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VARSITY

Pressure builds on University to divest assets

- *University Council to hold an open discussion to debate the University's investments*
- *Protestors take to the streets once again to call for divestment from fossil fuels*

Josh Kimblin News Correspondent
Patrick Wernham Editor

The University came under increased pressure this week to divest from fossil fuel companies, as students staged a protest in the city centre, and academics called for a discussion about where Cambridge invests its £6.3 billion endowment.

A motion was also submitted for the final CUSU Council of term, calling on the students' union to take a more proactive stance in the debate surrounding divestment. The moves come after analysis of the Paradise Papers revealed that Cambridge had put money into a fund that is heavily invested in fossil fuel companies.

On Tuesday this week, the divestment movement staged another protest against the University of Cambridge's investment in fossil fuel industries, with a march through the city centre.

A group of over sixty protesters, representing Cambridge Zero Carbon Society, marched from Magdalene Bridge to the Old Schools at midday. Holding a large banner and brandishing orange placards, they chanted and banged pots and pans. Passers-by stopped to watch, as some took photos.

This was the second ‘Emergency Protest’ to take place this week, following the disruption of a Careers Service event attended by BP and Shell last Thursday. During that protest, protestors with black paint on their hands staged a sit-in in front of the companies' stalls.

Speaking to *Varsity* after the event, Rufus Jordana, a member of the Zero Carbon Society, said: “Today we marched and protested to condemn Cambridge's

complicity in the Paradise Papers scandal and its undeclared holdings in the fossil fuel industry.”

“It is fully reasonable to expect that the University of Cambridge, whose mission statement is to ‘contribute to society,’ should not hold investments in an industry which is speeding the planet and organised human life to destruction.”

“Cambridge has offered us repeated assurances that it holds minimal investments in the fossil fuel industry. Ignoring student motions, petitions, and academic votes, it has offered nothing more than an empty ethical investment policy, as well as another Working Group, which nobody asked for. The Paradise Papers show that Cambridge has invested in oil exploration and drilling – and that their empty platitudes are lies.”

The protest was arranged in co-ordination with the Oxford Climate Justice campaign, who rallied last Friday. Both groups are using the hashtag ‘#Come-Clean’, as part of a wider campaign for transparency in university investments.

Angus Satow, press officer for the Zero Carbon Society, wrote in a press release that the groups hope “to put pressure on their universities to establish a substantive and transparent ethical investment policy.”

The same press release noted an escalation in the Society's demands of the University. “Alongside divestment from offshore funds and fossil fuels, Zero Carbon are now also calling for a full declaration of where the University is investing, a public apology for its

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Divestment protestors march down Senate House Passage

(EMILY WOOD)

Uni denies counselling wait times

Louis Ashworth and Anna Menin
Editor-at-Large and Associate Editor

Cambridge University has seemingly contradicted both the executive and annual report of the University Counselling Service (UCS), as further questions arise after the revelation that staff resignations significantly disrupted counselling operations over the past two academic years.

A University spokesperson denied both that waiting times for counselling have risen during recent years, and that the UCS has never imposed limits on the number of counselling sessions students were offered, despite official evidence to the contrary.

“Waiting times ebb and flow but overall, in the past four years, there has been no increase in waiting time in the service,” they said, despite the disclosure last week that some students had to wait up to five weeks to get an appointment in Lent term 2016.

Last week, *Varsity* revealed that the UCS, which offers centralised counselling and mental health support for students, had been operationally disrupted by staff resignations. Multiple staff leaving the service, combined with sickness and a retirement, led to significantly increased wait times for students seeking counselling two years ago. During the last year staffing shortages from a failure to recruit resulted in cuts to the levels of counselling that could be provided.

Once *Varsity* had gone to press last week, the UCS released its latest annual report, containing new statistics and information about its operations.

Assessing complaints made about the UCS during 2016–17, the report says “most of the complaints received about the counselling service relate to students having to wait for their appointments, or having a limit to the number of sessions available.” The report then quotes a complaint which suggests “Extending [counselling] beyond 6 sessions if possible to do some longer term work.”

Last week, this paper reported that the UCS had sought to move away from a set number of sessions, though this

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EDITORIAL

Accountability, for everyone

It's a cliché that the role of journalism, at a student or national level, is to hold institutions and powerful figures to account. Nevertheless, it's something that we try to keep here at *Varsity*. Hopefully that's been apparent over the past few weeks, with our coverage of the staffing shortage at the University Counselling Service and subsequent cover-up, and the University's last minute installation of their own choice of chairperson at a PalSoc event to choose just two examples from the last edition.

This impulse seems to be spreading into the wider University community. Cambridge Zero Carbon Society have long been putting pressure on the University to withdraw its investments from fossil fuel companies. Yet in the wake of the release of the Paradise Papers, their campaigning has taken on an added urgency. The accounts make clear precisely where, as in what fossil fuel companies, the University is putting its money. For those wanting to hold powers to account, the job seems to have been made easier.

Nor is this sentiment confined to students. A number of fellows submitted a request for the University Council to hold a discussion on the University's investments, and in response the Vice-Chancellor has agreed that the resulting discussion will be open to all students and staff of the University. If you're inclined to go along and see said democratic accountability in action, then do keep yourself informed by reading our report on the march in News, as well as Khem Rogaly's case for divestment in Comment.

The idea that people, as well as ancient institutions, need to be held to account appears in other forms throughout the paper. In Comment, Ollie Winters argues that the Facebook page Grudgebridge has turned from a place for light-hearted moaning into something altogether more sinister. Precisely because of its anonymity, Grudgebridge has become a safe space for anyone wanting to publish all kinds of abuse without having to face any kind of responsibility or recriminations for what they want to write.

Elsewhere in this week's paper, Francesco Anselmetti and Beth Craig-Geen keep the pressure on the University as to their PalSoc decision, arguing that it amounts to more of a crack-down on the much vaunted free speech than any 'safe space'. Though these are just a few examples, we hope it is indicative of a wider feeling in the University community. We are told to interrogate and question in our academic work. It's time to do that outside of the supervision room, too.

Academics join students' calls for divestment

- Cambridge Zero Carbon holds demonstration on Magdelene Bridge
- Members of Regent House call for a discussion on the University's investments
- CUSU Council to hear a motion mandating CUSU sabbs to speak in support

Continued from front page

investment practices and the establishment of a student and academic-led ethical investment policy."

In addition to the protest, a number of academics in their role as members of Regent House, the University's governing body, called for a "discussion of the University's investments, as a topic of concern to the University".

The request was submitted by 21 academics, including Dr Robert Macfarlane, Dr Nicholas Guyatt, and Rev Jeremy Caddick. Caddick is a long-standing supporter of the divestment movement, having been one of the signatories of the inter-faith statement on divestment released in early November.

The letter called on the University to lead by example, and "continue [the] process of shaping the world for the better".

At the time, Caddick told *Varsity* "the statement highlights the way that the world's faith traditions have a huge amount to say about how and why we value the natural world", adding "it isn't just ours to destroy".

Among the other signatories of the inter-faith letter were Dr Rowan Williams, former archbishop of Canterbury

“
The
University’s
empty
platitudes
are lies
”

and master of Magdalene College, and Dr Tim Winter, Islamic chaplain to the University.

According to this week's *Reporter*, the University Council has agreed that the University's investments will be among the matters for consideration at the Discussion to be held on the 5th December. In addition, Stephen Toope, the vice-chancellor, has said that the Discussion will be open to all students and staff of the University, and that time allowing, all those who wish to speak on the topic will be permitted to do so.

Action on a more bureaucratic level has not been restricted to academics, however. A motion has been submitted for the CUSU Council of Michaelmas term, which would commit the students' union to advocating for divestment in a more concrete way than at present. It was put forward by Hattie Hammans and seconded by Angus Satow.

If passed, the CUSU sabbatical team, amounting to six paid employees, would be mandated to make a written submission to the University's working group on divestment in support of the movement. It would also mandate CUSU president, Daisy Eyre, as well as the other sabbatical officers to lobby on behalf of the divestment movement in all meetings with senior University figures like



▲ Protestors marched from Magdalene Bridge through the city centre on Tuesday (EMILY WOOD)

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News



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the vice-chancellor.

An extra £100 would be allocated from the CUSU Council Free Budget for the Cambridge Zero Carbon Society if the motion were passed. Council has already passed a motion in support of divestment in November 2015, which said that it was "morally wrong for the University to invest in fossil fuel reserves". However, it did not commit CUSU to put pressure on the University in specific contexts.

Much of the motion's supporting information comes from information revealed by *The Guardian* and other newspapers from the so-called Panama Papers.

The files showed that both Cambridge and the University of Oxford had paid into a fund connected to deep-sea digging and oil exploration.

That fund, called Collier International, was split into two further, separate funds. The largest of those two funds was revealed as having invested in Royal Dutch Shell, an Anglo-Dutch oil company. Two partners of Shell, Xtreme Coil and the Shell Technology Ventures Fund, also benefitted from investment.

A number of colleges were also revealed as having invested in the fund, such as Gonville & Caius and Downing.

Responding to the revelations, Cambridge Zero Carbon said: "These revela-

tions are absolutely scandalous. That the University has been investing tens of millions of pounds in offshore funds to dodge tax is bad enough. That in doing so it has been investing huge quantities in Shell's deep-sea oil exploits is outrageous."

The various actions follow the second 'town hall' meeting of the University Council's divestment Working Group, which was held last Thursday, at which Eyre spoke out in support of the movement.

The Working Group was established in May 2017 in response to the grace for divestment passed at Regent House. The meeting sought to remedy the uncertainty over the implications of divestment for Cambridge University, and how the University could use its influence and intellectual capital to take positive steps towards a zero-carbon future.

Rufus Jordana was critical of the Group's stated aims, saying that the Zero Carbon Society hoped to see "the immediate announcement of full divestment from fossil fuels, and the reorientation of the University Working Group on divestment towards this goal."

The Working Group expects to report on the advantages and disadvantages of divestment by the end of this academic year.

"The University should not hold investments in an industry which is speeding the planet and organised human life to destruction"

Rufus Jordana
Member of Zero Carbon



"Engaging with fossil fuel companies on climate change cannot bring the change we need in the time we have"

Inter-faith statement on divestment

"Either we will have managed to find a way to live sustainably, or bequeathed a climate collapse"

Rev Jeremy Caddick
Dean of Emmanuel College

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News

Whiskery: Catz porters and students do

Sophie Shennan
Senior News Correspondent

Student-led charity Student Minds Catz has teamed up with staff and students at St Catharine's College to take part in Movember.

The campaign is raising money for Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM), a men's mental health charity offering support and challenging stigma surrounding mental health issues. On their official JustGiving page, the campaign draws attention to the fact that "3 out of every 4 suicides are male," and stresses that "we believe it's important to talk about men's mental health and open up the discussion." So far, the campaign has raised over £140 for the charity, and hopes to raise £500 by the end of the month.

The campaign is run by Student Minds Catz's College Representative Coordinator Carolyn Irvine. Irvine told *Varsity* that the idea for the campaign was sparked by a conversation between herself and the college's Head Porter, Dave Dove, during which Dove recalled the porters' participation in Movember several years previously.

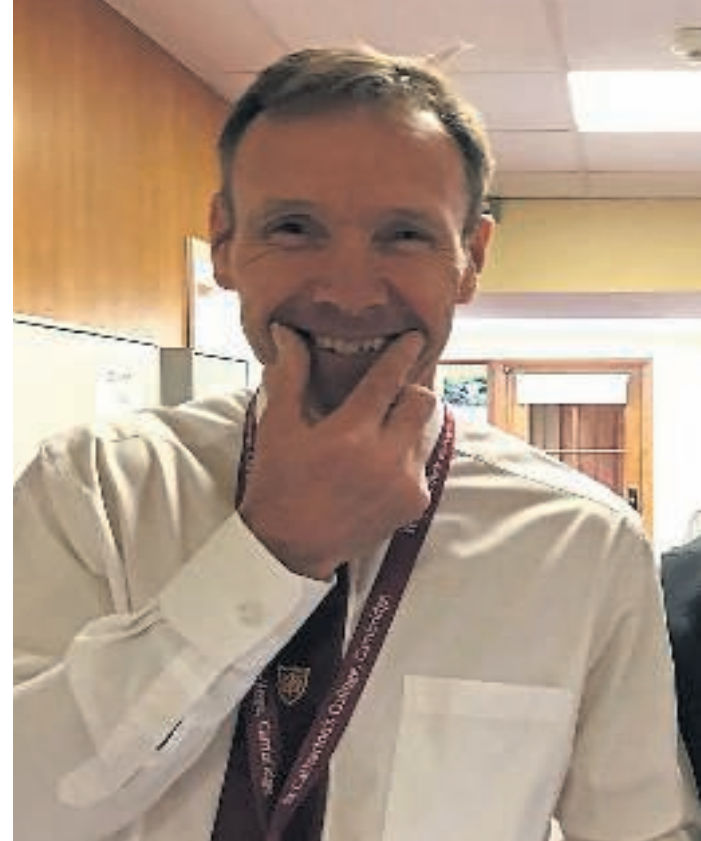
As a result of the conversation, they

decided to start a Movember campaign again to raise money for men's mental health issues. The campaign was organised by Dove and Irvine, with help from the Student Minds Catz team and the MCR Welfare representative Frances St George-Hyslop. So far, seven students and seven Catz porters are taking part.

Speaking to *Varsity*, Irvine said that "I am always really proud of Catz as a college. I feel that the college community often bands together to support causes and drive community action."

"This fundraising effort demonstrates that community spirit that makes Catz a really unique college. It's about more than just fundraising, it's about drawing attention to men's mental health, which unfortunately is so often overlooked. One of the biggest challenges to mental health work is creating a space which is inclusive for all genders. We'd love for other colleges to do Movember next year, but in the meantime you can support the Catz fundraising drive by sponsoring our porters and students."

Student Daniel Garlick, who is taking part in Movember, told *Varsity* that he thought it was "vital to shine a light on this issue and remove the stigma that surrounds it, especially in the student population."



Student Loans Company head dismissed over public slamming

Caitlin Smith
Senior News Editor

The chief executive of the Student Loans Company (SLC), the organisation responsible for administering loans to over six million students and graduates in the UK, has been dismissed from his post after publicly criticising the organisation.

Steve Lamey was found guilty of having breached "ethical standards expected of public office holders" by a Whitehall inquiry, which led to his suspension in July. His dismissal from the role was announced last week. The SLC did not make clear at the time why it had taken the decision to sack Lamey.

The ruling of the Whitehall inquiry came after a conference of university administrators at which Lamey branded the SLC a "mess".

A disciplinary report seen by *The Times* shows that Lamey was also found to have exaggerated the number of calls from students that were mishandled by the company. He told the conference that 50% of calls were mishandled.

However, according to this report, this figure only held true for peak periods at the beginning of each academic year. Outside of these times, the report said, the rate of call mishandling was one in five.

As chief executive of the SLC, a government-run, not-for-profit organisation, Lamey was paid £200,000 a year. His suspension came just a year after his appointment to the role.

In an interview with *The Times*, Lamey, 60, criticised what he called the

"trumped-up charges to discredit him". He accused Whitehall of having "hung him out to dry" after he made moves to reform the organisation. He said that senior figures in Whitehall were guilty of "sweeping the failures of the organisation under the carpet" rather than solving problems at the beleaguered organisation.

"Almost all of the allegations against me were made by disgruntled staff who were upset with the way in which I was changing the organisation and who had received poor performance reviews", he said.

The Whitehall investigation agreed that Lamey, a former chief operations officer at Revenue and Customs, had been responsible for making "a real and positive difference" at the SLC. Many of the SLC's current difficulties, including a "remote, aloof leadership team" and a "lack of customer focus", predated Lamey's appointment, the report said.

Prior to his arrival, the SLC faced criticism regarding poor customer service, inefficiency, and allegations that they had sent fake debt collection notices to students.

The report also suggested that the SLC was struggling to combat problems of bullying, low morale and high sickness rates, with staff missing an average of 16 working days per year due to sickness. It cited the findings of an audit carried out by McKinsey & Company, a management consultancy firm, which discovered that the SLC was ranked in the bottom 10% of all organisations it assessed in 35 out of 36 criteria.

While praising the positive progress he had instigated, the report suggest-

“The department and the board seem to have gone out of their way to destroy my reputation”



ed Lamey was guilty of inappropriate behaviour towards staff, including incidents of swearing during a performance assessment for a staff member and a "failure to control bad behaviour amongst the executive leadership team". Of the 58 allegations made against Lamey, only six were upheld by the internal investigation.

Despite these issues, Lamey earned a glowing performance review from Christian Brodie, the SLC's chairman, praising Lamey, for having "re-energised the business". He also said he had shown "sound and effective leadership qualities".

Lamey told *The Times*: "The depart-

▲ The SLC has faced criticism for inefficiency and malpractice (CAITLIN SMITH)

ment and the board seem to have gone out of their way to destroy my reputation. I can only conclude that they were more interested in hiding the chronic problems [of the] SLC rather than facing up to them in public."

In response to Lamey's allegations, the SLC said he had been dismissed "following investigations into allegations about aspects of his management and leadership".

It added: "The investigations covered a range of different allegations with a number upheld. It would be inappropriate to comment on individual findings within the report."

Movember



◀ Porters and students show off their early progress
(DANIEL GARLICK/
CAROLYN IRVINE)

MENAF panel discuss Turkey's turbulent future

Nick Harris
News Correspondent

On Monday evening, a panel hosted by the Cambridge Middle East and North Africa Forum (MENAF) discussed the troubled political situation developing in Turkey over the last ten years.

