (p.9), while Bex Goodchild investigates the ADC's post-pandemic £52,000 loss

(p.28).

Meanwhile, as the nights get darker and Halloween approaches, don't let your deadlines or the looming spectre of Week 5 haunt you. As Alice Mainwood writes (p.13), it's okay not to know it all. While *Varsity* explores the behind-the-scenes at the Arts Picturehouse (p. 22) and offers top tips for recovering from a night out (p.16), remember that Cambridge offers you the opportunity to forge new experiences beyond the library - whether through

the theatre, a music night, or even a tiddlywinks match (p.31). Just make sure to wrap up warm - and perhaps consider investing in a gilet (p.1)?



Week in Pictures



Unite strike rally along King's parade and near the Fitwilliam Museum (24/10) [Hannah Mawardi]



Cambridge Film Festival (19/10-26/10) [Hannah Mawardi]



St Johns' - Robinson match (21/10) [Dik Ng]



Jesus College legacies of slavery exhibition (04/10-31/10) [Hannah Mawardi]



Student show *The Welkin* [Paul Ashley]



Homerton's Black History Month formal (18/10) [Michael Lawson-Falomo]

VC on staff pay, free speech and mental health



▲ Dr Deborah Prentice
Photo: Tomos Alwyn Davies

Continued from front page

from an independent evaluation to find out where the biggest points of stress are. “It will take us a couple of years to work it all out,” she admits, but she hopes to “tackle” those who are “most underpaid” first. “This organisation can’t take a lot more marking and assessment boycotts, on all sides.”

“That’s the most important thing I feel I’m doing this year,” she says thoughtfully, “is seeing this through.” Despite this emphasis on importance, when we ask whether the demands for pay increases will be met, she hesitates: “I mean, I don’t – I doubt it.” Then she clarifies her stance: “I don’t know, because I don’t know what they’re going to be [...] we’re not just going to be able to roll that back immediately which is what I think people were asking for – I don’t think we’re going to quite get there.” But she eventually regains her balance: “we want it to be a great place to work and people deserve fair pay for their work, obviously,” she concludes with an affirming smile.

Throughout our interview, she is also eager to express that mental health is another “critically important” topic. On the issue of student suicides, she notes that additional mental health resources were put in place before she arrived. But is this enough given the pressures that come with the Cambridge environment? Student stress and workload have been the focus of many of her meetings since spring, she tells us. “The proposal for the reading week came through as a way of trying to address that stress,” she said. Although the University has established a reading week working group, students are still awaiting a final decision on the matter.

Amidst fierce debates over affirmative action in the US, does Prentice see any similar flaws in Cambridge’s admissions system? Here she has no qualms – she sees the system as “very strong.” She continues, “in the United States, universities talk – I don’t know, it’s a system in flux there – but they talk about admitting a class. They don’t talk about

Timeline

- 1984** Prentice graduates from **Stanford** with an AB in Human Biology and Music
- 1989** Prentice leaves **Yale** with an MS, MPhil, and PhD in Psychology and begins at Princeton as an Assistant Professor
- 2002** Prentice is promoted to department chair at **Princeton**
- 2014** Prentice begins as Dean of the Faculty at Princeton
- 2017** Prentice becomes provost of Princeton University
- 2023** Prentice becomes **Cambridge’s** 347th Vice-Chancellor

admitting students,” she notes. “And here it’s not thought of that way [...] I feel like every individual really gets a thorough evaluation and opportunity to present themselves.”

At heart, Prentice is a social psychologist. She studies the unwritten norms that govern our behaviour – how we form our views and how we manage difference. For her, this has led to a natural interest in free speech. “My valuing of free speech comes very much out of a recognition of how difficult it is and how important it is,” she says. “An educational institution like Cambridge is really the one place where we can at least try to set up the conditions to enable people to have free speech within the law.”

To her, this is precisely the University’s role – to create environments in which people can “actually learn” from an “honest and open” exchange of views. In an attempt to achieve this goal, she is working to introduce new free speech ‘dialogues’. Details, she admits, are yet to be confirmed, but a pilot session will be held in a “couple weeks” on the topic of assisted dying.

Free speech is, of course, a contentious topic of conversation in Cam-

bridge. With a number of student protests last academic year over the invitation of speakers such as gender critical academics Helen Joyce and Simon Fanshawe, does Prentice see any need to impose limits on the speakers and topics that the University chooses to platform? In response, Prentice turns to an increasingly familiar tool: emphasising the importance of student welfare. “I think inclusion is a first and basic principle in the university. Making sure that everybody feels welcome and included is critically important, period. It’s quite separate from the free speech question.” She disagrees with the premise that there’s any fundamental conflict between free speech and inclusivity: “If we’re going to put out a controversial topic, we’re inevitably going to be fielding views that people don’t agree with, but that doesn’t mean that we can’t be inclusive as well.”

We’re offered a similar response when we refer to the open letter demanding that the university publicly denounce the “slaughter of innocent Palestinians,” which has been signed by over a thousand students and staff at the time of this interview (20/10), among escalating criticism of the University’s response to events in Israel and Gaza. Although she’s “not surprised” that people “want to see their views supported,” she is ultimately reserved on the matter: “We’ve just got to focus on supporting our people [...] Universities aren’t about telling people what to think, they’re about teaching people to think for themselves.”

Despite the controversies she has already had to contend with in her time here, Prentice is overwhelmingly positive about her experience of Cambridge so far: “I love it [...] the people here have been warm and welcoming. Despite all the challenges, they’re excited about the future.” It was only at the very end of our time with her, as she laughed in surprise watching us rush across her office with camera equipment, that we felt a true sense of the warmth that lies behind her steely composure. “I’m sorry, I’m sorry,” she laughed, with a small smile.

Selwyn heating crisis

Continued from front page

all those investing in bedsocks, gilets, vests and blankets to help support this attempt to reduce our carbon footprint.”

The College has stated that the new heating policy was developed “in consultation with the student body,” through its Sustainability Working Group.

Selwyn students have questioned the sustainability of such measures, notably the fact that heating is turned on all day in the college bar and library.

Selwyn students have expressed frustration at the general price increases in College and the simultaneous cuts in living quality, following a failed attempt at a rent strike last term.

A student told *Varsity*: “My college rent in first year for an en-suite set room was 184 pounds a week. In my third year, it was raised to 219 pounds for a room without an ensuite.”

“The justification for the increase was the cost of living crisis and the increase of heating costs, but heating hours have been reduced. The rent should not have increased by this much if the heating is limited the way it is. College isn’t being open enough about changes they’re making,” they said.

Matthew Doyle, the Accommodation Officer representative of the Selwyn JCR, disclosed to *Varsity*: “The price of gas and electricity has significantly increased in the past two years. The measures taken by College to limit heating in the first part of term means that money can be saved, which means these savings can be passed onto students.”

Such changes “will take time to implement and cCollege has decided that this current course of action is the best in the short term,” Doyle said.

“There are improvements that College can make to the way they communicate this information, but it is also important that students let maintenance know when there are issues with their rooms such as radiators not working,” Doyle concluded.

Jennifer Phillips, the college Bursar, told *Varsity*: “This [heating policy] is designed to reduce energy use and to keep rents lower than they would otherwise be. This policy was agreed by the college’s accommodation committee and by its college council, both of which have representatives from the JCR and the MCR who supported the initiative.”

Interested in
writing for
Varsity?

Follow our
Instagram page



University watch



Beth Doherty & Taneesha Datta

UCL Marxist society suspended over posters calling for a “mass uprising”

The society has been suspended, and faces being shut down, due to posters calling for an “intifada until victory”. The Union of Jewish Students described the posters as a “thinly veiled call for violence”. Discussing the suspension, a UCL SU spokesperson said the material “had the potential to be construed as inciting violence.” The society was one of eight at British universities to have published similar messages, following attacks by Israel which have killed 5,000 people so far in Gaza and Hamas attacks which killed 1,400 people in Israel.

Cardiff SU bans chinos and blue shirts

Cardiff University SU has banned chinos and blue shirts. The move is due to a reported incident of “rugby freshers” pushing each other in a nightclub queue. An SU spokesperson told the *Guardian* this could have escalated into a “major incident” and the behaviour was “reckless, dangerous and irresponsible.” The ban is temporary, and the SU will “regularly review” the policy.

Oxford societies call for the release of Israeli hostages

Seven student societies at Oxford released a joint statement on 24/10 calling for the “immediate unconditional release of 200+ Israeli hostages illegally held in Gaza by Hamas terrorists, including at least 10 British citizens”. Signatories included the Israel Society and the Jewish Society, as well as political societies such as Oxford University Conservative Association, Oxford Labour Club, and the Oxford University Liberal Democrats.

Celebrities to turn St Andrews cinema into gastropub

Golf player Tiger Woods and singer Justin Timberlake recently revealed plans to turn the New Picture House cinema at St Andrews into a luxury sports and entertainment gastro pub. A student-initiated petition that expresses concerns over the proposal has gained over 9,000 signatures from community members. Timberlake said, “our new venue is so much more than a typical sports bar experience – it’s a place you can go to be entertained without sacrificing quality or comfort.”

News

University Council recommends Pro-Vice-Chancellor role for sustainability

Felix Armstrong

A new role of Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC) has been proposed, as the University faces recommendations to cut its research ties to the fossil fuel industry.

The new PVC would “play a key part in driving progress on the University’s sustainability ambitions on all fronts,” representatives of students and academics have said.

The University Council (UC), Cambridge’s principal executive body, published proposals for a sixth PVC role on Wednesday (25/10).

The creation of the role has been dubbed “promising” by student climate campaigners, but the University’s focus on “job titles” has been heavily criticised.

Fergus Kirman, the SU’s Undergraduate President, has hailed the proposal as “welcome,” but said that “clear student involvement” in appointing the candidate is “essential.”

The University Council has proposed a sixth PVC role, which will be charged with a “responsibility for supporting all activities related to environmental sustainability across the University.”

The UC’s proposals make repeated reference to the Topping Report, which

advised that the University’s financial ties to the fossil fuel industry pose “high reputational risk.”

The report, authored by former UN climate champion Nigel Topping, found in July that companies such as BP and Shell are not aligned with the University’s decarbonisation ambitions “on any level.”

Since 2016, Cambridge has received £19.7m in research funding and philanthropic donations from Shell and BP.

The existing system that the University uses to scrutinise ethics of associating with companies like these, which has been in place since 2018, was found by Topping to “lack clarity and transparency.”

The UC stated that the Topping report requires a “reset in approach,” towards “the development of an overall institutional strategy in climate and sustainability, built on its interdisciplinary research strengths and encompassing its educational offerings, operations, and outreach activities.”

Jason Scott-Warren, a member of University Council and a signatory on the proposal for a sustainability PVC, described the Topping report as a “scathing indictment of the University’s history of taking fossil fuel funding” when it was

released in July.

Cambridge Climate Justice (CCJ), a student activist group, told *Varsity*: “It’s promising... but this is yet another example of Cambridge University talking the talk on climate action. When it comes to the walk, they’re dragging their heels.”

“It’s not just a new Pro-Vice-Chancellor that we need, it’s tangible action, making actual change in the face of climate breakdown,” CCJ said.

Sam Hutton, Chair of the SU’s Ethical Affairs campaign, said: “Introducing a new pro-vice-chancellor seems like a big step, but they must be willing to take decisive action.”

“As the University’s climate initiatives continue to delay, obfuscate and green-wash, we need this position to disrupt the complacency in Cambridge decision-making, and not simply act as another mouthpiece for the empty rhetoric of complicity in the climate crisis,” Hutton told *Varsity*.

Kirman told *Varsity*: “It’s really welcome that the University is considering creating this new role; it would demonstrate a serious commitment to tackling the climate crisis that we’re facing right now.”

“It’s essential that whoever’s ap-



▲ FELIX ARMSTRONG

pointed to such a role has credibility and authority. Creating a properly empowered position, as well as ensuring clear student involvement in appointing the candidate, would guarantee that,” he said.

The proposal for the new PVC role requires approval from the University, and its focus on sustainability is yet to be confirmed. If approved, the UC will “give

detailed consideration to the title and remit of the new role,” they have said.

The *Financial Times* reported in July that the Topping recommendations are expected to be accepted by the University, but this is yet to be confirmed.

A University spokesperson said: “The new Vice-Chancellor has already stated that one of her key priorities will be around climate and sustainability.”

Considering a career in law?
We can help you qualify as a
U.S. attorney or a solicitor in
England & Wales

**BARBRI prepares candidates
for legal qualification exams
in key jurisdictions**

- Solicitors Qualifying Exam Prep
- Extended U.S. Bar Prep
- Legal Professional Development

Find out more on barbri.com



SCAN ME

barbri®

ecm 

THE HIGH-TECH RECRUITMENT EXPERTS

CAMBRIDGE • UK

Software • Electronics • Mechanical • Maths & Physics
Applied Sciences • Consultancy • Graduate / PhD

Let us do the
detective
work.

From knowing what jobs are out there
to advice and guidance through the
hiring process, we work with you.



01223 81 33 99

register@ecmselection.co.uk
ecmselection.co.uk/university

Unite members picket University as strikes begin

Samuel Foo and Wilf Vall

Non-teaching staff across the University went on strike this Tuesday (24/10), in the first of four strike days announced by the union Unite for this term.

Striking workers were joined by student societies in a rally on King's Parade, as the Union demands a pay rise higher than the five to six per cent increase currently being offered by the University.

Unite represents around 450 workers from various departments at Cambridge, such as the Fitzwilliam Museum and University Library. The Fitzwilliam Museum and the UL's special exhibitions were closed for the day as a result of the strike.

The industrial action was announced earlier this month after a ballot in which 75% of voters endorsed the strike, with a turnout of 54%.

A rally was held outside Senate House, where strikers were joined by students from groups such as Cambridge Defend Education, the Cambridge Marxist Society, and the Labour Club (CULC).

Ian Maidlow, Unite regional coordinating officer, told the crowd: "Seven picket lines across the city all morning, and hundreds of Unite members on strike. I've never been more proud of our Unite membership at Cambridge."

"A world-renowned museum, and you closed it. Congratulations! But we want it reopened, and we want it reopened in a way that acknowledges and values the people that work there," Maidlow said.

Speeches were also given by other members of Unite, a UCU representative, a Labour member of the Cambridgeshire County Council, a representative from Anglia Ruskin's SU, and a member of the Marxist Society.

Maidlow told *Varsity*: "Nobody wants to cause disruption, nobody wants to close the Fitzwilliam Museum, which is what's happened. But the resolution to this is in the hands of the University."

Emily Perdue, Unite Cambridge branch head, told *Varsity*: "We're striking to get a better pay offer from UCU, because we believe 5% is not enough after years of below inflation pay rises."

"We have balloted before on pay in previous years and not had the response from members above the threshold, but this year, our members felt that enough was enough and that this was the time to strike, and to show our dissatisfaction," Perdue said.

"We would like to negotiate. We think it's really simple that pay has to be improved. It's not rocket science, it's just improved pay," she continued.

Speaking to *Varsity* in a personal capacity, Nicholas Lindsey, Campaigns Officer at CULC, remarked: "With tensions unfortunately growing between Labour and its affiliate unions at a national level, I think it's more important than ever for individual Labour clubs like ourselves to step up to try and preserve these links on a grassroots level."

A spokesperson for Cambridge De-



▲ HANNAH MAWARDI

pend Education said: "[We] are joining the rally today to support the demands of Unite members striking across the university. From maintenance and building staff to library and museum workers, we know the labour of those on strike today and Thursday is indisputably essential to the everyday running of our university - without them, there is no

Cambridge."

"We believe it is high time they are treated accordingly by senior management, and will be alongside them in solidarity until their demands are met," they added.

One worker attending the rally told *Varsity* that university staff are forced to live outside the city centre due to house

prices, and face long commutes.

"Some staff have to come in early, at half past 7 or 8, in order to avoid congestion, even before their paid hours begin," they said.

The University of Cambridge has been contacted for comment.



35% off at Turing Locke. Contact us now to book.

If you're looking for university accommodation in Cambridge, we've got you covered. With fully fitted kitchens, your own living and working space, a gym, coffee shop, cocktail bar and co-working areas, Turing Locke is well-equipped for student living. Live. Sleep. Study. Socialise. All under one roof.

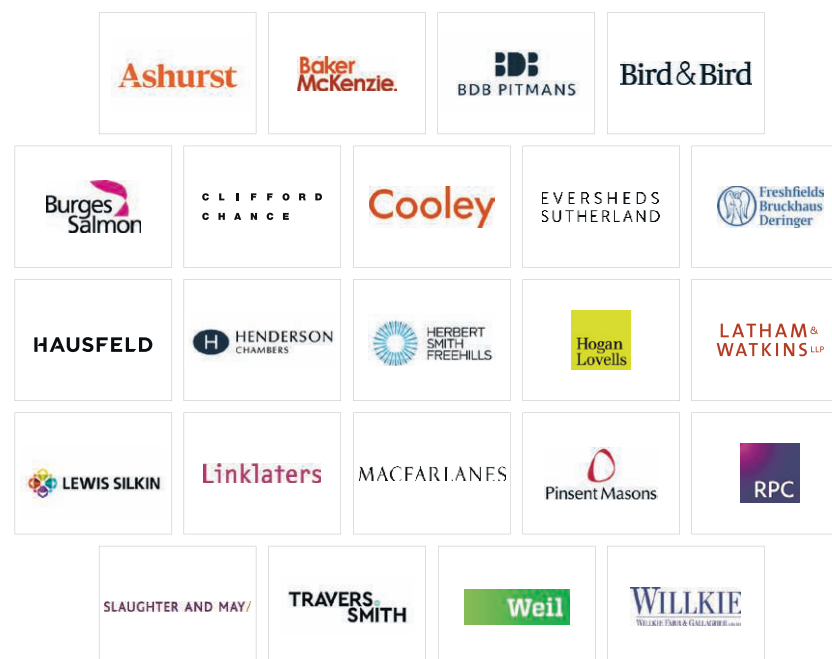
Locke

lockeliving.com | @lockehotels

Bookable: 6th September - 31st of Dec. For stay dates between: 01/10/2023 - 31/03/2023. Book direct over the phone or contact sales.turing@lockeliving.com. Minimum 1 month stay. Flexible cancellation option available, subject to minimum LOS and notice period. For full T&C please contact sales.turing@lockeliving.com

VANTAGE

Vantage is an online portal that connects you with top legal employers.



Unlike any other law careers platform, Vantage allows these top legal employers to find specific students based on different criteria such as subject of study, year of graduation or area of interest. When a firm or chambers contacts you through Vantage, you know that they're genuinely interested in engaging with you.

Sign up to hear directly from legal employers about training contracts, pupillages, vacation schemes, work experience and more.

vantageapp.io



News

Around town



Amelia Platt

Stag and hen parties take over!

Cambridge is being overrun by stag weekends, hen parties and “pop up brothels”, residents have said. *The Mirror* has reported on Cambridge councillors’ concerns about the number of short-term lets available in Cambridge. A motion calling for councillors to address this issue was unanimously approved. The proposal also requires local MPs to support measures for better control of short-term letting.

Bonfire-less night!

Cambridge’s annual firework display will feature no bonfire this year. The decision comes as a result of resident complaints, *Cambridge Independent* has reported. Thousands of people are expected to attend this year’s display on Midsummer Common. An official complaint was filed by Dr Dick Baxter, who lives on the edge of the common, after last year’s display. Baxter claimed the bonfire was unlawful, violated council policy, and was a danger to public health. This was disputed by the council, but sparked a wider discussion about whether bonfires should be hosted by a council that had declared a climate crisis.

Water doc says Cam running dry

A documentary exploring how the Cambridge water system is under threat had its premiere yesterday (25/10). The film was shown at Cambridge Arts Picturehouse as part of the Cambridge Film Festival. The documentary, titled *Pure Clean Water*, explores how the watercourse known as Hobson’s Conduit has for 250 years diverted a natural spring, providing Cambridge with its main source of drinking water. According to the documentary, increased demand is causing springs to dry up, precious chalk streams to disappear and the River Cam to be badly degraded.

