

# Varsity

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## GU faces judgement day

University reviews future of services for graduate students



**Louis Ashworth**

Senior Investigations Editor

The survival of the Graduate Union (GU) may be at stake as the university review its services.

According to an internal document leaked exclusively to *Varsity*, the University of Cambridge is undertaking a review focusing on “whether the university should continue to recognise the GU as the body representing the university’s graduate students and, if not, how graduate students can

be best represented”.

Senior figures referenced problems with the organisation of the GU, with minutes saying that “removal of the GU from the Charity Commission’s register of charities earlier in 2015 was one of the more recent examples of a series of problems that had beset the GU in recent years”.

The review is due to focus on “the question of whether the GU or CUSU should be recognised as the body to represent graduate students in the future”, according to the document. The working group that is producing

the review is chaired by Professor Graham Virgo, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education.

The review’s final report is due to be presented to the University Council on 15th February. It has been conducted “with a view to making a recommendation to the Regent House” by the end of Lent term.

The Graduate Union’s website states that it “takes concerns” raised by its members to a “wide range of of university committees”, pursues campaigns, and acts as the “voice” for graduate and mature students.

The Graduate Union has had a troubled recent history. Last year’s election for GU position, branded “irresponsible” by one candidate for president, was invalidated after a vote “miscount”. The GU lost its charitable status with the Charity Commission in February 2015 after failing to file its annual accounts.

Meanwhile, CUSU have formally announced their intention to seek to bring graduate services under their banner. In their Strategic Plan for the years 2014-17...

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## Tab and May Ball Presidents in reviews row

Varsity News Team

*The Tab Cambridge* has emailed the presidents of Cambridge’s May Balls saying that with the exception of Trinity and St John’s, they “will not be giving any free publicity to May Balls this year in the form of reviews”.

In an email seen by *Varsity*, the paper’s editors James Wells and Xavier Bisits claim that “perks like free or discounted tickets are one of the only ways we can incentivise our authors”.

Presidents were roundly critical of the move, with Derek Chan, Chair of the May Ball Presidents’ Committee (MBPC) for 2015-16, condemning *The Tab*’s “non-negotiable request” as “particularly irregular and heavy-handed”.

Currently, the MBPC maintains a policy of not issuing free or discounted tickets in exchange for reviews. Chan indicated that the committee-wide policy would stand, and all presidents *Varsity* spoke to concurred.

“The MBPC does not agree that the financial burden of incentivising *Tab* writers should rest with our event committees,” Chan told *Varsity*. “Unlike *Tab Media Ltd.*, the running of balls and June events is not for profit.”

The President of Emmanuel College’s June Event echoed the sentiment, arguing that “given that May Balls and June events do not make a profit ... and that our income comes directly from ticket sales... giving away free tickets constitutes a material expenditure”.

“I have to think of every pound spent in terms of value to our guests, and I do not believe that reviews are the most effective way to spend that money,” she said.

If the MBPC does not change its policy and offer free or discounted tickets, *The Tab* editors note that “the only reviews [*The Tab*] will be doing are John’s, Trinity and any colleges...

*Continued on page 5*

INSIDE:

ACADEMICS THREATENED, STEPHEN HAWKING, DANIEL ZEICHNER



# ‘Change’ or ‘progress’?

For most of us, term is well and truly underway. The IN pile is rapidly outgrowing the OUT pile, and this is only Week 2! The old, seemingly unchanging rhythm of Cambridge life has returned.

Change, however, does seem to be afoot, after a week which has seen the revelation that the future of the Graduate Union is in doubt. The GU's complex history is worth re-examining. Founded in 1954 by the wife of the then Master of Peterhouse College, in the face of considerable opposition from the university, the GU took its current name and form, after a series of changes, in 1981. Since then, the ride has rarely been smooth.

In 2013, the GU's constitution was suspended when a subcommittee of the University Council discovered that it had been operating with too few trustees. Around the same time, £1000 went missing from the GU's safe, prompting a

wave of finger-pointing. The then president of the GU, Arsalan Ghani, faced a petition with more than 200 signatories calling for his resignation. To top it all off, the GU was deregistered as a charity last year as concerns mounted.

What will become of the GU remains to be seen, although the timing of the working group's reconsideration of its future is not insignificant given the plans for the redevelopment of the Mill Lane site where the GU is currently housed. It would seem that the university is looking to shake things up.

Shaking things up probably isn't something which springs to mind when we think of Cambridge, an institution which has been dominated by a certain demographic for over 800 years.

Of course, change is what we pick up a newspaper to read about; what is the

news but a series of reports describing ever-shifting events? Attitudes and ideas, too, are constantly changing. Even simply saying something like “The news this week that the Tate Modern has announced its first female director in Frances Morris is welcome” (page 18) seems entirely natural now because we've internalised that way of thinking. This is despite the fact that an era in which such a baldly progressive statement would have seemed odd or radical is by no means beyond the limits of living memory for some.

Reading the news (and moderating our reactions to it) is not wholly instinctive. Instead, our thoughts and impressions are shaped (for better or worse) not only by what we read, but also by the trends and patterns we observe in others' beliefs. As readers become writers – a transition upon which publications such as this are reliant – a feedback loop can

entrench certain ways of thinking. Hang on then, whatever happened to change?

While ‘progress’ is often so slow as to be imperceptible, it is only when we reach a milestone that we realise how far we have already come. That is as true of milestones, such as the stark realisation of a historic change like the possible closure of the GU as it is for far more positive milestones (see, I'm at it too now) like another crack in the glass ceiling.

However, if we decide that it's a good thing, change is by no means guaranteed. Fresh blood and fresh ideas are sometimes necessary if we want to shake things up, to stop things from getting entrenched. That thought may seem to be at odds with the sort of steady ‘progress’ we often have in mind. Perhaps the sort of change we want isn't so radical after all, and perhaps that's not a bad thing to realise.

## Self-Care group ‘disaffiliated’ amid drugs row

### Varsity News Team

CUSU's Women's Campaign have “officially disaffiliated” a Facebook group, after it was revealed by *The Tab* that it had been used to share prescription drugs, among them anti-depressants, acne medication and contraceptive pills.

Formerly known as the “CUSU WomCam Self-Care Tips” group, it is used by self-defining women and non-binary students to offer advice and share experiences in order to help members in terms of self-care – including dealing with mental health issues. However, the group appears to have also been used to exchange prescription drugs such as citalopram and fluoxetine without a prescription.

While some have voiced their alarm at this revelation, a member of the group speaking to *Varsity* attested to the group being “a beautiful place full of love, support and self-appreciation.”

In the group's description, its administrators requested student journalists not to “write publicly about anything in the group”, stressing that “the group is \*not\* a public space and shouldn't be treated as such.”

There has been an angry response since *The Tab* published the exposé on Wednesday. Speaking to *Varsity*, a second-year student and member of the group said: “This is a complete violation of privacy. It's disgusting [...] putting the members, some of whom are in vulnerable mental states, shows a lack of respect and compassion.

“This group is not a place for women to get medication. The author has isolated specific posts (which aren't that prevalent) and accused members of facilitating a dangerous situation.”

While possession of prescription drugs is not a criminal offence unless they are specifically classified under the Misuse of Drugs Act, the sale of prescription drugs is limited to those with a prescription from an appropriate practitioner.

Taking medication for which you do not personally have a prescription has been branded as dangerous, as many drugs come with all manner of grave possible side-effects. Professor Steve Field, chairman of the Royal College of General Practitioners, has previously condemned the sharing of prescription medications, describing how “The sharing of drugs in this way is inherently dangerous because neither the patient who was first prescribed the medication nor the person now taking them will understand the drug or its side effects.” He added that “Those taking them are putting themselves at risk of harm or even death.”

“

### THE SHARING OF DRUGS IS INHERENTLY DANGEROUS

On this point, the member of the group who spoke to *Varsity* said that “I appreciate that on the surface this



Prescription medications are thought to have been exchanged online

seems dangerous, but members only ask for a dose of medication in emergency situations, and usually someone agreeing to help another asks for proof of their prescription first.”

In a statement, the CUSU executive said that they did not endorse messages in the group “as they may be counter to students' wellbeing” and that “CUSU exists to defend and extend student welfare at Cambridge University”. They also indicated that

they would be working with WomCam to “ensure the wellbeing of Cambridge students is consistently safeguarded”.

Speaking to *Varsity*, CUSU Women's Officer Charlotte Chorley said that they are “awaiting decisions from the moderators of the group as to how will they proceed”.

However, in a statement, the Women's Campaign stressed that the group “has directional and political autonomy” from CUSU and that “bar

funding, CUSU has no influence over the workings and communications of the Women's Campaign”.

CUSU President Priscilla Mensah has previously said that CUSU cannot tell its autonomous campaigns and groups what to do, though the CUSU executive's latest statement does “remind students that help and support is always available either through the CUSU-GU Welfare Officer or through the Students' Unions' Advice Service”.

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# Academics face death threats over Turkey petition

Turkish academic in Cambridge describes fear of investigation and arrest by government over peace petition

**Jack Higgins**

Senior News Editor

A Cambridge academic has spoken to *Varsity* about how they feel unable to return home for fear that the Turkish government will arrest them because they had signed a petition critical of the regime.

This academic is just one of 1,127 signatories – from 89 universities across the world – who have each been threatened with criminal investigations from the Turkish government.

The Turkish authorities are reportedly seeking to charge the academics over ‘insulting the Turkish nation’ and ‘advocating for terrorism’, both of which are listed as offences within the Turkish penal code. If convicted, each academic could face between one and five years in prison.

The petition, under the title ‘Academics for Peace’, voiced criticism of continuing government violence against Kurds in the country, and was said to have “angered” President Erdogan.

Erdogan’s government have defended their military campaign on the grounds that it is targeted against a militant left-wing Kurdish group. However, *The Washington Post* has alleged that the military are perpetrating “direct and indirect violence against [Kurdish] civilians.”

In an address on Tuesday last week, President Erdogan said that Turkey

must challenge the “treason” from these “so-called academics”, whom he described as “ignorant and dark.” He also called on universities to punish these “traitors”.

Following the address, 42 universities are thought to have complied by suspending or firing 109 people. The BBC reports that, as of Monday, state prosecutors have detained “at least” 18 academics. Reuters have suggested that the number of academics arrested may be higher than that figure.

A pro-government newspaper has published the names of the petition’s signatories, prompting a convicted criminal to issue death threats to the academics, saying he would “let [their] blood in streams” and “take a shower in [their] blood”.

Speaking to *Varsity*, a Cambridge academic who signed the petition said that they have had to cancel their plans to return to Turkey because they “could be detained entering the country and/or barred from leaving.”

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INCITEMENT TO LYNCHING FOR JUST SIGNING A PETITION FOR PEACE IS A NEW LOW

They continued by saying that they “know many academics who signed



Turkey’s President Erdogan called the academics “traitors” for signing the petition

the petition”, and that “the ones in Turkey are facing prison, firing, physical harassment or worse.”

They added that academics in the country have “probably committed career suicide” by protesting against the government’s actions against the Kurds, and that there have been reports of “academics’ doors being marked and other acts of intimidation, unfortunately in some cases from colleagues and students.”

While describing this as not uncommon behaviour for the Turkish government, they added that the “blanket targeting of 1,128 people [and] incitement

to lynching for just signing a petition for peace is a new low.”

Over 1,000 UK academics have issued another petition in response, stating that they are “extremely disturbed by Turkey’s recent treatment of academics that have spoken out against atrocities being committed by the Turkish state against Kurds.” Similar petitions have been organised in the USA, Canada and Germany.

Offering their support to the academics involved, the Middle East Studies Association, the British International Studies Association, and the Central European International

Studies Association, amongst others, have all released letters condemning the Turkish government. The American Anthropological Association, writing to Turkey’s Prime Minister, said they wished to “express [their] grave concern” over the growing “public atmosphere of intimidation and threats against academics.”

Turkey currently ranks 149th out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index. Erdogan has faced significant protests and opposition in recent years, despite winning the 2014 Presidential election with over 50 per cent of the vote.



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The Graduate Union was described as having experienced a “series of problems”

# University reviews role for Graduate Union

*Continued from front page.*  
... they listed as a Strategic Target a “formal merger with the Graduate Union that protects the autonomy of grad students and grad-specific services”. The plan, released before the GU lost its charitable status, describes the situation as there being “two separate charitable bodies with identical aims and membership”.

Furthermore, CUSU’s Strategic Plan states that the GU “has consistently stumbled from crisis to crisis over the past decade”.

CUSU President Priscilla Mensah told *Varsity* that a joining of the two bodies would involve “potentially merging some of the practical ways that CUSU and the GU could work together”.

“I don’t think the answer is merging the GU with CUSU,” said Chad Allen, who was elected as GU President in a by-election following the invalidated election last year. He raised questions about how the two organisations could be practically merged, saying that “the only thing I’m not open-minded to is just having a graduate sabb in CUSU”. He pointed to the 1994 Education

Act’s guidance for student unions, which states that “appointment to major union offices should be by election in a secret ballot in which all members are entitled to vote”, saying that it could create a situation in which a graduate sabb was a minor officer, and not afforded the same powers as other members of the sabbatical team.

“

**I DON’T THINK THE ANSWER IS MERGING THE GU WITH CUSU**

“I’m not saying it’s impossible that would work,” Allen said. “I think that’s a very compromised situation for a graduate sabb to find themselves in”.

Mensah disagreed with Allen’s vision of combined services, emphasising that a merger would require a wider restructuring of CUSU. She told *Varsity* that if the university chose to cease to recognise the GU “CUSU could not look the same way it does

now... things would have to change for both organisations”.

Asked whether he thought that CUSU’s sabbatical officers saw the university’s review as an opportunity for a power grab, Allen responded “Maybe... but for the right reasons. It’s not a personal thing”.

Allen spoke about the need to sustain representation, pointing to the increasing numbers of graduates, who have made up the majority of the full-time student intake since 2010.

“In five or 10 years’ time, it could be that graduate students are the vast majority,” he said.

The leaked document noted the need to “consult with the graduate student community by inviting comments from JCRs and MCRs by email on the questions to be considered by the review group, by a deadline in December”.

Robinson MCR President Maxine Lamb told *Varsity* that “feedback from our MCR members has shown very mixed feelings on the subject”.

“We feel we could have had further consultation and more information from the university than what we did receive,” Lamb said. “We were informed about the ‘Survey on representation of graduate students’ in the GU bulletin last December and through various other email lists... there has been little other information from the university itself and very little background explaining why it was being conducted was provided with the survey. Furthermore, to our knowledge, to date there has been no feedback to students on the outcome of this survey”.

Lamb claimed that MCR members were concerned that if CUSU took on the responsibility for mature students, there may be a reduction in “the quality of the services they currently provide” because CUSU is “primarily undergraduate focused”.

Brendan Mahon, speaking as St Edmund’s Combination Room President, criticised the Graduate Union heavily. “How can such a mess of an organisation possibly represent graduate students properly?” said

Mahon. “They were de-registered as a charity, which is a pretty special level of incompetence.”

“CUSU is actually run properly. With a grad sabb, the voice of grads won’t get lost in undergrad problems, like Chad Allen seems to suggest.” Mahon has previously chaired CUSU Council, but chose not to speak in that capacity.

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**HOW CAN SUCH A MESS OF AN ORGANISATION POSSIBLY REPRESENT GRADUATE STUDENTS PROPERLY?**

“It is important for graduate students to have their own representation due to their needs being different from those of undergraduates,” said Lamb. “However, the benefit of having a distinct body solely for graduates is lost when that body is not well run and does not provide the support that graduates require. We are concerned that, despite the improvements the current GU President is promising, the lack of resources and personnel the GU currently has has made it something of an uphill battle for them.”

A spokesperson for the university said: “The review is ongoing and the final report is due to be presented to the University Council in Lent term.”

The minutes from a University Council meeting on 19th October last year show that Dr Richard Anthony, Bursar at St Edmund’s, reported on the topic of the GU.

The minutes of that University Council meeting state that “The Committee had been disappointed that no member of the GU Trustee Board had been able to attend the meeting to respond to the Committee’s serious concerns about the governance of the GU in person.”

They also said that “The removal of the GU from the Charity Commission’s

register of charities earlier in 2015 was one of the more recent examples of a series of problems that had beset the GU in recent years”.

Anthony reported that the problems had “distracted the GU from its primary function”. The minutes state that “feedback from Dr Anthony’s own college suggested that the GU was not performing adequately”.

Sources within CUSU have told *Varsity* that the university’s review may have created a rift within CUSU’s sabbatical team. “I think we’re united in our shared interest that graduates need robust and effective representation,” said Mensah, but recognised that “we’re all individuals”. She said she would “never speculate” as to what conclusions the review will reach.

At a meeting of the Council Committee for the Supervision of the Student Unions (CCSSU) in September last year, it was recorded that the GU and CUSU, as well as Cambridge’s JCRs and MCRs, have “received the worst score in the UK for students’ satisfaction with their students’ union”.

The resolution of a debate from May last year describes how there “had been a concern that the GU was proposing to withdraw its funding of the post” of joint CUSU/GU Welfare and Rights Officer.

The minutes of the CCSSU meeting state that “following discussions over the summer with the CUSU officers, the GU had agreed to continue to fund its share of the costs of the joint post”.

This week saw the installation, after some delay, of a door into the offices of CUSU, the GU and 17 Mill Lane. Both bodies have spoken to *Varsity* about the frustration caused by students being unable to physically have access to the student services they offer. “It’s very hard to provide services when you have to direct people halfway through a building to get to see you,” said Allen.

Until the final report is presented to the University Council next month, it seems that a question mark will hang over the Graduate Union.



17 Mill Lane, which houses both CUSU and the GU



# Tab accused of being ‘underhand’ in May Ball ticketing row

*Continued from front page...*  
... colleges seeking publicity in the form of a sponsored article”.

Chan told *Varsity* of his disappointment at this stance. “We are dismayed that an editor of *The Tab* implied his intention to block pro bono review submissions from publication,” he said. *The Tab*’s editors have confirmed that they stand by their view.

The Presidents of the Trinity College May Ball issued a joint statement affirming: “It is not the Trinity May Ball’s policy to provide free or discounted tickets, beyond those given to our charitable partners and our committee.”

A student at Newnham College said that by only reviewing Trinity and St John’s May Balls, *The Tab* were “perpetuating the pomposity of the only two colleges who could probably afford to give them free tickets”.

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IT’S ARROGANT AND UNETHICAL

Citing its status as “the most read student newspaper in the UK” in their email to the May Ball presidents, *The Tab*’s editors argue that “a review by *The Tab* is, of course, very valuable”, quoting the site’s page view figures and the benefits they claim a good review can bring to an event.

They claimed that students “pride themselves on making it into [their] photos”, and that “a good view upholds

the reputation of the event, creates hype and facilitates ticket sales in future years”.

The President of Emmanuel’s June Event went on to tell *Varsity* that she found the paper’s conduct to be “unprofessional”, adding that “it seemed underhand to approach colleges directly when our policy had been clearly set out centrally. Approaching presidents individually felt like a tactic to undermine that coordination.”

She also described how she felt that “the bulk of the email itself read very similarly to messages sent to past presidents requesting free tickets. The only novelty is the promise not to review colleges which do not offer tickets.”

“As far as I know, Emmanuel hasn’t offered free or discounted tickets to press in the last three years, and have nonetheless received reviews.” *The Tab*’s editors maintain that they have been offered free tickets to events such as Selwyn Snowball in the past.

In a statement to *Varsity*, *The Tab*’s editors said: “We are concerned that Derek’s support for a ban on committees being able to issue press tickets is harming the norm in Cambridge of newspapers including *The Tab* being able to review as many events, balls and plays as possible.

“We don’t expect a review’s ticket to every event or even most events, but without reviewers’ tickets, it is far more difficult for newspapers like *The Tab* to incentivise busy students to put an effort into covering events, particularly the less well-known balls. Indeed, the reason why many students join *The Tab* is the knowledge they may receive such tickets, which is an incentive for



St John’s May Ball fireworks

their high output.

“General practice in the UK is to give reviewers’ tickets, stimulating discussion, adding to the event experience and even giving free publicity to the event in question. Rather than getting committees to break the rules – as has been done in the past under similar agreements by newspapers like *The Tab*, if indeed the policy existed beforehand – we would like to point

out openly the problems that this ban has for journalism in Cambridge.

“We can’t force anyone to give us reviewers’ tickets, of course, but we do hope to encourage the committee to remove its ban for next year. We strongly believe committees should be able to make their own decisions about ticketing.

“We will be making an exception in the case of Trinity and John’s because

we believe we have a duty to our readers to cover the most popular May Balls irrespective of the committee’s ban.”

Speaking to *Varsity*, a student at Homerton College said, “I doubt most students paying for May Ball tickets with three figure price tags will appreciate *The Tab* trying to use its influence to blackmail organisers for free tickets. It’s arrogant and unethical.”

## CUSU to hold referendum on full-time Disabled Students’ Officer

**Joe Robinson**  
Senior News Editor

CUSU have announced a referendum on the creation of a full-time Disabled Students Officer (DSO) to be held later this month.

The referendum was triggered by a petition by the CUSU Disabled Students’ Campaign (DSC), which reached 350 signatures, the threshold to be passed by the CUSU Constitution before a referendum is triggered.

The petition accused the university of discriminating against students with disabilities through “inadequate mental health support, a lack of staff training, and a university that is inaccessible in its physical layout as well as its teaching and examination structures”.

It stated that the creation of a full-time DSO is needed in order to “challenge these deep institutional problems”.

Under the existing CUSU budget, a Disabled Students’ Officer would be paid £20,000 per annum, in line other sabbatical officers.

When the petition closed, a spokesperson for the Disabled Students’ Campaign called it a “landmark success that reflects the long-standing need to address the structural, attitudinal, and physical exclusion experienced by disabled students at Cambridge”.

The plebiscite which will take place on 27th January will be made up of a yes/no vote on the question: “Do you accept the proposed constitutional changes, which would add a Disabled Students’ Sabbatical Officer to the CUSU Full-Time Elected Officer Team?”

If successful, the Disabled Students’ Officer will join the President, Education and Deputy President, Access and Funding, Coordination and Services, Student Support, and Women’s Officers as annually elected, paid positions.

Those eligible for the role will be “ordinary members who self-define as disabled”, just as those eligible for the existing full-time position of Women’s Officer are self-defining women.

Up to now, the Disabled Students’ Campaign has been one of five autonomous campaigning bodies within CUSU. The other four are the BME, International, Women’s and LGBT+ campaigns. It is the newest campaign of the five, and was created as the “voice of disabled students” at Cambridge.