The panel discussion, entitled 'After July 15: The Future of Turkey' and held at Gonville & Caius College, primarily focused on the trend towards nationalism and Islamism following an attempted coup by a faction of the Turkish armed forces in the summer of 2016.

The panel consisted of Jonathan Friedman, who has worked as a financial consultant for Turkish investors and is currently director of digital risk management firm Stroz Friedberg; Dasha Afanasieva, the former Istanbul correspondent for Reuters, and Cambridge's own Dr Ayse Zarakol, a fellow of Emmanuel College and a reader in International Relations.

The first part of the evening consisted of panellists giving their thoughts on the state of Turkey today, and how it arrived in its precarious international and domestic position. Friedman was keen to emphasise the "structural factors in Turkey" which led to the current situation, pointing out how Turkey's role in Western foreign policy has shifted from

▶ The future of Turkey's President Erdoğan hangs in the balance

(JIM MATTIS)



being "a key part of containment policy against the Soviet Union" to their current position – questioning "old alliances" in the United States, the EU and the West and acting more autonomously.

Dasha Afanasieva, on the other hand, was keen to bring her experiences of living in Turkey to the discussion, giving her account of the "rise of nationalism" she witnessed after the coup attempt, partially because of the perception of "outside agents controlling" Turkey. Her perception of the question facing the government boiled down to "secularism vs Islamism" and "how do you reconcile the two?"

Dr Zarakol differed somewhat from the other two panellists in her assessment, saying that they had found "too much method in the madness of Turkish politics". She doubted that any "grand vision" of "moving away from the West" existed given the erratic alliances and enemies which Turkey has been

making. Rather, she saw the situation as more chaotic, arguing that the government had needed to "manufacture enemies" in order to maintain legitimacy and coherence.

New issues were raised when the audience was given a chance to pose questions to the panel. The panel reached something of a consensus on the relationship between Kurds in Turkey and the government, with Dasha Afanasieva saying that in the government's view, Turkey has a "PKK problem, not a Kurdish problem". Jonathan Friedman and Dr Zarakol suggested that there was no consistent position from all Kurds towards the government or vice versa.

However, when asked whether Turkey's foreign policy could be seen as aligning with Qatar and Iran, the panel were in disagreement again. Dr Zarakol branded all of Turkey's new alliances a collective "marriage of convenience", while Jonathan Friedman pointed out that "Turkey's state banks conspired with Iran" to launder money and that there may be credit from other Arab states keeping the Turkish economy afloat.

The evening concluded with discussion of President Erdoğan's future, with the panel speculating that he could be threatened by a resurgent Nationalist Movement Party, the main far-right and ultranationalist party in Turkey.

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News

Corpus Christi considers CUSU

Students gather to debate familiar questions, with fresh financial spin

Jack Conway
News Correspondent

Corpus Christi College held a debate on Tuesday to consider whether to reaffiliate its JCR with CUSU.

Corpus Christi's JCR has been disaffiliated from CUSU since a referendum in 2010, and the Corpus JCR's constitution stipulates that it must hold a yearly referendum to re-evaluate that decision. Last year, 77.1% of voters opted to remain disaffiliated from CUSU.

Tuesday's debate was held as part of this year's referendum build-up, for which voting will open at 8am on Saturday 18th November and close at 10pm on Sunday 19th November. A quorum of 40% is necessary for the results to be considered valid.

The pro-reaffiliation side was represented at the debate by CUSU President Daisy Eyre and CUSU Welfare and Rights Officer Micha Frazer-Carroll, a Corpus alumna. The anti-reaffiliation side was represented by Samuel Deutsch, a third-year student at Corpus, and Cici Carey-Stuart, the Corpus gender equalities officer. The debate was moderated by Jacob Bradley, the Corpus JCR vice-president.

The arguments presented covered a wide range of topics. The anti-reaffiliation side spoke first, arguing that CUSU is ineffective, that the Corpus JCR can cover most services offered by CUSU and can do so better. They said that Corpus students have little to gain from reaffiliation when, even as members of a disaffiliated college, they are still able to enjoy services provided by CUSU, such as free sexual health supplies.

The pro-reaffiliation side attempted to move the debate away from mere financial calculation on the part of Corpus Christi, and instead argued that, as a whole, CUSU does positive work that benefits Corpus and the University in general. For this reason, the pro-reaffilia-

tion side argued that reaffiliation should be seen more as symbolic gesture of support for CUSU and the work it does.

Eyre said that she recognised that "almost all of our activity benefits Corpus students as much as anyone else," and said that she was "proud of this". She and Frazer-Carroll stressed that Corpus students would continue to have access to the services CUSU provides.

This rhetoric was at times divisive, with the anti-reaffiliation side accused their opponents of "guilt-tripping" Corpus students about the union's precarious financial situation, suggesting that criticism should instead be directed towards a lack of financial support from the University.

One argument that set this year's debate apart from those of previous years is that surrounding the possible introduction of CUSU's new funding model. Under the proposals, all colleges, including those which have voted to disaffiliate, will pay a block grant to the union, which would go towards funding its welfare and support office. Previously, affiliated colleges paid CUSU a per capita fee. A final decision on approving the proposal will lie with the Levy Committee, a sub-group of the Bursars' Committee.

Under the new scheme, Corpus will pay a larger sum to CUSU, and the pro-reaffiliation side saw this as reason to affiliate in order to have influence on what this money is used for. The anti-reaffiliation side, however, said conclusions should not be drawn until the details of the new scheme are finalised.

Speaking to *Varsity*, Bradley said that "engagement seems to be far higher" this year as compared to last year, with "passionate figures in both the pro-affiliation and anti-affiliation camps".

He continued, "Very few students remain even within a generation of those who were here when Corpus disaffiliated originally, and the status quo of disaffiliation has remained stable for a long time."

▼ Gonville & Caius is the second of the two disaffiliated colleges (N CHADWICK)



▲ Students at Corpus will vote this weekend
(SIMON LOCK)

The eternal question? A long

The debate about disaffiliation has plagued CUSU for 11 years. Often, it seems to revolve around the same questions: value for money, democratic representation, and CUSU efficiency.

This year, however, the debate has shifted with the potential introduction of a new CUSU funding model. The new model disincentivises disaffiliation by requiring a levy from every college, even those that are disaffiliated. The proposal has the potential to transform the question of affiliation from a financial decision into something more symbolic. Passed by CUSU Council last month, it now lies with the Levy Committee, a sub-group of the Bursars' Committee, to give the proposal their final approval.

The new funding model is merely the latest development in the debate surrounding affiliation with CUSU;

Cambridge colleges have a long history of questioning the merits of alignment with the university-wide student union.

The first college to disaffiliate from CUSU was Trinity, which voted for disaffiliation by a margin of six votes in 2006. The college disaffiliated as a result of controversy surrounding then-CUSU President Laura Walsh. Emmanuel, Jesus, and St John's held referendums at the same time, but all opted to remain affiliated.

After Trinity reaffiliated in 2007, the disaffiliation debate remained static for two years. In 2009, however, Peterhouse held a referendum after the JCR found itself struggling to raise the funds to pay its affiliation fee. By the time the referendum was held, the funds had been found and the college voted overwhelmingly to remain affiliated.

CUSU would not be so lucky in 2010, when 71% of Corpus Christi's undergraduates and 86% of its postgraduates



reaffiliation



history of dissaflation debate

voted to disaffiliate from CUSU, as it has remained ever since. Robinson and Selwyn held votes in 2012 and 2013 respectively. Both opted to remain affiliated, although the vote at Selwyn was particularly narrow, with the pro-affiliation camp gaining a majority of only 55%. Gonville & Caius also held a referendum in 2013, but, unlike Selwyn, its motion to disaffiliate passed with 70% of students opting to leave CUSU. Caius and Corpus are now the only two JCRs that remain disaffiliated from CUSU. Since Caius disaffiliated, there have been three unsuccessful referendums. The first was Churchill, which saw 80% of students vote to remain affiliated in 2015. The second was Peterhouse, which held its second disaffiliation referendum in October of last year. The referendum was largely sparked by the university-wide decision to remain affiliated with the NUS, whose president, Malia Bouat-

tia, was at the time fending off allegations of anti-Semitism. CUSU was accused of having “let down Jewish students”. Ultimately, Peterhouse voted to remain. In November 2016, shortly after the Peterhouse vote, an overwhelming 84% of Selwyn students voted yet again to remain affiliated with CUSU. The referendum was held because the Selwyn JCR’s constitution requires that it hold a referendum on CUSU affiliation every three years, meaning the next will occur in 2019. The Corpus referendum, then, is merely the latest vote in a long tradition. Historically, the preservation of the status quo seems to be a strong deciding factor in these votes: affiliated colleges generally vote to remain affiliated, and vice versa for those disaffiliated. And if the status quo is any indication, referendums like these will continue for years to come.

BAA-RACK O-BAA-MA

Sheep recognise human faces

The Department of Physiology, Development and Neuroscience found that sheep can be trained to recognise familiar human faces. Eight female Welsh Mountain sheep were taught to recognise the faces of four celebrities (Fiona Bruce, Jake Gyllenhaal, Barack Obama, and Emma Watson) from photographs, by using food pellets. It was also found that the sheep could identify the picture of their handler without prior training.

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Magdalene declares war on waste

Students at Magdalene have established a group to cut down on food wastage in college. The ‘Magdalene Food-Sharing Forum’ was established this week “to provide an easy way to find happy homes for unwanted food items”. The group encourages students to make a post offering their unwanted but edible food to other students, and “co-ordinate handing it over to minimise the amount getting thrown away. “Less waste and free food”, the group’s description states, “what could be better?”



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BILLBOARD ON THE BACKS

Sugar daddy billboard appears in Cambridge

A mobile billboard for Norwegian-run ‘sugar daddy’ dating website RichMeet-Beautiful.co.uk appeared on the backs this week. The controversial billboards, which caused a storm when they appeared in Paris earlier in November, have now been spotted on English university campuses including LSE and King’s College London. In 2013, it was revealed that Cambridge had the highest number of student “sugar babies” in the UK.

OF-NO!

Hire bikes stolen and vandalised

Fifteen ofo bikes have been handed in to Cambridge police station in the last week. The hire bikes, which launched in April, have been a particular target for thieves, and many have been returned vandalised or damaged. One bike had been illegally painted a luminescent green, while another was found dumped near a local swimming pool. Nonetheless, an ofo spokesperson said that the “vast majority” of the 450 bikes in use in Cambridge “are being used in a responsible and considerate manner”.



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Interview

Dustin Lance Black



“To change a mind, you have to start with someone’s heart”

The Oscar-winning screenwriter and LGBT activist Dustin Lance Black speaks to Lewis Thomas about his background and work

Dustin Lance Black has made it his mission to tell those stories which he thinks deserve to be told: stories of marginalisation, persecution, and hope.

Sitting down with *Varsity*, he appears supremely relaxed, sipping his drink and chatting away. However, there’s an edge beneath his smile: this is a man who knows the urgency of his writing, and the role that good writing with a strong message can play not only in cultural debate, but in policymaking.

This is made clear when he describes what motivated him to write *Milk* – a biopic of the 1970s LGBT leader Harvey Milk – which won him the Oscar for best screenplay in 2008. “I was a young, Mormon, military, conservative, Southern kid; I had no idea that there was such a thing as an openly gay man – much less one who succeeded in what it was he wanted to do.”

“I thought that you went to hell, that you lost your family, and that you survived in shame and solitude. That had led me to contemplate very dire solutions. When I first heard his story... I thought that my life perhaps had the potential for love and success. And that was lifesaving for me. And his story was lost! I’d go and ask people if they’d heard of Harvey Milk, and they hadn’t.”

However, Lance Black’s motivation for the film wasn’t limited to telling Milk’s story for the sake of it. “He had this strategy of coalition-building between minorities that had proven successful, and I felt like we had lost this message. Minorities were doing a lot of investigating about how they were different but not a lot of working together, and we were watching ourselves lose at the ballot box.”

Milk was written during the ‘culture



◀ Black received the Academy Award for the Best Original Screenplay for his film *Milk* (FOCUS FEATURES)

wars’ of the early 2000s, when John Ashcroft attacked scantily-clad statues and American state legislatures sought to constitutionally ban same-sex marriage. However, *Milk* has acquired a new significance recently. “There was a period of about eight years when we were working together again, and we had a lot of success. But we’re back in a period now where we could heed the lessons of Harvey Milk – and others – again and build those coalitions so we stop electing Donald Trumps.”

Black cut his teeth writing in one phase of the US culture war; after the Obama years, he has found himself back in the trenches for the next phase.

Talk turns from *Milk* to Lance Black’s new project, *When We Rise*, a depiction of American LGBT history. Asked how he thinks Trump’s presidency will be looked upon by historians of LGBT rights, he stresses our responsibility as citizens. “That’s up to us. It’s up to us to make sure that Donald Trump and his administration is the last gasp of a dying dinosaur. That this is the last cry of a very vocal minority who do not believe that people of difference ought to have the same shot in life. It’s really up to us: it’s not just going to happen on its own.”

He is optimistic that this is the last gasp of the dinosaur. “I have great faith

in us as the human race to see the evil and the wrong that is being done by this administration, and to figure out what it is we need to do to resist, and to fight back – to make sure that his presidency is over within the next three years.”

Black suggests that it will not do for those opposed to Trump to prevent him from advancing his agenda: the foundations of that agenda, and those who articulate it, must be pushed back. “This isn’t about politics anymore. This is about making sure we preserve as much peace as we can, as much of the planet as we can, [and] as much of the lives and self-esteem of the people who he is saying have less value than heterosexual, white, Christian men.”

On the political role of artists and ordinary citizens, he is unequivocal. “Everyone has their own talents that they can bring to bear at this moment in our history; how can you influence the people around you?” And what is Black’s own skill? “I tell stories. Telling stories is one of the most potent skills in changing culture, because it starts with changing hearts.”

The secret to changing views lies not in “talking about a constitution, laws, science, statistics – even if you know they’re on your side – because that just puts people on the defensive. If you

▲ Black wrote the film *Milk* and the Broadway play *8*

(JULIETA SARMIENTO-PONCE)

“This isn’t about politics anymore”

want to change a mind, you have to start with someone’s heart... the best way to do that is to tell a story, and the most valuable story to tell is your own.

“That story has the power to change a heart; that has the power to change a mind; and that is where we start to change the culture.” The ‘culture wars’ will not be won at the ballot box; they will not be won in statehouses. They will be won by winning hearts and changing minds through storytelling: “when people tell the damn truth... tell a story and change the world.”

“The history’s not written, and I think it’s important to make sure that we work to make sure that this is not where history is headed.” It’s a similar sentiment to Churchill’s quip that “history will be kind to me, for I intend to write it”. Lance Black depicts history and works to shape it. He is a writer, an activist, and a man with a clear sense of purpose.

He tells the truth and, in doing so, tries to change society. His writing has already impacted hearts and minds throughout the US and elsewhere; whether it will continue to do so remains to be seen. This is a theme with Lance Black: we can hope that our work will have an impact, but the only way to ensure that it will is to continue with it.

He seems determined to do so.

University denies disruptions to counselling service

Continued from front page:

had been framed as a way of avoiding costly and inefficient extra counselling for students deemed to have sufficiently recovered.

The report suggests that some students were told the numbers of sessions they could have was limited even if they may have felt they required more.

Varsity contacted the University to clarify whether the UCS limits the number of counselling sessions students can receive. A spokesperson for the University said: "there have never been a set number of sessions at UCS as we tailor our responses to the individual", apparently contradicting the annual report and a meeting of the UCS's executive cited by Varsity last week.

The new annual report is accompanied by a statistic section for the first time. The figures released include monthly statistics for referrals to the service, covering the past four years, revealing how demand for the UCS fluctuates over the course of the academic year.

The figures show that demand for the service consistently peaks in October and January, and was typically at its highest throughout full term, dropping to lower levels over the vacation period.

The months spanned by Michaelmas and Lent term saw higher levels of counselling referrals than those of Easter term.

There is an apparent disconnect in the new statistics between referrals and counselling sessions. In 2016/17, there were 2,179 referrals to the service, but only 1,575 counselling clients. In 2013/14, this disparity was reversed, with 1,565 referrals and a greater number of clients, at 1,592. Asked to explain the relationship between the figures, and how many referrals did not result in a student becoming a counselling client, a University spokesperson said: "This information is not compiled in a reportable format, it varies from year to year."

High referral numbers during November and March in particular raise the possibility that some students who do not stay in the city during the vacation period may have to delay their appointments until full term begins again. In Lent 2016, when some students were experiencing extended waiting times, this runover period might have begun in early February.

Varsity asked the University what process takes place if a student is awaiting counselling going into the vacation period. A University spokesperson said: "We organise appointments depending on the situation and the clients," adding



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"The high number of [undergraduates] who are in Cambridge during the holidays are offered appointments during the holiday period."

The latest annual report contains a breakdown of the average number of sessions offered to students. It shows that 48% of the UCS's student clients for 2016-17 received one to three sessions

▲The University Counselling Service is under considerable strain (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

of counselling, including the initial assessment appointment. 40.61% of clients were seen four to eight times, while 11.3% had nine or more. The report said: "There were a number of staffing changes at the start of the academic year", apparently referring to the influx of new staff that occurred in Michaelmas last year, reported by Varsity last week.