Pedestrians to be prioritised over cars

The Greater Cambridge Partnership has resumed work on plans to reduce car use across the city, the *Cambridge Independent* has reported. The new draft proposals will give priority access to those walking, cycling and using public transport. Cambridge’s road classification has not been updated since the 1980s. The review had been paused to allow a decision to be made on plans for a road charge to fund public transport improvements. These plans were scrapped, following widespread opposition.

SU President contacts government antisemitism advisor after Intifada row



▲ Lord Mann
Photo: Roger Harris / Wikimedia Commons / <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.en>

Tommy Castellani

The Students’ Union President has said he will be contacting the Government’s chief advisor on antisemitism, after an SU motion on Israel and Gaza sparked a row when the proposer called for a “mass uprising” like “the First Intifada.”

Fergus Kirman notified *Varsity* of his intent to contact Lord Mann, Parliament’s Independent Adviser on Antisemitism, as well as Professor Arif Ahmed, a controversial ex-Cambridge Don recently appointed as Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s ‘free speech tsar’.

His decision comes since Cambridge’s Jewish Society (JSoc) condemned Monday’s motion to the SU Student Council as a “disgrace”. Edward Isaacs, President of the national Union of Jewish Students (UJS), also demanded the University investigate the motion and its proposer, and take “appropriate action.”

Varsity has also learnt that the CST, a Jewish charity that supports victims of antisemitism, has received a report on the motion proposer’s speech.

The motion, submitted by a member of Cambridge Marxist Society, called for

“a mass uprising on both sides of the Green Line and across the Middle East.”

When pressed on the phrasing of the motion, the proposer told the student audience to think “back to the first Intifada.”

The first Intifada was a 1987 uprising in the Occupied Palestinian Territory against the Israeli authorities.

Einav Grushka and Tani Volk, Israeli students who co-authored a letter demanding the university condemn Hamas earlier this month, described the reference to the Intifada as “directly inciting violence and murder” in a statement to *Varsity* on Monday.

Kirman has said that he “deeply regrets how many Jewish students have been made to feel by these events.”

The national Union of Jewish Students (UJS) statement accused the SU of “failing in its duty of care to Jewish students” and putting Jewish students “in a position where they must debate the murder of their friends and relatives.”

Kirman told *Varsity* that the SU only tabled the motion because they believed they were “required to under freedom of speech obligations.”

Kirman has sought “urgent guidance”

from Professor Ahmed on how to “interpret [the SU’s] obligations in this case.”

“We will also be contacting the office of Lord Mann, the government’s Independent Adviser on Antisemitism, and we’re hoping to receive legal advice to determine whether we are indeed required under law to allow students to table this motion,” Kirman said.

“No student ever deserves to be made to feel fearful, humiliated, or unsafe,” Kirman added, in reference to the student backlash to the motion.

Vice-Chancellor Deborah Prentice said at an all-staff meeting earlier this week: “The University has zero tolerance for all forms of racism, and that includes anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and any other form of unlawful discrimination or abuse based on ethno-religious identity. That has to be stated very, very clearly.”

“We must affirm everyone’s rights to hold and express their views within the law while continuing to care for and empathise with each other as human beings,” the Vice-Chancellor continued.

The University has declined to clarify whether the motion will be investigated.

Don wants coloniser painting back

Priya Watkinson

A Divinity professor wants a painting depicting a Governor-General of British colonial rule in India to be re-hung in Clare College.

Varsity has seen private committee minutes showing Douglas Hedley, a fellow at Clare, demanding that the college reinstate paintings of Charles Cornwallis, 1st Marquess Cornwallis to Clare’s Great Hall.

Speaking to the college committee, Professor Hedley justified his calls for Cornwallis’ image to be returned on the grounds of “safeguarding college heritage” and respecting Clare’s historical “major benefactors.”

Cornwallis, an Eton-educated Clare

alumnus, played a foundational role in the establishment of colonial rule in India. Serving as Governor-General from 1786-93, Cornwallis is considered to have consolidated British control in India - paving the way for a century of direct rule during the Raj.

His introduction of the ‘Cornwallis Code’ began the systematic exclusion of non-British people from positions of political power.

Clare had removed the painting during a three year refurbishment of the college, and so far has not reinstated it to where it formally hung in the Great Hall. The refurbishment has now been completed.

The College has been considering whether to replace the painting with

one of Eric Ashby, Master of Clare from 1959 to 1975, and present Master Loretta Minghella.

Hedley 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.

The professor was named in a 2021 investigation by the *Byline Times*, alongside other controversial Cambridge academics. These included the government’s new free speech tsar Arif Ahmed and National Conservatism Conference organiser James Orr.

Clare College was contacted for comment.

Students disrupt oil boss 'Oscars'

Iman Khan

Cambridge students, including an undercover activist, joined the ‘Oily Money Out’ protests directed at London’s Energy Intelligence Forum (EIF), nicknamed ‘the Oscars of Oil’.

Cambridge activists claimed that they delayed a talk from the CEO of Shell by several hours, eventually forcing the address to be delivered over Zoom.

Having run since 1980, the ‘Oil and Money Conference’ was rebranded in 2020 as the ‘Energy Intelligence Forum’.

The conference included speakers from oil companies such as BP, Shell, and Saudi Aramco, as well as Government representatives.

One student, who wishes to remain anonymous, told *Varsity* of her experience “infiltrating the hotel disguised as a wealthy hotel-goer” to gather intelligence to determine the “most successful strategy for disruption.”

The conference took place just weeks ahead of COP28, and hosted Sultan Ahmed Al-Jaber, who holds the presidency of the UN climate talks in Dubai. Sultan Al-Jaber’s appointment has been scrutinised, given his role as chief executive of the UAE’s national oil company.

The ‘Oily Money Out’ week of protest, sparked by the conference, gathered hundreds of climate activists including Greta Thunberg, who was arrested by the Metropolitan police outside of the EIF.

There were over 30 actions across London, including blockades of the conference entrance, and chants in condemnation of the event, previously called the Oil & Money Conference.

Camouflaged among the conference attendees and hotel guests, the Cambridge student obtained information regarding the best time and tactics to disrupt the conference from the inside, they told *Varsity*.

The activist drew attention to the presence of major actors in the controversial Rosebank oil field, which was recently approved by the Government. The CEO of Equinor, the company behind the development which goes against scientific recommendations of no new oil and gas, was a speaker at the event.

“[It’s] shocking what borrowed clothes and a confident walk can do in a society that worships material wealth,” the student remarked.

The student highlighted that her “internal disruption was just a small part of the massively successful campaign organised by Fossil Free London and partners to make the city inhospitable to the fossil fuel industry and its financiers.”

Several other Cambridge activists took part in the week of protest. Students expressed their strong disapproval of the role of the university’s “complicit[y]” in the fossil fuel industry, as Cambridge receives “funding from oil companies and maintain[s] climate-ignorant curricula”.

Students emphasised that the University of Cambridge is at the forefront of climate research and, thus must take a more active role in mobilising the outcomes of its research.

Opera cancelled over parallels to Israel-Gaza conflict

Samuel Foo

A production of Handel's oratorio *Saul* has been cancelled on the grounds of similarities with current events in Israel and Gaza.

The decision comes as tensions grow regarding the University's response to the Israel-Gaza conflict.

The cancelled opera retells biblical narratives and depicts warfare between the ancient Israelites and Philistines, and "includes eerily prescient ideas", according to its website.

The event description draws attention to such "prescience", including a content notice which requests audiences to note the "political parallels to the ongoing conflict in Israel and Palestine".

The performance, staged by the Cambridge University Opera Society, was due to begin yesterday (26/10) at Emmanuel College Chapel.

An email announcing the cancellation was sent to the CUOS mailing list on Saturday morning (21/10).

In the email, CUOS President Beth Norman stated: "Due to the current sensitive political situation and unfortunate escalation of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and Israel, we have decided that

the production of Handel's *Saul* will not go ahead."

Max Mason, the production's director, said in the same notice: "We came to the unanimous conclusion that our production was not in the place to fully confront the issues that have striking synchronicity with the ongoing Middle East conflict."

"We began rehearsals before news of Gaza emerged, but, now with surmounting understanding of the full situation, we realise we cannot continue," he explained.

"Whilst it might seem like Cambridge is a world away from these issues, there are people who live in our colleges and households who are facing unimaginable difficulties as they watch the situation unfold," Mason said.

The email also stated that all ticket holders would receive a refund.

The ADC's ticketing website states that the oratorio is a "reimagining" of biblical plots which "emphasises 21st-century ideas of populism, tyranny and political turmoil".

When contacted by *Varsity* for further comment, the organisers declined to provide details beyond those in the original email.



▲ Diliff / Wikimedia Commons <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>

Geography students criticise department for grading errors

Jack Hitchcock

Geography students have written an open letter criticising the Faculty after students' grades were incorrectly calculated.

An error in the Part IA results calculation process, communicated to students on the 18th of October, led to mistakes in the weighting of students' grades.

The letter has questioned the "consistency and fairness" of the Faculty's grading process. One student's ranking increased by thirteen places as a result of the grading error.

Another student's grade went down a Class as a result of the weighting errors.

According to an email from the Geography Undergraduate Office, "the IA [non-exam] project was weighted equal to the combined weighting of an exam paper when it should be worth 20%".

For those who performed better in coursework than in the exams, these grading errors meant a loss of marks.

One signatory, affected by the IA miscalculation, told *Varsity*: "Being put off again and again with excuses is both frustrating and disappointing, and feels

so at odds with the organisation, efficiency, and dedication the department demands from students."

Following confusion over this year's exam results, geography students across year groups are gathering signatures for an open letter addressed to the department.

The letter expresses concern for "the underachievement of Geography as a subject when compared to other humanities disciplines," suggesting that a "technical issue" might be at fault.

The letter also questions "the consistency and fairness of the marking process" within the subject, calling for fair and open communication regarding faults.

The letter calls for "clarity on the marking criteria and process" to "greatly alleviate the concerns and frustrations among the student body".

In a communication from the Undergraduate Office, the guidelines for classing part IA/IB candidates were attached for students' information. No details or explanations for the miscalculation, however, were volunteered.

The Geography Department was contacted for comment.

Looking for an intellectually challenging and rewarding career option?

▲ LOUIS ASHWORTH

KICK START YOUR CAREER AS A PATENT ATTORNEY WITH US

What Does It Involve?

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

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

Sound Interesting?

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

Visit our website for more information about training as a Patent Attorney.

www.jakemp.com/careers

J A KEMP
PATENT ATTORNEYS • TRADE MARK ATTORNEYS

SEO/LONDON
SPONSORS FOR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

HAVE YOU SECURED YOUR NEXT CORPORATE INTERNSHIP?

OPPORTUNITIES: access to internships & work experience with 140+ world class employers

SUPPORT: free training, mentoring & employment support

LIFELONG NETWORK: professional connections through our Alumni programme

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

JOIN US

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

News

Jesus College exhibition on slavery links

The College is currently running an exhibition which explores the College's involvement in empire and slavery. The exhibition is based on key findings from recent research by Jesus College's Legacies of Slavery Working Party (LSWP). It was the LSWP, founded in 2019, who recommended the return of the college's Benin Bronze, making it the first-ever institution to do so. The exhibition, titled 'Jesus College: Empire, Slavery and the Colonial World,' will run until Tuesday (31/10) and is free to attend.

Journal editor sacked for pro-Palestinian content

The editor-in-chief of a Cambridge-based biology journal has been sacked for quote-posting a pro-Palestinian article, sparking resignations from senior and reviewing editors. Michael Eisen, formerly editor-in-chief of eLife, reposted an article from *The Onion*, with the satirical headline: "Dying Gazans Criticized For Not Using Last Words To Condemn Hamas". Eisen told X (Twitter) that he was being replaced for reposting the article on Monday night.

Emmanuel College offers support to children in care

A new partnership between the College and the charity First Star Scholars UK will offer care-experienced children help with fulfilling their academic potential, working towards entering higher education. The new scheme, running from Year 9 through to Year 13, will allow students to visit the 16th-century college on Saturdays for extra tuition in English and Maths, plus extra-curricular activities. The College will also host a summer school in 2024, teaching life skills, self-advocacy, and cookery.

Councillor quits Labour after Starmer's Israel-Gaza remarks

A Cambridge city councillor has resigned from the Labour Party as a result of Keir Starmer's comments on the Israel-Gaza conflict. Mairéad Healy, former Executive Councillor for Communities in the Romsey Ward, quit the party last week, reports the BBC. Starmer's comments that Israel has the "right to defend itself" and to "take action in relation to the ongoing hostage situation" were the "final straw" for Councillor Healy, as stated on her Facebook.

Caius students vote to fly transgender flag

Students at Gonville & Caius college have voted to fly the Irish flag on St Patrick's day and the Trans flag on the Transgender day of visibility. Caius is the only College where students nominate and vote on which flags they would like to fly from the flagpole following a change to the College's flag policy in 2022. After much backlash from students, the College U-turned on its controversial decision to fly only the College flag from the flag Pole. This year, the College has agreed to fly the progress pride flag on the last days of February and June 2024 to celebrate LGBT+ History Month and LGBT+ Pride Month respectively. More than 400 students participated in the vote on whether to fly the Irish and trans flags. Both of which received overwhelming support from students. 360 voted in favour of the National flag of Ireland and 377 voted in favour of the trans flag. The policy of consulting students on what flags to fly is part of a trial and the College will decide later in the year on the future of its flag policy.



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS
BOOKSHOP

20% OFF*

ALL BOOKS FOR HOLDERS OF
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY AND CAMCARDS

SIMPLY PRESENT YOUR CARD IN STORE

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



Illustration by Richard Briggs



1 Trinity Street, Cambridge CB2 1SZ

01223 333333

✉ bookshop@cambridge.org

*Offer can't be combined with other promotions

New racial harassment service launched

A Racial Harassment Adviser service has been launched by the University, offering emotional and practical support to students who have experienced racial harassment. The University's Harassment and Violence Support Service (HVSS) is running the scheme, which provides help to students following racial harassment, violence or discrimination that they have experienced "at any time in their lives". This comes amidst a national drive to increase support available for students from ethnic minority backgrounds at higher education institutions, and to make support more accessible. A 2019 inquiry into racial harassment in British universities found that 24% of students from ethnic minority backgrounds experienced racial harassment. The service claims to offer impartial information around reporting options and support through the reporting process for students who choose to engage with it, whether this is through the university or externally. In 2022, *Varsity* learned that a student had made a complaint to their college regarding racial abuse days before their death, which was a suspected suicide. The college in question had declined to investigate the student's concerns.

Jesus welcomes College's first woman Organ Scholar

Jesus College recently admitted the college's first woman Organ Scholar, in the new cohort of freshers. Miriam Reveley is pursuing an undergraduate degree in music and is currently the college's Junior Organ Scholar. In an interview with Jesus College, Miriam said she began playing the organ when she was 15 and a chorister at Ely Cathedral. She says she was "nervous" to start the organ as she had only just begun playing the piano. Miriam has performed in many prestigious venues, such as Westminster Abbey and Windsor Castle, where she played for the Committal Service of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. In being the first woman organ scholar at the college, Miriam said it "is a small step in the right direction, although there is still a very long way to go".

East West Fail?

The troubled return of the Varsity Rail

Minding the gap between statistics and reality, **Naima Clarvis** speaks to Cambridge Approaches to map out the case for and against East West Rail

The glorious return of The Varsity Line is upon us. The Varsity Line? Pray let it not be another niche sport to earn a blue in, I hear you cry. Well fear not, this new railway project under the name of East West Rail is a planned revival of connectivity, not varsity competition, between the university cities of Oxford and Cambridge. It has been advertised as "critical" and "transformation", but EWR certainly don't show a flair for detail: they can't even outline a business case for the project. Supposedly, the railway is crucial for the country's economy, will provide essential opportunities for young professionals and is a cornerstone for "creating a sustainable future". So why does no one want it?

Dr William Harrold, retired Engineer and co-founder of the anti-EWR campaign group Cambridge Approaches, provided me with more than a few compel-

EWR do claim the support of 71% of local residents, but neglect to mention that those surveyed all lived within 800m of proposed stations

ling reasons. He touched upon East-West Rail's healthy dose of "optimism bias" in their proposed economic benefits. They currently estimate the project will cost £7.85bn to construct, and £150million a year to operate. Although less hefty than the £20bn construction cost for the Elizabeth Line, the issue arises in the number of people it would benefit: the Elizabeth Line carries half a million a day; EWR would assist just 2090 daily commuters. The optimism? Firstly, their model includes all commuters, those using the rail as well as other modes of transport. Secondly, they include people who don't yet live in the surrounding areas – these numbers are reliant on an entirely separate new housing project. Cambridge

Approaches estimate there to be more like 470 commuters. EWR do claim the support of 71% of local residents, but neglect to mention that those surveyed all lived within 800m of proposed stations. For a gamble with such an eye-watering cost, one might feel justified in expecting accurate statistics.

But perhaps it would still be worth it. Neil Sachdev, the Chair of EWR predicted that the "railway alongside the work that everyone else... is going to do will create £110bn GVA (gross value added) in the region." Alarmed by the phrase "alongside the work [of] everyone else", William had a closer inspection of the monetary benefits that commuters specifically using the rail would bring. The average Cambridge job brings roughly £50,000 GVA to the economy. Multiply that by 2,090 (or 470 depending on your levels of leniency) and you're closer to £0.1bn a year, with nearly £4mil per commuter initially spent to enable this. As William put it "I'm sure [those workers] would rather have that in an envelope through the door," minus the £300 that every UK taxpayer will be contributing. EWR seem to be inflating their numbers by adding the GVA of the separate housing project, as well as the hypothetical scientific breakthroughs that would arise. Despite the "support of 50 companies" touted by EWR, it seems none of them are quite supportive enough to actually fund the project. The famed 'Triple Helix' leaders, Astra Zeneca, Oxford's Jenner Institute, and the government managed to collaborate quite happily back in 2020, working between three cities on the Covid-19 vaccine. You might say it went well – and without the help of an £8bn transport system.

Financially then, EWR's detractors do not see it as a worthy project. Environmentally, it's disappointingly worse. It's true that the railway would get freight-lorries off the road: Network Rail have said it will take up to 50 freight trains on EWR to sufficiently relieve other overloaded routes. East West Rail have compromised at four. Not great for freight. As touched upon, EWR are rather reliant on the accompanying, although separate, plan to build houses for 213,000 people. The combined CO2 emissions of housing, transport and construction, at 10 million tonnes, are creeping into competition with what was the UK's largest coal-fired power station. The proposed route will also cut through 23 protected wildlife

sites, demolish 60 homes, seriously threaten Cambridge's already scarce water supply and destroy some of the best farmland in the UK. Considering the rising urgency of food security due to climate change, many would not view destroying some of our most fruitful land

“ Unless you're looking through a pair of hot-pink tinted spectacles, it does seem hard to see the case for this project

the wisest move.

In light of all this, who on earth could be driving forward such a project? There seem to be two forces behind the project, said William. The government's desire to develop the life sciences would be satisfied by increasing connectivity between 'Triple-helix sites'. These are places where government, academia and the private sector collaborate, such as Addenbrooke's, The Jenner Institute, The Cambridge Biomedical Campus. Is this rail really the way to level up these sites? Addenbrooke's themselves are struggling under a £100 mil maintenance backlog, and issues with water infrastructure (which would be made worse by the railway) are delaying the plans for their newest Cancer hospital. Anyone that's been to Addenbrookes can attest to William's point that "staff are so overworked that collaboration with private sectors is already a diminishing priority." It's not hard to see why some would suggest the £7.85bn may be put to better use in funding our countries' collapsing public healthcare service.

The biggest force, however, comes from the fact that EWR seems inextricably linked to the housing project for 213,000. Greater Cambridge's head of planning, Stephen Kelly, predicts that only 66,000 jobs are needed for sustainable growth, all already provided for by council plans. This new housing development, then, risks overwhelming a system that is already functioning well enough. And in the face of the one million empty houses up North, as well as the recent cancellation of the HS2 – Manchester line, it seems yet another slap in the face for the North. Calculations by The Financial Times show the GDP per capita of the UK excluding London is equivalent to that of the poorest US State, Mississippi. Might it be time to shift our focus away from the South, levelling out the country instead of 'levelling up'?