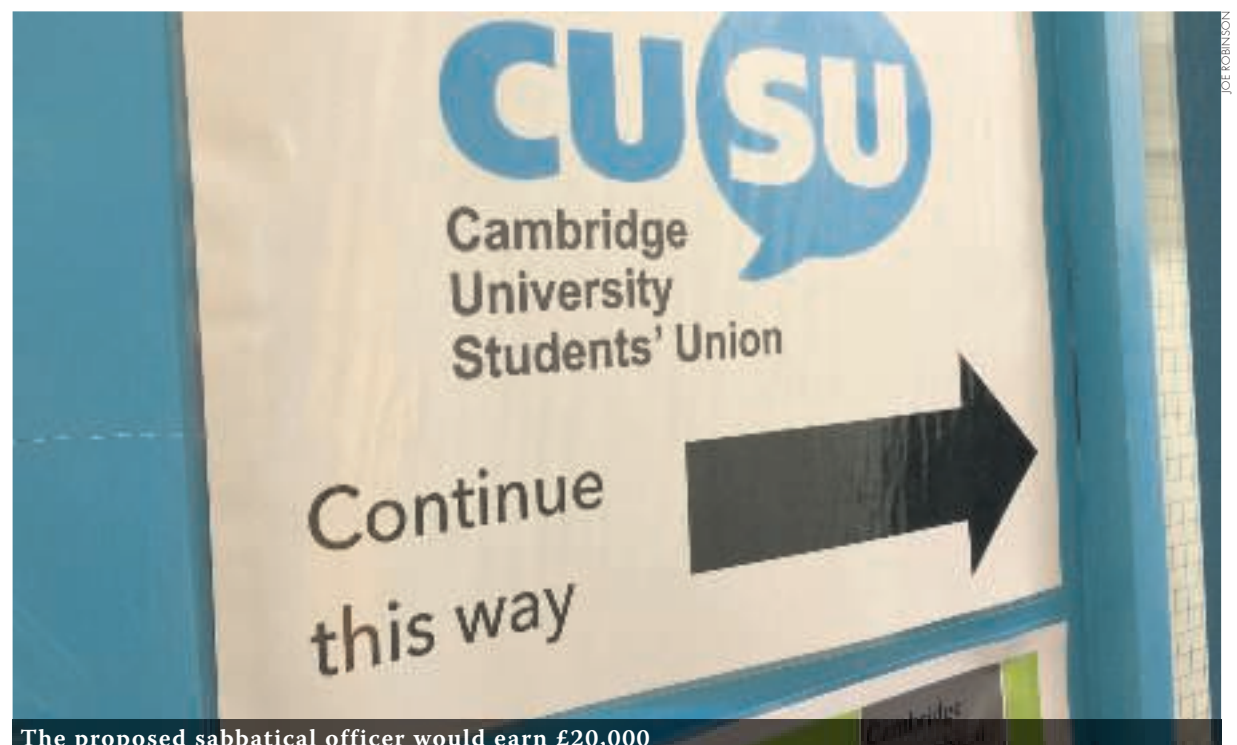
Self-identifying disabled students made up 7.2 per cent of the full-time student body, according to a survey last year, whereas 26.6 per cent identified as black and minority ethnicity (BME).

Concerns have been raised, however, on the value for money offered by a full-time sabbatical officer dealing with disabled students’ issues.

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THE OPPORTUNITY COSTS NEED TO BE CONSIDERED CAREFULLY

Cornelius Roemer, President of Trinity College Students’ Union and a member of the CUSU Part-time



The proposed sabbatical officer would earn £20,000

Executive, told *Varsity* that “the opportunity costs need to be considered carefully”. He added: “Even before the DSC petition/campaign arose, one of my working hypotheses was that CUSU might benefit [from] more support staff (rather than more sabbatical officers to deal with admin work) [...] It is clear that it is not feasible to create sabbatical positions for all autonomous campaigns. This has to be taken into account to ensure fairness among campaigns. There may be good reasons why the DSC should get a sabb but not

others, but this discussion needs to be had.”

During Monday’s CUSU Council meeting, CUSU President Priscilla Mensah addressed the contentious issue of individual JCRs and MCRs campaigning for either side of the referendum.

She expressed a desire for a “weighted conversation” to be had, and added that “hopefully [those wishing to express a particular view] would be happy to comply”.

Addressing concerns about the

balance of the debate, and of the short time-scale of the campaign before the referendum, CUSU Coordinator Jemma Stewart told *Varsity* that “CUSU Elections Committee is committed to running a fair, accessible and democratic referendum”.

She also said that CUSU will be holding a debate on the referendum which will be live-streamed online on 26th January at 7 p.m.

Voting will take place on 27th January for 9 a.m. till 9 p.m., and results will be announced the next day.



# Hawking warns that humanity faces disaster from man-made threats

**Daniel Gayne**

Senior News Correspondent

Professor Stephen Hawking has warned that in the next 10,000 years humanity will face destruction by threats of its own making.

Professor Hawking was doing a Q&A when he was asked the probing question: “Do you think the world will end naturally or will man destroy it first?”

In response, the Gonville and Caius fellow noted that: “We face a number of threats to our survival from nuclear war, catastrophic global warming, and genetically engineered viruses.

“The number is likely to increase in the future, with the development of new technologies, and new ways things can go wrong.

“Although the chance of a disaster to planet Earth in a given year may be quite low, it adds up over time, and becomes a near certainty in the next thousand or 10,000 years.

“

**HOW CAN THE HUMAN RACE SUSTAIN ANOTHER 100 YEARS?**

“By that time, we should have spread out into space, and to other stars, so a disaster on Earth would not mean the



Prof. Hawking has warned that “we face a number of threats to our survival”

end of the human race.

“However, we will not establish self-sustaining colonies in space for at least the next hundred years, so we have to be very careful in this period.”

However, there was a note of optimism when Hawking, Research Director at Cambridge University’s Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics, added that: “We are not going to stop making progress, or reverse it, so we have to recognise the dangers and control them.”

This is not the first time Prof. Hawking has opined on the ominous. Previously, he warned of the risk of humans being wiped out by their own artificially intelligent inventions, and the threat of more intelligent extraterrestrials.

In 2006 Hawking posted this open question on the internet: “In a world that is in chaos politically, socially and environmentally, how can the human race sustain another 100 years?”

Hawking has been affiliated to Cambridge since he took up graduate

study in Cosmology at Trinity Hall in October 1962. Until 2009 he was Lucasian Professor of Mathematics.

The talk, delivered at London’s Royal Institution, delved into Hawking’s research into black holes, which he described as “stranger than anything dreamed up by science fiction writers”. The lecture series, which has in the past featured Jeffrey Sachs, Bertrand Russell, and Edward Said, will be broadcast on Radio 4, with Professor Hawking’s first lecture going out on 26th January at 9 a.m.

## VC forging India links

**Jack Higgins**

Senior News Editor

The Vice-Chancellor (VC) of the University of Cambridge has agreed to consider co-operating with the Andhra Pradesh – a state in India – government in the field of education.

Chief Minister Naidu today met Sir Leszek Borysiewicz in Davos to discuss education. The meeting took place at the 46th World Economic Forum summit in Switzerland.

“

**TRANSFORM ANDHRA PRADESH INTO A “CENTRE OF EDUCATION”**

Naidu’s conversation with the VC stems from a desire to transform Andhra Pradesh into a “centre of education.” Borysiewicz has agreed to send a delegation to the Indian state in order to consider whether working together would be desirable. This is not the last time the Vice-Chancellor has made the headlines in relation to India.

Last term it was reported that the Indian Prime Minister - who faces allegations of human rights abuses - would visit Cambridge on Borysiewicz’s invitation, which prompted an open letter from academics criticising the invitation for having “gravely compromised” the “reputation” of the university.

# Cambridge PhD student could be Mars-bound

**Kaya Wong**

Senior News Correspondent

Ryan MacDonald, a 22-year-old theoretical astrophysicist at Gonville and Caius College pursuing a PhD in Astronomy, could potentially be going on a one-way trip to Mars.

Over 200,000 hopefuls around the globe applied for the coveted 24 spots as Mars One crew, and MacDonald is amongst the final 100 candidates in the selection process.

This September, he will go through a two-week assessment that will determine whether he will be one of the astronauts settling on the first colony established beyond planet Earth. While the prospect of a one-way trip to another planet might seem intimidating, it does not faze MacDonald.

“I’ve been fascinated by space for as long as I can remember,” he said. “But as a young aspiring astronaut in the ‘90s, there were few positive role models to look towards, since the UK’s official policy discounted human spaceflight.”

The Mars One programme aims to take the ‘next giant leap for humankind’, proposing to establish permanent human settlement on the red planet, with the first crew to depart in 2026. The project is spearheaded by an elite team of eight, including a Nobel Laureate, an astronaut and a former NASA Chief Technologist.

It was not until he had the chance to speak with Major Tim Peake – the first Briton to walk in space – at the launch of the UK Space Agency in 2010, that his childhood dreams of spaceflight

suddenly seemed realisable.

After that encounter, MacDonald had his sights set on the European Space Agency, anticipating the moment when they open applications again in the 2020s.

The typical minimum requirements for astronauts are a science PhD and/or three years of relevant research experience or, alternatively, a BA in Science and 1,000 hours as a jet pilot.

Three years after meeting Major Peake, in April 2013, Mars One opened its applications. An unexpected opportunity for MacDonald to realise his interstellar dreams had presented itself and he grasped it with both hands.

“Sure, I thought, the chance of being accepted would be small, but how could anyone turn down the chance to be one of the first scientists on Mars?”

Getting this far in the selection process was no easy feat – the interview round was particularly daunting as it tested the candidates’ ability to apply large quantities of newly learnt information in unfamiliar contexts.

“We were provided with a cart-load of information concerning past missions to Mars, the Martian environment, technical aspects of the life support systems and the colonisation plan, amongst many other topics.”

MacDonald’s interview was conducted by Dr Norbert Kraft M.D., a NASA award winning expert in Aerospace Medicine, which MacDonald admits was ‘terrifyingly tense’, but also an ‘incredible opportunity’ as it was a chance to speak to a distinguished figure in the field of human spaceflight.

Even though he knows he might not end up being one of the scientists on



The British astronaut was a major inspiration to MacDonald

Mars, the passionate astrophysicist has relished the chance of meeting other candidates on the project. He has met 26 of the current 100 candidates in person, and feels honoured to be counted amongst them.

“I’ve met candidates with backgrounds in aerospace engineering, medicine, law, sustainability, physics, astronomy... They are an incredible bunch of people that represent a diverse cross-section of society.

“Oh, and Neil deGrasse Tyson and NASA Astronaut Mike Massimino also Skyped me on TV, so there’s that!”, MacDonald revealed.

Aside from being an academic,

he also runs outreach activities for younger audiences and is currently finishing a near-future hard science fiction novel. Through being part of the Mars One project, he has been offered various opportunities to inspire others through public speaking, and he agrees that the experience of doing so has enriched him as a person.

“For me the absolute highlight has been the fantastic educational platform my status as a candidate has afforded me, to speak to schools around the world about space, planetary science, human missions to Mars and careers in STEM.”

He has also spoken at international

conferences, a TEDx event, and was even recently accepted into a professional speaking organisation.

MacDonald admits that what fuels his passion is the legacy the project will bequeath, noting that he was “fascinated by the scientific potential but it’s the inspirational potential that really drives [him].”

When asked to offer advice to aspiring youngsters, he said: “Identify what is that one thing in life that you are passionate about more than any other, then pursue it relentlessly. The only limits in life are self-imposed, so chart your course, chip away at the obstacles, and you will get there in the end.”



# Zeichner: 'Britain's position is an accident of history'

**Tom Freeman**  
Associate Editor

Daniel Zeichner, the Labour MP for Cambridge, has reiterated his opposition to the UK's Trident nuclear weapons system, but conceded that the position is politically compromising.

In an event hosted by King's Review and chaired by Christopher Prendergast, Professor Emeritus in French, who at the start of the event made clear he was not acting as a "neutral moderator", Zeichner conceded: "We're putting ourselves in a vulnerable position politically".

The Shadow Transport Minister approvingly noted of his statement before his election that his position on Trident renewal was "not quite what my party's is", concurring with Prendergast that "not quite" meant "exactly not".

"There has to be nuance in your presentation, but you're exactly right," he said. "Going around saying your party is rubbish is not the best way to win an election."

However, he said that this "perhaps isn't true" for Labour voters in Cambridge who, he argued, were "fed up with politics as it was before".

He said Cambridge's status as "a progressive city, an intelligent city" meant its voters were more receptive to arguments in favour of scrapping Trident. Arguing that voters in other constituencies were more likely to be sceptical, he said it was "not surprising" that some of his Labour colleagues continued to support Trident renewal

because they were "a bit scared" of the potential electoral consequences to do otherwise.

Prendergast claimed the electorate had been sold a "delusional belief" over the issue.

Zeichner accused the Prime Minister's position on Trident to be "very far from the truth", and called Cameron and his party's performance at Prime Minister's Questions "regularly pathetic... when these are serious and profound issues".

He also accused Cameron and the Conservatives of "trotting out... the kind of stuff you see in *Sun* headlines".

Arguing that the 2015 election illustrated that the party "still can't take on Murdoch and win elections", he criticised the print media for being "pretty biased" and conceded that the argument to scrap Trident could be lost because of a "difficult" media environment.

"This is the beginning of a debate that frankly the popular media has not started at all", a situation he called "ludicrous".

He also admitted he "can't remember" whether the previous Labour government had reduced the number of submarines from four to three.

Currently all four Vanguard submarines are in service, as the 2006 white paper proposing reduction was never adopted.

One questioner raised the possibility of reducing the number of submarines to two, so the deterrent was not permanently at sea. In response, Zeichner criticised those who were "obsessed" with military hardware and

"having the stuff".

"The distance between the real world and that is very great indeed," he said.

However, he said the country could be under no illusions about the existence of regimes hostile to the UK.

"I am not a pacifist," he said. "The Labour Party is not a pacifist party, and is not about to become one."

Despite this, he reiterated his belief that his party could convince the public to scrap the nuclear deterrent.

"I do not think that to win an election we have to run the old arguments about Trident," he said, narratives which he accused the media of repeating.

"A lot of this to me feels from a different age," he said. "As far as the public and the media are concerned... we are digging up something from 30 years ago and replaying it."

He also claimed that the public were "reviled" by the idea of Britain following an American agenda, and concurred with Prendergast when he said: "It is not obvious to me in what sense we can plausibly describe our system as independent."

"By and large, we see America as our ally," Zeichner said. But he claimed that we might wonder whether this would still be the case if Donald Trump got into power, which he said would be a "very frightening time".

Jeremy Corbyn and Emily Thornberry, the Shadow Defence Secretary, had been "derided and lampooned" in the press for the suggestion that "Trident isn't the only option available," Zeichner claimed, but that



Zeichner appeared at King's College

such media coverage illustrated the "shallowness" of the arguments presented for Trident renewal.

He praised Thornberry for being "very astute" to raise the issue of Trident as part of the country's long-term defence policy.

Conceding that Jeremy Corbyn's position "didn't work for us in the 1980s" and that the current debate handed an opportunity, he supported the belief that this was the "first opportunity in a long while" Labour might offer a different stance on Trident renewal, and hoped that the public would support this.

Throughout the event, Zeichner reiterated his longstanding belief that the weapons' effectiveness as a deterrent was dubious, citing his presence on marches against nuclear weapons in the early 1980s.

"I didn't believe it then, and I don't believe it now," he told the mostly non-student audience. "I think I've been very clear I'm not voting for renewal."

Prendergast, however, argued more forcefully against the weapons,

claiming that the idea they are an effective deterrent against North Korea had "zero credibility as a military political decision".

Zeichner echoed his sentiment, arguing that it was "completely irrational" to believe Trident affected how the North Korean regime operated, an argument that assumes the North Korean government was a "rational regime".

In response to Prendergast's contention that the logic of deterrence means that nuclear proliferation should be encouraged, Zeichner compared the situation to arguments made by the American right about gun ownership.

"It's the same argument that Donald Trump and Sarah Palin make," he said. "If we all have guns, we're safer."

He also compared Britain's position as a former empire to Austria who, he argued, in the 1980s believed Britain's attitudes towards its own influence were " quaint".

"It all depends on where you're sitting," he said. "Britain's position is an accident of history."

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Raspberries included!



# Union hosts sexism in business event

**Ellie Howcroft**

Senior News Correspondent

Building on the success of last term's BBC 100 Women event, Cambridge University's Women in Business Society (CAMWIB) collaborated with the Cambridge Union Society on Monday to host a forum on the problem of institutionalised sexism in business.

The panel was made up of four women from the worlds of business and academia: Bella Vuillermoz, the founder of Sky's 'Sky Academy' initiative; Ines Wichert, a doctor of Organisational Psychology who has written on the role of women in the workplace; Pinky Lilani, owner of Spice Magic, and lawyer Charlotte Proudman, who rose to prominence last year after speaking out about her experiences of sexism on LinkedIn.

“

THE ONLY THING YOU GET IN LIFE WITHOUT ASKING IS AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Much of the discussion was oriented around the challenges and obstacles faced by women during the course of their career, with Vuillermoz characterising women's career ladder as a "jungle gym".

Speaking of the difficulties faced by women in the workplace, Proudman talked about "imposter syndrome"



– the feeling of not being good enough for your working environment – while Vuillermoz spoke of the tribulations associated with being "an ambitious workaholic with perfectionist tendencies".

Throughout, the panellists related their individual experiences to the practicalities of the business world, speaking of the importance of mentoring those below you whilst looking to senior colleagues for advice and support. Lilani, related personal anecdotes from her life and argued that we should not follow other people's

blueprints but instead create our own.

With the topic moving to the issue of a 'work-life balance', Wichert argued that we should really be talking of 'work-life integration', stating that the two are indistinct. She added that women's place in the workplace will not change unless male attitudes both at home and in the workplace change. With regards to the question of whether women can 'have it all', Wichert suggested that this was a personal question that needed to be defined by each individual for themselves.

A lively discussion followed relating

to increasing the number of women in senior roles in business through quotas, with arguments that more women in senior roles has positively impacted on the running of businesses and concerns that change may not happen if it is not enforced. Throughout, the audience was encouraged to combat sexism by pursuing their goals with single-mindedness and determination, and that women should never be afraid to ask for what they want. As Lilani expressed it, "the only thing you get in life without asking is an infectious disease."

## Uni seeks female constables

**Joe Robinson**

Senior News Editor

The University of Cambridge has put out a job advert for more women to join the University's 30-strong team of constables.

The university is looking to redress the gender balance which states that they "particularly welcome applications from women for this vacancy as they are currently under-represented at this level in our department".

The successful candidate must be able to "communicate with a wide range of people and keep calm in challenging situations".

The Cambridge University Constabulary, made possible by the Universities Act 1825, is among the oldest police forces in the United Kingdom. As a non-Home Office police service, they are appointed de jure by the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor, but are in practice appointed by the University's Proctors' Office.

According to law, they have "powers and authorities, privileges, immunities, and advantages as any constables hath or shall have within his constableness" – that is, within a four-mile radius of the precincts of the University.

Until the 1960s, the Proctors and the Constabulary conducted regular street patrols within the university's precincts.

However, they no longer actively patrol the city's streets and operate on a reactive basis when disorder or demonstrations are expected.

## Cambridge house price growth outpaces rest of the country

**Siyang Wei**

Senior News Correspondent

House prices in Cambridge increased at the highest rate in the country last year, outpacing even London.

According to a report released yesterday by Hometrack, the UK's leading residential property market specialist, the average value of a home in Cambridge rose from £348,000 to just under £400,000, an increase of 14.4 per cent.

The report measured the growth rates and average prices for 20 major cities in the UK; London, in second place, experienced an annual growth rate of 13.8 per cent, followed by Bristol with 12.8 per cent.

However, average house prices remain highest in London, pushing up to £455,000 this year.

Although prices may be rising rapidly, the numbers of residential property sales in both Cambridge and London are expected to be lower, as the scarcity of homes coming onto the market as well as their decreasing affordability limit the overall number of homes that can be sold.

Richard Donnell, Hometrack's Insight Director, said: "With cities the focus of economic and demographic change, it is no surprise that city-level house price inflation continues to run ahead of UK house price growth, which has also risen to 7.9 per cent. The performance of house prices across these cities reflects the scarcity of supply and underlying demand for homes".

This analysis was echoed by Adrian Whittaker, Sales Director at New Street Mortgages, who commented that the high rate of growth is

"representative of a market that is becoming more competitive", in what he characterised as an "environment of rising demand and limited supply".

Jeremy Duncombe, Director of Legal & General Mortgage Club, added that increasing house prices "demonstrate that housing demand is continuing to exceed supply, pricing potential buyers out of the market."

"The significant disparity between the prices of homes in different areas of the UK is particularly concerning as it forces people to buy further away from their first choice location, or move to a property which may not best suit their specific needs, potentially disrupting their lifestyle."

"More houses need to be built around UK cities to enable people to live in their desired areas."

The rising demand may be fuelled by property investors, whom the report shows made one in five of all residential purchases last year.

Mr Donnell further commented: "Cambridge, Oxford, and London have been pretty much on the same trajectory for quite some time."

"There's been a lot of new housing in the Cambridge area, such as at Trumpington Meadows, and between 30 and 40 per cent of the sales in recent times have been new-built homes."

"There's also been a lot of employment growth... and that is fuelling housing demand. It's also true to say Cambridge is a kind of extension of London, just an hour up the railway line, so prices are going to reflect that."

## #Match4Lara gets PMQs mention

**Anna Menin**

Senior News Correspondent

The #MatchforLara campaign has continued to gather large amounts of support across the country, in the wake of a major recruitment drive for stem cell donors in Cambridge last week.

The campaign was launched following the diagnosis of 24-year-old Lara Casalotti with leukaemia in December 2015, and her family's discovery that her brother Seb, a student at Magdalene, was not a match.

They were then informed that finding a donor match would be very difficult because of Lara's Thai-Italian heritage. She is undergoing intensive chemotherapy at University College Hospital, London, but finding a matching stem cell donor is her only chance of survival.

Since the campaign's launch, it has attracted widespread support, with Tulip Siddiq, MP for Lara's home constituency of Hampstead and Kilburn, asking David Cameron to "send a message of support to those working to keep Lara alive" at PMQs on Wednesday, which he did.

The Anthony Nolan charity, which supports those with blood cancer, has seen a five-fold increase in the number of new applicants to its register since the launch of the campaign, which it described as "unprecedented".

Currently, only 0.5 per cent of donors on the Anthony Nolan register are from East Asian backgrounds, with 1.5 per cent from European



backgrounds, and similar shortages of donors from ethnic minorities are common throughout the world.

This means that only 20 per cent of people from black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds who need a stem cell transplant will ever find a perfect match.

Ann O'Leary, Head of Register Development at Anthony Nolan, described Lara as "a truly inspirational and selfless young woman", and emphasised that "somewhere out there, there's a potential lifesaver who could give her a lifeline by donating their stem cells".

She also claimed that what "many people don't realise how easy it is" to join the register, stressing that "it simply involves filling in a form and providing a saliva sample", and that "If you're one of the privileged few who goes onto donate, 90 per cent of the time this will now take place via an outpatient appointment".

Lara's brother Seb has urged people to sign up, saying: "there's no time to put this off or think 'I'll do it next week'. That could be too late for Lara. Please do it today."

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# News in Brief

EMERGENCY IN LIBRARY, STAY OUTSIDE

## UL evacuated in fire scare

The University Library was evacuated on Tuesday amid a fire scare. The fire alarm sounded with an evacuation of the entire building following. One eye witness said that staff told those present that the evacuation was not a drill. Students were made to wait outside, while a sign was placed saying "emergency in library, please stay outside".

SKELETON MOVES TO OXFORD

## Oxford gets another fossil

Having spent 165 million years in Cambridgeshire, a rare plesiosaur skeleton named Eve will be moving to the Other Place. The 5.5 metre-long skeleton will be housed in a museum, and was originally discovered by archaeologists working in the north of Cambridgeshire at Must Farm – where Cambridge archaeologists recently discovered a Bronze Age settlement.

MAN FOUND DEAD IN LOCAL HOTEL

## Murder probe at Varsity hotel

A man, thought to be in his 20s, has been found dead at the Varsity Hotel and Spa in Cambridge.

The deceased was found yesterday at the hotel, which has housed notable figures over the years, including David Beckham last May.

*Cambridge News* has reported that the body is believed to have been found in the hotel's penthouse.

## Acclaimed author to become Lucy Cav fellow

Scottish author Ali Smith will be joining Lucy Cavendish College as an honorary fellow in late January. A fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, Smith was awarded a CBE in 2015 for services for literature, having also won the Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction and the Goldsmiths Prize and the Whitbread Novel of the Year. Her speech on 21st January, entitled 'On Not Giving a Talk!', sold out very quickly and will celebrate Robert Burns.



## The Week in Numbers

13th

How Cambridge performed among UK universities placed in international outlook rankings

2

Number of May Balls *The Tab Cambridge* is willing to review without free tickets

£20,000

The salary CUSU would pay if new Disabled Students' Officer is created

PROFESSOR COMMUNICATES WITH CROWS

## The crow whisperer

A Cambridge professor has claimed to be able to communicate with crows on a BBC panel show.