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News

Outreach and backlash: Beard on managing media attention

Elizabeth Shaw
News Correspondent

In light of recent media attention faced by members of the Faculty of English, the Sidgwick Site Equalities Improvement Network held a talk on Wednesday 15th November titled 'When outreach leads to backlash'.

Led by Professor Mary Beard from the Faculty of Classics and Paul Holland from the University's Office of External Affairs and Communications, the discussion opened with Holland displaying a tweet by historian Andrea Wulf about how the philosophies of Alexander von Humboldt could form a vision of positive social media use: "Rather than being talked at, he wanted scientists to talk with each other."

Given recent backlash faced by University figures about lecture trigger warnings and the suggested decolonisation of curricula, the talk stressed that it is more important than ever to understand strategies to deal with potentially erroneous social media coverage. Holland asserted that decolonising the English curriculum was "nobody's issue, but an issue with the coverage that came from it".

He recalled the Office of External Affairs and Communications' efficient response to the situation; they immedi-



ately contacted the media to alert them to the fact the story had been misconstrued, worked with the English faculty to create a cast-iron statement within an hour, reported the incident to the Independent Press Standards Organisation and discussed the backlash with those involved.

The talk offered practical, risk-averse advice from the Communications Office: remove yourself from the situation and

▲ "I have got much more out of Twitter than I have lost", says Mary Beard (YOUTUBE)

if possible remove the material itself, although it is always advised to take a screen grab for evidential purposes; try to remove 'tags' associating you with photos; perhaps implement a moderation policy for comments sections; consider invoking the 'right to be forgotten'. In the wake of a social media storm, the University's team can help to identify positive media opportunities to enable the individual to have their voice heard in a productive way. Also, the University can offer pastoral as well as practical advice for individuals encountering on-line abuse.

Mary Beard openly offered a "very different perspective" and admitted to her work and opinions being "less risk-averse by nature". She professed: "I have got much more out of Twitter than I have lost". However, as a "declamatory and un-nuanced" platform of "absolute unpredictability", social media is a place where "hell can break loose".

Beard herself has encountered unpleasant abuse, particularly in connection to her comment about the ethnic diversity of Roman Britain presented in a BBC cartoon in August. As a result, Beard's advice at the talk was sensitive and steeped in years of personal experience. She began by stating the important rule of thumb that if threatened with death, rape or decapitation in whatever

medium, the crime must be reported to the police, and encouraged the audience to "always remain absolutely, patronisingly polite" to any abusers.

"The advice to block and not reply has never felt right to me."

Beard expressed the idea that although to simply ignore may push the offence out of sight, in doing so you are somehow just putting blinkers on against the continuing abuse. Rather, she suggested the following strategy: "Engage with the comments, as you might convince some of the people who are looking into the conversation. You might, just might, make a difference. More often than you expect, they are keen to apologise."

Speaking to *Varsity*, Beard enforced the importance of "not making it a bigger issue than it is". She emphasised that over time you build emotional coping mechanisms, and it is important both to retain a "realistic view of the situation" and to remember that "you don't have to be alone".

Despite admitting to having felt "irritated" in the past by the effort, time and energy spent reacting and dealing with backlash, she emphasised she resists feeling "threatened", and reiterated a message of positivity: "Ultimately you have to find a way to manage it, but it gets better."

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Cafe closes after student sues over disabled access

Phoebe Gargaro
Deputy News Editor

Carlos BBQ on Mill Road was forced to close this week, after Esther Leighton, a disabled undergraduate studying at Homerton College, took owner Carlos Kahraman to court for failing to provide adequate disabled access.

Leighton accused Kahraman and his business of "harassment, victimisation and discrimination arising from disability" along with "failure to make reasonable adjustments", *Cambridge News* reported. After losing the case, the cafe was liable for compensation of £6,000, and £2,500 to be paid to the disabled customer, which the cafe was unable to afford.

Leighton, who was CUSU's Academic Affairs Officer on the 2015-16 Disabled students' campaign, wrote to 28 stores and restaurants that she believed were not properly equipped for disabled access, *Varsity* reported in March 2017. This resulted in seven court actions, with Mill Road's Charisma Hairdressing Salon, Penguin Dry Cleaners, and Zi's Piri Piri restaurant all being sued for £1,500 each.

Leighton also told the court that Kahraman had harassed her by running after her in the street and shouting abuse: "Carlos violated my dignity or created an intimidating, humiliating or offensive environment for me", the *News* reported.

However, Anne-Marie Masterton,



▲ Cafe owner Carlos Kahraman was liable for over £8,500 in compensation (SAM HARRISON)

a local disabilities access campaigner, claimed she had "never had a problem getting into the cafe and Carlos or one of his staff have always helped me if I needed to get in."

After the cafe closed, Mill Road Traders' Association called an emergency meeting, in an attempt to prevent other businesses from meeting the same fate. Piero D'Angelico, who heads the Traders' Association, told the *News*: "Carlos just couldn't afford to pay the fine and has gone bust. This is an awful situation. The traders are joining together to see what the community can do to help."

Leighton was clear that her motive for taking these business to court was not financial in nature: "The most important thing to me is an apology, not getting money. The point is to be able to access the shops."

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Science

Making conservation work



● In conversation with William Sutherland, professor of conservation biology and president of the British Ecological Society

Jake Cornwall-Scoones
Science Editor

Humans have been changing their surrounding environments since they came into existence six million years ago; in fact it is one of the defining traits of our species. Yet the scale at which these changes are occurring has been increasing at an exponential rate in increasing decades, having widespread and potentially long-lasting impacts on biodiversity the world over. I spoke with William Sutherland, Miriam Rothschild Professor of Conservation Biology, to discuss the major challenges in conservation and how these can be tackled, especially in the face of the major political shake-ups of recent years.

Biodiversity is the “basis of life on the planet”. It is of pragmatic importance to the food “food, pollinators, resources” that depend on it, as well as of aesthetic importance, “it makes a lot of difference to people.” Yet conservation faces considerable challenges. Habitat loss, where land-use is changed for the short-term benefit of humans, such as for farming or agriculture, is a big issue, including “the loss of tropical forests, the loss of wetlands, loss of natural areas. Globally, it’s the most important problem.” Further, pollution and climate change are also great concerns, changing environments on a global scale.

Humans co-exist with a diverse set of flora and fauna, and considering our earth-wide dominion, we have been the cause of major invasions by these organisms. “Many of our aquatic bodies have been overtaken by invasive plants. Especially on islands, invasive rats and cats are eating much of the native species: for example the lighthouse keeper’s cat – called Tibbles – ate all the Stephen

Islands wren so it is now extinct. There’s a paper that came out yesterday showing that the areas where there’s the most threatened vertebrates are the areas populated by the most invasive mammals: those two seem to come together.”

Conservation science however should not be observed as a story of doom and gloom, suggests Sutherland: “There are a lot of success stories and I think sometimes we become too pessimistic.” He points to local achievements: “In Cambridgeshire you can see red kites. They are conservation success stories due to a reintroduction programme. Out of the David Attenborough windows we regularly see buzzards and I once saw a raven out of the window here: they both spread because of a lack of persecution.” Indeed many of the conservation challenges of the past have been “largely solved”. These include the “exploitation of predators, habitat management’s got a lot better, we used to massively overfish populations around the North Sea”. Another is water pollution in rivers, which is a transformation Sutherland has seen in his own lifetime. “I was brought up in Sheffield around the River Don, it was too polluted for any fish to live in. That’s no longer the case: our water bodies have become a lot less polluted.” These successes should be both celebrated and should act as a paradigm for further work: “We need to take the same approach of doing the right science and then applying it in order to solve continuing problems such as declines of agricultural species, woodland conservation, climate change and the spread of tree diseases.”

One new idea that has become both popular and controversial in recent years is the concept of “rewilding”, the process of reintroducing animals that once existed in an area but are now locally extinct as a method of land use. Sutherland points to the example of Oostvaardersplassen in the Netherlands, an area once used as industrial land, but given floods and a recession, sustaining an interventionist approach to conservation became economically unsustainable. “So they decided to sort of leave it alone but introduce Heck cattle and Konik ponies and red deer. And you go there and it’s like what it must have been during the Pleistocene: great herds of

“There are a lot of success stories and I think sometimes we become too pessimistic”

animals wandering around; it looks stunning and it’s a reasonably effective way of managing this huge block of land.” This is something that Sutherland thinks is “a romantic idea but it’s certainly not a solution for everything.” In Cambridgeshire for example such a scheme would often not work effectively because it’s a county of “many small sites with special diversity that you have to keep in a particular state to maintain their particular species”. On a large scale, rewinding has the potential to work as “species will find an early successional stage patch because of the occasional flood or storm or grazing”. Leaving small areas alone will often lead to a loss in early successional stage habitats, which home “most of the species we care about”.

Leaving the European Union, suggests Sutherland, has both benefits and costs for conservation science. The EU has “done a lot of good”, particularly in the way that it has encouraged international collaboration: “Becoming isolated is exactly the wrong way that you want to go – I want to live in a more connected society” Yet “there are some opportunities. The common fisheries policy was terrible but has improved, while the common agricultural policy spent a huge amount of money on the environment but not very well ... There is a lot of talk within government about ways of managing land in a less expensive and more beneficial way.” Indeed, Sutherland is optimistic about the actualisation of these talks.

“Cambridge is quite heavily involved in that discussion ... A number of us have been discussing with those making the policies. Michael Gove is giving the right noises. Perhaps he could make a real difference.”

The situation in the USA, with the rise of Trump, is for Sutherland, generating a much more “chilly environment”. “There are immense concerns about the attitude towards science and knowledge, and that is worrying and depressing. I’m looking for the good side

▲ Oostvaardersplassen koniks, a nature reserve in the Netherlands noted for its rewinding project (EM KINTZEL, I VAN STOKKUM)

there...” The USA are leaders in climate change research and “yet some of the representatives of government bodies are not allowed to talk at climate change conferences”. He points to an event held at the Environmental Protection Agency headquarters enabling making coal extraction easier: “That was making a very clear statement about direction.”

Doing science is all well and good but it’s important to ensure that findings seed change, especially in the case of conservation science which is very much application-driven. This, however, is harder than it sounds. Sutherland spoke about the work his group has been doing, “we have a website called Conservation Evidence that summarises global evidence and makes it available to practitioners and policy makers.”

Whilst, with the likes of Google, information has become more openly accessible, Sutherland feels it is often insufficiently comprehensive. “People are just doing little bits all over the place: it’s a bit haphazard... There’s something to be said for having comprehensive and understandable but where there’s a stamp of authority. There are medical sites that you can go and read a popular explanation for a range of problems. And you really need the same for conservation, where you know that people have searched the evidence and summarised the conclusions.”

Even with information available in an accessible format, some policy makers and practitioners, suggests Sutherland, exhibit “evidence complacency” which is the tendency for people to think they needn’t know about the evidence, that their knowledge is sufficient”. He alludes to the example of building a bat bridge over the A11, aimed to minimise collisions between bats and lorries. “When they were built, I think there had been 17 other location but they hadn’t been tested and when they had it was shown they didn’t make a difference. It’s a worry that people are constructing these without having done the right testing and research beforehand.”

Conservation science has shown considerable success over the past decades, both in terms of collecting evidence and in translating it into policy. Still, there are considerable number of challenges that have yet to be solved, and given the recent political upheavals, some are pessimistic about our future.

◀ Anti-Trump protest in London (WIKI: ALISDARE HICKSON)



Rewilding: bringing nature back to nature?

● **Joseph Krol** investigates the controversy of rewilding, a novel method of land use

The world may have changed somewhat since Wordsworth wrote *The Tables Turned*, but the sentiment his poetry so often encapsulates – that of the serene benedictions of the natural world – is now stronger than ever. The spirit of environmentalism has never been so keenly felt; yet, as a society we so often continue to inflict senseless damage on our surroundings. From this sharpening contrast has emerged an increasingly popular vision for man's relationship with the world: that of rewilding.

Rewilding, at its core, is a reversion to nature; it involves taking actions as to render natural processes effective once more. Specific strategies include the rebuilding of connections between areas now split in two by our great thoroughfares, as well as the reintroduction of

apex predators whose position had, up to now, been left untenable as a result of human action.

Its proponents note the many benefits of the scheme; rewilding, they argue, would make ecosystems much more sustainable, by increasing biodiversity and enabling them to respond more effectively to changing conditions, free from the artificiality of human impositions. The Rewilding Britain website also notes the important roles that many once-common organisms play in our ecosystems; for instance, natural woodlands with a diverse range of plant life have been shown to absorb considerably more carbon dioxide than industrial-scale monoculture. However, other stakeholders have quite different views.

The problems posed by rewilding are too often reduced to the admittedly vivid image of rabid wolves marauding the backstreets of Watford. There are, however, very genuine concerns over the precise method by which it is enacted. Unchecked introduction of apex predators into our countryside would be a real threat to the viability of livestock farming, and the National Farmers Union has understandably been very frosty to the idea. It must be acknowledged that the environment has changed substantially in the centuries since the last British wolf was killed, and we cannot be sure – or,

really, have a remotely clear idea – what the long-term impacts on our modern ecosystems will be.

The interplay between man and our environment is undoubtedly immensely fragile. Some, however, question the very dichotomy implicit in such a statement. In his classic 1975 work *Animal Liberation*, the Australian philosopher Peter Singer introduced the concept of 'speciesism'; although building on the work of Jeremy Bentham and Richard Ryder, it was the first time this take on conservationism had been brought to the forefront of popular discourse. In essence, it argues that the species to which an organism belongs is a completely arbitrary criterion by which to assign rights. According to such an ethical code, rewilding is in many regards morally necessary; we would no more have the right to build a motorway across a field than hedgehogs have the right to cross the meadow in peace. We would have no more right to rid Britain of wolves than wolves would have to rid Britain of us.

Some have rejected these notions, declaring speciesism a baseless fallacy. And it may certainly be said that there is a very visceral, and entirely reasonable, human instinct towards the preservation of our own species. Without an innate bias towards mankind over other animals, we may never have become such a



▲ Wolves are animals commonly suggested as ripe for rewildings (PXHERE)

dominant species. But even acting with nought more than human self-interest, there remains a strong case to be made for rewilding, among other tactics.

It would take obliviousness of gargantuan proportions not to see that mankind currently finds itself facing a truly existential question, more so than ever before. Global temperatures are rising at an unprecedented scale, as are sea levels; it is no exaggeration to say that the Earth could quite possibly become irretrievably uninhabitable within a century.

In this situation in which we find

ourselves, we must bear in mind that humankind does not exist distinct from nature. Whether in the rainforests of Borneo or the suburbs of Stevenage, we all live forever in this admixture between humanity and the natural world. If we want this delicate harmony to last beyond our lifetimes, we must be prepared, as a species, to learn from nature, through rewilding or otherwise.

It may prove difficult, and it will certainly not solve all of our problems. But these lessons are needed more urgently than ever.

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It's time we faced the facts on divestment

Both the figures and the moral argument support divestment from fossil fuels. Cambridge must act



Khem Rogaly is a first year studying History at King's

The recent findings from the Paradise Papers have brought to light shocking acts of negligence by public figures, from the Queen to Shakira – but one of the most glaring acts of hypocrisy has come from the University of Cambridge and its constituent colleges. In these documents, the University was found to have invested £1.3 million in Collier International, a tax-avoiding private equity firm that primarily invests in Shell, alongside two deep-sea oil exploration companies. Ten colleges were also found to have pumped money into the fund, including £10m from hardly-cash-strapped Trinity College.

This news comes in the context of an ongoing campaign to make the University divest from fossil fuels. Last year, the governing body of the University – the Senate House – passed a democratic grace to put the process of divestment in motion, but this was overruled by the University Council, which instead opted for a drawn-out consultation process to evaluate whether divestment fitted its goal to 'contribute to society through the pursuit of education'. This is a disturbing failure.

By deciding not to act faster, the University has opted to play an active role in the destruction of the very society it seeks to contribute towards. It is engaging in the existentially damaging game of climate change, in which the next three

“It makes financial and moral sense, and Cambridge is not acting fast enough”



▲ Fossil fuels should stay in the ground (ANDREW SCHMIDT)

years will be crucial. Major action on moving away from fossil fuels is widely cited by scientists as necessary before 2020 if the aim of keeping to two degrees warming is to be met. Divestment makes financial and moral sense and Cambridge is not acting fast enough.

Cambridge is estimated to have £370 million invested in fossil fuel companies overall. This is a significant investment in corporations that already have three times more fossil fuels in reserve than we are able to burn if we keep to the moderate target of two degrees of global warming agreed in Paris in 2015. The companies that Cambridge has investments in, such as Xtreme Coil, BP and Shell, continue to explore for further fossil fuel reserves, something clearly infeasible when considering that burning current stocks would lead to a climate disaster. Cambridge could send a clear moral signal to these groups, as well as removing financial support. Otherwise, it risks being part of the problem in a moment of ever-worsening crisis.

Divestment by universities has been shown to work historically: it was part of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and against the war in Darfur. And, as Cambridge is the university with the largest endowment in Europe, their divestment could have a definite impact. The idea that remaining a shareholder could give the University more influence over the policies of fossil fuel companies has no historical basis in the last thirty years of trying. It is difficult to see how this could have anything beyond an incremental impact; it would

require shareholders to force the complete reimagining of the purpose of huge corporations.

