

Stranger screens

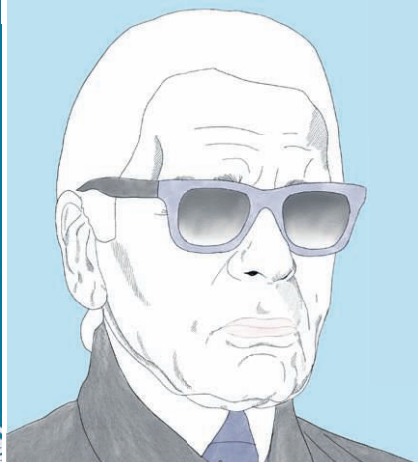
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▲ Candidates for CUSU President Edward Parker Humphreys, left, and Shadab Ahmed, right, campaigned on lecture sites yesterday (YUTONG CAI)

BME Eddie's students threatened with College action over eugenics fellow protest

Noella Chye
Exclusive

On 1st February, three students at St Edmund's received an email from a senior member of the college claiming they had breached college disciplinary procedures during a peaceful protest over the widely-condemned appointment of Noah Carl. All three were BME students.

Later, they were asked to write "to each of the members of staff on the corridor to apologise for the distress caused to them", to avoid any action being taken.

Two of the students were told that members of the college had "found [their] behaviour to be threatening and intimidating." In an email exchange, the senior member of the college said that the three students' names "were cited in the reports of alarm and/or recorded by the card system as seeking entry to the tutorial corridor, that was at that time closed."

The college did not respond to a request for comment about whether it has a policy against using its card system to determine students' whereabouts.

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Campaigns kick off in 2019 CUSU race

Jess Ma
Senior News Editor

CUSU and GU elections have officially begun, with campaigning starting yesterday. This year's CUSU presidential race sees a clash between CUSU Access

and Funding Officer Shadab Ahmed and former Jesus JCR President Edward Parker Humphreys, as well as competition in all sabbatical roles.

Social media campaigns and flyers distribution continues to be the dominant form of campaigning. Some candidates have been handing out flyers

at lecture sites, while others met with students to discuss their manifestos.

Most candidates have Facebook event pages, and photo frames for their supporters. Four candidates have campaigning websites while both presidential candidates have released promotional videos.

The flagship event of the election will be a hustings at the University Centre at 6pm today. Students will have the opportunity to directly engage with candidates as they take questions from the floor and pre-submitted questions.

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Peter Tatchell: ‘We are in the midst of an incredibly exciting and inspiring gender revolution’

Owen Dowling speaks to Peter Tatchell about LGBT+ history and the future of the movement

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Stonewall riots in New York, a key moment in LGBT+ history which sparked the establishment of Gay Liberation Fronts around the world – precipitating a global struggle for the social and legal emancipation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Dubbed ‘Saint Peter’ by his fellow activists, and a ‘gay gangster’ by Robert Mugabe, the veteran activist Peter Tatchell has long been a prominent figure in the fight for LGBT+ rights. From his youth in the year of Stonewall, through his membership of the Gay Liberation Front in the 1970s, the experience of the AIDS crisis and involvement in the direct action group ‘Outrage!’, Tatchell’s activism has continued to the present day, when some argue LGBT+ people have finally achieved formal equality in society. I sat down with him before his speech in the Cambridge Union chamber, which was flying an LGBT+ flag for the first time, to discuss his experiences within the LGBT rights movement, as well as his views on the successes of that struggle, on direct action, on LGBT rights around the world, and on the prospects for trans liberation in the coming years.

Describing his experiences as a teen-

▼ **Tatchell argues that it was not until 2000 that LGBT rights saw serious legislative change**

(THE CAMBRIDGE

ager in the embryonic gay rights movement at the end of the 1960s, Tatchell recalls predicting, “based upon the experience of the Black Civil Rights movement in America, that it would probably take about fifty years to win full legal equality in western countries such as Britain. It was a guesstimate, but it’s proved to be just about right.”

Indeed, it was not until the 2000s that the push for LGBT+ rights in the UK tipped over into serious legislative change - with a series of reforms passed under the post-1997 Labour government including the repeal of Section 28, the equalisation of the age of consent, the introduction of civil partnerships, and protections against workplace discrimination. 2013 saw gay marriage passed in Parliament under the coalition government. Tatchell describes the process by which “all the major anti-gay laws were repealed within a space of 15 years” as “the fastest, most successful law reform campaign in British history, maybe in world history. There has never been a disadvantaged, marginalised community that has experienced such a transition to equality in such a short space of time.”

Tatchell emphasises that this legal ‘transition to equality’, beginning in 1999, represented the first batch of gay rights legislation passed since “the partial decriminalization of male homosexuality in England and Wales in 1967.” In the intervening decades, “we got basically nothing. All the lobbying, the campaigning was rebuffed by successive governments both Labour and Conservative.” There were even periods of particularly reactionary opposition, especially from the Thatcher government which in 1988, against the backdrop of the AIDS crisis, passed Section 28 - prohibiting local authorities from ‘promoting homosexuality’ or ‘teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship’. It was within this context, Tatchell argues, that the extra-parliamentary movement for

“This is a revolution in human consciousness challenging orthodox ideas of male and female, masculine and feminine”



gay rights emerged, and took on a necessarily radical character.

On the specific campaign strategies during this period, he points to a “synergy” between the complimentary dynamics of political lobbying for reform, as advanced by Stonewall, and a tradition of direct action - which included lesbian activists abseiling into the House of Lords to protest Section 28, and Tatchell’s group ‘Outrage!’ These organisations, he argues, enjoyed a dialectical relationship “a bit like the suffragists and the suffragettes”, which helped shift the overton window of political discourse towards one conducive to gay rights legislation. Tatchell himself has been prominently involved in direct action, and while acknowledging that he personally has “played a significant role in the battle for LGBT+ rights over the last five decades”, he insists that “...it’s never been me alone. I’ve always been working in collaboration with other activists, be they in the Gay Liberation Front of the 1970s, or ‘Outrage!’ in the 1990s.”

Indeed, he sees the gains made for LGBT+ equality in the last decades as achievements for which “no one individual organization can claim credit.” They were the “result of the cumulative, collective efforts of tens of thousands of LGBT+ people around the country” - demonstrating, in his view, that “it is only through collective action that social change comes.”

Moving onto the subject of global LGBT+ activism, he argues that it is important to recognise that, while enormous steps have been made for gay rights in the UK, in much of Europe, the US, and elsewhere, there remain vast swathes of the globe in which homosexuality is criminalized - with ten countries still administering the death penalty. Telling me he has always seen LGBT+ liberation as a necessarily internationalist project, his activism has taken him from demonstrating for gay rights in East Germany as a young man, for which he found himself arrested by the Stasi, to repeated protests in Putin’s Russia. However, he again insists, this has not been an individual quest - his international action has always been in conjunction and solidarity with activists in these countries.

Tatchell repeatedly travelled to Russia, which under President Putin has maintained and instituted a series of anti-gay laws including a 2013 ban on so-called ‘homosexual propaganda to minors’ (employing language reminiscent of Section 28). The country has seen an epidemic of anti-gay vigilante violence and Tatchell has staged numerous protests - including in 2007 at which he was “set upon by neo-nazis” he soon realised were either in fact “police agents in plain clothes, or were neo-nazis operating in collaboration with the police.” Again insisting that his demonstrations have been “at the invitation of Russian LGBT+ activists” who regularly face this form of state violence, he tells me that as a high-profile activist with a sizeable media profile, he has been “able to bring British and international media to Moscow” to “help highlight the abuses, the homophobia, biphobia and transphobia of their government.”

This past summer, during a period of international media attention due to the World Cup, Tatchell travelled once again to Russia, staging a one-person protest outside the Kremlin with a placard reading: ‘Putin fails to act against Chechnya torture of gay people.’ Elaborating on the situation in Chechnya, the semi-autonomous province within the Russian Federation where there have



▲ **Peter Tatchell is a British human rights campaigner**
(THE CAMBRIDGE UNION)

been reports of anti-gay persecutions, he tells me that “the first wave of anti-LGBT witch-hunts in Chechnya began this time last year. It resulted in dozens of known or suspected LGBT+ people being arrested, detained without trial, tortured and in some cases murdered.”

Despite a brief easing of the campaign after international outcry in mid-2018, the persecutions began again in earnest from January 2019, with the BBC reporting around that 40 people have been imprisoned.

Despite the contested nature of the balance of federal and regional authority in Chechnya, Tatchell unequivocally states that “I hold President Putin directly and personally responsible for what is going on. He is the president of Russia, Chechnya is part of the Russian Federation, and he could act to stop these pogroms, but he won’t. He is colluding with the Chechen leader Kadyrov” who has claimed the “removal” of LGBT+ Chechens is necessary to ‘cleanse our blood’. It is clear, he argues, that Russian LGBT+ activists, facing an effective ultra-conservative coalition between the “hardline homophobic Russian Orthodox Church...far-right and ultra-nationalist lobbies” under the umbrella of Putin’s repressive government, have a serious, protracted struggle ahead of themselves in the campaign for LGBT liberation in Russia.

We conclude with a look to the future for LGBT+ rights in the UK. Writing for the Guardian, Tatchell once described the outlook of the Gay Liberation Front of his youth upon gender-norms as that of “sexual liberationists and social revolutionaries, out to turn the world upside down...GLF’s main aim was never equality within the status quo...We sought a cultural revolution to overturn centuries of male heterosexual domination and thereby free both queers and women...” Given this, I was interested to know his perspective on the history, present situation of, and prospects for, trans rights in the UK. With ideas challenging traditional conceptions of gender and identity,

as well as particular issues facing transgender people becoming increasingly visible in the public discourse, Tatchell argues that “we are in the midst of an incredibly exciting and inspiring gender revolution, spearheaded by trans people and those who identify as gender-fluid or non-binary. This is a revolution in human consciousness, challenging orthodox ideals of male and female,

masculine and feminine.” However, he concedes, this gender revolution is at a relatively early stage compared with the battle for lesbian and gay rights. “I think bisexuals have actually also often been left behind as well. I think we are in a period of necessary catch-up” with trans issues, despite having once been at the forefront of the Gay Liberation Front, having “dropped off the agenda” of many gay rights organisations in the ‘80s and ‘90s, and now finally breaching into the mainstream.

Of course there has, perhaps inevitably, been a cultural backlash to this increasing transvisibility, with “trans people being demonised by the media” and “subjected to the most outrageous, outdated, ignorant and bigoted stereotypes” in a manner reminiscent of familiar tropes from the 1980s associating homosexuals with sexual predators or perversion. However, most disturbing for Tatchell is a “minority of feminists” whom he argues have adopted the mistaken perspective that trans women are a threat to women’s rights and spaces, wishing that they would “try and search for the common ground between women’s rights and trans rights, instead of setting up artificial, nonsensical and bigoted divisions” between those fighting for women’s and trans liberation.

The response of LGBT+ activists in the coming years, in the face of reactionary backlash, will shape the direction and prospects of the ‘gender revolution’.

This LGBT+ History Month, Tatchell emphasises that the freedoms queer people now have were achieved through collective struggle, and that we should recognise this to inform our efforts to maintain and extend our gains. We should continue to fight to protect what we have won, and to extend the spirit of liberation and solidarity to those around the world still unfree.

Much has been gained, but for many LGBT+ people in Britain and abroad, the struggle carries on.

“There has never been a disadvantaged, marginalised community that has experienced such a transition to equality in such a short space of time”

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The deadline for applications is 5pm, Tuesday 5th March
Interviews will be held on the morning of Friday 8th March



VARSITY



News

New AI centre launched to tackle environmental risk

Kyoka Hadano
Senior News Correspondent

The University is launching a new centre aimed at developing AI techniques to find solutions to major environmental threats. One of 16 new Centres for Doctoral Training announced last week, it is funded by UK Research and Innovation and will be welcoming its first cohort of PhD students in October 2019.

Named the Centre for Doctoral Training in Application of Artificial Intelligence to the study of Environmental Risks, it intends to train future thought leaders in environmental data science, bringing together computer scientists, mathematicians and engineers alongside environmental and geoscientists. At the centre, they will be applying AI to environmental data in order to comprehend and manage risks.

Existing projects involving the use of AI in tackling environmental risk include the use of satellite observations to chart the pathways of whales through the oceans, large datasets to understand changes in biodiversity in woodland

habitats, machine learning to understand earthquake risk and the use of drones to monitor hazards at active volcanoes.

The centre intends to combine this work with the interests of external partners to create an alliance aimed at leading forward the next generation of environmental data science. These partners include Microsoft, DeepMind, The European Development Bank, Friends of the Earth, the European Space Agency, the Environment Agency, resource industry leaders and policy partners. Professor Simon Redfern, Head of the Department of Earth Sciences, will be leading the new centre.

In an official statement on the University website, Redfern highlighted the increased quantity and variety of datasets available to observe the Earth, from the atomic scale to global satellite observations, and how these can be used to assess and tackle the threats of environmental hazards and climate change.

Equally, however, Redfern emphasises the challenges posed by such large datasets, underlining that “new methods need to be developed to tap their potential and to use this information to

guide our path away from environmental catastrophe”.

Systems involving AI methods such as “satellite data, autonomous sensors, drones, and networks of instruments” can also provide increasingly detailed information about environmental risks

► **“Urbanisation and the growth of megacities generate other risks, as society becomes potentially more fragile and vulnerable to geohazards”**

PHOTO BY ANDREAS BRÜCKER ON UNSPASH



and their potential effects. Redfern underlines this importance in light of human-induced climate change, where “urbanisation and the growth of megacities generate other risks, as society becomes potentially more fragile and vulnerable to geohazards such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods and tsunamis”. Previously, Redfern was involved in the controversial divestment working group, overseeing proposed donations from fossil fuel giants.

The development of the new centre was welcomed by Business Secretary Greg Clark, who described the announcement as “our modern Industrial Strategy in action, investing in skills and talent to drive high skilled jobs, growth and productivity across the UK.”

“We want to keep up this momentum and cement our reputation as pioneers in AI,” says Digital Secretary Jeremy Wright, “working with world-class academic institutions and industry we will be able to train the next generation of top-tier AI talent and maintain the UK’s reputation as a trailblazer in emerging technologies.”

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▲ Lara Erritt's Theresa May seeks a more digital take on Brexit (Illustration for Varsity)

QUANTUM STEPS

Physicists get nuclei to dance

A team of researchers led by a Fellow at St. John's have found a way to control the nuclei of semiconductor quantum dots in order to operate a quantum memory device. Quantum dots are crystals made up of thousands of atoms which interact with magnetically trapped electrons. The researchers found a way to cool the nuclei to less than a thousandth of a degree above absolute zero temperature. They are hoping that "the dance" can help them further develop quantum technology in the future.

GOING VIRAL

Modern laptops vulnerable to attack

According to new research from the University of Cambridge and Rice University, many laptops and some desktop computers are much more vulnerable to hacking through plug-in devices than previously believed. Computers most at risk are those with a Thunderbolt port such as Windows or macOS. The vulnerabilities were first discovered in 2016. However, researchers warn that new threats may arise with continued technological developments.

R'AIR'LY SEEN

"Changing face of UK" in aerial photos

The University of Cambridge has released a series of aerial photos of the UK dating between 1945 and 2009. The collection, which started after the bombings of the UK and shows various parts of the country throughout time, has been described as a "historical Google Earth". The University first used RAF planes and pilots to take the photos until it bought the Cessna Skymaster in 1965. The Department of Geography are looking to make the entire photo archive available digitally.

A POETIC FIRST

King's College Choir perform in Mandarin

Xu Zhimo's poem about leaving Cambridge has been paired with composition by John Rutter and is now accompanied by a music video. The composition was released by King's College Recordings to celebrate Lunar New Year. Xu was a member of King's College in the 1920s. The video featured a special performance by the King's College Choir. This was the first time that the King's College Choir has performed in Mandarin in its 500 year existence.




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News CUSU/GU Elections

What will it take to snatch victory in this year's race for CUSU president?

Katy Bennett
Senior News Correspondent

Over the next week, Edward Parker Humphreys and Shadab Ahmed will have only each other to beat in the race for CUSU President.

Although it is not uncommon to see several sabbatical positions go uncontested, a two-candidate race for the presidency is unusual. With the exception of 2014, in which only one candidate ran for CUSU president, and 2010, when there were two, every year for the last ten years has seen at least three candidates in the competition for the presidency.

Last year proved that adding a third candidate into the mix could have a significant impact on the final results, as Evie Aspinall won in the second-round run-off, despite Siyang Wei leading in polls prior to the election and winning the highest number of first-preference votes. The second-preference votes of Connor MacDonald's supporters were decisive in Aspinall's victory, who received 592 second-preference votes while Wei only received 147.

The lack of an obvious right-leaning candidate this year could have an impact on the results, with both Ahmed and Parker Humphreys poised to appeal more to the left and left-of-centre student body.

Parker Humphreys has been particularly involved with the student left, having been co-chair of CULC in 2017, while Ahmed, as a current sabbatical officer, is implicitly associated with the left-leaning image of CUSU. Both candidates are in favour of divestment, oppose the Prevent duty, and have expressed support for Cambridge Cut the Rent.



Elections Timeline

Thursday 28th February
Campaigning period opened at 9am

Friday 1st March
Hustings at 6pm

Tuesday 5th
Voting opens at 9am

Friday 8th
Voting closes at 5pm

Friday 8th
Provisional results announced at 7pm

That said, the lack of a right-leaning candidate itself is not overwhelmingly significant – both Connor MacDonald's loss last year and Jack Drury's in 2017 demonstrate the difficulties conservative candidates have faced gaining support in what is a largely left-of-centre student body. But the lack of an obvious candidate means that the 'CUCA vote' could conceivably go either way – and potentially prove to be decisive in which candidate gains the presidency.

At the same time, there is a possibility that this cohort of voters will not materialise at all. Of the 1,076 votes for MacDonald last year, 337 – just under a third – did not express any second preference. A further 180 students voted as their first preference to re-open nominations. It is worth noting that in the two-candidate race in 2010 the turnout was only 13.1% of the electoral roll, compared with 21.2% in the previous year. This is compared with last year's turnout of 20.9%, and a 22.5% turnout in 2017, where three candidates were competing for the presidency.