Appearing on *Would I Lie to You?*, Nicola Clayton claimed to be teaching comedian Ben Miller how to "talk to crows". As a professor of comparative cognition, Clayton is an expert on the evolution of crows and their unique intelligence.

She told *Cambridge News* that "I am really interested in how crows communicate without words, but quite a lot of people have got in touch about it since".

MINISTER DEFENDS CORBYN AT CULC

## Shadow minister visit

Luciana Berger, Britain's first Shadow Minister for Mental Health, visited Cambridge on Wednesday in order to raise the profile of the issue of mental health, particularly in light of a NUS study in December that showed a majority of students suffer from mental health issues.

During both her Union appearance and a Q&A after with Labour Club members, she spoke about the opportunities the role affords her, and defended the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn.

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## UK has the most outward-looking universities in the world, new rankings show

**Harry Curtis**

Deputy News Editor

The United Kingdom has emerged as the world leader in terms of outward-looking universities, according to rankings released by the *Times Higher Education* (THE) supplement.

Imperial College London was placed tenth in the list of 200 institutions worldwide, heading up an impressive contingent of eight British universities in the top 25, which also included Oxford, UCL, KCL, LSE, Queen Mary and Queen's University Belfast.

UK universities took nearly two thirds of all places, the University of Cambridge coming in as the world's thirty-sixth – and the UK's thirteenth – most international university. The rankings were based on the *THE*'s most recent “international outlook” data, which is calculated by how good a university is at attracting students and staff from abroad – measured by the ratio of international-to-domestic students and staff, as well how much “international collaboration” is undertaken at an institution.

To determine “international collaboration”, the *THE* “calculate the proportion of a university's total research journal publications that have at least one international co-author”.

The top three most outward-looking universities according to these latest rankings are Qatar University, the University of Luxembourg and the University of Hong Kong.

Interestingly, none of these – and only two of the top ten – comprise the top ten of *THE*'s broader scoped World University Rankings. The California Institute of Technology and the University of Chicago, respectively first and tenth in the broader rankings, both fail to make the top 200 in terms of international outlook.

## Eight places for ‘East End Eton’

**Daniel Gayne**

Senior News Correspondent

Eight students from a free school in one of the most deprived areas of the UK have received offers from Oxford and Cambridge.

The London Academy of Excellence, nicknamed the ‘Eton of the East End’, outperformed a number of fee paying public schools, including Prince Charles’ alma mater.

Some of the offer holders will be the first in their families to go to university and all of them come from immigrant families. By comparison, £30,000-per-year Gordonstoun received only one offer this year.

One of 400 free schools approved for opening in England by the Coalition government between 2010 and 2015, the Academy is located just a few minutes from the Olympic Park in Stratford. It is a highly competitive institution, with 2,500 applicants vying for only 200 places.

Free Schools are a type of non-profit academies, funded by the state but not controlled by a Local Authority. Despite some successes, free schools remain controversial.

Backers have argued that local competition would drive up standards and increase choice, whilst critics suggested that middle class parents and private companies are more likely to be the ones to set up such schools.

However, think tank Policy Exchange reported in 2015 that free schools are eight times more likely to be in England's most deprived areas

than the least deprived.

The schools have also been criticised from other quarters for allowing too much religious influence, and even perhaps extremist influences.

The success of the LAE in helping deprived students achieve has been commended, with the Sunday Times naming it the ‘best sixth form in the country’.

“

**£30,000-PER-YEAR  
GORDONSTOUN RECEIVED  
ONLY ONE OFFER THIS YEAR.**

But there have been some suggestions that success has been achieved at the price of overly rigorous admissions and expulsions policy.

In 2014, West Ham MP Lyn Brown investigated the LAE after they were criticised for “culling” underperforming AS students. Some students complained after they were “kicked out” for achieving grades too low to apply for Russell Group Universities.

The Academy did not tell students about this policy when they applied, instead notifying them during their time studying at the academy.

When asked, headmaster John Weeks said the academy's success was simply down to “expert teachers who love their subject and sixth-formers with the mindset to succeed”.



### Looking for work this summer?

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Closing date for applications: 21 March 2016.

## Spider-Man could not exist, Cambridge researchers find

**Olivia Childs**

News Correspondent

Spider-Man's wall-climbing abilities are impossible for humans to replicate, new research from researchers at Cambridge has found.

A study conducted by scientists in Cambridge, Australia and the USA has shown that without “impractically large sticky feet” and 40 per cent of our bodies covered in sticky footpads, humans wouldn't be able to climb walls as Spider-Man does.

The researchers compared 225 different species, looking at the weight and footpad size of frogs, lizards, spiders and insects in hopes of developing large-scale, bio-inspired adhesives.

Despite looking at many different species, Dr David Labonte from University of Cambridge's Department of Zoology notes “their sticky feet are remarkably similar”.

He added, “When this happens, it's a clear sign that it must be a very good solution”.

However, geckos are the largest animals able to scale vertical walls, and as the size of an animal increases, the amount of body surface per volume decreases, meaning the amount of sticky footpads needed to support the animal increases.

Labonte explained that “This poses a problem for larger climbing animals because, when they are bigger and heavier, they need more sticking power, but they have comparatively



Study shows that Spider-Man's ability to climb walls is impossible

less body surface available for sticky footpads”.

“

**IMPRACTICALLY LARGE  
STICKY FEET**

For a human to achieve the same thing they would need “shoes in European size 145 or US size 114,” says Walter Federie, from the same department. Humans would need 40 per cent of our body to be covered in sticky footpads, or 80 per cent of our front.

However, there is another way some

larger animals are able to stick, by having stickier footpads. Christofer Clemente, a co-author from the University of the Sunshine Coast, notes that in some closely related species “pad size was not increasing fast enough to match body size yet these animals could still stick to walls”.

“We found that tree frogs have switched to this second option of making pads stickier rather than bigger. It's remarkable that we see two different evolutionary solutions to the problem of getting big and sticking to walls”.

Labonte stated that there is still interesting work to be done concerning the strategies animals use to make their footpads stickier. “These would likely have very useful applications in the development of large-scale, powerful yet controllable adhesives”.

## Oxford isn't daunting to ‘Hogwarts generation’

**Anna Menin**

Deputy News Editor

Oxford's Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach, Dr Samira Khan, has suggested that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are now unlikely to be put off applying to Oxford because of its long history as they have “grown up with Harry Potter”.

Speaking to the *Times Educational Supplement*, Khan claimed that Oxford's “grand dining halls” are often “compared to Hogwarts”, and that students from the “Hogwarts generation” are often “really excited” about the prospect of the university's many traditions, saying that “they are probably more familiar with it than we give them credit for”.

Students “recognise the benefits of [a] small college community, the grand tables, talking about current affairs — that's what we want them to embrace and take ownership of”, she added.

She also claimed that students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are predicted three A grades at A-level were “more likely” to be invited to interview than their more advantaged peers, because of Oxford's use of contextual data. Khan said that this data is most often used when Oxford reaches a “threshold point”, when it becomes difficult to distinguish between different applicants according to their grades.

For instance, the applicant's exam results can be considered in relation to

their school's average or in relation to their socio-economic background.

Responding to Khan's comments, a spokesperson from the University of Cambridge said that it invites “every-one who has a realistic chance of being offered a place” to interview, and that “If a student has a good examination record and a favourable reference, they are likely to be invited to attend an interview”.

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**OXFORD'S “GRAND  
DINING HALLS” ARE OFTEN  
“COMPARED TO HOGWARTS”**

The spokesperson claimed that “throughout the admissions decision-making process, we assess a package of evidence... as well as contextual information about applicants”.

They added that Cambridge “works hard to raise aspirations among disadvantaged groups and to widen participation both at Cambridge and in higher education in general”, and that it “runs 4,000 widening participation events”.

The spokesperson also claimed that Cambridge provides a “great deal of information about applying to and studying at Cambridge online, including films which aim to demystify the interview process”.



## Hawking: Nobel Prize?

**William Dorrell**

Science Correspondent

Stephen Hawking is already the proud owner of a very comprehensive CV. Being played by Eddie Redmayne in an Oscar-winning portrayal of your life is not a bad start; combine this with ground-breaking science, an inspiring ordeal with motor neurone disease, and cameo performances in the *Big Bang Theory* and *The Simpsons* and you'd think there wasn't much more to add. However the Nobel Prize, indicative of success in science, remains elusive – unless his most recent paper changes that.

The Nobel Prize is traditionally awarded in sciences only when the theory is backed by experimental results; this has been difficult for Hawking whose area of interest is black holes and cosmology. Trying to gather data about these is near impossible, leaving Hawking Nobel-less.

Black Holes sucking in nearby light and matter are a familiar concept: areas of such high gravity that the normal rules of physics stop applying. They are either formed by the collapse of high mass stars or have existed since the Big Bang and vary massively in size. The smallest are as small as an atom but have the same mass as a mountain while the largest have the mass of four million suns, for example the super-massive black hole around which our entire galaxy orbits.

Hawking's most famous contribution is the proposal that Black Holes are decreasing in mass through the release of Hawking Radiation, and previously this was thought to be his best bet at a Nobel Prize. This describes the release of radiation from a black hole, slowly decreasing its mass over millions of years. This emission of radiation increases as the black hole becomes smaller predicting a burst of energy from low mass black holes.

However, attempts to measure this have so far proved futile. Potentially the Large Hadron Collider could create a tiny black hole in controlled

conditions. There were fears that this might gobble up the planet, even eliciting a Hawaiian court case against the European Organization for Nuclear Research. In reality, as Hawking himself explained as a punchline to a joke at a recent talk, "the black hole would disappear in a puff of Hawking radiation – and I would get a Nobel Prize."

His latest publication, released in brief in 2014, concerns the black hole information paradox, a problem first posed by Hawking in the 1970s. This is a conflict between two big hitting ideas. The first is that on a fundamental scale the laws of physics are reversible, so information at one point in the past can theoretically be recovered. However all this information is guzzled down by the black holes and emitted as a stream of Hawking radiation, in which the information disappears.

Hawking's answer, in the recently released "Soft Hair on Black Holes" (a paper currently without peer review), is that the information is at least partially stored in the deformities in space-time. These appear as a luscious head of 'hair', streams of zero-mass particles surrounding the Black Hole. This paper provides the possibility of a testable hypothesis that could finally earn Hawking a Nobel Prize.

The jury is still out on the likelihood of this. The 'hairy' mechanism and a practical way to observe the phenomenon are still very unclear, but don't underestimate Stephen Hawking. He has often exceeded expectations before.



TWP/REUTERS/ALAMY

**Soteris Soteriades**

Science Correspondent

In recent decades, there has been a vast improvement in our understanding of drug action in the brain. This includes cocaine, which is the second most frequently used illegal drug worldwide, after cannabis. However, despite knowing the basic neurobiology of cocaine action in the brain, scientists are still working hard to understand how this translates to addiction and what the determinants of cocaine-seeking behaviour are.

Here's a quick intro. Neurotransmitters, as most of you may know, are substances that neurons use to communicate with each other. There's an important category of neurotransmitters called monoamines, which include dopamine, noradrenaline and serotonin. When they are released, they excite or inhibit other neurons but they are ultimately taken up back into neurons via monoamine transporters, which terminate their action. Cocaine blocks these transporters, particularly the dopamine transporter, causing dopamine to flood the brain and elicit agitation and euphoria. Drugs are initially taken because the increase in dopamine causes feelings of pleasure. Eventually, the reward circuitry adapts to the increase in dopamine and develops tolerance, meaning that you need more dopamine each time to experience the same amount of pleasure. This eventually leads to addiction, characterised by chronic compulsivity.

The main reward pathways involve the striatum and the amygdala, structures found buried deep in the hemispheres. In a study using mice, it was shown that brain activity during the initial goal-directed phase of cocaine seeking was different to that of cocaine seeking that has become habitual and chronic. Goal-directed cocaine seeking is associated with activity in the basolateral amygdala and the core of the nucleus accumbens, in the form of

TWP/REUTERS/ALAMY

the more cocaine you take, the more

your lunch in the filing cabinet and your papers in the fridge – this might not be the whole story. In some cases, 'mummy brain' may well boost cognitive ability after childbirth.

The actual biology behind 'mummy brain' is still largely under-explored, with notable exceptions, including a feature earlier this month in *New Scientist*. This is set to change, though, and a breakthrough in understanding pregnancy's effects on brain function could be a medical godsend for the 10 per cent of new mothers in the UK suffering from postnatal depression. We are also long overdue for a cultural breakthrough: assuming that having children is bad for the brain is simplistic at best and harmful at worst.

It's true that there is scientific evidence for memory impairment during pregnancy. Most of this relies on standard memory tests, and while not all the results are completely clear, pregnant volunteers tended to have more trouble with some tasks (such as verbal memory) than the control groups. Back in 1997, *New Scientist* itself published an

interview with a research group who found that overall brain volume actually shrank during pregnancy – although the researchers also pointed out that brain size quickly returned to normal afterwards.

Unfortunately, these studies focus exclusively on pregnancy; that is, they don't look for long-term changes in brain function that continue after childbirth. One exception was a 2014 study of memory function in both pregnant and postpartum women. It claimed to find no evidence of memory problems, but this is difficult to interpret because none of the women had been given memory tests before becoming pregnant. Also, some of the muddle-headedness attributed to 'mummy brain' probably results from independent physiological stress, which is difficult to control in a clinical study. Living with a newborn often involves a chronic lack of sleep – and sleep deprivation turns anyone's brain to mush, children or not.

Meanwhile, there is more and more evidence from behavioural studies in animals that reproduction actually



The science of addiction is incredibly complex

Pavlovian conditioning that involves reinforcement of the behaviour by drug-related stimuli.

Wikler's 1948 theory of relapse characterises addiction as the compulsive avoidance of severe physical withdrawal symptoms. Cocaine, however, does not cause prominent physical dependence. Instead, the drug is more involved with psychological withdrawal symptoms, mainly feelings of craving. However, statistics have shown that six out of ten cocaine addicts relapsed for reasons other than craving the drug.

What could be causing it then? It was previously thought that relapse is caused by reduced control of the frontal lobes, namely the prefrontal cortex. However, a new study led by Dr Belin from the University of Cambridge has discovered a new component of the reward pathway that bypasses the prefrontal cortex, connecting the basolateral amygdala (associated with emotional experience) with the dorsolateral striatum (associated with habitual behaviour). This means that feelings of craving are essentially unconscious – the drug addict may not be aware of their desire to take the drug. This seems like a vicious cycle: the more cocaine you take, the more

you crave it, the more you change your behaviour in order to satisfy this craving, until it becomes second nature. Not only can you not control it: you may not even realise it!

Dr Belin showed through a second study that N-acetylcysteine (NAC), a drug used to treat paracetamol overdose, might help addicts overcome their addiction by decreasing activity in the reward pathway described above – but only if they are determined to quit. This study is still in the clinical stages, so I wouldn't depend on endorsing that treatment just yet.

What both of these studies hint is that prolonged cocaine intake causes cocaine-seeking behaviour to shift from goal-directed (under voluntary control) to compulsive (involuntary). The fact that addiction is due to lack of control is nothing new, but the prospect that our brains can be controlled by drugs even under the level of consciousness is frightening for those who want to quit.

However, research in the area is far from over. Hopefully, in the near future, scientific knowledge will allow us to invent both remedies and, more important, means to prevent addiction from occurring in the first place.

## 'Mummy Brain': How having children can increase cognitive function



**NEUROPOP**

WITH  
JOY

THOMPSON

'Pregnancy brain' and its postnatal relative, 'mummy brain', are supposed to be common, if unwelcome, side effects of childbearing. However, while women do report memory lapses or trouble concentrating during pregnancy – imagine putting

your lunch in the filing cabinet and your papers in the fridge – this might not be the whole story. In some cases, 'mummy brain' may well boost cognitive ability after childbirth.

The actual biology behind 'mummy brain' is still largely under-explored, with notable exceptions, including a feature earlier this month in *New Scientist*. This is set to change, though, and a breakthrough in understanding pregnancy's effects on brain function could be a medical godsend for the 10 per cent of new mothers in the UK suffering from postnatal depression. We are also long overdue for a cultural breakthrough: assuming that having children is bad for the brain is simplistic at best and harmful at worst.

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interview with a research group who found that overall brain volume actually shrank during pregnancy – although the researchers also pointed out that brain size quickly returned to normal afterwards.

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Meanwhile, there is more and more evidence from behavioural studies in animals that reproduction actually

increases brainpower. In rodents, for example, females with offspring are better at learning and problem solving than females that have never given birth, with one 2014 study finding that maternal rats are more efficient predators. This makes sound evolutionary sense, since an enhanced ability to catch dinner would help to ensure the offspring's survival.

For female rats at least, the presence of offspring acts like an 'enriched environment', providing a source of novel experience to stimulate neural activity and challenge cognition (which, unsurprisingly, sounds exactly what young children do to their parents). The biology behind this is thought to involve a process called 'reproduction-induced neuroplasticity', where nerve cells in the brain start forming new connections. Hormone levels also play a role, even after birth: a 2008 study of owl monkeys found that parents performed better on memory tests and adapted better to new situations than non-parents. These behaviours correlated with changing levels of the hormones DHEA and cortisol,

which regulate stress and the ability to cope with change. Interestingly, the male parents underwent exactly the same hormonal and behavioural changes as the females, perhaps because both male and female owl monkeys help care for their offspring.

So it turns out that the old cliché of 'mummy brain' is inadequate. Pregnancy and childrearing seem to have lasting effects on the brain, but at least some of these effects may enhance cognitive functions essential for all aspects of life. Higher-order cognition and enhanced problem-solving abilities are, after all, equally at home at the CEO office as they are in the nursery.



KITTY WALKER



# VARSITY INTRODUCING

Imogen Casels

**You don't sit down and think, "I want to write a poem about this"?**

IMOGEN CASSELS is a second-year English student at Caius. She is a previous winner of the Foyles Young Poets competition, and her poetry has been published in *Ambit* magazine.

**When did you start writing poetry?**

Probably when I was about nine or ten. I really liked the *Chronicles of Narnia* books, so I'd write little poems about griffins and unicorns. They were awful! I still have them, though. I don't like getting rid of stuff.

**What do you write about now, as opposed to then?**

It's come a long way from the unicorns! The poet Helen Mort said my poems were "ways of seeing", which I found very flattering, because I love John Berger's book [of the same name]. I like not being set to a certain path, seeing things from different angles. I worry a lot, "do I have a voice as a poet? Do I have a poetry policy?" But I don't, you don't have to. You can just look at things in different ways. I like noticing small things that people say, or do, and generally fictionalising them or expanding on them in a fictional way.

**So is that how you start a poem?**

I can't do the sitting down thing, I've tried. I always force it and it never ends well. It's really weird, but a line will just pop into my head. I don't think that I think in words; I don't notice myself thinking in words generally, but I must do a bit, because I look at something and then my brain will just describe it in words in a weird way and I'll think, "Oh, hang on, that's a good line". I keep looking at it and thinking about it, and hopefully more lines will emerge. Then I just run to the nearest bit of paper or computer and try and hold it in my head all the way and then do things with it. Sometimes there's not enough to spin something out of, but generally there is, which is always surprising.

**What's the best poem you think you've ever written?**

My favourite poem of mine at the moment is a poem called "The Fire Manifesto". I wrote the poem when I didn't get in to *Magma* [poetry magazine] and I was really upset so I went outside and BURNED A FLOWER. [laughs] I ended up just looking at the looking at that burning flower, and thinking about that and



in a state you can't be creative. And then you try, and it's really bad, and you feel worse.

**What are your main poetic influences?**

I really like Emily Berry, who's writing now. She writes about the experiences of a modern woman, which I can really relate to. But in terms of poetry, I always worry about reading a poem and thinking, "I'm going to write a poem like this", because it's sort of plagiarism... I think I'd be very tempted to just steal a line and change the words in a way

that isn't really OK. There are OK ways of taking a poem and writing in a similar form. The Denise Levertov poem "What Were They Like?" is wonderful - the first stanza is questions and the second is answers, and the answers are very abstract and sad and weird... It's beautiful. I think using a form like that is fine.

I really like going to art galleries... There was a really good exhibition at the Tate Modern about Surrealism, it had loads of Picassos in it and it was wonderful. I went twice, and, without intending to, I started writing really small vignettes - because it was a Surrealist exhibition they didn't really make any sense, but I really liked them! They don't have a narrative, so it's a fairly static kind of series, but I'd

the sea, because I like the sea... it's fairly abstract and weird. I worked on it with Vahni Capildeo [Poetry Fellow at Murray Edwards]. Last summer term I wasn't writing and felt very depressed about not writing. I went to her and she said, "Well, you know, you don't write to be published, you write because you want to write."

**So do you find writing therapeutic?**

Rarely, I think. The annoying thing about feeling very down about not writing is that it doesn't actually help you write. People are right when they say that poetry often comes out of sadness, but I think when you're just

like to do something with it.

**Why poetry, rather than short stories or...?**

I find poetry better suited to the sentiments I want to express and the ways I want to express them. Poems - they're slightly fragmented. Unless it's a prose poem, there are generally line breaks, these odd breaks in them. They're almost like a collection of fragments, even if they make sense. I don't know whether I think in a more fragmented way... I definitely speak in it [laughs]. So that appeals to me, and there's more scope to put pretty images in there, and I'm a sucker for pretty images about the sea. If there's a nice image of the sea, I love it - I'm incapable of thinking critically of it.

**And birds...**

And birds and fire and stars. Prose... when I was little I had lots of ideas for adventure and fantasy stories, but it's always filling in the middles, you know, the evenings around the campfire... what are you gonna say about that? I could always imagine the battles, the exciting bits, but you've got to fill it in.

**Do you see yourself as a professional poet in the future?**

It's not really a job, certainly not any more. I don't think it ever really has been a job... you need something to do with your time. But I think in the future poetry is the only definite thing I know I want to do... Being an academic is not going to happen, so I'll just work in a bookshop.

*Imogen was talking to Alice Chilcott*

## James Hoare: North Korea "doesn't actually have an atmosphere of fear"

Minnie Crampton speaks to the academic, historian, and former envoy to Pyongyang about the country's future

After North Korea shocked the world earlier this month with its detonation of an H-bomb, Dr James Hoare - in Cambridge to appear at The Marshall Society - asserts that this was not the game-changer it was initially feared to be.

Whilst allaying concerns that this could have been a turning point in North Korea's nuclear programme, he believes that it "does show that they intend to carry on with their nuclear programme; that they are working to develop a viable nuclear weapon of some sort and that presumably means not just that it will go bang, but that it will go bang where they want it to."

Hoare believes that the unanimous condemnation from the U.N. Security Council is not enough, as this third test during Obama's Presidency is evidence that world leaders have not been able to subdue the regime.

Because of this, Hoare remains sceptical over the use of sanctions, pointing to the fact that these have not previously been compelling: "the pressure of sanctions is not nearly as great as it might be as long as there is this channel through China; if you look at what's happened in North Korea during the period since it started its nuclear programme, the reality is that it has not been stopped from importing even luxury goods... the sanction

system is not really working". The fact that North Korea has been living with sanctions since the Korean War without too much discomfort suggests to him that a different approach should be used.

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**THE PROBLEM IS ABOUT CHANGE**

"So what do you do in the end? Personally, I think you engage and negotiate - I don't think the North Koreans are going to give up on their nuclear programme... so what you could do is get them to freeze the programme". He seems relatively optimistic at the prospect that the Kim regime may accept this proposition as it did once before, in 1994.

I was keen to ask him about the view that U.S. inaction was a reflection of Washington not seeing North Korea as its biggest East Asian threat - that instead their condemnation of the latest test was more directed towards Chinese expansionism and efforts to support North Korean stability.

"I could go along with that as an explanation, I think that the real U.S.

concern is China - what China might do, and how China might threaten the United States' interests. I thought this 20 years ago as it was quite clear [then] that China and the US had drifted apart after the collapse of the Soviet Union - but, rather than spell that out [the US chose to] pick on... North Korea."