The moral reckoning behind divestment is clear but many in the University still raise financial concerns, despite investment posing greater financial risk to them than reward. Well known lefties such as the IMF, the World Bank and Mark Carney have all identified the potential trap that fossil fuel companies currently face. If they refuse to act with the international consensus and instead use up their current reserves they will destroy the planet, but if international agreements are followed, the companies will be left with huge amounts of money in 'stranded assets', or fuel they cannot burn. This could be up to \$100 trillion, according to an estimate made by Citigroup. It will not affect research funding either: Cambridge has only received relatively small amounts from fossil fuel companies – £15.8 million between 2009 and 2014 – which pales in comparison to the amount it gets in government funding. Not divesting makes little sense, even with morals put to one side.

Divestment may not be the solution to climate change and few argue that it is. But for Cambridge to refuse to divert funds from fossil fuels, as we lead up to a moment in 2020 where we need to show significant change not to surpass two degrees, is an immense moral failure. As a university it cannot hold onto the pretence of financial arguments any longer; if it truly claims to seek to contribute positively to society then action must be taken now.

Khem Rogaly

Grudgebridge has become a platform for online abuse

The page has turned from its original purpose – satirical moaning – to a safe space for abuse online, says Ollie Winters

Grudgebridge is something that many Cambridge students are familiar with seeing in their Facebook newsfeed. Marketing itself as a sort of antithesis to the more popular Crushbridge, Grudgebridge states that it is trying to 'make Cambridge less awkward, one declaration of irritation at a time'.

Certainly, sometimes it does do this, with a good dose of humour thrown in as well. 'Grudge on whoever always leaves a baguette in our kitchen at pre-drinks': extremely funny. 'Grudge on tourists who stand in the road taking pictures': highly relatable. On occasion, Grudgebridge has made us all chuckle or nod sympathetically. So why, suddenly, is a problem developing?

Grudgebridge has recently become a platform for cyberbullying and often hateful and offensive remarks. Using the cover of anonymity, certain individuals are broadcasting views attacking mental health issues as

well as maliciously targeting individuals. Last Friday, I woke up to a barrage of messages from friends telling me to check Grudgebridge and not to worry, they were all here for me. Someone had submitted a particularly hateful post attacking me in a way I've never experienced in person.

To be absolutely clear, this article is not designed to portray myself as a victim, nor is it some sort of call that Grudgebridge should be banned. Cyberbullying is hardly a new problem and is not one that is likely to be dealt with soon. The issue with Grudgebridge, however, is that it provides both legitimacy and high levels of exposure to content that otherwise would be condemned as simply trolling.

Alongside the attack on me were posts about Magdalene formal, halloumi, and the *Daily Mail*, all of which can be seen as legitimate content in-keeping with the apparent ethos of the page. By equating the attack on me to pieces of satire, the actual significance of the post's content

is diminished: targeted cyberbullying, something which has no place on the internet and should be condemned wherever possible. Not trivialised.

Moreover, even on a simple logistical level, trolling someone on the internet is difficult. Finding a platform which is easily accessible and not subject to structural moderation is not easy. Yet Grudgebridge is followed by over 4,000 people, most of whom I assume follow the page for the satirical content, and all of whom will have been exposed to this attack.

Although thankfully the post was liked by only two people, neither of whom I know, two comments attacking the content received a combined 100 likes from people who will have read the post. One Grudgebridge in defence of the page argues that 'life isn't a safe space'. But the whole point of Grudgebridge is that it provides a safe

space to be offensive with no possibility of a comeback.

A further issue is that, due to the structure of Facebook pages, the content of Grudgebridge is controlled solely by admins, which gives them unrivalled capacity to control attacks such as this, whilst still hiding behind anonymity. Many of my friends informed me that after reporting the post, they were informed by Facebook that it failed to breach their rules on acceptable content, which is in all fairness completely legitimate. Whilst hateful, it uses no genuinely offensive language and is only malicious contextually. Furthermore, despite requests made to the admins, the post remains on Facebook. As such, the power to prevent cyberbullying remains entirely in the hands of people who cannot be held accountable for it.

However, these

problems are secondary to the major issue surrounding the use of Grudgebridge to post malicious content. Quite simply, it is not helpful or useful in any way for people to vent anger anonymously online. Perhaps there are certain things I should take on board, but an attack via the internet is hardly likely to encourage me to listen to someone who can't even bring themselves to confront me without hiding behind anonymity.

If anything, posting content like this is far more likely to make the recipient more defensive and therefore exacerbate the issue. Problems need to be dealt with constructively if anyone is to expect improvement. And anyone writing offensive content on a popular Facebook page cannot legitimately expect anything to be resolved. Grudgebridge gained popularity by expressing irritation, not hatred, and it is probably beneficial to everyone that it continues doing this and only this.



Ciaran Walsh on Australia's vote to legalise gay marriage



The censoring of the PalSoc debate in a free university is unacceptable

By replacing SOAS's Dr Ruba Salih with their own 'neutral' chair, the University are delegitimising the Palestinian cause



Francesco Anselmetti is a fourth year at Peterhouse doing Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies



Beth Craig-Geen is a fourth year at Medwards doing MML and Middle Eastern Studies

Over the course of the last month, fundamental questions have been raised about the ability of both staff and students in our University to conduct rigorous practice and productive, independent dialogue. Whilst inexcusable, both *The Telegraph's* coverage of the Decolonise initiative and *La Repubblica's* ad hominem attack on Giulio Regeni's supervisor do not come as a surprise if we consider the susceptibility of the national and international media to political agendas and private interests. What marks last Wednesday's events as particularly disturbing and insidious is that action by the University itself has now prevented the academic freedom of its students.

Last week, an event on the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, which aims to stop the building of illegal Israeli settlements, was threatened with cancellation by the University if the panel's chair, respected academic and woman of colour Dr Ruba Salih, was not replaced with a 'neutral' member of University staff. The venue in Mill Lane Lecture Rooms had been booked weeks in advance and approved with a full Prevent (the government's 'anti-extremism' initiative) assessment, but the organisers

were presented with this ultimatum a mere seven hours before the event.

The University cited the need to protect the freedom of speech of 'both sides' of a debate which they described as 'controversial', and the opposition they had received to it in the form of a letter campaign from well-known pro-Israeli group StandWithUs. In their public statements, however, they present as their reasoning a decontextualised question from the organisers as to whether security would be present (given the precedent set for this the last time panellist Omar Barghouti spoke), claiming that the organisers requested extra security.

This authoritarian intervention in a student-organised event promoting the human rights of Palestinians and other marginalised groups around the world could be viewed in one of three ways. At best, it is a feeble attempt to avoid engaging in academic discussion on a controversial subject for fear of bad publicity – something that has severely backfired this week, with an open letter condemning the University's actions signed by over 500 members of the global academic community and publicised in national and international press.

It could also indicate, however, a

concerning example of the University's application of the government's counter-productive Prevent policy, which has been condemned by various studies conducted by organisations from Human Rights Watch to the United Nations for infringing on freedom of speech, privacy and leading to racial profiling – all issues which are pertinent in this case. This transparent attempt to shut down free academic activity, which serves to delegitimise the cause that the meeting in question – that of freeing Palestinians from Israeli occupation – should be opposed by all.

The justifications behind the University's policing of the event are intimately linked with the framing of pro-Palestinian activism as 'contentious'. This framing can be seen as dangerously close to linking opposition to the state of Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine land with anti-Semitism. However, there is little that is contentious about wanting to promote the human rights and self-governance of Palestinians.

The Israeli Professor Moshé Machover has recently commented on the link between the manufacturing of this obstinate criticism and the international decline in the support of Israel's settler-

colonialism: "What is remarkable is that among the BDS [the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement] activists there is an overrepresentation of young Jewish people.

"That is very worrying for the Zionists and if you read the Israeli press it is clear that there is a determination to halt this erosion of support for the Zionist state by discrediting its critics". Through its measures, the University is adding to this discrediting, in the same way that the Prevent policy thoughtlessly associates pro-Palestinian causes with religious fundamentalism.

Groups opposed to the policies of the state of Israel are heterogenous. In the words of Palestinian activist Omar Barghouti, the coalition that forms the BDS movement "agree on its three main goals, and basically nothing else". Just how the consensus around the ending of Israel's hold of occupied land, the recognition of the fundamental rights of Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel, and the right to return of Palestinian refugees as stipulated by UN Resolution 194 constitutes 'radical belief', and can be used to shut down students' academic freedom, is frankly beyond our comprehension.

“The Prevent policy associates pro-Palestinian causes with religious fundamentalism”

Comment

Misogyny on the left is a problem that we must address

Columnist [Anna Cardoso](#) reflects on the hypocrisy of some of the prominent figures on the left, and says this issue must be confronted



GAGE SKIDMORE

There are few things I hate more in life than 'feminist' misogynists. This might seem paradoxical – that's because it is. These are the people who pay lip service to gender equality and female empowerment, but sexually harass and assault people all the same, or fail to support survivors who come forward. They wear the label 'feminist' like a shirt from UNIF; it is nothing more than a fashionable, status-boosting accessory.

One such man is Sam Kriss. If you are at all familiar with the dark depths of Marxist twitter, you'll recognise his name. He formerly wrote for *Vice* and BuzzFeed and was the ultimate leftie. He railed against the misogyny of the gaming community, constantly calling out right-wing politicians and the media for their sexism. Since being accused of sexual assault, he has been dropped from all major news organisations that associated with him. Rupert Myers of *GQ* faced similar allegations, despite having called meninists "cave-dwelling idiots".

The left loves to moralise about the right's sexism. I'm not about to deny that misogyny doesn't exist on the right – of course it does. Especially in America, where most of the Republican party believes *Roe v. Wade* should be appealed and defunding Planned Parenthood (America's most important women's health organisation) is a top priority; sexism spills into policymaking. We *should* call out the misogyny of some people on the

right. However, what grates me is the fact that some people think that taking on the feminist label exonerates them from thinking critically about their treatment of women.

These misogynistic tendencies don't just manifest themselves in sexual violence. Hillary Clinton has continuously insisted that an important reason for her loss was America's sexism. She decried the "double standards" women are held to in public life. Take her most famous scandal – the one that many analysts argue fundamentally undermined her trustworthiness in the eyes of the electorate – her use of a private email server when she was secretary of state. Would it surprise you to find out that Steve Bannon, the executive chairman of *Breitbart*, the news outlet which spewed more vitriol about this scandal than any other newspaper, also used a private domain when he was a White House adviser? I certainly was not.

Women are consistently held to higher standards than their male counterparts. It is easy to see how the comments about her "likeability" were deeply gendered criticisms; would a male candidate really have to meet the same standards? Can we say Trump did? In fact, his dis-likeability could be seen as a strength of his candidacy (he was not constrained by society's norms of politeness and etiquette). A phrase

“A long, hard look at sexist behaviour is overdue on the left”

Anna Cardoso is a columnist and second year History student at Trinity



from the American political TV show *Scandal* comes to mind here: "You have to be twice as good to get half as much." We constantly elect deeply flawed men but refuse to extend the benefit of the doubt to women.

I think we saw some of this in the NUS delegate campaign. Carine Valarche left the hustings upset after being subjected to pointed questioning by an audience member from Zero Carbon Society. Even if their actions weren't driven by a hatred of women, it plays into a disturbing pattern in politics and wider society. There was a man on the panel who openly disagreed with divestment and there was a woman who *supported* divestment but hadn't actually taken part in the campaign itself. The audience decided to attack the woman, an ally to the Zero Carbon campaign and a liberal, rather than their professed enemy, the conservative. I can't say that this was motivated by misogyny. I do think, however, it is important to highlight the gender politics at play here – and that it is another example of women being held to a much higher standard than male peers.

Bernie bros, Marxists, and leftists have long claimed that such criticisms from the centre are a way to discredit socialism without critically engaging with its ideas. Let me come out and say that is not what I am trying to do. I agree with many of the criticisms the hard-left level against capitalism and its flaws. But I also think that a long, hard look at sexist behaviour and tacit assumptions about women is overdue on the left – especially when so many lefties ostensibly stand for gender equality and 'feminism'.



Beth Bhargava is in her first year studying History at King's

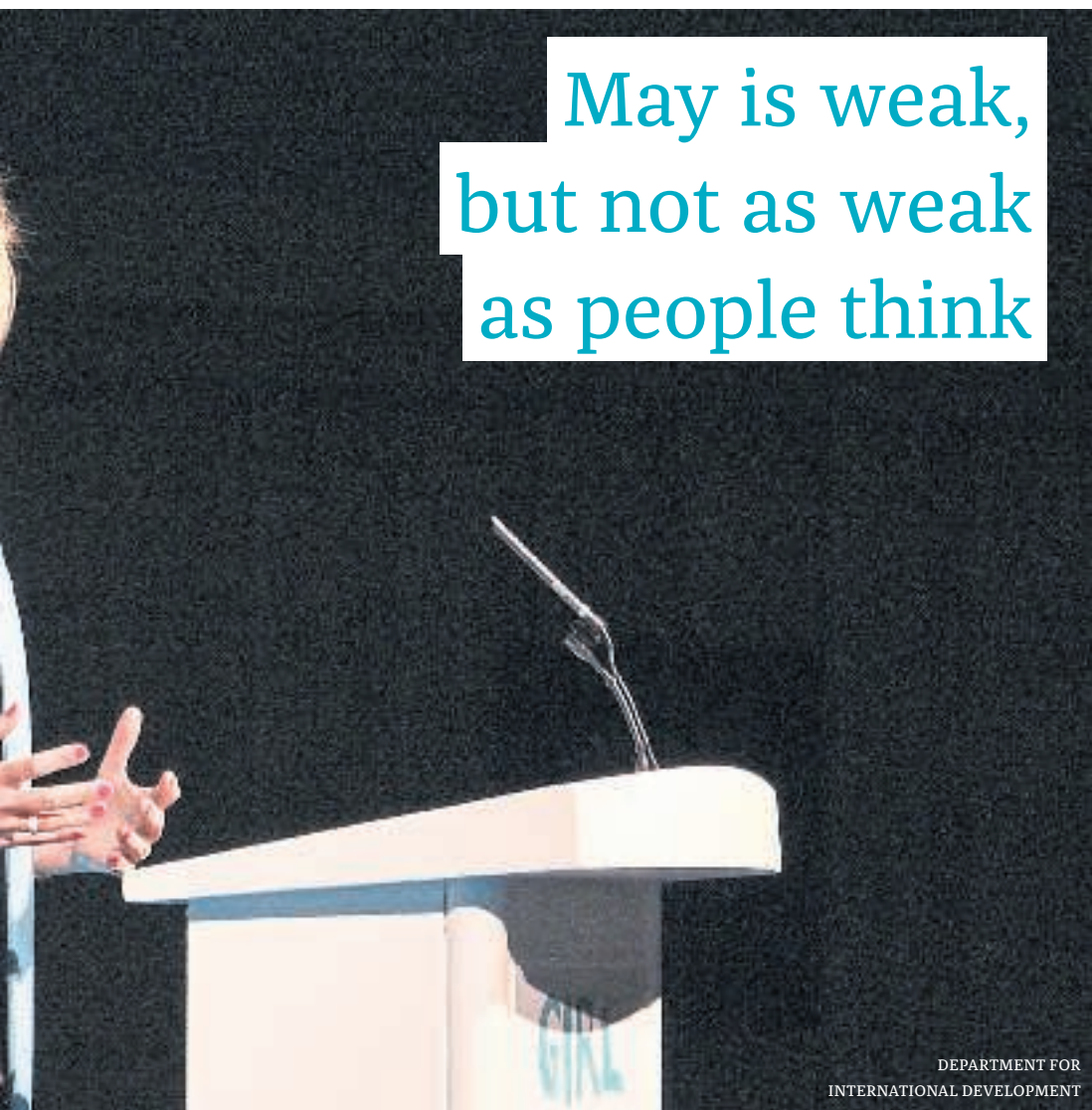
Beth Bhargava says recent scandals have left the government weakened, but this doesn't mean a Labour government is inevitable

Though the Week Five blues may finally be over for us here at Cambridge, there has been no immediate reprieve for Theresa May. After last week's bewildering flurry of scandals and multiple cabinet resignations, the prime minister has since faced reports that up to 40 of her colleagues may be ready to engineer her own.

In this context, it would be easy for those on the left to embrace a triumphalist narrative, viewing each new crisis as the one that will finally sink the Conservatives. Yet this may not reflect political realities so much as our own desires.

It is easy to see why the left longingly theorises about governmental collapse. The alternative – the survival of the status quo until the next election mandated by the Fixed-Term Parliaments Act – presents a grim picture. Five years is a long time. Though Labour is doing exceptional work to try to maintain voter engagement, it is inevitable that momentum would be lost over the course of half a decade. It is bitter to realise that rather than capitalising on present successes, we may be forced to fight our next elec-

Comment



May is weak,
but not as weak
as people think

tion in the distant future, under circumstances we cannot anticipate.

More traumatically, we must confront the possibility that a government whose policies – from the botched implementation of Universal Credit to the chronic underfunding of our mental health services – are having a genuinely fatal impact may be able to continue its criminal neglect for the foreseeable future.

Yet for those of us who need comfort, considering this bleak vision, there are more realistic scenarios for us to pin our hopes on than the undermining of the Tory government from within, which remains unlikely at best.

Just over a year ago, I attended a rally in support of Jeremy Corbyn's continued leadership of the Labour Party, as he faced off against Owen Smith. There, a prominent trade unionist reflected on Labour's troubles, observing mournfully that such internecine conflict and leadership challenges only ever seem to sink the left's chances of gaining and maintaining power. Ultimately, he claimed, the Tories always hold together in an expression of class solidarity. It is clearly not that simple, and yet despite all appearances the Tories do even now remain united by powerful sentiments of fear and self-interest.