Unless you're looking through a pair of hot-pink tinted spectacles, it does seem hard to see the case for this project. William notes that funding that will no doubt exceed £7.75bn, money that could be put to developing light railway routes, busways, electrical cars. It could provide the desperately-needed boost to our country's public services. Although it might seem an issue far away from our student-bubble, do we want to be seen supporting yet another archetypal infrastructure project that hyper-fixates on the south, destroys our environment, and spends more money where it's not needed? In its early days, with intentions of economic growth, even an electric rail line, the project may have been somewhat promising. But as more protests and issues arise, an investigation by the National Audit Office has been put in motion. William's insistence that it's "completely pants" may soon be official.

RAWPIXEL LTD / FLICKR/ CC BY 4.0 ▼



▼LOUIS ASHWORTH WITH PERMISSION FOR VARSITY

From the archive:

Oxbridge line axed

BRITISH RAIL have closed two sections of the line between Cambridge and Oxford, which means that it is no longer possible to reach Oxford by rail without going via London.

Originally, it was proposed to close the complete line, but so many objections were received by the Minister of Transport to the intended axing of the Bedford – Bletchley line that it was decided to keep this section open.

The other sections of the Cambridge – Oxford line were uneconomical, and closed on January 1st this year.

● Footnote: If you still want to fit in a rail journey on your way to Oxford, you can go by Eastern Counties bus to Bedford, by rail to Bletchley, and then by United Counties bus to Oxford—a total of five hours' travelling time. Otherwise, go Premier Travel—9 a.m. from here, 7 p.m. back from Oxford daily.

Varsity 27th January 1968



Features

Cambridge's radical history of student protest

What would Cantabs in the 60s think of today's student activists? **Joshua Shortman** takes to the *Varsity* archives to find out

Every holiday, I talk to my Grandfather about the previous term, and he asks me if I have been out to protest. I mention watching an XR march from my window, or forgetting to turn up to a picket line on Sidgwick, and he berates me for failing to organise the next great student rebellion: how can we anaemic students simply lie down, whilst we cough up unpayable fees for unpaid lecturers?

He was pretty far from a '68er in his day — a Vulcan (nuclear) bomber pilot, drafted along with other armed forces to replace firemen during the strikes in '77 - '78 — but he brings it up because he knows that it makes me feel guilty. My first year room was papered in slogans from the May '68 student protests; I would tell anyone who asked that this was all in aid of revising for my paper on 20th century European history, which wasn't entirely untrue. And of course, student protests were the first thing I looked for in the *Varsity* archives.

They don't disappoint. Due to its proximity to America's armed presence in Britain, and the role of certain left-leaning academics (Bertrand Russell for example), Cambridge was central to the CND movement — one of the great student protest movements of the 60's. Nuclear weapons were, and still are, very much on the student mind. One article from 1963 reads: "yet another move has been made [in 1963] by a college towards providing shelters for undergraduates in the event of a nuclear war", and concluded that "to have a situation where some colleges, perhaps the rich ones, were fully equipped with shelter facilities for its men while others had no more than a small wine cellar would be ludicrous and unjust." It is hard not to find such concerns somewhat absurd in the face of total annihilation — a point made by *Varsity* during the Cuban missile crisis, when the paper writes that the concerns of the undergraduate ("whether essays would be on time, whether they would be elected to the Labour Club Committee") were "put into the background by an apparent threat that they might be exploded at any minute."

With this on their minds, students protest: *Varsity* describes how "police and proctors patrolled Parker's Piece and the market place on Tuesday night as an unruly mob of over 2,000 heard speakers of the 'Hands off Cuba' movement warn of nuclear war during the next 24 hours." Prospective Labour candidate Robert Davies, "undeterred by a guided toilet-roll, accused the Americans of ostracising Cuba, and driving it towards Khrushchev and Mao Tse Tung," whilst "the press" (presumably of people, rather than of student journalists) were nearly run over in "a grim moment when a 105 bus roared through... jamming hundreds against the steps of the guildhall," as part of a confusion caused by a counter-protester crashing his motorbike into the

crowd.

The images and the language are everything promised by the slogans. An open letter published by *Varsity* in 1969 boldly opens "We are radicals. We believe in freedom. Freedom of thought.

“

The more 60s *Varsity* you read, the more radicalism starts to sound like an assertion rather than a reality

Freedom of speech. Freedom of movement. Freedom of assembly." And yet, in a way, the authors doth protest too much. The more 60s *Varsity* you read, the more radicalism starts to sound like an assertion rather than a reality. The CND admits later in 1963 that "it [had] failed in its objective" — not only that of disarmament, but that of recruitment: "about 9000 leaflets were sent out after the Cuban crises, but as a result, only 11 had joined."

The first demand of the "*Varsity* radicals" is the introduction of a student union; I had been unaware that ours formed in 1971, and was only recognised by the University in '84. Shortly afterwards, this is followed by the call for co-residence, and "at least some mixed colleges in the University." Admittedly, the issue of co-residence in Nanterre University was the spark for the '68 protests in Paris: but there, and in the rest of Europe, demands

and violence that have been taking place in Paris and even Essex" against the student action in Cambridge. It credits "the possibility of force... some slight degree of anarchy" as the crucial ingredient in forcing the introduction of student representation to King's; but later asks itself "What kind of trouble? Well, probably not demonstrations or sit-ins, or even shouting at reactionaries. But a steady pressure; rowdy meetings, continual questioning of dons, a refusal to let the issue be forgotten."

This is partly reflective of *Varsity* as a newspaper — it is far from a revolutionary rag, with editorials consistently criticising sit-ins or demonstrations, arguing that they risk polarising a liberal University discourse and causing it to collapse into street politics. Even reading *Stop Press* however (a considerably more radical student paper, which merged with *Varsity* in the 70's when we went bankrupt) shows that "rowdy meetings" are by no means the greatest threat Cambridge has to offer. In a protest in '76, which perhaps could only have originated in Cambridge, "nearly 300 students [took part in a] 'work-in' at the University library in defiance of

tion from the 60's onwards) — is exam reform. It is in the open letter: it is behind the burning of gowns, and the appearance of 100 marchers gathered in front of the Sidgwick buttery "dressed in white sheets" with heads "swathed in bandages or [walking] on crutches [carrying] banners proclaiming, "We are the academic cripples"; it continues into the 70's, with a "1000 strong occupation of the Lady Mitchell Hall" in protest against the refusal of the Regent house to abolish Part I classing in Economics and introduce coursework papers in place of examinations.

Much like co-residence, it is hard, with perspective, to view this as revolutionary. Then again, for many of us over the past three years, exams have been reformed: due not to the efforts of student activists, but to a global pandemic. Returning to college this Michaelmas, and the reactionary re-introduc-

tion of in-person exams appears to have slipped under most of our noses — as in a Rishi-Sunak-cigarette-ban style, most faculties have forced the first year undergraduate back into a futile exercise of sheer memorisation, which neglects the purpose of a university education. Though the bureaucratic and academic demands of 60s students can seem anything from boring to laughable, they did take their educational philosophy seriously: "more interdisciplinary studies and courses ... [and] a social sciences faculty this October, if practicable" are further demands of the open letter. And so — for all that I love him — there is a part of me that doesn't look forward to seeing my Grandfather at the end of this term.

ALL IMAGES FROM
VARSITY ARCHIVES ▼

Open Letter to the University



went far beyond co-residence — as barricades were set up, workers went on strike, and protest sought to challenge the political hypocrisies of Western and Eastern leadership. *Varsity* itself draws a "marked contrast to the demonstrations

the early closing hours." *Varsity*'s open letter from '69 actually includes "more seminars and lectures" as one of its demands.

The demand of student protest however (common to all student ac-



The 1973 Sit-in march





THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Fully funded PhD Studentships for 2024 entry

**Studentships cover full tuition fees
plus an annual stipend**



Comment

It's time for universities to shift money from the top

Secondary schools are in the grips of multiple crises. Higher education seems fit to follow, argues **Maddy Browne**

Overworked and underappreciated academics are returning to another year, this time as overworked and underappreciated examiners. The tight marking deadlines, made worse by institutional higher-ups no doubt breathing down the necks of staff, feels like a disturbing flashback to mock exam season at my secondary school. In both cases, it seems as if there was a fatal disconnect

“We are paying a premium into a system that is slowly crumbling around us

between those rushing to complete their marking and the distant managers starting the countdown.

As *Varsity* reported, despite a professed “extensive consultation” with faculties, the UCU was still seeking “an urgent meeting” with the university to discuss the marking deadline. Something doesn’t add up.

The issue of working conditions and retention is heartbreakingly similar to that of the maintained school sector, where both sets of workers have taken real time pay cuts when compared to inflation and are working more hours. The situation is further exacerbated by the frequency of inflexible contracts rampant in the higher education industry.

According to the 2021 UCU workload survey, staff at UK uni-

versities who are paid hourly (either on a zero or minimum hours contract) are working an average of 62.75 hours a week, 23% more than those on permanent contracts.

This only worsens at Oxbridge with the supervision system. It seems absurd that at a university where the Vice-Chancellor earned £526,000 in 2022 alone, supervisors are still often only being paid hourly for supervisions, not for any prep or marking time. Put in these quantitative terms, we can see the extent of the value deficit. Even if this salary might not in itself cover the necessary pay rises and additional hiring, it still tells staff, and tells us, that the leadership are worth that much more.

What could all this amount to? The same education crisis that the UK’s schoolchildren are currently suffering through, where professionals cannot be trained, recruited or retained within an environment that refuses to value them. This of course all feeds back to the ridiculously unsustainable funding arrangement that is tuition fees - which universities themselves know to be unsustainable. All of which disproportionately affects humanities subjects, of course.

This may be less literal than our secondary school counterparts, with less instances of dangerous concrete that could actually fall down around them. Nevertheless, when it comes to the rights of workers, there are parallels that need to be addressed before thousands of them feel like they have to leave the job they love (before they are kicked out of it, that is). In both sectors, the trust of staff

needs rebuilding just as much as the classrooms.

My mum was one of the 40,000 teachers that left the profession before retirement age between 2021 and 2022, in spite of having been a dedicated social sciences teacher for nearly 20 years. Every year it was more students and less support, more admin and less pay. Behind the scenes, teachers of higher education are suffering in the same way. I am hyper-conscious of this at every supervision, as well as increasingly angry at the institutions who might soon be making them decide if their job is worth the burn out.

Acknowledging this problem doesn’t delegitimize the struggle of current finalists desperately waiting for results so they can start the job search. As a current second year, I can only imagine how frustrating that was. But this only circles back to the issue at hand. If UK universities, just like the Department of Education, took the time and money to show staff their worth, then this would protect the worth of students too. And I do sincerely believe that such staff, like teachers in our schools, wouldn’t risk our studies (and pay deductions!) if they didn’t feel like they really, truly, had to.

As I remember watching my mum feel more and more disrespected by the education system, I am reminded that these two campaigns are about more than pay investments.

It’s time for universities to shift money away from the grossly overpaid vice-chancellors and invest it in their staffs’ - and therefore students’ - wellbeing. Just like it’s time for the government to pay up and invest in teachers for the long term.

If the systems surrounding an individual fail to reflect their value, then of course they won’t stick around in that system. In the immortal words of Education Secretary Gillian Keegan, they won’t “sj[ilt] on their arse and [do] nothing”. They will leave.



Head to head: The best way to spend first year

Izzy Benardout

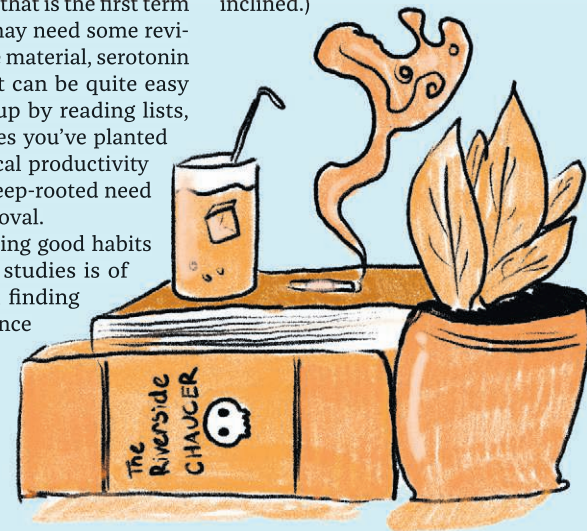
Apparently, it takes 28 days to form a habit - so hopefully, as the first half of Michaelmas draws to a drizzly, dark close, you have already mastered the art of having fun in Cambridge. To many onlookers, the terms fun and Cambridge seem mutually exclusive; how can the metaphysical demands of tripos possibly align with a flourishing social life, rich with extra-curriculars and overpriced club nights?

It may seem odd to consider having fun as something one needs to practice, a skill to be honed. Yet, one may find that after the rigmarole of A-Levels and the baptism of fire that is the first term of first year, you may need some revision. Deadlines are material, serotonin isn’t - and thus, it can be quite easy to be swallowed up by reading lists, the number of trees you’ve planted in your hypothetical productivity forest, and your deep-rooted need for your DoS’ approval.

Thus, while setting good habits in regard to your studies is of course important, finding that work-life balance is probably even more so. For some, fun (in the loosest definition of the term) can be found

on a Wednesday and Sunday night, at the bottom of a VK bottle or within a very badly rolled cigarette. Yet, there is also an art to finding fun in the beautifully mundane, and as a groggy, nostalgic second year, I look fondly upon the late-night walks, the impromptu coffee trips, and the number of card games I learnt, then subsequently lost, during my first year.

As the song, and my recent birthday goes, you are not nineteen forever - and neither are you a fresher. So, learn to enjoy the leeway that first year can bring, and find those moments to save your BeReals for (if you are that way inclined.)



Ezra Izer

Tempting as it is to spawn into your first year at Cambridge with visions of moonlit punting excursions, opinions on which Voi-based transportation will clash the least with your college gown, and perhaps a newfound sonar for whether a building is actually a porters’ lodge or just another avant-garde art installation, there is unfortunately a practical dimension to arriving here: that, although your first year may not matter as much as the years that follow it, this does not mean that it fails to matter at all. At the very least, it is a tad more foundational than those ENTs-team-groupies that somehow manage to stretch “Freshers’ Week” into a year make it out to be. (Please remember that you are not at Euphoria High; you go to Girton.)

The simple reality is that, no matter how tightly you clutch your emotional-support puffer to your chest, your freshman year is never going to be exactly as advertised in the postcards. Instead, try to view it as an opportunity to acclimatise to the peculiar culture and rigorous momentum of this place. Think

of it as your academic pilot episode. Those habits that you (begrudgingly) adopt now will come to assist you in your overall Cantabrigian trajectory; the sooner you capture the viewers, the sooner you get to watch the rave reviews pour in. Do retain, however, that this should not come at the expense of your social life. In many ways, the friendships that you carve out for yourself here will be the thing affording you buoyancy when you feel yourself cast most adrift in the Cam (sans punt). But do not punish yourself if things do not instantly click together. There is always second year.

In other words, your first year is more than just a prolonged introduction to May Ball dress codes and deciding who to court in the culture wars between Deliveroo and UberEats. Lay it well, and the structure you build during your time at uni will be robust; breeze through it, and you might find yourself facing a shaky edifice in the years to come. As they say in Latin (or maybe the Classicists I know just happen to be very convincing liars), “Initium dimidium facti” - the beginning is half the deed. The start sets the tone, so you may as well make it count(-ish).

JCRs are a force for good

Tom Moran argues student-governance is essential for creating actual change

At this time of year, freshers are being introduced to the idea of JCRs and, hopefully, the power they hold within our university: promoting change, representing underrepresented groups, and forging community. JCRs are often neglected as a crucial piece in the puzzle for constructive and visible student action.

At this point last year, as a newly arrived fresher, I didn't even know what the acronym JCR stood for. I also didn't fully grasp its actual ability to effect change at my college. Fortunately, I had two enthusiastic committee members as my college parents who made me aware of the important role that the JCR played in the college community. However, there was still scepticism about their influence on the college and their ability to bring about actual change. Despite this scepticism, and with no expectations, I decided to run for Buildings and Services Officer. I won the election unopposed.

Since taking up my role, I have realised that the scepticism around the power of JCRs is unfounded. In fact, having built a constructive relationship with the college, I've found common ground and have been able to influence real decisions within the college. This isn't to say that this will be the same with all colleges, but rather that if you can find common ground with the institutions, you have a launchpad for all types of discussions. Fundamentally, regardless of the way they go about it, colleges should be there for their students, just as JCRs are. Calling them out when they aren't is more powerful when that relationship has already been built.

JCR roles, which can be varied and different, are some of the closest that students can get to the positions of power within the college system. I've sat on committees quite literally sitting next to the Master and Bursar, discussing issues such as food hall prices, rents, and building work. These positions put you in the room where decisions are made. Even outside of the official structures, being known and having a relationship with people in positions of power within the college allows you to learn from their often extensive and interesting careers.

In my experience, building a constructive relationship with the college has been impactful for students. My JCR have achieved a more streamlined formal hall booking system, better value food in the hall, and rent

compensation for students disrupted by construction work. These changes were easy and involved large amounts of effort, but seeing the real-life impact these changes, and others have had on my college community is powerful and profound.

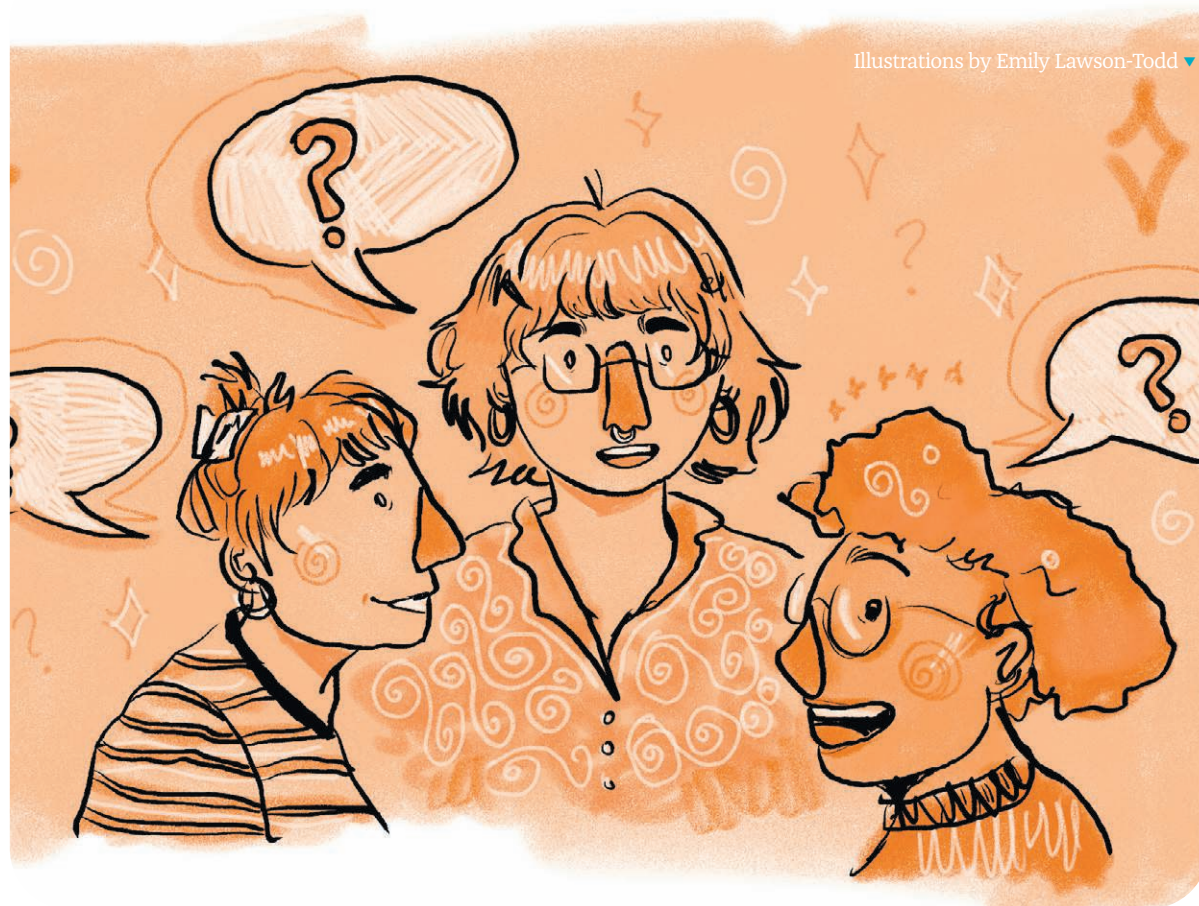
In my JCR, this is evident through the community that our Women and Non-Binary officer has created alongside FemSoc, a thriving queer community led by the LGBTQ+ officers, and a truly impactful community focused on environmentalism and sustainability with the Green Officer. Building and creating a sense of community post-COVID has been a challenge, but JCRs play an unparalleled role in creating community both directly and indirectly by allocating funds to other college societies. Simply having a student body, such as a JCR, that shows the colleges they will stand up for the interests of all students regardless forces colleges to listen. With proper representation, anything is possible.