Hoare stresses that China's influence in North Korea is pivotal and that its leniency in the last decade towards their nuclear programme is fuelling the U.S. worries that China is purposely upsetting the global balance of power. With its support from China, he argues, the country is actually in a relatively secure position.

"It doesn't actually have an atmosphere of fear - there are clearly detention camps and people do disappear... but for the majority of people that isn't what they experience... Pyongyang is a special case; what you see in Pyongyang is not what you see in the rest of the country... it is a privileged city, its where there are facilities which don't seem to operate in other places. But I'm hesitant to say this is the most terrible place on earth."

In recognising the existence of detention camps and surveillance of its citizens, Hoare asserts that a significant threat to the maintenance of the regime is information crossing

the border in and out of the country. He tells me: "the problem is about change as change is dangerous for the leadership."

Despite the harsh reality of the regime, he is optimistic about the growing number of mobile phones, DVDs and bicycles that are crossing the border from the south and providing increased mobility and communication to ordinary citizens. However, he warns that "if it [information and technology coming and going across the border] is going to change so -

ciety, it needs a wider distribution" and because of this he envisages small progressions in civil liberties occurring in the near future.

So, he says, now is an opportune moment for the international community to engage diplomatically with North Korea - as the seeds of change begin to take root within this Orwellian state.



JAMES HOARE



# Comment

## In defence of maintenance grants



Idel Hanley

*The government knows the price of everything but the value of nothing*

The House of Commons has recently decided to scrap the maintenance grant, a system in place to ensure equal financial footing for undergraduates. At the majority of British universities, maintenance loans barely cover accommodation costs, meaning that the grant is unquestionably valuable in providing support for a large number of students. With the current tuition fees situation, maintenance grants help to ensure equality of opportunities and access, dispelling financial disadvantage.

This detrimental cut would perhaps be more justifiable if it seemed that the government had seriously thought it through and considered how a system of alternative funding would be implemented. For students, the action would seem more reasonable if the government had had a full parliamentary debate, and voted on the issue democratically.

Instead, the Tory government are pushing for an ill-informed scrapping of the grant. It was passed through the House of Commons without proper debate by a committee of 18 MPs, of whom ten voted for the cut and eight against. Although over half a million students in England receive maintenance grants, a group of 18 MPs somehow have the power to decide their future.

The maintenance grant is an

essential means of support for many students who would not otherwise be able to afford to go to university. The government are seemingly ignoring students' and parents' concerns alike about the potential damage this cut will cause, and appear incapable of understanding the struggles it could create. Poorer students may now leave university with over £60,000 of debt, which will only act as a further deterrent from pursuing higher education.

University choice may become increasingly influenced by the cost of the area, the distance from home and the length of the course, rather than being led by personal course preference and university calibre. The additional financial burden of scrapping maintenance grants also undermines the idea that one might want to go to university for the enjoyment of education. The cuts appear regressive, attacking the poorest amongst our student body, and causing a step back in equal access to higher education.

The government have justified their action by claiming it will bring in money to remedy the deficit. However this makes little sense, as the government are also claiming that students will pay back the same amount regardless of the change. The government's single-minded aim of reducing the deficit at any cost is merely shifting the debt onto the individual. It seems

the government are out of touch with their people and have failed to fully assess the real impact these cuts will have.

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THE GOVERNMENT ARE OUT OF TOUCH WITH THEIR PEOPLE

In the National Union of Students' (NUS) survey of those receiving maintenance grants, 52 per cent said it was absolutely essential to their university attendance, and a further 30 per cent claimed it was important or very important. It appears the government have ignored serious concerns about the cost of living, the pressure to get holiday jobs, and the need to support family at home. This, combined with the seemingly undemocratic process used to pass these cuts, will spread distrust in the government.

These cuts are not the only major change that the government is trying to implement, nor is it the only measure introduced in a seemingly underhand way. The changing of the terms and conditions of current loans, together with the proposal of increasing fees in line with inflation, are ideas

that will create problems for students. Further policies, such as the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) which will rank universities on the quality of their teaching and allow tuition fee increases, are causes for concern. Metric systems such as graduates' income, the foundation of this system, will have the potential to transform higher education into a market, and also reverse years of access work at the University of Cambridge. We may no longer be able to tell students that Cambridge will cost the same as any other university, thereby entrenching perceptions of the University as an elitist institution.

This wider context of the government's higher education policies, and the undemocratic processes they are using to implement them, is revealing about the government's perception of education. Education should be accessible to everyone, and based on merit rather than privilege. Education is a fundamental right, and in no circumstances should this right be undermined. It seems the government are trying to turn the higher education system into a market, students into consumers and education into a commodity. The increase in tuition fees started this gradual process, and everyone, regardless of financial support, should be concerned about where these changes will lead.

## Ignore the Brexiters: The EU still has value



Fabian Stephany

*Although the EU has its flaws, leaving it won't solve our problems*

This is a reply to a Comment piece published last week in *Varsity* entitled 'Why it is time to break the Brexit taboo'. The article started quite promisingly: "70 per cent of 18-24 year olds [think] that we should remain in the EU". Great news! Unfortunately, as on many other questions, generations are divided. The same ORB poll claimed that only 38 per cent of those 65 and older would like to stay. Interestingly, those who still have a life with the EU ahead of them seem to like the idea, and I guess this applies to the majority of Cambridge students, too. Dear author: how and why would you like to change your generation's mind? Like most Eurosceptics, the author refers to four main issues, namely: migration, economics, bureaucracy, and democracy.

The author's main argument with regard to migration is that the increasing number of EU citizens in the UK is keeping non-EU migrants away. It is cynical to claim that the stream of legal EU migration leaves no space for those fleeing from conflicts which are "uncomfortably intertwined with historic British foreign policy". What keeps those migrants away is not EU legislation; it is the English Channel and a miserable UK immigration policy, which excludes

citizens of European countries as well as refugees. Let us not forget that a lot of those people are freezing right at Britain's doorstep, in Calais.

On the author's economic argument, some things should be set in perspective. The author claims that three of the world's four largest economies, ranked above the UK according to the IMF, are not part of a supranational union. But with its free flow of people, goods, and capital, the EU should correctly be considered one single economy. In fact, cumulatively the European Union comprises the largest economy in the world and is growing. The author seems to hold the opinion that the EU is holding Britain back, unable to handle today's problems. The reality is quite the contrary: membership of the EU is the only realistic way for its members to cope with the demands of the modern world. Make no mistake, no single country in the EU – not Germany, not France, and not the UK – would have the bargaining power to negotiate, face to face, at the WTO tables or with the US in a TTIP deal.

Bureaucracy appears to be one of the sceptic's favourite topics. "...there is no such thing [as EU money]. It is simply our money which is given back to us". Of course, some of the money which the UK receives from Brussels

comes from Britain itself. Some of it comes from Germany, some from France, some from Luxembourg, some from Estonia, and so on. Instead of listing the many European funding schemes of which the UK has been benefiting in the past, I will name just one, the European Research Council (ERC) grants. Of the 372 ERC consolidator grants in 2015, worth €713 million in total, 86 have been given to UK research institutions. This ranks the United Kingdom first among all 24 receiving countries. These grants have gone to leading researchers at top universities, and 12 Cambridge projects were funded by the ERC consolidator scheme in 2015.

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GET INVOLVED, DON'T TURN AWAY

Lastly, the author's main complaint is that the Union is undemocratic, since fewer than 10 per cent of the MEPs are British. It is correct that of the 751 MEPs, only 73 are British. That ranks the UK third, together with Italy (73) after France (74) and Germany

(96), quite accurately reflects the proportions of the population of each member state. The British MEPs have all been elected in a free, equal and public election in 2014. Every British citizen aged 18 and above had the right to vote – quite democratic, I think. What is more worrying from a democratic point of view is that only 36 per cent of all eligible voters made use of this right.

Nobody ever said that the EU would instantly be the best working supranational union. Well, right now it is the only one in the world which works. But it is certainly not going to improve if everybody just complains about it or tries to leave. To all the advocates of the 'British Exodus': the European Union is YOUR Union, too. Whenever you dislike its rules or its rulers, why don't YOU do something constructive about it? Pointing the finger is the first step, but after that protest, get involved and don't turn away. If the toilet in your house is clogged, what do you do? Do you move out, or do you put the rubber gloves on? For sure, some things need to be improved in our community in order for it to function more democratically and efficiently. So don't run away: open your mind and think not what Europe can do for you, but what you can do for Europe!





## An outdated weapon: what's the point of Trident?



Sam Harrison

*You don't have to be a hippie to think Trident is a waste of resources*

This year, the debate over Britain's nuclear deterrent will be held seriously for the first time since 1987, thanks to its scheduled renewal and Jeremy Corbyn's victory last year. The issue was raised in an Andrew Marr interview on Sunday and elicited the usual self-styled 'moderate' scoffing at a man deranged enough to think we should not retain the capacity to fry the skeletons of millions of people. But in spite of the useful stereotype of the bearded, lefty, pacifistic CND member, there is right-wing support for jettisoning the Trident programme, notably from journalist Peter Hitchens, whose conservative credentials Mussolini would find difficult to deny. Thus I would like to commit an act of left-wing apostasy, and offer a case for scrapping Trident to appeal to those of a centrist, and indeed a patriotic, persuasion.

Trident has no strategic value. In 2009, a group of retired military officers signed an open letter declaring that "Nuclear weapons have shown themselves to be completely useless as a deterrent to the threats and scale of violence we currently face or are likely to face." This conclusion is hardly staggering. War today is waged not between nation-states, but against

disparate groups of international dissidents often haphazardly thrust under the umbrella names of single terrorist organisations to persuade ourselves that the old adage about snakes' heads and dying still has some relevance. A nuclear weapon cannot be utilised against a terrorist group which is ensconced in local citenries. It would be like shooting needles out of a haystack. With an RPG.

And an expensive RPG, at that. The Ministry of Defence, which is notorious for making breezy underestimates of its projects' costs, has announced that it will need to spend somewhere between £17.5 billion and £23.4 billion simply on renewing Trident. On top of that, the cost of maintaining the equipment over the course of its forty-year life is reckoned to be £57 billion.

Why, then, are we considering squandering billions on a militarily useless project? The answer lies in our history. From the very beginning, the nuclear deterrent's purpose has been to maintain some semblance of British prestige even as greatness slips like sand through the nation's fingers: witness the famous early justification from Ernest Bevin, that "I don't want any other Foreign Secretary of this country to be talked to or at by a

Secretary of State in the United States as I have just had in my discussions... We've got to have this thing over here whatever it costs... We've got to have the bloody Union Jack on top of it." Since then Britain has been reduced to the role of the archetypal teenage boy, desperately straining to impress its cooler peers by bragging, in this case, about how many innocent people it can kill.

This is the paradox of Trident. To call for its abolition is considered inherently unpatriotic, thanks to this entanglement of our prowess in technological military development with our sense of national prestige. Yet this manifestation of Britain's pitiful post-imperial hangover is a suppurating embarrassment on display to the whole world. More than this, the effect of Trident on the national consciousness is both palpable and pernicious. It persuades us that we remain a global power, and this entails constant meddling in the affairs of others. Relinquishing Trident would be symbolic of a new direction for Britain, one of ceasing to blunder into delicate international situations and in so doing making ourselves the deserved focus of the world's disdain.

What will truly enhance Britain's international reputation? The

theoretical ability to burn part of the planet and a reputation for charging blithely into Middle Eastern war zones? Or the use of those immeasurable billions to fund functioning healthcare and education? Rather than trying to keep ourselves in the list of the world's most psychopathic nations, why not use the resources to improve our international ranking in education, in which we currently languish in 20th place?

One comparison illuminates the contrast between the status quo and a nuclear-free future. It is a custom that every few years the American President comes and patronises the sitting Prime Minister, praising Britain for our role in supporting them in their pointless wars around the world. But in the recent Democratic debate, the nation assumed a new position in the American consciousness when Bernie Sanders asked why it was that Britain spends half as much as the USA on healthcare, yet offers it free to every citizen. The Britain of the future will either be a half-tragic, half-risible imperialist shadow, or a shining example of mature unilateralism and humane healthcare. And it is worth asking: which is the truly patriotic vision?



# Misogynistic jokes are a minefield

**Emily  
Bailey-Page**



The line between joke and casual sexism is not as clear as we like to think

Back in December, CUSU Women's Officer Charlotte Chorley was asked 'who's making lunch?' by a BBC Cambridgeshire radio presenter. This was in an interview which happens to have been centring on the meaning and ramifications of... flippant sexist comments. At this point I will leave space for a weighty ironic pause, so feel free to take this time if you need to put the kettle on or indeed get back in the kitchen and make a sandwich to launch into the face of your nearest available chauvinist.

Someone once said that examining the way a joke functions is like pulling up a flower to see how it works. You can see the roots, but unfortunately now both the flower and the joke are dead. In this case however I think it's important to kill the flower and figure out what's going on. The workings of these sorts of 'jokes' actually operate with very complex dynamics. It's a difficult area to navigate. The presenter Paul Stainton insisted that the comment was purely ironic. He claimed all disrespect was aimed at Tyson Fury, the Sports Personality

of the Year-nominated boxer who sparked the discussion with charming comments like: "I believe a woman's best place is in the kitchen and on her back". Stainton claimed his joke was clearly meant in mockery of these sorts of attitudes, and meant to show complicity with Chorley. And so the familiar accusation arises that feminists, alongside other social justice campaigners, don't get the joke and are irrevocably devoid of a sense of humour.

However, for it to be obvious that Stainton was joking, it would have to be obvious at face value that he didn't share this point in any way. Stainton could of course quite easily not be a raving misogynist, but that doesn't mean women don't actually encounter real men on a (depressingly) frequent basis who are, and who make the exact same 'jokes' with a very real implication of the desirability of female servility. Fedoras, chinos and signet rings may be some indication, but misogynists generally don't walk around with flashing neon signs identifying themselves as such. Sadly, all too often they can turn out to have

infiltrated the ranks of our relatives, our managers at our Saturday jobs and, god forbid, even our lecturers. So it isn't as obvious to the rest of us as Stainton might assume that he was joking.

Apparently, meaningless jokes can actually have a very meaningful impact on people's attitudes. Who knew?! There's a reason why bullies use jokes to humiliate their victims. By getting others to laugh along, the bullied feel more alone. The humour often relies on an unspoken subtext: you're a loser, no one likes you, you look funny, and this subtext is even more powerful for being left unsaid.

Once you have identified these subtexts, you may feel very clever, and that you deserve a gold star for your efforts. Some people like to show off how clever they are through something they call 'satire'. This is when you still make the sexist, racist or offensive joke but you vitally accompany it with a glint in your eye and heavy dose of 'top banter' so that everyone understands that you're not actually an attention-hungry bigot but a wonderful, sensitive person, just with

an 'edgy' sense of humour.

It's tempting to get a bit snobbish and think that in Cambridge, everyone is far too educated not to have these sorts of attitudes for real. So, it's only satire, right? The drinking societies and swaps, it's all very meta, right? And if anyone takes offence, it's their fault for being over-sensitive, right?

No. Even if you're very confident of how enlightened you are, and you don't really believe a woman's place is in the kitchen, of course you don't think rape is funny. But unfortunately there's a high chance that the woman hearing your joke has heard it before, except from someone whose misogyny turned out to be frighteningly real. And that wasn't necessarily just the disembodied voice of some oddball on the internet. It was someone on the train, someone at school, someone who to all intents and purposes seemed normal and harmless. In short, just like you. So really it isn't quite so obvious that you're joking after all.

## Head space

In her second weekly column, *Rhiannon Shaw* considers mental health's relationship with job applications



**Rhiannon Shaw**

I like books. People in books do lots of things. They jump, they walk, they dance, they kiss, they sometimes do really naughty things like having depression or being bisexual – hey, just like me! But I'm yet to come across a book where, in the fit of some great existential crisis, while gazing out over Lake Geneva with a parrot on one shoulder and a samurai sword in one hand, the protagonist has suddenly exclaimed, 'Alas! What shall my future employer think of all this!?'

This thought came to me as I was filling out an application for an internship. Apparently, because I'm not getting a massive inheritance from a far-off relative anytime soon, I have to face up to my own limited funds and look for a place I can go every day to earn some moolah – but first I need to go to a place every day where I earn no money but something called 'experience' and 'transferable skills'. This particular company wanted to know what I'd been up to for, oh, say, every vacation since arriving at university. A brief précis of 100 words would do. Thus began my long contemplation of how to stretch 'I did pretty rubbish revision for my exams and started to think I might have depression' beyond its paltry word count.

When I was first diagnosed with

depression, my mother pointed out, not jokingly, that future employers would know about it – have to know about it, for that matter. When looking at options for a year abroad after university, I was stopped dead in my tracks by an application form that requested I provide ALL RECENT MEDICAL HISTORY INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH. It warned that I would be assessed and if my medical health record did not match precisely what I had set down there, MY APPLICATION WOULD BE CANCELLED.

The Equality Act in the UK outlaws employers from treating those with mental illnesses any differently from other employees, or from enquiring about their employees' health before they are offered a job. The country I was considering had very different guidelines – in the international job climate, I was perhaps naïve to expect that I could expect the same legal standards. Your past, your imprint, online or off, follows you wherever you go. I'm essentially attempting to smuggle my brain across an international border and I may well be arrested for the forgotten banana in my frontal lobe.

There are countless successful people who have made a living while having a mental illness – some have made enormous leaps and bounds in their field because they simply have a different way of thinking about the world. Carrie Fisher, Stephen Fry and Temple Grandin address their own mental health and confront stigma with the kind of chutzpah most of us could only dream of. But not all of us are going to be movie stars or activists or world-renowned scientists. Though we may not be exposed as much to internet trolls, 'average', non-famous people' who try to speak out about discrimination from a boss or a co-worker won't necessarily garner 500,000 shares on Facebook or a

Change.org petition. Some will fight long, quiet legal battles that strain their mental health even further. Like stigma anywhere else, mental health discrimination in the workplace needs to be rooted out through the collective sentiment of 'This is never okay', whether it happens to a Broadway star or a teacher in Truro.

I always have the temptation to narrativize my own existence – to see each missed bus as some great metaphor of how I, the protagonist, am wrangling with the subject of time and space. But the truth is that I struggle to romanticise those many days spent playing Pokemon FireRed for 8 hours because everything else felt terrifying. It's not something I can put on my CV, even if getting better has made more of an

impact on my life than my part-time job at a supermarket ever did. But it's not something I want to pretend never happened. Lying about it isn't helpful to anyone, especially not myself.

What has been impressed upon most young people, whether intentionally or not, is that there is a certain careful way of presenting themselves that will give them a base level of success and professional appeal. They should dye their hair a normal colour, avoid writing anything controversial for a student paper, delete that YouTube video of them doing a ukulele cover of One Direction. But mental health isn't something that can just be deleted from your internet search history – it's intrinsic to who we are, and shouldn't be swept under the rug like

a dirty secret.

The days, weeks, months and years of recovery are not often commemorated like the 'expected' milestones of life. Rarely do people post about their mental health as much as they'd post about a new relationship status, a job offer, or finding a piece of toast that looks like Mr T. But, even if an essay on overcoming your anxiety is unlikely to make great waves with Stacy in H.R., I for one think getting up and doing each day is pretty marvellous and makes us all rather cool – probably at least as cool as those book characters I hear about so much.

See this article online for links to mental health support resources.





# How do we accept the fragility of our icons?



Esther Raffell

*The deaths of Alan Rickman and David Bowie leave fans struggling to know how to grieve*

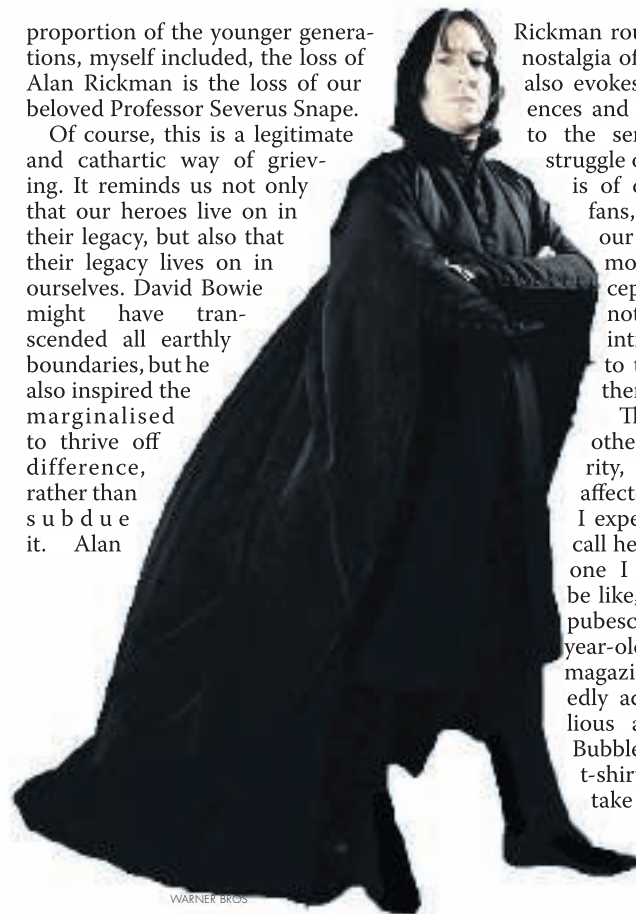
The passing of two British icons, eerily connected by age and manner of death, reminds us of the fragility of those we've painted as fearless: David Bowie, shattering all presumptions on gender and sexuality with wonderful androgyny, and Alan Rickman, never afraid to play the villain and entering a formidable film industry with remarkable ease at such a late stage in his career. When vignettes like these characterise their existence, no wonder we thought they were superhuman. In a way, perhaps they are.

Nevertheless, the decisions of both Rickman and Bowie to keep their health difficulties confidential, while more than understandable, served to sustain their guise of invincibility until the moment news broke. Denial is the first stage of grief, but the finality that greeted the public when their deaths were confirmed, pretty much out of nowhere, was an unpleasant reality check: our heroes can't live forever.

Yet the way that many have chosen to honour and commemorate their passing is a poignant illustration of our attachment to their guise, and our difficulty to accept their humanness. A memorial for Alan Rickman has been placed at platform 9 and 3/4 at King's Cross station. For a significant

proportion of the younger generations, myself included, the loss of Alan Rickman is the loss of our beloved Professor Severus Snape.

Of course, this is a legitimate and cathartic way of grieving. It reminds us not only that our heroes live on in their legacy, but also that their legacy lives on in ourselves. David Bowie might have transcended all earthly boundaries, but he also inspired the marginalised to thrive off difference, rather than subdue it. Alan



Rickman rouses the collective nostalgia of a generation, but also evokes personal experiences and memories related to the series. Though the struggle of their loved ones is of course greater, as fans, the fragility of our heroes is perhaps more difficult to accept, because we do not experience their intimate reaction to the world we cast them into.

The death of another kind of celebrity, Peaches Geldoff, affected me more than I expected. I might not call her a hero, or someone I really aspired to be like, but as an angsty, pubescent fourteen-year-old reading teen magazines, I unashamedly admired her rebellious antics and 'Blow Bubbles Not Bombs' t-shirts. Watching her take down resident rent-a-mouth Katie Hopkins five years later

on *This Morning*, I felt a sense of nostalgia and even pride that she was so articulate. When I heard of her death only a year later, it felt wrong. I had in some corner of my mind chosen to identify with part of her life narrative, and she had unfairly cut our connection short.

But my wistful mourning was coloured by an image of myself mapped onto her, not the woman herself. I realised that what I had considered and yearned for was not the individual, whose qualities, musings and everyday interactions I could not begin to know or understand, but rather what I thought I might take from her, and maybe use for myself.