With all recent polls suggesting a Labour lead, it seems probable (though not certain) that – were there a general election tomorrow – a Labour government would result. Specifically, this would be a Corbyn-led government, shattering almost four decades of neoliberal consensus which many of those now in power consider their life's work. Yet the very fact that a socialist administration now seems a real possibility is what will bind the Tories together, driving them to cling defiantly to power.

At this stage, the stakes are so high

“The stakes are so high even hard-Brexiteers would be unwilling to make unnecessary gambles”

that it is difficult to see how even the government's most hare-brained (and straw-haired) careerists and hard-Brexiteers would be willing to make unnecessary gambles, knowing the immense potential cost. It is entirely possible that the Conservatives will weather the present storm, suppressing the impact of internal strife just enough to stay afloat, in a kind of depressing, Thatcherite version of *Life of Pi*.

Therefore, those eagerly awaiting the fall of the government would do better to shift their focus and hopes away from the executive, and towards Parliament.

With the media spotlight currently turned on the internal affairs of the Tory Party, it is easy to forget that they do not rule alone, being entirely dependent upon the co-operation of the DUP. The DUP have already inflicted defeats on the Tories by backing Labour proposals to increase NHS workers' pay and scrap the tuition fee rise, standing by commitments made in their manifesto.

These were non-binding votes, yet it is not unreasonable to expect that the opposition may yet be able to further exploit divisions between the two parties, and with more significant results. With discussion continuing over the implications that Brexit will have for Ireland, worries mounting over the possibility of a hard border, and the floundering negotiations failing to deliver any real clarity on the issue, it is inevitable that tensions will continue to rise.

To me, a parliamentary vote of no confidence backed by the DUP, though still a very distant possibility, presents the most significant hope for a premature end to the present government and all the sufferings it has engendered. I will continue to observe the practical operations of the Confidence and Supply deal with (desperate) interest.

A lack of interest in interest rates rises is dangerous

Angus Parker argues that the widespread apathy regarding the economy allows for a vicious cycle of obfuscation towards changes



Angus Parker is a second year Geography student at Robinson



Last month, the governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, announced an interest rate rise of 0.25%, raising the official annual bank rate to 0.5% – the first increase since July 2007. While most statistics should be scrutinised for the shroud of subjectivity that they harbour, the rate rise is perhaps one of the few objective figures that we can trust. It cannot be misinterpreted – a 0.25% rise means 0.25% – and it matters. Forget economic jargon: interest rates can affect wages, mortgages, savings, incomes and loans, and are fundamental to the functioning, structure and geometry of the wider economic system which serves as the life-blood of society.

Yet the rate rise has quickly dissolved from public interest, and the apparent indifference belies a more important point – that there exists a disconnect and disinterest in the economy more generally. This is borne partly out of the complexity with which economics is perceived as a discipline – the domain of the educated, permeated with technical, ambiguous jargon – but also results from the lack of trust and faith that the wider public have in using the economy as a bellwether for personal stability. How can we place importance and take an interest in decisions that affect the economy (such as the recent rate rise) when our understanding is superficial (seen through the prism of party politics) and our trust has been undermined (particularly since 2007/8)?

The subtlety here, however, is not that the general public are culpably lazy and ignorant. We should not be so self-deprecating. Rather, there is a superficiality permeating the ways by which politicians use headline economic figures, claims and fluctuations to further agendas rather than to educate the public; and this significantly affects perception. The rate rise, for instance, whilst a fundamentally objective economic change, was couched politically in terms of 'winners' and 'losers' rather than explanations as to what an interest rate rise *actually* means, not to mention why it was economically prudent to make such a move.

Instead, the rise was grasped by politicians, from all parties in the House of Commons and both sides of the Brexit debate, as the latest economic instrument with which to shape the topography of societal perception and further political agendas. The rhetoric focused

more on the political factors that had precipitated the decision. It was variously disputed, for example, as another reason why the Brexit vote was right, and why it was wrong, a result of Labour mismanagement ten years ago, an outcome of Conservative austerity, and so on. Whatever the agenda, such an influential rise can be moulded to fit any schema. The figure of 0.25% thus became subsumed to the whims of rhetoric and used as political ballast rather than explained in layman's terms.

This is dangerous – not only for ourselves, individually, but also for society as a whole. It engenders economic passivity, obfuscates deeper structural issues and conceals implications of policy change. We should be wary of such apathy. Whilst economic education is somewhat the responsibility of the state, when core economic changes are made – whether it be from the Bank of England or the government – a failure to take an interest in such decisions, whilst perhaps not immediately costly in the short term, can have significant long-term implications.

To claim otherwise would be to overlook and ignore the case study provided by the aforementioned crash of 2008. An alienation and distancing from the economy 10 years ago enabled a system to develop that became so complex, leveraged and widespread that we all became implicated within it without even knowing it. Whilst it might seem too tangential to connect the 2008 crisis with a disinterest in the interest rate rise, if we don't take an interest in the economy and question political decisions, changes in the economic sphere can swiftly become opaque, distant and unfamiliar. Similarly, the Brexit referendum and subsequent negotiations have vividly projected and reiterated the necessity of understanding fundamental economic factors.

In a transient society in which people incessantly search for certitude and stability, we should be mindful of demanding certainty of our futures, without first grasping the validity and relevance of the present – nowhere is this more evident than in the sphere of the economy. Whilst we must not let ourselves become apathetic towards economic decisions, it is equally incumbent upon politicians and economists, as well as the media, to ensure that economic changes are explained without a rhetorical veneer.



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Cambridge's Tory prejudice

Does voting for austerity make you immoral? *Phoebe Pickering* argues that 'Toryphobia' stifles debate and urges to 'hate the opinion', not the person

In the days leading up to writing this article, I decided to go around to some of my friends from different colleges to ask them one question: "What political prejudice, if any, have you seen in Cambridge?" The answers were close to unanimous; it seemed that around Cambridge, a Tory's only place in political conversation is as the butt of a joke.

The question we then have to ask, is who cares? Is a joke about someone such a serious offence that it would merit being called prejudice of any kind? It is often the case, however, when looking at a broad range of issues – sexism, for example – that jokes are used as a thin veil which masks more sinister beliefs. In the same ways, the veil of banter has been let slip many times and under this, a real hatred of conservatives has shown its face. At Fitzwilliam College, a canvasser for the Conservatives in this year's general election faced real abuse and social ostracism for putting campaign literature in fellow students' pigeonholes, something that would never happen to a Labour campaigner in Cambridge.

Now, I am going to do something which I rarely do nowadays, which is to confess my own political opinions. I have learnt over the years that it is just not worth it to allow my political leanings to slip into conversation any more. I've been asked questions such as "I know you're a nice person and all but how could you feel okay with yourself voting Conservative?" and "How do you sleep at night knowing that you voted for austerity?". I've had people shouting at me and throwing me dirty looks for supporting the Leave campaign.

I am not saying that passion should not appear in politics, and real anger has its place when the line between political belief and morally objectionable acts have been crossed. However, there is an assumption that certain political beliefs entail that their holders always have morally objectionable characters, and therein lies the problem: the immediate assumption of guilt. What I find most bizarre about such an assumption of guilt is that it comes with the most widespread political opinions, not, in fact, the ones which are the least popular. The Conservatives won the most votes at the last general election, and in the referendum it was the Brexiteers who were in the majority. But judging by the backlash against these beliefs alone, nobody, had they been dropped onto the Earth today from outer space, could possibly guess this fact. They might, however, form the reasonable judgement that we belong to a secretive satanic cult instead.

Maybe that would explain how, despite being very inter-

"I've had people shouting at me and throwing me dirty looks for supporting the Leave campaign"

▼ Conservative Party rosette



ested in politics, whenever this topic of conversation comes up, I pray that nobody will ask my opinion, look to the floor and keep my mouth shut.

Maybe that would provide a better explanation as to why I feel it necessary if I have confessed my views to follow it up immediately with quick-fire justifications as to why I'm not a bad person: "But I voted for Brexit for democratic reasons, not because I'm against immigration", and with a pleading look in my eyes, "I voted Conservative because I just don't think that socialism works in the long run", which could just be translated into "please don't hate me, I beg of you".

It really shouldn't be this way that people take such a dim view of humanity as to label most voters in the UK as bad people. A phrase that comes to mind is: "Look at a man like he's the Devil and you'll never understand his motives." If you ask a conservative why they vote for austerity, they might say it is because high government spending leads to recessions which hurt the poorest in society; they will not tell you that they hate poor people. So please tell me that you think this is bad economics, but don't tell me that I'm just a nasty person. And if you do, then I'm afraid you have fallen prey to the propaganda produced by your own side, because it is so much easier to label someone as evil than to rebut their arguments.

I fear that there's a danger if we continue along the same road where opinions are ontology, 'you are what you think', that if I hate your opinions then I must hate you. My fear is that our own echo chambers will just continue to grow and grow until they drown out all other noise. For if you question the socially accepted opinions, you are calling your own social acceptance into question. To create this sort of censorial environment is to create a danger of a stagnating and even declining society.

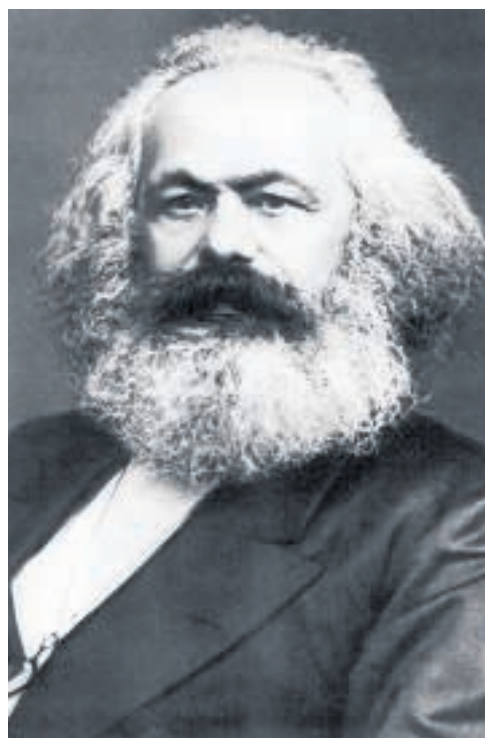
We can never progress without debate, which can only come with the acceptance that every one of our own ideas may be fallible in some way, even, unthinkable, that Jeremy Corbyn might not be the Messiah reborn. No views should be taken as a given, especially not 'socially accepted' views which nevertheless continue to have a vocal opposition.

This opposition will never go away unless we make the arguments against them. Debating is the only tool we have which lets us make decisions on political matters without descending into violence. Safe spaces appear to have unsafe consequences. Whilst I am not saying that calling Tories mean names will suddenly cause us all to mount our horses and charge into battle on King's Parade, it is clear that social pressures and ostracism can be a form of censorship which has damaging consequences for us all ●



▶ Left to right:
Karl Marx (John Mayal)
Hannah Arendt (Ryohei Noda)
Edmund Burke (Wiki: Rock Valley College)

▼ Living the Tory life – not quite as decadent as the stereotype (Wikipedia: Christie's)
▼ Cambridge University Conservative Association (Anna Menin)



Theo Demolder explores the insights offered by the history of political thought, arguing that it has something to teach our own representatives.

Responding to the question of what they're working on, HSPS students are used to being met with an envious "ah, that sounds so interesting!" That I am this week reading about how commercial empire on the seas was conceptualised in the early 17th century is less likely to get this reaction than something like US foreign policy, populism, race, or gender. All the same, I cannot think of a subject which matters more to understanding our world today than the history of political thought.

It is often said that to understand the present we must understand the past. But which parts of the past? Pretty much any point of view can be backed up by an historical example; but which parallels are true? Absurd claims just this year include, in *Foreign Policy*, that Martin Luther was the Donald Trump of 1517, and, in the *Financial Times*, that the Roman republic was brought down by fake news. Ideas, on the other hand, cut across time.

Concepts formed centuries ago, in contexts of which most of us have only the sketchiest of understandings, shape our modern politics. A recent example is 'sovereignty'. Very simply, it means absolute power: where the final say lies. It cannot exist divided or pooled, any more than a person or parliament could. The very fact that we have the ability to withdraw from the EU shows that we have it. That southern US states lost a civil war shows that they did not. Somehow this idea, from a 16th-century French jurist, has been adopted to mean in some sense 'control', in some sense 'democracy'; in some sense, perhaps, something about our history, too.

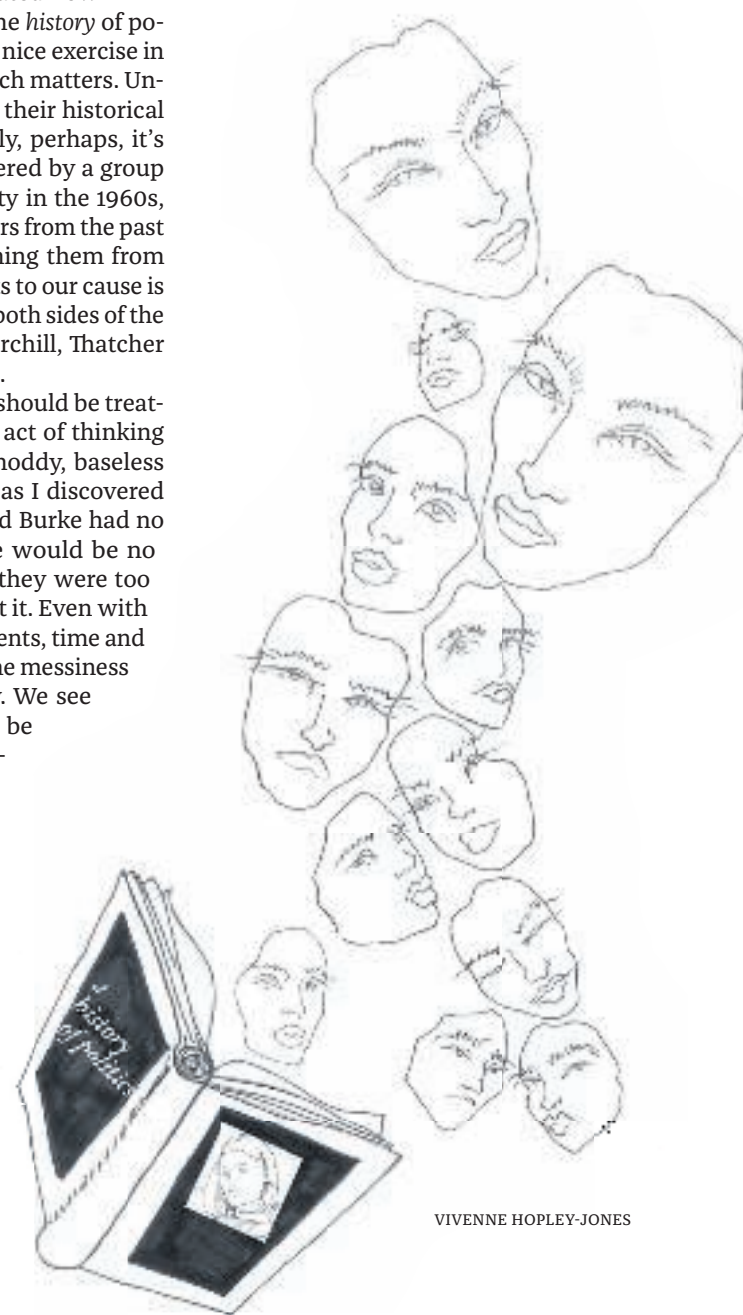
This isn't just a dry point about linguistic precision. It's about how we make sense of modern politics at a time when that can seem far from easy. Tracing the ideas which guide us back through time exposes their nuances and their flaws. We may discover valuable ways of thinking previously lost to us. The political thought of the past confronts us with questions about our own views and values. What strikes me when talking to friends is not that their opinions have generally been pulled in one direction or the other; it's that everyone thinks that the question of what is right in

politics is a lot more complicated now.

Here, it's the fact that it's the *history* of political thought – and not just a nice exercise in abstract philosophising – which matters. Understanding political ideas in their historical context is crucial. Surprisingly, perhaps, it's a relatively new idea – pioneered by a group of academics at this university in the 1960s, 'the Cambridge school'. Thinkers from the past might inspire us, but wrenching them from their place in history as recruits to our cause is as ridiculous as the claims on both sides of the EU debate to know how Churchill, Thatcher and others would have voted.

Treating past thought as it should be treated teaches us about the very act of thinking about politics. We see that shoddy, baseless arguments are nothing new; as I discovered last week, statesman Edmund Burke had no shame in arguing that there would be no point freeing slaves because they were too fond of their masters to accept it. Even with the downright brilliant arguments, time and time again history shows us the messiness of politics getting in the way. We see that grand visions can never be neatly imposed onto the complexity of human experience. As the centenary of the Bolshevik revolution passes, we should remember the price paid when plans don't work out – when theory doesn't fit reality, and reality is blamed.

This whole history can seem frustrating. And it seems to be getting worse. One supervisor described the history of political thought since 1890 as a history of abject failure; and he had a point. Perhaps our representatives were more alive to these problems of thinking about politics, next time we could hope to fail better ●



VIVENNE HOPLEY-JONES

Arts

A black square in a red revolution



Alex Reeds takes a moment to explore the transgressive and revolutionary qualities of Russian painter Kazimir Malevich's work

THE MAYS 2018 - EDITOR WANTED

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History has a habit of overlooking art in favour of politics in the context of revolutions. The rising up of the masses, the overthrowing of a tyrannical system, the dawning of a new age: these are the phenomena that most commonly characterise revolution.