Parker Humphreys and Ahmed will also face heightened competition for the left-wing vote, and arguably must distinguish themselves sufficiently so that they are not met with apathy from the majority of the student body.

Both have substantial experience – Parker Humphreys as JCR President and Ahmed as CUSU Access Officer – and both have spoken about similar issues, including college inequalities and access. Ahmed is running on a platform of continuity and experience, while Parker Humphreys has promised to speak up for issues around access and welfare.

Only time will tell whether the race will heat up, or whether the lack of a third candidate will take the edge out of this year's election season.

Who's running for president



(BECCA NICHOLS)

Shadab Ahmed

● Ahmed is running as the CUSU insider candidate. Currently Access & Funding Officer, Ahmed has said he will bring “continuity and experience” to the role. His four main policy areas are “support, access, fundraising, and empowerment”.

□ NATSCI, CHRIST'S

Jesus, resurrected?

Following in the footsteps of past CUSU presidents Amatey Doku and Daisy Eyre is Edward Parker Humphreys. All three students read HSPS at Jesus, and served as JCR presidents during their times as undergraduates. If Parker Humphreys wins, he will be the third Jesuan to hold the position in four years. Will Parker Humphreys be able to bring Jesus back to 17 Mill Lane?

(YUTONG CAI)



Breaking news,
around the
clock
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nt?



(ROSIE BRADBURY)

Edward Parker Humphreys

● Parker Humphreys is an experienced campaigner. A former JCR president and one of the students who launched the Cambridge Living Wage Campaign, he has said he will prioritise post-admission access, welfare, and supporting MCRs and JCRs.

□ HSPS, JESUS

✨ Get all the latest news and analysis on the elections: varsity.co.uk/cusu-elections-2019

Policy matrix

Where do the candidates stand?



Ahmed



Parker Humphreys

What’s an issue in Cambridge that is currently underdiscussed?

Ahmed said that although college inequalities are “talked about a lot”, “it’s still severely understated how much your raw absolute experience can vary based on the college you go to”, for issues such as financial provision and academic support.

Parker Humphreys believes that student loneliness is an issue that “doesn’t get discussed enough”. He noted that “doing an arts degree can end up being very lonely”, as aside from a couple of lectures a week, “there isn’t much interaction at all”.

What’s your stance on the Prevent duty?

Ahmed describes the Prevent duty as a “massive issue [...] even if you don’t see it all the time”. He views the legislation as both a “welfare issue” and a “rights issue”, and has spoken to students “who do feel quite targeted by it”.

Parker Humphreys believes the “gap between rhetoric and practice [on Prevent] is worrying” where a ‘light touch’ approach “doesn’t seem to be the case”. He said he has flagged cases which risked “disproportionately impact[ing] BME and Muslim students”.

How is it possible to reduce college inequalities?

For Ahmed, addressing college inequalities requires different tactics depending on the problem, where rent needs “a college-specific approach”, but the living wage is an issue for which “you can write a basic proposal” for all colleges.

Parker Humphreys says that “working with JCRs and MCRs on a one-on-one level” is crucial to identifying strategies which are applicable at various colleges, and that as CUSU president, he would take a collaborative, on-the-ground approach.

Is enough being done on high rents and rent disparities?

Ahmed believes that CUSU can do more to support work by student groups to cut the rent, through “getting a broad range of opinions” from surveys and focus groups, and “fighting [rent charges] individually within each college”.

Parker Humphreys says that CUSU should give “their utmost support” to efforts at a college level in order to mediate between colleges and campaigners, as he has observed “such a power imbalance” and where colleges “can often be very punitive in response”.

Why do you think CUSU engagement is so low?

Ahmed says that he doesn’t believe engagement is “particularly bad”, citing CUSU elections voter turnout in 2018 of over 20%. He added, “people who engage, engage lots”, but that he hopes, if elected, to groups of students who don’t engage if the reason is that “they don’t feel welcome”.

For Parker Humphreys, the most common criticism he hears of the student union is, “what does it do?”, and that although he sees engagement as important, “you’ve not going to get everyone involved”, and that students also “want to see CUSU getting on with the job”.

Do we need to divest?

Ahmed is in favour of divestment. He argues that “Cambridge cannot call itself a world-leading elite institution if they’re not socially responsible as well”, and that the fight to divest must continue until it is successful.

Parker Humphreys similarly favours divestment, and has said that if elected, he would continue to “[lobby] the University” on an issue which he believes “the vast majority of students support”.

The race heats up Sabbatical officer candidates face fierce competition

● This year's CUSU/GU sabbatical races are set to be the most competitive races in recent years, with every full-time sabbatical position contested by at least two students. As campaigning gets underway, **Elizabeth Haigh** runs through each role, and the candidates vying to take them



▲ Candidates for Welfare & Finance Officer Stella Swain, left, and Cici Carey-Stuart, right (STELLA SWAIN/CICI CAREY-STUART)

Women's Officer

Kate Litman and Finley Kidd are contesting the position of Women's Officer, with Kate Litman having served as Secretary for the CUSU Women's Campaign this year and Kidd having been Women's Officer at Newnham and the Disabled Student's Rep on Women's Campaign Committee.

Both candidates argue for the need to resist Prevent. Yet their manifestos differ on some key policy points. For example, Kidd aims to introduce a Working Class Rep to the WomCam Committee, and Litman has called for a five-year review of the Mind the Gap report into the gender attainment gap.

Litman said to *Varsity*: "the Women's Campaign has been a space where I have met people who shared their knowledge with me and shaped my feminism, and where I found comfort and solidarity, especially when returning from intermission."

"But I know not everyone feels like they can access WomCam, especially trans women and women of colour, and I want to work to make WomCam a more welcoming space for all."

Kidd said: "I have greatly benefitted from different feminist spaces in Cambridge and the urgently needed support, solidarity and consciousness-raising that they offer. I've also spent my entire degree living with and learning from women and non-binary people, and this engagement with their diverse lived experiences drives my desire to broaden and connect feminist work in Cambridge so that it serves and includes everyone."

Welfare & Rights

Meanwhile, Stella Swain and Cici Carey-Stuart have been nominated for CUSU/GU Welfare and Rights Officer.

Swain is the Open Portfolio Officer for the Women's Campaign, meaning that this year she has been working on an open campaign, specifically building solidarity in Cambridge organisation.

Carey-Stuart has this year been both Equalities Officer for Corpus Christi JCR and the CUSU LGBT+ Trans and Non-Binary Rep.

His manifesto states his desire to make free sanitary products available on a university level and better training for liberation officers in both JCRs

and MCRs and CUSU Liberation Campaigns.

Swain meanwhile aims to work to reduce housing and homelessness issues in Cambridge as well as improving services for survivors of sexual violence and ensuring staff are trained in line with anti-discrimination policies.

University Councillor

The contest for University Councillor will elect an independent student representative to University Council, its executive decision-making body, consisting of 25 members. This year the candidates for the role are Poppy Cockburn and Tamzin Byrne. The two candidates have different platforms and experiences: Cockburn is a first-year student at Robinson College, and Byrne is a postgraduate at Murray Edwards.

Byrne has been MCR President and charity trustee at Medwards this year. Both state in their manifestos their commitment to divestment and to achieving more affordable, equal rent.

Byrne also wants to interrogate the University's five-year Education Strategy: she claims rising targets for student

enrollments will threaten the quality of teaching and learning.

Cockburn has advocated for changes in disciplinary procedures concerning sexual assault. Cockburn has been endorsed by pro-divestment campaign group Cambridge Zero Carbon.

Current University Councillor Marcel Llaverro-Pasquina was similarly endorsed for the position when he ran last year.

The CUSU and GU presidents also sit on University Council.

Graduate Union President

The role of Graduate Union president will be the most contested this year, with three candidates running for the position: Alessandro Ceccarelli, Devarchan Banerjee and Jack Chadwick.

Banerjee may appear as a relative newcomer, as both Chadwick and Ceccarelli have experience on the GU, as Disabilities Officer and LGBTQ+ officer respectively. Banerjee, however, has cited his past leadership experience, such as his presidency of a youth social organization in India.

Banerjee's campaign priorities are accessibility, participation and inclusion and welfare, whilst Ceccarelli's manifesto highlights the areas of equality, research resources and environmental sustainability. Chadwick as GU president promises to work towards reducing course costs, internationalise access, contextualise admissions and fight for fair pay for grad staff.

Chadwick said to *Varsity* that "as the Graduate Union's first ever Disabilities Officer I've developed the skills to turn our concerns as graduates into winning campaigns, in areas like degree funding, access and academic support... My knowledge of how the university is run and experience of working within its structures means I'd be able to make a real impact as President from day one."

Ceccarelli said that he is running for GU President because he is "very passionate about student representation and activism, especially about minorities rights." He added that he has "a wide range of experience across many European and Asian Universities, often as officer of Student Unions."

Banerjee told *Varsity* that "my Campaign slogan is, 'A Humbler Cambridge that is willing to listen, and a Nimble Cambridge that is able to accommodate'. As a graduate student studying abroad for the first time, I have found Cambridge to be big, beautiful and brilliant with an endless stream of opportunities. I have also experienced it to be distant, unapproachable and often unaccountable."

Only GU members are eligible to vote in this race: GU members include students on graduate courses, as well as mature undergraduates and under-

graduates in their fourth year or higher of residence.

Disabled Students' Officer

For the first time since the creation of the role in 2016, the role of Disabled Students' Officer will be contested. Competing for the role are Jess O'Brien and Beth Walters. O'Brien has been Trinity Hall's Disabled Students' Officer, as well as both Access, and Socials Officer for the CUSU Disabled Students' Campaign.

Her manifesto seeks to create more equal ground between colleges by creating league tables of the levels of support available, and also encourage college JCRs to sign up to an 'accessibility pledge'.

Walters also has experience on her college JCR, as Disabilities Officer for Queens' College JCR and cites her personal experience her experience "with the many connections between intermission and disability and hope to examine this further." Her manifesto has three strands: identity, intersectionality and inclusivity.

Walters said to *Varsity*: "When I applied to come to Cambridge, Queens' was the only college that explicitly mentioned accessibility and disability in the prospectus. I would like to change this and make the Disabled Students' Campaign easier to identify with, more intersectional and more inclusive."

O'Brien said that she has been "heavily involved in campaigning within the University during my time here, particularly in support of the rights and needs of Disabled Students. She added that she would "love to use [her] considerable experience to change some of that, and to make genuine improvements in the lives, well-being, and experiences of disabled individuals at this institution."

Ethical Affairs Officers

The part-time roles of Ethical Affairs Officers are the only positions to be uncontested this year, with current Ethical Affairs Officers Jake Simms and Alice Gilderdale both seeking re-election to their roles – an improvement from last year, when no nominations for the roles were received, resulting in a by-election.

Gilderdale argues that over the past year, she has worked to collaborate with student campaigns and represent them on a university-wide platform. Both candidates cite environmental issues as a major concern, with both supporting divestment and disarmament.

Gilderdale also cites Period Poverty as a major cause she wishes to further support next year, while Simms highlights a need to support students in the Save Montreal Square campaign.

Meet the sabb candidates going into battle

● Vying for Education

Molly Killeen
Senior News Correspondent

Both of this year's candidates for CUSU Education Officer bring to the table extensive CVs, having assumed a variety of roles across the university in their three years at Cambridge.

Ali Hyde, a third year sociology student has spent the past year as both Vice-President of Downing's JCR and President of the CUSU LGBT+ campaign, after serving as the trans rep in his first year. Alongside these roles he has been an active member of Cambridge Universities Labour Club (CULC), having been Co-Chair, LGBT+ Officer and Campaigns and Constituency Liaison Officer on CULC. He will also be one of six delegates at this April's NUS conference.

Howard Chae, Hyde's opponent, has a similarly lengthy and impressive list of positions held. A third year historian at Magdalene, Chae has spent two years on the committee of the CUSU BME campaign, first as LGBT+ Officer, then as Campaigns Officer, and a year on CUSU's part-time executive committee as an Education Team Campaigns Officer. He also served as a Faculty of History rep. "I'm running for education officer", he says, "because I think I have the principles and experiences to make sure that the position of student representative can be turned into a channel for collective empowerment and action."

Both emphasize the importance of what these roles have taught them in explaining their decisions to run.

Chae's time on the BME campaign focused on "making sure that there were safe spaces available for queer and trans students of colour at this university", which culminated in the relaunching of FUSE, and on building a "cohesive relationship" between BME officers across colleges.

Hyde cites the value of the time he's invested in understanding the university's structures and working with an array of groups within Cambridge. He describes the education role as "the place where you can make a lot of impact", and points to the importance of the Education Officer's job of setting university-wide policy, saying "I think education is the thing that CUSU can affect change on most, that's why I want to do it."

Both Hyde and Chae put forward policy proposals which focus heavily on student welfare provision and spaces for student advocacy and activism.

Chae outlines a number of specific measures he would take as Education Officer, including creating a "comprehensive uni-wide policy on harassment", and seeking to "standardize sexual misconduct guidelines across faculties", broadening a conversation which has, thus far, focused on inter-college inequalities, to one which tackles the disparities between procedures across different faculties and departments.

In a similar way, he advocates action on the problem of what students perceive to be variations in the quality of teaching between colleges, especially with regard to the provision of support



▲ Candidates Ali Hyde, left, and Howard Chae, right (ROSIE BRADBURY)

for disabled students.

In his role on the BME campaign, Chae has been working to introduce "anti-bias training" for freshers and says that, as education officer, he would push for this to occur for all of the university's "student-facing staff." He mentions Prevent, slating its implementation and arguing that it has "created as silencing effect that disproportionately affects BME students and Muslim students and excludes them from the public life of the university."

The Cambridge work-life balance is another topic he raises. The mental health crisis, he argues, can't be solved through "ameliorative solutions", such as puppy therapy sessions, alone. Instead, he says, those looking to confront it must address its structural causes.

Hyde's manifesto is divided into three key areas of focus which he loosely describes as "student support", "education without barriers" and "promoting advocacy." The focus of the first is largely on stopping "the sink or swim approach that the university seems to have to freshers", he says, noting the need for greater provision of information for incoming students and the standardization of the support given by colleges to both undergraduates and postgraduates.

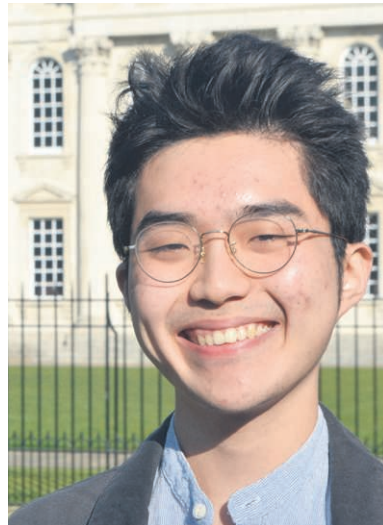
Central to all of this, he emphasises, is a concentration on the intersection of mental health and academics, where he would seek to take a "preventative rather than reactionary" approach.

Hyde also outlines aims to take the Period Poverty Campaign and the campaign for gender-neutral facilities university wide, to ensure their enactment in all faculties and colleges. He also outlines plans for the formulation of a "lecture accessibility policy" which would aim to remove barriers for disabled students, whether in the negotiation of certain buildings or in terms of timetabling considerations.

Hyde also supports addressing the "racialized aspects of Prevent" and "standing up against the marketization of higher education", areas in which he sees the representation of student voices as particularly important, given the fact that these issues "[hit] the marginalized the hardest and those who are most in need of access."

Finally, his "promoting advocacy" policy rests on the idea that, as education officer, he would support students engaged in advocacy work throughout Cambridge, for instance those involved in "queering or decolonising the curriculum in their faculties."

CUSU's new academic forum would



play a role here, and he says he would, as education officer, aim to make it in the mould of PresCon, which brings JCR presidents and the CUSU executive team together.

It is hard to fault the considerable experience or representative capacities of either candidate in this year's education race and it is perhaps this comparable grounding which leads them to confront similar issue areas with what are not always wholly conflicting starting points for solutions.

● The race for Access & Funding

Charlotte Lillywhite
Senior News Correspondent

Both of this year's candidates for CUSU Access & Funding Officer, Ashley Woodvine and Lily-Rose Sharry, had experience with the University's access initiatives before applying to Cambridge.

Ashley Woodvine, a third year philosophy student at Catz, was the first student in her state school to apply to Oxbridge in ten years. This made the already daunting process far more difficult, as she "didn't know how it worked" and "there wasn't a lot of support" to remedy this - she tells me she was "far more worried and far more stressed about the process" than she should have been. Taking part in access schemes, then, "made [her] feel like Cambridge was a place [she] could go".

Lily-Rose Sharry tells me similar. A third year HSPS student at Robinson, she attended the Sutton Trust Summer School, an access initiative she says had "such an amazing, profound impact on [her] life". Estranged from her parents and coming from a low-income, state-school background with care experience, she explains that she "didn't have much self-belief" before this - she went "from being very awkward about that aspect of [her] identity to going the other way, and doing as much as possible".

For both Woodvine and Sharry, then, becoming involved with access work at Cambridge, and wishing to continue this

within CUSU, felt like a natural step.

Woodvine, as Catz JCR Access Officer, has worked this year to "keep access issues in conversation", working on projects such as the CAMbassador scheme and the CUSU Shadowing Scheme. She was on the inaugural Class Act committee, and is a member of the core InsideUni team, compiling and editing information on students' interview experiences, as well as resources such as financial aid and summer schools. Woodvine has also worked at the Sutton Trust summer school, which she attended before applying to Cambridge.

Sharry has also been heavily involved with access at her college, as Access Officer for Robinson. As Care Leaver and Estranged Students Officer for Class Act, she conducted a survey for Cambridge students to gather information about the support that is offered at each college, which she used in discussions with the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education.

She also says she has "built up a good working relationship with the Widening Participation Office, having worked with the as a CAMbassador to deliver access programmes for young people in care. In 2018, Sharry was nominated for a Student Social Mobility Award for her work within Class Act.

Woodvine stresses that there needs to be greater collaboration between CUSU's access work and the Cambridge Admissions Office, beyond the Shadowing Scheme.

She also hopes to reintroduce Access Forums to encourage JCR officers to collaborate, work alongside the Class Act committee, and work on Widening Participation programmes with faculties which have low proportions of state comprehensive students.