You can be that representation. Running for a JCR role is not like a role in the union or even the student's union; you are the everyday face around college with a mandate for change and, importantly, the ability to effect change. That elected power is not easily sidelined by the college. I cannot encourage anyone enough to run for your JCR, whether you're a fresher or entering later years of study. JCRs need your range of experiences and expertise. The elections and hustings are opportunities to gather the best ideas; they certainly shouldn't be personality contests.

Finally, I appreciate that committee roles aren't for everyone. But there are ways you can be involved. Firstly, engage with your JCR committees, attend their events, and talk to them about any issues; fundamentally, they are there for you, so make the most of them. Secondly, make your voice heard, be engaged in the hustings process, and make an informed choice based on

policies and not friendships. Increased turnout in elections only legitimises JCRs further and provides an even stronger mandate for change.

I truly believe that engagement with your JCR, through running for election, voting or simply attending events will bring about a greater sense of community and change.



Illustrations by Emily Lawson-Todd ▼

It's okay not to know it all

Midway through another term of academic rigour, Alice Mainwood argues that we shouldn't feel as though we need to be full-formed academics just yet

We're all in a bad habit of pretending that studying at Cambridge isn't as difficult as it really is. At least, that's what I like to think, instead of resigning myself to the possibility of actually just being worse at my degree than everyone else.

I'm just as guilty as the next English student for upholding this pretence. I love getting out the fancy rhetorical terms and any clever-sounding reference to the *Aeneid* whenever I'm blessed with the briefest of moments where I feel able. But, at the end of the day, I don't think I'm alone in spending the final few moments before knocking on a supervisor's door wondering what I'm going to do if I'm asked about that one piece of reading that I just couldn't detangle for love nor money. I don't always get it, and definitely don't always know the answers, and supervisions have a nasty potential to bring about a self-doubt-inducing competitiveness. Really, I'm quite sure it's not just me. Lots of us feel at least a little bit phobic of looking stupid.

That fear makes us relentlessly pretend that we do know all the answers, and instils that horribly adamant resistance to saying 'I'm not sure', or 'sorry, I don't think I've understood the question'. It's almost as if we view every supervision as a repeat of our admissions interview. We use them to perform, trying desperately to show what we already know, what we can deduce, what we *don't* need help with. It doesn't make for an easy environment to learn in. Sure, we will all in-

evitably yearn for our supervisors approval, and understandably so. But it's a shame we let that desire for respect get in the way of admitting when we need their help.

The way we're examined only really encourages us to compare ourselves to others, and eggs on fear of our own failures by forcing uncomfortable comparisons. So, all things considered, I am at least grateful that the marking and assessment boycott granted me a healthy recovery period between Easter term and having to comprehend the reality of my exam results. And as I bask in the last few days of this blissful ignorance, I do feel the blessing that it has been to have thus far escaped my brutal ranking beside every single one of my peers, into a single, neatly ordered list. Number 1 here, number 185 there. I don't want to know exactly how many people know more about Shakespeare than me, nor do I want to know what number of my peers can analyse Chaucer's most obscure verse more succinctly than I can.

My pending crisis of faith in academic institutions' ability to nurture a love of learning has made me recall my first interaction with a Cambridge academic as a fresher. We sat in what clearly used to be a student's room until a very recent, very lacklustre attempt to turn it into a supervision room. The academic told me that I should find the workload here pretty manageable if I treated my degree at Cambridge like a 9-5 job. It felt like a kick to the gut. We often forget how much we sacrificed and how hard we worked to be here, but in that moment I felt that sacrifice

acutely. All that work for a 9-5 job? I wanted to find academic fulfilment, not pull myself through an 8 hour slog five times a week solely in the name of two treasured days off.

Maybe that is the problem; we treat our degrees like jobs. Maybe that's why we try so hard to disguise our uncertainty or need for help. We've just forgotten that we're here to *learn*, not perform.

Perhaps it sounds a bit naïve for a second year who should be plotting internship plans and schmoozing on LinkedIn, but I want to enjoy my degree. I applied to Cambridge because I like learning, not because I actually wanted to get myself in tens of thousands of pounds of debt whilst essentially working an office job. I don't want to spend what remains of my degree pretending I'm already as clever as I could be. What a respite it would be to sometimes say 'I'm not sure I know the answer, sorry,' without feeling like I've just admitted to scamming my way into Cambridge by having a secret genius twin do my interview, plagiarising my A-Level exams, and threatening an admissions tutor with the fruition of all their worst nightmares if they don't give me a place.

We all worked hard to be here, but the real result isn't the place we earned on our course, but the degree we'll get at the end of it. We're not meant to have reached our full potential yet. It would be so much easier for us to get there if we admitted that our degrees are really quite hard work, and that we don't know all the answers.



Interviews

3 months in, what has Fergus Kirman done for the SU?

The new SU President thinks he can save the Students' Union and reconnect with students. **Sam Hudson** asks how



SU President Fergus Kirman (SAM HUDSON) ▲

When Fergus Kirman was elected in March, he represented a dramatic change to the SU's swampy status quo. Between their shambolic handling of a data leak last year and quixotic policies – perhaps best embodied by the pledge to make all University catering plant-based – it is no surprise that students were hungry for the change Kirman had promised throughout his campaign.

And perhaps more so than anyone else within the SU, Kirman has been frank about the need for a change in course. In the immediate aftermath of his victory, Kirman told *Varsity* “we’re in a pit,” teasing that “change was coming.” As to what that change will look like, I spoke to the man to find out.

“You have to do the things that connect with all students, not just certain types

Kirman presents himself as a liberal reformer. He wants to prioritise manageable change over the lofty yet unachievable goals which have all too often been pursued by the SU. “Sometimes when you’re in this position, you can get engaged in big, national and international level change, when often

what students want are changes that affect them now.”

One popular example of the “small, tangible” change championed by Kirman is his flagship policy to cover prescription costs of students. Kirman told me that this policy is going ahead and that JCRs at every college would have the opportunity to launch the scheme. He confirmed that, at the time of our interview (14/09/23), two colleges had already joined the scheme, but he concedes: “that’s two down, 27 to go.” Kirman is “very optimistic” that more JCRs will want to sign on to his plan. The plan fits into his wider aim of increasing engagement with the SU. “This is a really key area where we get results by working together [with JCRs].”

On the reading week, Kirman is “absolutely committed” to continue the campaign for it, seeing the referendum that supported it as a good example of the democratic policy he wants more of. He acknowledges that it must be “so frustrating” for “progress to be slow” in the actual implementation of the week, but adds that “we have already made so much progress” having the University acknowledge problems with student workloads.

A significant issue facing the SU – and one that Kirman is more than a little familiar with – is the progressive decline in turnout at SU elections. The turnout at the Easter election which put Kirman in power was only 10.8%, down from 12% last year and 18% the year before. I asked him whether it was simply the case that most Cambridge students were just simply uninterested in student politics and too occupied with their degrees. He disagreed with my more pessimistic assessment but admitted that “students have very understandably been losing faith in student unionism.” Kirman told

me, to solve this problem with apathy “you have to get the basics right [...] You have to do the things that connect with all students, not just certain types of students.”

“Students have been very understandably losing faith in student unionism

This focus on delivering what students actually want is a central component of his vision for reform. It is not the SU’s job to “tell students what to think,” rather it is the job of the SU to do what students tell them to. I ask him whether in the past the SU has spent too much time preaching from the altar instead of listening to their congregation. Kirman is diplomatic about his predecessors, saying that the issues the SU championed “really mattered” to him but “we can always do better at talking a bit less and listening a bit more.” This makes a striking contrast with the insistence of previous presidents that the SU is not as out-of-touch as it is often characterised. And though Kirman is careful not to criticise the efforts of previous SU leadership teams, it is clear he has positioned himself as a clean break from the unpopular status quo.

Eleonora Svanberg: Getting women into STEM through TikTok

Isabella Dowden

ARIANA GHATAN ▶



College: St John's

Hometown: Linköping, Sweden

Education and academic career: Bachelor's degree in Physics, University of Stockholm. Master's degree in Applied Mathematics, University of Cambridge. Incoming DPhil in Mathematics, University of Oxford.

Why did you become a content creator?

When I was teaching during my first gap year, I was trying to get more students interested in technology, and they started telling me I should go on TikTok. My first video that went viral was about women who code, then when I got TikTok verified I realised it was more than just a hobby.

So what does identifying as a “maths person” look like to you?

I would love for a maths person to simply be someone who is interested in maths. For women especially, you shouldn't feel like you have to hide your femininity. It sounds so obvious, but there is a photo of me wearing a dress on my LinkedIn, and I have had people question me and tell me it is inappropriate, comparing me to what their image of what a woman in STEM is meant to look like.

Men are predicted to outnumber women in physics until the year 2158. What are three things that can be done to change this?

- 1) Young girls need to be exposed to science, technology and mathematics in the real world, so they can solve issues in our society, and integrate with all sorts of other subjects.
- 2) Connect young students to working professionals, to give them relatable inspiration.
- 3) Talk about mathematics more and talk about feeling stupid, with the aim of building self-esteem and mathematical confidence.

You're currently writing a book – what's it about?

It is about mathematical confidence, aimed at young girls. It is me reaching out to people with maths anxiety and me talking to myself in my hardest moments. I find it very fun and therapeutic to write in that sense, and it will be published next year.

Finally, do you have a message for freshers, at the beginning of the academic journey?

Firstly, congrats! You are going to have an amazing time. Remember to be kind to yourself, and surround yourself with people that make you feel good.

Interviews

‘We changed it all’: Hipgnosis co-founder Aubrey Powell on reinventing the album cover

Ella McCartney talks to Aubrey Powell about designing album covers for Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin and Paul McCartney, and creating the most iconic album art in the world

In today’s world of streaming music, where an album cover is no more than a few tiny pixels on your screen, it’s hard to imagine going to the effort to set a man on fire or let a giant inflatable pig loose over Battersea Power Station (and grounding all planes on their way to Heathrow Airport in the process), just for the perfect image. However, as the late 60s ushered in a new wave of rock music that broke with convention, the art of album cover design was also completely reformed. Iconic album covers for artists such as Led Zeppelin, Paul McCartney, Peter Gabriel, and Pink Floyd (including *Dark Side of the Moon* and *Wish You Were Here*) were all created in this cultural climate and by the same people – a creative duo from Cambridge known as Hipgnosis, credited with reinventing the album cover.

Hipgnosis’ co-founder, Aubrey Powell, recounts moving to Cambridge at the age of sixteen in 1963, after being expelled from the King’s School, Ely as “during a school trip I slipped out and went to the pub.” His first job was at King’s College as a waiter: “in those days, the toffs at the University would look down on plebs

like me and treat us like shit [...] Clicking their fingers at me and demanding bottles of wine didn’t go down too well and I didn’t last long.”

In the 1960s in Cambridge, “there was an atmosphere of revolution in the air.” He first noticed his future Hipgnosis partner, Storm Thorgerson, and to-be members of Pink Floyd, as they were “dressed very coolly, they all had long hair, they were always carrying guitars and always laughing, and I thought I need to meet these people.”

As a new member of their group, Powell explains how “everybody wanted to be free,” which translated into “lots of girlfriends” and “everybody experimenting with drugs.” Powell recalls the experience of “swimming in the River Cam on acid and experiencing the wildest feelings as you put your foot in a deep piece of mud somewhere in Grantchester and thinking you were going to slip into the centre of the Earth.”

The friends then moved to London, where Powell took up photography, Storm studied film and Pink Floyd officially formed. Powell explains that in the 1960s, all album covers featured “a

picture of the band on the front with a white piece of lettering with the title of the album, and the name of the group.” However, Pink Floyd “were looking to break away from the confines of EMI Music.” Reflecting on the start of Hipgnosis’ and Pink Floyd’s creative partnership, Powell remarks “we changed it all.”

I ask Powell whether he thinks it was a coincidence that this new style coincided with such a significant period in rock history. He instantly responds, “it was serendipity.” Drawing on the influence of surrealist art, especially that of Salvador Dali, Hipgnosis’ album covers ranged from a photo of a cow for Pink Floyd’s *Atom Heart Mother*, to a photo of a sheep sitting on a chaise lounge in the ocean for 10cc’s *Look Hear?*. For Pink Floyd, Hipgnosis made some of the most iconic pieces of album art in the world. Including the glass prism on *Dark Side of the Moon* and setting a man on fire for *Wish You Were Here* (Powell’s favourite Pink Floyd work).

Despite the rising popularity of the vinyl in recent years, Powell is doubtful that it will last: “the budgets aren’t big enough [...] Sadly, the music has become



more important.” He continues: “between 1969 and 1982 were the halcyon days of album covers and we were privileged to be involved with that. But that doesn’t exist now, and I don’t think that’s ever going to come back.”

After Hipgnosis was dissolved in 1983, Powell has worked in film, directing commercials, music videos and documentaries. He was creative director of Paul McCartney’s World Tour and he is the current creative director of Pink Floyd.

He partly credits social media as enabling “Hipgnosis’ work over the last 50 years to become recognisable globally.” “It’s hard to walk down the street, in any city in the world, and within two minutes not see somebody wearing a t-shirt with *Dark Side of the Moon* on it, and it’s often young people [...] I feel incredibly flattered.”

Powell reflects: “I think that Hipgnosis’ legacy will continue to go forward for many, many years. It will be recognised for being part of a cultural time for 15 years where album covers were important. And you can’t take that away.”

◀ ALL ART BY HIPGNOSIS

THE MAYS



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

Now in its 32nd year, The Mays is a book of the best of new student poetry, short stories, creative photography and art from the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford.

The Mays is credited with launching Zadie Smith’s career. The publication has featured a wide range of high-profile guest editors over the years, including Kate Bush, Stephen Fry, Arlo Parks, Rupri Kaur, Nick Cave, Patti Smith, Jarvis Cocker, Ted Hughes and Oscar Murillo.

Joint applications will be considered. To apply, please send your CV(s) via email to business@varsity.co.uk together with a covering letter of no more than 600 words detailing your vision for the book. Applicants with excellent leadership skills and a high level of expertise with Adobe InDesign are encouraged to apply.

The application deadline is 6pm, Friday 3rd November 2023
www.themaysanthology.co.uk

(Student submissions for art, poetry, short stories etc will open during Lent 2024)

KINGSWAY CYCLES

Est 1978

New and Used bikes for sale, ladies and gents available.

Also lights, locks, helmets and other accessories available too.

Please come to our store.

8 City Road, Cambridge CB11DP

Tel: 01223 355852 Email: kingswaycycles@hotmail.com

www.kingswaycycles.com

Science

In-cider info on hangover recovery

Natalia Emsley calls the shots on the science behind your alcohol-induced misery

You're probably all too familiar with the consequences of drinking. From lowered inhibition and loss of coordination to slurred speech and drowsiness, alcohol has various short-term impacts on our bodies. And of course, these extend well beyond your night out (regrets and embarrassment included). But you may know less about exactly what's driving them.

Ever wondered why a kebab and chips are so desirable on the way home? Why you are so exhausted the day after? And why you are so worried about what you said and did that night? Well, rest assured that following highly scientific hangover-inspired research, I have found the explanations.

Getting the 'drunchies'?

We all know that the night is rarely over until you've eaten something ridiculously greasy on the way home. Although, let's be real – drunk people will eat pretty much anything.

But it seems counterintuitive that alcohol causes hunger, given it is so calorie-dense. There are several proposed factors contributing to alcohol boosting the appetite. These include suppression of fatty acid oxidation (the process by which fatty acids are broken down and used for energy), which leads to feelings of hunger, and affected neurochemical systems responsible

for appetite regulation. Exacerbating this is an alcohol-induced reduction in willpower, meaning that you are more likely to eat more (and more unhealthy) food than you would have intended to.

Recent research has led to another theory that the reason lies in the brain, specifically, that there is stimulation of nerve cells in the brain that increase appetite. In simple terms, your brain thinks it's starving. Researchers demonstrated this in mice, finding that after being injected with alcohol, the mice ate significantly more than sober mice. Each injection was the mouse-equivalent of about two bottles of wine – scientifically termed to be “a proper binge session.” The researchers found spikes in electrical activity in agouti-related peptide cells (AgRP neurons), which are important in controlling hunger, usually

activated by starvation. These AgRP neurons are also present in humans, and could be activated in a similar way to make us hungry after alcohol consumption.

Unfortunately, it has also been proven that eating greasy foods after drinking doesn't magically soak up the alcohol. In reality, these foods can actually make you feel worse as your body has to work twice as hard to break down the alcohol and high levels of sodium and fat. Sorry, Gardies.

Not sleeping well?

Excessive alcohol consumption is also linked to poor sleep quality and duration so you might not sleep in that late after you've been drinking. So your 9am is not a valid excuse to not go out.

Having more than 1-2 drinks decreases your sleep quality by 39%. A normal sleep cycle has four different stages, the final being the important REM (rapid eye movement) stage, during which dreaming primarily takes place. REM sleep is also involved in memory consolidation and emotional processing. Alcohol can increase suppression of REM sleep in the first two cycles and because it is a sedative, often shortens sleep onset so you fall into deep sleep quite quickly. There is a resulting imbalance be-

tween REM sleep and slow-wave sleep (the restorative stage in which deep sleep happens). The reduced time spent in the REM stage lowers sleep quality.

So, be ready for a bad mood, bad concentration and bad decision-making the next day.

Feeling anxious?

Lastly, 'hangxiety'. If you haven't heard of it, it's hangover plus anxiety. Sleep deprivation resulting from heavy drinking can exacerbate this heightened anxiety many of us experience the day after.

What causes it? Alcohol mimics GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid), a calming brain chemical, which stimulates the inhibition of nerve cell activity, making us feel relaxed. Happy times. As you drink more, the alcohol starts blocking glutamate, the primary excitatory chemical in the brain, which means less anxiety. Still seems good? Wrong. Your body tries to sort the imbalance in brain chemicals by bringing GABA levels down and turning glutamate up, but it overcompensates. So when you finish drinking, you have unnaturally low GABA and a spike in glutamate. The blocking of the glutamate system also affects your memory – being unable to remember the events of the night before is naturally another key contributor to hangxiety. In addition, alcoholic drinks can contain lots

of sugar; after metabolising this sugar, the body releases stress hormones to promote the release of glycogen by the liver and restore normal blood sugar levels. It can take one or two days for the levels to return to normal. While the feelings are barely noticeable for some, for others they are very real, and can be reason enough to cut out alcohol completely. But rest assured that it's totally normal to feel this way and the friends you went out with probably feel the exact same.

But what does all of this mean?

- Eat before (and during) pres to get food in your system – preferably a balanced meal of carbs, protein and fats
- Avoid greasy foods after drinking water and carb-heavy foods are the ultimate cures for a hangover
- Alternate alcoholic drinks with water or low-sugar soft drinks and have fewer caffeinated and carbonated alcoholic drinks to get better sleep
- Eat a nutritious breakfast in the morning to help restore blood sugar levels
- Don't drink the morning after – it's never the way, I promise



▼ Tobia Novia

It pays to educate people on science

Will Brammer stresses the importance of helping others understand the ever-evolving world of scientific research

The role of the scientist is two-fold – a balancing act between research and communication. Given communication tends to be correlated with trust, the reason for this dual role is clear: research is allowed or disallowed through regulation, which is controlled by politics, which is controlled by public opinion. What research is funded, is fuelled eventually by how much the science is trusted. And this research can change the world, or not, depending on whether it's allowed to by the opinions of the masses. This is why it pays to be invested in the general perception of science, and why a survey conducted recently caught my interest.