This is certainly the case with regards to the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, which last week marked its 100th anniversary. Images of Lenin's ruthlessness, Trotsky's idealism and the Provisional Government's incompetence dominate our perception of the events of 1917. However, it was the Russian painters, poets and writers who had been addressing many of the revolutionary ideals, embodied by the October Revolution, long before 1917. The ambition of the Russian avant-garde's desire to launch a revolutionary struggle against artistic modes of perception was unparalleled and arguably foreshadowed the famous political upheavals of 1917, which we most notably associate with the theme of revolution in Russia.

Kazimir Malevich (1878-1935) was one of these revolutionary figures in the Russian avant-garde. Having experimented in the early stages of his artistic career with different styles ranging from Primitivism to Cubo-Futurism, it was the exhibition of his work *Black Square* (pictured below) in 1915 that cemented his place among the pioneers of abstract art. The very name of the painting, *Black Square*, is a deliberate misnomer: despite its appearance, the work is neither a square, nor is it black. None of its sides are parallel to the frame and it is painted from a mix of colours, none of which are black. How could a painting so simple be so radical? Therein lies the beauty of Malevich's *magnum opus*. Behind the surface of this perfectly symmetrical shape exists a revolutionary system, which Malevich named 'Suprematism'.

Malevich believed that the problem with the naturalist art of his predecessors was the desire to simply depict reality at the expense of creating new forms. He dreamed of a new art form that would have no subject and be made up solely from shapes and colours: the pure aesthetic would reign 'supreme' over the image or content. Suprematism signalled this rejection of representational art and liberation

from pictorial conventions.

It is in this context that *Black Square* became such a revolutionary work of art. Its importance as the first Suprematist painting is undeniable. It embodies the supremacy of colour and form in its simplicity and the principle of revolution in its challenge to established modes of perception. Malevich considered his square to be 'alive', and concurrently addressed the question of how it could activate the body of the spectator. Thus, the idea of 'feeling' art was critical for Malevich. Indeed the contemporary viewer most commonly 'feels' a sense of anger and disappointment upon seeing *Black Square*. Comments such as 'Is that it?' and 'Even I could draw a black square on a canvas' rank among the most popular of those who visit Moscow's Tretyakov Gallery to see the iconic painting. This is one of the perennial discussions that define abstract art. However, as already noted, *Black Square* does not depict a black square. It was not intended to represent a real object, but rather a perfect geometrical form, liberated from the strictures of art.

The ambition of Malevich's ideology seems almost laughable to the contemporary critic, especially having been conceived amid the chaos of the First World War. However, at a time when revolutionary sentiment was brewing in all walks of life, anything seemed possible to the most radical thinkers. Sadly, it seems that Malevich's complex principle for artistic revolution was as misunderstood in 1915 as it remains today.

Despite its promise, and the praise garnered by the Russian intelligentsia, Malevich's Suprematist theory did not strike the same chord with either the Bolsheviks or the illiterate masses of Russian society. Suprematism was a short-lived movement, displaced by the more pragmatic Constructivism, which proclaimed the need for artists to become active builders in society by using art to create material objects. Malevich's focus on art for art's sake was inherently incompatible with the Bolsheviks' revolutionary principle, as art needed to be embraced as a means to indoctrinate the masses.

Nevertheless, *Black Square* is rightly considered a seminal work of abstract art, representing a decisive break from past conventions. It is ironic that despite Malevich's wish for

painting to be free from political and social content, *Black Square* has become one of the most recognisable symbols of revolutionary Russia.

Just as Suprematism was displaced by other art forms, so too was Malevich's black by the red of the Bolshevik revolution.

However, revolution should not be defined by a single colour: the Russian Revolution was as much a political upheaval as it was social and artistic.

On the centenary we should remember this. Although there would likely have been no revolution without Lenin, Malevich and his artistic associates also played their part ●



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Point blank: in defence of the blank canvas

Although often the butt of derisory jokes concerning modern art, **Jade Cuttle** thinks we shouldn't be so quick to write 'invisible' art off as lazy or pretentious

In the gallery of art that doesn't visibly exist, the hooks hang onto a heavy weight, but as brushstrokes are replaced by blankness, this mass is mostly in the mind. I am not always entirely convinced about this self-conscious snubbing of the aesthetic, as it's hard to be sure when such a large selection has been but a hoax. But I am, however, very intrigued.

Invisible: Art about the Unseen, 1957-2012 at the Hayward Gallery (2012) is the best exhibition you'll never see. Whilst some masterpieces included a piece of paper at which an artist stared for 1,000 hours over a period of five years, and a plinth upon which Warhol briefly stood before stepping off, other pieces were more solemn. For instance, an exhibition by Teresa Margolles entailed her collecting water that had been used to wash the bodies of murder victims in Mexico City's morgue before placing it in a humidifier, clinging grimly to the skin of the spectator.

Taking this a step further, there's Robert Ryman's *Sans Titre* (1974), which is basically a plain, white canvas. But what's fascinating is the shift to the spectator projecting their own ideas onto a plain surface as a means of making art. The piece also takes an interest in physicality, exploring what Paul Klee called 'the painting's anatomy': dissecting the medium of painting until you're simply left with its skeletal remains, canvas and brushstroke. We're peeling back the flesh of aesthetics, and when you cut these canvases they bleed potentiality, a powerful yet invisible presence.

Nam June Paik's *Zen For Film* (Fluxfilm No. 1) (1964) is another fascinatingly empty piece, reinterpreted in film. It is video art stripped to its core basics: a loop of clear, unexposed film leader is passed through the projector, showing nothing but the flicker and fumble of scratches dug in by dust over the years.

As we wait for the film to start – the slim few at the Pompidou who stay to see it through – we soon realise there's neither start nor end. We are left with pure materiality and a lingering sense of longing that leads us into con-

templation, and again, imagination – also into mumbled pardons as people hesitantly pass in front of the screen. It's a brilliant spectacle of shadows, where the spectator (and their creative faculties) is the leading star.

Admittedly I wrote my fourth year Cambridge dissertation on the politics of interpretation, defending the value of contemporary art in the pecking order of art history. And so naturally – after the solitary confinement dissertation slog, living off scraps of tinned sardines from the safety of my desk – I now feel very strongly about loosening the shackles of subordination, ever so slightly, and arguing that imagination can be trusted to pioneer a more central role in perception.

"Modern art is meaningless": there's nothing that grates on me more, and Piero Manzoni's *Merda D'artista* (1961), the tinned-shit, is the fall-back example people like to use. There's never been so much scandal packed into such a tiny space, a metal tin measuring 4.8 by 6.5 centimetres (1.9 by 2.5 inches). Initially, Manzoni's project was to produce invisible paintings. But this series takes the idea of invisibility one (slightly grotesque) step further: 90 tins, each concealing 30 grams (one ounce) of his own excrement, purchased by weight at the going price of gold. Admittedly, it's gross. But the aim was to shake the spectator's confidence in their conception of art, and undoubtedly cause a stir.

Each artwork here shows an attempt to escape from the frame of expectation, casting aside the shackles of convention and its codes in the ultimate spectacle of innovation. Rule-breaking means mind-bending, and nothing screams creative genius more than bursting beyond the banks of convention in order to poke around in the untouched territory of the imagination – rather than just imitation, skilfully accurate as this may be. If art is about creativity and imagination, it doesn't seem too outrageous to propose a work where this skill is demanded of the people interacting with it, surely? And a blank piece of paper, after all, is the best fodder for a hungry mind ●

▲ *White on White* (Malevich, 1918), one of the first 'blank' pieces of art (WIKIPEDIA: MOMA)

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What's on

By **Georgie Kemsley-Pein**

Illustrations by **Amy Teh**



Ben Fagan will be the feature poet of the final speakeasy of the year, performing alongside other students and the open slam, putting on an evening of performance and poetry at the ADC Bar. Tickets are £5.

**Speakeasy: Week VII
with Ben Fagan**

ADC Bar

19 November, 8-9:30pm

**Life Goes On: Stand-Up
Show**

The Corpus Playroom

20 November, 9:30pm

On at the Corpus Playroom, Will Penswick, Mark Bittlestone and Will Darylmp's show explores existential questions of life after Cambridge and the point in education. Head over for an hour of amusement as ex-Cantabs put this on for one night only.



For their Michaelmas term concert, Cambridge University Symphony Orchestra will be performing at the West Road Concert Hall, performing pieces from Debussy, Dukas and Berlioz. Tickets can be bought online on the orchestra's website or on the door from 7:30 pm onwards.

**CUSO Presents: Soirée
Fantastique**

West Road Concert Hall

20 November, 8pm



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**CUADC/Footlights
Pantomime: The
Hunchback of Notre Dame**
ADC Theatre

**22 November - 2nd
December,
various times**

Come along to Cambridge's annual pantomime based loosely around The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Promising festivities and laughs, CUADC and the Footlights team up to provide a nonsensical night of frivolity.

**White Clouds
The Blue Moon**
19 November, 6-11pm

White Clouds presents an evening of music, projections, paintings and installations all under the theme: 'things you find under the sky'. Entry is free, so pop along for an evening of art, relaxation and cheap drinks.



Music

...& Me: David Bowie

From unlikely beginnings, **Jordan Pankhurst** recalls her memories shaped around his music and the legacy of his artistry

Our relationship didn't start in the most poignant or poetic way. If you can think back to the early 2000s and push past all the excellent movies you've probably seen since, you probably will find memories of *Shrek 2* alongside the sequel to *The Princess Diaries* and other questionable family films. *Shrek 2* is no masterpiece and had, as one might imagine, no impact on my life. But I have to say that the soundtrack certainly did.

Through that soundtrack, I was introduced to the incredible Tom Waits, my beloved Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, and my all-time favourite: David Bowie. On that soundtrack, he recorded a new version of his classic song, 'Changes', with Butterfly Boucher. When I listened to it as a nine-year-old, I loved the whole thing, always waiting anxiously for his grand entrance, which doesn't come until about half-way through the song. I didn't know who this fabulous man was, but I loved his voice and, even more than that, his aura of cool weirdness.

After that point, I don't have a clear timeline, but I know that I bought *Hunky Dory* first.

That album both opened my mind to concepts that had seemed taboo to my teenage self and comforted me with warm, familiar ideas. In the song 'Quicksand', Bowie sings about existential dread, religious doubt, and sprinkles in references to Himmler and Aleister Crowley. And, for a long time, that song stuck out in my mind. I wasn't regularly chatting about Crowley with my peers, and, growing up in a semi-rural area of the American southeast, I didn't have many friends with whom I could discuss ideas about religious scepticism or overt criticism. David Bowie's music gave me the chance to encounter and think about all these huge ideas, even if I didn't know what to make of them.

But I also remember being 16, unwell the night before prom. I listened to 'Fill Your Heart' to take my mind off the situation. Looking at the lyrics now, I see that there are obvious undertones to the song that relate more closely to the ideas in 'Quicksand' than I would have imagined then. To me, it was just a happy, adorable song. And I don't think that I was necessarily wrong.

I think it was what I needed it to be at that time, as art often is. *Hunky Dory* as an album did that for me then, and it still does now.

Soon after, I got *The Rise and Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* and revelled in the science-fiction bizarreness of songs like 'Moonage Daydream' and 'Starman'. I tricked conservative friends into loving these songs, hoping that someday I could lead them towards his beautiful anthems to difference, like 'Lady Stardust' and 'Rock 'n' Roll Suicide', which rarely fails to make me teary.

“Weirdness was no longer weird to me”



Adding to my library, I fell in love with everything from underrated gems like *Lodger* and the staggeringly innovative cover album, *Pin Ups*, to his critically maligned but delightful *Let's Dance*. By the time I was working on my undergraduate degree, I was obsessed. I had posters on my walls, t-shirts in my closet, records on my shelves, and a sizeable amount of David Bowie knowledge in my head. Largely because of him, weirdness was no longer weird to me, and I felt increasingly able to freely express my unusual interests and feelings without the concern of seeming odd.

When I woke up on the day that David Bowie died, I picked up my phone and saw so many texts. I didn't know why everyone was telling me that they were sorry, but the messages were clearly those of condolence. Obviously, it wasn't a mystery for very long, because his face was plastered on all sides of the internet. I cried for his wife, Iman, and his children, and I cried for myself. I had just talked to someone about how beautiful I found his new album, *Blackstar*, and how much it felt to me like his past masterpieces. I was so happy that my hero had come back,



WIKIPEDIA:AVRO

and he, just as quickly, was gone.

When I tell people to listen to David Bowie, I always say, "There's something for everyone." Regardless of a person's genre preferences, emotional state, beliefs, or ideas about what makes good music, I genuinely believe that there is a David Bowie song that will suit their needs. I have been listening to David Bowie for 13 years, and he's never once failed me ●

REVIEW



Morrissey *Low In High School*

★★★★★

Fans and critics alike have taken to Twitter to mock the track-listing of *Low In High School* as perhaps 'the most Morrissey thing ever', from the politically-charged 'Who Will Protect Us From The Police?' to the sexually uncomfortable 'When You Open Your Legs' to the morose 'I Wish You Lonely'. And perhaps they are right; however, Morrissey's eleventh solo studio album has found the exemplary fusion of the political Morrissey we all love (or loathe) and the emotional, sulky attitude

Morrissey has so notoriously evoked since his days as The Smiths' frontman.

The album comes as a notable improvement on Morrissey's 2014 album *World Peace Is None Of Your Business*. From the off, the screaming and the harsh guitar rhythm of 'My Love I'd Do Anything For You' sets the tone for an angrier, more 'honest' album, as producer Joe Chiccarelli is quoted as claiming. Morrissey continues to develop the album from the opening track into a fusion of modern indie rock riffs and electronica, while still evoking the ever-contradictory use of sullen, spiteful lyrics set to jangly, upbeat melodies, typical of 1980s Smiths tracks such as 'The Boy With The Thorn In His Side'. An example would be the Johnny Marr-esque guitar work under 'Jacky's Only Happy When She's Up On The Stage'. The first single of the album, 'I Spent The Day In Bed', is perhaps, I would argue, a modern reincarnation of The Smiths' sound; looking past the chaotic electronic noise, the structure and odd-humoured lyrics of the song, defeating political norms and life's mundanity, are typical of 1980s Morrissey.

'Home Is A Question Mark' is perhaps the most impressive song of the album, and undoubtedly the song that will stand out most from the others. Beginning with the ominous, brooding guitars and drums, transitioning gradually into Morrissey's powerful, though now clearly ageing, vocals, the song epitomises why this album is perhaps one of the most powerful and sincere he has released solo.

The triumphant vocals remind me clearly of Morrissey's solo track 'To Me You Are A Work Of Art' from the 2006 album *Ringleader of the Tormentors*, in many ways a similar album for its heavier sound, but with this one more poignant sounding track.

The key turning point of the album is in the over-7-minute-long anti-war epic 'I Bury The Living'. *Low In High School* is an album riddled with Morrissey's political messages on war, authority, and power (and inevitably, his resentment of all three). Alluded to in the visceral chanting of "monarchy, oligarch, head of state, potentate" in 'I Wish You Lonely', the raging single word repetition of "honour, mad, cannon-fodder" in 'I Bury The Living' returns us to the power of Morrissey's underlying aim of the album, as it is pieced together: to not merely be a self-reflection, as many of Morrissey's most sullen and contemplative songs are, but to subvert traditional views of power and legitimacy. It is indeed this almost anarchic purpose to the album that we come to expect from the controversial cover, and we are not disappointed.

From 'I Bury The Living' onwards, the album seeps more deeply into the political, with the theme of dictatorship arising on no less than three occasions. Though I have thus far praised the consistency and raw passion in

“Carefully intertwining the rebellious and reflective, the emotive and emotional”

Morrissey's thematic approach to this album, sadly, it is also the one slight downfall of the album. Morrissey's writing of the theme of authority becomes overly repetitive; thus, much like the issue with Morrissey's personal politics, we are greeted with what seems like condescending political preaching in the lyrics for the majority of the latter half of the album. The redeem-

ing factor to this, however, is that while the lyrics may suffer, the overall songwriting does not. The instrumentals remain complex, accompanied by thoughtful melodies – particularly in 'In Your Lap' which, musically, invokes the troubled but strangely beautiful piano work of The Smiths' 'Asleep'.

Whether an avid Smiths or Morrissey fan, or a new listener to either, this album is well worth buying. It is the best of both worlds, bringing to the modern age The Smiths' musical legacy while also bringing out the best of Morrissey's freedom as a solo artist to experiment and compromise. Coming three years since his last album, it is clear to tell three years of work at least are involved in this thoughtfully produced, arranged and composed album, carefully intertwining the rebellious and reflective, the emotive and emotional ●

Connor Dwyer

Film & TV

Honorary Academy Award: *Le Bonheur* of Agnès Varda



Madeleine Pulman-Jones finds a sense of discomfort in the sudden recognition of one of the finest living film directors

“It was a big event, very serious, full of meaning and weight – but I feel that between weight and lightness, I choose lightness. And I feel like I’m dancing – the dance of cinema.”

On 11th November 2017, paid tribute by Angelina Jolie and Jessica Chastain who she referred to as her “feminist guardian angels”, legendary French avant-garde director Agnès Varda became the first female director to win an Honorary Academy Award. Towards the end of her acceptance speech, 89-year-old Varda declared, “I feel like I’m dancing – the dance of cinema.” Eternal playfulness and sense of humour intact, standing with arms outstretched, draped in the swathes of her chiffon scarf, Varda looked less like she was dancing, and more like the human embodiment of one of Monet’s brush-strokes.