Her focus on financial concerns stems from her experiences working at summer schools and open days, where many prospective students are "really worried about how much Cambridge is going to cost them" and so wants to make information on financial support more readily available to students. She also wants to improve availability of financial support: she hopes to work towards resolving the financial barriers to international access,

as well as working "to ensure that colleges adjust the bursaries and financial provisions for these students in line with any increases they make to rent".

She also hopes to work on application support by addressing the issue of teachers not knowing how to effectively support Cambridge applications, by running a conference to teach these skills.

Sharry's campaign focus on different areas to Woodvine's: "aspiration" before admission, "retention" after admission, and "preparation" for graduates, citing the help that her "own personal experiences" has contributed in her creation of these.

In terms of pre-admission access, she hopes to offer travel refunds for Open Days for those from low-income backgrounds, not just for the "practical" help this would provide, but the "symbolic" significance, serving as an "invitation to come here". She emphasised her wish to work with other liberation campaigns, such as the Disabled Students' Campaign, stressing that "widening participation involves disabled students as well and this is often forgotten".

For students already in Cambridge, Sharry hopes to devise an optional university-wide Academic Skills Programme. She plans to directly promote the CUSU Class Act buddy scheme to incoming freshers, and, like Woodvine, is keen to make access information more transparent, planning to ensure Funding Guides, which outline available bursaries and scholarships, exist at every college.

In terms of preparation for graduates, she recognised that, "traditionally", conversations surrounding access have focussed on "undergraduates pre-admission". She hopes to create an internal and inter-university Postgraduate Mentoring Scheme online to aid this.

Both candidates have put forward proposals which focus largely on issues of transparency, intercollegiate disparity, and addressing the nuances of the access debate. Their strong, personal commitments to their campaigns indicate their keen motivation, an enthusiasm which will be interesting to watch play out over the course of the coming week.



▲ Candidates Lily-Rose Sharry and Ashley Woodvine (ROSIE BRADBURY)

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News

Eddie's escalation BME students threatened with disciplinary action over peaceful protest

◀ Continued from the Front Page

In a subsequent email, the staff member told one of the students: "Accounts state that you were seen on CCTV climbing the stairs at the head of the group and that you were subsequently reported by a witness on the corridor as being at the front of the group that was shouting and banging on doors. Individuals who were working in the corridor found the behaviour to be threatening and intimidating."

"You may consider that you were exercising a legitimate right to protest, but members of College staff are entitled to a safe working environment and they have reported that their safety and wellbeing was compromised by the incident."

After students expressed concern for being singled out and asked to apologise, the college did not pursue further action.

In a statement from St Edmund's College, a spokesperson said: "During an otherwise peaceful protest, demonstrators gained unauthorised access to the main administration corridor of the College where staff had been led to believe they could work safely and unimpeded. Unfortunately, this led to a situation where grown men, not all of whom were members of the College, trapped mostly female staff members in their offices."

However, photographs from the protest show that the number of men and women present was roughly equal.

The spokesperson added: "This was followed by repeated banging and kicking on their doors and shouting in an intimidating and aggressive manner. These tactics caused considerable alarm and distress to our staff."

"The College believes in the rights of its members to hold peaceful protests. However, it will not tolerate aggressive and intimidating behaviour towards its staff, or any member of its community."

At least four St Edmund's students wrote to the college expressing their concern.

The email exchanges between the three students and senior member involved have been circulated in a 62-page dossier sent to all fellows at the college and seen by *Varsity*, with the names of

the individuals redacted.

The dossier circulated around the college also included a list of members of the college and academics who were involved in Dr Carl's appointment to the Toby Jackman Newton Trust research fellowship in response to Freedom of Information Act requests.

In December, over 280 academics signed an open letter condemning the appointment of Dr Carl for his past research on links between race, criminality and IQ. In the letter, they described his work as "ethically suspect and methodologically flawed", and called on the University of Cambridge to "immediately conduct an investigation". An investigation into Dr Carl's appointment is currently ongoing.

In the staff member's first email, all three students were invited to a meeting later that day, 1st February, to "outline [their] view of the situation and find a resolution", which none of the students decided to attend. Two of them offered to meet with staff members who had expressed distress.

On 5th February, the students were told that, following consultation with the college's dean of discipline, no further action would be taken if the college received written apologies, and "no repeat of the disruptive behaviour".

In response, two of the students pushed back.

The first student wrote: "I find it deeply offensive that I am being asked to apologise in writing for peacefully protesting against college's racist and degrading treatment of me. Do you have any measure of what it means to be told that your intelligence is determined by your skin colour? That my skin colour is related to a tendency to crime?"

They added: "I implore you to take a step back and reflect on what it means to ask a student of colour whose humanity and dignity is attacked to apologize for creating disquiet in corridors. How entitled it is of you to ask this of me?"

They said that they would continue to engage in peaceful protests over the appointment of Noah Carl, and that if they received any further emails they would take it "to be a significant breakdown of relationship" between them and the college, and would seek disaffiliation.

The second student replied saying that the appointment of Noah Carl and the college's response so far "undermines my humanity and dignity continuously."

They said they would not apologise. "I have thought about the nature of apology and that if it does not come from a place of sincerity and honesty, it is a farce [...] My personal morality [...] does not allow me to compromise my integrity and apologise for protesting racism and its institutional endorsement just because the college has misrepresented a peaceful protest as intimidating and singled me out for disciplinary action."

The third student apologised for any distress caused.

At this point, the staff member informed them that they would not pursue further action.

They told the first student on 8th Feb-

ruary they had noted the student's wish not to be contacted in future.

In an email to the second student dated 9th February, they said: "I am sorry that you feel singled out and I asked you to a meeting to try to reach an understanding," and added, "I appreciate that you feel unable to come and will therefore leave the matter there."



▲ Students marched through the college (JESS MA)

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In full: Panel members

The initial coordinating panel, which finalised the longlist and shortlist of candidates consisted of: Master (Chair), Senior Tutor, Ms Dobson, Dr Paul.

On the interview panel: Master (Chair), Senior Tutor, Dr Paul, Dr McCosker, Dr Jongkind, Dr Oosterhoff, Dr Kessler.

Once the appointment was confirmed, a Nomination Committee met on 26th April and decided to recommend Dr Carl for a fellowship. Those present included: Master (Chair), Senior Tutor, Dean, Dr Jongkind, Dr Gordon, Professor White. Members who were absent with apologies: Dr Brett, Professor Guthrie, Dr Harter, Professor Herrtage, Dr Morrison

“There is no intelligible basis on which to distinguish their actions from the rest of the group”

Features

Is that who you are? How beautiful

King's College chaplain, *Reverend Andrew Hammond* argues that the Church must rethink its teaching in order to become a welcoming space for everyone

Content note: this article contains discussion of homophobia and homophobic language

There have been some powerful pieces in Varsity recently on being an LGBT+ student here, and how that relates to Christianity. In one rather heartwarming article, the writer described receiving significant affirmation from other Christians. But the experience of LGBT+ students here is not always so encouraging.

I got an email the other day from a student saying – I'm gay, and I'm really interested in Christianity; but the Christians I've spoken to here say this is incompatible. It's certainly not the first time someone has said this to me. I fixed to meet him, in the hope of rescuing the situation. Our conversation continues. Many, many Christians – lay, ordained, young, old, ordinary, exalted – believe that the Church's teaching on sexuality, marriage and gender identity needs to change. I'm one of them. This is about getting to grips with what Christian love really means. It means that the quality of the love between two people is what matters, not the gender of the lovers. It means that such love can be expressed between two people with integrity, because it is faithful to how people are made to love.

I believe that the Church is dynamic. I don't accept the idea that 'church teaching' is some immovable, fixed body of doctrine. If it were, the Church would still support the death penalty (including drowning witches and burning at the stake), torture and slavery; and it wouldn't have embraced equality for women, rejected racism, stopped demonising suicide, accepted divorce and begun to question just war theory.

The resistance to changing the teaching in the more vocal, visible parts of the Church is often alarmingly aggressive – obsessive, too. Here in Cambridge you won't thankfully encounter the vitriol and spitting rage; I've yet to see a 'God Hates Fags' placard. But the determined resistance is still there. The best of this resistance does try to be reconciliatory and eirenic. Often, though, the full affirmation of LGBT+ people – ie affirming their relationships and their selfhood – is anathema. I've seen it spill over into visible recoil.

The conservative line is that this is about sound biblical teaching. For some reason the idea of re-receiving the few verses that are said to be about homo-

“I don't accept the idea that 'church teaching' is some immutable, fixed body of doctrine”



sexuality is not just rejected, but rejected vehemently. I find this, frankly, mystifying. After all, all those changes in the teaching which I mentioned earlier happened because of new understandings of what the Bible means.

When it comes to detailed analysis, all the energy is to be found now in a sequence of studies by LGBT+ affirming evangelical scholars, mostly American. These are game-changers, and have contributed to the recent brave moves made by leading evangelicals in this country, such as the Bishop of Liverpool. And there are other, very different traditions of reading and receiving the Bible: centuries-old, rich, deep traditions. These are

not always pithy, though, which means they attract less attention.

I just used the phrase 'the few verses that are said to be about homosexuality'. I believe, as many others do, that these texts are not 'about homosexuality' at all. They're about things like pederasty, prostitution, rape and adultery. They are texts that have nothing to say about relationships characterized by love, fidelity, honesty, and kindness. What is more, these few verses were articulated in a culture of total male supremacy, wherein being penetrated was understood as degrading and feminine, and for a man was strictly taboo. I think that the visceral resistance to

▲ Rev Hammond performed a duet with drag queen Courtney Act at the King's Affair in June (ANJALENE WHITTIER)

LGBT+ acceptance within the Church has more to do with social taboos than biblical interpretation. Why else would it be so angry?

If in doubt, go back to Jesus. When Jesus says you can judge prophets by their fruits (Matthew 7), what are the fruits we see? Anxiety, depression, self-harm, even suicide? Or love, generosity, loyalty, empathy and life-affirming joy? I think I know which prophets are on to something.

You'll find examples of that something in churches, chapels and individual Christians all over Cambridge: all ready to say, 'Is that how you love? Is that who you are? How beautiful'.

What's therapy like?



During eating disorder awareness week, **Cordelia Sigurdsson** reflects on the life-saving potential of communication

Content note: this article contains detailed discussion of eating disorders and eating disorder recovery

For me, therapy was a deeply odd experience, sometimes painful and often hard. But it was undeniably life-saving, and, looking back, I will always be grateful for what my therapists did for me. I hope to reassure anyone apprehensive about entering an eating disorder clinic that talking about your eating disorder is the best thing you can do.

For me there were three stages of therapy. First: the clinically strict and unemotional stage. Second: a stage of mindfulness, awareness and education. Third: the stage of talking, working through emotions, and preparing for the future.

In my case, the first stage was everything you don't expect therapy to be. It consisted of sitting in a large room with one of my parents next to me, and two psychologists and an eating disorder nurse sat opposite. I was weighed and the number on the scale was recorded so it was easy to track my progress, or

“It uncovered a weakness that I was terrified to admit”

lack of progress, on a graph.

The numbers were scrutinized and discussed. It was in this stage that my parents were given a meal plan and I was banned from doing any exercise. There is no medicine for anorexia, only a clinical attitude towards eating and food.

Most weeks I was scared to go to the clinic, or at least apprehensive. Were they going to tell me off? What were they going to say? Looking back I can see that this is the way it needed to be. I was only ever scared to go because my anorexia was. I hated the clinic for a brief time, but only because my anorexia did. The nurses there knew this better than I did.

I remember them telling me everything I wasn't allowed to do, explaining the dangerous path I was heading down. Then the mood in the room changed. You could have cut the tension with a knife. One of the women said, “there it is, I can feel anorexia in the room.” Strange as it sounds, she was absolutely right.

About the time I turned 18, as I slowly but surely put on weight, the therapy changed slightly. I still had a meal plan, but as long as I was eating, it wasn't as strict. My parents no longer had to come with me to the therapy sessions, which were now one-on-one with a nice smiley man. I was still weighed every week and we still talked about what I ate, but I was in more of a position to talk about *why* I was doing this – what anorexia's motivation was. If my weight dropped slightly or I didn't eat lunch that day, we would talk about it. We worked on

mindfulness: sitting, thinking, listening to music, focusing on breathing – with the hope that I could become more in control of my mind and life again.

We talked about the consequences of what I was doing a lot. The therapy still had an element of strictness to it; everything felt like it had serious consequences. But the therapist's statements no longer finished in a scolding, angry tone, but rather with, “*but why?*” He forced me to think. He helped me learn how to say, “well done” to myself, to slow down and be satisfied with what I had achieved in my life.

As I reached the end of Year 13, therapy changed again. I began to see a lovely, motherly type woman. The strictness was faded out. I was still weighed, but there were no eating plans. We talked a lot about the future. We discussed how I was going to cope with my A-level exams, going inter-railing for a month, and going to university.

I wrote down a list of foods that I (or anorexia) would avoid like the plague. My therapist and I would talk about why this might be, with the goal of, eventually, without too much pressure, trying the foods again and striking them off the list. Then to try them again, and again. Each time I ate something on my list was a kick in the teeth to my anorexia. Each time proved to me that I could do it – I could eat like everyone else!

We would talk about how I was going to cope with living alone. I honestly had no idea how I was going to fare at Cambridge, but I decided not

▲ Illustration by Kate Towsey for Varsity

to continue therapy here. I wanted to leave it behind. I was determined that anorexia wasn't going to ruin this opportunity for me. But I knew what to do if it did.

I think the most important part of therapy is that they force you to talk about it. Whether it be an eating disorder, another mental illness or a past trauma, therapy forces it out of you – out of that space you have trapped it in.

I have explained the ins and outs of my eating disorder more times this term than I ever have in my life. I finally feel like I can talk about it, really talk about it, in a way that makes me feel my mind is now free from the control of the monster of anorexia.

So, if you are to take anything from this, I hope it is that these psychological demons are best fought with external support. A person who is suffering needs someone else. I needed someone to tell me food that wouldn't kill me, and that one day I would be able to live without anorexia – if I fought it for long enough.

Most people ignore eating disorders, or dismiss them as a phase, or just *don't like* to say something – but why? Talking might just save someone's life. To me, anorexia wasn't just something that happened to me. It uncovered a weakness in me that I was terrified to admit, and it represents a time when I was not perfect. Yet, talking about these difficult things is the only way we might help someone, and it's okay if that someone is yourself.

“I have explained the ins and outs of my eating disorder more times this term than I ever have in my life”

Features

The perks & perils of twin rivalry

Jess Molyneux draws parallels between academic rivalry at Cambridge and lifelong competition with her identical twin

Cover your ears, Blues: for me, competition isn't all about sport. If you'd ever been a spectator at my secondary school rounders matches, you wouldn't think I was the competitive type. Instead of squealing in frustration at fellow team mates, I was pretty much a spectator myself. In my case, that pushy spirit which team games seem to bring out in some people was channelled elsewhere. There's a fine line between sharing spaces and battling for territory, and being a twin really tunes you in to the delicacy of that border. Competition isn't something fired up by a league table or tournament, it isn't inspired by team pride or a one-off



panic sets in and the search for a new opponent kicks off.

This is quite a strenuous task to add to all the other actual necessities of Michaelmas term, since it involved seeking, finding, and destroying a single comparable soul. It means sussing people, comparing their habits and achievements to yours, instinctively, to a less than healthy extent. It means getting stressed when from the multitude of options on the reading list, or stalls at the freshers' fair, someone picks or does 'better', and you have to square that with your own achievements, because that's just how your brain has been wired for nineteen years. It means, in short, trying to find your twin in Cambridge.

All of us will feel that pressure of comparison and evaluation in relation to someone who represents the pinnacle of achievement. Comparison culture is certainly not exclusive to twins. But that figure is, of course, necessarily a phantom. Not only is it impossible to find someone who is directly comparable, who is always aiming for the same goals as you without fluctuation, there just isn't a metric of comparison which you can use. Do you 'win' if you finish the text first and hand in the essay impressively early, or is it 'better' to have been reading right up to the deadline? Have you done the 'best thing' if you went to the lecture, or to the careers workshop? Or, even, if you took the afternoon off and gave yourself some well-deserved and well-needed rest?

For everyone, a bit of healthy competition is what got us here – most of us couldn't help but be aware of application statistics pitching us against our peers. But it shouldn't be, and it can't be, what sustains us while we're here. I'm not sure exactly at what point last term it fully sank in that life in Cambridge doesn't have to be a competition, or at least that there doesn't have to be just one winner. Maybe I had been missing my sister more than I realised, and seeking competition was a weird, go-to way of emulating our relationship. But as soon as I realised that there are a number of ways of finding a surrogate twin here in Cambridge, course friends you can have excited chatter with, college spouses you can confide in, chill with, cry to, it didn't seem as much like a tournament or a race or a league table. We might not be at that sprint-finish yet, but we're all in it together.

▲▼ **Being a twin provides a constant sense of friendly competition** (JESS MOLYNEUX)

“It fully sank in that life in Cambridge doesn't have to be a competition”



chance to be the best – it's a way of life. Home isn't a battlefield, nor every school day a 100m sprint, but it's difficult to get across just how intensely competition, weighted comparison, mutual spurring, shapes the way you think as a twin, how pervasively it seeps into everyday life.

To a large extent, when you know no different, it barely poses a problem, and, at least for me and my sister, it becomes a positive force: competition got us both to where we are now. When the only method within your control to make sure you're the 'better twin' (because, trust me, people ask for that ranking surprisingly and unoriginally often) is to try as hard as you can, you're always going to do your best. And just to chill out what sounds like a pretty intense picture of twin life, the coolest thing about competition with my twin is its paradoxical support in practice. Who better to be sprint-finisher with than the best friend who you trained alongside, who gets and mirrors your pace and your rhythm, who wants to finish *joint* first with you?

Things get a little more complicated between Oxford, where my identical twin sister studies, and Cambridge. Not only is competition compounded by a healthy bit of institutional rivalry, but you're now playing in different leagues. Let's say we're playing different sports: different universities, different courses, different cities, different career paths. Either way, comparison, and so competition, is pretty much off the table.