We are all wrong about the celebrities we love. Well, not so much wrong, but we all choose to interpret their stories to fit ours. That's why the swathes of personal anecdotes, stories and accounts of their lives are beautifully rich and diverse. The vilification faced by a few brave souls, who chose to point out Bowie's involvement with underage girls following his death, demonstrates this point. "We're incredulous when a person's crimes don't match our image of them," Angelina Chapin from *The Huffington Post* remarked. She's right. Our images of them are different to the reality.



Miranda Slade

*On Maturity* by Miranda Slade

Our generation seems uniquely, and somewhat prematurely, obsessed with recapturing our younger selves. We abide by the hashtag #throwbackthursday, while Timehop posts saturate our Facebook timelines. As the first children to have played our teenage years out on social media, we are able to scroll through our personal histories and select the pieces we want to re-post, in order to create a narrative about exactly how our past has become our present.

But as we nostalgically varnish the ghostly display pictures of our former selves, we are ignoring the danger of regression. We incriminate ourselves by retrieving these old memories, yet we venerate a nightclub that plays songs older than current freshers. We are beginning to wade into the murky waters of post-irony and, even speaking as someone who has mounted defences of a lot of poor decision-making on irony, there is a crucial distinction to be made.

I am now in my fourth year at Cambridge. As a fourth-year student in Cambridge, it's often easy to feel that you may have overstayed your welcome. If a year were a day, then

the Cambridge degree would have the shelf life of a dairy product. You can enjoy it for three days. But that's all - by the fourth you can still taste the memory of how good it was, but there's an undeniably acerbic tinge as it begins to curdle. (It's been three weeks of Veganuary and this is the most use I have had for dairy, leave me alone).

Three years is enough for most. If one were to attend every Wednesday Cindies - ambitious but not impossible - for the span of their undergraduate career that would be 72 visits. At £5 entry, that is £360. Throw Sunday Life into the equation and that number doubles. A bottle of £4 Sainsbury's House Soave at pre-drinks before each of these events? The grand total reaches £1296.

I'll admit now that I did not make it to Cindies 72 times in 3 years. But my example is an illustration of how much we invest in the promise and potential of a good night out, even if the stamp and bruises from last week have barely faded. The vomit, regrettable one night stands and hangovers are less easily quantifiable, but they deserve their recognition, too. Although we love to complain

about Cambridge nightlife, we never become jaded enough to renounce it completely.

So, why do we find it so hard to move on? I'm not sure. When I attended my 22nd bop this weekend, muscle memory took hold and I made all the same mistakes I did at the previous 21. Appropriating the reckless abandon and enthusiasm of youth, I danced vigorously to the best of the '90s and even had a tactical chunder for good measure. I can't

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**BEING BLIND TO ONE'S OWN FLAWS MIGHT BE A FLAW IN ITSELF**

claim to be proud of myself.

Older, but certainly not wiser, I felt it was time to make a positive change in order to distance today's Miranda from her previous incarnation. In the interest of self-improvement, I consulted WikiHow for guidance on how

to move on. Their advice was specific to romantic relationships but, given that my love life has been filled with almost as much regret and awkward eye contact as brunch the day after the bop, the leap didn't seem insurmountable. It was, in the end, a fruitless endeavour: one of the steps recommended by WikiHow was 'Be Sad', which I'd already managed without the help of the Internet.

One important lesson I have learnt in my protracted undergraduate years is that in place of improvement must come acceptance. I accepted that I wasn't going to be able to 'move on' from bop-based binge drinking, and texted friends asking for suggestions on which of my shortcomings I could work on instead. Quite soon after hitting 'send' it dawned on me that being blind to one's own flaws might be a flaw in itself. That realisation seemed like an important enough step in my self-actualisation that I no longer felt the need

for self-improvement.

The reconnection website FriendsReunited closed down this week, presumably because all of the information you would have been able to hide on this site was published on Facebook all along. The lesson here is that there is no hiding your past. You simply have to scroll through, recognise your past, and finally - whether you want to or not - repeat it.





# Vulture

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# HAMILTON:

## FRESH OFF THE BLOCK

*The CUMTS team discuss new musical Hamilton, and why you should be looking out for it*

Life as a musical theatre nerd is infinitely better when there is a new hit show that everyone, and I literally mean everyone, is talking about and humming under their breath. This year's gift from the Broadway gods (also known as Lin-Manuel Miranda) is *Hamilton*, the story of the often forgotten Founding Father of the United States, Alexander Hamilton, whose tale is told in the form of an overwhelmingly contemporary hip-hop musical.

I won't lie: when I first heard the soundtrack, I was not convinced. The show opens with three consecutive predominantly heavy rap numbers, and as a fan of the soaring melodies of Stephen Schwartz and the catchy tunes of Andrew Lloyd Webber, I thought *Hamilton* just wasn't for me.

Six weeks later, I have the soundtrack on repeat, know all the songs, and am now aware of how wrong my first impression was. I think my initial reaction to the volume of complex rapping in the show was that it was not written for someone as uncool as me. But this is where Miranda's genius truly becomes apparent. His blending of the astonishing rap with the gorgeous musical theatre melodies gives the show an edge that Broadway has been lacking, and he really has redefined the genre.

You can hear influences from Andrew Lloyd Webber in 'Burn', Nicki Minaj in 'Aaron Burr, Sir', Laurence O'Keefe in 'It's Quiet Uptown' and Beyoncé in 'Say No To This'. Essentially, Lin-Manuel Miranda has done for American history what Baz Luhrmann did for *Romeo + Juliet*. If the hardcore musical theatre traditionalists are still not swayed, there is always King George's wonderfully camp, wonderfully Broadway number, 'You'll Be Back'.

Whilst the music is the core of this show's genius, the telling, or more accurately the retelling, of this historical narrative is so important, not just to America's past but also for what it means to be American today. Performed by a mainly non-white cast, the hip hop songs seamlessly transport us to the eighteenth century and tell, in magnificent detail, the story of the life and work of Alexander Hamilton, who served as America's first Secretary of the Treasury. The musical brings to light the genius, effort and personal strength he invested in the creation of one of the most prosperous countries on earth, despite having all the odds against him.

A key line is "I'm just like my country, I'm young, scrappy and hungry", reminding us that, at its heart, the USA is comparatively new – only 240 years young. The show celebrates a nation founded on the values of freedom, ambition and the American Dream. I think the show holds a pertinent message of patriotism that could win over even the most cynical American citizen.

Fans of *Hamilton* include Barack and Michelle Obama, Beyoncé and Jay-Z; it is sold out until September, although tickets are rumoured to be going for \$4,000 on the black market (always a feasible option). Yet the chance for us commoners to see the show may well be when Cameron Mackintosh brings it to the West End in 2017, hopefully with the same roaring success as it has had on Broadway. For now, though, we are limited to the delights of the soundtrack. So, what are you waiting for?

# Art: a man's world

*Katie Wetherall asks why high-flying women are still an exception in the art industry*

The news this week that the Tate Modern has announced its first female director in Frances Morris is welcome. But the fact that her appointment doubles the number of women at the helm of the top art galleries shows institutions must do much more to promote women and smash the artistic glass ceiling.

The under-representation of women, ethnic minorities and disabled people in executive positions is just one small symptom of an industry dominated by white, European men. Female artists are almost entirely absent from historic art collections; their work goes for much less commercially and they are still massively underrepresented in contemporary art institutions.

When Frances Morris graduated from King's College with a First in Art History in 1982, most Cambridge colleges were only just starting to admit female undergraduates. That didn't stop Morris from smoking a pipe, donning Land Army Breeches and joining King's Women. She thought she looked cool, but a tutor told her she was dressed like a horsewoman. Devilishly clever, she went on to do her PhD at the Courtauld Institute and has been at Tate Modern since 1998. But her success is the exception, not the rule.

Of the top 10 most visited art galleries in the UK (Arts Newspaper 2014 attendance figures), only two have female directors – Penelope Curtis at the Tate Britain and now Frances Morris at the Tate Modern. The National Gallery has been headed by men during the entirety of its existence, but that didn't stop it from appointing its 14th male director this year. The British Museum, The Royal Academy of Arts, the National Portrait Gallery, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the National Museum of Scotland, Somerset House, and the Dulwich Gallery all have white males mostly responsible for the overall direction of the collections. And closer to home, both the Fitzwilliam here in Cambridge and the Ashmolean in Oxford are – you guessed it – run by men.

Art galleries are a public celebration of what we value most in a society, of what we find compelling and magnificent, beautiful and haunting. It matters what hangs on the walls and who holds the power of taste and distinction. This isn't to say that a male curator is always less likely to commission work by female artists, or vice versa. But the case for diversity in all areas of the arts, from what hangs on the walls, to who sits in a boardroom, is clear. It's not even that having a broad range of backgrounds, genders, ages and races is 'good' for the art world: it's integral to its very being.

It is painfully obvious that differences in opinion, style, background, and world view drive art forward and endow it with an immense capacity for wonder and delight. Without diverse workforces, we will not unlock the full potential of the arts and creative industries. By limiting the opportunities of substantial sections of Britain's population for recognition and success, we and the whole world miss out on their talent as a result.

Redressing the historic gender imbalances in the modern world is, however, not straightforward. Should we go about reinserting overlooked female artists into seventeenth-century art collections, or is this trying to rewrite history?

The idea of quotas is no less controversial. In a 2013 interview with the *White Review*, Morris said "if we implemented a 50/50 rule in our collection displays, we'd probably be drawing upon 1/5 of the collection to represent 50 per cent of the display." Professionals in the creative industries should still try to draw from as many backgrounds and perspectives as possible. In her time so far at the Tate, Frances Morris has curated three major retrospectives of female artists: Louise Bourgeois in 2007, Yayoi Kusama in 2012 and Agnes Martin in 2014. Bourgeois is an example of an artist continually overlooked by the art world until feminist art theory brought the issue to attention in the 1970s. Her collection of paintings and mass sculptures explore psychological events from her childhood, domesticity, motherhood and sexuality.

According to Bourgeois, when she brought her work to the trustees of the MoMA in the 1930s, 'They were not interested in a young woman coming from Paris. They were not interested in her three children. They wanted male artists, and they wanted male artists who did not say they were married.' It took 50 years and the persuasive efforts of a young female curator for MoMA to display Bourgeois's work - in what was its first female retrospective.

The situation has improved. It is true that women fare better in curatorial and executive positions in the European and American art scene. In second-year History of Art lectures today, you'll be hard pressed to spot the two male students out of 27: a very different gender ratio to 1982. Before 1900 female artists comprised one per cent of collections at the Tate Britain, by 1965 this had reached 30 per cent. But overall representation of female artists in London art galleries has plateaued ever since. We should celebrate Morris's success, but remember that there is much, much more to be done.





# Hidden Treasures

Anna McGee on the arts organisation helping us find them

Try to imagine all the oil paintings currently in the UK; not only those displayed in art galleries, but also those tucked away in storage rooms or in the gloomy recesses of some old manor house. There are approximately 210,000 publicly-owned oil paintings in Britain, yet – believe it or not – 80% of these are not on view. They are instead in storage, often due to disrepair or lack of display space, meaning that works of art meant for public enjoyment are not freely available – or even known about.

The Public Catalogue Foundation (PCF), founded in 2003, sought to remedy the situation. It tracked down oil paintings not only in museums and galleries, but in hospitals, schools and town halls all over the country, and sent its photographers to record them. And it all began in Cambridge: the Fitzwilliam Museum was the first to have its collection of paintings catalogued by the

PCF. Astonishingly, the Fitzwilliam did not have such a catalogue before the intervention of the PCF's founder, Dr Frederick Hohler.

Despite the enormous scale of the undertaking, by 2012 the PCF had catalogued all 210,000 publicly-owned oil paintings in the UK, and it now makes them freely accessible online. This massive project, which the PCF undertook in partnership with the BBC from 2009, aimed to engage a wide audience, not just those interested in art. The website catalogue – named *Your Paintings* – is a fantastic interactive resource, combining old-school art with cutting-edge technology.

A crowd-sourcing 'Tagger' system invites anyone to help make the catalogue more easily usable, by classifying paintings under subject matter visible in the composition: this is as simple as a game of eye-spy, but actually generates the metadata necessary to transform the website into a highly sensitive search engine. In this way, the *Your Paintings* catalogue can be searched not just by an artist's name, but by any key word – and this means that everyone, not only those with specialised knowledge, can use it. Want to trace the popularity of the bowler hat in British history? By searching 'bowler hat', all oil paintings depicting this accessory will come up. In this way you can learn about changing fashions: art can be a mirror of life.

As well as creating this fantastic tool and resource, the PCF's work has yielded exciting art-historical discoveries: in 2013, a portrait by Flemish Baroque legend Anthony Van Dyck was discovered at the Bowes Museum in Durham. Previously thought to have been a copy, the painting had been put into storage where its condition deteriorated, making the chances of correct attribution less and less likely. Thanks to the PCF's initiative, the painting was cleaned, photographed and put online, where leading art historian (and Cambridge alumnus) Dr Bendor

Grosvenor spotted it and began investigations, ultimately prompting reattribution.

Tempted by the prospect of more such discoveries, *Your Paintings* launched Art Detective, another public-participation forum where specialists in any area, not just art history, can share their expertise to help with questions of attribution, dating and subject-matter identification in paintings. A seascape by nineteenth-century maritime painter John Thomas Serres, for instance, has recently been identified as a view of the River Thames off Gravesend: specialists in boats and coastal geography helped solve this puzzle, not art historians. By popularising art, the PCF isn't simplifying the complex issues surrounding art historical research, but is acknowledging that no single group of people has all the answers.

The PCF's attempts to democratise the art sphere do not stop there: they have also started various projects promoting the interaction of children with fine art. Most impressively, in 2013 26 oil painting masterpieces by artists such as Gainsborough, Lowry, Monet and Turner were lent by public art collections to nearby schools.

Though raising awareness of the UK's oil-painting collection is an on-going task, the PCF's original undertaking of cataloguing these works is complete. So, what now? Their next major digitisation programme, beginning this year, will deal with all publicly owned sculpture in Britain, at least 80% of which is again hidden from public view. We can only imagine what exciting finds there will be. The PCF helps us to discover hidden treasures – and is itself a gem in the UK arts scene.

*Your Paintings* will be called *Art UK* from February 2016.



## Anna's Culinary Corner

Last week was all about mug cakes, the ultimate comfort food, baked to perfection in your fire-proof microwave and enjoyed in the safety of your very own gyp room – talk about mollycoddling. This week it is time to branch out beyond the narrow confines of college kitchens, beyond formal swaps to distant locations such as Girton, and indeed out of Cambridgeshire altogether. However many deadlines and commitments you may have preying on you, sometimes you just need to escape the bubble, and what better destination is there than London, less than an hour and ten pounds away if you choose your trains wisely?

We all know what a fine city the capital is in terms of galleries, clubs, and high-street shopping, but this is not 'Anna's culture corner': instead, I bring to you the culinary gem of central London, Camden Market. Think of the food provision at any standard May Ball, then extend it to cover most of the world, and you have a more or less accurate picture of Camden Market in mind. Hidden away by Camden Lock, and only at a walking distance from King's Cross, it is a paradise of street food in all its forms, from bagels to posh burgers, vegan wraps to succulent Polish sausages – and to continue with the May Ball analogy, even the compulsory mac 'n cheese and hog roast are featured.

'Overwhelming for a beginner' is an understatement when I look back at my first time. I wanted to taste anything and everything, which is made very possible by a plethora of free samples (there is an Italian flat bread stall that is particularly

generous). To soften the blow for anyone planning on losing their Camden culinary virginity, I bring to you my top three savoury picks along with some bites of dessert, shortlisted based on all the times I have been sampling hundreds of foods instead of typing thousands of words.

**The first stop on my food tour** explores the flavours of South America, neatly packed into arepas. These are Venezuelan and Colombian corn-based flatbreads filled to the brim with culinary goodness. Black beans, plantains (a larger sort of banana used for cooking), avocado, and cheese feature in my favourite vegetarian version, all stuffed into bread fried at the stall while you are waiting. The carnivores among us can spike their arepas with one of the many meat options, built on the same base as the veggie one. Help yourself to lashings of delicious yoghurt sauce to complete your scrumptious South-American experience; it is perhaps not the neatest eat, but it is well worth the mess.

**The next leg of our journey** continues with bread-type sustenance, this time from India. Roti House offers tandoori-style mixtures of vegetables, meat, and your choice of spiciness, gently embraced by a fresh naan bread wrap – simple but oh-so-tasty. At this stall, not all choices are equal, though: the tikka-flavoured tandoori chicken only works if you really love chicken and KFC is your idea of heaven because of the density of the meat. My recommendation is the potato curry – it was well-received even by my usually religiously carnivorous companion and is sure to keep you going for the rest of your day in Lon-

don, right up to catching that late train back to Cambridge.

**Our final destination** is perhaps not as exotic as the first two, but who would not love a bowl of pasta? Your standard Sainsbury's spinach and ricotta ravioli has got nothing on Crazy for Pasta. Let your mouth engage in a wet dream while watching the cooks roll out fresh pasta dough, ready to be boiled just for you. The menu of sauce options seems to go from one tour de force to another: if I am forced to pick (as I always eventually am!), the butter and sage in all its simplicity really compliments the flavour of the fresh pasta.

If after your tour of world cuisine you still want to sweeten the deal with, well, something sweet, I would recommend one of the many stalls churning out churros, those elongated doughnuts filled with caramel or chocolate sauce. The crêpes are also well worth the queue, although somewhat generic when it comes to fillings; for a not-so-readily available option, try the Dutch pancakes – these are essentially bite-sized bits of puffy pancake, perfected with a fine coating of icing sugar.

There will always be essays to write, but why not make those culinary dreams come true and treat yourself to a day out at a pre-May Ball experience? I am certainly planning on a swift return – there is a brigadeiro stall (go and find out for yourself what they are!) that has gone unexplored for too long...





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## THE VARSITY CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

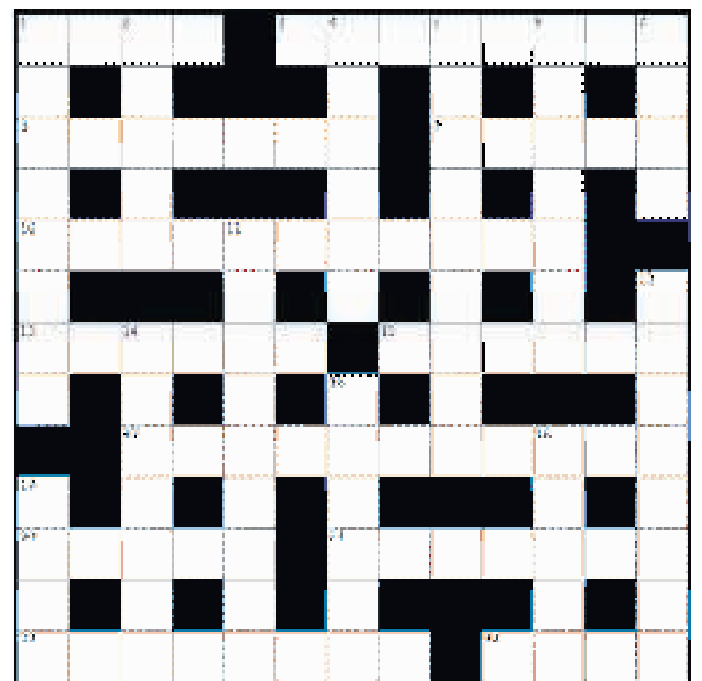
Set by Glueball

### Across

1. High holiday? (4)
3. Ready to fire, but there's a catch (8)
8. Guilty journalist tails a fraud (7)
9. Start to responsibly use resources and land in countryside (5)
10. Choir accompanied by D-sharp tuned instrument (11)
13. Twice picked fruit (6)
15. Regrets beheading birds (6)
17. Still, our art is too abstract for Blake, perhaps? (11)
20. Untidy, but like garden (5)
21. Single measure of fashionable gin brings people together (7)
22. Early Shakespearean character embraced, holding Romeo who seemed indifferent (8)
23. Top Egyptian God (4)

### Down

1. Posh seat not right for casual cafés (8)
2. One church, golden, follows heavenly blood (5)
4. Censor leftist movement (6)
5. Wrong mare ordered for Khan, potentially (9)
6. First link cut short (7)



7. Fry alive in skillet (4)
11. Social Lilly regularly visits swish rascal (9)
12. Great son weirdly kept waiting (8)
14. Move to take queen – missed it by this much! (7)
16. Establish that eggs is eggs (6)
18. Dancing is turn-off (5)
19. Friends make absurd brief lapse (4)

Please submit completed crosswords to [editor@varsity.co.uk](mailto:editor@varsity.co.uk). Congratulations to Jake Choules for submitting the first correct answers to Issue 801.



# Messing around with your degree

*Haroon Mohamoud describes his experience of changing tripsos*

**J**ack of all trades, master of none. My secondary school teachers can vouch for how pertinent a label that was for my schoolboy self. As with many of life's truths, this same figure of speech can be found in different languages. The Hungarian one is particularly sharp: 'He who grasps much, retains but little.'

At school, I was what teachers would call an 'all-rounder': my maths skills were respectable and my chemistry was proficient enough that I could tell a covalent bond from an ionic, but I obtained an Olympiad medal in neither subject; I could weave essays analysing fine pieces of English literature but it was clear I was no Wordsworth myself when it came to creative composition.

Unsurprisingly, my wide-ranging interests made choosing my A-level options a nightmare. In my last school report before GCSE exams, my headmaster admonished me for even thinking of continuing with the sciences and maths into the Sixth Form "on the basis of these grades!" When my exams in these subjects went better than expected, I challenged myself to actually try. Three months into Lower Sixth, I realised I was made neither for juggling 'derivatives as  $dy/dx$ ', or the very painstaking business of calculating titres.

With a deferred place to study Classics during my gap year, alongside full-time work, I had the opportunity to study Arabic. Suddenly, I found myself absorbed in the ancient Semitic language – its grammar, and its large corpus of profound texts. I decided to give up my deferred place and apply for Arabic instead. However, by the time I was due to take up my place, I had become fairly familiar with the language. Would I manage to plough through four years of full-time study? Having read titles in Middle Eastern history by Hugh Kennedy and Albert Hourani, I rediscovered from my A-level days that history had a language of its own.

Frantic, I emailed my Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (AMES) Director of Studies to see if it was not too late to switch to History. I was asked to send in an essay and was invited for two interviews: one with the college Director of Studies for History and a History fellow, the other with the Senior Tutor. Although these were pretty straightforward, I spent the three days between the invitation and the actual date of the interview frantically pacing up and down, aimlessly trying to reground myself in the Russian history I'd studied at A-Level.

Unsurprisingly, the first interview with the History specialists began

with a discussion of the essay, which deliberated over whether or not there was a transformation in the conditions of the Russian peasantry across Tsarist and then Communist regimes (1855-1964). In the meeting with the Senior Tutor, more of the discussion revolved around the circumstances of my sudden epiphany.

On my journey home that sunny September afternoon, I received an email to say my transition from AMES to History was approved.

Since I changed degree even before I had set foot in Cambridge, it did not really impact my life much on a personal level. Friendships had not been formed in the AMES faculty to be broken in favour of ones in the Faculty of History. King's now had nine – as opposed to eight – first-year historians.

The History course is a year shorter, so I am due to graduate a year earlier than I would have originally – on condition that I do not change to another subject. For indeed, my manic subject grasshopperiness might not be confined to History (excuse the pun!). As a penultimate-year student, I am now increasingly beginning to ponder what to do after I complete my degree.

I am already planning my forays into another new subject.