Varda is without doubt a spiritual foreigner on Hollywood soil. The land in which Varda and her films have always dwelt defies the definitions of both Hollywood cinema and French cinema. It is one of ‘lightness’ – one of possibility and colour, of weathered faces and wildflower, of fur hats in summer and people’s faces printed on wall-size posters. That the Academy have chosen to honour Varda is without doubt a hopeful step towards the recognition of women in filmmaking, but as Varda herself noted, this is “a side Oscar”, even going so far as to call it “the Oscar of the poor”.

A lifelong leader of the anti-Hollywood European avant-garde, Varda is linked most strongly to the French nouvelle vague and more specifically to its intellectual, leftist, ‘Rive Gauche’ subset which included filmmakers such as Alain Resnais and Chris Marker. Varda’s debut feature, *La Pointe Courte* pre-dates the two features generally accepted as the first films of the nouvelle vague, Resnais’s *Hiroshima mon amour*, and Godard’s seminal *Breathless* (he refused to travel to pick up his Honorary Oscar in 2010), by around five years, leading many to regard it as the true root of the nouvelle vague movement.

During the nouvelle vague, Varda made masterpieces including *Cléo from 5 to 7* (1961) and *Le Bonheur* (1965). Since then, she has continued to make films that push the boundaries of narrative cinema, such as *One Sings, The Other Doesn’t* (1977) and *Vagabond* (1984), moving in later years towards documentary and installation art. Indeed, it was most likely her 2016 collaboration, with French artist JR, *Faces and Places*, a feature length documentary, which catapulted her back into the collective consciousness of the industry and led to this Oscar.

In her 2008 self-portrait *The Beaches of Agnès*, Varda stated humorously that she, “tried to be a joyful feminist, but [she] was very angry”. Varda’s particular brand of feminist filmmaking is at once a call to arms to female

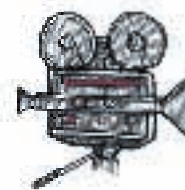
filmmakers, and a form of intimate portraiture. In *Cléo from 5 to 7*, Varda not only revolutionised French cinema by affording a woman the same attention and scope for existential questioning as her male contemporaries, but also feminised traditional notions of cinematic time by capturing an hour-and-a-half of Cléo’s life in real time. This preoccupation with the filmic expression of female lived experience has also been reflected in Varda’s encouragement of women to train as technicians and take agency over their own representation in cinema.

It is beyond question that Agnès Varda is a

pioneering, iconoclastic director in regard to the fight for equal representation of women in the film industry, but in regard to her place in the cinematic canon, Varda is all-too-often defined by her gender rather than her artistic genius. Her honorary Oscar will no doubt alert a whole new generation to her inspiringly idiosyncratic cinematic world as well as her revolutionary feminist activism – which is hugely positive.

However, Varda herself had her reservations about the Oscar, saying in a recent interview with *The New York Times*, that “It’s ridiculous. I’m well known but still remain poor, with poor audiences and poor box office. [The prize] is like a consolation.” From Varda’s perspective, mainstream recognition in this form is perhaps unwanted. She highlighted in her acceptance speech her difficulties in finding financing for her ambitious and unconventional films, and it is impossible to overlook the hypocrisy of the Academy’s decision to reward a filmmaker whose work they ignored for decades, quite possibly in a bid to make themselves seem more diverse amid the #OscarsSoWhite and Harvey Weinstein scandals.

Of course, this may be an ungenerous interpretation of a genuine display of appreciation for a true master of the form, but one cannot help but question the sincerity of this award ●



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CFF: Questioning if You

Pany Heliotis attempts to capture the breathless nature of Lynne Ramsay’s enigmatic latest

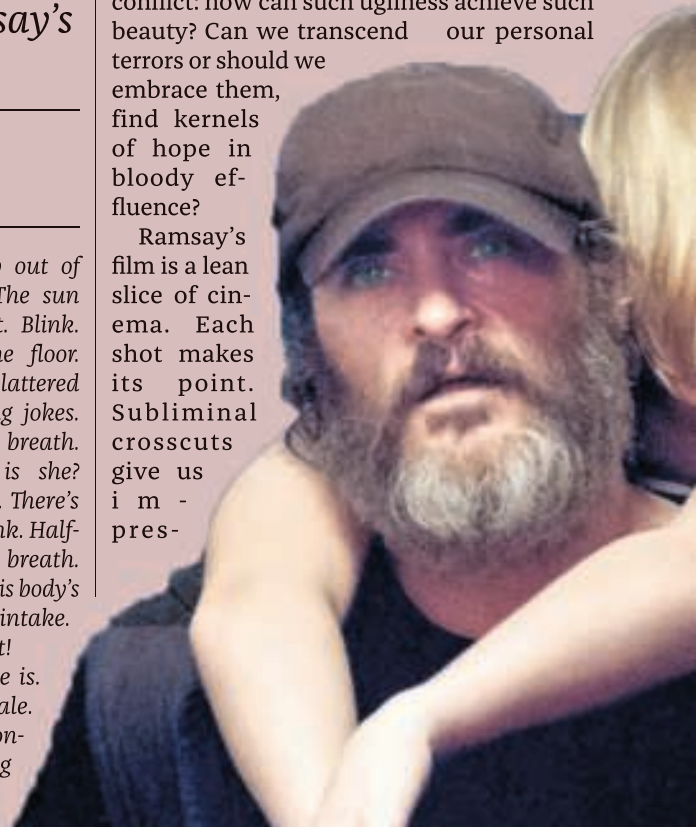
Dir. Lynne Ramsay
In cinemas 9th March 2018
★★★★★

You blink. There she is. Snap out of it. Sharp intake of breath. The sun hits you. Stand on your feet. Blink. She’s gone. A man bleeds on the floor. Exhale. A torch shows a blood-splattered room. You go home. Mom’s making jokes. You blink. Man, I hate her. Slow breath. I love my Mom. Blink. Where is she? You leave your room. Breath out. There’s the Regal. What’s upstairs? Blink. Blink. Half-empty cinema. Bearded man. Sharp breath. Looks like *The Master*. Blink. But not. His body’s warped, palsied hunchback. Sharp intake. He’s haunted. Who is he? Breathe out!

Where did he go? Blink. There he is. Blink. Gone! Did they see him? Exhale. He’s a soldier. Wait – inhale. FBI? Contractor? Breathe out. Who’s following him? What? God Bless America.

Lynne Ramsay’s *You Were Never Really Here* is a fever dream. Trauma incarnate. An assault on our aesthetic sensibilities, forcing us into conflict: how can such ugliness achieve such beauty? Can we transcend our personal terrors or should we embrace them, find kernels of hope in bloody effluence?

Ramsay’s film is a lean slice of cinema. Each shot makes its point. Subliminal crosscuts give us im-pres-



A profound restoration of faith by *Paddington 2*

Lillian Crawford finds herself not only stunned by the aesthetic qualities of this fine sequel, but pondering the simple matters of community and love sorely missed today

Dir. Paul King
In cinemas now
★★★★★

Sometimes the sky is dark and the heavens are open, and the bleakness of the world comes to the fore. People eat with their mouths open and fail to thank those that hold doors open for them, while others just let it slam behind them. No one ever smiles, suppressing true sentiments for fear of judgement, the desire to blend in with the rest of the slow-moving crowd. It is a place of ignorance and self-interest, but also of constant



STUDIOCANAL

intrusion in the personal business of others. As society lapses into dystopia, Paddington stretches out a welcome paw to restore our sense of community, of our humanity.

Lavishing semi-animated sequels with critical acclaim will, quite rightly, arouse a great deal of scepticism, especially to a film that was largely forgettable. The first *Paddington* was undoubtedly charming, but at best a one-off winter-warmer to watch with the family on a frosty afternoon. Perhaps it was too bogged down in exposition and character development to truly get its gears in motion, loomed over by an uncharacteristically flat performance from Nicole Kidman.

She is replaced here by Hugh Grant in one of the highlight roles of his career as a villain verging on self-parody that allows him to have contagious fun playing everyone from Magwitch to Poirot, via Macbeth and a remarkably attractive nun. With Paddington well and truly settled in, the film delves deeper than the first outing, and as such obtains a new level of richness, with a spoonful of cinema magic to help it along.

There are moments of pure visual wonderment smattered throughout, including a meticulous segment in which Paddington leads the prophetic Aunt Lucy through a hand-drawn London. Its show-stopping climax rivals *The Wrong Trousers* as far as raucous train chases go, with both Hugh Bonneville

and Sally Hawkins on hand to deliver some of the film's most farcical moments, as well as its most touching monologues. Indeed, the humour remains universal, with director Paul King ensuring a smile is drawn on everyone's face in its Chaplin-esque sequences, with inevitable hilarity ensuing.

If there is anything to criticise, it might be said to sag a little in the middle, as our furry protagonist finds himself behind bars and in the company of a starry cohort of inmates, including Noah Taylor and Brendan Gleeson. Colour is soon restored, however, and the pastel-pink hues give the prison a delectable Wes Anderson make-over. There is slight discomfort in the apparently gratuitous 'borrowing' of visual motifs from the escape concerto section of M. Gustave's exploits – *The Grand Bear-dapest Hotel*, if you will.

Nevertheless, Paddington makes for the most delightful of screen prisoners, and the heart he injects into his comrades reveals their inner soft-

ness. His ability to forgive and look for the good in others is strikingly admirable, serving as a reminder of the value of retribution, and that no one is ever beyond the possibility of moral redemption. While here presented in a fantastical sense, one is awoken to the dire necessity of its recognition.

So leave the cinema with an amicable smile and a tear in the eye, put a penny in the old man's hat, wave to the neighbours, and thank the stopping cars. It will not seem like much, and yet it means more en masse by way of example. It is never clear when *Paddington 2* is set, with fashions clashing and rotary phones still in use; perhaps it is building a bridge between the old world and the new, a tale of the restoration of manners and amiability.

There could not be a more exquisite treat this Christmas, save perhaps a well-made marmalade sandwich ●



STUDIOCANAL

Were Never Really Here

sions of backstory but without the catharsis of indulgence. *Blink*. Did I just see that? *Exhale*. No. I could not have. A film that runs on its own logic, this adaptation of Jonathan Ames's novella offers few explanations and yet transfixes.

Each frame is filled with consequence and a murky mysticism: when Phoenix's character enters a room, proceeding shots keep him just in the frame or suddenly absent from it. Ramsay is not straining for magical disappearances but transience by way of metaphysical absence. If we do not know who we are, how are we ever seen?

Phoenix's character is a silent hunchback with suicidal inclinations, but a governing philosophy reveals itself purely through his actions: violent recovery of trafficked children. An angel besmirched in blood or a devil with a moral purpose? Phoenix's physical appear-

ance directs us towards the latter.

Bulked up, but malformed with a left shoulder that juts out seemingly through his neck. *Inhale*. Who are we looking at? *Exhale*. What are we looking at? This is as confrontational a lead character as one will ever find in contemporary cinema: a benign sadist addicted to jelly beans suffering post-traumatic stress.

At 85 minutes, Ramsay's film shows things one wishes they had never seen but quickly enough that one can recover. The same cannot be said for its subjects.

Stunning and horrifying. Claustrophobic but transcendent. Ramsay's latest is a cinematic panic attack. *Breathe in. Blink. Breathe out* ●



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Fashion

Check out *Varsity Fashion*'s Instagram photos:
[instagram.com/varsitycambridge](https://www.instagram.com/varsitycambridge)



The lasting impact of fashion photography



Zoé Barnes takes us through the history of fashion photography, and says it's about more than just selling clothes. It's about selling a fantasy

Photography is a huge part of fashion. If you've ever flicked through a copy of *Vogue*, you may wonder at how many pages you get through before reaching the contents, and that is because the advertising and the images are so central that one almost starts to wonder if the words were just added to break up the images, rather than the other way around.

In the musical film *Funny Face*, Fred Astaire plays a fashion photographer who takes on a novice model played by Audrey Hepburn to become the new face of the fictional *Quality* magazine, photographing her in a number of locations around Paris. In each location, the instructions vary from, "You have balloons and are very happy" to "You are Anna Karenina and may never know love again", whether in front of the Arc de Triomphe, down the great steps of the Opéra Garnier or in a market stall, clutching armfuls of brightly coloured flowers. It is clear, then, that fashion photography is not only key to selling fashion, but to expressing it as an artistic form.

In 1911, photographer Edward Steichen was dared by Lucien Vogel, the publisher of *Jardin des Modes* and *La Gazette du Bon Ton*, to depict fashion as a fine art. A subsequent series of photos for the magazine *Art et Decoration* showed models posing at the bottom of marble staircases or in front of ornate mirrors, dressed in Poiret, under the title, 'L'art de la robe' – the art of the dress. From these earliest beginnings fashion photography has been more than about just the clothes: it has been about selling a fantasy.

In 1923, Steichen started working as a photographer for Condé Nast, becoming known as the best and certainly the highest paid photographer in the world at the time. But it is also worth noting that Steichen studied Fine Art, turning to photography when he realised that he would never have the success as an artist he desired, and declaring that he would not participate in the great argument of the time as to the artistic merits of photography over painting. In a way, Steichen's career and work can be considered a starting point for almost any discussion about the development and value of fashion photography.

Sarah Moon, a French model-turned-photographer, is also known for her interest in art and treating fashion photography as something beyond merely the advertising of clothing. Her work is noted for its vague, soft and often impressionistic style, an avant-garde photography that ensured Moon's solo exhibition in 1992 at the Staley-Wise Gallery in New York. In many photos, it's impossible to see the details of the clothing, and yet it is still fashion photography, and these notions are imprinted on the way fashion photography is framed nowadays.

Javier Vallhonrat, another photographer who studied painting and fine art before turning to photography, focuses on composition, balancing colours, often pastels and jewel tones, but will also draw the focus to the environment in which the model finds themselves. These two photographers are wildly different in approach, yet both centre around fashion and both push themselves as photographers and artists.

Certainly, fashion photography was pioneering in the development of photography. Whereas fashion photography is most often conducted for advertisements or fashion magazines, traditional photography had to be altered to create something suited to reproduction of details in newsprint, involving natural light and low contrast. Yet, fashion photography is also distinctly different to other forms of photography, developing its own aesthetic in which the fashions depicted are enhanced by the presence of exotic locations and luxurious props and accessories, selling the fantasy as much as the clothing.

It is also worth noting that fashion photographers have moved beyond the frivolous in their portrayal of clothing, working to document surrounding issues, allowing for a documentation of different eras, both as social history and in keeping with event. Consider Cecil Beaton's famous *Fashion is Indestructible* from 1941, where a fashionable woman looks upon the rubble of Middle Temple in London; this is the Second World War contextualised by fashion.

Photography can add to the general feel of luxury and clothing as art, but it could also



▲ **Queen Fawzia, first wife of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi of Iran, photographed also by Cecil Beaton** (Wikipedia: Imperial War Museums)

▼ **Richard Avedon is one of the most influential fashion photographers; he has changed the way we think about clothes and the way we view them** (Flickr: Bill)



be argued that the storytelling involved may detract from the clothing. Richard Avedon, who did not conform to standard techniques of fashion photography where the models are indifferent to the camera and often emotionless, showed many models in action and laughing. One of Avedon's photographs that bears mentioning is *Dovima with Elephants*, which is almost surreal in its juxtaposition of the famous model Dovima and two elephants. Animal cruelty aside, it is visually striking, combining fantasy and reality, contrasting youth and age, sizes and freedom with captivity. Dovima is wearing a Dior gown, which in any other image would take centre stage. It is difficult to know whether the setting and artistry detracts from or compliments it, creating a vision as to the free, beautiful, strong woman who wears Dior clothing, but the point is that it is easy to discuss the image and the composition without ever discussing what is being worn or even the person wearing it.

Photography is integral to fashion. It allows it to be spread to a much larger audience than before. If not everybody can afford a luxurious haute couture gown, you can pick up a copy of a fashion magazine and be enchanted and inspired by the images within. It has also been key in the development of different ways to approach photography, elevating and sometimes detracting from the work of the designers it seeks to celebrate. It is everywhere around us, from billboards and advertisements to street style blogs and the walls of a gallery. It is commercial and pervasive, but that does not mean that it has to follow a certain formula or that it cannot be considered a high art form within itself ●

Theatre

More reviews are available online at:
varsity.co.uk/theatre



PREVIEW: RABBIT



Finding our feet

As I entered the rehearsal room, the atmosphere was surprisingly relaxed, and a far cry from the imposing structures of the lecture theatre. I was nervous about doing my first interview, but upon seeing the friendly faces of the *Rabbit* crew, I realised that I had nothing to worry about.

I asked the essential question: “Why did you choose to take part in a freshers’ play?” There was a mixture of responses. For some, joining the theatre at Cambridge was a natural continuation of their previous experience with theatre, but for others, it prepresented a wealth of new opportunity.

But one thing that the cast and crew seemed to agree upon unanimously was the plethora of theatrical opportunities available at Cambridge. Producer Arthur Tan described

▶▶ The *Rabbit* cast and crew felt that the setup of freshers’ plays helped them gain a ‘foothold’ in the Cambridge theatre scene (MEGAN HARDING)

the diversity of plays as “so exciting”. One actress admitted that she initially felt spoiled for choice when she saw the range of auditions, and was therefore relieved to see freshers’ plays being advertised separately, thankful that she could see something “for me” out of the dizzying dozens of plays.