Liberating? Not quite. Unfortunately, the natural response to such a disorientation, being forced to recalibrate and modify my habits in reaction to losing something so foundational to my way of thinking, working, and evaluating myself, is a degree above bewilderment and a degree below paranoia. Instead of taking a step back and developing new methods for target-setting and mind-sets for work, exercise, extra-curriculars,

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‘Beauty is pain’: questioning my relationship with body hair

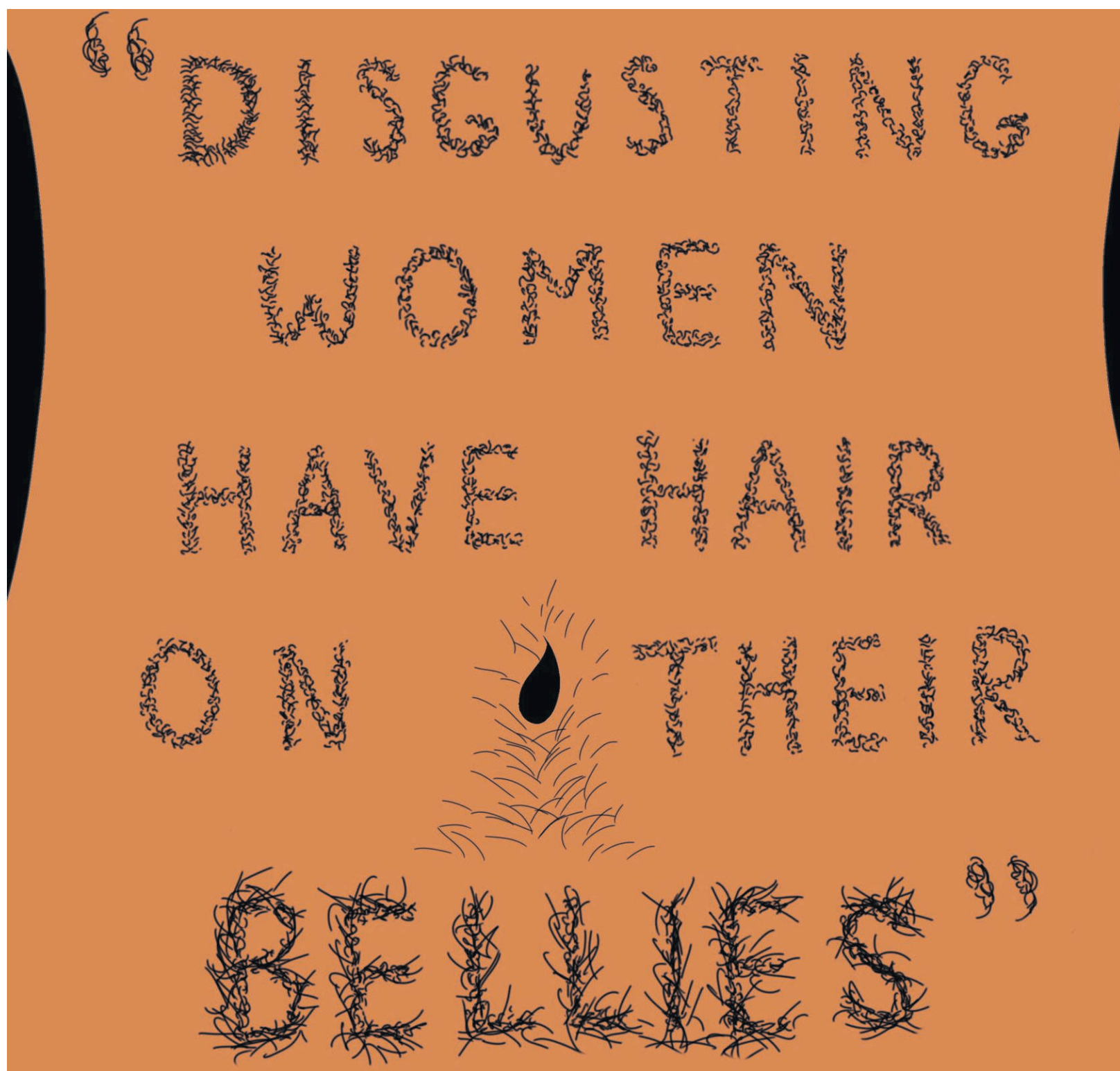
Khadija Tahir explores how western beauty standards shaped her insecurities around body hair

I began to remove my body hair at the age of 11. My first waxing appointment was painful but the lady ripping off the thick, black hair from my legs and arms kept repeating “beauty is pain, sweetie”. This was exactly what I began to tell myself when I got my upper-lip threaded at the age of 12, my eyebrows done at 15, and laser hair removal at 17. Beauty, through all of this, became so closely associated to pain for me, but a pain that I was expected to endure. Of course this expectation was one society had held for me, like it still does for all women, but more dangerously, I personally held this expectation for myself.

The hair removal adverts, depicting women shaving already smooth legs along and glossy, pore-less bodies, disseminated across TV the internet were hugely detrimental for how I viewed my own body. Even worse, I never saw anyone from my ethnic background on any of these platforms, and no one appeared to be struggling with the issues I had. Recently, even the seemingly progressive act of celebrities embracing body hair by growing it out for months to obtain a fainter layer of blonde or light brown hair on their legs and arms only reinforced the abnormality of my own body. When you’re taught to believe that normal is synonymous with “western”, anything that isn’t seen explicitly on fashion models and Hollywood movie actresses is considered strange. In this view, existing naturally as a South Asian girl was simply not considered normal.

Previously, I never spoke of my insecurity, especially in my years of schooling in England, because that would mean admitting that I had hair to begin with. By changing in the toilets rather than the girls’ changing rooms and never tying my hair up, I made an active effort to hide any trace of it. That is why spontaneously wearing shorts, skirts and crop tops was a luxury I didn’t have the privilege of experiencing, and by missing out on these little things, the idea that I wasn’t normal set firmly in my head. I was one woman of colour, who believed insecurity around body hair was a problem that I alone was facing. When friends remarked how “disgusting women have hair on their stomach”, I would laugh and agree, because not doing so would classify me as that “disgusting woman”. I already believed I was one, but I kept this self-deprecation to myself.

After a decade of regularly waxing, epilating, shaving and threading my entire body in the comfort of my own home, with professionals to help, coming to Cambridge was a genuine source of anxiety. Most feared not fitting in, or



struggling with work, but I was worried about how I would maintain my hair removal routine on a student budget with minimal time. Despite my efforts, and some progress in accepting that a lack of South Asian representation in western media and social media did not mean that my body hair was abnormal, I still struggle to embrace it. With time and an incredible group of friends, who enabled me to be open about my insecurities and shared their own, I realised that my thick, black body hair was a source of anxiety for not just me, but most, if not all, South Asian women.

The open, relatively uncensored environment of Cambridge allowed me to finally start a dialogue with other people who felt equally anxious about not fitting into western beauty ideals.

It dawned on me that multiple generations of women have somehow failed to allow themselves believe that the hair they grow on various parts of the body is normal. One of these women is me. I still don’t have enough confidence to embrace it, and continue with long, painful hair removal procedures in my room on a regular basis. I still flinch when someone touches my arm if it’s not smooth and prefer not to wear shorts and skirts because of the multiple ingrown hairs and razor cuts that still mark my skin. But I don’t want to dismiss the progress I have made. I accept that I have hair, that I do remove it and that it does bother me.

That lady telling me that “beauty is pain” and all the women who echoed her are wrong. She should have said that “western beauty standards are painful”,

▲ Illustration by Lisha Zhong for Varsity

which they are. Having to fit into such moulds and standards is expensive, physically uncomfortable and futile. And as a Pakistani woman, whatever I do, I will never fit into them. My body hair isn’t western, it isn’t blonde or light, but thick, dark, and everywhere.

The slow journey of coming to believe that this is also normal is underway. It may take years, and I may never reach a place where I’m comfortable with it. But after many years of believing that hair is a sign of ugliness, I can finally now acknowledge that one can be beautiful with body hair.

Now it is about trying to make that ‘one’, me, and to see myself with a kind vision, which is inclusive of my South Asian ethnicity and all the strange, unique beauties that come with it.

Opinion



Veganism can be wonderful, but don't ignore the potential dangers of restrictive eating

We must not forget the dangers extreme diet changes can pose

Chloe Marschner

Content note: this article contains detailed discussion of eating disorders & restrictive eating

Arguably, there has never been a better time to be vegan. Already in 2019, the so-called 'Veganuary effect' has had enormous ripples, from a hearty Gregg's offering, to the introduction of a vegan option at some of Cambridge's most elaborate formal dinners. This trend is indicative of a culture increasingly adopting healthier eating habits. Veganism is more actively encouraged and more accessible than even two years ago.

Yet this attitude often overlooks the danger that restrictive eating poses for some people. Veganism is a healthy lifestyle choice – if done in the right way and for positive reasons – so, naturally, this article will not represent the experience of many people's dietary choices. However, in the context of eating disorder recovery, adopting a vegan diet can fall neatly into the grey area between healthy and unhealthy relationships with food. This is, of course, not true for everyone, but we must recognise that veganism can, for some, represent a dan-

gerous form of restrictive eating.

Veganism can provide a convenient and socially acceptable way of furthering food-obsessive behaviours. In a culture increasingly concerned with health, one only has to half-heartedly scroll through Instagram to see a multitude of health and wellness bloggers proclaiming the virtues of veganism. With the seemingly exponential growth of veganism in the last year, and the prolific Veganuary campaign, adopting a new dietary pattern can be fairly unassuming. Food can be refused with the simple 'v' word, disguising an intense fear of eating the 'wrong' foods with environmental and ethical concerns, as well as general health concerns, rather than a complex, convoluted run of excuses. Indeed, there are valid reasons for adopting this diet, but, in certain cases, veganism is allowed to become a defence mechanism. Any indication of restrictive behaviour can appear to simply be part of a broader culture of healthy eating, and this may be normalising unhealthy relationships with food. In our increasingly health-orientated culture, veganism is often

regarded as an efficient means to lose weight; something which is featured heavily in the media. Dairy and eggs are condemned not only for their unethical means of production, but also for their fat and cholesterol content, along with a cocktail of hormones and associated chemicals added during processing. All the same, many nutritionists have ultimately come to the consensus that dairy and eggs are good for our health, if eaten in moderation, because of the proteins, vitamins and nutrients they contain. The discussion and provision of alternatives, supplying the nutrients missing from a vegan diet, provide a way for those suffering from restrictive eating disorders to avoid certain food groups that they may have demonised. The relationship between health culture and eating disorders continues: veganism can require checking the labels of anything found in the supermarket aisles, an action similar to the calorie-checking behaviour often observed as a symptom of eating disorders.

Some people have spoken about how veganism helped their changing rela-

tionship with food when taken on as part of recovery from an eating disorder: justifying food choices as beneficial to both the planet and the self can offer enough encouragement to keep working through recovery. We should celebrate this, while remembering that this is by no means the case for everyone.

We must remain aware that diets which involve majorly restricting what you can eat pose a danger for certain people, and it is becoming harder to discern when this is the case in a culture increasingly oriented towards healthy habits and diet trends. We mustn't forget that someone still suffering or recovering from an eating disorder can be physically healthier in terms of their weight and meeting their nutritional needs, but can still be ruminating on food in an unhealthy way. Ultimately, there are many good reasons to be vegan, but we must be conscious of the cultural dynamics operating within this dietary shift, and we should not advocate such a radical change to eating habits without considering the potential dangers this may pose.

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Food can be refused with the simple 'v' word, disguising an intense fear of eating the 'wrong' food
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Why not do all that you can to help people feel comfortable?

Content notes are the best and most considerate way to enable individuals to make informed choices

Content note: this article contains discussions of sexual assault, ableism and passing mentions of suicide

A content note (sometimes called a trigger warning) is a short warning that flags potentially distressing content. There is a one at the start of this article, and some faculties, such as English and MML, are currently having discussions about if and how to distribute similar warnings for course material such as lectures.

This week, MML students received an email from the faculty reps explaining that they were trying to “gauge student opinion on introducing content notes for lectures, following the English Faculty’s guide for best practice.” I firmly believe that students need these content notes to be introduced. Students deserve to be warned ahead of time of discussions they might find difficult so that they can make the appropriate concessions to keep themselves safe from any emotional distress.

Some people (including the Dean at the University of Chicago in 2016), argue that giving content notes is wrapping people up in cotton wool and failing to prepare them for the “real world”. These people claim that adults should be exposed to content which strengthens their resolve, and argue that it’s not helpful for us to simply avoid difficult situations. However, in the real world, I am very rarely in situations where I have to listen to discussions that force me to think in depth about my trauma, but am unable to leave.

In my day to day life, I am able to subtly slip out of difficult conversations. This is different in a lecture hall or class, where there is often pressure to stay put, which may be exacerbated by other mental health problems or social conventions. I would ask those who are against content notes this: if there is one simple thing you can do in order to make someone’s life a little less distressing, why not do it?

My own assault happened six years ago now. I consider this wound to be more healed than it is raw, but I know it will never be completely fixed and I will never be the same person that I was before it happened. In most contexts, I can be part of conversations about assault and sexual violence, like writing this article, for example, but in others, it’s not okay. I once was in the middle of a lecture hall, in the middle of a row, part-way through the hour, when the lecturer paused briefly to warn her audience: “Oh, content note, I’m going to be talking about some really violent sex.” This was quite simply not sufficient warning. Giving content notes isn’t going to stop people going to lectures. What is going to do is stop people being in the situation I was: trapped by people’s bodies, exposed, listening to a description of sexual violence for which I needed more than a just few seconds to prepare myself.

In my experience, people know how to manage their own triggers, and they know what works for them.

When you give someone a content

“Content notes are considerate for everyone, not just those of us with a diagnosis”

note, you are giving them a tool with which they can keep themselves safe. They can sit near an exit, let their friends know what’s going on in advance, or bring things to ground themselves, such as a hot drink, headphones, or something comforting to fiddle with (remember fidget spinners? Those are actually incredibly helpful for some people!). In some cases, they can choose not to go to the lecture because their mental health doesn’t allow them to, much the same as people might do if they’re feeling physically ill.

But warnings are also necessary for people who have not experienced the distressing things being discussed. A person doesn’t need to have direct experience of a trauma for it to be upsetting. Some conversations just take bracing for. Even if I hadn’t been through assault myself, discussions about sexual violence, which reminds me how weak my body is, would be, at best, uncomfortable and at worst incredibly triggering. Discussions about mental health and suicide certainly require some mental preparation, no matter whether you have directly experienced these issues. Content notes are considerate for *everyone*, not just those of us with some kind of diagnosis or who have lived experience of trauma.

Content notes normalise talking about things which are difficult for us and show that it is acceptable to take steps to mitigate this. Normalisation is, in my opinion, one of the most valuable things we can do to promote mental health. We need to normalise content notes, yes, but this is just the first step.

We also need to normalise other forms of reasonable adjustments. To give an example, lectures must be recorded as the standard rather than the exception in humanities subjects. In the context I’ve been describing, recorded lectures would allow those who feel unable not to attend certain sessions in favour of learning the content in their own time and space, with the freedom to skip over any disturbing or emotionally-difficult segments. You can’t fast forward real life. However, recorded lectures also make allowances for anyone who has a mental or physical disability that means they can’t make it into the faculty, such as a chronic fatigue flare up or a depressive episode.

Giving content notes is just one step towards creating a culture of consideration. This is not a snowflake culture, but one where people’s experiences and abilities are taken into account at every opportunity, not just when they are asked to, as is currently my experience with content notes. I believe that giving content notes promotes a society that is less fundamentally ableist - meaning it is not completely built on the assumption that the only people living within it will be able bodied and mentally healthy.

And it’s this kind of policy change that can lead to a change of attitude in society at large. The more aware we all are of a need for content notes, the more likely we are to be considerate outside of lectures and make this world, our world, a better place.

► Conversations are being had about the use of content notes
(GERMAN POO-CAAMANO)



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Opinion

The Independent Group doesn't stand for new politics, but the remains of a dying political class

Despite all the clamour around its inception, the Independent Group is a vague and impotent body

Tom Cleere

The 29th of March is rapidly approaching, and it seems increasingly likely that the UK will be dumped unceremoniously out of the European Union. With an attitude highly reminiscent of an arts student the night before a deadline, Theresa May appears to be procrastinating, praying for MPs to come to their senses and approve her deal. Hard Brexiteers in her party have had their heads in the sand as they pilot the country off a cliff-edge, refusing to listen to advice.

The opposition parties don't appear to be much better. Labour still seem confused and in disarray over the direction the party should take, while the Lib Dems are a total irrelevance, polling at single digits. For Remainers, the situation could not be more dire.

The solution? Putting themselves forward are the Independent Group, a coalition of high-profile defectors mostly from Labour. Opposing anti-semitism in Labour, promising a second referendum, and hoping to offer a "new kind of politics" to fight extremism, the group seems to be a centrist's dream. Clearly, they've struck a nerve. They poll surprisingly well, recently reaching 18% and leapfrogging the Lib Dems. Are they the great hope that will save Britain from Brexit?

To put it simply: no. It's clear that the "group" has a plethora of issues. They may criticise Labour for failing to tackle anti-semitism effectively, but their failure to discipline Angela Smith after her "funny tinge" comment is deeply hypocritical. There also seems to be dispute about the policies of previous governments. While Anna Soubry described the Cameron and Osborne cuts as doing a "marvellous job", Heidi Allen stated that her former party was blind to suffering, and the Labour MPs consistently voted against austerity measures. How does one square these contradictory viewpoints?

In fact, what exactly does the Independent Group even stand for? They claim to "pursue policies that are evidence-based, not led by ideology". Do they seriously believe that other political organisations don't use evidence? A set of beliefs and values will always be necessary to assess information and formulate a political platform, no matter how anti-ideological they claim to be, because the evidence itself does not formulate policies. What, then, are they basing their platform on? Eleven beliefs have been listed on their website, but all them are vague and clearly designed to appeal to as wide a range of people as possible. For example, they believe in creating "more

prosperous communities" by creating "a society which fosters individual freedom and supports all families". This is hardly controversial.

Die-hard Labour and Tory voters would claim that they want the same thing. They also seek to reduce poverty and inequality through opportunity. Again, that is something most people would agree with. How do they plan to implement these beliefs? Where are these evidence-based policies? With a lack of any sort of detail in the form of a manifesto, the Independent Group can claim to represent everyone without representing anyone.