Published at the start of this year, the Genetics Society, a group of researchers from prominent UK universities, conducted a survey to assess how science, and genetics more specifically, had changed in the minds of the public since the COVID-19 pandemic. The results were encouraging. An increased correspondence with the public about what was being done in the scientific world to help combat the disease seems

to have done the job of granting a little more faith in the commonly mistrusted field of genetics. In general, science was trusted more after the pandemic by 30%



Genetics remains a strange, almost threatening, area to most

of people surveyed, with far fewer (less than 7%) becoming more distrustful.

I believe most of this comes down to a greater understanding of the science. I learn about genetics in my degree all the time, and I'm yet to see modern experiments that have shown me that the field, as a whole, isn't a force for good in the world. It's hard not to notice the correlation between a massive increase in communication to the public about the research going on and this spike in trust. Let's be real here, before PCR (polymerase chain reaction) testing was main-

stream news, how many people knew what the genetic techniques behind PCR were? It's hardly a new technique – PCR has been a mainstay of lab work in a wide range of fields since its creation in 1983. But, of course, the public doesn't know that, because why would they? And so genetics remains a strange, almost threatening, area to most.

And Covid-19 did change that. Whether it's through the success of the vaccine, or increased communication about science, something was working. But I worry we're slipping back now. Another report from the US shows a fall in trust of scientists down to pre-Covid levels. It serves as an important reminder that our collective memory is short; the progress we made during the pandemic is far from permanent.

There's an issue with media presentation here, too. You might remember a fairly recent bit of news on the birth of the first “three-parent babies” in the UK. With articles headlined things such as “Baby born from three people's DNA in UK first” and “First ‘three-parent babies’ born in Britain”, it's not surprising that on multiple occasions, various friends quizzed me about why science would ever do this. The impression from the

headlines supports the viewpoint that genetics is messing with human lives for seemingly no reason.

There is a motive, however. These babies have been born with almost entirely two parents' DNA like any other, and only the addition of a third, tiny dose of mitochondrial DNA from a separate egg cell to allow mothers with unhealthy mitochondria to not pass any mitochondrial diseases – life-threatening conditions which often result in the deaths of the children – to the next generation. The new DNA only acts to prevent these diseases; there are effectively no modifications to any other trait. So I find it hard to see this as anything other than a good thing.

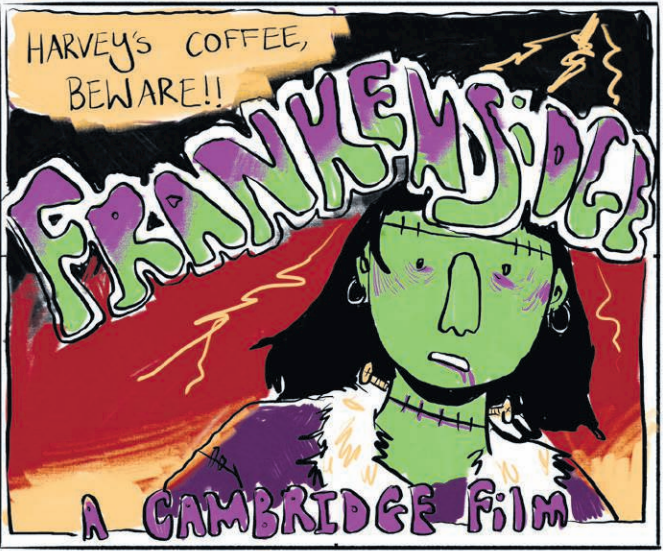
Still, I understand why these headlines lead people to question it. In their defence, the articles invariably go on to discuss the benefits of the technique and almost always end up leaning in favour of the treatment. But I think it's fairly telling that none of the article headlines say “New technique to prevent mitochondrial disease

used in UK”. Utilising a more alarming title may be a good way to reel in readers, but I fear the consequences for public trust in science and research. The sad truth is that a lot of people just don't read past the headline.

So what's my point? I want to emphasise the importance of science communication and convince anyone with scientific knowledge to help out. If people come up to you with questions about science, or concerns about where our fields are going, try to find the time and have a chat. When we can reach a point where all of us are willing to talk about science's progress with anyone who's willing to listen, perception can change. It was proven once, back during the pandemic. I firmly believe it can happen again.



The Smoking Area



▼ EMILY LAWSON-TODD

VINTAGE VARSITY

By Joshua Shortman and Paddy Davies Jones

Varsity's first issue was published on January 7th, 1931. If we ever possessed copies of the first editions in our archives, then they have long since turned into dust - and Varsity's turbulent history of bankruptcies, amalgamations and uncountable editorships mean that even our piles of dust have been misplaced. To get back to the very start, you have to enter the UL. Make it past the mute, pleading eyes of masters students as they look up from an endless corridor (all language other than Ecclesiastical Latin vanished from their heads) and you will find the microfilm archives on which Varsity is stored. The room itself is an archive of the 70s - towering projectors built from laminated wood and bakelite, which hum and rattle in the dark, as you crouch under a yellow desk lamp.

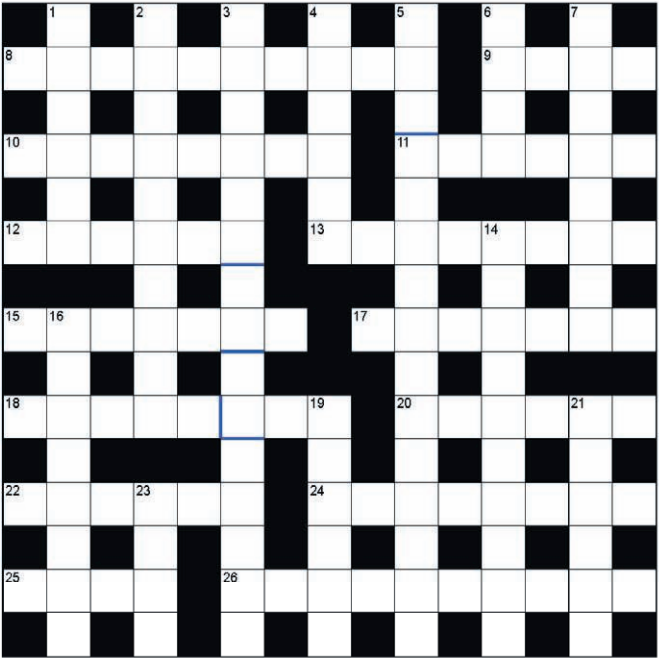
They reveal a very different paper to the one you hold today. Far from focusing on Cambridge, the stated aim is "to tell you what is happening in London ... for in spite of the car ban, we still manage to spend a few hours in town." News receives a curt front page, and the rest of the paper is devoted to theatre and film reviews - ending each edition with a two-page-spread reviewing a recent car model. Cars make their way onto the news page too - almost every edition contains a story of undergraduates being hauled up in the local court, with offences ranging from driving without lights, to "H.E. Shaw of Christ's college, who ... said that he was driving from London to Cambridge and when near Royston felt very tired. He did not remember anything about Trumpington, until he hit the wall". Upon exiting the car, a banker recalls Mr Shaw asserting that "I want this hushed up"; nearly a century on, we can only apologise to Mr Shaw for Varsity's indiscretion.

The first edition sells well - the second beginning with a humble apology to those seeking a copy who had to be turned away after we sold out. And on the second page, we get a glimpse of the Varsity of tomorrow: an article titled 'CAMBRIDGE PSEUDOEDUCATION', which provoked a critique in London's Daily Express the next week. It creates a weird sensation, which we have become familiar with in the archives - the experience of reading sentences which a friend might have said yesterday alongside those which haven't been uttered in decades. "Consider, for instance," our journo writes, "the state of the English Tripos ... the ground to be covered is so wide that it is impossible to study any part of it with the thoroughness which it deserves": "the syllabus definitely militates against any attempts to acquire a proper knowledge of English literature ... other faculties are in little better case." One undergraduate, "being afflicted with too great a love of his subject", is applauded for leaving Cambridge to pursue his studies at a German University; acknowledging that "most lectures are little more than a waste of time ... they are either dull or interesting (mostly the former), but rarely instructive."

They are lines that echo through my head during a 9am on the history of political thought, which begins and ends with the question, "What is the history of political thought?". Nobody seems to know - least of all the historians of political thought. The thirties disappear into the present, in a lecture hall which probably hasn't changed either - until the conclusion of the article is reached: "parents throughout the empire are persuaded to send their sons to Oxford or Cambridge in spite of the expense: they leave Cambridge endowed, it is true, with a certain prestige, but with little else."

Games & puzzles by Marble and Tiro

Varsity Crossword



Across

- 8 American state (10)
 9 Atmosphere (4)
 10 Chinese port city (8)
 11 Makes happen (6)
 12 Puts back (6)
 13 Surrounded (8)
 15 Relating to the innermost region of an atom (7)
 17 Obvious (7)
- 18 Fictional Miami gang boss (8)
 20 What is right and wrong (6)
 22 Task (6)
 24 Santa's steed (8)
 25 What men and doors have in common? (4)
 26 Large animal from China (5,5)

Down

- 1 Scooby Doo character (6)
 2 Ceremonial head of University (10)
 3 Phrase meaning modern (2,4,3,3,3)
 4 Step (6)
 5 Between, for example, Christ's and Lucy Cavendish (15)
 6 College abbreviation (4)
 7 Subnational identity in England (8)
 14 Shape with 8 faces (10)
 16 Nonchalant (8)
 19 Goo from where you hear (6)
 21 Types (6)
 23 Excellent Swedish music group (4)

Cryptic

Across

- 8 It's up in the air at the moment, at first no ball (10)
 9 A Captain used to go fishing (4)
 10 Drunken ale donor who painted in Italy? (8)
 11 Shared carbon monoxide metre before Monday (6)
 12 Dotty mutual accent? (6)
 13 Old Italian movement makes love (8)
 15 Bribes some who spay offshore (7)
 17 Roll it back, Saint John! (7)
 18 Weird with tee, I wore this to

- Magdalene (5,3)
 20 "Don't uni rankings have any merit?", starts northern university (6)
 22 Fake pennies - nothing to be paid back (6)
 24 Grips part of motorcycle chestprotector around noon (8)
 25 Sounds like a long way to couch (4)
 26 Mischievous child at ends of obedience can't wait (10)

Down

- 1 River right in hot water (6)
 2 Indirect bullet nearby. (10)
 3 Awful if tourists spoil first plane across the Atlantic (6,2,2,5)
 4 Diversion from detective belonging to us (6)
 5 Moses's principles demand swap for ecstasy in tenements. (3,12)
 6 Which person gets wagon, Honda or Mercedes started? (4)
 7 Asimov's interests steal powerless lenses (8)
 14 Bolt's partner takes the biscuit for Christmas ballet (10)
 16 Binding commercial with corrupt shoe-in (8)
 19 Get out of Spanish cloak (6)
 21 Organisation in Volkswagen cylinders (6)
 23 State early signs of urine test as healthy (4)

Sudoku

Easy

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

Medium

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

vulture.



The mysteries of The Haunted Bookshop

Laura Potomova explores the spooky secrets behind the seemingly quaint bookshop and discusses its otherworldly connections with owner, Phil Salin

Rain falls in torrents from the rim of my umbrella, socks squelch in my tragically un-waterproof shoes. I'm soaked, shivering, and yet, I hesitate outside the door. A witch in faded rags jumps out at me from the window display, her face frozen in an evil cackle. Above her against the blood-red frame of the shop floats the ghostly white namesake of Cambridge's notorious Haunted Bookshop.

I step into a world that belongs to the past, a time when Cambridge belonged to Byron, to Plath, to bikes not buses, newspapers not the internet

It is the familiar squiggle of Enid Blyton's name on a book propped near the entrance that finally lures me in. As I cross the threshold, I step into a world that still belongs, somehow, to the past—my past, where I'd sit cross-legged on my bed, hidden with a flashlight under my covers as the clock struck 12, burying my nose in *Famous Five* adventures I'd already read a million times before. But also a collective past, a time when Cambridge belonged to Byron, to Plath, to bikes, not buses, to newspapers not the internet. Rows of second-hand books close in around me, fence me in, they make the room smaller, tighter, but they also blow it open into an endless vista of stories and histories, remnants of years gone by.

As my eyes grow accustomed to the gloom, a desk emerges amidst a pile of books and the head of Phil Salin, the proprietor of the shop, nods at me across a bulky computer-screen. It was his wife, Sarah Key, who started the business in 1987, trading in book fairs before her whilst Phil settled down in The Haunted Bookshop in 1993. But as I probe Phil's knowledge of the house further, the books momentarily disappear and the rich history of the space itself seeps through the walls. I am now drawn into the Red House Pub of the early 1900s, dim lights flickering over clinking beers and male conversations, or old, ghostly student rooms, students complaining of the spookiness of the graveyard outside, or the 1970s record shop Phil so fondly remembers visiting.

I address the elephant in the room. "Is the bookshop haunted?" I ask. The Red House beer-men dissolve into flimsy cling-film apparitions that lean, arms crossed, against the bookshelves or sit on stools of piled books to continue their discussions. I watch as the ghostly old man once spotted by the bookshop's previous owner rises up from the basement, accompanied by Sarah Key's white-gowned spectral vision, a faint violet smell lingering behind them as they brush past me and disappear up the stairs.

But Phil is a rationalist. He shows no sign of fluster and answers my question with dead certainty: "people come in expecting to be frightened. But of course, as we all know, there are

no such things as ghosts." I can't help but sense something shift in the air in response to Phil's radical dismissal, the ghosts stirring in their graves in outrage at his blasphemy. Or perhaps it's just the mixture of disappointment and relief I feel as I listen to Phil debunk the myth of the bookshop's namesake further: the original owner, Derek Gibbons, "got the name from a chap called Christopher Morley," a Canadian essayist who had written a book called *The Haunted Bookshop*.

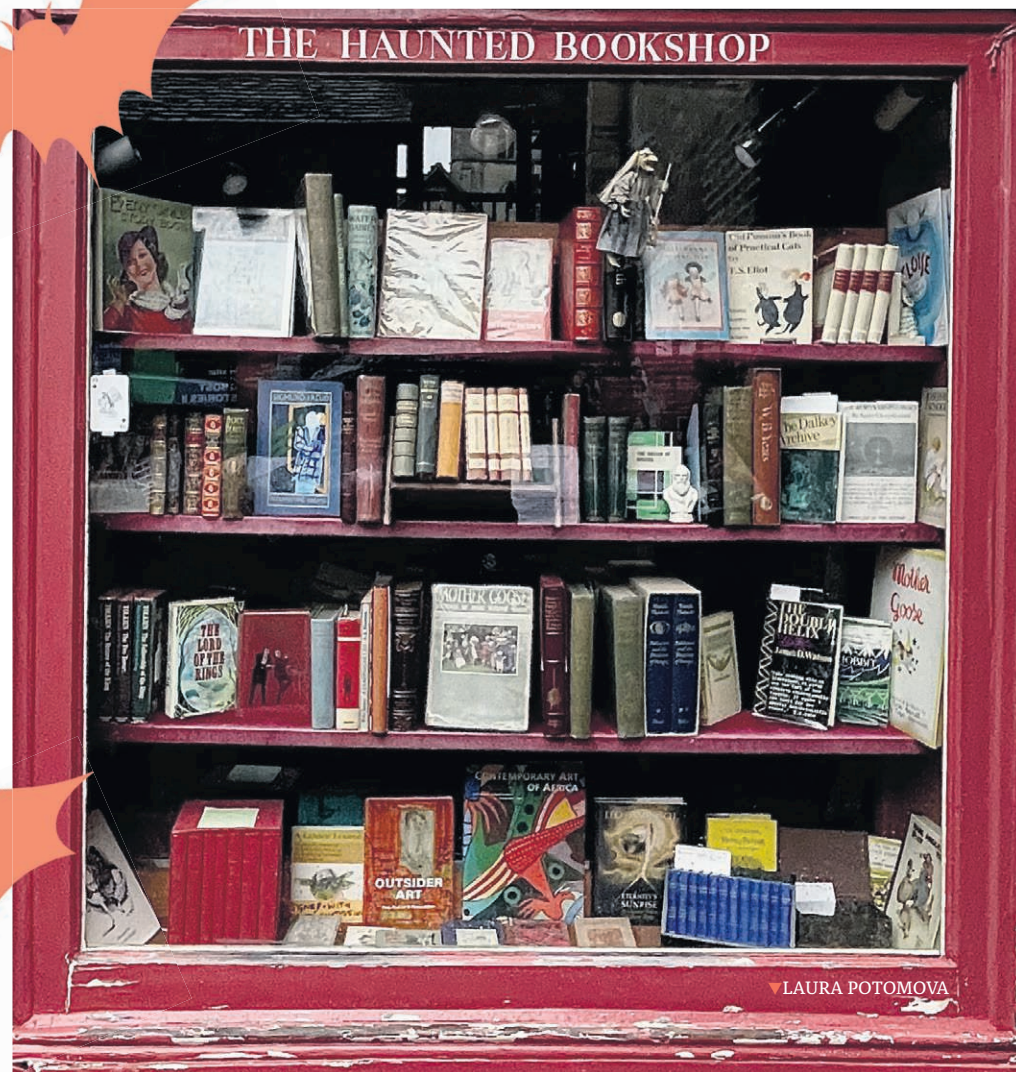
There is something grounding and admirable in the way Phil takes things as they are. But as I gaze around the walls, each book conjuring in some indirect way its past owner, I wonder if this isn't just something he tells himself to calm his nerves, to maintain his sanity as he sits hour by hour, day by day, behind his desk, daring the ghosts to stay away.

But if it's the namesake that lures customers in, it's the endless promise of the books themselves that makes them return. The discoveries to be made in Phil and Sarah's bookshop are indeed endless. Far from the clinicality of Waterstones or the unnatural, predetermined order of Amazon, the Haunted Bookshop speaks to the random, the accidental and the aimless in our minds.

On the wonky bookshelves, genres overlap, colours blend and time periods collapse. Books rearrange themselves and topple over each other across two storeys, displace one another as new ones glide in and old ones stream out, eyes landing on

something new every time you glance around. And as I walk out of the shop an hour later, it seems to me that it is in such moments

of serendipity that the magic and mystery of The Haunted Bookshop really lies.



All treats, no tricks: Varsity's haunting Halloween favourites

'Bat' by D.H. Lawrence

This poem sees a man's expatriate idealism disturbed by a swarm of bats at sundown. Tantalised, but kept out of their strange language, Lawrence grows a little resentful, embarrassed even. He tries out his own poetic echolocation, repeating and reforming images in hope to make out their shape more clearly. For those who get the questions wrong on *Eggheads*.

The works of Holly Warburton

An underrated British artist whose works evoke an eerie and otherworldly atmosphere, her digital paintings are melancholic in spite of their bright colours and often conceal tiny ghost-like figures within their expansive urban and pastoral backdrops. 'Chaos' and 'Crossing Paths' are two of my favourites.

'The Doll's Alphabet' by Camilla Grudova

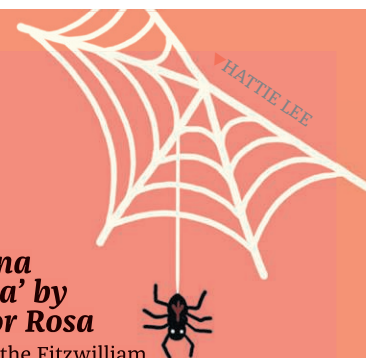
With child-like, deadpan richness, Camilla Grudova's narrators unstitch themselves, turn wolfish, trade rats' skulls for "nice blue dresses," and try to survive a world in which being Manless is an offence. In *The Doll's Alphabet*, Grudova's only short story collection, the weird is everything, and it smells like "tinned meat."

'I hear a fly buzz — when I died' by Emily Dickinson

The paradoxical title opens a resoundingly haunting poem. Deathly stillness is punctuated by the earthly fly - the entire poem occupies somewhere in between. This atmospheric poem is as unshakeable as the buzzing fly.