On one hand, the team are thoroughly impressed by the level of resources available to aspiring thespians at Cambridge. But on the other, the standards appear dauntingly high, as one fresher reported experiencing the “imposter syndrome”, a term we are all too familiar with at Cambridge. Conversely, one of the fresher directors explained that although being in the same position as previous students who are now well-established in the theatre scene initially made participating in the Cambridge theatre scene intimidating, her perspective has since shifted. She explained that following in the footsteps of previous ADC directors she had previously admired gave her directorial post a sense of familiarity and added ease, as she now felt connected to previous directors, rather than unnerved by the idea.

Yet some cast members saw the experience as “daunting” in a different way: there was a fear that you would “miss the boat” if you didn’t take up opportunities as soon as you

set foot in Cambridge, which I’m sure is very relatable for many, and some freshers even expressed fears of an ADC ‘clique’.

But contrary to their original fears, they were relieved at the extent of the support provided by the ADC with funding and selection for the freshers’ plays. The *Rabbit* cast felt that the setup of freshers’ plays really helped them gain a “foothold” in the theatre scene.

Everyone spoke about the play itself with great passion, trying not to blurt out any spoilers. The crew have an obvious appreciation for the play, as they elaborated on the juxtaposition of binary views and characters against complex situations featured in the tightly-woven text.

Producing a play is never without its challenges; I presumed that this would mainly involve time or money, but I was pleasantly proven wrong. The cast elaborated on the challenge of bringing a modernist play to life, making something dynamic out of a relatively ordinary setting. The team deal with this challenge by taking creative risks in the staging of the play, creating visually striking scenes.

Ultimately, it is full of “energy and dynamism”. The effort and personal thought channelled into the production is admirable, and it is always nice to remember that Cambridge has a life of its own, beyond academia ●

Sophie Zhang

What’s On: The Freshers’ Plays

The Memory of Water
 Corpus Playroom
 7:00pm
 (until 18th November)



The Ruling Class
 ADC Theatre
 7:45pm
 (until 18th November)



Rabbit
 ADC Theatre
 11:00pm
 (until 18th November)



REVIEW



Much Improv About Nothing

★★★★★

The amusing premise of *Much Improv About Nothing* is that every Shakespeare play is created on the spot with audience suggestions. Will Shakespeare was merely the poor old scribe that had to jot it all down. The Impronauts transport us back to England in 1600...or so, to recreate this event.

Shakespeare is famed for his eclectic mix of plays and the audience are asked to vote on which genre they would like. The beauty of the Impronauts is that every show is made up on the spot and thus no two shows are alike. Therefore, there are no spoilers in saying that opening night was a tragedy called *Tom: The Prince and the Poisoner*. Thanks to the audience, Tom suffered with constipation and pedantry; the former was revisited and made for great comedy throughout. However, his pedantry became forgotten and rather disappeared from the narrative.

The notion of audience participation can be enough to put off some theatre goers. It can embarrass or intimidate those who prefer to watch rather than be centre-stage. But the Impronauts offer a welcome alternative. There is no danger in sitting in the front row at this show – participation is voluntary and anonymous.

Before the show starts, the audience are encouraged to write down objects on paper.



These are placed on stage and throughout the show the characters select one at random to include in their speech.

It is incredibly satisfying to hear the audience laugh as your object is read out, and it is even more impressive to see what the Impronauts can do with it.

Particularly commendable is the way in which anachronisms are incorporated. One audience object was ‘Ye olde flat-screen television (4k)’. This was turned into a well-crafted metaphor of how those who appear shiny and attractive are often lacking in dimension. Yet, it was less impressive when the troupe introduced anachronisms themselves, such as a reference to the guillotine. As to be expected, some objects worked better than others, but most were included without hesitation. The only time this broke down was when a member of the troupe did not understand the word ‘gaol’ and it had to be explained to her as ‘jail’.

The show was most successful when the troupe referred back to objects selected earlier in the show, with the most striking examples being throwbacks to the ‘deathwatch beetle’ and the ‘fall of the Roman Empire’.

If you are looking for a perfectly crafted narrative then improv is not the place to find it. The story can lose its thread and plot holes can quickly appear, but the Impronauts show that improv is more than an after-dinner party game or a 90s TV show. *Much Improv* is an enjoyable and humour-filled night at the theatre ●

Stephanie Brown



2020 Casting are recruiting supporting artists (Extras) for a new feature film that is shooting in Cambridge. This production is called Red Joan and features Judi Dench, Sophie Cookson (The Kingsman: The Secret Service) and will be directed by Trevor Nunn.

Shooting starts in December 2017. You will be required to attend a fitting in late November.

What we are looking for:

Men and women of all ages (16-70 Years Old).

The film is mainly set during the time period of 1938 - 1947.

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If you, or anyone you know is interested in this opportunity please register your details at www.2020casting.com.

We will also require your measurements and a head and shoulders photo as well as a full body photo - against a plain background.

Previous films the company have worked on include: The Darkest House, Dunkirk, Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them, World War Z, X-Men: First Class and The Dark Knight Rises.

Sport

Houston Astros: a new baseball paradigm?

Nathan Johns
Sports Columnist

It is very rare to see a palpable shift in decades-old attitudes, but that could well have been what happened in Los Angeles a fortnight ago. Following a record-breaking string of matches, the Houston Astros became world champions by winning Major League Baseball's World Series for the first time in their 56-year history after defeating the Los Angeles Dodgers 5-1 in game 7.

The best-of-seven series was a classic in and of itself. Five of the seven games were decided by two runs or less, the most in a World Series since 2000. The Astros chalked up 25 home runs, the most by any team in the history of the 'Fall Classic'. MVP of the Series, Astros centre fielder George Springer, became the first player to hit a home run in four successive World Series games, and only the third person in history to hit five in the series overall. From an emotional point of view, nearby Hollywood could not have written a better script. This was a fitting victory for the city of Houston, after its recent devastation by Hurricane Harvey.

The Astros were baseball's best team; of that there is little doubt. The ramifications, however, of the first World Se-

ries title for a team from the Lone Star State – not only for baseball, but also for sport as a whole – are potentially enormous. What makes this triumph truly remarkable is the system employed to bring about success. Baseball's shift from old-fashioned scouting methods to the meticulous study of analytics has been well documented, most famously by Michael Lewis' book and its subsequent film adaption starring Brad Pitt, *Moneyball*.

In fact, the very presence of these two teams in the World Series also reflects this. Houston's front office, the personnel tasked with assembling the roster, is run by an ex-management consultant who is also an engineering graduate and a former NASA researcher. The Dodgers have a former Wall Street analyst as well as an MIT graduate with a philosophy PhD.

Yet, what differentiates the Astros from the Dodgers is the extent to which they built on the *Moneyball* idea. The A's used the system to plug holes left by superstar departures in what was already a solid playoff roster, whereas the Astros, while also looking to construct a relatively cheap roster, did so from the very beginning. They gutted their squad completely and went about using statistical data rather than name recognition to sign players and recruit prospects.



▲ Jose Altuve starred for the Houston Astros this year (KEITH ALLISON)

Of no concern was how bad they would be as a result of this developmental process. Such a system is becoming increasingly prevalent across baseball: 2016's champions Chicago Cubs did something similar, building their squad around players such as 2013 first round pick Kris Bryant, as did the 2015 Royals. Yet, no team bought in to the point where they tanked as badly as the Astros.

Just how awful they were cannot be stressed enough. Between 2011 and 2013, they lost 324 of 486 games played – 69.2% of their games, to be precise. In the results-based world of professional sport, the manner in which they stuck

to this plan regimentally is truly remarkable. Yet, even the Astros, despite their persistence, could not have anticipated that the plan would have taken this long to bear fruit. But they did make mistakes. In 2013, the number one pick in the amateur player draft was spent on injury-prone pitcher Mark Appel who now plies his trade in the amateur leagues.

Undoubtedly though, they did hit on a number of prospects and free agents. Springer, the aforementioned MVP, was a first round pick in 2011; second baseman Jose Altuve was an international amateur free agent signed aged just 17 in 2007, and shortstop Carlos Correa, an All-Star this

year, was drafted first overall in 2012. By building from within and creating such a strong core of young, and thus cheap, players, the Astros could then afford to finish the jigsaw by trading for big name players in the last 12 months. Catcher Brian McCann, who signed a 5-year \$85 million deal in 2014, was acquired from the Yankees, and former Cy Young winner and AL MVP Justin Verlander was likewise sourced from Detroit. Yet, even with these big name acquisitions, their payroll was only the 17th highest in the bigs. The Dodgers were top of the list.

It will be interesting to see if baseball can stay the course and follow in the Astros' tracks. Next season, some of the biggest names in the sport, Bryce Harper and Josh Donaldson, respectively of Washington and Toronto, will hit the market. Harper has previously been discussed in the context of the first half billion-dollar deal. There will be a team that caves and breaks from the system, perhaps Harper's rumoured favourites the Yankees. Harper's signing would mark a return to the days of big-spending owner Hal Steinbrenner for the Bronx Bombers.

How long the Astros can remain a model of analytical and fiscally sound development remains to be seen, but for now, being in it for the long haul is garnering results.



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Hilton

In conversation with: Lizzy Apsley

Lawrence Hopkins

speaks to the captain of Cambridge's Hare & Hounds club,

Lizzy Apsley

The Oxford-Cambridge rivalry, the original Varsity, is a peculiar tradition. For some of the sports clubs of this University, beating their Oxford counterparts is the be-all and end-all. However, what is most peculiar is a Varsity Match taking place in Michaelmas term; this is the case for the Cambridge University Hare & Hounds. Over the course of two weekends, no fewer than seven races will be contested. Lizzy Apsley, Club Captain of the 'Hareys', is hoping for success in every single one.

Of the seven matches, five are contested by selected teams, three on the men's side and two on the women's. Selections were made on Monday of this week, following the MET League Cross Country race in Welwyn Garden City. For Apsley, she has run herself into the Blues' team for the third time. "The standard at the selection race was really high, but we know that Oxford's standard of runners will be really high too."

Last year, selection was conducted on the basis of a number of races, whereas for this year the MET League was the only selection race. "We based selection on a single race this year because winning Varsity requires performing on the day."

Though the Blues' Matches for both men and women take place on Wimbledon Common, the venue for the other Matches alternates yearly between Oxford and Cambridge; this year's Matches will take place over the Shotover course in the Oxfordshire hills, on gradients that are rarely found around Cambridge. "We do struggle to mimic things in Cambridge, but the fact that Shotover is hilly did not influence team selection. It is harder to get supporters to Shotover, but in terms of racing, we have done more

The Hare and Hounds' margin of victory against Oxford last year

5-2

hill sessions this year as preparation, so we are ready."

Many of the Hareys run well over fifty miles a week, and balancing this training demand with studies can be a fertile breeding ground for injury: "In previous years we have struggled with injuries,



▲ The CUHH Ladies' Blues celebrate Varsity victory in 2015 (DAVID APSLEY)

but we have been better at managing injuries this year than before. Our hard sessions are Tuesday and Saturday, with plenty of recovery in between."

Despite including the likes of Oliver Fox, Will Ryle-Hodges, and Phil Crout in their Blues' team - respectively first, fourth, and fifth in last year's race - the men consider themselves underdogs, having won last year for the first time since 2013. "On both sides, men and women, Oxford are an older squad. But

it certainly is not the case that we can't beat them. Both our Blues' squads have freshers in them, two in the women's and one in the men's, and the men have lucky charm Will Ryle-Hodges, who has been on the winning side six times." Indeed, the Gentlemen's Race has been run 126 times, and Ryle-Hodges is the most successful runner in its history.

Two matches are not solely contested by selected runners: the Ladies' Thirds, and the Gentlemen's Fourths. Scoring is

weighted, Apsley tells me, in an effort to make the contest as fair as possible, but "the bigger team tends to win."

With the advent of GPS watches and apps like Strava it is easier than ever to track training. The observation can be made that more of the Hareys are taking to two wheels rather than two legs, incorporating bike work into their training schedules: "This has come about since people have realised, from experience, that you can only run so much. We run circuit sessions in conjunction with the Tri[athlon] club, and so there is a degree of overlap."

With only a matter of weeks left until she, and the rest of CUHH, is on the start line for the annual tête-à-tête with OUC-CC, training is beginning to wind down. "At this stage, training will not make a huge amount of difference. It is about preventing injury and tapering until race day." Apsley will not, however, be drawn into setting out her stall; when I ask if CUHH will win, she is not forthcoming, offering only "cautious optimism".

The II-IVs Matches take place on Saturday 25th November, with the 127th Gentlemen's Race and 42nd Ladies' University Race following a week later, hosted by Thames Hare & Hounds. Apsley is quietly confident; a repeat of last year's success may be on the cards, though the hills of Shotover must be negotiated first if a win is to materialise.

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Cross country In conversation with Lizzy Apsley, president of CUHH 31



CURUFC 42

BPRFC 40

Cambridge steal late try to rob British Police

Harry Normanton
Senior Sports Reporter

Led by rampant flanker Matt Watson, Cambridge edged out the British Police in a try-fest at Grange Road. It was an important win for the Light Blues – only their second of the season after a rocky, injury-plagued start to the year – boosting morale ahead of next month's Varsity Match.

The game had started ominously, with the Police opening the scoring in under five minutes. Crisp passing from a line-out ten metres inside the Cambridge half set the visitors' outside centre through the Light Blues' defensive line. He committed the fullback, then spun a perfectly timed pass out to the left-winger who breezed over untouched in the corner. The fly half missed the conversion, but it was a menacing statement of intent.

Cambridge, though, came screeching straight back. A bullocking run from number eight Buchan Richardson set the Light Blues up on the edge of the Police 22, and after several phases of patient build-up flanker Matt Watson came steaming onto the ball, blasted through three defenders and crashed over the line. Three minutes later, man of the match Watson turned creator, deftly off-loading to outside centre Archie Russell to give Cambridge the lead, 14-5.

After fifteen minutes Cambridge extended their lead, prop Will Briggs scooping up a loose ball after a maul had

collapsed and stretching over the line. But the Police fought back. They won a succession of penalties in the Cambridge half, and, perhaps sensing that this was going to be a high-scoring game, each time they opted to kick for the corner, gunning for a try rather than just three points. And their aggression was rewarded when one of many rolling mauls finally rumbled over the Cambridge try line. An excellent conversion from the far left touchline by the visitors' fly half meant that Cambridge led by nine points with a quarter of the game played.

That set the stage for arguably the finest moment of the match. An encouraging spell of Light Blue possession in the Police 22 after the restart was disrupted when the visitors managed to force the ball loose at a ruck and hack it clear. Collecting the bobbling ball ten metres inside his own half, Cambridge fullback Charlie Amesbury slalomed past three defenders then slipped a pass to the omnipresent Watson, thundering onto the ball on his inside shoulder. Having battered over one defender, he raced to the 22 before zipping the ball to inside centre Jake Hennessey, who fended off the Police fullback with an outstretched arm to fight the way over the line. The Light Blues had flown 60 metres down the field without being brought down once, and now led 28-12.

The Police refused to buckle, though. Helped by loose Light Blue discipline, they scored two tries before halftime; the first from a dominant scrum 5 metres

out, the second the product of a series of zippy passes whisking the ball from wing to wing. Two difficult conversions nervelessly slotted between the uprights meant that, for all their attacking brilliance, Cambridge led by just two points at half time.

The visitors carried their momentum into the second half; a brilliantly timed pass from the fly half, taking the ball from the back of a scrum, found the full-back careering onto the ball at breakneck speed. He found a gap in the defensive line, and was barely touched before dotting the ball down under the posts.

Cambridge eventually replied, an angled run edging left wing Henry King over the line to reward a long spell of pressure in the Police 22. Another successful conversion from fly half Mike Phillips nosed the Light Blues back ahead with twenty minutes to play. But following the try, the hosts made a spate of substitutions, and it seemed to hand the Police the initiative. The visitors' pack was now considerably heavier than that of their opponents, and they took full advantage, using a series of punchy 'pick and go's to roll deep into the Cambridge 22. The Police scrum, solid for the whole match, now became dominant, and they were awarded a penalty try after the Light Blues' pack had been repeatedly penalised.

That made the score 40-35 to the Police with just thirteen minutes to play. If it looked like the visitors were headed for victory, though, the Light Blues had

▲▼ CURUFC recorded their first win of the season earlier this month against Moseley

(ANGUS PARKER)



other ideas. They marched into their opponents' half, won a penalty and kicked to the corner. From the lineout a wall of Light Blue bodies battered their way over the line, and Hennessey, kicking instead of Phillips, who had hobbled off with a leg injury minutes over, squeaked the conversion just inside the left-hand upright. The Police came roaring back, but Cambridge held out for the last six minutes – including several roaring, sinew-straining scrums – to secure a thrilling victory.

Lock Nick Koster, captain for the night, fêted the character the team had shown in getting over the line after several narrow defeats earlier in the season. Due to injury, he said, "this was the first time the full pack played together all season, so it's really important that we work hard over the next few weeks to learn to work as a team".

The team will hope to continue its upward trajectory next week in the Steele-Bodger Match, their final game before the Varsity Match on 7th December.

Cambridge: Amesbury (c), R. Triniman, A. Russell, J. Hennessey, H. King, M. Phillips, C. Bell, W. Briggs, A. Burnett, J. Dixon, A. Hunter, N. Koster, M. Watson, S. Leonard, B. Richardson
British Police: Haco, A. Davies, S. Phillips, C. Roddy, K. Tayler, D. Preece, C. Aldham, I. Gerrard, T. Moody, J. Mills, Llyr Griffiths (c), S. Rutledge, A. Bryans, S. Johnson, R. Moffat