The fact of the matter is that the Independent Group, while claiming to offer a new alternative, is just a vehicle of establishment politicians to reappear on the political scene. Most of the defectors had played important roles in their former parties, some of them even participating in government or as shadow secretaries, and they've gradually been sidelined as their parties moved on without them. But it's clear that they've learnt nothing from the Brexit referendum. The "evidence" that they cherish clearly shows a correlation between the most economically deprived areas in the country and support for Brexit. Those who voted to leave were those who were left behind

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The Independent Group is just a vehicle for establishment politicians to reappear on the political scene
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in the post-Thatcher economic boom. For them, the benefits of continued EU membership were hard to see, and so they chose to rebel against the political elites. These are the same elites who now claim to represent the interests of the country. The Independent Group claims to want to fix Britain's broken political system while ignoring the fact they were themselves complicit in breaking it in the first place.

The members of the Independent Group chose to leave parties that supported them. Parties that funded their campaigns, provided them a nationwide platform and gave them access to grassroots supporters across the country. Instead, they chose to neuter themselves politically, cutting themselves off from the workings of the powers that be. And look where that led them. With Labour's announcement of support for a second referendum, the reasons to support these MPs dwindle by the minute.

If they're so adamant that they represent the wishes of their constituents, then they should prove it by standing in a by-election. But of course they won't.

The Independent Group is hypocritical, it stands for nothing, and it represents a dying political class. Britain and the Remain movement is better off without them.

A hard border would be extremely harmful to Northern Ireland's identity

A hard border must be avoided to protect the fragile harmony that exists between Irish and Britishness essential to Northern Irish identity

Peter McLaughlin

The Irish border has recently loomed large as perhaps the most difficult challenge in negotiating Brexit. All sorts of proposals have been offered to 'fix' the problem of the border, from May's backstop, to 'technological solutions', and even a suggestion that the Republic of Ireland rejoin the UK. All sides – the government, the EU, Tory backbenchers, Labour – have emphasised their opposition to a hard border, and even if (in some cases) one can question their sincerity, this is an impressive show of unanimity. But it has not translated to much in the way of action, as the UK seemingly sleepwalks towards a no-deal Brexit.

Well-known are the straightforward economic and political costs of a hard border: closing-off of important markets, difficulties for those who cross the border for work, the threat of terrorism. But while these consequences would be difficult and potentially dangerous, a hard border's effects on the people of Northern Ireland's conception of their own national identity would be just as significant.

In symbolic terms, perhaps the most important part of the Good Friday Agreement, which brought peace to Northern Ireland, was its explicit commitment to the right of the people of Northern Ireland to "identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both".

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Being Irish in Northern Ireland is much easier today than it was 20 years ago
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Northern Ireland, from the outset, was a sectarian entity: James Craig, the province's first head of government, famously 'boasted' that Northern Ireland was "a Protestant parliament and a Protestant state". Irish Catholics were routinely denied civil rights and seen as second-class citizens, and the 30-year Troubles were in many ways the result of the sectarian tension that arose bubbling over. The declaration that the people of the province had the right to be Irish was a formal declaration heralding the end of the period.

Nonetheless, formal declarations are empty without substantive action to back them up; an invisible border was the change that allowed Irishness to exist harmoniously in Northern Ireland. To feel Irish in Northern Ireland, especially during the Troubles, could often mean feeling occupied, walled off from your own nation. But today, the open border means that the island is continuous: if you're not aware of where the border is, the only indication that you've crossed into a different country is that the speed limit is now in kilometres. Being Irish in Northern Ireland is much easier today than it was 20 years ago.

A hard border would threaten this. Any indication of the border immediately demarcates division on the island, whether that be through security or customs checks. The border between

Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK (the Irish sea) is natural, but the border between Northern Ireland and the South can only be artificial. It exists because of centuries of colonial rule and British-created division, that means that Irishness often includes an opposition to this colonialism, a pride in resistance: the most celebrated moments in Irish history are the rebellions of 1798 and 1916, and the country's anthem is *Amhrán na bhFiann* – the Soldier's Song.

Can such pride be consistent with living contentedly under a British union? For many, this comes down to a practical question. If Northern Ireland can govern its own affairs, if its people are free to identify as Irish, and if the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic is porous, then the union creates no pressure to give up one's independence. But when these things are compromised, being happy with Northern Ireland's place in the UK becomes trickier for those whose Irishness is important to them. A hard border would draw a line between Irish people in Northern Ireland and their own country, and put Irishness at odds with living under the union, creating frustration and resentment.

If a hard border would make being Irish more difficult, it would have an even more disastrous effect on those whose identities do not fit within the narrow confines of either 'Irishness'

or 'Britishness'. The Good Friday Agreement's promise of respect was towards those who identified as "Irish or British, or both". Those last two words, "or both", suggest a new way forward for Northern Ireland: an identity that moves past longstanding division and that believes that Irishness and Britishness need not be opposed. To believe that one can be both is to reject the sectarianism that has been ever-present in the history of the province, and to accept Northern Ireland's complex dual inheritance on its own terms. Being Northern Irish – to be not primarily British or Irish, but to be from *this province* and proud of it – is powerful and possible.

But the compatibility of Irishness and Britishness would be destabilised by a hard border. The ease with which it is possible to reconcile the two when considering one's personal identity is dependent on whether they are reconcilable in practical terms. With a hard border, harmony between the two would no longer be possible. The line between Britain and Ireland would become clearly marked and practically significant, with infrastructural changes literally enforcing the division.

Ultimately, a hard border threatens the progress that Northern Ireland has made. As 29 March looms, we must all redouble our efforts to ensure that it is avoided.

vulture

Illustration by Kate Towsey



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What is art? *Fountain* and the beauty in the mundane

Looking at Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain*, Emma Morgan discusses what "art" actually means

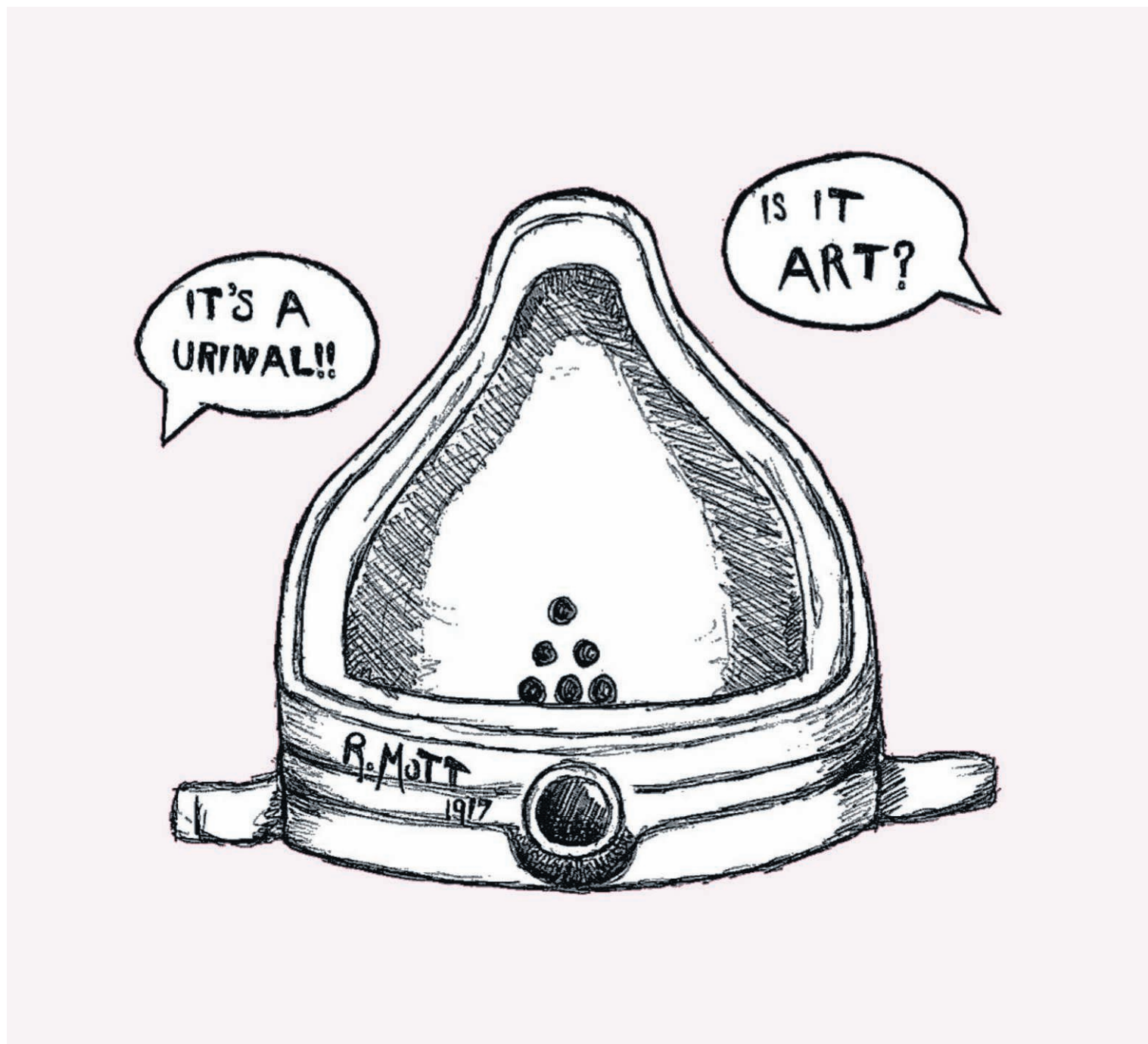
In 1917, the artist Marcel Duchamp submitted a piece called *Fountain* to the Parisian Salon des Indépendants for exhibition. The proposed artwork consisted simply of an upturned urinal, with the mysterious words 'R. Mutt 1917' scribbled on its side. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Salon's board of directors judged it to be a display not of artistry, but of *indecenty*, and it was refused entry to the exhibition. How could Duchamp really claim that this "ready made" object was his own work, when he had had no hand in producing it? And did he really expect everyone else to believe that this run-of-the-mill urinal was art, just because he said it was?

The Salon's decision to deny *Fountain* gallery space caused Duchamp to resign from the board in protest, an action which draped the whole exhibition in controversy, and imbued the piece itself with a symbolic political significance. That urinal became a stand against censorship in art, a campaign for inclusivity, demanding that galleries open their doors to a more challenging and varied range of pieces.

The unspectacular item which Duchamp seemed to have selected and presented so unthinkingly became a hugely thought-provoking and enduring work in the history of art. And maybe that was his goal all along; maybe he wanted to show that even the most commonplace of objects could somehow prove to be just as memorable and significant as the radiance of a Turner sunset or the loving detail of Rembrandt's portraits. For while these works are known for their striking beauty, a beauty which seems to sew the contours of real life into the canvas, *Fountain* stands out for its capacity to inspire debate.

It may have taken a tiny fraction of the time and precision invested into paintings such as Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* (1486), but somehow, it appears to be a more challenging work, as its unapologetic plainness forces the viewer to work with the artist to decipher its meaning.

While practitioners of fine art present us with the finished products of their craftsmanship, conceptual artists such as Duchamp draw us into dialogue with their work, encouraging us to complete its basic forms with our own ideas. Both approaches clearly have their own creative value then, but they also employ widely differing techniques, styles and effects, which create a seemingly unbridgeable gulf between them. And it's with this difficulty that the recurring debate begins: which one of them is the real deal? What is



▲It doesn't matter whether it is an arrestingly beautiful portrait, or simply a plain black canvas: art is only art if it reaches out from itself to touch you (LOIS WRIGHT)

art, exactly?

One dictionary definition states that 'art' consists of "creating paintings, sculptures, and other pictures or objects for people to look at and admire or think deeply about". This insistence on an either/or between aesthetic admiration and intellectual reflection suggests that even the dictionary is confused about what art really is.

Surely it's lazy to label the two ends of the creative spectrum with the same word? There must be some elusive quality lying within them, which somehow draws them together despite the gulf of

“Even ostensibly mundane items or images can move, influence and inspire us”

their difference. And perhaps that 'thing' could be described as human contact.

It doesn't matter whether it is an arrestingly beautiful portrait, or simply a plain black canvas: art is only art if it reaches out from itself to touch you. Its loveliness, or its sadness, or its thought-provoking starkness must carve out a little space for itself in your mind and stay there, ready to be seen and examined again and again. If we see that as the central criterion of an artwork, then its definition becomes at once universal and highly personal, a question of emotional at-

“If it makes you smile slightly, or if your mind keeps tripping back to its shapes and signs, then it's art”

tachments which allows anyone and everyone to judge creative pieces for themselves.

If we look at it in that way, the whole world can become an art gallery. A shelf filled with carefully ordered books, a neatly written word tried out on the tongue, a graceful hand movement, a perfect curve of eyeliner, the symmetry of a solved equation, the mess of a desk full of papers... If it makes you smile slightly, or if your mind keeps tripping back to its shapes and signs, then it's art. I think that that is what makes *Fountain* so unexpectedly satisfying and rich: apart from its capacity to generate debate, the weirdness of the object's normality also forces you to step back and re-evaluate the elitist boundaries and limits of artistry.

Duchamp's work allows us to see the creative potential in the everyday, and reminds us that even ostensibly mundane items or images can move, influence and inspire us.

In conversation with Tom Odell: ‘keep that fire stoked’



▲ Tom Odell appearing at the Cambridge Union on the 21st February (THE CAMBRIDGE UNION)

From John Lewis to the Union, Tom Odell chats to Emily Loynes about self-care, chaos, and a desire for a better world

There's a buzz in the Cambridge Union from the dozens of eager students filling the benches as Tom Odell finally arrives. 35 minutes late to his own Union event, he breezes into the chamber, all floppy hair and trench coat, and apologises to the crowd. Charmed by his easy, friendly smile, and painfully acquainted with the struggle of parking in Cambridge, we all instantly forgive him.

The 28-year-old was born and raised in Chichester, but moved to Brighton aged 18 to study at the British and Irish Modern Music Institute. Lugging his keyboard relentlessly around open mic nights, he was eventually noticed by Lily Allen, and signed to her record label in 2012. His first EP, *Songs From Another Love*, was released the same year. Though he claims to have mellowed, Tom tells us he's shocked by just how determined he used to be: "I look back at my 18 and 19 year old self, and I think to myself, 'you were a psychopath'. Every breath that I drew was used to try and make an album, get a record deal and write those songs." It seems his hard work paid off: three albums later, he's performed at Glastonbury, shared the stage with his idol Elton

John, and even beaten him to a John Lewis Christmas Advert (2014 – the penguin one), while last year's *Jubilee Road* peaked at No. 5 on the UK charts.

Having spent the best part of his twenties in the spotlight, he's pretty well acquainted with the highs and lows of the industry, and the pressures that face young hopefuls starting out in music. "The music industry is behind with regards to mental health," Tom states candidly. His own experiences have taught him that the hard way – he admits that he himself has suffered from some "stuff to do with that". Now, he says, a significant proportion of his day is spent engaged in self-care – he's been meditating everyday for two years. Being in the public eye has forced him to learn to take care of his mental wellbeing: "the pressure on us all these days to have a perfect life is terrifyingly heavy – it's no wonder so many of us are having panic attacks."

Tom's father's job as an airline pilot meant his childhood was somewhat irregular, and he lived briefly in New Zealand as a boy. When asked how he got into music, he tells us that "there were lots of elements in my upbringing that made me feel like an outsider. It was a very natural progression that I ended up doing what I'm doing, because I always felt like I was between two teams. Now I almost enjoy being there."

But Tom thinks that the feeling of never quite belonging has helped him gain perspectives from which to write his songs: being an observer, it seems, has its benefits. "It all looks so complete and right when I look at someone

else's life," he says, "but when I look at my own life it feels like fucking chaos." This generates a laugh from the audience – it's not hard to relate to that.

During the event, he tells us about a song that he's been working on, one that started as nothing more than a scribbled title – 'Girls Without Fathers'. "It was in my notebook on multiple pages, but eventually I managed to find a melody and the title popped back into my head. The song has taken months to write, and every few days a new idea will come with it, but it's very slow." It's about the lasting repercussions of a father leaving a mother and children – so what draws him towards these difficult themes? Tom's silent for a long moment. My transcribing suddenly seems thunderous in the echo of the Union chamber, and it appears to have caught his attention. "Who's typing?" he demands. Embarrassingly, I've thrown him off his train of thought. "The irresponsibility of men..." he sighs, trailing off. Mood.

When we speak alone after the event, I ask Tom about his ongoing Jubilee Road Tour – he's just finished the 5-week second leg, during which he played in over 60 cities around Europe. A lot of artists complain about how hard touring can be, with weeks on the road in a cramped bus, facing exhaustion and homesickness, but Tom seems to speak of his experiences as if he cherishes every moment. I'm interested to hear how he manages to stay positive throughout. "It's difficult like any job's difficult," he admits, but also claims that travelling and touring are as much a part of his job as actually writing and recording albums: "I've really tried to travel as much as possible, to see interesting places and be around interesting people. A huge part of my job as a songwriter is to keep that fire stoked."

For Tom, the "greatest privilege" of touring is being able to meet the fans who come

out in their thousands to watch him perform. "Everywhere we go," he explains, "there's just this incredible love and intelligence among the young people – a desire for a better world." He sees this hope and acceptance as "the exact reverse of what's going on in Western politics: bigotry, closing borders, segregating people. But I find it to be the exact opposite in the youth."

“
The pressure on us all these days to have a perfect life is terrifyingly heavy – it's no wonder so many of us are having panic attacks
”

I ask Tom about the differences between playing a show on tour and playing festivals. Dancing in a muddy field in the height of summer is a completely different experience to being crammed into a sweaty venue in East London, and, though I'm a fan of both, I want to know what it's like for the artist. And although he's partway through his third headline tour, Tom is no stranger to festivals, either: he tells me he's done 25 festivals each summer for the past 5 years. So how do they compare? "When people come to my show on a Tuesday night in Cambridge, you've got them for two hours but you know they've got to catch the bus home at the end and they'll get on with their lives. But with festivals, you've got this audience who are completely different, because they've abandoned all responsibility. You don't need anything on you. It's like a hippie's utopia."