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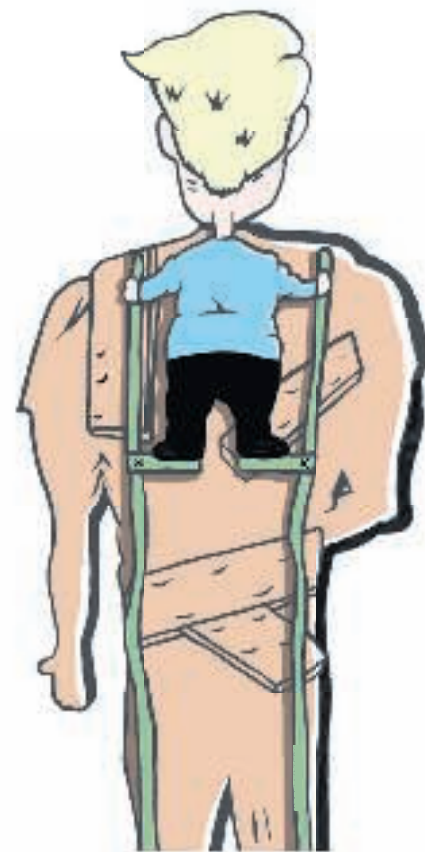
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# Blue steel, body-building and bigorexia



*Xanthe Gilmore investigates the often overlooked topic of male body image in Cambridge*

**H**ave you ever wondered if there was more to life, other than being really, really, ridiculously good looking? As *Zoolander 2* hits our screens next month, let us remember the deep existential musings first spoken to us by male model of the year, Derek Zoolander or 'Blue Steel,' over a decade ago. Here at Cambridge, however, we're probably more interested in the reverse question: is it enough to be brainy?

Cambridge is notorious for wanting its students to focus on work and (as national newspapers love to report) some may opt for a work hard, play hard attitude. But there seems to be a new trend emerging of students who are taking it easy in the pub only to kill it in the gym. This work hard, work out hard approach will of course not be exclusive to guys, but given the number of *Varsity* articles on female bodies and body issues, let's have a quick look at male bodies in Cambridge.

There's no escaping it in the mainstream media. Whereas girls were once accused of starving themselves because they read too many fashion mags, the pressure for topless selfies on Tinder and Instagram has apparently made a generation of young men more body-conscious than women. And at Cambridge? Surely we're so busy knacker our minds we've hardly the time to work on our bodies as well? But of course, exercise isn't always about wanting to look good and can be the perfect antidote to the competitive environment, high expectations and heavy work load most people experience here.

Cambridge certainly seems to support and encourage physical activity at an institutional level. In 2013, the university

opened its doors to the new University Sports Centre, which cost £16 million and offers various sports scholarships. For Rob Liu, an engineering PhD student at Fitzwilliam College and a keen sportsman, regular exercise has been invaluable. "I don't think I would have survived here without sport. It's such an important part of life," he says. "It can change mindsets." Rob boxes for between one and three hours a day, six days a week, depending on the training regime. Even after Cambridge, the future looks particularly bright for the most physically active among us. Recent studies have shown that graduates who played sport at university earn on average 18 per cent more than their fitness-shy friends.



**IT SEEMS ONLY NATURAL  
THAT STUDENTS WOULD BE  
BODY-CONSCIOUS**

Then there's the social side of things. William Miller, a fourth-year undergraduate at Trinity Hall, works out for two hours a day, five days a week. But rather than being a bodybuilding junkie, he says he's motivated by spending time with guys after a loaded day of work. "I don't get a lot of time to hang out with my friends, so the gym's a good place to catch up. I like the atmosphere there." Gym sessions are starting to replace pub outings for some guys, with protein shakes the new drink of choice.

But it's not all about our mental wellbeing.



**MEN MAY NOW FEEL  
PRESSURE TO WORK OUT JUST  
TO APPEAR MR AVERAGE**

Given that at no other time in our lives are we likely to be photo bombed as frequently or mix with so many bright young things than at university, it seems only natural that students would be body-conscious. Mathieu Delaveau, a Frenchman on exchange here, finds the UK much more look-obsessed than other European countries he's lived in. In the six years he spent at France's most elite universities, he never once set foot in a gym. But Cambridge made him rethink his daily routine. "I had never worked out before coming to Cambridge. In France, you'd never hear of a student going to the gym. The UK definitely made me more aware of my appearance."

Especially in the UK, men may now feel pressure to work out just to appear Mr Average. Whereas we're seeing fewer super-skinny female models and (arguably) a greater variety of female body shapes celebrated in mainstream media, the male bodies exhibited on posters and screens seem to be increasingly conforming to a uniform, beefed up shape. It's a look no one's born with, and more and more are working for. Just as the most desirable "feminine" physical

traits have long tended to be (man-)made (as in make-up), our conception of a typical "masculine" body is now "built" (as in body-building). Although such superficial concerns might seem a million miles from the preoccupations of busy Cambridge students, just think how attractive taking control of an ego boost might appear when stony feedback from supervisors may have battered your self-esteem.

Exercise can clearly have significant health benefits, but isn't always about taking care of yourself, mentally and physically. The motivations for working out can be complex and sometimes the line between the healthy and unhealthy ones, especially in a pressure cooker environment like Cambridge, can become hazy. Sadly, there isn't a great deal of information available on male students struggling with issues like compulsive exercise, body dysmorphia (including "bigorexia"), extreme diets and eating disorders, probably because guys are much less likely to come forward with body image (but what are really mental health) issues than their female peers.

Cambridge is a wonderful place for some of the world's future thinkers, doers and leaders, but its bubble has never been so successful at protecting such active minds from mental health issues. We have recently seen a number of excellent articles written about (and often by) female sufferers of body image issues.

Even if we start with anonymous contributions, it would be great if we heard from more guys who can be similarly - and uniquely - affected by these important problems, too.





# New Year's Disillusions

*The Messiah, Lady Gaga, and Knitting*



**MEGGIE FAIRCLOUGH**

I had good intentions, I really did. However, it simply cannot be denied that I am a complete and utter failure when it comes to successfully carrying out my New Year's resolutions. It's not even three weeks into January and I have already failed the first and most basic resolution of my list of ten: "complete at least five resolutions this year".

I didn't get off to an auspicious start. On New Year's Day, being in Austria, I was inundated with Schnapps. Alcohol is fine, and I was not stupid enough to attempt to quit that, but I was stupid enough to believe I could

go for a month without chocolate. Apparently, as well as coming up with psychoanalysis and Schnitzel, the Austrians have invented chocolate Schnapps (and, incidentally, I was rolling with the idea that knocking down peach Schnapps is essentially having one of your five a day).

Arriving in Cambridge quickly shattered the majority of my remaining list. For example, one resolution was to "get to grips with what I want to do in life". Now, becoming the Messiah or the next Lady Gaga was never considered an option; I aimed small, and so I thought it would be easy. I sim-

ply went to the Careers Service and told them I'm good with people and like a challenge. After all, Psychology is ultimately a degree for people who don't have any idea what they want to do. Little did I know that the Careers Service was a challenge unto itself, and I left having less of a clue as to what I'm going to do with my life than when first entering. Apparently careers as either a policewoman or a weather presenter are my best bets! Taking up knitting was a different sort of resolution altogether... yet even here, my dad's new knitted 'hat' ended up being so unfortunately misshapen that it could pass as some sort

of woolly willy warmer, for want of a better phrase.

So, is there any hope left for those of us who will probably never be able to merrily tick our way down a list of New Year's resolutions? Quite honestly, probably not. But really, I don't think that it matters too much. One of the special things about resolutions is that they make you realise that you've somehow survived long enough to reach the point you're at now, regardless of whether you go for a run every day, or managed to learn to speak fluent Korean. If we're still here, I guess we must be doing something right.

*Why fad resolutions are just, well, fads*



**BETH CLOUGHTON**

Oh, hey there. How's your chai soy latte going? How's that vegan cream you've got going on top of your matcha tea? How is your gym regime? New Year's resolutions aren't really resolutions at all. They are more like a commercial injection of positivity that your self can be made better at the stroke of midnight, almost in a reverse style of Cinderella. They are fleeting like a Zante romance, and yet mine this year is still withstanding. My New Year's resolution is, you know, sort of 'meta'. It's

sort of 'modern'. My New Year's resolution was to not have one (boom). Now, pedants, I know and you know this means in turn I have a New Year's resolution, and to that I have no answer except that I am greedily munching into a bag of pre-grated cheese. This dynamic has meant I have indulged in a bit of the old penny sale at Holland & Barrett and looked at a gym. Sure, my gluteus maximus is not that of a marble statue, nor is my skin glowing like a freshly polished shoe, but entertaining a two-week fad diet

does more bad than good, and my pockets are perhaps too heavy with all the coins I have saved not purchasing a Bootea detox shit-yourself-and-pay-for-it drink.

A \*clap\* \*clap\* \*clap\* for those who have sustained their resolution because it is only the third week and it isn't impressive yet. I want you to succeed, it's just that the world did not design the façade of a 'New Year's resolution' for you to become a better person: 'they' created it to make

you feel inadequate and buy a waist trainer. Why have I never heard of someone's New Year's resolution to be something like "I want to remain exactly the same if only to reflect after 365 days and be happy with whatever progress I have made". Or "I want to be able to do a really cute sticker collage to hide my corporate investment of a mac laptop"?

It is because of 'the man', 'the system', the lie.

*"stop biting nails is as far as it goes"*



**NOA LESSOF GENDLER**

From the age of about fourteen, I set myself resolutions every year. In my idealistic adolescent phase, they were basically preposterous. I'd pick ten on a variety of themes, including ones such as 'exercise three times a week', 'drink eight glasses of water a day', 'meditate before bed' and 'write a blog post every weekend'. Needless to say, these would last until about 6th January, by which point I wouldn't have exercised once, and I'd give up on the whole endeavour. In more recent years, I streamlined: in 2015, I

committed only to writing one short story a month. That failed by March. The only resolution I've set every year is to stop biting my nails, and the ongoing necessity of that demonstrates my success.

This year, I haven't set myself a single resolution. Here's why. My life is tough enough as it is. I struggle just to get out of bed in the morning, to remember to take my medication at the same time every day, to motivate myself to read things in time for my supervisions. I find it hard to get

laundry done and make myself do the washing up. I have to fight myself in order not to buy cheesy chips in the middle of the nights and obscene amounts of alcohol when I'm already well into my overdraft. These things are enough to be getting along with as it is.

Setting myself pernickety resolutions which I'll only feel guilty about is not going to improve my life or make me a better person. I know what I need to work on – being awake during daylight hours, spending reasonably,

working consistently – and bullet-point lists will only be one more reminder when I'm failing. 'Resolutions' just add unnecessary pressure. I don't need any more pressure – I'm well aware of my flaws, thanks. So this year, I'm just going to try and get my shit together in my own way and in my own good time. I'm not going to feel guilty if I don't get down to the gym three times a week.

But I'm still definitely going to try and stop biting my nails. Because it's disgusting.





# My relationship with JEWELS

*Meg Honigmann explores her lifelong love for jewellery*

On New Year's Day an old, faded obsession of mine struck again. As I was walking around the V&A, I came upon the 'Bejewelled Treasures' exhibition, a display of 100 jewelled extravaganzas from the seventeenth century onwards. It was very dark inside, and all the eye could see were illuminated jewels balanced in glass cases. They were arranged by the colour of the jewel: emeralds lay to the left, rubies to the right, and diamonds were, well, everywhere.

And suddenly, once again, I was seven years old.

The first time I was ever really excited about jewellery was in year three. My parents told me that if I learnt all my times tables I would be allowed to buy

a bag covered entirely in jewels. I have no idea what happened to the bag, but I remember how it haunted my dreams, and I remember the triumph I felt when it was finally my own.

I only ever contemplated the idea of serious jewels in 2008, when my godfather wrote a book about Fabergé eggs. As I flicked through the pages the complete luxury and extravagance, coupled with the minute attention to detail, fascinated me and lured me into studying them with rapt attention. It was not the idea of owning a piece that really thrilled me, but the exquisite form of art each piece embodied. It was about what the power of creating something so beautiful represented.

This obsession with jewels, like many

in my life, had stayed for a while and then faded from my mind. But as I wandered round the Al-Thani exhibition I couldn't believe that this menagerie of jewels in cages was a private collection. I joked to my mum that *maybe if I just wrote* and explained how much I loved a particular piece, the owner might agree; they wouldn't even notice its absence, let alone miss it.

I thought about what it would be like to walk around the tiny streets of Cambridge adorned in priceless jewels – wearing a huge emerald ring into a supervision; flashing a priceless brooch on my way to lectures – and came to the realisation that people might just reason that I had a taste for extravagant costume jewellery, and

think me a bit strange. They would never imagine their price.

Maybe you, reader, own a diamond choker. Maybe you don't. Either way, jewels are a complicated fantasy for those who don't own them, a combination of *The Bloody Chamber* and bling – but perhaps quotidian for those who do.

The only jewels I currently have are a string of aquamarines, and my birthstone, a gift from my grandmother. The idea that the stone is termed 'semi-precious' is to me ludicrous because of what they mean to me. I don't wear them, but keep them in a bag in the same shade of a dreamy light blue, and that's enough to know that they are there.

In my opinion, jewellery is best kept secret. Whether it's real or not isn't important if no one knows, and if they can appreciate how it looks then the effect is the same. Jewels – subtly glinting or draped from head to toe – should not be shouted about, or hashtagged all over Instagram. At the end of the day, they are and are not a commodity – jewels have a dual function. They are art; they are a means of signalling wealth; they are a means of signalling taste and self-creation; they are a portable store of value.

But really, whichever value you decide to privilege over others is your decision. What matters is their meaning to you.

## PIERCINGS



THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY  
POCKET SQUARE?

*James Swaden looks at changing attitudes towards male piercings*

In 2014, the American actor Harrison Ford presented an award at the Oscars in Los Angeles. There was nothing particularly remarkable about his outfit; his hair was styled, his tuxedo black and well-fitted and his goatee trimmed. However, upon closer inspection, something was just a tiny bit different. His left earlobe was adorned with a small, hooped ring. Ford, who at the time was a sprightly 71-year-old, embodied in this unremarkable moment a significant trend in men's jewellery: the increasing normalisation of male piercings.

Whilst male facial piercings have historically been associated with indications of sexuality and the hippie movement, since the 1980s they have grown steadily more popular. A quick look in Topman or All Saints will show the variety of earrings and other jewellery which are on trend. On campus, male students can be seen with a range of facial piercings.

Moving away from now 'traditional' earlobe or helix piercings, young men are increasingly making more outlandish and daring choices including: eyebrow, nose, septum, tongue, inner conch, rook, and tragus or cheek piercings. Very few people seem particularly shocked by these piercings and they have become a regular fashion item for guys seeking a bit of an edge.

Why, then, do male students choose to get facial piercings? Chesney, a 21-year-old student, believes it is part

of a growing trend towards less gendered fashion choices: "I've always liked to be a bit different to everyone else, and my piercings are a part of that. I think there is a general trend in men's fashion at the moment that is slowly beginning to explore domains usually reserved for female consumers- makeup, handbags, heels, skirts-as ideas surrounding traditional masculinity are challenged...I think there is still a way to go until jewellery becomes an accepted accessory (apart from, of course, daddy's signet ring and some string around the wrist)."

“

THEY ARE REDEFINING WHAT  
CONSTITUTES SOCIALLY  
ACCEPTABLE BODY JEWELLERY

Nick, who is 21 and a trainee architect, is of the same opinion: "I guess more men getting them just follows the whole trend of men being more metrosexual and correlates with the increase in male beauty products." As men move begin to move away from rigidly gendered standards in fashion, they are redefining what constitutes socially acceptable body jewellery.

Tom, 20, finds his piercings to be a fun addition to his overall casual style: "I think it makes me feel cool and a bit

hip, like I'm not boring and stuffy. I'm not formal. I'm young and fun and casual." The average young man, it seems, views their piercings as a way to express individuality, as task which is not easy for men to do through fashion.

However, to what extent are piercings acceptable for men in the workplace? Matt, also 20, explains that he has piercings as a student because he's unsure whether they will be acceptable once he enters the working world: "I suppose for me, I like the aesthetic and it also feels like (perhaps somewhat ridiculously) that it's something I won't be allowed to have in a professional job for 40 years so why not have it now?"

The formality of workwear has changed in recent years. Whilst ties were an obligatory part of any man's work attire in the 1960s and 1970s, even large corporate firms are increasingly adopting no-tie policies. In newer industries and businesses, such as media, technology and start-ups, casual wear is often the norm. Is it acceptable, though, for a man to go to an interview with a helix piercing?

Most guys going for formal job interviews remove their piercings for fear of creating a negative impression, but as our attitudes towards male piercings change, perhaps they'll become a chic accessory, something like a pocket-square for the twenty-first-century man.



# Jewellery with intent

*Is our jewellery obsession vain? Laura Day goes over the subconscious aspects of jewellery shopping*

Why do we wear jewellery? The answer to this very question is manifold. There is a plethora of reasons, all linked to vanity, consumerism, or special memories and moments in life that have compelled the woman to don a particular trinket – as if it's a symbolic pendant that surmises a moment or experience for all to see.

While wearing jewellery may have its personal benefits and hidden meanings, there is no escaping the reality that it is in fact a statement of class and wealth; whether knowingly or not, someone wears a necklace, bracelet, ring etc. with the intention of showcasing just how much they earn, and where they can afford to shop.

This is where the brands come in. From Asprey's, to H. Samuel, to Claire's Accessories, we all have our preference. Yet, this preference automatically places us in a category; brackets of affordability denoting not only our pay packet each month, but also where we're brave enough to shop. Whilst the act of purchasing the jewellery makes us feel special and valued, there is a hint of self-reflection and social judgement creeping in at

the edges – what will the neighbour think? Is this too expensive? How much will I actually wear it?

“

**THERE IS A HINT OF SELF-REFLECTION AND SOCIAL JUDGEMENT CREEPING IN AT THE EDGES**

If you're flush enough to shop at Asprey's, there's no certainty in the knowledge that your peers will recognise the branded item on looks alone – the coveted admiration based on one's vanity over jewellery can only be achieved through vocal confirmation of the ridiculously obscene amount paid. Yet, if you were to go for coffee wearing a Pandora bracelet, you could almost guarantee that it would be recognised. Similarly, the return to Tiffany's range is unmistakable, especially if it contains a hint of the famous Tiffany blue.

But why bother with the high-end brands? A Pandora bracelet, after all, is something most will know of and could invest in. There is a story behind every charm, with the option to switch the combinations around depending on mood or outfit choice.

The charm bracelet industry has taken off in recent years, with Pandora leading the way, followed by Thomas Sabo, Trollbeads, and Chamilia. Each offers the same product with their own twist. Whilst Pandora stick to the traditional solid silver and rose gold charms, with elegant glass beads to choose from too, Chamilia has taken advantage of the younger market, selling charms inspired by the Disney movie Frozen.

Whether a statement of fashion intent, or simply a memory to wear, jewellery serves a range of purposes, and will never go out of fashion. Trends will inevitably change, but there will always be a market for it, because it is just another cranny of human consumerism – something we're all guilty of.

## Charity Shop Finds

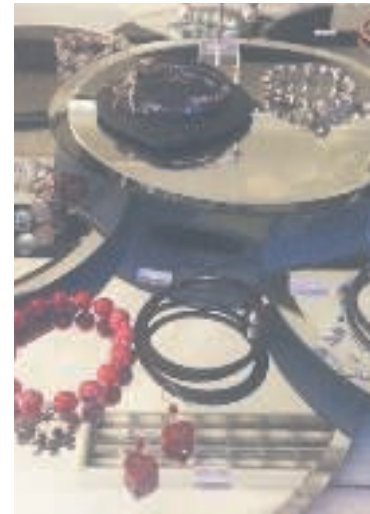
*This little friend here is great for a number of reasons:*

1. It promotes healthy living, raspberries are fruit.
2. It was a Ted Baker brand new ring found in a charity shop.
3. It is kitsch and kitsch always returns.
4. It fits perfectly.
5. It acts as a under-cover knuckle duster.
6. Designer fashion eventually streams into the charity shops for you to pick up at a percent of the original cost.
7. It is fruit ring! Fruit on a ring!

Beth Cloughton

# Hidden Gems

*Emily Fishman reveals Cambridge's jewellery secrets*



MEG HONGMANN



Jewellery is the ultimate accessory. Unlike shoes, jewellery takes no effort to try on and when window shopping; it is often a gleaming necklace, or shiny bracelet which catches the eye of the gazer passing by. For me, jewellery is almost as important as the outfit itself, whether bespoke or quirky, it is the finishing touch which can make or break an outfit.

One of the best independent jewellery shops in town is Cambridge contemporary crafts. It sells fun and unique accessories, its jewellery is average priced but it's fun designs are distinctive from the high streets shops. If you want something individual but not an overstatement then their jewellery is perfect for looking stylish every day.

If you are looking for a feminine twist, perhaps a garden party or may ball, then **Lilac Rose** (71 Bridge St, CB2 1UR) is the place to go. Affordable, but also another independent store, a bracelet will cost on average £15. Not too pricey, considering it is an independent store, their designs are classy but sophisticated. **Lilac Rose's** jewellery has charm, with very pretty designs this store is also a good place for last minute Mother's day shopping

But if you want something different, then try the **All Saints Garden, Art and Craft Market** (Trinity Street, CB2 1TQ). There you will find an array of different stalls, my favourite

being the Hairy growler. Don't worry, its jewellery isn't 'hairy' or 'growls', instead this stall offers very innovative designs, being inspired by nature and natural forms. Expect leafy tones and autumnal colours, perfect for finishing off a new spring outfit. Some of the jewellery too is recycled, an added 'green' bonus, and all the items are handcrafted in Cambridge using traditional tools and techniques. Perhaps a more ethical choice, yet be careful not to spend your entire student loan on this stall (it is rather tempting).

Lastly, for those of you who remain indecisive or picky around choosing the perfect bracelet for a new dress or a matching necklace for a formal then **The Beaderie** (14 Magdalene St, Cambridge CB3 0AF) along Magdalene Street is the perfect place for you to get creative and pick out the right beads for your very own item of jewellery.

Everyone at Cambridge is an individual in their own right, and therefore finding the perfect item of jewellery to make you stand out and looking your best is highly important!

Luckily, Cambridge has a fantastic array of independent shops to explore, so don't worry, the next person you sit next to in a lecture will not be wearing that same ring – I can assure you!



## GIVING TRAGEDY A MAKEOVER

TROJAN  
BARBIE

*Eleanor Costello speaks with the creative team  
as they prepare for opening night*

“Let’s get away from the epicness. These are real characters, real women – and let’s show that.” Emma Blacklay-Piech is in full-on director mode, pacing around the ADC bar mid-rehearsal. It’s two weeks before opening night, and today they’re focusing on a scene where Andromache (Kate Marston) tells Hecuba (Bethan Davidson) of the death of her child. It’s a poignant scene in an unmercifully heart-rending play. It’s somewhat jarring to watch the rehearsal – one moment the actors are laughing and messing around, and the next they’re in tears, enveloped in their roles. *Trojan Barbie* is based upon Euripides’s *Trojan Women*, and Emma explains the link between the two plays as we sit down to talk: “What Christine Evans has done is she’s taken these characters, and she’s put them in the modern world. You start off with a character called Lottie who’s from Reading, who is very much a modern character. She comes to Turkey on holiday and then gets caught up in this conflict at a refugee camp.”

It seems particularly apt timing for a play on refugees, something that Emma acknowledges. “One of my favourite scenes is the first scene, where Lottie meets Andronice. The modern world meets the ancient world, and just seeing those two worlds collide and have a conversation is so striking. I think that’s where you really see the relevance of this text and see that nothing’s changed. When you set these epic characters in a modern context in a modern camp, especially given what’s going on in Syria and in Europe with all of these camps being set up, then it’s so powerful to see how it’s the same story. These women existed for all this time. Women who are losing their sons to war, who are losing children to rebel forces.”

Producer Eleanor Mitchell chimes in: “One of our first chats about this was how women-specific the play is. These women are mothers and they’re wives and they’re friends, and it’s looking at those relationships and what happens to them in those situations.” So, could we describe the *Trojan Barbie* as a political play? To my surprise, Emma vehemently shakes her head. “This play isn’t about changing people’s opinions on refugees, it’s not got a political stance. It’s just giving these people a voice. It’s allowing people to see what the media doesn’t show. I really like the use of the Barbie doll in the play, because it made me think about the way that the media reports crises. It talks about facts and figures

but not real people. It blurs the face of the victims. So that’s what we’re using the doll to symbolise.