'L'Umana Fragilita' by Salvador Rosa

Housed in the Fitzwilliam Museum, the sinister work of artist Salvador Rosa captures the universal, eternal theme of human fragility. A portrait of the artist's mistress sits passively, the figure of a child placed on her knee, his hands clasped by the bony fingers of death, representing Salvador's deceased son, Rosalvo. Emerging from a thick, nocturnal gloom, a huge, winged skeleton, death incarnate, directs the infant as he writes "conception is a sin, Birth is pain, Life is toil, Death a necessity." Beautiful but haunting, Salvador's *L'Umana Fragilita* ultimately reminds viewers of their mortality as they navigate a transient world.



Cambridge's Hallow-zines: a Varsity guide

Anna Wythe discovers how *The Cambridge Cult* and *Lunulae* fill the void between darkness and the ethereal

I find a small shrine at the back of a crowded room. Tarot cards are scattered across a low wooden table decorated with white lace and a half-burnt candle. In the centre opal-coloured zines glisten with words like 'ritual' and 'dream'.

Each Cambridge zine has its own atmosphere, but few carry an aura as strong as the zine scene's apocryphal gospels: *The Cambridge Cult* and *Lunulae*. In honour of the impending Hallows' Eve, I decided to enter their eerie world, and I soon realised that this was not the realm of jump-scares or plastic skeletons. These zines strip spookiness of its tacky costumes and reveal the dark themes beneath. They stand in a morass of interlocking ideas and aesthetics, conjuring ghosts from the Freudian subconscious and the afterlife, reading bodies as cogently as dreams.

The Cambridge Cult was initially created "to provide a space for esoteric work, with a focus on magic, witchcraft and fantasy," as its co-editor Tilda Butterworth told me. These days it's interested in "anything unconventional and strange." As I turn the dark pages, I'm struck by the sensuality of its words and images. Tattooed skin moves tentatively into sunlight. An uncertain subject goes down on death.

Lunulae, a younger zine, is dedicated "to the space between the beautiful and the uncanny." Its creator, Anna Chandler de Waal, explained: "I have always liked the idea of creating a kind of dream-scape — a space apart from reality, the ethereal twinned with darkness. Each issue is pervaded by



***The Cult* bubbles with anarchic energy whilst *Lunulae* seems to hold a deep spiritual stillness**

the idea of the 'liminal' — the in-between — whether between the unconscious and conscious, mundane or occult, dream or nightmare... An emblem of *lunulae*, I think, is the moon hung in daylight."

Where *The Cult*'s pages are glossy black, *Lunulae*'s

are white with bones and pearls. *The Cult* bubbles with anarchic energy whilst *Lunulae* seems to hold a deep spiritual stillness. More practically, *Lunulae* is distinguished from other Cambridge zines for its ability to bring material culture into its pages. *The Cult* is perhaps most absorbing in its photography.

They are different beasts and yet undoubtedly share preoccupations. In both, I was drawn to the seriousness with which they approached aesthetics. In modern society the word aesthetic is often synonymous with trends and with superficiality. These zines restore beauty to its throne. Through their focus on ritual, they unlock the spiritually transformative potential of aesthetics and objects. Indeed, this ethos spills beyond the printed page: sometimes the editors themselves can be found in ruined abbeys performing sacred rituals together.

I was struck too by the way that these zines invert the classic Halloween trope of fleeing the monster. I haven't watched many horror movies, but trying to run away from something that cannot be outrun seems to be a recurring feature. Yet, *Lunulae* and *The Cult* dive headfirst into the uncanny and the subconscious. The new issue of *Lunulae*, *Unreal-*

ity, ushers ghosts out of hiding and tames them through dream interpretation and tarot reading. *The Cult*'s exploration of chaos likewise urges an embrace of those turbulent internal forces that, if crushed, will re-emerge as monsters. In both, art is a kind of conjuring.

Halloween is a meeting point for art, ritual, and of course demons. I asked the editors of both zines for advice on how to celebrate it. "Ritual sacrifice. Or a good house party. Or both!" was Tilda's recommendation. Anna told me about the Celtic Festival of Samhain, and the importance of letting things emerge into the silence. For Halloween, "dressing up is paramount... I consume lots of red wine and other bloody foods — pomegranates, berries, jelly in strange animal moulds. If I am spending the night out I get headily drunk and go dancing and feel Dionysiac." Perhaps there will also be time in the last days of October to make art for the pages of *Lunulae* and *The Cult*.

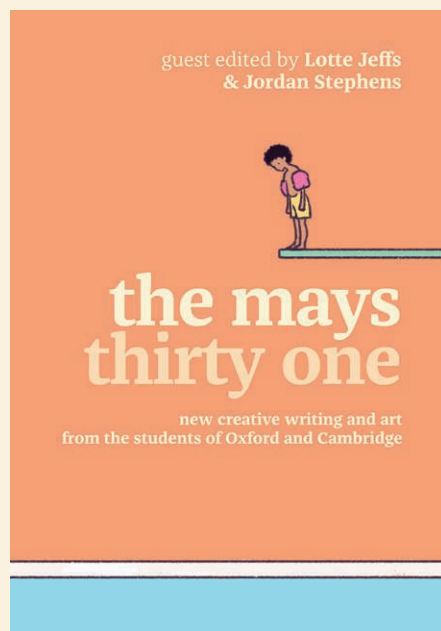


GUEST EDITED BY **LOTTE JEFFS & JORDAN STEPHENS**



THE MAYS 31

The best new writing and art from the students of Cambridge University & Oxford University



Available to order now
from www.varsity.co.uk/shop



For more information visit www.themaysanthology.co.uk



J. S. Wilson & Son Bookbinders Ltd Cambridge Established 1830



Thesis Binding • Conservation

Leather Binding • Journal Binding

Tel (01223) 212420

www.jswilsonandson.co.uk

Film & TV

Behind the ticket booth

Olivia Townsend goes on the other side of the ticket stand at Arts Picturehouse to talk about what makes the cinema special

My grandparents moved to Cambridge as newlyweds in 1970. My time living here as a student and their time here in their twenties bear a few striking similarities. My grandad was in a band that played gigs at the Anchor and college bars – places I find myself spending a bit too much time; my nan used to walk up-and-down the Grafton to get to work on Fitzroy Street – now I make the pilgrimage there to raid Greggs and the British Heart Foundation. I recently mentioned that I had been to Arts Picturehouse this week to watch the Talking Heads concert film *Stop Making Sense*, and I was met with memories from 1971 of going to the same cinema to watch *Straw Dogs*. My nan laughed as she recalled that the double seats in the back row were popular with young couples who wanted to “canoodle” (her word, not mine). The cinema they frequented was then called the Regal, which opened in 1937, but it is now best-known and beloved by students as the Cambridge Wetherspoons, a conversion made in 1999. Arts Picturehouse took over the

remaining space and has been the home of arthouse cinema in the city ever since.

When I sit down with Vicky in the Picturehouse bar, she admits that she hears stories like the ones my grandparents told me all the time. She tells me about how, for many of the regulars of Arts Picturehouse, “this has been their cinema since they were children,” and many of them take a lot of pride in the amount of time they’ve been members.

“**There’s an innate cosiness and close-knit feel to a smaller cinema**

Vicky started working at Arts Picturehouse as a member of the front of house staff in 2018 straight out of university, and now she takes a lead as Deputy General Manager. “I fell in love with the building and the place and just stayed,” she tells me. Her time here has given her a host of interesting anecdotes to call upon; she once served Ben Affleck popcorn (after he had mistakenly walked into Wetherspoons while looking for the cinema), and met Joanna Lumley, and made her a black filter coffee.

The more Vicky and I chat, the more I realise that the significance of the

Arts Picturehouse is rooted in more than its heritage and the host of famous people that have come in the door. There’s an innate cosiness and close-knit feel to a smaller cinema: “people feel at home here,” Vicky says. She describes their quiz nights, which see returning teams of local film buffs pack out the bar; it’s apparent that this is an important place for much of the Cambridge community.

Community really seems to lie at the heart of Arts Picturehouse. The cinema is owned by Cine-world, which went into administration in 2022. This came after a difficult couple of years for all cinemas across the country when they closed during lockdown. I ask Vicky how it feels to be navigating this precarious climate and she reinforces that making it through the “murky waters” of the last couple of years has been a test of mettle for Arts Picturehouse. Covid is not the first challenge they have faced; in 2013 the Government’s Competition Commission grew concerned by the number of cinemas in Cambridge. When locals got wind of the Commission’s suggestions that Arts Picturehouse was more of an economic hindrance than a help, they responded with passion – one person wrote to describe the cinema as a “loved and treasured resource in Cambridge.” It leaves me optimistic that with such a core of community support the Arts Picturehouse will be able to navigate the uncertain economy of today.

Far from just being a community space, the appeal of Arts Picturehouse is also rooted in its role of preserving and promoting arthouse and classic film in Cambridge. Alongside new releases the Picturehouse prides itself on knowing its audience when it comes to programming and curating their selection, offering re-runs from decades old films that still entirely book out. Last week they put on *Friday the 13th*, and packed out the screen with a hundred people –

Vicky explains that “people have seen the film before but they wanted to see it on that day, in that crowd.” The cinema is well-known for its Studio Ghibli season, which draws in audiences of all ages, and for the next week it is also home to

the Cambridge Film Festival (19th-26th October). It’s exciting when I learn from Vicky that they are now starting to bring back 35mm film screenings; she explains that “showing that here shows off who we are” as a cinema “dedicated to preserving film” – Arts Picturehouse still has a distinctive identity and purpose in the Cambridge film scene. As I discuss my closing thoughts with Vicky she recognizes that “each cinema has its demographic, its type. I can go for an Ice Blast and a horror film at the Vue. I love doing that, but I think there’s something so special about this place. That’s why I’m drawn to it.”

Arts Picturehouse has been an integral part of Cambridge life for generations; from my own visits to those of my grandparents, it has maintained the love of its audiences. This feeling, echoed in the excited group of friends heading into the cinema I saw as I walked back out onto St Andrew’s Street, is by design. At its core, Arts Picturehouse is there to bring a variety of movies to Cambridge, to restore films that may be lost, and, most importantly, to foster a community of film-lovers.

▼ HANNAH MAWARDI

Rotting in the Sun (MUBI)

★★★★★

A ketamine-fuelled dive into the superficialities of queer millennial life in Mexico City, this film tells the story of Sebas, a disillusioned artist who dreams of phenobarbital and habitually chews out his housekeeper for the slightest slip. He’s advised to take a vacation at a party beach for a weekend, and happens upon the clownishly enigmatic Jordan Firstman, a ‘creative’ obsessed with his online presence – things, predictably, start to go south. In a city of digital nomads and a forgotten working class, Sebastián Silva’s semi-autobiographical satire offers a cutting perspective on narcissism and nihilism, addiction and gentrification, and brazenly tackles the exploitative structures that uphold our society... And, in turn, imprison us. – Genevieve Badia-Aylin

Killers of the Flower Moon (Cinemas)

★★★★★

Martin Scorsese, perhaps our greatest living American filmmaker, returns to our screens... With yet another story all about the great original sins of America herself. Centring on a series of murders of the Native American Osage people that took place in Oklahoma during the 1920s, and playing out over a meticulously paced 206 minutes, it’s a vital film of characteristically epic scale, haunted by a sense of spiritual guilt and soaked in oil and blood. It might fall just slightly short of Scorsese at his very best – but he’s certainly never made something that feels quite this (rightfully) angry. – Isaac Jackson

The Reckoning (BBC iPlayer)

★★★★★

Steve Coogan is uncanny here, starring as the notorious Jimmy Savile in a highly-anticipated (and perhaps inevitably controversial) dramatisation of the

TV personality’s life and crimes. It’s been dropped rather unceremoniously onto BBC iPlayer, with very little fanfare, and it isn’t too hard to see why. Coogan is a fine actor, and an even finer impressionist, but the show as a whole can’t help but feel like a sensationalistic rehash of everything we already know, all-too-eager to sidestep its ethical quandaries and (very liberal) use of artistic license simply by bookending each episode with fleeting interviews with a few of Savile’s victims. Remember that it’s all financed by the BBC, the one institution perhaps most responsible for enabling Savile’s behaviour, and the whole affair starts to smell pretty bad. – Isaac Jackson

Boiling Point (BBC iPlayer)

★★★★★

Seeing Philip Barantini’s culinary drama *Boiling Point* (2021) in the cinema was possibly the most stressful viewing experience I’ve ever had, but some bizarre part of me was desperate for more. Thankfully, four tense hours of his new television spin-off have provided that perfect cocktail of anxiety and

enjoyment once again. There was always a risk of throwing off that perfect balance by lengthening the format and introducing new characters, but the team doesn’t put a foot wrong here. The style of the film is expertly maintained, with an opening scene that mirrors its one-shot method, the same stellar performance from show-stealing Vinette Robinson as a newly-appointed head chef, and an uneasy but beautiful score from Aaron May and David Ridley. – Sam Allen



What's on?

► OLIVIA LISLE

Humanising Cambridge through the camera

Heidi Atkins speaks to Tirza Sey about her docuseries tackling race, class, and culture in Cambridge

For most people entering the final year of their degree, the thought of adding any extra work onto the already-intense workload sounds horrific. But, for third-year lawyer Tirza Sey, the last stretch of her degree sounded like the perfect time to undertake the behemoth task of presenting a 'true Cambridge' through a 15 episode investigative docuseries into race, class and culture at Cambridge. I caught up with Tirza to find out her motivations, aims and plans for her documentary *Cam Uncut*.

The documentary is split into three segments – race, class and culture – and Tirza aims to complete one per term, releasing them slowly over the holidays. Each segment will have 5-7 episodes, focusing on a different aspect of the three broader segments, and will contain interviews with students about their experiences at this university.

Tirza gives me a preview of an episode called *Invited But Not Accepted*, which will contain interviews with people about “the invisible barrier” many people of colour feel entering spaces in Cambridge. She tells me about her experience of rowing: “no one ever did anything to make me feel out of place, but there was this tangible feeling that if you’ve never rowed before, if you’re not from the same background, you’re not going to fit in.”

“I’m from a working class single-mother household. My mum was in care growing up so she struggled to get to school. I’m incredibly proud that in

one generation we’ve gone from not going to school to going to Cambridge,” Tirza explains when I ask about her background. She is quick to emphasise that “this is not a piece solely from the eyes of a working-class black girl, but from as many people as possible.” Her desire to generate diverse perspectives has led to her hiring second year Ollie Gottlieb as assistant creative director. “Aside from his passion for this project, I purposefully chose Ollie because of how different our experiences have been at this university. We will never see Cambridge through the same lens, but as experiences teach us different lessons, we can learn from each other. I think that’s a beautiful thing, really.”

Tirza’s commitment to a



▼ TOMOS ALWYN DAVIES

diversity of experience is palpable, and a huge part of what sets this project apart from other exposés of Cambridge. “We’re not running into drinking societies with a GoPro strapped to our heads,” she tells me, keen to emphasise just how anti-sensationalism this project is, “we’re looking at lived experiences and coming at it from all angles.” Her aim is to “sit down and talk with people”, the vision being not to sensationalise life here, but to humanise Cambridge.

One of the ways Tirza hopes to break down the veneer of perfection she felt during her first two years is by discussing things often treated as too uncomfortable. “In first year I felt like my blackness was such an obstacle, such a barrier. I remember crying, confused as to why my colour was

such an issue to some people. It forced me to hate something so intrinsic to my identity, something I never felt conscious of before coming here. It took me a long time to realise that black is truly beautiful, even if this place doesn’t validate that.” Her journey towards self-love was helped by talking to “other women of colour who’ve felt the same”, and she hopes *Cam Uncut* will help people who have struggled through similar problems.

Through talking to as many people as possible, Tirza wants to make sure newcomers to Cambridge know that there are people here who will represent them. She bemoans the fact she was made to feel she wasn’t supposed to be here: “I got the grades, I did the LNAT, I did the CLT. In terms of class, in terms of race, in terms of background, I was made to feel like I didn’t belong. I have gotten here despite the obstacles and I don’t want people to feel like they cannot take up space here.”

Cam Uncut is a documentary about protest, about people taking up spaces where they are made to feel they don’t belong and, critically, about self-love. “I always want people who are in the same positions as me or come from marginalised backgrounds to apply to Cambridge because it’s an act of protest.” As the interview comes to an end, Tirza says that “change starts with people, and I want people from different backgrounds to come here and pioneer to change the institution. I want people to know that it may not be easy, but that’s okay.”

ADVERTISE WITH US

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

Email: business@varsity.co.uk

Telephone: 01223 337575

www.varsity.co.uk

Order yours today!

The Varsity Tote Bag



Just £3.99 plus postage.

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

www.varsity.co.uk/shop

Fashion

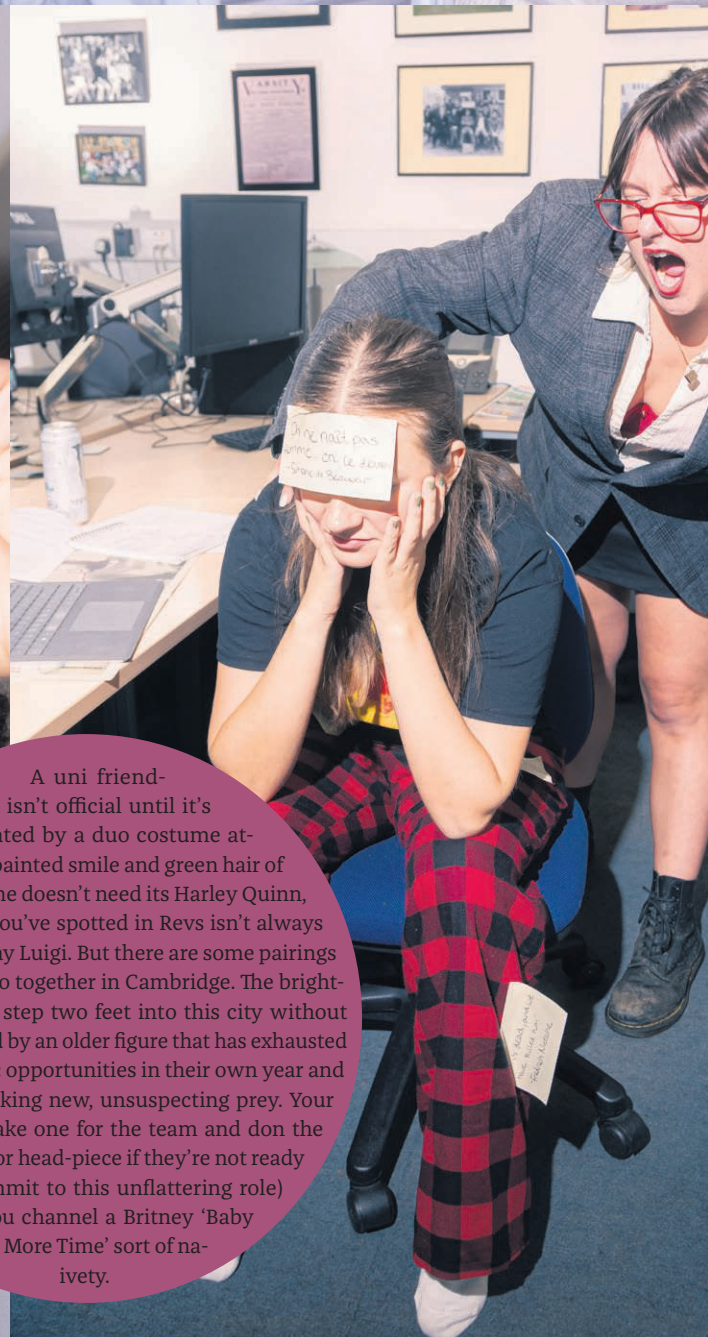
One minute you're blissfully putting up fairy lights in your new room. The next, you're balancing two essays, a dissertation and another club night you feel obliged to go to just because it's Halloween. Whether you forgot to bring a costume, or have been mercilessly peer-pressured into a themed formal, this article is for you. Here's how you can dress to impress with minimal time and no Amazon Prime.