As Tom kicks off the next leg of his Jubilee Road tour in Asia this March, followed by a month-long stint in North America before a summer of festivals, I wonder when he'll get the chance to release some eagerly awaited new music. Where's he going next? His reply, though unexpected, is unsurprising. "Back to London, probably."



(THE CAMBRIDGE UNION)

Footlights Spring Revue: Last Resort review

These graduating Footlights acquit themselves well in this highly entertaining sketch show - 4.5 stars

The annual Spring Revue is a big deal, and if anyone is going to make a song and dance about it, it's the Footlights. The opening number was a lively way of setting the tone, introducing the ensemble cast, and playing with Emily Senior's cute and versatile set, which was well used and brought the performers further downstage.

The fun begins with a tech-reliant sketch, and it is refreshing to hear well-timed, good quality sound clips. Both lighting and sound, designed by George Jeffreys, should be highly commended, keeping pace in and between sketches. Will Bicknell-Found was well chosen to open the show, with consistent, confident delivery and stage presence. The first sketch transitions are slightly uneasy because they seem so randomly ordered. It unfolds that the hotel set is just for show - pun intended because 'last resort' as a concept seems like an afterthought in a show with no running narrative, and few relevant sketches. But honestly, who cares? (Unless, that is, you had particularly wanted to see something entirely hotel-based.) It seems a strict theme might have corseted this mammoth sketch show, and that's very tricky to maneuver. Rather, the format benefitted from quickly departing from the concept, as it afforded greater scope to demonstrate each performer's individual

style. For this reason, this review will not mention any spoiling specificities of the sketches because it is in their ingenuity and weirdness that most of their humour is found. (Indeed, the sketches seemed more often to relate to cannibalism or childhood than hotels!)

Noah Geelan's flat-out commitment to an early sketch cannot fail to win the audience over. He holds our attention whenever he's onstage, partially because he is unafraid of working with silences which house some of his best sketches, and partially because he has a great command of timing, tone and expression. Emma Plowright and Comrie Saville-Ferguson are the two other standout character comedians of the show. Plowright is understated in her delivery which works well with her style of comedy that doesn't rely on punchlines as much as unforeseeable twists; the audience must hang onto every word she says and so she creates the environment for spontaneous, surprising laughter. At the opposite end, Saville-Ferguson demands equally real, unexpected laughs but from the sheer zaniness of his sketches and characters which heighten tropes or convention into absurdity and hilarity.

However, the first act was a little rocky with a varying quality of sketches which, although the performers did well to regain momentum and confidence from the audience, undermined a lot of potentially strong sketches. Some performers forgot or stuttered over their lines which, at times, hindered the pace and audience's trust, and while they were able to spin jokes from it, certain scenes, though few, could do with more rehearsal. The 'adoption' and 'postman' sketches seemed to last too long, with some jokes that failed to land.

Ania Magliano-Wright took a while to



▲ Comrie Saville-Ferguson during rehearsals (DAVID SWARBRICK)

find her groove, but finally came into her own with the RADA audience participation sketch. Stanley Thomas's audience interactions and absurd shorts were fabulous. Gabriel Barton-Singer has the amazing quality of appearing as if he's just wandered onstage and happened to be funny, which is a gift and a quality he would do well to retain. The monologues were very strong, most notably Joy Hunter's 'Police Dogs' and Alex Franklin's 'Cluedo House'. However, it felt like they came at the expense of the stage time of other performers like Isambard Dexter and Danny Baalbaki who were somewhat underused though much appreciated when they were. For a revue, eleven is large cast, perhaps too large for a completely seamless and fairly-weighted show, but highly necessary as an in-

clusive opportunity to showcase Cambridge's graduating comedians.

Patrick Wilson and Angela Channell's direction has rightly prioritised the individual strengths of the performers, making this a real celebration of the work produced by the group over the past three or more years. This is a bizarre and marvelous ride of a show where, if Hunter and Franklin's sketches are anything to go by, anything goes. There are many first-rate sketches, and the second act is far more polished than the first. Finally, it's important to remember that these performers weren't 'Footlights' before they came to Cambridge, so regardless of your views towards the society, they simply must be praised for the hard work they have done and the impressive talents they have cultivated.

'A show for all': *Let's Start a Fire*

Joanna Neve gives an insight into this bold piece of student writing

Written by student Victor Rees, *Let's Start a Fire* is a pitch-black tale of celebrity and cruelty, which questions what it takes to be famous in the 21st century - and how much you can truly love those you hurt.

The plot revolves around a shocking crime, the burning of a fox. Recorded and leaked online, the video creates public outrage and a brutal media storm. When the initial flames die down, Sam and her girlfriend Emma try to renegotiate control over their own lives, inevitably leading to a twisted game of blackmail and backstabbing. Soon, the women must confront the revelation that they had more to do with the crime than intended. Written by Victor Rees, the play is partially inspired by the shocking 2017 event when a Pembroke student burnt money in front of a homeless man in Cambridge. Relevant and capturing, the show explores the complexities of abuse within a same sex relationship and is humorous and witty in the process.

For the cast involved, it was very important that the theme of abuse was taken seriously and given the emphasis it deserves in char-

acter development. Orli Vogt-Vincent (Emma) told me that 'it ventures so far away from the norm and what you might expect', which is why the viewing is so bold and captivating. The whole cast made sure not to stick to the stereotypes of masculine relationship abuse, instead looking through the lens of emotional manipulation after careful research and discussions with people affected. For Tyra Amofah-Akardom (Sam), they key take-home is that 'making someone feel like their existence is in the hands of another is never okay' regardless of the form the abuse takes. Director Zara Ramtohl-Akbur wanted to ensure that the cast also brought their own experiences of relationships to the table, allowing some improvisation and small alterations, to create characters which come across as real throughout all of their scenes.

The play has just 3 characters, which has enabled careful time for character building for a really insightful viewing. Vogt-Vincent plays Emma, a girl with an immense amount of light and shade. She is simultaneously head strong and passive, fiery and submissive, with a beautiful flare of personality which changes between scenes. The character of Terry (Christopher Marshall) also stands to be an interesting viewing, as he is a humorous character who debunks and fails to conform to stereotypical perceptions of masculinity. Instead he is



► Vogt-Vincent and Amofah-Akardom during rehearsals (Zara Ramtohl-Akbur)

a 'figure of masculinity who is quiet, tired and vulnerable, someone in need of help'. My personal favourite is Sam (Amofah-Akardom), who doesn't like Hollywood movies because the endings are too happy, 'the couple driving into the sunset never crash and the newlyweds never celebrate by gassing themselves in their kitchen', a fascinating insight into her character. Alongside the heavy themes of abuse which is so amazingly portrayed, *Let's Start a Fire* is also a humorous viewing, thanks to the improvisation techniques employed during rehearsals which enable natural humour to come through, particularly through the character of Terry.

Fundamentally, the play is not so much about events, but aftermath. It's about not seeing patterns and cycles in front of you, the bonding process of humour and psychological impulses we don't want to talk about. Assistant Director Sophie Hill had an air of excitement during our interview, as the play is never seen before, completely 'new ground' which stands to shock, surprise and entertain. Crucially, in the same way that watching fire leaves an imprint on vision afterwards, Director Zara hopes the play will have a similar effect, allowing the audience to go home with an imprint from the production. With beautiful motifs of old Hollywood and a passionate cast, *Let's Start a Fire* is a show for all.

Is Netflix killing university life?

Sophie Williams-Dunning

We all love a good episode of 'Sex Education'... or one, or two, or all eight back to back, with breaks only to check Crushbridge, email your supervisor weak excuses and get more hobnobs. But how is our generation's addiction to online streaming services and the new solo TV-watching culture that comes with them affecting the life of students at Cambridge?

I was prompted to write this article after my own harrowing experience of Netflix addiction last term. I made the terrible mistake of starting to watch the notoriously bingeable 'Gossip Girl' in September, and probably watched anywhere between 1-3 hours a day during Michaelmas. Coming back for Lent, and having finished Gossip Girl (and not my set reading) over the Christmas break, I was resolved to cut Netflix out of my daily routine, as well as think more deeply about the effect online streaming services such as this have on our quality of life and social habits.

I interviewed a group of current students to get to the core of how much, and how, we watch TV. The answers varied from one hour a week to 14 times that much, with certain students admitting to indulging in at least two hours a day, 90% of which would be alone. In the modern technological age of online streaming services and the subsequent privatisation of leisure time, it's all too easy to spend this amount of time watching TV. But what are we missing out on in comparison to students who studied before the subscription services such as Netflix and Amazon Prime had become so popular and pervasive?

A wave of recent studies into binge culture have shown that watching TV accounts for half of the average American's leisure time, whilst a survey by Netflix in 2013 showed that 73% of participants saw binge-watching as a socially acceptable behaviour. In fact, the habit has become such a widespread addiction that 'binge-watch' was recently declared the word of the year by Collins Dictionary.

There's no doubt, therefore, that these services have transformed the television watching into a more private and accessible activity, which encourages the kind of daytime, solo bingeing that I see as so harmful because of the detrimental social and mental effects it can have. In fact, studies have shown a certain correlation (though not necessarily causation) between TV bingeing and stress, anxiety, feelings of loneliness and depression; the very problems that many users of Netflix turn to the service in order to alleviate. Something, therefore, definitely needs to change about our modern TV consuming habits.

So how can you and your friends quit unhealthy bingeing and re-claim your free time? I advise setting yourself an ambitious, but achievable target relative to your current usage. Put measures in place to ensure you stick to your target, such as asking your friends to keep an eye on you, deleting Netflix off your phone and blocking it on your laptop using an app like FocusMe. Think of other activities you'd like to do in your newly freed up leisure time; perhaps try reading, doodling, going for walks, cooking for yourself more, or even just using that time to call friends and family at home. If you're a background TV watcher and you simply can't face the idea of tidying your room or doing essay citations without an episode of something "playing in the back-

ground", try switching to less distracting and addictive content, such as podcasts, or even the good old-fashioned radio! Finally, if you do really want to watch something, stick to documentaries and other less binge-able shows to prevent descending into a bingeing relapse.

As anyone who's ever looked at the terrifying new Apple feature 'Screen Time' can attest, coming to terms with our usage of technology can sometimes be a daunting, and even shameful task. It is one however, that we must face full-on in order to regain our powers of self-control and free up those oh so precious hours in the week.

► Illustration by Kate Towsey



“
I made
the
terrible
mistake
of
starting
to watch
Gossip
Girl last
term!
”



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Showcasing student filmmaking at *Cambridge Shorts*

Carlotta Wright was impressed by the talent on display at this evening of student films

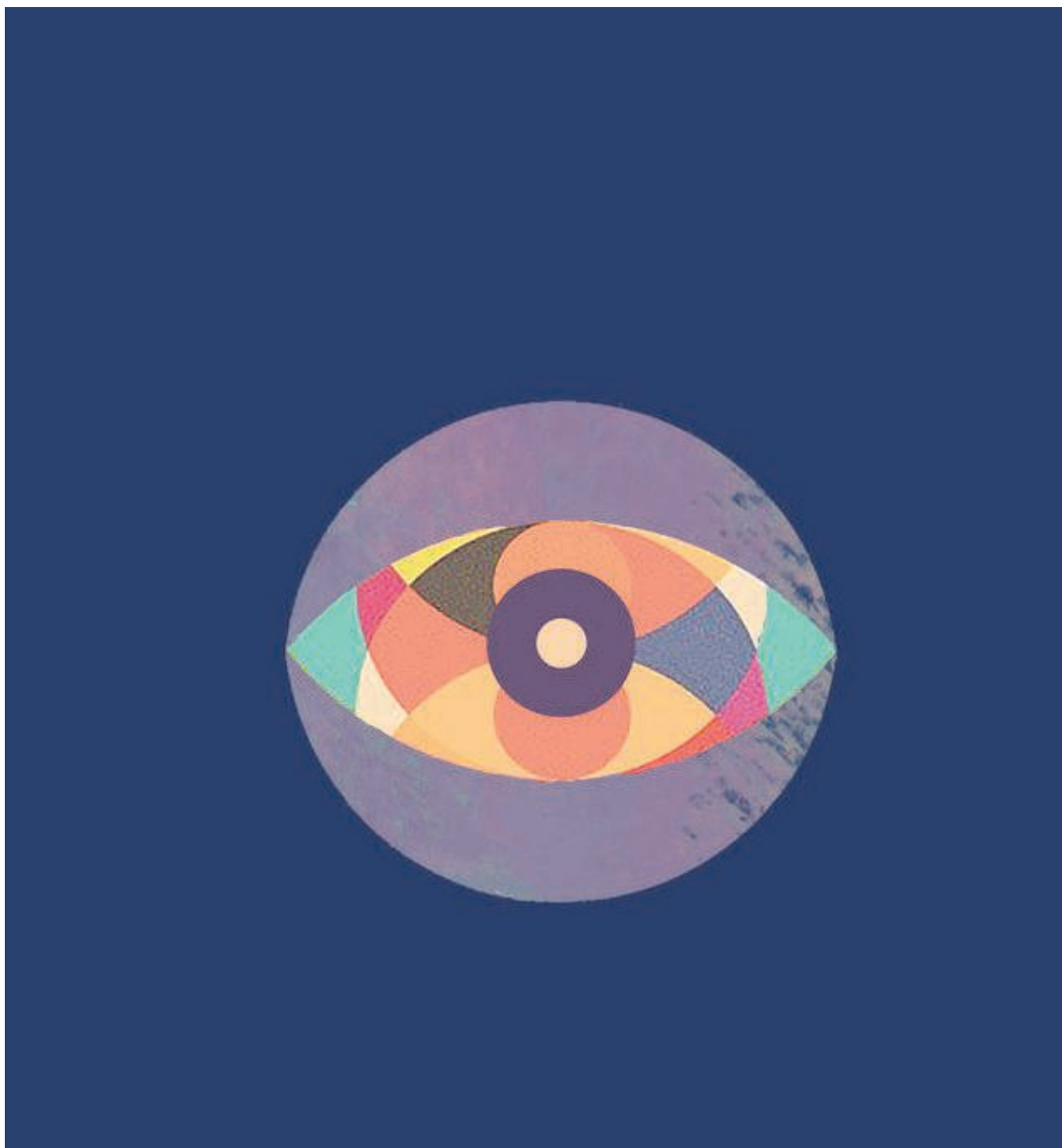
Earlier this term *Cambridge Shorts* was back in its ninth installment. At the beginning, though, it felt rather like I was watching its debut. The audience spent about ten minutes in confusion, as a film seemed to have started playing while the lights were still up. One audience member whispered, "When's it going to start?". The *Shorts* did finally find its feet throughout the night, however. The animation of the hosts, Tom Nunan and James Coe (Maria von Snatch), by Eve Gatenby, set an impressively high standard for the night but felt wasted. Nunan and Coe's rapport sometimes felt dissonant and flat, when juxtaposed with some of the more serious films. In the little time they had to get into the feel of their roles, they received volumes of laughter from the audience. The in-jokes about Cambridge 'thesps', a pitfall at every *Shorts*, did more to perpetuate Cambridge film exclusivity than criticize it. However, this time there was a greater effort to display a variety of styles from a variety of student filmmakers.

The arrangement of, and transition between, these various films were seamless and the first film, *Haze*, by Daria Hupov, set a beautiful tone. Hupov's experimentation with lighting was tender and professional. The premise of the film was a music video, in which the expertly synchronized and directed dance movements, at their peaks, were mesmerizing. A beautiful showcase of seamless editing, frames and colours, *Haze* was an ambitious project executed near-perfectly.

We moved onto the second film: *Queer Voices in China* by Lucy Gilder. For a documentary shining a light on the Chinese underground gay community, we never saw their faces. Shrouding them in anonymity may have been an artistic choice, but one I would like to have had explained. The filmmaker's gaze seemed preoccupied instead with the aesthetics of China. Relying on visuals rather than the strength of the accounts was a real disservice to the film's subjects. When there was cohesion – such as when we saw the gay bar, 'Underground', as someone talked about their experiences there, it was lovely to see.

Rowan Hall Maudslay's Monty Python-style *Lionguard*, about a knight on a quest, knew its target audience well and elicited lots of laughter from the very start with its stylized opening credits. At times, it felt the film was just a showcase of all the editing techniques and fighting choreography that could be packed in, at the expense of a clearly conveyed storyline. A slick sketch, it knew its limits and did not stretch itself too hard.

Hourglass. A beautifully poignant film on the subject of grief was conceived of a collaboration between Notes (direction by Laura Baliman) and CFA (poem by Scott Partington). The highlight of my evening was this poem which was beautifully written and moving.



▲ There was greater effort to display a variety of styles from a variety of student filmmakers (ISABELLA DALLISTON)

It was further strengthened by the narrator who was able to carry the emotional weight where sometimes the cinematography could not. However, the student talent in a film with such a small cast, crew, and budget, is admired.

The penultimate film, *Seabirds*, by Joshua Harris, failed to find its feet. The cinematography was stunning and the music choice apt, reminiscent of a BBC wildlife film. The homemade style gave it life, but at times, when clips of birds were a little too long and the sound was difficult to understand, it was detrimental. On hearing misplaced laughter, I couldn't help but wonder whether the audience at *Shorts* was the wrong one for this film. In any case, the tremendous effort of this amateur wildlife documentary was appreciated, and the beautiful underwater shots, intricate script and pure passion for nature elicited sympathy from the audience.

The last film gave us food for thought. Zeb Goriely, in *A Day in the Mind*, creates a conversation on mental health and how to survive

“What was consistent throughout was the raw talent and love for film”

a Cambridge term. Special credits should be given to the composer, Iona Mac, who created an arrestingly beautiful score. The special effects were especially captivating. However, it did feel like the balance between a grounded account of mental health and the film's stylized aesthetics wasn't quite achieved. Goriely's decision to make the pace of the video slightly too fast imitates the fast pace of the Cambridge lifestyle but prevented the audience from really digesting the important dialogue.