“I’d like people to leave with a different perspective on how they’re viewing the current situation in Syria – because everyone knows about it, and these characters show the lives of real people. And not just the refugees, this play gives the voice to soldiers as well. That’s another reason why I chose this re-working of the play, because it shows male characters who are just as disillusioned as the women are. I want the audience to leave with some empathy.” Which characters in particular have appealed to Eleanor and Emma personally? Eleanor and Emma pull faces as they stop to consider. “I really love the character of Cassandra,” Eleanor finally says. “Everyone in this camp is trying to hold onto their sanity, but from the off Cassandra is completely different – she’s just bouncing and skipping around the stage.”

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IT SHOWS MALE CHARACTERS  
WHO ARE JUST AS  
DISILLUSIONED AS THE  
WOMEN ARE

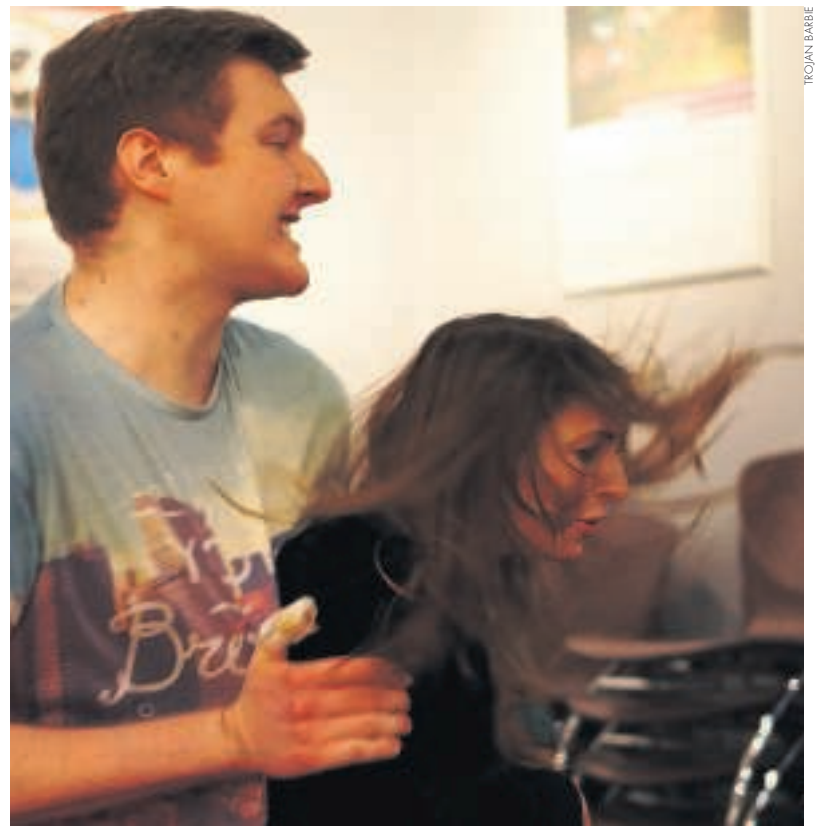
“Yes,” Emma agrees. “In the traditional version of the text Cassandra has the gift of foresight, but she is cursed because no one believes her – they just think she’s mad. But in our version what Christine Evans has done is very clever. She [Cassandra] has post-traumatic amnesia, and she’s stuck in this childlike state from before all of this trauma happened to her. The way that she speaks doesn’t make any sense on paper – but gradually the audience realise that she is actually talking about something else.” Eleanor nods. “I have a lot of empathy for her and feel very sorry for her. She has this monologue that’s incredibly affecting, and I’m really excited to see that on stage.” Emma enthuses about her favourite character, Helen of Troy “She’s so different to the other women in the camp, and she has so many layers. With other characters, like Hecuba, you see them for who they are. With Helen you never really know who she is. She has a different role for the men, a different role for the women. You’ll see that in the play; she’ll be playing one character when she talks to one person, and

then she’ll completely change when she talks to someone else. She puts on these different faces.” The play has its (brief) lighter moments through the doom and gloom. “There’s one bit in particular with Helen when her husband comes back,” Eleanor says, and when she catches Emma’s eye they both laugh. “I don’t want to give too much away. You start out laughing because it’s ridiculous, and then suddenly you’re shocked. You really see all of Helen’s cunning artfulness coming out fully.”

Emma agrees: “There’s a real shift in that scene. It starts out quite light. Will Bishop is playing Melanaus, and he’s immensely Hugh Grant-esque in that scene, so it’s funny. And then one of the most traumatic moments of the play happens, which is completely unexpected.” Eleanor also talks animatedly about the charities that the play is hoping to support. “We found some charities which specifically support women who have had to flee or had to return to war-torn countries, and go through the process of putting their lives back together. Women for Women International do some really good work going into communities. Rather than just providing money, they provide very specific training programmes for women to help them build networks in their community and rebuild what’s been torn apart – they give training to help them set up new businesses or enter new industries.”

“They also give really important help like better healthcare resources, just so that these people can survive in a country that is really unstable. Their website is really good, I’d really encourage people to have a look. You can find detailed reports on what they’re doing in various countries; they have a support-a-sister scheme where you can send money to a specific community.” As we wrap up the interview, I ask whether there’s anything else that they’d like to add. “We’ve done some really cool things with the lighting and the set and everything. I’m really excited to see it all happen,” Eleanor says. Emma nods. “Come see it if you have any interest in Syria, or any interest in women’s position in society, or just if you want to see some really badass acting. The cast are phenomenal. We’re ready to run.”

*Trojan Barbie is at the ADC Theatre at 7:45pm from Tuesday 26th - Saturday 30th January. You can find out more about Women for Women International at [www.womenforwomen.org.uk](http://www.womenforwomen.org.uk).*







CLARE FRESHERS' PLAY

# INTO THE WOODS

*Anna Jennings chats to Beatriz Santos and Josh Cleary, writer and director of this year's Clare Freshers' Play, **The Forest Grimm***

**Anna Jennings (Varsity):** *Why did you take on the endeavour of writing a play?*

**Beatriz Santos:** We all got together and threw some ideas around about what to put on, and eventually came up with the idea of adapting three fairytales, with a darker twist. We were really interested in the idea of fusion and interweaving, and that's how the script gradually began to develop.

**AJ:** *Have you done anything like this before?*

**BS:** Nope! This is the first time I've written for the stage, which posed some problems because it's not like writing a poem or prose – you have to be very clear about where the dramatic action is happening, and when. I had to go over things to make them more explicit. There are new opportunities for playing and mucking around on stage, which hopefully is going to be fun. I think for me the hardest part has been writing the second act – we were pushed for time for me to finish the script, and it's difficult working with fairytales. Everyone knows how they begin, but how they end, especially in our version, was a bit of a conundrum. Bringing it to a climax and a satisfactory ending was quite tricky for me.

**AJ:** *What's it been like letting someone direct your play?*

**BS:** It's been terrifying, but also really great; Josh is a fantastic director and I feel confident in his hands, but handing it over was a huge leap of faith! I was hoping the actors would 'get' the characters that I had written because

before they were all just in my head. I think for me one of the most nerve-racking aspects is hoping that everyone gets the lines right and that the text is delivered well. As it's written in verse, if the actors speed up, or don't quite take their time, it might be difficult to grasp. There are also a few crazy and ridiculous plot twists, so I'm hoping the audience will really get into it and enjoy it.

**AJ:** *How would you describe your working relationship?*

**Josh Cleary:** Beatriz is really great to work with! I have really loved this process: getting new scenes, reading through them and trying to get somewhere close to imagining the crazy world which she created. One of the things I love about the script is the verse it's written in – it's a really nice device. It really is the driving force behind the play. So much of the production has been really smooth. We have a brilliant team of actors, and the production team is great. Alex, our producer, has done a fantastic job of getting everyone together and making sure that everything happens so that I've had less to worry about.

**AJ:** *What's been the hardest part of your job?*

**JC:** One of the main problems is that we are using Clare Cellars, which is a great place to be because it's not like a usual theatre, and the audience are laid out in a very different way. However, this is challenging, especially for the actors, who have to act in a new way as there are audience members on both sides. They're always under the

spotlight, constantly on display. One of the problems I had early on was trying to figure out all the entrances and exits, because it's a long strip and you don't want the staging to become monotonous. We've tried to use the space more creatively and have some entrances from peculiar locations.

**AJ:** *What has kept you sane throughout the process?*

**JC:** I don't drink coffee, so that can't be my answer! I guess it's all about making sure that everyone is on the same page, but also knowing when to stop thinking about it. With a production like this it's really easy to spend every moment thinking about all the details and worrying about everything not coming together, but sometimes you just have to take a step back, wait until the next rehearsal and try not to think about it too much.

**AJ:** *Finally, can you sum up why people should come and see the play?*

**JC:** Because, it's unique, it's fun, it's exciting, and I can't remember the last time I saw a play like it. It's mad. Completely mad – in such a brilliant way!

**BS:** I have tried to make it fresh, even when working with these fairytales which we all know off by heart. It's a crazy adventure down the rabbit hole, and it is literally down in Clare Cellars, so I hope everyone has the courage to pop in – it'll be great!

*The Forest Grimm is on in Clare Cellars, 24th-26th January at 8pm. Tickets can be booked now at [www.adcticketing.com](http://www.adcticketing.com)*

## CONFESSIONS OF A CAMBRIDGE THEATRE REVIEWER



*Eleanor Costello*

Reviewing plays in Cambridge is a unique experience. We are blessed with some of the most talented performers and artists in the country. Hour upon hour is poured into every production, along with blood, sweat, and tears... and then the reviewer simply signs up, strolls into the ADC, collects their two tickets, and then rates the performance out of five. There is something satisfying about having such complete undeserved power – and also something really horribly unpleasant. Because if going to see an awful play is disappointing, then having to review an awful play is painful.

There's a terrible temptation at the back of your mind to unleash the inner-Satan that's been lingering throughout the performance, whispering phrases such as "an absolute disaster", "the worst two hours of my life", and "has potential to be used as an instrument of torture". But then again, you are intensely aware that these are real people who have invested a lot of time and effort into the production, so you are equally

tempted to slap three-stars on the review and mumble something about how the actors were "talented" but the production "didn't quite come together." In the end you resign yourself to the fact that your role is to give an honest account of whether it's worth dragging yourself out of your room to go and see it – and so you tell the truth, even if it's harsh.

The problem is that eventually you start bumping into people you've reviewed. I once turned up late for a college football match, and so I had to get changed whilst the other team was in the dressing room. As I dressed I chatted to the girl next to me, and quickly noticed that she wasn't being very friendly. I was telling her a story about how a cat outside had leaped up to bite me as I'd walked past. I thought it was a very exciting story – mainly because the cat had followed me inside and was sat next to me, swiping at my hands in a crazed frenzy. I couldn't get it to leave me alone. This girl had a face like stone. I was pondering the girl's silence and intimidating glower when

I realised the awful truth – only three days before I had reviewed her in a play, and given her a horrific review. I hadn't said anything too personal, but the production was just so miserable – almost three hours long, I'd almost fallen asleep halfway through, and I had made my displeasure clear. I avoided her for the rest of the match, terrified to touch the ball in case she tackled me to the ground.

A much more awkward incident came when I reviewed a sketch show by a group of people from my college for (dare I admit it?) another of Cambridge's esteemed student publications. I studied the same subject as a few of them, so I was crossing my fingers that their production would be great and I could give them a really nice review. Almost inevitably, I didn't enjoy the play. It was fairly entertaining but it just wasn't my thing. I didn't feel that I could be too biased just because I knew them, so I gave them a reasonable seven out of ten and wrote a long review explaining exactly what I liked and didn't like about the production. However, disaster struck the

next day when I had a look online at my review (it's sad I know, but I get a kick out of seeing my name on an article). The editor had cut out all of my nice comments, leaving a rather brutal review. None of the cast spoke to me again, so I didn't get the chance to tell them what had happened. Very unfortunate.

So why do I continue reviewing? The answer is simple – because it's all worth it when you come across a five-star play. No review is more satisfying to write and more pleasant to read than a review where the writer has clearly fallen in love with the production. Their writing is set alight. They gush about the actors, about the moments which made them gasp, and the lines which will stick in their mind for a long time. As the audience applauds at the end of the production, you cannot hide the smug little smile on your face. Everyone else claps to show their appreciation. You will write your appreciation for all the world to see, bestowing a special kind of glory.





20TH CENTURY FOX

## FILM

**The Revenant***dir. Alejandro G. Iñárritu, 156 mins*

★★★★★

When I left this film my friend asked if I was alright. That was no coincidence. My face was clearly reflecting the feelings of mild shell-shock at what I had just seen. 'Enjoy' is not the right word for this film. It absorbs every fibre of your being into the American West and refuses to let go until the end.

On the surface it seems a simple premise. Director Alejandro González Iñárritu focuses on the tale of Hugh Glass (Leonardo DiCaprio), a fur trapper left for dead on a hunting mission in the 1820s American West. The film develops into a tale of revenge between Glass and Tom Hardy's character John Fitzgerald. But beneath this simplicity is a subtle exploration of major forces of existence, swinging from survival to the meaning of the divine – all within the two and a half hour running time.

Undoubtedly, the star of this film is the cinematography. Each shot was a work of art, with the camera sweeping from vast glaciers to snowy forests – justifying the methodical use of only natural light to build this film. All the human actors are totally dwarfed by nature; a shot of DiCaprio trudging totally alone across a vast glacier is something to behold. The tracking

shots used in the opening sequence perfectly draw the viewer into the terror of the fur trappers as they flee from the vengeful First Nations warriors.

At this film's heart is survival and all its attendant pain. All the publicity for this film has focused on what DiCaprio went through to create his performance and the end result certainly justifies the means. He produces a very physical portrayal of Glass but it is startlingly effective. This is not the pithy, eloquent DiCaprio of *The Wolf of Wall Street*. This is gritty DiCaprio at his finest. In one scene he is caught up in the maelstrom of a freezing river, and I totally forgot I was watching a film. By genuinely putting DiCaprio in a freezing river, Iñárritu added a layer of realism lost in modern cinema. DiCaprio's pain feels real because, frankly, it partly is, and that makes his performance all the more believable.

However this is not a one-man show. The rest of the cast provide sterling performances that complete the picture. Tom Hardy is menacing as John Fitzgerald, a brooding presence willing to do anything to succeed in the bleakness of the American Frontier. Will Poulter is another highlight as Jim Bridger, portraying brilliantly the terror of a young man broken by his experiences on the expedition – memories of his breakout role as Eustace in the Narnia films are long gone. Indeed the First Nations actors have received a criminally low amount of media attention, passing over some of the strongest performances in the film.

Yet, despite all this, Iñárritu has not

created perfection. It is very easy to get caught up in a film's imagery and forgive its other failings. Much of this film lacks dialogue. DiCaprio's character is silent for so long it is shocking when he speaks. Many of the film's shots are the struggle of men trudging through the endless expanses of the American West. And this leaves the film feeling strangely incomplete. I can understand that Iñárritu was looking to use this silence to portray the isolation of those left alone with nature. But this could have been balanced with more scenes that develop the multiple parties we cut between in this film. It would have been fascinating to have had a reasonable portion of screen time with the group of First Nations people, exploring their drive for revenge against the invading Americans. Striking imagery does not produce a coherent film, and at times the film feels like it is trying to say too much. Iñárritu's vision was too mind-boggling to be contained by the paltry limits of the screen. If he had reined himself in, and created a tighter narrative, the themes would have shone through all the stronger.

Overall, this film is a flawed work of art, pushing the boundaries of filmmaking, with the consequence of losing some narrative coherency. It remains the most beautiful film I've ever seen, but not the best. Nevertheless, I believe it will be the film that gets DiCaprio his elusive Oscar – if it doesn't, I dread to think what he'll put himself through next.

*Alex Izza*

## EXHIBITION

**Queens' Arts Festival***13-17/01/2016*

★★★★★

There isn't much of an art scene in Cambridge, or at least, not one related to the university itself. Queens' Arts Festival – as well as the upcoming John Hughes Arts Festival – provides a rare opportunity for students to exhibit their art. It's amazing what some people manage to produce, presumably in the little spare time they manage to find here. Unfortunately – perhaps unsurprisingly – this meant a lot of the pieces on display at the exhibition were small or simple works: there was a dominance of drawings and photos, with the seemingly obligatory display of life drawings tucked in one corner.

The overall display was very interesting, albeit slightly underwhelming. This was no fault of the artworks or the curators, though: with Queens' phenomenal Old Hall as their location, it was always going to be a tall order to compete with the surroundings. A

set of photos atop a table was hardly a match for a portrait of Erasmus; black and white drawings were swamped by the majestic polychromy of the walls and ceiling.

That said, there was a welcoming and comforting atmosphere. With a fire burning to one side and a table adorned with free wine, it was a pleasant place to pass some time perusing the art and chatting to whomever had turned up. It did feel like some of those in attendance were merely drawn in by the promise of free wine; nonetheless, they stayed for the art, which I suppose was the point. The art itself was mixed. The pieces were mostly small; though paying close attention paid dividends, and some gems really shone through. To name but a few, I'd have to mention Vincent Hao's photos, Rosanna Suppa's ink drawings – one of which I would have happily paid for and hung on my wall – and Tanya Basi's painting of Queens'. Despite resting on a bench to one side, I was drawn to Eloise Gillow's Magdalene watercolour: elegant yet simple, it had a professional air to it. Nonetheless, I did hear a fellow visitor ask their partner – repeatedly, it must be said – whether or not it was finished. Meanwhile Lauren Downing's illustrations (part of a children's book being prepared for a postgraduate course) showed flair,

creativity and promise: I'd definitely like to see more.

However, the star of the show – and I'm certain many others would agree with me – was Emma Wood. Dozens of her drawings were pegged to lines that crisscrossed the room. Dealing with a range of topics – love, life as a young person, many focusing on Cambridge student life – her simple doodles were funny, engaging and at times touching. The arrangement of the display, although striking, was annoying: I spent too much time craning my neck or standing awkwardly in doorways and, as such, definitely missed a few of them. Without wanting to be too emphatic, I'd happily buy a book of these doodles or, perhaps more realistically, spend too much time procrastinating on a tumblr of them.

This is why it's a real shame that there aren't more artistic and creative events in Cambridge, certainly none with a large audience or a notable platform. Not only do student artists need a space to display their work, it can also be a real joy to spend time appreciating it. It doesn't just have to be students like myself, who are slightly obsessed with art and have spent too much time in the Fitzwilliam Museum: art can be pretty, engaging, fun and simple – and it deserves to be seen.

*Louis Shankar*

## FILM

**Room***dir. Lenny Abrahamson, 118 mins*

★★★★★

**R**oom, directed by Lenny Abrahamson, is a truthful, sensitive adaptation of Emma Donoghue's 2010 novel, which manages to be touching and deeply affecting without ever slipping into sugary sentimentality. With a brilliant script, great acting and beautiful cinematography, this film, although at times very difficult to watch, remains optimistic in spite of its subject matter.

*Room* is the tale of a woman who has been abducted and held for seven years in a fortified garden shed in suburban America, and is raped nightly by her abductor, by whom she has a child. The film opens on the morning of her son Jack's fifth birthday. Wishing to shield him from the nightmarish truth of both of their lives, the woman, known to Jack as Ma, has taught him that *Room* is all that exists, and this pretence allows Jack to be happy. Ma however remains desperate to escape, and concocts a plan with Jack to leave

*Room*. But for a little boy who has never even believed in the existence of Outside, the world is an imposing and confusing place.

Brie Larson is fantastic as Ma, portraying a character who is completely devoted to giving her son the best life possible in the most difficult of circumstances. Larson also captures the stress, fear and, at times, despair of a woman imprisoned for so long. Inside *Room*, her wide-eyed, harried expression is a constant reminder of her nightmarish circumstances. Sean Bridgers is also excellent as her captor. He provides a harsh edge to Ma and Jack's sometimes idyllic existence, jostling unpredictably between slimy friendliness and violent anger.

Amazingly, however, it is Jacob Tremblay who runs the show. His performance is brilliant, filled with intricate physical details, such as his sheepish habit of looking at people in *Outside* from under his long hair, and his first tentative, barefoot steps on an unfamiliar surface. Jack's optimism and resilience makes the film ultimately very affirming. He is happy in *Room*, and though it will take some getting used to, he will be happy in *Outside* too.

One of the most intriguing aspects





ELEMENT PICTURES

of the film is its ability to suggest that Room might perhaps be a kind of idyllic place to grow up in. Faced with circumstances that don't make sense, and that certainly don't match with the world he sees on TV, Jack invents an elaborate and flexible mythology to explain his life. There's Room, and outside, there's outer space. The things on TV are not real, the things in Room are. Jack and Ma are real: their captor is 'maybe half'.

## “THERE'S ROOM, AND OUTSIDE, THERE'S OUTER SPACE

With the creation of these stories comes a wonderful freedom to choose the truth, and arriving in Outside, despite the countless wonderful things, is a loss of this. Jack's reluctance to relinquish this imaginary world is brilliantly expressed when Ma tries to explain the circumstances of her abduction to Jack. Frustrated by his inability to understand the story, and frightened by its darkness and the threat it poses to

his understanding of everything, Jack yells, 'I don't want this story!'

Ma's reply is a tragic summary of the reality of living with knowledge of Outside: 'This is the story you get.'

*Room's* fantastic acting, powerful script and complex themes benefit from beautiful cinematography which is at times breathtaking. The first section of the film, set entirely within Room, gives an eloquent insight into Jack's view of his world, making the most of the enclosed space and of the close ups which maximise it, which mimics his perspective as a child. Likewise the camera work in Outside focuses closely on Jack's physical responses to his new surroundings, allowing the audience to perfectly follow his reactions even as shyness limits his dialogue. The first shot of Jack outside of Room, looking wide-eyed up at the sky, is gasp-inducing.

*Room*, although at times incredibly confronting and difficult to watch, is fantastic. The script is strong and masterfully brought to life by director and actors alike. Although there is no question that *Room* is a deeply affecting film, what shines is Jack's resilience and optimism. In spite of all its darkness, this film is ultimately stirring and affirming.

Clare Cavenagh

## ALBUM

### Daughter - *Not To Disappear*

released 15/1, 4AD / Glassnote

★★★★★



“I feel numb, I feel numb in this kingdom” Elena Tonra sings wearily on 'Numbers', one of the standout singles from Daughter's second LP, *Not to Disappear*. Oddly enough, this lyric goes some way towards perfectly summarising the feelings of indifference I have towards this album. In the past, I'd always relied on Daughter's music to provide me with a kind of crude emotional exorcism during my most self-pitying and vulnerable moments: previous releases such as 'Youth' and 'Medicine' had a failsafe capacity to reduce me to a bawling, leaking wreck of a man when exposed to their haunting melodies and searingly honest lyrics. With this in mind, I turned to this record only to be shocked to find that the shoulders upon which I had always reliably wept on had turned their back on me. In their place are ten songs defined far more by disenchantment than any strong emotions: the arctic, biting misery of their first album has thawed into a kind of lukewarm cynicism.

Its opening track, 'New Ways', is not so much cathartic as draining, hobbling along under a limp drum patter before petering out in what is an entirely forgettable pre-ambles to the next leg of the album. Then, on 'To Belong', Tonra grumpily shrugs off the dying embers of a relationship over a track where weary blips and pulses drift into a hazy and underwhelming guitar chorus. 'No Care' continues the sense of apathy, affecting tired, lazy guitar jangles and passive-aggressive lyrics delivered in an uncaring drawl. Nor does *Not to Disappear* finish any differently to the way it starts: 'Made of Stone' is effectively a static and slow-burning outro to see off an album that never really gets going. In fact, the deeper you delve into the record, the more the songs seem to blur into one another under the same sense of tired detachment.