The most strategic Halloween staple is the headband that can reliably be sourced in a caffeine-fuelled panic from your local charity shop or supermarket. Match it to whatever monochromatic outfit you have available and enjoy the unearned praise from impressed strangers who benignly assume some level of forethought. Bought a little black dress for winter? Bat ears. White mini dress for summer? Bunny ears. Red suit for formals? Devil horns. You get the idea.

If you have a token person in STEM in your friendship group with a highly borrowable lab coat, how about the all-too-familiar STEM-superiority complex? All you'll need is a pair of prescription glasses and a print-out of last year's admissions statistics and you'll be good to go. Other low effort prop ideas include the scary porter (bowler hat), the alumnus (a King Charles cardboard mask), or the silly fresh (college puffer).

Show some love to your home base by theming your costume around your college. You happen to have a gold dress and gold eyeshadow and now you're the Corpus Clock. If you have a white T-shirt you can splatter with ink, you've transformed into the Typewriter. Grey pyjamas? The Cripps Building. Some special FX makeup to mimic bug bites? A scabies victim at Selwyn. Alternatively, just dig through the second-hand stash in the British Heart Foundation and dress as your rival college.

A uni friendship isn't official until it's inaugurated by a duo costume attempt. The painted smile and green hair of a Joker costume doesn't need its Harley Quinn, and the Mario you've spotted in Revs isn't always followed by a stray Luigi. But there are some pairings that just have to go together in Cambridge. The bright-eyed fresher can't step two feet into this city without being accompanied by an older figure that has exhausted all of the romantic opportunities in their own year and moved onto sharking new, unsuspecting prey. Your friend should take one for the team and don the shark onesie (or head-piece if they're not ready to fully commit to this unflattering role) while you channel a Britney 'Baby One More Time' sort of naivety.



Spooky, sexy, or supervisor?



If forcing your friend to dress as a shark is proving difficult, a less incriminating option is the careless cyclist and tourist that has been run over. As someone who has witnessed this collision on many occasions, I can attest that some lycra, a helmet, a backpack that is worn on the front, and fake blood is enough to conjure some Cambridge-specific horror. And finally, the BNOC, head-to-toe in the drip that is college stash, just isn't complete without a 'Top Commenter on Camfess' label plastered to your friend's chest.

If dressing up at all feels like too much of an ask this close to week five, try coming as your 4am essay crisis. This one doesn't need much prep. Just scrunch up some Simone de Beauvoir quotes, stick them to a jumper and voilà, you've come as a hastily-pulled-together undergrad essay. Truly terrifying stuff. Bonus points if the jumper hasn't been washed in three weeks and you're clutching a can of Monster like it's life support.

Realistically, if your Halloween evening follows its expected trajectory then no one will remember your lazily-constructed costume anyway. Half its components will likely end up strewn across the Revs floor, never to see the light of day again. Stay safe, and remember that nothing will be scarier than waking up for your 9am the next day...

Writers: Zoe Blackburn and Katerina Long

Creative director: Ruby Cline

Photographer: Tomos Alwyn Davies

Models: Heidi Atkins, Katerina Long, Esther Magedera, Tejomayee Ganesh, Nyahalo Tucker

Music

The Last Dinner Party at The Portland Arms

Alex Brian dons a Victorian-inspired outfit to see London's most exciting new band

The Portland Arms is sweaty enough at the best of times. But it certainly doesn't help if you're wearing an elaborate costume based on the prompt 'Victoriana and the language of flowers'. Surveying the crowd of flushed faces crammed beside me, I could not help but notice the sheer range of people who had flocked to see The Last Dinner Party perform, from Portland Arms regulars to a group of superfans decked in gowns, flowers and ruffs. The band, for their part, were clad in impressive historical attire, but some members of the audience were giving them a run for their money.

For a band that only formed in 2021, this level of enthusiasm is unprecedented but certainly not undeserved. That they have released just three singles makes it even more striking. Indeed, their rapid growth and major label backing have led some to accuse them of being 'industry plants'. However, as Thursday's concert demonstrated, the band are anything but a manufactured pop group, with one track written in keyboardist Aurora Nishevci's mother tongue, Albanian, and others incorporating flute and mandolin.

It's no surprise that they have caused a stir on the London live scene. Frontwoman Abigail Morris could mesmerise any audience with her expressive hand movements and powerful chest voice, while Emily Roberts' guitar skills are unreal. Her tone frequently resembles that of Brian May and offers hope for a return of the epic solo to pop

music. All it took was a YouTube video of one of their shows for emails to start pouring in from labels and managers.

Their sound exudes the energy and flamboyance of 80s rock and, although they have frequently denied being influenced by ABBA, there are echoes of the Swedish supergroup in their prominent key-

“

Another girl started crying from the intensity of it all

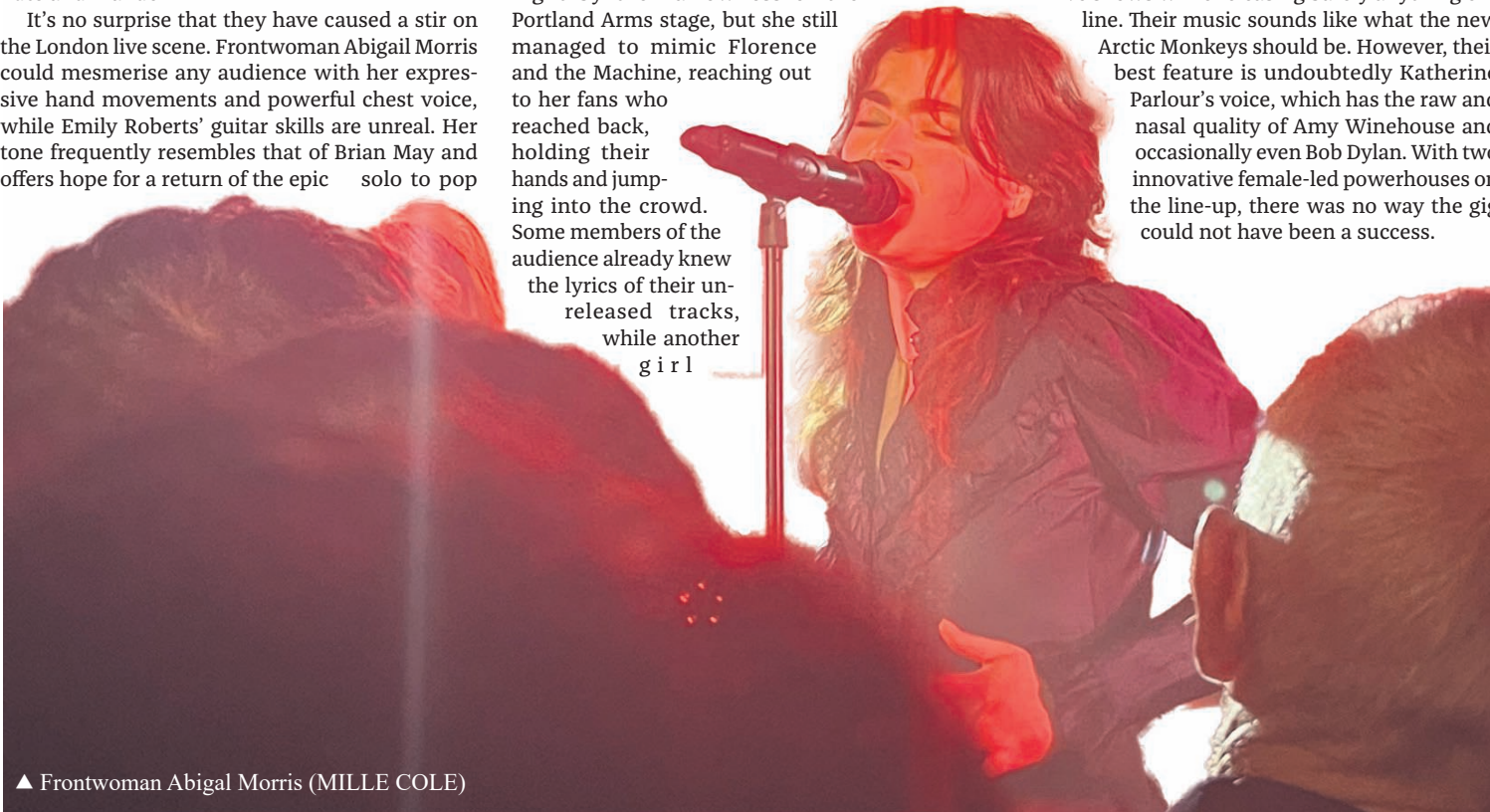
board parts and punchy rhythms. Their lyrics border on the absurd ("And we're a lot alike / In favour, like a motorbike / A sailor and a nightingale / Dancing in convertibles") but are extremely intimate and tackle issues such as feminism and queerness.

Morris was slightly constrained last Thursday night by the narrowness of the Portland Arms stage, but she still managed to mimic Florence and the Machine, reaching out to her fans who reached back, holding their hands and jumping into the crowd. Some members of the audience already knew the lyrics of their unreleased tracks, while another

started crying from the intensity of it all. If this was the reaction to their lesser-known songs, I'll leave you to imagine what occurred during 'Nothing Matters'.

The show navigated a broad range of emotion, from the classic rock of 'Big Dog' to the close harmonies and classical piano of 'Beautiful Boy'. Even within songs, the band created dramatic contrasts using varied textures and drum parts. The group proved that they are not just relying on the exquisite production of James Ford (Arctic Monkeys, Foals) to carry them through; their live sound was just as polished as their recordings. The periodic interruptions of their guitar tech wearing a bright pink snood only added to the intimacy of the gig.

Near the end of the show, this snood-wielding technician carried a cake on stage and the crowd sang 'Happy Birthday' to Morris. Before launching into the final track, Morris thanked the support act, Picture Parlour, for their amazing set. Like The Last Dinner Party, Picture Parlour have generated plenty of anticipation through their live shows while releasing barely anything online. Their music sounds like what the new Arctic Monkeys should be. However, their best feature is undoubtedly Katherine Parlour's voice, which has the raw and nasal quality of Amy Winehouse and occasionally even Bob Dylan. With two innovative female-led powerhouses on the line-up, there was no way the gig could not have been a success.



▲ Frontwoman Abigail Morris (MILLE COLE)

Spooky tunes to rattle your bones this Halloween

'Oogie Boogie's Song' – Rodrigo y Gabriela

Danny Elfman's soundtrack for *A Nightmare Before Christmas* will get you in the mood for that weird liminal space between Halloween and Bridgemas.

'Psycho Killer' – Talking Heads

With the re-release of *Stop Making Sense*, what better time to reacquaint yourself with the tune which was this American rock band its first stab at success.

'(Don't Fear) The Reaper' – Blue Öyster Cult

That lilting jaunt you've spotted in a sidge girlie's walk as they stroll into the English library, pulling

off their fingerless gloves? Almost certainly caused by the bridge in 'Music For a Sushi Restaurant'.

'vampire' – Olivia Rodrigo

Rhian Daly said Rodrigo "gives you permission to feel everything and not to have to dilute anything", which makes her the perfect messiah for a cohort of girlies who *wear* everything that can legitimately be called shabby chic and wouldn't even think of diluting their colour palettes.

'Monster Mash' – Bobby "Boris" Pickett

Inspired by *Frankenstein* and various mad-scientist caricatures, there's no other bop that beats this one in terms of what you should expect if Mash is your

club of choice.

'Hammer Horror' – Kate Bush

The first single from Bush's 1978 album, *Lionheart*, this tune will have you watching your back. The film genre inspired track closes with Bush questioning 'And who taps me on the shoulder? / I turn around, but you're gone.' Haunting.

'Thriller' – Michael Jackson

An iconic classic for spooky season - accompanied by an equally classic music video. What are you doing if this isn't on your playlist? Go and put it on that pres mix now!

Q&A with Lizzie Mayland

Alex Brian talks misogyny and music videos with the rhythm guitarist of London's most exciting new band

What has been the most memorable moment of your tour so far?

That would have to be coming off stage after playing at Glastonbury. So many of our friends came to watch our set who we didn't expect to come. In fact, we didn't expect anyone to be there because it was a Saturday morning. Everyone did look a bit out of it.

Where did you get the idea to have fans dress up for your shows and what is your favourite dress code from this tour?

We're not the first artists who have done it but we love dressing up and wanted to create a space where others can feel safe to do so. I'm most excited for 'glam rock'. I've got my flares at the ready!

You've defended yourself well against allegations of being an 'industry plant', but where do you think these criticisms come from?

The old patriarchy, unfortunately. When we started out, we were playing on line-ups that were otherwise entirely men which was intimidating, but thankfully things are improving.

Who are the female artists who inspire you?

Florence and the Machine, Lady Gaga, Nina Simone – the list goes on.

What inspires your lyrics and who is involved in writing them?

I wrote the lyrics for and sang lead vocals on 'Sinner' because it felt like my story to tell. I like lyrics that tell a story and are accessible. I think Miski does this really well. I've been listening to her new album all morning. She uses simple words which become interesting due to where they are placed in the melody.

Have you ever been to Cambridge before?

I've visited my friends who went to university there and have been back for a DJ show since.

Which guitarists inspire you?

I love Johnny Marr and the melodic style of Mac DeMarco.

Which of your unreleased tracks are you most excited for us to hear?

We're going to release another single soon*. It's quite a left turn. I think it will be polarising. It's got my favourite music video because we had more creative control over it.

How important are music videos in your creative process?

I really value the aesthetic side of being in a band but it's not something I considered when signing up. It's so fun getting paid to dance around on camera and we've worked with some incredibly talented directors.

How have you found gaining creative control over your music videos?

For our first video, everyone was really focused on successfully launching the band. They used our mood board, but the specifics were left out of our hands. As we've become more confident and established, we've been given more licence, so hopefully that will continue.

*'My Lady of Mercy' was released on 9/10

Cambridge music history corner

David Quinn discovers the time that Lou Reed played an hour of guitar feedback at Junction

▲ EMILY LAWSON-TODD

Lou Reed is the kind of musical icon best imagined in a leather jacket, half-finished cigarette in hand, standing against a New York City skyline. So, it is difficult to picture him loitering outside Cambridge Junction with a giant heap of electronic equipment, more closely resembling an astrophysicist than a rockstar. Yet, this is exactly how he appeared in 2010 when he performed as part of the Junction's 20th anniversary celebrations. For this was no conventional rock show. Lou Reed was playing in a band that he had recently formed called Metal Machine Trio. True to his reputation for being provocative, Reed played a

“
RCA had made one of music's most cardinal sins: they had told Lou Reed what to do

live rendition of his 1975 album *Metal Machine Music*. This may sound innocent but it has a long (and somewhat humorous) history.

Lou Reed's *Metal Machine Music* (subtitled **The Amine B Ring*) is a record that will have you reaching for the nearest hammer in a vain attempt to smash every copy out of existence. It capped the most popular period of Reed's discography and ensured his legendary status, but not quite in the way you might think...

After leaving The Velvet Underground in 1970, Lou Reed was a p -

proached by David Bowie, who offered to produce the next album of this influential, yet still underground, artist. With Bowie's guitarist Mick Ronson, they created 1972's *Transformer*, which many still consider Reed's magnum opus. The bassline of 'Walk on the Wild Side' is instantly recognisable, while the piano in 'Perfect Day' is heartbreakingly beautiful. 1972 was also the year Reed first performed in Cambridge.

Unfortunately, Reed's follow-up album wasn't nearly as accessible. 1973's *Berlin* is much darker and more mature, alienating listeners who expected more glam rock and memorable hooks. When Reed tried to recapture this more commercial sound on 1974's *Sally Can't Dance*, his peppy pop-rock riffs and production were jarring alongside bleak lyrics about his experiences of electro-shock therapy and drug abuse. Surprisingly, the album was commercially successful, and Reed's record label, RCA, encouraged him to release a quick follow-up. Burned out musically, the provocateur in Reed was awoken. RCA had made one of music's most cardinal sins: they had told Lou Reed what to do.

Reed did promptly deliver an ambitious double album that aimed to change pop music forever - by containing no recognisable melody or rhythm at all. Whereas John Cage was content with silence on '4:33', Reed still provided his audience with noise. *Metal Machine Music* consists of 64 minutes and 11 seconds of whining guitar feedback manipulated by Reed at various disjointed speeds and pitches. The result sounds more like tinnitus than music.

While The Velvet Underground had also experimented with sound by, for example, incorporating droning violas into 'Venus in Furs', these decisions had always contributed towards a musical idea. On *Metal Machine Music*, there is no substance behind Reed's sound.

“
On Metal Machine Music, there is no substance behind Reed's sound

RCA's hands were tied. Contractually, they were obliged to release it. However, they resisted Reed's attempts to offer it as a classical album (which would have almost certainly made Beethoven roll over in his grave) and eventually withdrew the album after three weeks. Still, it apparently sold 100,000 copies and prob-

ably generated even more noise complaints.

It is difficult to think of another example of self-sabotage on this scale, though Neil Young's experiments with a vocoder and a pink suit in the early 1980s may come close. Critics called it "the tubular groaning of a galactic refrigerator", and, even now, the album finds itself on lists of the worst albums in history based on its ability to "clear the room of humans in record time".

After reading these judgements, it may seem like the project was irredeemable. However, it did stand as a testament to Reed's personality and principles (if not his artistry). Thus, the performance at the Junction was able to revive interest in the project. *Cambridge News* described Reed as a "maverick Dumbledore rejigging the rules of Quidditch", referring to the joy Reed found in experimentation. Highlights of the concert included when Reed let rip on his battered guitar and improvised a melody that he seemed to pluck from nowhere. Even at 68, he succeeded at confounding his audience and finding moments of beauty in the process.



WHY CONSULT WHEN YOU CAN LEAD?

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

Omar, Assistant Brand Manager, Tampax



Alumnus of Emmanuel College

Zoe, Sales Manager, Febreze



Alumnus of Robinson College

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



Alumnus of Pembroke College



▲ MAN ALIVE!, FLICKR

(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/manalive/5900962918/>)

Theatre

Has Covid tanked the ADC?

Bex Goodchild unveils the grim truth behind the ADC Theatre's £52,000 loss

It's well known that the ADC deals in amateur theatre — it's in the name — so no one expects it to make a huge profit. However, we also never expected it to make the massive deficits which the recently published 2022/23 ADC General Report suggest. Staging at least four plays a week, the notoriety of the theatre makes it shocking — and honestly a little concerning — that they're ending this year with a shortfall of £52,000.

Since Cambridge University effectively owns the ADC Theatre, they are (fortunately) responsible for resolving this deficit. According to the report, this involves providing a limited chest fund of £21k, plus a grant of £173k, all totalling to a massive £194k pumped into the theatre just to keep it afloat. While it's great that the university invests so much in the arts for students, is it sustainable to keep this up? Looking at past years' reports, the answer appears to be no. Worryingly, this issue is becoming a pattern, with the report for 2021/22 also revealing a deficit of £42,000. With the ADC evidently financially dependent on the university for the foreseeable future, maybe it's time to start thinking about why student theatre is making such a loss, and what needs to change.

According to the report, ticket sales for the ADC Theatre and Playroom are falling under 90% of the overall target. Only 51% of seats across all shows were sold — down 4% from last year. Even the bar didn't meet the expected sales, down 6%. Is Cambridge losing

interest? Potentially, although more answers seem to lie in the pandemic. We all remember the battering the arts industry took during Covid. From 'Save the Theatre' initiatives to online streaming, there were countless desperate efforts to keep the business afloat. Just as the university has stepped in to salvage the ADC Theatre, 2020 saw the government muster a £1.57 billion rescue plan for the nation's stages.



Post-Covid theatre has become a charity

However, for the majority of people, Covid no longer poses a risk. We are no longer in lockdown, standing two metres apart, or told to wear masks. Nevertheless, theatre-going seems to be the exception when it comes to returning to pre-pandemic ways. Beyond the ADC Theatre, venues everywhere are struggling to usher in the same business that they once enjoyed. The National Theatre, despite their income rising by 40% last year, are still miles off where they were before 2020; from a yearly in-

come pre-Covid averaging at over £100 million, their current turnover now fails to rise above £80 million.