The hard work, time, and effort put into *Shorts* is truly astounding and is, and will always be, a difficult night to pull off. Typical student and budget problems revealed themselves in unclear audio, imperfect lighting and cinematography, but what was consistent throughout was the raw talent and love for film seen in the leg-work, ambitious topics and projects and time invested in the work. For those interested in film, *Cambridge Shorts* is a night I would encourage you to attend, despite its imperfections, and a night I hope

Fresh, fast and furious meals

Zach Lande shares his favourite student recipes

Spaghetti aglio e olio is a traditional Italian pasta dish from Naples. It is made by lightly sautéing thinly sliced garlic in extra virgin olive oil over medium heat – with the addition of dried red chili flakes if you like them – and then tossing the infused oil with cooked spaghetti. Finish with finely chopped parsley, a generous squeeze of fresh lemon juice, and then season with salt and pepper. This dish is a masterpiece in simplicity that is far greater than the sum of its parts. You won't believe me until you try it for yourself.

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cook time: 13 minutes

Couscous is a remarkably versatile grain that offers a blank canvas for bold, bright flavours. My favourite way to make couscous is *tabbouleh*, a Middle Eastern vegetarian salad. After the couscous is cooked, add diced cucumber and bell peppers, finely chopped cherry tomatoes, spring onions, coriander, mint, and parsley. Finish with fresh lemon juice, extra virgin olive oil, salt, and pepper. The salad goes brilliantly well with fried halloumi or chicken. It is also an excellent way to experiment with different vegetables, fresh herbs, and spices.

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 7 minutes

Risotto may seem intimidating, but it's actually an incredibly simple dish that can be made in a rice cooker. For a basic *risotto bianco* (white risotto), sweat diced onions, celery, and garlic in a pan until softened. Add risotto rice (I use Carnaroli or Arborio) and a splash of dry white wine. Once the alcohol has evaporated, slowly add ladles of hot stock to the rice, stirring constantly, and allowing each ladleful to be absorbed before adding the next. Taste the rice to check if it's cooked. If not, carry on adding stock until the rice is soft but with a slight bite. Finish the risotto with plenty of butter and grated parmesan cheese.

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cook time: 30 minutes

Eggs are perhaps one of the most versatile and accessible of all proteins. There are limitless ways to prepare them, and they can easily be turned into a hearty meal. An excellent example is *shakshouka*, a North African dish consisting of eggs poached in a spiced tomato sauce. Start by sweating diced onions and mixed bell peppers until soft. Add chopped garlic and fresh chilli and fry until tender. Throw in a dash of cumin and paprika, then add chopped fresh tomatoes and cook until the tomatoes have completely collapsed. Make wells in the tomato mixture and break an egg into each well. Cover the pan and cook gently over a medium-low heat for 5–6 minutes, or until the egg whites are set and the yolks are still a little runny.

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cook time: 20 minutes



▲ “Shakshouka is a North African dish of eggs poached in a spiced tomato sauce” (ZACH LANDE)

Stir-fry is a pillar of student cuisine and is a great way to use up leftover vegetables. Try selecting your own ingredients so that you can fully customise the dish. My personal favourites are: spring onions, bell peppers, fresh ginger, garlic, carrots, broccoli, and cabbage. To maximise flavour in a stir fry, you want to use high heat and sunflower oil. You can

boost the flavour of the stir-fry with condiments like soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, oyster sauce, toasted sesame oil, and fresh lime juice. Keep experimenting until you find your perfect combination.

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 8 minutes

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Deconstructing Karl

Caterina Bragoli examines the man behind the thick-rimmed glasses

Only the day before Karl Lagerfeld's passing, I was at a talk given by two leading figures of Chanel International, one of whom was Dr Berndt Hauptkorn, European president of Chanel. The way in which Lagerfeld was presented as the very core of the brand was extremely powerful. Dr Hauptkorn seemed to brush competing fashion houses aside simply because they were not fuelled by his creative vision. Lagerfeld invigorated the brand with an unparalleled timelessness, sophistication and elegance that would never be compromised; he furthered Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel's legacy while simultaneously defying fashion's boundaries. If Coco was the beating heart of the brand, Lagerfeld was the blood that ran through its veins.

Disconnecting Lagerfeld from Chanel is challenging. After all, he was Chanel's creative director since 1983. However, tracing his immense career to its foundations offers a glimpse into the ground-breaking creative path that led to his innovation at Chanel. Lagerfeld was no stranger to the hardships of breaking into the fashion industry: after winning a coat designing contest in 1955, he progressed to the position of Pierre Balmain's assistant. Balmain is credited with offering Lagerfeld his first big break, influencing his career by introducing him to the art of tailoring, or 'Architecture of the Movement', as Balmain aptly phrased it. Lagerfeld put this training to good use when designing for Chanel: he is credited with defying the set silhouettes associated with the brand, instead reviving designs

from the 1920s, by shortening hem lines, injecting vibrant colours, and monogramming the most unlikely garments.

The pioneering position for Lagerfeld that truly established his name in the industry was his work with the Italian fashion house Fendi. This collaboration began in 1965, manifesting in bold and striking ways for over 50 years. Lagerfeld himself said that "It's the longest collaboration in fashion", a testament to how invaluable and instrumental his creative direction was. One of his greatest reinventions was his approach to fur which, while a questionable pursuit in today's society, in 1965 was ground-breaking. High fashion had never encountered the likes of rabbit or squirrel pelts before, yet Lagerfeld managed to incorporate these unique textures into his designs, placing Fendi at the forefront of the modern fashion industry. Lagerfeld's quest for ex-

perimentation seems more prominent in his work with Fendi than with Chanel: whilst Gabrielle Chanel's feminine vision was the ultimate priority for the brand, Lagerfeld and the Fendi sisters had no such rules to adhere to, catapulting the brand to an internationally recognisable status.

Yet Lagerfeld and Chanel will forever walk hand-in-hand in fashion history, and for good reason. Following the death of Chanel, the fashion house suffered immensely from a lack of creative vision, alongside a problematic overinvestment in the fragrance side of the brand. Designers were merely replicating Chanel; nothing new was revitalising the brand's collections. Lagerfeld took Chanel's ideas and elevated them to new heights. He used the brand's focal points – tweed, and the colours of black, pink and gold – and revolved his collections around them, constantly reinventing classics such as the 2.55 bag, or their tweed blazer. But Lagerfeld didn't stop there, choosing to breathe new life into classic designs by incorporating the power of street culture. The classic ideal of Chanel was merged with an eclectic mix of street style and grunge, placing Chanel on an unreachable pedestal, and explaining the autonomy the brand has today.

Lagerfeld's mark has been left on every aspect of Chanel as a brand, most importantly their shows, which are the stuff of legend. Lagerfeld and the Chanel production team had the ability to transport an audience out of Paris or New York and into a pseudo-reality of dreams. Recently, in the Couture Spring/Summer 2019 collection show, Chanel built an Italian lakeside mansion – 'Villa Chanel' – and accompanying gardens, making summer tangible in the very air of the show. Autumn/Winter 2018 saw the models walking down an enchanted forest runway, complete with fallen leaves in various shades of green and brown. Lagerfeld even managed to erect a giant Eiffel Tower in the Grand Palais for the Couture Autumn/Winter 2017 collection. The merging of fashion with insanely crafted, unbelievably real settings will never be replicated without the eye of Lagerfeld. He knew exactly what kind of environment would allow his clothing to reach its full potential, meticulously manipulating locations to compliment the power of his collections, while crafting an audience experience that only Chanel could offer.

This astounding career forms only half of Lagerfeld. A fundamental reason why his image was extolled as the epitome of high fashion was his very essence as a designer, and his intricately crafted image. Lagerfeld famously said "I am like a caricature of myself, and I like that". The black sunglasses, scraped-back silver ponytail, and impeccable suits are just a few of the factors that contributed to the overall image of Lagerfeld. He transcended the boundaries of normality, shunning the concept of im-

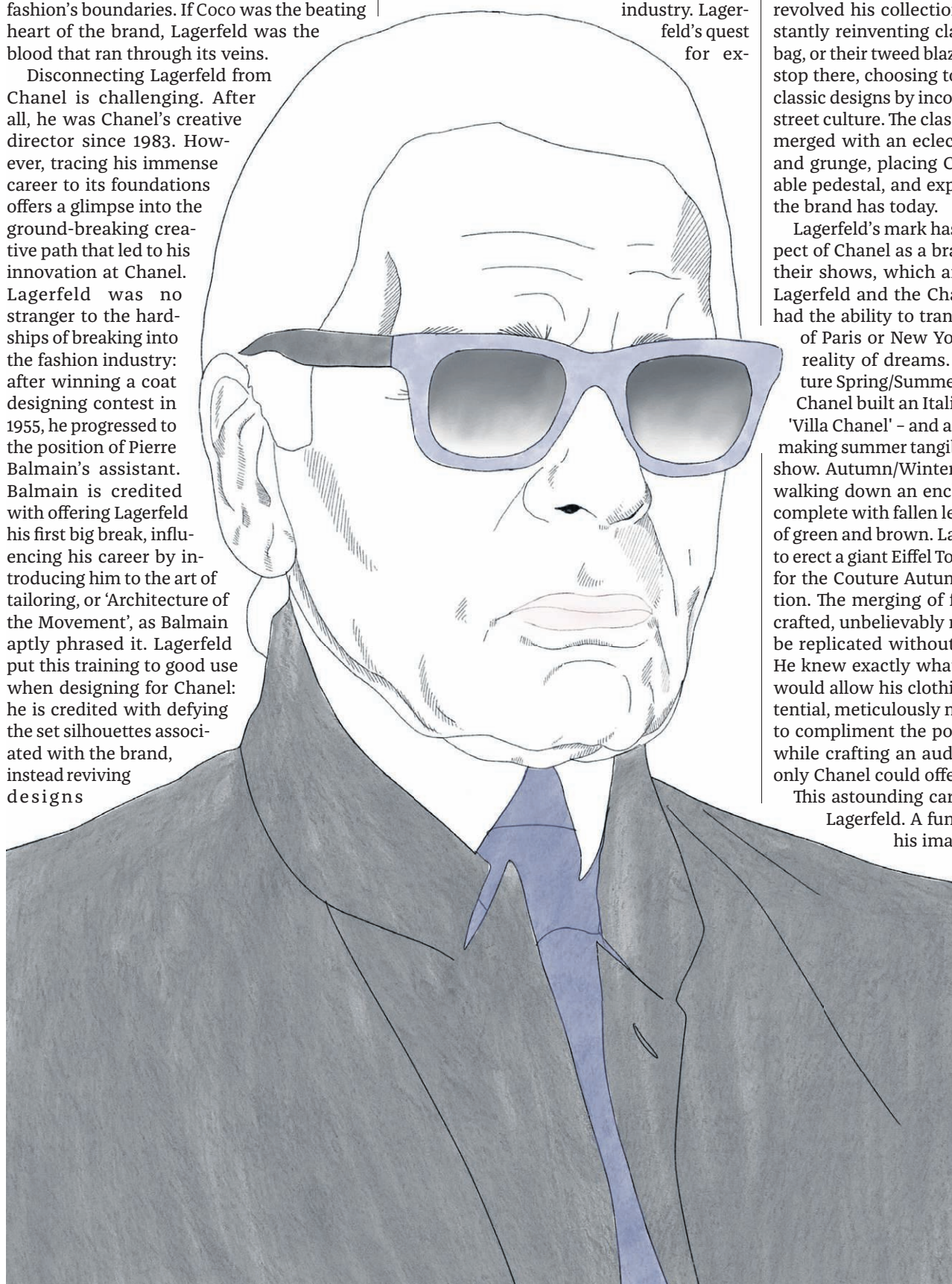
perfection with an image oozing with class, elegance and creativity. This image had an immense sense of personality on the surface, yet what did it really offer us in regards to the person that Lagerfeld was? Perhaps that was Lagerfeld's ultimate aim: to reveal the crux of himself through his designs. The ever-evolving collections contrasted with the consistency of his image, creating a paradoxical dynamic that has never before been encountered in the history of fashion, and most likely never will be again.

But preserving the legacy of fashion's greatest force is a complex task. Lagerfeld has always been a vocal proponent of his desired aesthetic: fashion for the slim. Chanel itself appeals to a certain idealised woman: beautiful, thin. Lagerfeld took this concept and created a brand that alienated women that did not conform to his standards. This prompts debate over the coveted status of Lagerfeld, and why he was afforded such reverence despite his outdated notions, while the likes of Edward Enninful were employing trans columnists and including women of diverse backgrounds on *Vogue* covers. Lagerfeld has been branded misogynistic in the days following his death, and you don't have to search far to find out why: labelling Adele 'too fat' or claiming his collection with H&M could only be worn by 'thin people' suggests a hatred for anything less than his own idea of perfection. In an ever-changing climate, Lagerfeld's standards do not fit. Fashion embraces a spectrum of female beauty – perhaps only recently – but change is making its way in, and Lagerfeld was promoting the ideas of decades past. Fat shaming is never acceptable, not even when coming from the mouth of fashion's greatest legend. Offering no compromise or accessible options for the vast majority of women suggests something truly callous about his view of women.

Who truly was Lagerfeld? This elusive caricature offered the world's prying eyes no access into the goings-on of his personal life, only a glimpse of his beloved cat, Choupette. "I never thought that I would fall in love with a little cat like this," said Lagerfeld early last year in an interview with *Vogue*. Is that the real key to deducing Lagerfeld's character? Amidst the fortune and glamour of his flamboyant lifestyle – he did have five homes – a cat as his life partner seems to suit his particular lifestyle.

Equally, Lagerfeld remained uncompromisingly protective over his true age. He claimed for decades to be younger than he actually was. "You know, the youth obsession is a kind of racism," he commented in the same *Vogue* interview. Lagerfeld's breezy use of the word racism suggests a lack of understanding of the political climate of modern society. He thought it acceptable to bring this into a discussion over his refusal to set the record straight over his age. This was just one aspect of the illusion of Lagerfeld: he was infallible in the world of fashion, and seemingly also to himself.

It is a rare gift to be utterly overcome with passion for your work, and there is no better example of work being both a pleasure and an indulgence than in the decades-long career of Lagerfeld, so much so that fashion and Lagerfeld are almost indistinguishable from each other. Yet, the truth is rearing its head, forcing the sycophantic fans of Chanel and Lagerfeld to come to terms with the reality of the man behind the garments.



▲ Karl Lagerfeld was known for his very specific personal aesthetic. (ALISA SANTIKARN)



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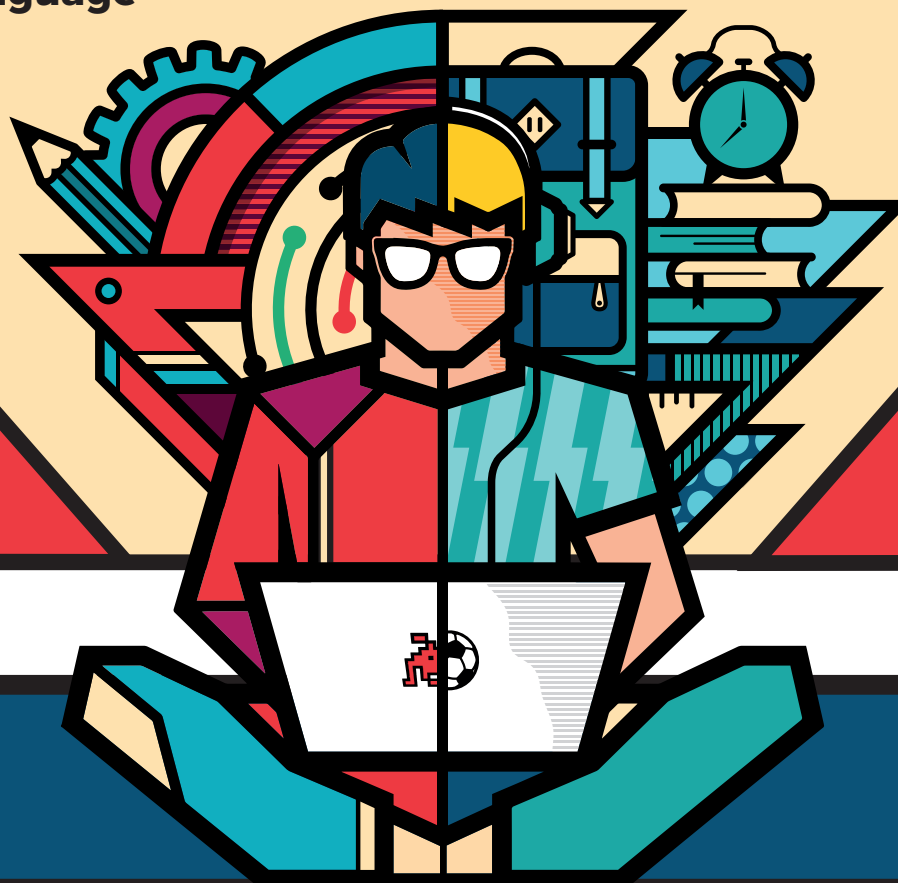


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Science

Palm oil, the other oil crisis

Belinda Ng talks to Cambridge academic Dr Rosemary Ostfeld about what we can do to ensure we are eating sustainably

The controversy surrounding palm oil is deemed the 'other' oil crisis; a quieter, but just as destructive, practice compared with the headlines about the fossil fuel industry. Found widely in our processed snacks, shampoo, ice-cream, bread and more, palm oil is an edible vegetable oil derived from the fruit of the African palm oil tree. Although cheap and versatile, its widespread plantations in Southeast Asia and South America is contributing to deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and the release of potent greenhouse gases. But are there ways for us to transition towards sustainable consumption of palm oil? Dr Rosemary Ostfeld is a member of the Environmental Economy and Policy Research Group, and part of the Department of Land Economy here at the University of Cambridge. Her insights into environmental sustainability in the palm oil industry offer new hope for the battle against the rapid loss of our planet's tropical rainforests, a battle which, currently, we seem to be losing.

While palm oil has a reputation of just being a villain, the common misconception to just ban it is wrong, Dr Ostfeld says. The problem with the palm oil supply chain is not really to do with the nature of palm oil itself. According to Dr Ostfeld, there are many benefits of

palm oil, namely the fact that it is more efficient to produce and requires fewer resources than other types of vegetable oil. Instead, its controversial nature is locational: palm oil is harvested in areas of pristine tropical rainforest, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia. She also adds that "like many commodities, it is very difficult to trace the supply chain and know exactly which plantation the palm oil has come from."