This is not to say that there aren't a few highlights along the way. 'Doing the Right Thing' is as hard-hitting as it gets thematically: it documents the decline of Tonra's grandmother while suffering from Alzheimer's disease. The creeping loss of her identity is steadily teased out through its lyrics: "I'll lose my mind / then I'll lose my children / then I'll lose my love". It's one of few moments where the album suddenly starts up from its relentless moping to offer a genuine sense of agony - in many ways it is one of the most beautiful songs that the band have ever written. Similarly, 'Fossa' uses some of the most direct and polished images of any of their songs. Translating from Latin as 'trench', it explores the narrow, suffocating feeling of being trapped in romantic longing for someone else with little hope of it ever being returned: "Be what you want / I could be what you want", Tonra repeats. However, the most interesting thing on the album by far is 'Numbers': through creaking, sprawling synths and roving guitar melodies, a spacious, otherworldly soundscape is created. Added to this is the genuinely striking idea at the heart of the song: "I'll wash my mouth but still taste you". It acts as a bitter criticism of hook-up culture and the grubby, lurking regret felt after a one night stand.

These songs, arresting in both their sound and content, are an indication of what could have been had the band not chosen to settle for tasteful yet dull tracks over riskier, experimental and more emotive ones. As technically impressive as the music might get at points, I couldn't help but part with the album feeling underwhelmed. Where some of their previous releases used to rage tragically against their fate, this record, on the whole, quietly simmers in the background. 'Not to Disappear', an album which is dedicated first and foremost to being memorable and to retaining a sense of one's identity, will ironically become entirely forgettable to me in a few weeks' time.

Ben Waters

## ALBUM

### Future - *Purple Reign*

released 17/1, self-released

★★★★★



With the dual Prince and royalty allusion as his new mixtape's title and with a healthy dose of arrogance backing up its surprise release, Future is making some serious claims towards membership of the hip-hop elite. The thing is, based on his previous two releases, he can probably back it up. Solo effort *DS2* and *What a Time to Be Alive*, his collaboration with Drake, were both huge hits, catapulting him toward stardom at an astonishing pace.

But that newfound spotlight is not a kind place to many artists - many have looked back on *WaTtBA* as a service provided for Drake's benefit. Future has only really had one significant solo success, and he has yet to provide the consistent output to justify the dizzying hype being piled upon him. So his status is ripe for being challenged: is Future really in command?

*Purple Reign* bares the hallmarks of an artist who has arrived. Future's identifying style has barely changed, having found a groove alongside his regular producers. He has completely settled in to his role, which is to define, represent and relentlessly sell trap music. It is a totally respectable position to have reached.

The problem is that it's insufferably boring. He has pumped out a set of smooth, predictable tracks with little about them to differentiate them from the rest of Future's output or, indeed, each other. Now that he has shown off his defining sound so completely, now that his messy breakup (with RnB singer Ciara) has been resolved, now that the boundaries that trap was fighting in its inception have been well and truly eradicated; what remains on this release is a complete lack of struggle or tension in the delivery of these tracks.

And it is a shame that *Purple Reign* ended up that way, given the components for a much more engaging project are there. Led by Metro Boomin, the producers turned in a very respectable and, occasionally, inventive set of beats: 'Run Up' channels the best of UK grime with its angular, awkward shuffle, while 'Inside the Mattress' and 'All Right' are thunderous slices of hard hitting body music. Occasionally, those more exciting beats tease out a more dynamic flow from Future, but the majority of these tracks are ponderous and dull.

The failure of this album is set in relief when you have a look at the artists Future is up against, making vicious, danceable hip-hop music that also manages to retain a sense of invention. A\$AP Rocky's last album, *At.Long.Last. A\$AP*, adds a delirious and cinematic quality to its low-slung, Southern sound with a mad lyrical sensibility to cap it off; its sales even matched Future's own smash *DS2*.

Long Beach-native Vince Staples certainly won't manage to beat Future commercially, but his breakout album, *Summertime '06*, marries deathly, stark beats to a pointed political statement, all the while wrapping it up in an intelligently structured narrative. I'm so down on this Future release only because we have come to expect so much more from him: he proved on *DS2* that he can be one of the most interesting artists around. Maybe that was more a product of his circumstance than anything innate to the music; more happy accident than concerted effort.

Future has already stated that this is only the start of his release schedule for this year - last year produced three mixtapes and an album. Hopefully, somewhere in those releases is a new idea for what Future's project is really about. That idea has been lost somewhere along the way, and *Purple Reign* really shows it.

Michael Davin



# Why Ronnie O'Sullivan is a threat to snooker

**Gabriel Gendler**

Sport Correspondent

'Remarkable' would be a fitting adjective to describe Ronnie O'Sullivan's sixth victory in a Masters Final. 'Painful' would be more fitting still. The Rocket, as O'Sullivan is colloquially known, dropped a solitary frame to an underwhelming Hawkins before

winning the requisite ten on the trot. When he produced a stylish 136 in the third, Alexandra Palace erupted. When a wayward pink sank out of pure luck to award him the ninth, the discomfort was audible.

His dominance is virtually unparalleled in any sport. Even before last week he had won each of the Triple Crown events on five occasions. He holds the records for the longest

winning streak, the most competitive centuries and the most competitive maximum breaks, including the three fastest in history. His records cover every aspect of the game, and are all the more remarkable for the fact that he has achieved them despite a long history of false retirements, long sabbaticals, depression and drug-related issues. On the rare occasion that he loses, it's because his mind is

elsewhere. On form, he doesn't lose at all.

The Rocket raises difficult questions for the sport. On some levels, he can only strengthen it; he is a pleasure to watch, and sessions in which he plays are invariably sold out. In a more abstract sense, he makes a farce of snooker. We are entertained, because we are attracted to talent and genius, but the higher form of entertainment through sport - the dialectic, the battle of wits, the manoeuvring and predicting - leaves the Crucible when Ronnie enters it. Instead of the thought-provoking psychological thriller that it should be, snooker is a feel-good American college flick about a fraternity of one.

This is not a fate to which all sports are vulnerable. When Barcelona dominate club football, their tougher fixtures don't become routine. Each challenger brings a game plan, and the champions must respond. Federer's reign in tennis was soured by his head-to-head inferiority to Nadal. The rapid exchange of movements, decisions and ideas that comprise most confrontational sports means that the strength of an individual or team does not compromise the entertainment value of each encounter.

There was no such dialectic on Sunday. In each frame, Hawkins played a few shots, and then gave way for a solo performance from O'Sullivan. Snooker admits some degree of confrontational play, in the form of shot selection, but it is a solo sport compared to football or rugby. Indeed, the disciplines that focus primarily

on the individual are precisely those that find themselves in the condition that snooker finds itself in now. Tiger Woods monopolised golf for a decade. So did Roger Federer and Michael Schumacher in tennis and Formula 1 respectively. Athletes and swimmers can dominate their events for years - Michael Phelps is the obvious example, but not the only one. In contrast, winning the Premier League ordinarily involves winning only two out of every three matches.

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**SNOOKER IS A FEEL-GOOD AMERICAN COLLEGE FLICK ABOUT A FRATERNITY OF ONE**

There is a great deal of value in sports that place a premium on individual performance. These are the contests that test an athlete's mental resources, require remarkable physical achievements and produce inspirational champions. They are more inclusive; it is easier to go for a jog than to organise a game of rugby. Nevertheless, when talented outliers like O'Sullivan turn up the sport itself becomes vulnerable - and snooker is under rocket fire.

Should we be worried? There are enough reasons to be cheerful. Today we can enjoy a master at work - and eventually, everyone will be defeated by time.



Is Ronnie the Rocket torpedoing snooker's integrity?

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# Is there really no 'I' in 'team'?

As Lionel Messi picks up his fifth Ballon d'Or, Ravi Willder wonders whether individual awards and media coverage pervert the true spirit of team sport

An old cliché continually circles the team-based sports of this world; that the word 'team' lacks an 'I', forever quipped in the (often futile) hope that this mere grammatical quirk will discourage egotistical play on the corresponding pitch or court. The lesser-observed retort to this gnomish statement is to respond with an equally sage remark: that while this may be the case, there happen to be five instances of this self-obsessed vowel in 'individual brilliance'.

One could easily imagine the narcissistic Cristiano Ronaldo reciting this statement while he looks in the mirror every morning, what with the Real Madrid forward's propensity for berating teammates for not passing the ball to him, yet being guilty of doing the same on numerous instances in any given match.

It was thus a clash of sporting ideologies which characterised this year's Ballon D'Or ceremony, the most prestigious award in world football, where the Portuguese man o' war came up against, and lost, to the ultimate team player, as well as footballing extraordinaire, Lionel Messi. Messi emerged victorious at the exclusive presentation in Zurich, finishing with 41 per cent of the total vote compared to Ronaldo's 28 per cent, with the nearest rival Neymar finishing a distant third on 8 per cent. But what can this result tell us about the regard held, if any, for sporting success anchored in team-orientated play as opposed to pure individual talent?

The FIFA Ballon D'Or is an award that defines itself by the simple superlative 'best': it is an award bestowed upon the 'world's best male player' of the previous calendar year. A definition of 'best', however, is one that is much more ambiguous. On the basis of individual statistics alone, Ronaldo would have just edged Messi to the prestigious prize, having scored 57 goals compared to the Argentine's 52

for club and country. It was the latter's role in a record-breaking year for his team Barcelona, however, that scooped him the prize; the Catalan outfit won everything on offer in Spain and Europe in 2015 by winning the elusive treble of La Liga, Copa del Rey and UEFA Champions League, as well as claiming the showpiece UEFA Super Cup and FIFA Club World Cup. Messi was the orchestrator in obtaining a haul of trophies that even a Tolkienesque dragon would envy, while Ronaldo's goals could not prevent a barren year for his club of notorious high expectations. In keeping with his portrayal as the ultimate team-player, Messi had 26 assists to his name compared to his rival's 17, as he formed a deadly symbiotic trident with Neymar and Suarez at club level. Ronaldo lacked the same spirit, even refusing to celebrate some of his club-mates goals in acts that at the best could be described as extremely petulant.

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INDEED, SPORTING EGOTISM IS SOMETIMES EVEN CELEBRATED BY THE PUBLIC AND MEDIA

Messi's ability to foster the unity that led to a historic year, then, along with his magisterial ability, was what prompted the panel of his peers and journalists to vote him as the Ballon D'Or winner by a considerable margin, while Ronaldo was left empty-handed at the podium, despite his goal-scoring feats. On this occasion team-play triumphed over individual prowess, yet both the public and the media are at times guilty of elevating one man or woman's importance to the extent that it eclipses the team

spirit which sport strives to promote.

One thinks of the predilection of back page headlines to attribute sporting successes to a sole individual, thus discarding the holistic effort embodied by the victorious team. For instance, headlines at the weekend after Manchester United's win at Liverpool focused on the goalscorer Wayne Rooney's role, when in fact he was of far less importance than the whole of Manchester United's defence and especially goalkeeper David De Gea in securing a 1-0 win. Further afield, after Great Britain's valiant Davis Cup triumph in November, numerous back pages ran with a headline along the lines of 'Murray wins Davis Cup for Britain', and in so doing disregarded the effort put in by his teammates, who also played a crucial role in clinching the trophy.

Indeed, sporting egotism is sometimes even celebrated by the public and media. Maverick footballer Zlatan Ibrahimovic springs to mind. The Swede's most famous quotations, that have won him a cult following on social media and in newspapers alike, include "An injured Zlatan is a pretty serious thing for any team", and "One thing is for sure, a World Cup without me is nothing to watch". Granted, the forward is a phenomenally gifted footballer, yet social media seems to revel in his arrogance and disregard for his teammates a tad too much, given that he has never quite reached the Olympian heights set by Ronaldo and Messi in his career.

Ibrahimovic aside, and in contrast to the media, athletes themselves are quick to point to their team's role in their individual success. Messi took pains to thank his teammates in his Ballon D'Or acceptance speech, while the response of the winning goalscorer/penalty-saving goalkeeper that "the three points are the most important thing" has become somewhat of a cliché in post-match interviews. Even in more individually orientated sports,

such as tennis singles, players take pains to thank people that have contributed to their success. Backroom staff, coaches, trainers, and parents always feature prominently in victorious acceptance speeches. Players realise that even the most incredible talent requires the support of a whole host of qualified professionals and family members to be successful.

Even if a cynic might doubt the sincerity of some of these platitudes, those of footballers especially, there is no doubt that an individual requires

the backing of a team to attain the highest glory. Messi and Ronaldo owe much to their teammates who consistently provide them with the opportunity to shine, even if it means they themselves perform a less glamorous role in the team's eventual success. While individual excellence can propel a player into the limelight, only an effective instillation of a healthy team ethic can help the player scale the pinnacles of sporting success – even if the media prefer to focus on the glamour of individual talent.



As Zlatan would inform you, there's a capital 'I' in Ibrahimovic

## The eccentricities of the 'Special Ones'



AVB revolutionises sitting

**Sam Dunning**

Sport Correspondent

Football managers are a weird breed. When Louis van Gaal was manager of Bayern Munich, he wanted to prove to his players that he had the balls to drop any of them, and he did so by literally showing them his balls. He also looks like a thumb.

Luciano Spalletti has recently been appointed manager of Roma for the second time. His last managerial stint at Zenit St. Petersburg is probably

best remembered for the time he celebrated winning the Russian title by running around the pitch topless in sub-zero conditions.

Arsène Wenger, meanwhile, would never do such a thing. He's much more likely to make the point that associating male sexual organs with courage is typical of the patriarchy's attempt to monopolize certain virtues. The man thinks. In a recent interview with French magazine *L'Equipe*, he reflected whimsically that only the present can yield happiness, because "the past holds only regrets, the future only worries." Very much the words of a "specialist in failure", or so Mourinho would say.

The former Chelsea boss didn't do so well this season, but we're sure that he's sure that he's still "a special one," not "one of the bottle," whatever that means. Maybe a poorly translated Portuguese idiom? An alcoholic's cry for help? Attempts to become the "happy one" certainly petered out this season.

More disturbing psychological questions hang over Brendan Rogers,

who has a greyscale portrait of himself in his own living room. Likewise, Roy Keane, whose wildly staring eyes are like portals to a world of hate and anger, where Roy and 'other Roy' can live in happiness.

Some managers are a bit chirpier. Ian Holloway always amuses, in a sort of avuncular, farmy man-in-pub way, and Big Sam's a laugh. Especially when he declares that he wants to manage AC Milan. Just as wacky was Andre Villas-Boas (pictured), for his distinctive, constipation-inspired stance on the touchline. Reports he is having his poise patented so far remain unconfirmed. If the managers of the minor leagues decry bias towards Premier League outfits, they always have the F.A. Cup to show off their eccentricities. Remember Exeter manager Paul Tisdale's distinctive fedora when his side faced Liverpool?

And we'll always lap it up. Managers remain the only mavericks in an increasingly professionalised sport. We're like those seagulls that follow trawlers. Speaking of, someone should definitely appoint Cantona manager.

*Continued from back page.*

But you, dear reader, probably remain largely ambivalent. I like football and tennis, you say; doping is the problem of other sports. Positive tests here are few and far between. Football, for all its faults, is a clean sport.

Football, and tennis, rugby, cricket or golf, bask only in complacency because of their inherent immaturity. To convincingly believe that the most lucrative and popular sport in the world would fail to abuse stimulants which would give marked advantages to any team is wishful thinking. West Germany's 1954 World Cup winning team have recently been revealed to have doped systemically. Players on Helenio Herrera's infamous, and widely successful, Inter Milan of the 1960s have told of taking all manner of unidentified pills with their coffee in the morning before matches. Bayern Munich's long-standing fitness coach, Hans-Wilhelm Muller-Wohlfarth, attempted to use a concoction of stimulants with calf's blood to cure Frank Ribery of a recurring knee injury two years ago.

More worrying is the general lack of high-profile doping cases within tennis. On the one hand, this is simply

because so many drugs are allowed here which are banned in track and field events. Andy Murray regularly goes on the drip to recover from tennis matches, a transgression for which Mo Farah would pick up a two-year ban. Testing is still woefully inadequate. Out-of-season checks are absent; it means players can use stimulants to artificially build up muscle power during the off-season; by the time the matches start, the drugs will have left their system, but their benefits will remain.

How much doping exists within sports like football is, of course, unknown. A lack of positive tests says nothing when the sport lacks doping tests in general. Yet the problem is resurfacing, with a vengeance, for athletics. Records will be overturned, former stars will descend into infamy; the sport may take years to recover its support and its credibility. Only time can tell whether football and tennis, will, at some point, feel its full force. When the time does come, they must do what athletics must do now, and face the doping problem head on. Perhaps, finally, cycling will no longer be a doping scapegoat, but will become an example of anti-doping.





## Sporting individualism

Does it detract from the value of team spirit? Page 31.

# Sport

# Doping – sport's great denial

**Athletics' governing body is starting to realise the scale of the doping problem, and it's time for all sports to take note**

**Felix Schlichter**

Sport Editor

1923 Tour de France winner Henri Pélissier was rather frank about the life of a pro-cyclist when interviewed by journalist Albert Londres the following year. Opening up his bag, he pulled out a variety of supplements; this is cocaine for our eyes, he explained, chloroform for our gums, liniment for our joints. "At night, in our rooms, we can't sleep. We twitch and dance and jig about as though we were doing St. Vitus' dance."

A national anti-doping law came into effect in 1965, too late to prevent Knud Enemark Jensen's death from amphetamines and Ronicol in 1960, and too ineffective to save Tom Simpson from dying on the slopes of Mont Ventoux from amphetamines and alcohol in 1967.

Rather than disappearing from professional sport, doping simply went underground. Its ugly spectre still stalks sport today. In the 1980s the use of steroids turned the world of athletics upside down when 1988 Olympic champion and world record holder Ben Johnson tested positive in Seoul. He later admitted to systematic steroid abuse stretching back to 1981. In the 1990s the spotlight turned once again on cycling after the Festina affair, a French police seizure of cartloads of blood-boosters hoarded by the most popular cycling team in France. In the wake of the Lance Armstrong crisis, and that of the Russian athletics team, cycling and athletics seem to be in constant competition in an attempt to occupy the centre of sport's chemically induced dark side.

The questions asked in the 1980s and 1990s don't seem to have changed either: how to prevent doping; how to treat former dopers; how to tackle the history of a tarnished sport. So far, definitive answers are still conspicuous in their absence.

Arguments on whether to legalise doping have diminished in recent years; the focus has now shifted onto providing lengthier bans. Two year bans are now the norm for cycling, and in athletics second doping violations will now guarantee bans exceeding four years. Moral campaigns against dopers, most notably against Justin Gatlin during the latest World Championships in Beijing, can hit endorsements and sponsorships.

Lengthy bans are, however, almost never the answer. It certainly hasn't hampered the recent proliferation of doping abuses in Russia. The answer is far more likely to be found in increased testing. Cyclists are now forced to report their movements to the World Anti-Doping Authorities (WADA) so



IAAF President Lord Coe finds himself in the middle of a storm

they can be tested throughout the year, including at five in the morning during an off-season holiday in the Bahamas. Three missed tests now constitutes a major doping violation and the maximum first-time ban of two years from all competitions. Doping tests are no longer centred on major sporting events, but spread to incorporate the lengthy months of training as well.

Yet however much effort is made, no sport can ever be entirely free from the shadow of dopers. How is one to tackle repentant dopers? Just as in real life, once a criminal has served his sentence, he is eligible to return and be reintroduced into society (or his sport). Will he become a leading figure for a concerted anti-doping

crusade, or will he relapse into being a dark blot on the sport? Recently, two Italian cyclists tested positive for EPO (erythropoietin). Matteo Rabottini, whose career had been gently sliding into obscurity, recently told the *La Gazzetta dello Sport* that, following his positive test, his wife and children had left him, he was near financial ruin, and even his parents now refuse to talk to him. The offers of support and sympathy seemed only natural for an athlete who was openly repenting an inexcusable moment of recklessness which had destroyed his entire life. Yet the same support was offered to Mauro Santambrogio, who was on the brink of suicide after receiving his ban. But having been brought back

from the brink into the cycling fold, he then tested positive for testosterone.

And what about those athletes who receive bans for accidental use of ordinary, over-the-counter medications, inexplicably banned in their professions? What about those athletes who knowingly doped for years but receive heavily-reduced bans for ratting out their fellow sinners? The idea that the anti-doping authorities will eventually find the holy-grail of a fair, secure method for prosecuting the guilty and saving the innocent is ludicrous. There is no magic formula.

For some desperate souls who gave up promising desk-jobs to follow their dreams, who were perhaps held back from the brink of success by an untimely injury, who have a family to feed and a contract to fulfil, the reward will always overcome the risk. Moreover, as doping controls become more sophisticated, so stimulants become cheaper, easier to buy, and harder to detect.

So what am I saying? Should we just admit doping will remain, indulge in fatalism, and give up what seems to be forever a lost cause? Of course not (however much despairing existentialism appeals to Cambridge students). But what all sport must do is what any good therapist would immediately say to the alcoholic, the drug-addict, the criminal; to tackle a problem, one must first admit that there is one.

It took cycling the best part of two decades of slander and ridicule to crack down on the doping epidemic. If the road to redemption seems, even now, rather a long and treacherous one, then at least the journey has started. Cycling has the most drugs tests per head, the most off-season testing of any sport, one of the most stringent lists of banned articles, and a well-regulated, organised, anti-doping body. The last few years have also seen a drastic reduction in international doping cases, while cycling has the only voluntary (additional) anti-doping organisation, the MPCC (Mouvement pour un Cyclisme Crédible), which provides even harsher sanctions (including minimum four year bans).

Now athletics too is starting to realise the extent of its doping problem. It is no longer a case of a few 'bad apples' or individual perpetrators; doping is institutional and endemic, and it needs to be tackled as such. Doping in Russia is just one hole in a sport riddled like Swiss cheese. Now is the time to wake up and smell the toast burning, and to act across the sport. The road towards a cleaner sport will prove difficult, especially initially. The skeletons will quickly come falling out of the closet. But it is a step which the sport must take.

*Continued on Page 31*

## Tennis serves up a spot of bother

**Ravi Willder**

Sport Editor

Tennis has joined the sports suffering a personal crisis. While tennis players this week have had to contend with sweltering heat on court at the first Grand Slam of the year, the Australian Open, the sport's governing bodies have been exposed to uncomfortable conditions of a more ethical nature. The tennis world has been rocked by allegations that the outcomes of matches have been predetermined by players paid to lose by betting syndicates. Even more worrying are the suggestions that the fixing has infiltrated even the highest level of the sport. One ex-player this week claimed that the results of certain ATP Masters events have been influenced by illegal betting syndicates from around the world.

Several top players at the Australian Open have played down the scale of the scandal. Andy Murray said that he had never heard of any such activity in the game, while Novak Djokovic stated that, while he had been approached on one occasion early in his career, there is "nothing happening at the top level". The Tennis Integrity Unit (TIU) also attempted to quash the claims, stating that "The TIU and the tennis authorities absolutely reject any suggestion that evidence of match-fixing has been suppressed for any reason." Nevertheless, in a sport where the outcome can be determined by a careless double fault or a single errant shot, there are understandable concerns that this could rock tennis' very foundations.

The European Sports Security Association declared that tennis was the sport most at risk from betting manipulation, both because of the ease with which one can lose a match, and the sheer extent of betting options that leading bookmakers offer. Punters can bet on anything from total games in a match to the outcome of individual points: an array of options that means that a player could fix only a handful of points and no-one would be any the wiser. The allegations arose as a result of a leak of documents to the BBC and Buzzfeed that mainly discussed events dating back to 2007, but one suspects that this is a scandal that has the potential to change the face of the sport for many years to come. Here's hoping that the issue will be resolved before it descends into the mess which fixing made of cricket not too long ago.