I don't think such immense losses in theatre can be explained by the practical fears Covid induced; while a couple of years ago people were genuinely anxious to sit down among a tightly packed audience, it's safe to say the fears of close contact are in the past. Can this mean that general interest in theatre has decreased? According to the ADC, it's the opposite — there were 1100 students participating in ADC shows last year, 600 of whom were involved for the first time. People want to put on a show, and I believe there's a general consensus that theatre is an important part of society and culture.

This is certainly revealed in the rise in optional donations; 6% of tickets this year included an average £5 donation, highlighting a strong sense of sympathy towards a struggling student theatre. But this also shows that, post-Covid, theatre has become a charity. Despite desperate desires to keep it afloat, I can't see anything improving in the coming years if this continues. For the ADC Theatre, at least, a revival to the sales of the past seems highly unlikely unless something is done.

So if not the fear of catching Covid, what is driving profits into the ground at the ADC — and the theatre industry as a whole? I'd argue that the answer lies in the cultural revolution that Covid brought. How people consume entertainment has dramatically, potentially irreversibly, been altered. The convenience and infinite variety of what is ac-

cessible online, from the comfort of our own homes, counteracts physical theatre's attractions. Not only is it more expensive, but it's more of a hassle.

Nevertheless, problems may also lie in over-idealising pre-Covid times. Yes, the ADC should be making more of a profit — but it's unlikely this can be achieved by desperately scrambling back to where we were. We need to look forward, and think about the current setting of Cambridge stages. Things are constantly changing, and theatre has a bad habit of always trying to stand still. The ADC Theatre is a fundamental part of Cambridge and has been for a long time, but we can't force it into the same box it used to be in and expect success.

Take the triumph of *Macbeth* (*Online!*), solely performed over Zoom; innovative plays like these use the changes within culture and technology to their advantage — an exciting prospect that more could consider. Alongside this, more sociable timings have been a means for some theatres to adapt to a post-Covid world, seeing success in The National Theatre, who introduced earlier showings to suit its audiences' preferences after conducting a survey of theatre-goers. Mimicking this process by asking the students and public what would really get them back into the theatre could be a way for the ADC to survive — not by struggling against the tide, but embracing a new wave of what audiences want. Let's welcome new ideas, new structures, and be grateful for the opportunities the ADC Theatre gives us.

▼DIO SANGWON SHIN



Review round up: what's on this weekend?

The Welkin

The Welkin is not for the faint hearted. Lucy Kirkwood's feminist spin on Reginald Rose's 1954 play *12 Angry Men*, here taken on and directed by Mercy Brewer and Fiona Popplewell, is a play that would have otherwise got away. Despite a shaky start with fast-spoken Suffolk dialect, which has the potential to leave you yearning for subtitles, the play goes on to warm up, and successfully avoids common tropes when depicting hysterical women. *The Welkin* has already proven to be one of this term's ADC main shows that must not be missed.

Find the full review by Liza Voloboeva online
Friday 27th 19:45, Saturday 28th 14:30 and 19:45 at the ADC Theatre

Exit the King

Exit the King is a play about decline; it revolves around the ever-present prospect that King Beger (whose empire has collapsed and whose first wife will not love him) will die at the end of the show. The show lacks an emotional punch, as the moments of impressive lighting and sound design that grace the beginning of the play, become rarer as it progresses. Whilst the play may not quite live up to the overwhelmingly impressive marketing scheme set up by Amy Oh and George Jackson, it is certainly still worth a trip to the Playroom this weekend.

Find the full review by Beatrice Coulter online
Friday 27th and Saturday 28th 19:00 at the Corpus Playroom

Blink

Pembroke New Cellars are a difficult place to put a play on in. The two actors who enter the stage at the start of the play are seemingly already waiting for us. From the moment you enter the venue, you feel the urge to whisper so as not to break the peace. Tabby MacLachlan and Sameera Bowers offer beautiful story telling and energy, and despite their physical distance throughout, they create great tension and closeness. The only disappointment in this play is the amount of seats left empty. If you get a chance this weekend, head over to Pembroke for this hidden gem. Find the full review by Bex Goodchild online
Friday 27th and Saturday 28th 19:00 at the Pembroke New Cellars

Second Temple

Second Temple is the story of a dysfunctional family reconvening for Hanukkah, and the burial of Leah's husband. Sarah opened the play by pinning up a poster which proudly declared "it's wine o'clock", which immediately confirmed that this was a character who would steadfastly ignore everything unravelling around her for as long as she could. There was never a moment in which I wasn't totally immersed by Sophie Stemmon's incredible script, despite a couple of slightly clunky moments for some characters.

Find the full review by Molly Scales online
Friday 27th and Saturday 28th 21:30 at the Corpus Playroom

GOT A BIG IDEA?

Calling all future Innovators and Entrepreneurs! Join us over 3 days at 3 locations across the University. Find out how to take the next steps.

TUE 14 NOV
MILNER INSTITUTE

WED 15 NOV
JESUS COLLEGE

THU 16 NOV
WEST HUB



**BOOK FREE
TICKETS HERE**



iecamexpo.eventbrite.co.uk

✓ 1-2-1 advice ✓ Networking ✓ Seminars ✓ Pizza!

Vulture

What's on?

Music	Lifestyle	Arts	Theatre
<p>1 November</p> <p>BAS JAN The Portland Ams, 7:00pm</p> <p>The Drowsy Chaperone ADC Theatre, 7:45pm</p> <p>3 November</p> <p>The Rezillos Junction, 7:00pm</p> <p>7 November</p> <p>The Dead South Corn Exchange, 7:30pm</p> <p>9 November</p> <p>Earthbound The Six Six Bar, 8:00pm</p>	<p>28 October</p> <p>SolidariTee charity six-a-side football St John's playing fields, 12:00pm</p> <p>3 November</p> <p>CUTSAS' 1989 listening party Hidden Rooms, 9:00pm</p> <p>1 November</p> <p>Halloween Rumboogie Revolution, 10:30pm</p> <p>4 November</p> <p>Illumina fireworks Midsummer Common, 7:30pm</p> <p>15 November</p> <p>One Direction After Dark Union Cellars, 8:00pm</p>	<p>27 October</p> <p>The Black Creatives Festival The Cambridge Union, 6pm</p> <p>03 November</p> <p>ARCSoc Life Drawing Arcitecure Department, 7:00pm</p> <p>11 November</p> <p>Opening of 'Making New Worlds: Li Yuan-Chia & Friends' exhibition Kettle's Yard, 6:30pm</p> <p>14 November</p> <p>An Evening with Elodie Harper Waterstones, 6:00pm</p> <p>16-19th November</p> <p>Cambridge Literary Festival Various venues, various times</p>	<p>31 October - 4 November</p> <p>'I was in the house and I was waiting for the rain to come' Corpus Playroom, 7pm</p> <p>The Drowsy Chaperone ADC Theatre, 7:45pm</p> <p>1 - 3 November</p> <p>Seven Sketchy Sins ADC Theatre, 11:00pm</p> <p>3 - 5 November</p> <p>Tusk Tusk Robinson Auditorium, 7:30pm</p> <p>7 - 11 November</p> <p>Love Corporation Corpus Playroom, 7:00pm</p>

Haircuts

Clipper Cut	from £17
Dry Cut	from £20
Wet Cut & Dry	from £22
Flat Top	from £22
Restyle	from £24
Long Hair	from £24
Skin Fade	from £23
Shave / Wet Cut & Dry	from £36

Beard

Trim	from £10
Wet Shave	from £18

Boys under 12

Monday to Thursday	
Dry Cut	from £16
Wet Cut & Dry	from £18

Uni Student Discount

Only accepted with a valid uni or NUS card

Monday to Thursday	from £18
Friday	from £19

Senior Citizens 67+

Monday to Thursday	from £16
--------------------	----------

Lui's

Barbershop

EST. 2001



Find us

5a Pembroke Street
Cambridge CB2 3QY

Follow us

@luisharbershop1
 luisharbershop2001

Contact us

Tel: 01223 566663
Online: luisharbershop.co.uk

Shop Varsity!

Our online store, offering a range of Varsity branded items is open now!

- Pack of Pens: £2.39
- Mugs: £8.99
- Facemasks: £5.79
- T-Shirts: £13.49
- Sweatshirts: £17.99
- Backpacks: £9.99
- Tote Bags: £3.99

Postal print subscriptions are now available too - get copies of Varsity delivered directly to your door worldwide!

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

www.varsity.co.uk/shop

Tiddlywinks: serious tactics, silly names

Cambridge has dominated tiddlywinks, with an unbelievable Varsity record and the world's number one player. **Will McLaughlin** goes to a practice to find out why

Squidging off

It is November 1954 and two Cambridge students are trying to work out how to get a Blue. Neither RC Martin nor Bill Steen were athletes, so the project seemed a difficult one, but what they lacked in sporting prowess they made up for in initiative. According to Steen's letters, starting surf bathing was too complex logistically, tree-felling was impossible in the fen land, and zoos weren't keen on leasing their camels out for students to race on. So they settled on a children's game about flicking counters into a pot. On 16 January 1955, six undergraduates and a chaplain met in Bill Steen's room in Christ's, and the Cambridge University Tiddlywinks Club (CUTwC) was born. A parlour game with a silly name had been transformed: it was now an international sport.

70 years later and I am stood in Newnham College to experience the wonders of winking in that very same club. More

than 30 eager students, five practice tables, and the world No 1 ranked winker, Patrick Barrie, fill the Jane Harrison Room in preparation for practice. Two kind members of the club, Hannah and Jack, agreed to teach me the game.

The fundamental aim of Tiddlywinks is to flick small counters, or "winks", into the central pot with your big counter, or "squidger". After practising these pots I had to learn the key to tiddlywinks' complex strategy: the "squop". A squop is when you land your wink on your opponent's and thereby freeze their wink out of the game. When the points are finally counted, a squopped wink will count for zero where a free wink will count for

one, so winkers must be constantly aware of how they might squop, be squopped, or re-squop an established squop to free themselves. After this preliminary training I was ready to start the game, and we squidged off.

The game develops

In the first few years after 1955, Cambridge dominated tiddlywinks. The usual strategy for a two-man team was for one to aim for the pot and one to aim for the squop, disrupting the other team. The game was won when the first person had all their winks in the pot, or "potted out". In 1961, however, this all changed, because Oxford University had innovated a new, and highly annoying strategy: both players squopped. With these devious tactics they ground out two or three hour games and won both the Silver Wink (the cross-university trophy) and the Varsity match. Rules had to be changed, and a 25-minute time limit was introduced.

That 25-minute time limit was ticking down as I tried to squop and pot in my game with Jack and Hannah. I also had another teacher, however: Patrick Barrie, a Chemical Engineering DoS at Emma, but in his spare time the No 1 ranked tiddlywinks player in the world. As he demonstrated technical shots and strategy to me, he also unknowingly demonstrated the unbelievable skill of top level players. An incredible deftness of touch allowed him to place

his winks wherever he wanted, and it was matched by a keen tactical awareness of what the other player might be able to do two, three or four moves in advance.

I asked him about his career and especially Varsity matches, but generally Oxford didn't pose much of a threat (in 35 Varsity matches Cambridge has won 31). It was the Americans that were his greatest rivals. I then asked him for his favourite Tiddlywink term, of which there is a great number to be found on the CUTwC website. John Mapley created it when he found himself on the top of a pile of winks. Not only was he able to send the opponent's wink far out of play, a "boondock", but he also managed to squop another wink at the same time. He was asked what he wanted to name his new shot, and because John Lennon's assassination occurred just days earlier, he settled on "The John Lennon Memorial Shot". It becomes a Paul McCartney if you miss.

The final rounds

In 2019 COVID was disrupting hospitals, schools and businesses, but more importantly, it was threatening the survival of tiddlywinks. Bertie, the CUTwC publicity officer, told me that while Cambridge continued, many other university Tiddlywinks clubs disbanded. The winking world looked bleak. But things are changing. With over 200 sign-ups at the Freshers' Fair, Cambridge's club is going strong, and Ox-

ford have committed to restarting the Silver Wink trophy. There are also international links resurging, with the Smith Lady's Undergraduate Tiddlywinkers (SLUTs by acronym) restarting their historic club in Massachusetts. There's hope for the future, and right now is a great time to get into winking.

As the final rounds of my game came to a close, Bertie told me that the end of practice did not mean the end of the night. They introduced me to the "casual winker, serious drinker", a concept I could readily get behind as we walked to The Mill for a few more rounds. I continued to talk winks as we played a variety of drinking games, and was infected by the joy that surrounded the game.

I had a fantastic evening, and came to respect not only the funny traditions, but the serious tactical and technical ability that tiddlywinks required. I realised however that the reason for Cambridge's enduring tiddlywinks success, and ability to survive while other University clubs disbanded and reformed, was nothing to do with technical ability or tiddlywinks aptitude, but because of the community. Older tiddlywinks players like Patrick come back to the club to pass down the game's obscure social traditions and culture, and by entering the sport you are also entering a vibrant social space. "I joined as a joke and last year became the president," said Bertie. "I know it's silly, but I love this club so much."



Women's cricket Cuppers gets off the mark

Ellen Hedderman-Thompson reports on Cambridge's first women's cricket tournament

Last Sunday (22/10) saw the first women's cricket cuppers being held by Cambridge University Cricket Club. By setting up an inter-college league, the university cricket team aim to provide an inclusive space to play cricket in a relaxed environment. Responding to the growth of the women's game, both within the University and nationally, they hope to expand the base of women's cricket in line with the men's leagues in Cambridge. As inter-college leagues receive funding from colleges, as opposed to the University team which relies on subsidies from individual students, they hope to provide an accessible and low-commitment way to play the sport, especially for students who did not have the opportunity to play before arriving at university.

There was a high turnout on Sunday, with both students who were playing cricket at Cambridge for the first time

and those who play at university-level coming together to promote the women's game and to enjoy the sport in a relaxed environment. One student, who had joined the cricket as a beginner last year, commented that the event was "a good way of bridging between different abilities." They spoke about the positive impact that playing cricket has had on their time at university, giving an opportunity to take up a new sport and meet people from different colleges, through a variety of social events that take place throughout the year. Many players mentioned the importance of cricket for their mental health, with one student describing it as a "mental-health boost."

The president of the Blues cricket team, Immy Jenner, emphasised that the team are trying to promote accessibility within cricket at Cambridge. She recognised the support of the charity

Her Game Too in supporting the promotion of women's cricket in Cambridge and across the country. Originally tackling gender discrimination in football, this charity aims to "champion female participation until girls and women are accepted and respected equally in sport." In addition to this, the cricket club runs taster sessions as part of the 'Give it a Go' scheme run by the University, and stress that everyone is welcome to join, with no previous experience of cricket needed. The club welcomes people at any point throughout the academic year who express an interest in the sport.

The inaugural women's Cuppers was a testament to the steps towards inclusivity in sport being made both at university level and nationally, providing a positive future outlook for both cricket and the wider sporting environment at Cambridge.

Captain's Corner

Ella McCartney chats to Women's Rowing President Jenna Armstrong

How did you get into rowing?

A girl in my freshman orientation group at university astutely observed my unusually long legs. She invited me to the University Boat Club start of season BBQ. Turns out, free food is never actually free - one 5km test later and a tummy full of food, I was hooked. The rest is history.

What is your favourite memory from rowing with the Cambridge University Boat Club?

Crossing the finish line in the 2023 Boat Race. It still gives me chills.

How do you motivate your team?

I am lucky that I am surrounded by the most impressive group of self-motivated athletes — they do most of the heavy lifting themselves! I will let out an occasional "YEAH" on the water or during a hard erg, but that is probably more for me than it is for them!

What is your pre-race ritual?

I need a last-minute wee right before we boat. Always.

What is the secret to your team's continuous success in the annual Boat Race?

If I told you, it wouldn't be a secret!

If you had to go to another college, which would it be and why?

Newnham #iykyk

Biggest irrational fear?

Missing the 05:57 train in the morning.

What's your ideal night out in Cambridge?

Jack's Gelato on my way home for my 8pm bedtime.

What do you miss about home when at uni?

American convenience—a car, air conditioning, high fructose corn syrup, and my mom's cooking.

College formal with three people (dead or alive) - who are you choosing?

Sarah Winckless, Grace Prendergast, Gevvie Stone.



College sport: Varsity's wins of the week

Ladies' Netball: Jesus 15 - 11 Murray Edwards

After starting the season by beating St John's, the reigning champions from the previous four seasons, Jesus continued their title charge with another win.

Women's and non-binary football: Fitz/Corpus 0 - 4 John's / King's

A newly promoted John's/King's side recovered from their defeat last week to pick up an important win against last year's division 1 runners-up.

Hockey: Trinity / Fitzwilliam 2 - 0 St John's / Newnham I

Trinity / Fitzwilliam remain undefeated in this season's college hockey league, taking a win against last season's champions, St John's / Newnham.

Sport



Rowing president reveals all
pg. 31

The weird world of tiddly-winks
pg. 31



Cambridge is Red!

John's continue rugby dominance



▲ DIK NG

Alex Berry

Rugby union is one of the most popular college sports, despite it often meaning spending 80 minutes getting repeatedly thrown into the freezing mud. With a tournament and two rounds of matches already completed, we're here to catch you up with how the season is playing out so far, and who to look out for as the season builds.

Touch tournament

On Saturday 7th October, the college rugby season kicked off with a touch union tournament featuring 12 teams split into groups of six for the group stages of the tournament. With many new players and some colleges merging to form brand new teams, it was clear that it was taking some time for play to become settled, with handling jitters and miscommunication a strong presence at the beginning of the tournament. However, with matches only being 10 minutes

long, stakes were high and one or more dropped balls could easily cost teams a match, with many games being won by only one or two points.

The semi-finals saw the top team from each group face off against the runner-up from the alternate group. John's, who had already shown their prowess by dominating the group stages, defeated PEST (Peterhouse-Selwyn-Emma-Tit Hall) by a 4-2 win in one semi-final, whilst Robinson just pipped Downing/Caius to a spot in the final with a 4-3 victory.

John's came out firing in the final, scoring the first try and clearly displaying their intentions to add another trophy to their already extensive collection. The rest of the 20-strong John's squad continued their support from the sidelines, but it's safe to say that the rest of the onlookers were rooting for Robinson to cause an upset. In the end the victory was narrow, with John's taking the win by a point, leaving the final score of 3-2. Robinson continued their pursuit from last season

by taking the fight to John's, but in the end their loss was inevitable against a John's team that just always seem to just have a little something extra to give.

League matches: round one

This year a new format for league matches with the implementation of three-way fixtures, in which three teams face off against each other in matches lasting 40 minutes each. The first matches of the season saw CCK (Clare-Corpus-King's) emerge victorious against Robinson and the All Greys, with a 38-5 victory over Robinson and a 24-5 win over the All Greys.

St John's continued their strong run of form from the touch tournament the weekend prior, defeating Downing/Caius 17-7 and Queen's/Jesus 21-0 in their matches. Unsurprisingly, they remain the team to beat this season.

The biggest win of the weekend came for Catz/Homerton, who stormed to a 46-5 victory over Girton. PEST had a more unfortunate start to the season being the

only team not to score any points in the opening series of matches, taking losses to both Fitzwilliam/Sidney Sussex and Trinity/Christ's.

League matches: round two

There was a big turn around for the fortunes of PEST in the latest round of matches. The team came back from a double loss the weekend prior to take victories in both of their matches, with a 14-7 win over the All Greys and a 21-0 win over Trinity/Christ's.

CCK continued their strong run of form from the previous weekend by defeating Downing/Caius and Catz/Homerton. Their win against Catz/Homerton was the lowest scoring match so far, the only points coming from a drop-goal in the dying moments of the match to secure the 3-0 win.

Robinson brought their A-game this week, taking it to St John's in a match that ended 27-26. Churchill/Magdalone

didn't make the match, meaning they didn't even attempt to battle these top teams, leaving John's to join CCK as the only teams undefeated after the first two rounds of matches.

So far, not much is amiss from last season at the top of the table, with John's keen to carry on their seemingly everlasting dominant streak, but CCK and Robinson provide hope for an upset as the season progresses.

Both teams will hope to gain on their rival as matches continue this Saturday (28/10).



▼ DIK NG