Here is where the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) comes in as a promising solution. This non-profit organisation was founded in 2004 by the World Wildlife Fund and other key stakeholders throughout the supply chain. "By making sure products on supermarket shelves contain RSPO certified palm oil ecolabel, it enables the palm oil to be traced throughout the supply chain," Dr Ostfeld explains. RSPO certification involves an independent body coming in to assess and track palm oil plantations according to designated criteria that is renewed regularly. Examples of criterion include respecting the human rights, minimising erosion and soil degradation, and avoiding use of fire to prepare land, which is particularly important in the Southeast Asian context where land is often cleared by human-induced fires.

Most recently, the RSPO body placed a ban on deforestation, which Dr Ostfeld says is a major step-up by the RSPO body in the fight to save the rainforests. Violation of these principles will result in suspension of the RSPO membership. Importantly, This "identity-preserved" palm oil is helpful because the system can be used alongside other tools, such

as Global Forest Watch, that can track deforestation.

The reason why the RSPO works, according to Dr Ostfeld, is that the supply chain becomes much more transparent and traceable. "It is a really strong supply chain model because you can trace it if the grower is doing something wrong," she says. She also adds that "[the RSPO] has made it possible for all these different stakeholders, such as growers, processors, traders, consumer goods manufacturers, and NGOs, to collaboratively come up with solutions". She believes there is wider potential for RSPO certification to be applied to other products with a large environmental footprint, such as soy or beef. This being said, she also recognises the challenges and limitations of certification: "It's a step in the right direction by providing extra checkpoints, but there are many social and political issues and many commodities that need to be addressed."

Further down the palm oil supply chain, we, the consumers of palm oil, contribute to the problem as well. Dr Ostfeld's research on customer awareness of palm oil and its impact show that ecolabel awareness doesn't necessarily translate to sustainable purchases. She compares the RSPO certification with fair trade to show that whilst 82% of people recognise and know about the fair-trade label, only 29% of those consistently purchase fair trade products. "This shows that customers cannot be relied upon to make sustainable choices," Dr Ostfeld says. She argues that if sustainable change is to occur, governments need to take action to require consumer goods

“Customers cannot be relied upon to make sustainable choices”

“Public awareness campaigns have been getting palm oil on the map as a hot issue”

▼ Oil palms in Sabah, Borneo
(UWE ARANAS)

retailers to purchase only 100% certified palm oil that is identity preserved. "A degree of flexibility will be needed by allowing different supply chain options towards meeting this target of 100% certified palm oil," Dr Ostfeld suggests.

Undoubtedly, it is easy to feel like this is a problem for governments and large organisations to handle. But Dr Ostfeld says there are many things we can do as individuals that will make a big impact. Firstly, we can push for retailers and consumer goods manufacturers to be upfront and transparent about the palm oil they are using in their products. "Public awareness campaigns have been getting palm oil on the map as a hot issue", Dr Ostfeld says. But making a difference does not just include activism. The key thing for us remains about "peeling back the label" by being a conscious consumer. Palm oil is most common in processed foods, such as cookies and instant noodles, so minimising consumption will help. WWF also has a variety of great resources ranking brands based on their sustainable palm oil commitments, as well as how to recognise the different ways palm oil is named on products.

Increasingly, there are also many online resources that provide information about the palm oil supply chain for people like us to understand where our products are coming from. Knowledge is power, and Dr Ostfeld is hopeful that through collaboration between consumers, retailers, and governments, positive changes can be made. "It's so important to try to learn more about these issues and not be afraid to make lifestyle changes to become more sustainable."



Measuring up milks

Milk has a significant environmental impact, but are the plant-based alternatives any better? **Sophie Cook** investigates

If you're considering reducing the amount of dairy in your diet, you're not alone. In the UK, sales of plant-based milks have increased by 30% since 2015, compared to only a 5% growth in traditional dairy milk. A study by Mintel revealed the rise is even greater in the USA, where non-dairy milk sales have grown by 61% since 2012. It may surprise you that in 1995, 45% of Britain's milk was delivered by a 'milkman'. By 2010, 95% of our milk was bought in a shop. Our supermarket shelves are now lined with an overwhelming number of varieties – cow, sheep, goat, nut, oat, rice, hemp, flax – all boasting a different nutritional profile and environmental footprint. So how do they measure up?

What's driving this craze? Arguably, our exploding 'coffee-shop culture' has a strong part to play. Somehow a 'white coffee' doesn't have quite the same ring to it as an 'oat milk latte' or a 'soy cappuccino'. The consumption of these dairy alternatives is much. While this may be due to trendy fitness and foodie bloggers, a study by the Food Ethics Council found that 46% of consumers aged 16-24 believe the current food system to be 'unfair' on the planet. In comparison, only 28% of people over 65 feel the same.

Almond milk makes up two thirds of plant-based milk sales. This undeniable market leader has come under fire recently due to its hefty water consumption. 80% of the world's almonds are grown in California, a state already ridden with drought and reliant on intensive irrigation. 10% of California's water use can be attributed to growing this thirsty nut, with 384 litres of water needed to make just 1 litre of almond

milk. This makes almond milk the worst environmental offender of all the non-dairy milks. Sounds bad, right? Yet the production of dairy milk requires 2.5 times more water – 1,020 litres per litre of milk. Dairy milk production is also the worst offender in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and land use due to the huge volumes of food needed to fuel dairy cows. According to a study by Joseph Poore at Oxford, a glass of dairy milk results in almost three times more greenhouse gas emissions than that of a plant-based alternative.

Another milk which has recently come under fire is soy. After the shocking Iceland advert over Christmas, we are all on full-alert for the presence of palm oil in our chocolate spreads and shampoos. We are keenly aware of Amazonian deforestation, and one of the other major drivers of this clearance is for soy plantations. What few people realise, though, is that 70% of the world's soy is actually used for livestock feed – not for the production of tofu or soy milk. Only 6% of the soy grown is used in human food, with the remaining 24% being used in the production of vegetable oil. It's also interesting to compare the nutritional content of these different milks. Protein is a real buzzword at the moment, and one of the main criticisms of these milks is their lower protein content, although the average American already consumes double their recommended daily protein allowance. And surprisingly, many of these fortified milk alternatives actually contain more calcium than traditional dairy milk.

While the revolution is raging, most people are not quite ready to quit cold turkey. According to Mintel, two thirds of people buying plant-based milks also buy dairy milk. Plant-based milks can be a delicious addition to cereals, porridge and curries, and if it's instagrammable latte art you're after, oat milk is quickly becoming the barista's favourite.



▲ More people are using alternatives to dairy milk in their coffee (MOHAMMED FAHEEM NISTAR)

Opinion: Stop making excuses for the academically brilliant

Great scientists with deplorable views should be subject to the same scrutiny and criticism as everyone else, argues **Tanvi Acharya**

It took Cold Spring Harbor – a world-leading research institution – 12 years to finally strip James Watson of honorary titles after he repeated erroneous claims that genes are responsible for differences between black and white people on IQ tests. Aside from the fundamentally flawed concept that a single number can capture all the facets of intelligence, IQ tests also do not account for social differences; indeed, adoption from a poor home to a well-off home is associated with a 12-18 point gain in IQ. But a more pertinent point is that genes are all too readily taken as destiny when, in reality, many genes interact together and are themselves influenced by en-

vironmental factors in ways that make it hard to anticipate behavioural traits – such as intelligence. The biggest irony is that genetics, a field for which Watson is deemed the father, has unequivocally shown that a connection between race and intelligence holds no water.

No one denies that it is important to honour scientists. We rightly name laboratories after them and award them prestigious prizes to recognise their incredible contributions to society. Inevitably, fame provides scientists with a platform; however, this platform comes with an obligation of responsibility. It is clear that James Watson has violated this responsibility by repeatedly espousing racist remarks. Recognising his accolades in a manner that continually allows him a platform leads us to unwittingly legitimise these profoundly unscientific views.

So how do we tackle the offensive remarks made by individuals that have revolutionised science? The first step is

“Scientific prowess does not assume ethical behaviour”

recognising that scientific prowess does not assume ethical behaviour. Anyone who has read Watson's autobiographical novel, *The Double Helix*, will know that sexist portrayals of women – most notably Rosalind Franklin, who was instrumental in providing the evidence critical to Watson and Crick's discovery – and a contempt for 'stupid' people are common tropes.

Watson is not alone. Einstein, for example, may have been a genius of physics, but his travel diaries reveal shocking xenophobia against Chinese people, and the treatment of his first wife also remains questionable. Or take Nikola Tesla – the inventor of alternating current – whose cult-figure status explains his appearance in the Oscar nominated film, *The Prestige*. Tesla, however, was also a staunch proponent of eugenics. These men are all proof that scientific greatness has no bearing on a person's character.

We must ensure that an individual's

“Our society has a tendency to place Nobel Prize winners on a pedestal”

scientific accomplishments don't exempt them from criticism. Our society has a tendency to place Nobel Prize winners on a pedestal and grant their words an authority that may not be deserved. Instead, they should be subject to the same scrutiny as any other person, especially when espousing dangerous and discriminatory rhetoric. Crucially, we should uphold the responsibilities that assign credibility to science, which are those of critical observation and experimentation. When notable institutions are indolent in their rejection of unsubstantiated views, lies are given undeserving validation, which has potentially dangerous consequences.

We are now facing a vast number of situations in which deplorable remarks made by 'great' men are seen simply as a 'product of their time'. Open discussion is needed to strike a balance between respecting scientific legacies while simultaneously condemning certain problematic behaviour.

CULNC captain: “The Blues have put out some immense performances this year”



Will Robinson sits down with **Sophie Maitland** ahead of this week's Varsity Netball Match

In the year of England's football World Cup heroics and penalty shoot-out successes, it is notable that the public should have picked the netball side's last gasp Commonwealth Games triumph as their sporting moment of 2018. It confirmed the rising prominence of netball in the nation's consciousness, a development welcomed by Blues netball captain Sophie Maitland.

“I was so excited! I was up at 4am with my mum to watch” she said, “there was an energy about netball in the media which was really exciting to be a part of.”

She will be hoping that same energy can be replicated this Sunday, as Cambridge University Ladies' Netball Club host Oxford in the annual Varsity fixture. Having suffered defeat last year, Maitland is hoping home advantage can have an effect: “The support makes a huge difference on the court, it can really influence the outcome of the match and give the players that extra motivation to get the ball.”

Hoping for “huge crowds”, Maitland believes that those in attendance will be exposed to the sheer athleticism of the match: “I think most people don't appreciate how fast and physical netball is when watched live”. The Varsity promotional video, put out by the club, aims to tackle some of the most perva-

“Bowling out with a victory against Oxford would prove a storybook ending”

sive preconceptions around the sport. “People tend to associate netball with the level played at school, which is great but watching high level netball or international standard is just another world altogether. These women are amazing athletes and the game is fast, strong and amazing to watch, so I wish more people knew that!”

It has not been an easy year as captain for Maitland: “BUCS has been really challenging this year. The league as a whole has got more competitive, with a team coming down from the Premier Division and other universities really pushing their netball.” Whilst the Blues remain winless in BUCS, she warns Oxford that this is no reason for complacency: “It has brought with it some of the best intensity of netball I have had over the last three years, with all the matches pushing us to our limits and enabling us to improve each game. The Blues have put out some immense performances this year, as Oxford will find out on Sunday”.

It is the process of dealing with setbacks that Maitland believes prepare her team best for the emotional intensity of a Varsity game: “We do a lot of sports psychology preparation in the run up to Varsity to help us prepare. It is a unique event which brings with it a different energy to normal league matches, so it is important players can deal with the mental and physical pressures of the day.”

Maitland's techniques have been embraced by her team, who complement her level-headedness in their programme notes: “Through the sports psychology she has developed, the squad have ad-

dressed many challenges and have come out stronger, and closer for it.”

And what of team spirit? Maitland has worked hard this year to create cohesion between not just the Blues, but the Jays and Devs as well: “We have tried really hard this year to integrate the whole club and do more team bonding activities.” Swaps, formals and nights out in kit have brought the club closer together: “I feel like [we] have a great culture and we pride ourselves on being a whole unit who support each other.”

Maitland's role is as important on the court as off it, and her teammates are at pains to emphasise her work ethic, noting that more often than not she finishes matches with blood-soaked socks, playing through the pain for the good of the team. In her final year at Cambridge, she is one of the most experienced players in the side, and so the emotions of a Varsity

▲ **A Cambridge netballer going for a hoop in front of a packed crowd** (CULNC)

▼ **Members of the Ladies' Netball Club in action** (CULNC)

clash will be nothing new: “[it's] natural to feel the pressure, but I am excited to utilise that and get on court.”

“My routine will be the same as before any netball match” she says, when asked about any pre-match superstitions. It is not unusual to adopt a routine in top-level sport: tennis superstar Rafael Nadal admitted to having at least nineteen rituals which he carries out for each game, whilst footballer Ander Herrera has worn the same pair of shin pads since the age of eight. “I try not to endorse any pre-Varsity superstitions, like lucky socks, because I believe you are in control of how you play on the day and what you put out on the court is down to you alone.” These certainly sound like the words of a captain.

This does not mean that the team won't share some final Varsity preparation however. The side come together to make banners, which will be proudly displayed at Sunday's event. They then meet for a pre-game dinner, during which every player in the squad gets a card signed by each of her teammates with supportive messages, which are then read out the night before the match.

With just days to go until the Blues take to the court, Maitland is aware that her period as Blues captain is coming to an end, but she will look back on the time with great warmth: “It's been a challenging year. I didn't anticipate how much energy and work it would take to be the captain. Having said that, I learnt so much and would not change a thing. I will definitely look back on the year in a positive light and I feel fortunate to have had that opportunity.”

Bowing out with a victory against Oxford would prove a storybook ending, and Maitland is quietly confident: “I know what [the] players are capable of and I can't wait to see them leave it all out on the court this Sunday.”

It is a rallying cry from the captain to her squad, and they will hope to reciprocate with a performance at the weekend. Whatever the result, the squad will surely miss Maitland as much as she will miss them; as they write in their programme notes: “Thank you, Captain. We owe this to you.”



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Every dedicated suit-wearer knows that Hong Kong's master tailors have an enviable reputation for quality, efficiency and price. The only not-inconsiderable snag is that they are ordinarily in Hong Kong whereas most of us ordinarily are not. Seekers after the finest Hong Kong tailoring need not worry any longer. Mr Raja M Daswani, master craftsman and Hong Kong's finest and most respected bespoke tailor, **Raja Fashions** now travels to the United Kingdom every two months.

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Netball Varsity preview: Will Robinson sits down with CULNC President Sophie Maitland **30**



Oxford

6

Cambridge

2

Cambridge tenacious in Lacrosse Varsity

Michael Nguyen-Kim
Sport Reporter

The lush playing fields of Churchill College played host to this year's Lacrosse Varsity last Saturday afternoon. Oxford came to town having won last year's Lacrosse Varsity in a nailbitingly close encounter, and the Light Blues were no doubt hoping to avenge that loss on home soil. However, with Oxford currently mid-table in the BUCS Premier South division and Cambridge holding an equivalent position in the lower Midlands 1A division, Cambridge's work was certainly cut out for them.

Upon the opening-face-off, the visitors' on-paper superiority was rapidly transferred onto the field. Oxford showed their intent early, transitioning the ball swiftly from defence to offence with a combination of accurate passes and foot speed. When settled in offence, they moved the ball efficiently, slickly transferring the ball to one another with pinpoint accuracy.

Cambridge, meanwhile, began sluggishly. Despite enjoying a similar amount of possession to their opponents, the home team regularly turned the ball over in midfield and were hesitant in offence, rarely posing an appreciable threat. Their inability to shut down the visitors' offensive ball movement forced

goalkeeper and captain Thomas Chalken into a series of fine saves early in the first quarter. Unfortunately, he could only resist for so long, with one of Oxford's forwards scything the ball into the net from close range to open their account. A second soon followed in eerily similar fashion, and the Light Blues went into quarter-time with a 2-0 deficit.

The second quarter began with more of the same, with Cambridge's sedate approach contrasting with Oxford's silky ball movement. The home team needed a circuit breaker, and they got one five minutes into the quarter in the form of forward Maseeh Roshan. With the ball edging near the goal-line, and an Oxford defender shaping to take possession of it, Roshan let loose on his unfortunate opponent with a vicious body check, the former ramming his shoulder into the latter's chest. The ball (plus the defender) spilled over the line, and Cambridge took possession.

The sheer force of the hit seemed to invigorate the home team, and they resumed with renewed aggressiveness. Some more solid hits on offence created a number of genuine chances which Cambridge were unlucky not to convert. Added pressure on defence disrupted Oxford's ball movement, preventing the margin from growing any larger. The two teams went into half-time with the match evenly poised, the second quarter

▲ **The Men's Blues in action in a fiercely contested affair**

(JAMES LEE)

“The home team fought tenaciously all day and were unlucky not to convert more of their chances”

finishing scoreless.

The start of the third quarter saw a lift in intensity from both teams and heralded the most entertaining passage of the match. Both teams transitioned the ball well and fought ferociously on both offense and defence. Many chances were created on both sides but were inevitably thwarted by a blend of desperate defending and goalkeeping heroics. The partisan crowd felt it was only a matter of time before the home team would break through, the tension building as three-quarter time approached.

And then it was relieved – by the visitors. After a series of immaculate saves, Chalken was again helpless as Oxford bounced the ball into the net from close range. The score was 3-0, and only the most miraculous of comebacks could have saved them from this point.

Hope was briefly rekindled when a magnificent long-range effort from long-stick midfielder Jack Peacock somehow found the back of the net early in the fourth quarter. The home fans sniffed magic in the air, and the next couple of minutes saw some spirited play from both sides. However, Oxford's class shone through again, as it had done all day, and they scored the next three goals as the game opened up. The Light Blues, though visibly exhausted, never stopped fighting, claiming a consolation goal on the stroke of full-time.

The final scoreline was perhaps harsh on the home team, who fought tenaciously all day and were unlucky not to convert more of their chances. Conversely, Oxford's tally was flattered by the three goals they scored when the game was beyond doubt, although their clinical execution meant they rightly deserved the win.

Cambridge's defeat follows Oxford's 9-8 win in last year's fixture in Oxford. The Light Blues inevitably have already set their sights on next year's fixture, where they will hope to again represent the University with aplomb.

▼ **This marks a second Varsity defeat after last year's Oxford victory**

(JAMES LEE)

